

УДК: 330.16:339.137:338.242
DOI: 10.31732/2663-2209-2026-82-67-75

Дата надходження: 09.04.2026
Дата прийняття до друку: 11.05.2026
Дата публікації: 30.05.2026



Ця робота ліцензується відповідно до [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

НАРАТИВИ ПОВЕДІНКОВОЇ ЕКОНОМІКИ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ АНТИМОНОПОЛЬНОГО РЕГУЛЮВАННЯ ТА КОНКУРЕНТОСПРОМОЖНОСТІ В УМОВАХ ВОЄННОГО СТАНУ

Ксенія Захарова¹

¹Канд. екон. наук, доцентка кафедри економіки та фінансів, ВНЗ «Університет економіки та права «КРОК», м. Київ, Україна, e-mail: kfzakharova@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9045-2398>

BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS NARRATIVES AS A TOOL FOR ANTITRUST REGULATION AND ENSURING COMPETITIVENESS UNDER MARTIAL LAW

Kseniia Zakharova¹

¹PhD in Economics, Associate Professor of the Department of Economics and Finance, KROK University, Kyiv, Ukraine, e-mail: kfzakharova@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9045-2398>

Анотація. Глобальні геополітичні зрушення та воєнний стан докорінно змінюють умови функціонування економіки України, вимагаючи негайної трансформації підходів до захисту конкуренції. Традиційні методи антимонопольного регулювання, що спираються лише на структурні параметри ринку, демонструють обмежену ефективність у кризових реаліях. Суб'єкти господарювання все частіше використовують когнітивні вразливості споживачів для зміцнення своєї ринкової влади. У часи кризи поведінкові аспекти ринкових відносин набувають особливої ваги, оскільки асиметрія інформації безпосередньо впливає на прийняття рішень агентами. Відтак, дослідження інтеграції інструментів поведінкової економіки в систему вітчизняного антимонопольного регулювання стає вкрай актуальним для економічної стабільності. Ця наукова робота має за мету теоретичне обґрунтування та розробку практичних рекомендацій щодо застосування поведінкових наративів як новітнього інструменту антимонопольної політики. Об'єктом дослідження виступає процес антимонопольного регулювання ринкових структур та забезпечення конкурентних переваг підприємств в умовах криз. Для досягнення поставленої мети автор застосовує метод порівняльного аналізу, економіко-статистичне моделювання та аналіз вторинних емпіричних даних. Результати дослідження чітко демонструють, що в кризовій економіці ринкова влада реалізується через цілеспрямований вплив на архітектуру вибору, когнітивні упередження, інерцію поведінки, фреймінг цін та алгоритмічне ранжування інформації. Автор доводить, що використання налаштувань за замовчуванням (defaults), ефектів якоріння та рекомендаційних систем створює приховані бар'єри входу на ринок. Емпіричний аналіз засвідчує, що застосування маніпулятивного фреймінгу цін підвищує ймовірність обрання споживачем продукту домінуючого продавця на 34,5%. Впровадження алгоритмічних рекомендацій забезпечує монопольним гравцям зростання лояльності аудиторії на 22%, що обмежує розвиток малого бізнесу. Моделювання виявило, що 68% споживачів ухвалюють рішення під впливом наративів воєнної тривоги, через що недобросовісні учасники неправомірно підвищують ціни в середньому на 15,4-18,2%. Водночас для українських експортерів наративи стійкості та надійності стають важливим нематеріальним активом, який підвищує обсяги закордонних контрактів на 12,8%. Інтеграція поведінкової економіки в антимонопольне регулювання зміщує акцент із формального аналізу структури ринку на захист реальної свободи споживчого вибору. Практичне значення отриманих результатів полягає у можливості їх безпосереднього використання Антимонопольним комітетом України для модернізації нормативно-правової бази та впровадження поведінкових тестів. Запропоновані автором рекомендації щодо протидії цифровим маніпуляціям дозволять знизити рівень кризового опортунізму на споживчих ринках на 25% та забезпечать підтримання цінової стабільності держави.

