



ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS GROWTH IN CONDITIONS OF LIMITED RESOURCES

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-----ABSTRACT-----

The article examines the ecological and economic aspects of the growth of the competitiveness of regions in conditions of limited resources, identifies the main factors of the ecological and economic competitiveness of the region.

KEYWORDS- *Region, ecology, competitiveness, ecological and economic system, ecologic risk, diversification, investment, ecological competitiveness.*

DISCUSSION

The region as a territorially localized socio-economic integrity develops and functions in interaction not only with other similar regional formations, but also with the corresponding natural environment, and as it becomes involved in the economic turnover, the latter increasingly acquires the quality of not only external, but also internal conditions (components) of regional reproduction. In this regard, any regional reproduction system invariably contains an ecological (ecological and economic) component, and the natural environment itself is an indispensable prerequisite and consequence of its formation and sustainable competitive development. The natural-ecological determinant of regional development, the general "inclusion" of the natural component in the system of regional reproduction (as a general condition, aspect factor and fundamental consequence), as well as the ever-increasing volumes of exploitation of natural resources (against the background of their progressing deficit and globalization of environmental problems) allow to focus on the ecological (ecological and economic) aspect of the competitiveness of the territory, understood as a set of regionally localized natural resource and natural ecological conditions and factors of social reproduction, as well as the measure (degree) of the efficiency of their use, taking into account the socio-ecological and ecological-economic priorities.

Proposing such a definition, I would like to emphasize that from the point of view of the overall competitiveness of the territory, its ecological and economic aspect is, of course, the most important, and as the general transformation of the socio-ecological system, its importance only increases and this is fully interconnected with the general actualization of ecologic problems, the formation ideas about the feasibility of sustainable development. [1, 2, 3, 4]

In the modern context, "ecology" is primarily understood as the science of the balanced existence of man and the natural environment [5]. Note that this equilibrium varies, and not only in time, but also in space and depends on many factors, including the features of social production in their regional specifics. The large-scale spread of the nature-processing industrial civilization and the corresponding globalization of ecologic problems initiated not only the transition to a post-industrial technological order, but also contributed to the emergence of numerous publications on modeling global socio-ecological dynamics.

In this regard, a new idea arises in the public consciousness - the concept of sustainable development (meeting the needs of the present, but not endangering the ability of future generations) to satisfy their own needs, most fully formulated at the World Conference on Environment and Development, held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has a National Commission on Sustainable Development, created by the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan, focused on the development of environmental policy aimed at protecting and improving the natural environment, rational use and renewal of natural resources, preservation and development of the sociosphere, which ensures normal life and environmental safety of a person [1].



It seems that, it is the idea of ecologically oriented socio-economic development, in which the growth of human well-being is not accompanied by a deterioration in the environment and degradation of natural systems, that can act as a starting point in the formation of systemic concepts of ecological and economic competitiveness, its meaningful interpretation from the standpoint of the subject of regional economics.

First of all, the ecological and economic aspect of competitiveness reflects the special (assessed by the corresponding quantitative and qualitative indicators) state of the region, or rather the corresponding ecological and economic system.

If we consider the region as a special ecological and economic system, then the following can act as its main components:

- natural resource potential of the region (state parameters: flora, fauna, soil, bowels, water, air);
- the population of the region (a person and indicators of the quality of his life: life expectancy, health status, level of knowledge, income, level of employment, etc.);
- the industry of the region (the volume of the produced product, as well as the factors of technogenic load, both regulated and emergency, caused by the activities of the industries most dangerous for the ecosystem of the region - biological, chemical, mining and metallurgical, etc.);
- infrastructure of the region's economy (industrial, social, institutional, environmental).

Characterizing the structure of the regional ecological-economic system, it should be noted that although production and technology directly affect nature, the latter depend on such economic indicators as prices, loans, rent, profit, etc. Summarizing, we can also say that natural-economic interaction is determined both directly by the regional economic mechanism and by the system of interregional relations built at higher hierarchical levels. In this regard, the basis of the ecological-economic system (integrating the above-mentioned particular components) are different-aspect economic relations "about" the use of the natural resource factor of social production in a specific regional-localized context.

