

“CONFLICT-FREE” SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

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“CONFLICT-FREE” SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS: PERSPECTIVES AND CONTRADICTIONS

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Contents

List of Figures	<i>xi</i>
List of Tables	<i>xv</i>
List of Contributors	<i>xix</i>
Foreword	<i>xxiii</i>

Introduction

<i>Elena G. Popkova</i>	<i>1</i>
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PART I: THE THEORY OF CONFLICTS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Chapter 1 Conceptual Approaches to Treatment of the Essence of Conflict as an Economic Category

<i>Tatiana N. Litvinova</i>	<i>5</i>
-----------------------------	----------

Chapter 2 Causal Connections between Conflicts in Socio-economic Systems

<i>Tatiana N. Litvinova and Irina A. Morozova</i>	<i>13</i>
---	-----------

Chapter 3 Classification of Conflicts in Socio-economic Systems

<i>Elena G. Popkova</i>	<i>21</i>
-------------------------	-----------

Chapter 4 Conflicts of Socio-economic Systems as Their Bifurcation Points: Theory and Methodology of the Systemic Approach

<i>Anastasia A. Kurilova, Kirill Y. Kurilov, Svetlana A. Popova and Elena A. Nemkina</i>	<i>29</i>
--	-----------

PART II: LEGAL CONFLICT

Chapter 5 The Notion of Legal Conflict

*Dmitry A. Lipinsky, Victoria V. Bolgova,
Aleksandra A. Musatkina and Tatiana V. Khudoykina* 39

Chapter 6 Violation of Law as a Legal Conflict

*Dmitry A. Lipinsky, Victoria V. Bolgova,
Aleksandra A. Musatkina and Tatiana V. Khudoykina* 47

Chapter 7 Economic Violation of Law as a Conflict

*Dmitry A. Lipinsky, Victoria V. Bolgova,
Aleksandra A. Musatkina and Tatiana V. Khudoykina* 55

Chapter 8 Mediative Method of Solving Legal Conflicts

*Dmitry A. Lipinsky, Victoria V. Bolgova,
Aleksandra A. Musatkina and Tatiana V. Khudoykina* 63

PART III: LEGAL FOCUS OF INTER-CORPORATE FINANCIAL CONFLICTOLOGY

Chapter 9 Corporate Conflicts in the System of Public Relations, Law, and Legislation of the Russian Federation

*Vladimira Dolinskaya, Alla Kalinina, Agnessa Inshakova and
Alexander Goncharov* 75

Chapter 10 Classification Criteria: Defining the Specific Features of Corporate Conflicts

Agnessa Inshakova, Vladimira Dolinskaya and Evgenia Frolova 89

Chapter 11 The Concept and Legal Framework for Judging Corporate Conflicts on the US Financial Market

Evgenia Frolova, Agnessa Inshakova and Vladimira Dolinskaya 101

PART IV: THE CONCEPT OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Chapter 12 Methodology of Studying Socio-economic Systems through the Prism of the Theory of Cycles

*Aleksei V. Bogoviz, Tatiana V. Skryl, Larisa A. Kapustyan,
Ksenia V. Ekimova and Julia V. Ragulina* 111

Chapter 13 Contradiction of Influence of Crises on Growth and Development of Socio-economic Systems
Lilia V. Ermolina, Marine M. Manukyan and Ekaterina S. Podbornova 119

Chapter 14 Comparison of Social and Economic Effects that Accompany Crises of Economic Systems
Elena A. Gureeva, Elena V. Kletsikova, Tatiana I. Chinaeva, Tatiana N. Morgun and Elena N. Kolomoets 127

PART V: CONCEPTUAL SUBSTANTIATION OF STUDYING CRISES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS FROM THE POSITIONS OF THE THEORY OF CONFLICTS

Chapter 15 Crises and Conflicts of Socio-economic Systems: Similarities and Differences
Anastasia A. Kurilova, Dmitry Y. Ivanov, Daria O. Zabaznova and Aleksandr V. Malofeev 139