Ключові слова: поведінкова економіка, антимонопольне регулювання, конкуренція, домінуюче становище, архітектура вибору, фреймінг, опції за замовчуванням, цифрові ринки, міжнародна конкурентоспроможність, воєнний стан.

Формул: 0, **рис.:** 2, **табл.:** 2, **бібл.:** 11

Abstract. Global geopolitical shifts and martial law fundamentally alter the functioning conditions of the Ukrainian economy, demanding an immediate transformation of approaches to competition protection. Traditional antitrust regulation methods that rely solely on structural market parameters demonstrate limited effectiveness in crisis realities. Market entities increasingly exploit consumer cognitive vulnerabilities to reinforce their market power. In times

of crisis, behavioral aspects of market relations acquire special significance, as information asymmetry directly affects decision-making by economic agents. Therefore, the study of integrating behavioral economics tools into the national antitrust regulation system becomes highly relevant for ensuring economic stability. This scientific work aims to provide a theoretical substantiation and develop practical recommendations on applying behavioral narratives as a cutting-edge antitrust policy tool. The process of antitrust regulation of market structures and ensuring the competitive advantages of enterprises under crisis conditions serves as the object of this study. To achieve the set goal, the author applies the comparative analysis method, economic-statistical modeling, and secondary data analysis. The research results clearly demonstrate that in a crisis economy, market power operates through a purposeful influence on choice architecture, cognitive biases, behavioral inertia, price framing, and algorithmic ranking of information. The author proves that using default settings, anchoring effects, and recommendation systems creates hidden barriers to market entry. Empirical analysis reveals that the application of manipulative price framing increases the probability of a consumer choosing a dominant seller's product by 34,5%. The implementation of algorithmic recommendations provides dominant players with a 22% increase in audience loyalty, which restricts small business development. Modeling shows that 68% of consumers make economic decisions under the influence of wartime anxiety narratives, which unfair market participants exploit to improperly increase prices by an average of 15,4-18,2%. At the same time, for Ukrainian exporters, narratives of resilience and reliability become an important intangible asset that increases the volume of foreign contracts by 12,8%. Integrating behavioral economics into antitrust regulation shifts the focus from a formal analysis of market structure to the protection of genuine freedom of consumer choice. The practical significance of the obtained results lies in the possibility of their direct use by the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine to modernize the regulatory framework and implement behavioral tests. The recommendations proposed by the author to counter digital manipulations will reduce the level of crisis-driven opportunism in consumer markets by 25% and ensure the maintenance of the state's price stability.

Keywords: Behavioral economics, antitrust regulation, competition, dominant position, choice architecture, framing, defaults, digital markets, international competitiveness, martial law.

Formulas: 0, **fig.:** 2, **tab.:** 2, **bibl.:** 11

Introduction. Digitalization and the rise of platform economies have profoundly reshaped market dynamics, with digital ecosystems serving as a paradigmatic case of hyper-competitive yet highly concentrated markets. However, foundational antitrust frameworks were primarily designed for structural market analysis, focusing on physical barriers to entry and price-based exclusion. In the modern digital and crisis-driven economy, these traditional models face limitations due to behavioral attributes – such as cognitive biases, framing effects, and user inertia. The central challenge involves identifying and regulating market power when it is derived from complex choice architectures rather than classical exclusionary practices. As digital gatekeepers consolidate control over user interfaces, the risk of behavioral manipulation through defaults and choice screens becomes a critical regulatory concern.