Based on the assessment of the current state of the ecological and economic system, F. Egamberdiev proposed the following classification of regions:

- a typical zone for fixing ecological well-being - the state of the regional environment ensures traditional forms of economic activity and their further development without prejudice to the health of the population;

- a typical zone for fixing environmental risk - the state of the regional environment has a maximum permissible load under existing forms of economic activity, the strengthening of which can lead to negative environmental impacts;

- a typical zone of fixing an ecological crisis - the level of the environment poses a threat to the state of human health and requires a partial reorientation of ecologically unfavorable forms of economic activity [6].

Taking into account the specifics of the ecological and economic system (focused on the reproduction of both the territorial community itself and adequate natural resource conditions and economic structure), its projected onto competitiveness can be grouped in a slightly different way:

- the "resource potential" of production due to natural and economic interaction (the possibility of sustainable resource provision of the economy, taking into account both the existing and projected parameters);
- the resource potential of the population's life (including not only the possibility of conducting natural and semi-natural forms of management adapted to the natural resource base, but also wages, profits and rent from all kinds of activities conditioned by natural and economic interaction);
- ecological conditions of production (the possibility of localization and sustainable functioning in a particular region of the most "sensitive" types of economic activity in the state of the natural environment, like recreation);
- ecological conditions of life of the population (territorial community), manifested in such parametric characteristics as life expectancy of the population, its incidence, etc.

According to WHO experts, the health of the population, or population health, on average 50 - 52% depends on the economic security and lifestyle of people, by 20 - 22% - on hereditary factors, by 7 - 12% on the level of medical care and on 18 - 20% of the state of the environment. In any case, one cannot but state that demographic processes to a significant extent correspond to the general environmental situation; to the greatest extent, this dependence is manifested at the meso-level, and in this regard, in order to take into account the competitiveness of the region, such indicators as average life expectancy, mortality from a number of nosologies directly determined by the ecological situation and even the population density itself (its excess of certain average values, over-concentration in urbanized territories), on the one hand, objectively aggravating the state of the natural environment, and on the other hand, it presupposes more stringent criteria when assessing the maximum possible levels of technogenic pressure and, accordingly, the degree of trouble in the regional ecological and economic system.

No less significant is the general natural resource potential, whose use in the process of functioning of territorial-economic systems, as well as their systemic interaction in the geo-economic (country and global scale), makes it possible to characterize the economic nature of ecological and economic competitiveness as a



region's opportunity (realizable or potential) extract, accumulate and redistribute in their favor the corresponding rent structured into its three main invariants:

- Natural resource (better quality of the resource, more favorable conditions for its exploitation);
- Natural and ecological (higher potential for self-healing of the environment);
- Ecological and localization (more environmentally favorable conditions for the location of production and the population).

The listed types of rent are not only interdependent (in particular, the first two of them can be considered basic, and the latter, to a certain extent, their derivative), but also to the greatest extent inherent in one or another specific technological order: natural resource dominates in pre-industrial and industrial a resource-based economy (and, accordingly, shares are more significant for peripheral regions with resource-raw materials or agricultural specialization), natural and ecological - the most significant for industrial territories specialized in the processing of natural resources; ecological-localization - for territorial-economic systems of the post-industrial type.

It should be emphasized that in a situation where the post-industrial economic model is taking root more and more, the competition for rent is complemented by the desire of territories (represented by economic entities located on them) to receive additional profit through the introduction of various kinds of environmental innovations (actual greening of production). In this regard, the point of view of M. Porter, the founder of the theory of competitive advantages, seems to be important, who believes that the opposition of economic interests and the tasks of environmental protection is caused by a static analysis of the situation, the inability to see the economic consequences of innovations, their impact on the competitiveness of an enterprise (firm). Equating environmental pollution with firm inefficiency, he writes in particular: "Properly designed environmental standards can initiate innovations that reduce the total cost of production of the relevant product or increase its consumer value. Such innovations enable companies to more efficiently use a combination of factors of production (from raw materials to energy and labor), thereby offsetting the costs associated with the need to comply with environmental laws. Ultimately, increased resource productivity makes companies more competitive, not the other way around" [7].