Chapter 16 Social Effects of Crises of Economic Systems as Manifestation of Conflicts in Them
Aleksei V. Bogoviz, Svetlana V. Belyaeva, Evgeny E. Shvakov, Elena V. Grib and Inna Y. Timofeeva 147

Chapter 17 Conceptual Model of Conflict of Socio-economic System as an Analogue of the Model of Economic Cycle
Aleksei V. Bogoviz, Alexander N. Alekseev, Olga V. Titova, Valentina V. Latysheva and Aleksei D. Ragulin 155

PART VI: RECONSIDERING THE ROLE OF CRISES IN DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS AS A RESULT OF THE 2008 GLOBAL CRISIS

Chapter 18 Common Regularities and Peculiarities of the Influence of the 2008 Crisis on Development of Socio-economic Systems
Zinaida N. Kozenko, Yuri A. Kozenko, Konstantin Y. Kozenko and Galina N. Zvereva 165

Chapter 19 Transition of Crisis from Stimulator of Economic Development into a Source of Social Problems	
<i>Anastasia A. Kurilova, Olga G. Zinovyeva, Larisa V. Popova and Svetlana Y. Shaldokhina</i>	173

Chapter 20 Sustainability as a Strategic Goal of Managing Growth and Development of Modern Socio-economic Systems	
<i>Olga V. Danilova</i>	181

Chapter 21 Sustainable Development of Economic Entities: Key Objectives, Stages, and Stakeholder Interests	
<i>Artem I. Krivtsov</i>	191

PART VII: CLASSIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM FROM THE POSITION OF THE THEORY OF ECONOMIC CYCLES

Chapter 22 Socio-economic Systems in the Phase of Crisis (Long Recession)	
<i>Anastasia A. Kurilova, Kirill Y. Kurilov, Tatiana A. Dugina and Evgeny A. Likholetov</i>	201

Chapter 23 Sustainable Socio-economic Systems	
<i>Aleksei V. Bogoviz, Svetlana V. Lobova, Julia V. Ragulina, Alexander N. Alekseev and Yevgeniy A. An</i>	209

Chapter 24 Stagnating Socio-economic Systems	
<i>Aleksei V. Bogoviz, Arthur V. Varlamov, Vitalii V. Mishchenko, Alexander A. Pochestnev and Yury L. Talismanov</i>	219

PART VIII: “CONFLICT-FREE” AS A NEW DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Chapter 25 “Conflict-free” as a Characteristic of the Process of Development of Socio-economic Systems	
<i>Anastasia A. Sozinova</i>	229

Chapter 26 Development of “Conflict-free” Socio-economic System: A View from the Positions of the Theory of Conflicts and the Theory of Systems <i>Yulia I. Dubova</i>	235
--	-----

Chapter 27 The Basic Principles of “Conflict-free” Development of Socio-economic Systems <i>Aleksei V. Bogoviz, Svetlana V. Lobova, Julia V. Ragulina and Alexander N. Alekseev</i>	243
---	-----

PART IX: THE FUNDAMENTAL PLATFORM FOR STUDYING “CONFLICT-FREE” SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Chapter 28 Factors of Regional Identity as a Dynamic Structure <i>Irina Tsvetkova, Evgenia Zhelnina, Tatiana Ivanova and Natalia Gorbacheva</i>	251
---	-----

Chapter 29 Socio-economic Aspects of Formation and Development of Territorial Clusters in the Context of Global and Russian Institutional Problems <i>Inna V. Mitrofanova, Dmitriy A. Sheikin, Irina V. Pozhilova, Rustam A. Yalmaev and Aynet T. Mishieva</i>	259
--	-----

Chapter 30 Signs of “Conflict-free” Socio-economic System <i>Aleksei V. Bogoviz, Karina A. Chernitsova, Andrey G. Nazarov, Andrei A. Bezhovets and Nataliia V. Polishchuk</i>	277
---	-----

Chapter 31 Methodological Recommendations and Criteria of Measuring of “Conflict” Level of Socio-economic System <i>Elena G. Popkova</i>	287
--	-----