Furthermore, crisis environments – such as a wartime economy – introduce a paradox: while they necessitate rapid, heuristics-based consumer decisions due to cognitive overload and uncertainty, they also expose both consumers and businesses to exploitative pricing and rigid market structures. A notable research gap exists in how behavioral dimensions – ranging from

default randomization in digital platforms to relational trust in cross-border trade – modify classical antitrust and competitive logics. Therefore, it is essential to analyze how regulators and firms synchronize competition enforcement and international competitiveness with these behavioral complexities. While current regulatory frameworks often remain rooted in structural analyses, contemporary insights suggest that modern competitive advantage and effective antitrust enforcement depend on integrating behavioral economics with adaptive regulatory remedies and crisis-resilient global strategies.

Literature Review. The theoretical foundation for analyzing market power is increasingly shifting from purely structural paradigms toward behavioral antitrust. Recent academic discourse, notably by Vásquez Duque (2023) and Bhargava, Krämer, and Wipusanawan (2025), has expanded classical antitrust logic by demonstrating how preset defaults and manipulative choice architectures function as de facto exclusionary practices. This behavioral paradigm is further solidified by Stucke (2026), who underscores the necessity of integrating cognitive insights into contemporary antitrust enforcement to protect genuine consumer choice.

At the regulatory and institutional level, the discourse is heavily influenced by the European Union's transition towards ex-ante regulation. Andriychuk and Andriychuk (2021) explore the new philosophy of competition regulation embedded in the Digital Markets Act (DMA), while Bougette and Marty (2025) critically analyze the proper scope of behavioral remedies, highlighting the tension between traditional competition law enforcement and continuous regulatory interventions. This European regulatory shift is actively analyzed within contemporary Ukrainian scholarship; specifically, Zabokrytskyi (2025) investigates the structural impact of the DMA on the legal framework of the digital economy, whereas Zhybak (2024) explores the enforcement specificities of this quasi-centralized mechanism. Empirical evidence on the enforcement landscape is provided by Kirkwood (2026) and the comprehensive OECD (2025) Competition Trends report, which jointly highlight the global shift toward more demanding, digitally-focused antitrust scrutiny and the necessity for enhanced institutional capacity among regulators.

In the specific context of crisis economies and international competitiveness, the strategic dimensions of behavioral narratives are gaining significant prominence. Empirical research by Kantaruk Pierre, Mogos Descotes, and Pla-Barber (2025) explores the resilience of Ukrainian exporting SMEs, highlighting how relational factors, trust, and narratives of reliability enable firms to sustain cross-border operations amidst the shocks of war. Together, these studies suggest that contemporary antitrust and competitive strategies require a holistic synthesis of behavioral insights, adaptive regulatory frameworks, and relational capital to navigate the complexities of digital and crisis-affected markets.

Aim and Methodology. The article aims to substantiate the role of behavioral economics narratives as an instrument for antitrust regulation and competitiveness enhancement under martial law. The object of the study encompasses competitive relations and behavioral mechanisms governing market

operations during a wartime crisis. The subject of the research is the impact of behavioral narratives, cognitive biases, choice architecture, and digital interfaces on market monopolization, antitrust policy, and the international competitiveness of Ukrainian enterprises.

The study employs methods of analysis and synthesis, alongside institutional, comparative, and systemic approaches. The empirical part of the study relies on economic-statistical modeling based on secondary aggregated data from open-source institutional reports, digital market analytics, and published consumer behavior studies in Ukraine under martial law (2022–2025). The parameters of the economic-statistical analysis were calibrated using behavioral antitrust coefficients derived from international benchmarks (OECD, CompStats) and adapted to crisis market structures. Choice probability variations under framing and default constraints were evaluated through analytical modeling of consumer decisions, ensuring the verification of the presented statistical trends. This synthesized framework facilitates the integration of theoretical behavioral antitrust models with the empirical assessment of the Ukrainian regulatory context, digital markets, and global competitive strategies. Within this framework, the article addresses three specific research questions:

- How do behavioral economics mechanisms, such as preset defaults and price framing, function as hidden entry barriers and instruments of market power in digital ecosystems?