As a result, we are talking not only about the environmental consequences of economic activity in the region, but also about the potential of economic development based on a certain regionally localized natural resource base, and, accordingly, the reproduction of a territorial community, which implies the need for simultaneous accounting for the phenomenon of ecological and economic competitiveness both ecological and economic vectors of the functioning of the regional economy. At the same time, in the study of the problems of environmental and economic competitiveness, a very significant role is played by the general regional organization of the economy, including its central-peripheral structure, structural and functional features, the very fact of the existence of a set of regions of different taxonomic levels and types, which together creates the necessary conditions for interregional interaction (including competition) and interregional analytical comparisons.

Finally, the competitiveness of a region is also the conditions for its "inclusion" in global ecological and economic processes, outside of which neither the very appearance of the above-described rent, nor the competition of territories for its appropriation is impossible. All of the above allows you to model the structural components and aspect manifestations of environmental and economic competitiveness (Fig. 1).

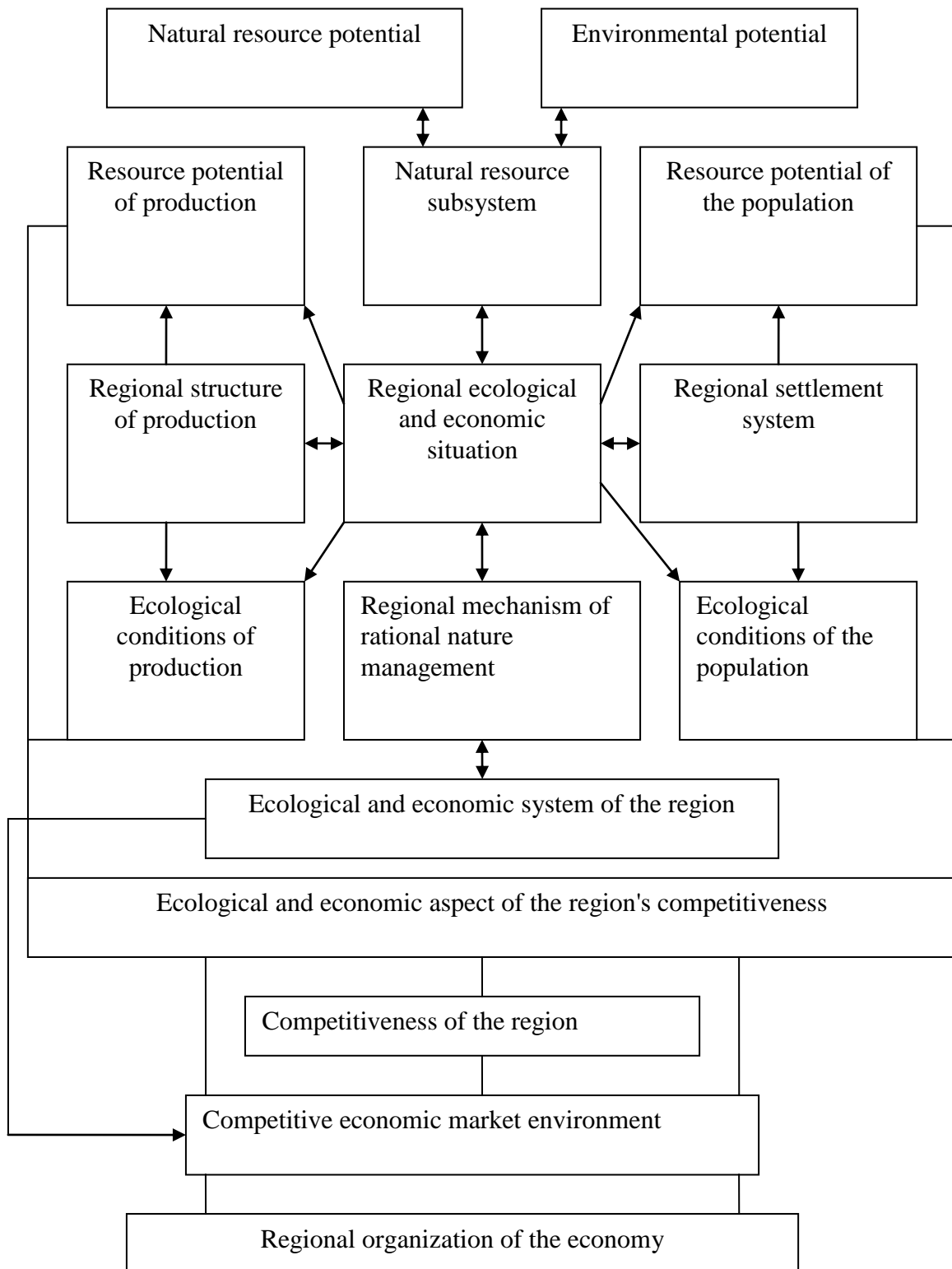


Figure 1. Ecological and economic system and its relationship with the competitiveness of the region.¹

¹ Source: compiled by the author.



The presented general vision of the problem under study also allows us to focus on the objective variety of approaches to assessing a particular region in terms of its ecological and economic competitiveness. It seems that the basic principle of identifying competitiveness (establishing the extent to which the development of the region corresponds to the principles of economic efficiency and ecological safety) should be supplemented by a number of private, corrective points: to what extent the region is competitive in the markets of natural resources, to what extent the regional economy is competitive compliance with the imperatives of sustainable eco-development; and, finally, to what extent the region is competitive in the markets for environmental goods and services.