PART X: PERSPECTIVES OF MANAGING “CONFLICT-FREE” SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

Chapter 32 Efficient Corporate Governance Is a Driving Force of Uncontroversial Development of Corporation as a Local Social and Economic System <i>Andrey A. Inyushkin, Elena S. Kryukova, Iurii S. Povarov and Valentina D. Ruzanova</i>	297
--	-----

Chapter 33 Trans-border Region vs Trans-conflict Region: Similarities and Differences in Management of Territorial Borders <i>Vladimir N. Gurba, Valery N. Konovalov, Sofia A. Martirosyan, Elena N. Donchenko and Narine A. Bezverbnaya</i>	307
Chapter 34 Algorithm of Transition of Modern Socio-economic Systems to a “Conflict-free” Path of Development <i>Elena A. Ostapenko, Armen V. Gevondyan, Inna V. Mishchenko, Dzhannet S. Shikhalieva and Tatyana G. Gurnovich</i>	315
Chapter 35 The Mechanism of Managing “Conflict-free” Socio-economic System <i>Anastasia A. Kurilova, Alexey V. Tolmachev, Valeriya P. Chayka and Aleksei G. Savin</i>	321
Chapter 36 Methodological Approach to Evaluating the Effectiveness of Development of “Conflict-Free” Socio-economic System <i>Irina S. Ferova, Ekaterina S. Kovanova, Elena V. Kletsikova, Rustem T. Yuldashev and Tatiana V. Tkachenko</i>	327
Conclusions <i>Elena G. Popkova</i>	335
Index	337

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Figure 1.1.	Essence of Conflict as an Economic Category.	9
-------------	--	---

Chapter 4

Figure 4.1.	The Model of Development of Dynamic System According to the Systemic Approach.	31
Figure 4.2.	Conflict of Socio-economic System as Its Bifurcation Point According to the Systemic Approach.	32
Figure 4.3.	Conflicts in Dynamic Socio-economic System in the Long-term Period.	33

Chapter 12

Figure 12.1.	Dynamic Model of Development of Socio-economic System through the Prism of the Theory of Cycles.. . . .	113
Figure 12.2.	Dynamics of Development of Socio-economic System of Russia through the Prism of the Theory of Cycles in 2000–2022.	114

Chapter 13

Figure 13.1.	Growth and Development of Socio-economic System under the Influence of Crisis during the Whole Wave of the Economic Cycle.	123
--------------	--	-----

Chapter 14

Figure 14.1.	Ratio of Social and Economic Causes of Crises of Economic Systems as Manifestations of Their Conflicts.	133
--------------	---	-----

Chapter 15

Figure 15.1.	Algorithm of Transition of Conflict into Crisis of Socio-economic System.	143
--------------	---	-----

Chapter 16

Figure 16.1.	Causal Connections between Distribution of Conflicts within Social Effects of Crises of Economic Systems and the Preferable Method of Their Regulation.	151
--------------	---	-----

Chapter 17

Figure 17.1. The Existing Conceptual Static Model of Conflict of Socio-economic Systems. 156

Figure 17.2. Conceptual Model of Conflict of Socio-economic System as an Analog of the Model of Economic Cycle. 157

Chapter 18

Figure 18.1. The Model of Influence of the 2008 Crisis on Development of Leading Developed Countries (G7) According to the Long-wave Scenario. 167

Figure 18.2. The Model of Influence of the 2008 Crisis on Development of Countries with Emerging Markets and Developing Countries According to Short-wave Scenario. 168

Chapter 21

Figure 21.1. Objectives of the Business Analysis in Studying the Stakeholders' Demands. 195

Chapter 22

Figure 22.1. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in the Countries of Euro Area in 2006–2018. 203

Figure 22.2. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in Countries of Major Advanced Economies (G7) in 2006 – 2018. 203

Figure 22.3. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2006 – 2018. 204

Figure 22.4. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in the Countries of Emerging and Developing Asia in 2006 – 2018. 204

Figure 22.5. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in Countries of the Category Emerging and Developing Europe in 2006 – 2018. 205