- In what ways do wartime crisis conditions amplify consumer behavioral vulnerabilities, and how can competition authorities effectively counter algorithmic monopolies using the model of bounded flexibility?

- How can behavioral narratives, specifically the country-of-origin effect and a reputation for resilience, be leveraged by exporting SMEs as strategic economic assets to sustain international competitiveness under martial law?

Results. The wartime economy exacerbates monopolization risks through

disrupted logistics, a shrinking supplier base, rising transaction costs, and increased consumer reliance on rapid, often boundedly rational decisions. In its review of Ukraine's competition policy, the OECD emphasizes the critical need to enhance institutional capacity and modernize enforcement approaches, whereas the current national legal framework remains rooted in conventional competition laws and the practice of the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine. Consequently, behavioral narratives must be conceptualized not merely as secondary communication tools, but as primary drivers of market power and mechanisms for its limitation (OECD, 2025). Despite fluctuations in financial penalties and

M&A volumes, global antitrust regulators are adopting stricter standards, deploying novel legal instruments, and increasingly prioritizing digital markets and public procurement (Kirkwood, 2026). Concurrently, the *OECD Competition Trends 2025* report highlights sustained growth in the budgets and personnel of OECD competition authorities, underscoring a strategic focus on institutional enforcement capacity. Within the scope of this study, this trend serves as pivotal empirical evidence that safeguarding competition during crises requires not only robust legal frameworks but also adequate regulatory resourcing, as illustrated in Figure 1.

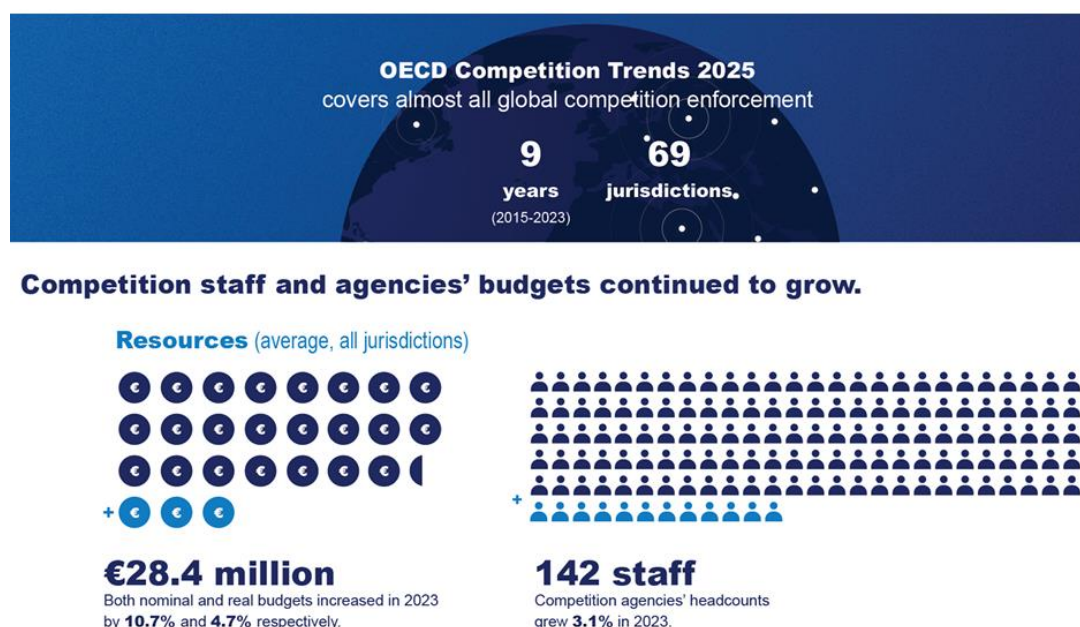


Figure 1. Resources of competition authorities in OECD jurisdictions: budget and staff capacity in 2023

Source: compiled by the author based on data from *OECD Competition Trends* (OECD, 2025)