The diversification of the proposed approach allows us to talk about competitiveness in relation to both regions that are building their own economic well-being based on the existing natural resource potential, and to mesoeconomic systems that form an economic model in conditions of a practical shortage of it, and competition itself (and, accordingly, competitiveness) can be traced both between typologically related territories (for example, resource and raw materials), and between functionally distant regions that occupy polar positions in the center-peripheral organization of the economy.

The study of the ecological and economic aspects of the competitiveness of the territorial economic systems of the meso-level presupposes the formation of relevant ideas about its dominant factors. The entire set of the latter can be conditionally combined into six groups, including natural resource (economic parameters of natural resource potential), natural and ecological, structural and technological (dominant technological order, "environmental friendliness" of the sectoral and territorial structure of the economic complex, environmental parameters of applied technologies, and etc.), institutional (the formation of the market environment and basic market institutions, cultural stereotypes and the legal framework for environmental management, etc.), demographic (population density, the presence of agglomerated forms of settlement, etc.) and geoeconomic (the degree of integration of the region in the world economic system, its role functions, place in the "center-periphery" system, etc.) (Figure 2).

Taking stock of the factors and aspect manifestations of ecological and economic competitiveness, focusing on the possible variability of approaches to its assessment, I would also like to focus on one more fundamental circumstance.

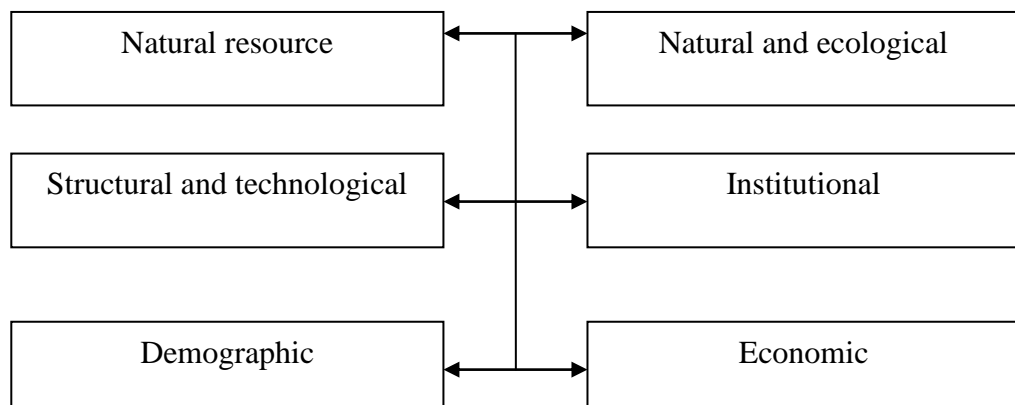


Fig. 2. Main factors of ecological and economic competitiveness of the region²

Thus, ecologic competitiveness is the ability of a product and product to maximally meet the requirements of environmental safety, environmental protection, to provide comfortable living conditions and protection from harmful environmental influences and, on this basis, to develop the productive forces of the region.

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