Figure 22.6. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in Countries of the Category Latin America and the Caribbean in 2006 – 2018. 205

Figure 22.7. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in the Countries of the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in 2006 – 2018. 206

Figure 22.8. Dynamics of Annual Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices in Countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in 2006 – 2018. 206

Chapter 24

- Figure 24.1. Dynamics of Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices, Growth Rate of GDP Per Capita in Constant Prices, and the Level of Unemployment Rate in the CIS Countries. 222
- Figure 24.2. Dynamics of Growth Rate of GDP in Constant Prices, Growth Rate of GDP Per Capita in Constant Prices, and the Level of Unemployment Rate in G7 Countries. 222

Chapter 25

- Figure 25.1. “Conflict-free” Socio-economic System at Various Phases of Its Conflict. 231
- Figure 25.2. Dynamics of GDP in Constant Prices in Turkey (TRY) and Japan (JPY) in 2006–2022. 232

Chapter 26

- Figure 26.1. The Model of Development of “Conflict-free” Socio-economic System from the Positions of the Theory of Conflicts and the Theory of Systems. 238

Chapter 27

- Figure 27.1. Basic Principles of “Conflict-free” Development of Socio-economic System. 245

Chapter 30

- Figure 30.1. Ratio of the Values of Indicators That Reflect Observation of Principles of “Conflict-free” Character in Turkey and Japan to Maximum Values of Indicators in the Selection Of Countries. 283

Chapter 34

- Figure 34.1. Algorithm of Transition of Modern Socio-economic Systems to “Conflict-free” Path of Development. 317

Chapter 35

- Figure 35.1. The Mechanism of Managing “Conflict-free” Socio-economic Systems. 323

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List of Tables

Chapter 1

Table 1.1.	Comparative Analysis of Conceptual Approaches to Treatment of the Essence of Conflict as an Economic Category.	7
------------	--	---

Chapter 2

Table 2.1.	Treatment of Causal Connections between Conflicts in Socio-economic Systems by the Existing Concepts.	14
Table 2.2.	Causal Connections of Conflicts in Socio-economic Systems..	16

Chapter 3

Table 3.1.	The Existing Narrow Classifications of Conflicts in Socio-economic Systems within Conceptual Approaches.. . .	22
Table 3.2.	The Offered Expanded Classification of Conflicts in Socio-economic Systems.	23

Chapter 13

Table 13.1.	Dynamics of Growth of Global GDP and Selected Indicators of the World Economy in 2007–2016..	121
Table 13.2.	Results of Regression Analysis of Dependence of the Selected Indicators of the World Economy on Growth of the World GDP in 2007–2016..	122

Chapter 14

Table 14.1.	Objective and Subjective Causes of Crisis as a Conflict of Economic System and the Corresponding Social Economic Indicators.	129
Table 14.2.	Dynamics of Values of the Indicators that Reflect Social and Economic Causes of Crisis of Economic System of Russia in 1999–2018.	130
Table 14.3.	Multiple Regression Dependence of Economic Growth of Russia’s Economic System on Indicators that Characterize Social and Economic Causes of Crisis In 1999–2018.	132

Chapter 15

Table 15.1.	Comparative Analysis of Conflict and Crisis of Socio-economic System.	141
-------------	---	-----

Chapter 16

Table 16.1. Social Effects of Crises of Economic Systems as Manifestations of Conflicts in Them. 150

Chapter 19

Table 19.1. Initial Data for Regression Analysis. 175

Table 19.2. Results of Regression Analysis of Dependence of the Index of Happiness on Growth Rate of GDP in Current Prices in 2008. 176

Table 19.3. Results of Regression Analysis of Dependence of Unemployment Rate on the Index of Economy Digitization in 2018. 177

Table 19.4. Results of Regression Analysis of Dependence of the Index of Happiness on the Unemployment Index in 2008. . . 178

Chapter 20

Table 20.1. Factors Affecting the Sustainability of the Development of the Regional Socio-economic System. 187