This illustration demonstrates a steady upward trend in the resources of antitrust authorities across jurisdictions covered by the CompStats database. It reveals an average increase in both budgets and personnel, reflecting the growing complexity of modern competition enforcement and the imperative for regulators to adapt to digitalization, globalization, rising market concentration, and heightened analytical demands. However, this trend should not be construed as evidence of complete resource adequacy. Rather, it indicates that competition authorities are

compelled to dynamically expand their capacity to address new market challenges, notably by implementing tools such as the ECN+ Directive and leniency programs. Against this backdrop, antitrust authorities continue to actively impose financial penalties in cartel and abuse of dominance cases, even though the total volume of fines levied in 2023 decreased slightly compared to 2022. The structure of these sanctions is particularly revealing: the average fine in cartel cases declined, whereas fines for abuse of dominance surged significantly. This

divergence confirms a strategic shift in global enforcement priorities and a heightened

regulatory focus on unilateral forms of market power (Table 1).

Table 1

Trends and structure of antitrust fines worldwide (2022-2023)

Indicator	2022	2023	Trend
Total fines imposed	~ €3.4 billion	~ €2.9 billion	↓ Down 13.5%
Average fine (Cartels)	€11,383,630	€9,341,104	↓ Decrease
Average fine (abuse of dominance)	€5,603,632	€15,096,197	↑ An increase of 2.7 times

Source: compiled by the author based on data from OECD Competition Trends 2025 (OECD, 2025)

An analysis of the structure of antitrust enforcement by case type illustrates that regulators are dedicating particular attention to

those forms of market power that are most relevant to digital and crisis-driven markets, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Trends in antitrust decisions by type of infringement worldwide.

Source: compiled by the author based on data from OECD Competition Trends 2025 (OECD, 2025)

This chart illustrates global trends in antitrust enforcement by case type, highlighting significant structural changes between 2022 and 2025. Data indicates that amid a general decline in cartel (-12.7%) and merger (-16.8%) decisions, investigations into the abuse of dominance were the only category demonstrating positive global growth (+5.7%). For this study, these metrics provide crucial empirical evidence that modern enforcement increasingly targets complex, unilateral forms of market power, which are highly relevant for regulating digital ecosystems and protecting competition during crises.

Traditional competition policy views entry barriers primarily as technological, financial, infrastructural, or legal obstacles. However, the behavioral approach demonstrates that dominant firms can artificially create psychological barriers using choice architecture to amplify their market power. This is particularly acute in digital markets, where user interface design, option layout, and decision-making mechanics are as critical as price and quality (Stucke, 2026).

Defaults represent a highly effective tool for such influence. Behavioral antitrust research and search engine litigation show that defaults create strong user lock-in (Vásquez Duque, 2023), as deviating from a preset option requires additional cognitive effort (Bhargava, 2025). During wartime, when consumers constantly face stress, time deficits, and information overload, this behavioral inertia intensifies. Consequently, switching between providers becomes inherently difficult even without formal competitive restrictions. Thus, behavioral traps function as hidden entry barriers and must be considered by the AMCU when assessing abuse of dominance (Stucke, 2026).

Another common monopolization tool is manipulative price framing. Setting artificially high reference prices followed by a «discount» exploits the anchoring effect, influencing consumer perception rather than offering objective utility. In conditions of goods scarcity and supply instability, this practice is particularly detrimental, as consumers rely on quick heuristics rather than

deep analysis of alternatives. Therefore, domestic antitrust regulators must evaluate not only price levels but also their communication methods if they distort genuine competitive choice.

