

THE ROLE OF TRADE POLICY IN ENSURING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY: MODERN APPROACHES

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Annotation. This article analyses current approaches to the role of the state and its foreign trade policy in the formation of national competitiveness, and presents the author's matrix of modern schools studying this direction in economics.

Key words: national competitiveness; foreign trade policy; role of the state in the economy.

To replace the classical theories of competitiveness in modern economic science, new studies of this phenomenon have begun to appear. The scientists actively working in this field include Michael Porter, Paul Krugman, Horst Siebert, Erik Reinert and others.

One of the leading modern economists in the field of competitiveness research is the American scientist Michael Porter. It was he who proposed one of the most comprehensive concepts of firm competitiveness and suggested strategies to improve it, as well as developed the concept of clusters used to analyse the position of the national economy in international markets.

In his further work, M. Porter paid special attention to government regulation and other conditions within the country that affect enterprises in any industry, and came to the unambiguous conclusion that the level of development of a country has a significant impact on the success of companies in the international market. His research was designed to provide an understanding of the role of the state in the competitive field of the world market and to show how competitiveness is formed and maintained.

M. Porter says that competitiveness is a property characteristic of specific sectors of the national economy, not the country as a whole. The state influences a firm's ability to succeed in a particular international market. At the same time, it does not have its own interests directly in the market and should deal exclusively with the problems of sustainable economic development.

In Porter's understanding, the concept of competitiveness at the country level is the concept of increasing the productivity of resource utilisation. The growth of the level of welfare of the population directly depends on the return per unit of resources spent by national companies. The need for constant productivity growth arises as a result of international competition, or 'productivity' competition between countries.

In general, Porter advocated minimal government intervention in the market or international trade and urged the government to work exclusively on creating conditions for a highly productive economy (through education, infrastructure, stimulating innovation, regulating the legal relations of market actors, ensuring the distribution and respect of property rights, etc.).

Through international trade and competition, firms can allocate resources to the most efficient niches, reducing the cost of supporting less efficient industries. However, the problem of an absolute productivity standard arises, whereby the efficiency of one industry within a country relative to others does not guarantee the country's competitiveness in the international market. To achieve efficiency on the world market, firms must initially have a comparative advantage in some area (and based on Ricardo's theory, almost all countries have a relative advantage), and then use it to develop other promising areas and achieve maximum productivity through increasingly narrow specialisation, which is what government policy is designed to help achieve.

The idea of competitiveness as an increase in the productivity of resource utilisation is also put forward by the American economist Paul Krugman. He sharply criticises the classical ideas that states should compete in creating economic conditions for attracting foreign business and increasing foreign trade surplus. He cites examples according to which the growth of exports or foreign investment in the economy does not always lead to an increase in the welfare of the country's inhabitants, although it contributes to an increase in profits. P. Krugman also argues that the success of a state depends only on the efforts of its authorities and citizens, but not on external factors or on how successful other countries become.

In contrast to P. Krugman, German economist Horst Siebert advocates the idea of competition between locations for mobile factors of production: highly educated labour, capital and technology. The task of governments, accordingly, is to create institutional conditions for attracting and retaining such factors of production in order to increase national welfare, as well as to find a balance in regulating their export in order to benefit from such movement and simultaneously avoid degradation of the national economy. H. Siebert favours liberal trade and sees the role of the state as a guarantor of low transaction costs in the movement of factors of production. International cooperation is also necessary to prevent aggressive or opportunistic behaviour on the part of individual states that could distort competition. However, the influence of international laws and regulations should be as small as necessary to maintain the system mentioned above.

In contrast to liberal views on international trade, the Norwegian economist Erik Reinert puts forward his theory of competitiveness of countries and the strategy of achieving national well-being. He opposes global free international trade and competition in the classical sense, nevertheless adhering to the ideas similar to those of M. Porter and P. Krugman about the need to stimulate the growth of productivity of national economies. E. Reinert's theory is based on a modern interpretation of the emulation tool - a strategy of copying an economic model or technology with the intention of surpassing the original, used by Ricardo's predecessors, including mercantilists (who, however, did not aim to increase prosperity). The Norwegian scientist does not operate with the concept of competitiveness, but emphasises the achievement of prosperity by countries, primarily developing countries. E. Reinert sees the development of manufacturing industries with increasing returns to scale as the key to welfare growth, even at the expense of the apparent initial inefficiency of their creation on the territory of a particular country, as well as the subsequent achievement of a balance between the various sectors of the national economy.

The role of the state should be to create such terms of trade that would stimulate the development of welfare-enhancing sectors of the economy, and not only to support the strengthening of specialisation of those sectors in which the country has a relative advantage. At the same time, states can gain advantages in the development of their trading partners, including through the adoption of experience (emulation) [4]. This approach differs from Porter's idea of minimal state intervention in the market and international trade, although it supports the idea of the main goal of state policy - to improve the welfare of citizens.

Thus, we can distinguish 3 modern trends in the theory of competitiveness of countries depending on the attitude to free trade and the role of the state: Anglo-Saxon (M. Porter, P. Krugman), German (H. Siebert) and Scandinavian (E. Reinert) (see the table).

The table below is a reflection of the existing theoretical concepts of competitiveness in the modern world. Today, the concept of competitiveness is generally criticised and the goals of the state and its role in international trade are perceived ambiguously.

Table 1

Classification of approaches to country competitiveness

		Rol gosudarstva v mejdunarodnoy trading	
		Minimum	Active
Tsel politics gosudarstva	True productivity and well-being	Anglo-Saxon school	Scandinavian school
	Privlechenie i uderjanie factorov proizvodstva	German school	Mercantilism

The Anglo-Saxon school represented by M. Porter, P. Krugman and others advocates for the most liberal international trade without government interference and sees the purpose of regulation in stimulating the growth of productivity of national factors of production and the welfare of citizens.

The German school represented by H. The German school, represented by H. Siebert and others, adhering to liberal views on international trade, sees the state as an active participant in the competition of locations for the placement of mobile factors of production. From the point of view of this school, state policy should stimulate the attraction and retention of such factors in order to maintain sustainable high rates of economic growth.

The Scandinavian school represented by E. Reinert and others, in contrast to Western economists, questions the possibility of universal welfare of all countries in conditions of free trade and initial uneven development. Within the framework of this school it is assumed that the state should take any steps to develop sectors that provide maximum contribution to the welfare of the population, even if these steps contradict the ideas of free trade.

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