Chapter 23

Table 23.1. Values of the Index of Socio-economic Development and the Index of Ecological Effectiveness in Countries G7 and Countries of BRICS in 2018. 211

Table 23.2. Dynamics of GDP Per Capita in Current Prices in Countries G7 and Countries of BRICS in 2006–2022. 212

Table 23.3. Estimate Values of the Indicator of Sustainability and the Indicator of Stability in Countries G7 and Countries of BRICS. 214

Table 23.4. Characteristics of Regression Dependence of the Indicator of Stability (y) on the Indicator of Sustainability (x) in Countries G7 and Countries of BRICS. 215

Chapter 24

Table 24.1. Conceptual Approaches to Treatment of Stagnation of Socio-economic Systems. 221

Chapter 26

Table 26.1. Treatment of Phenomena and Processes that Emerge during Development of System from the Positions of the Theory of Systems and the Theory of Conflicts. 237

Chapter 29

Table 29.1. Innovational Territorial Clusters of the RF (2017)..	262
Table 29.2. Comparative Analysis of the Programs of Development of Innovational Territorial Clusters of Russia's Regions (2017)..	264
Table 29.3. Comparative Analysis of Methodological Approaches to Analysis of the Institutional Basis of Regional Clusters.	266
Table 29.4. Ranking of Target Directions of Regional Programs of Development of Innovational Territorial Clusters.	267

Chapter 30

Table 30.1. Indicators Reflecting Observation of the Principles of "Conflict-free" Development by a Socio-economic System.. . . .	279
Table 30.2. Indicators of the Course of the Crisis and the Indicators Reflecting Observation of the Principles of "Conflict-free" Development in Countries of the World in 2008..	280
Table 30.3. Results of Regression Analysis.	282

Chapter 31

Table 31.1. Methodological Recommendations and Criteria for Measuring "Conflict Character" of Socio-economic System.	289
Table 31.2. Measuring the "Conflict Character" of Socio-economic Systems of Countries of the World in 2008.	291

Chapter 36

Table 36.1. Results of Evaluation of Effectiveness of Development of "Conflict-Free" Socio-economic Systems of Turkey and Japan in 2018.	331
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Foreword

This book is focused on the notion of “conflict”, which is new for the economic theory. The authors analyze the essence and connection between this phenomenon and economic crisis, providing its meta-scientific substantiation on the basis of the theory of cycles, the theory of economic growth, and the theory of systems, supplement it with social sense, and develop the concept and practical recommendations for formation of “conflict-free” systems as landmarks for development of modern countries of the world.

This book is unique due to the fact that socio-economic systems are studied through the prism of conflict, not crisis. This allows taking into account not only economic causes and consequences of temporary failures in functioning and development of socio-economic systems but also social causes and consequences. This ensures deep analysis and better understanding of the essence and value of these failures.

Due to this competitive advantage – as compared to the existing publications in the sphere of socio-economic systems – the target audience of the book is very wide. It will be interesting for academic community, practicing experts, and national regulating bodies.

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Introduction

Elena G. Popkova

Crisis has been traditionally considered an inseparable component of the process of growth and development of economic systems, which led to its establishment as a phase of economic cycle. Scientific treatment of the essence and role of crisis in the development of economic systems is conducted within two conceptual approaches.

According to the first of them, crisis is a break in the “global race” of countries and possibility to reconsider the trajectory of economic development of separate national systems and the global economic system on the whole. Crises led to systemic modernization and optimization of the dominating scientific paradigm and economic policy of management of development of economic systems. Popularity of this approach reduced after the 2008 global economic crisis.

Thus, the attention of the global community of scholars, politicians, and experts was paid to the second conceptual approach, within which economic crisis is defined as a temporary failure in the work of a perfectly functioning system. Crisis slows down the process of economic growth and development, hindering the implementation of entrepreneurial and innovational potential and leading to reduction of living standards of the population.