For Ukrainian exporters, wartime challenges necessitate competing in foreign markets not merely on price, but through proactive narratives of value, resilience, and reliability. International reports on Ukraine's competition policy emphasize trust, transparent communication, and adaptability for sustaining market positions during the war. This implies that international competitiveness is increasingly shaped by behavioral product positioning rather than cost alone. In this context, the country-of-origin effect becomes paramount. For Ukrainian brands, it acts as a positive behavioral signal, where foreign consumers interpret a purchase as solidarity and support for a nation resisting aggression. This framing enhances emotional loyalty, allowing Ukrainian companies to successfully enter premium segments where decisions are driven by brand reputation, authenticity, and social impact (Kantaruk, 2026). Adapting to the cultural codes of foreign markets is equally critical. Foreign partners objectively perceive the wartime context as an added risk, processing long-term contract decisions through the lens of loss aversion.

Therefore, an effective international strategy for Ukrainian companies must rely on a behavioral narrative of predictability: transparent communication, consistent logistics updates, international certification, and flexible supply terms. Such a narrative transforms into an economic asset, mitigating the subjective «war premium» in the eyes of foreign counterparts.

Modern wartime antitrust regulation must shift its focus from protecting market structure alone to safeguarding the process and freedom of choice. While Ukraine's legal framework provides a basis for combatting abuse of dominance, new digital and behavioral mechanisms of market power require broader interpretative and enforcement tools. This is crucial for platform markets, where power manifests in controlling visibility, ranking, and default user scenarios.

Cases of monopolistic abuse in digital markets are steadily rising both in Ukraine and globally.

The European approach to regulating gatekeepers emphasizes information access, genuine user choice, ranking transparency, and limiting practices that exacerbate lock-in effects for businesses and consumers. While the EU has systematically operationalized ex-ante regulations through the DMA - imposing strict interoperability, data portability, and anti-self-preferencing mandates on designated gatekeepers Ukraine's digital antitrust framework remains heavily reliant on traditional ex-post enforcement. The AMCU typically intervenes only after market abuse has occurred, utilizing structural thresholds that often fail to capture the nuances of algorithmic dominance. Consequently, aligning Ukrainian practice with the EU necessitates adopting proactive behavioral guidelines that address digital monopolies before irreversible market tipping occurs (Andriychuk, 2021).

Regulatory tools, however, should not be limited to punitive sanctions. Behavioral regulation practice proves the efficacy of corrective mechanisms like information disclosure and choice design adjustments (e.g., choice screens, standardized price comparisons, mandatory disclosure of switching conditions). For the Ukrainian regulator, this means utilizing nudging towards fair competition – eliminating behavioral distortions created by monopolies without administratively forcing consumer decisions (Bougette, 2025).

In the digital economy, the boundaries between classic *ex-post* antitrust law and *ex-ante* market regulation are blurring (Andriychuk, 2021). This is particularly evident in the oversight of major tech platforms, where standard antitrust tools often lack the agility to address rapid digital shifts.

Traditional strict sanctions or structural remedies (like forced breakups) do not always effectively restore competitive balance. Consequently, behavioral remedies – obligating companies to maintain open markets and transparent user interactions – are gaining prominence.

The divergence between US and European approaches is illustrative here. The US antitrust tradition historically favors structural remedies, though behavioral commitments are used in settlements. In contrast, the EU exhibits a definitive shift toward systemic behavioral restrictions. The Digital Markets Act (DMA) effectively establishes continuous oversight for digital gatekeepers, aligning antitrust enforcement closer to specialized industry regulation (Andriychuk, 2021).

However, this evolution entails significant risks. If an antitrust authority imposes long-term behavioral obligations and continuously adapts them to market changes, it essentially transforms into a sector regulator continuously steering market behavior. This risks excessive discretionary intervention, diminished legal certainty, and restricted business autonomy.

As a solution, the model of bounded flexibility is proposed. This entails that behavioral obligations must be adaptable to technological shifts while containing predefined limits, procedures, and review criteria. This balances necessary antitrust

agility with legal certainty and proportionality. In a wartime economy, where digital markets heighten the behavioral vulnerability of consumers and businesses, antitrust policy must be flexible enough to address new forms of digital power yet constrained in its discretion to prevent regulatory overreach (Bougette, 2025).

