

**Network enterprise as a challenge
for contemporary economic theory of the company**

The information society and the „new economy” carry many challenges for the enterprises operating within. The development of the information network and computer networks has led to a multilevel transformation of the economic order and has contributed to the transformation of traditional, monolithic enterprises into network enterprises with dispersed and poorly structured construction.

The creation and operation of network enterprises is a relatively new issue and the subject literature is very dispersed and inconsistent. The basic motive for undertaking the topic was exploration of the previously undiscovered issues and analysis of the nature of the network enterprise. Considering the relevance and importance of the issue, as well as the continuous development of the network company, this doctoral thesis attempts to create a network enterprise image on the basis of the economic theory of the enterprise and use the output of other scientific disciplines.

The main purpose of this thesis is answering the question on whether the contemporary theory of the company justifies and explains the functioning of a network enterprise or not.

The intention of the considerations being the subject of the thesis is to achieve the main objective, specific objectives and verification of the hypothesis which reads as follows:

Coopetition is a determinant of the development of a network enterprise and the development of such enterprise reduces the importance of business coordination within market and hierarchy.

The thesis is epistemological, hence it required theoretical studies. Two types of Polish and English-language sources of information were used: literature and Internet studies. For the purpose of achieving the assumed goals and verification of the research hypothesis, the following research methods were used: descriptive method, comparative method and literature analysis of the subject. The analysis was supported by an exemplification covering real operating network enterprises.

The scientific problem defined in the thesis and the adopted research objectives determine the structure of the doctoral dissertation. It consists of an introduction,

four chapters and a summary. The first chapter shows the reasons the network enterprise was established, its essence and conditions for development. The second chapter concerns the role of cooperation, competition and cooptation in the activities of the network company. The purpose of the third chapter is to identify which business coordination mechanism (market, hierarchy, network) is applicable to the functioning of the network organisation. The fourth chapter is devoted to the assessment of the usefulness of the contemporary economic theory of the company for the study of a network enterprise.

The conducted research enabled to verify of the assumed hypothesis. As a result, it was established that there are no grounds to reject it. In addition, a number of conclusions were formulated as a result of the considerations. For example, it was agreed that cooperation is necessary for the establishment and operation of the network company, but in some areas of the entity's activity competition is allowed and even recommended. The conducted analysis also allowed to draw a conclusion demonstrating the transition of a network enterprise towards the coordination of economic activity by means of a network mechanism. Moreover, some explanatory or common elements between network company and the agency theory and the theory of transaction of costs were proven.

The network enterprise is undoubtedly a challenge for the contemporary theory of the company. The considerations made in the above thesis seem to be a significant contribution to the study of a network enterprise from an economic point of view. However, full verification of the network organization requires very broad and interdisciplinary research.