This became a precondition for proclaiming a new course of development of modern national and economic systems and the global economic system, oriented at sustainability. At present, there are attempts in the sphere of formation to explore the theoretical basis of the concept of sustainable development of development of economic systems. At that, methodological aspects of measuring and managing sustainable development of systems are poorly studied, which is a restraining factor on the path of practical application of the concept of sustainable development of economic systems.

In this monograph, the authors study and solve the problem of development of a strong theoretical and methodological basis of the concept of sustainable development of economic systems, for which the low manifestation of anti-crisis development of economic systems – “conflict-free” character – is examined.

“Conflict-Free” Socio-economic Systems: Perspectives and Contradictions, 1–2

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This category is introduced by the authors of the monograph into scientific turn-over; its advantages as compared to the notion of “non-crisis” or “anti-crisis” development are substantiated – as they are connected to consideration of the economic and social causal connections of emergence of “conflicts” in economic systems. This allows for deep analysis and forecasting of their functioning and development.

PART I
THE THEORY OF CONFLICTS IN
SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

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Chapter 1

Conceptual Approaches to Treatment of the Essence of Conflict as an Economic Category

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Introduction

Socio-economic systems are unstable and are subject to conflicts due to certain reasons. First, these systems are complex and have many levels. They include a lot of economic subjects, each of which seeks its own interests. The social nature of economic subjects leads to their limited rationality, which complicates forecasting their behavior and managing them. Second, developing according to the market model, modern economic systems aim at intensive growth and are subject to constant changes.

These changes often conform to the interests of certain economic subjects and contradict the interests of others. Third, socio-economic systems are imperfect – despite multiple attempts at their optimization. Ideal models (including the model of market economy) of development of these systems are very difficult to be implemented in practice. This process becomes more complicated due to differentiation of socio-economic systems and complexity of models' adaptation to their peculiarities.

Due to the above reasons, conflicts are a normal phenomenon, which appears in socio-economic systems. However, the modern economic theory does not have a fundamental scientific paradigm of studying conflicts, which hinders their precise determination and does not allow developing a clear and unambiguous attitude toward economic conflicts (universal or differentiated depending on the classification of conflicts, which is also absent) and managing the conflicts depending on the goals and priorities of socio-economic systems.

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This problem is to be solved by this work, which is aimed at studying the essence of the conflict as an economic category through the prism of the existing conceptual approaches.

Materials and Method

The authors use the systemic approach for a comprehensive, structured, and dynamic study of socio-economic systems. Within this approach, the method of classification, with the help of which the existing conceptual approaches to treatment of the conflict as an economic category are determined and limited, and the method of comparative analysis, with the help of which the distinguished approaches are compared to each other, are used. The information and analytical basis of the research includes the works of international authors on the issues of conceptual study of the essence of conflict as an economic category.

Results

As a result of systematization of the existing scientific studies, devoted to conflicts in economy, we offer the authors' classification of conceptual approaches to treatment of the essence of conflict as an economic category, which, together with their comparative analysis, is given in [Table 1.1](#).

As is seen in [Table 1.1](#), we distinguished three conceptual approaches to studying the essence of conflict as an economic category. The first approach – inter-subject – is formed on the basis of the concept of state regulation of economy, the concept of international division of labor, and the concept of entrepreneurship. The cause of conflicts within this approach is contradiction of interests of economic subjects during their interaction. Within this approach, conflicts may arise at all levels of socio-economic systems:

- **Micro-level:** during interaction of entrepreneurial structures and consumers (between each other). It is expressed in the form of contractual opportunism – refusal from execution of terms of concluded contracts. This leads to aggravation of business climate (due to the absence of protection of contractual laws) and reduction of business activity in the economy. Conflict management is conducted through development and protection of contractual law.
- **Macro-level:** during interaction between entrepreneurial structures and population and the state. It is expressed in the form of violation of the law (non-observation of the set norms, tax evasion). This leads to the development of shadow economy. Conflict management is conducted through improvement of laws and control over their execution.
- **Global level:** during interaction of countries at the government level. It is expressed in the form of application of international sanctions. It leads to breaking of the global economic ties. Conflict management is conducted through the creation of international institutes for preventing and regulating the conflicts.