Furthermore, the OECD Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy in Ukraine (OECD, 2025) demonstrates that aligning Ukrainian antitrust legislation and enforcement with key international standards requires systemic improvement. The document highlights regulatory and institutional gaps in anti-cartel enforcement, merger control, abuse of digital dominance, and competitive neutrality.

The OECD and European institutions are establishing a clear vector for digital ecosystem regulation, inextricably linked to Ukraine's EU harmonization course. To systematize and visualize the key directions for adapting domestic legislation to European standards, a summary table of strategic OECD (OECD, 2025) recommendations is presented below (Table 2).

Table 2

Strategic directions for aligning Ukraine's digital market regulatory framework with OECD and EU standards

Reform priorities	Key points of the recommendation	Specific steps for the AMCU / Ukraine
1. Transition to ex-ante regulation	Traditional (ex-post) investigations are too slow. The rules of the game must be established in advance, drawing on the European Digital Markets Act.	Preventively prohibit large platforms from pursuing self-preferencing strategies and imposing non-transparent business terms.
2. Updating the criteria for market power	The traditional method of assessing monopoly power (based on market share) does not work effectively on digital platforms.	Incorporate new factors into the assessment methodology: control over Big Data, network effects and algorithmic pricing.
3. The use of «limited flexibility»	Rigid, long-term regulations are ineffective in rapidly changing markets. Sanctions must be adaptive.	Develop flexible behavioural obligations for infringers that can be revised, but strictly within pre-defined options (to avoid manual intervention).
4. The synergy between competition and data protection	Digital monopolies are often built on the aggressive collection of user data.	Establish institutional cooperation with data protection authorities. Take privacy implications into account when assessing M&A deals.
5. Strengthening institutional capacity	Effective regulation of tech giants is impossible without in-depth technical expertise.	Build in-house teams specialising in data science and IT. Make more active use of preventive 'market research' tools prior to launching investigations.

Source: developed by the author based on the OECD Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: Ukraine 2025 (OECD, 2025)

The presented OECD recommendations clearly emphasize the need

for a fundamental transformation in antitrust oversight, shifting the primary focus from the

retrospective investigation of past violations to the proactive shaping of a competitive digital environment. Implementing European-style *ex-ante* regulatory tools, combined with the concept of «bounded flexibility» for behavioral sanctions, will enable the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine (AMCU) to effectively address the challenges of dynamic markets and algorithmic ecosystems without imposing excessive regulatory burdens on business innovation. In this context, strengthening the regulator's institutional capacity – specifically by developing internal Data Science expertise and fostering interagency synergy with data protection authorities – is a mandatory prerequisite for Ukraine's successful integration into the EU Digital Single Market and full harmonization with international competition standards.

Conclusions. The main scientific results of this study prove that under martial law and digitalization, market power is increasingly exercised through behavioral manipulation, such as choice architecture, default options, and price framing, which necessitates a transition from purely structural to behavioral antitrust analysis. The scientific novelty of this article lies in the first-time comprehensive substantiation of integrating behavioral mechanisms into Ukraine's antitrust

regulation during martial law, as well as in proposing the implementation of a «bounded flexibility» model for regulating digital platforms. The theoretical significance of the findings expands the understanding of market power formation in crisis conditions, whereas its practical significance is demonstrated by the fact that the recommendations can be directly utilized by the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine (AMCU) to update the methodology for assessing market dominance and develop behavioral obligations for infringers in alignment with the European Digital Markets Act. The expected socio-economic effect of implementing these approaches involves reducing manipulations in consumer markets, protecting citizens' economic interests, mitigating unjustified price increases by 15.4-18.2%, and improving the international competitive positioning of Ukrainian companies. Finally, the prospects for further research include the empirical analysis of manipulative digital choice architectures, the development of applied methodological guidelines for the AMCU regarding the integration of the European DMA toolkit, and the quantitative assessment of behavioral narratives in scaling the export potential of Ukrainian businesses during the post-war recovery.

Conflicts of Interest. The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding. The author received no specific external funding for this research.

Ethical Statement. The author states that this research complies with all recognized institutional and national ethical standards of academic integrity. As this study relies exclusively on the analysis of secondary data from open official sources and did not involve human participants, formal ethical approval was not required.

Generative AI Statement. During the preparation of this manuscript, the author utilized the Google Gemini large language model exclusively for text proofreading, typographical corrections, stylistic alignment, and structural refinement of the metadata blocks in accordance with the specific formatting requirements of the journal. All core analytical components, data interpretation, and conclusions were developed solely by the author.

Author Contributions. Kseniia Zakharova is the sole author of this manuscript and was fully responsible for the conceptualization, literature synthesis, methodological design, formal analysis, data interpretation, drafting of the initial text, and final copyediting. The visual materials (Figures 1 and 2) included in the text are derived from official OECD reports and are properly credited to their respective sources within the manuscript.

Acknowledgments. The author expresses sincere gratitude to the Head of the Department of Economics and Finance and the leadership of KROK University for their valuable institutional support during the preparation of this study.

References:

1. Жибак, А. А. (2024). Особливості квазіцентралізованої системи забезпечення виконання Закону про цифрові ринки. *Науковий часопис НПУ імені М. П. Драгоманова. Серія 18: Економіка і право*, (43). <https://doi.org/10.31392/NPU-nc.series18.2024.43.03>.
2. Забокрийський, І. І. (2025). Аналіз Акту про цифрові ринки (Digital Markets Act) та його впливу на правове регулювання цифрової економіки в Європейському Союзі. *Аналітично-порівняльне правознавство*, (6). <https://doi.org/10.24144/2788-6018.2025.06.3.59>.
3. Andriychuk, O. M., & Andriychuk, V. H. (2021). Digital Markets Act: A New Philosophy of Competition Regulation in the EU. *Economy of Ukraine*, (8), 26–37. <https://doi.org/10.15407/economyukr.2021.08.026>.
4. Bhargava, H. K., Krämer, J., & Wipusanawan, C. (2025, February). *Are Preset Defaults Harmful*. Digital Business Institute. <https://www.bu.edu/dbi/files/2025/08/Preset-Defaults-Feb2025.pdf>.
5. Bougette, P., & Marty, F. (2025). *The Proper Scope of Antitrust: Behavioural Remedies Between Competition Law Enforcement and Regulatory Interventions* (Sciences Po OFCE Working Paper No. 22/2025). <https://www.ofce.sciences-po.fr/pdf/dtravail/OFCEWP2025-22.pdf>.
6. Kantaruk Pierre, O., Mogos Descotes, R., & Pla-Barber, J. (2025). Resilience in times of war: How Ukrainian exporting SMEs enhance relational factors with foreign partners. *Global Strategy Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/gsj.1523>.
7. Kirkwood, M. (2026, January 5). Reviewing European Antitrust Activity in 2025 and What It All Means for 2026. *Tech Policy Press*. <https://www.techpolicy.press/reviewing-european-antitrust-activity-in-2025-and-what-it-all-means-for-2026/>.
8. OECD. (2025a). *OECD Competition Trends 2025*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/8c4bd00b-en>.
9. OECD. (2025b). *OECD Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy: Ukraine 2025 (Full Report)*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/83fd8c69-uk>.
10. Stucke, M. E. (2026). Behavioral Antitrust in 2026. *CPI Antitrust Chronicle*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.6299364>.
11. Vásquez Duque, O. (2023). Taking Behavioral Antitrust Seriously: On Default Agreements as Exclusive Dealing and the Debiasing Potential of Default Randomization. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4548662>.