Table 1.1. Comparative Analysis of Conceptual Approaches to Treatment of the Essence of Conflict as an Economic Category.

Criteria of Comparison	Conceptual Approaches to Treatment of the Essence of Conflict					
	Inter-subject			Adaptive		Crisis
Concepts within the approach	Concept of state regulation of economy, concept of international division of labor, concept of entrepreneurship			Concept of innovations, concept of marketing, concept of social acceptance of changes		Concept of economic cycles, concept of economic growth, concept of economic crises
Generalized reason of conflicts	Contradiction of interests of economic subjects during their interaction			Reluctance of economic subjects to adapt to changes		Failure in socio-economic system
Level of emergence of conflicts	Micro-level	Macro-level	Global level	Micro-level	Macro-level	Micro-level, macro-level, global level
Manifestations of conflicts	Contractual opportunism	Violation of law	International sanctions	Opportunism of personnel	Social protest	Economic crisis
Influence of conflicts on socio-economic systems	Reduction of business activity	Development of shadow economy	Breaking of global economic ties	Decline of efficiency	Opposition to changes	Recession of economy, reduction of living standards
Generalized consequence of conflicts	Slowdown of rate of growth and development of socio-economic systems			Optimization of changes		Activation of innovative activities
Methods of conflict management	Development and protection of contractual law	Improvement and control over Execution Of Law	Creation of international institutes	Marketing of personnel	Support for social adaptation	Crisis management of economic systems

Source: Compiled by the authors.

General treatment of conflict within this approach is negative, as conflicts lead to slowdown of rate of growth and development of socio-economic systems. This approach is presented in the works by Distler, Stavrevska, and Vogel (2018), Martin-Shields and Bodanac (2018), Scholz-Wäckerle (2016), and Williams and Vorley (2017).

The second approach – adaptive – is formed on the basis of the concept of innovations, the concept of marketing, and the concept of social acceptance of changes. The cause of conflicts within this approach is reluctance (or impossibility) of economic subjects to adapt to current (or planned) changes. Within this approach, conflicts may arise at the following levels of the socio-economic systems:

- Micro-level: due to the absence of desire of personnel to accept the current changes (change of working conditions and wages). It is expressed in the form of personnel's opportunism, related to voluntary leave, negative attitude to work, and refusal or formal approach to execution of work responsibilities. It leads to reduction of efficiency. Conflict management is conducted through personnel marketing.
- Macro-level: due to reluctance of certain social categories or society on the whole to accept the current changes (growth of taxes, etc.). It is expressed in the form of social protest and leads to opposition to changes – small scale (exchange of negative modes, voting) or large scale (meetings, revolutions). Conflict management is conducted through support for social adaptation (information and consultation, psychological, and financial).

General treatment of conflict within this approach is positive, as conflicts allow determining drawbacks of changes and eliminating them, thus optimizing the changes. Representatives of this approach are Bogoviz, Ragulina, Alekseev, Lavrov, and Kletskova (2018a), Bogoviz, Ragulina, Alekseev, Anichkin, and Dobrosotsky (2018b), Bogoviz, Ragulina, and Sirotkina (2018c), and Popkova (2018).

The third approach – crisis – is formed on the basis of the concept of economic cycles, the concept of economic growth, and the concept of economic crises. The cause of conflicts within this approach is failure in socio-economic systems. Within this approach, conflicts may arise at all levels of socio-economic systems (micro-, macro-, and global levels). Conflict is expressed in the form of economic crisis. It leads to recession (reduction in the rate of economic growth) of economy and reduction of population's living standards. Conflict management is conducted through crisis management of economic systems (companies of regional, national, and global economies).

General treatment of conflict within this approach is positive, as conflicts allow determining drawbacks in the models of development of socio-economic systems and stimulate activation of innovative activities for overcoming these drawbacks. This approach is presented in the works by Popkova, Zolochesvskaya, Litvinova, and Zima (2017a) and Popkova, Lysak, Titarenko, Golikov, and Mordvintsev (2017b).