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## Dynamics of Socio-Cultural Indicators of Labor Competitiveness of the Population of a Large Siberian Region (2010–2016)\*



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**Abstract.** The goal of the paper is to study the dynamics of competitiveness of the population in one of the large Siberian regions (on the materials of Krasnoyarsk Krai). We use the socio-cultural approach (RAS Corresponding Member N.I. Lapin) and appropriate methodological tools in the research. Traditional and market motivation of people and their labor preferences are analyzed for the first time as socio-cultural indicators of competitiveness. Labor preferences act in the form of orientation toward working at enterprises (organizations) belonging to various forms of ownership. We show that in the majority of foreign economic studies, competitiveness is considered as the quality and ability to achieve one's own goals at the international level with one's own products and services. Many publications are devoted to comparative studies of competitiveness at the level of enterprises (firms). Interdisciplinary phenomena such as human capital and education are also studied in this context. The paper reveals the content and importance of international comparative studies of competitiveness and the formation of this phenomenon from the standpoint of management theory and psychology, among various categories of young people, as well. The article is based on the data of mass surveys of the region's residents through formalized interviews conducted in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016. We show that Krasnoyarsk Krai experienced a slight

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weakening of traditional labor attitudes and preferences of the population. But they have always occupied the most important position in the mass consciousness of the respondents. We found out that there is a slight increase in the proportion of residents with market labor orientation and preferences. We conclude that the competitiveness of the region's population decreases in conditions of market relations formed in the Russian society. We prove it is necessary to implement a comparative approach to studying the features of competitiveness of population of various Russian territories with use of the "Socio-cultural portrait of the region" technique. We propose to carry out further analysis of people's competitiveness in the regions broken down by social groups and age cohorts and to supplement the set of tools with the indicators used in several international comparative studies.

**Key words:** region, labor motivation, labor preferences, competitiveness, socio-cultural approach.

### Introduction

The purpose for the research is to analyze the changes in the population's competitiveness in a large Siberian region (case study of Krasnoyarsk Krai). The novelty of the implemented approach lies in the analysis of labor motivation and labor preferences of the population as competitiveness indicators. Labor preferences are a rather multi-layered concept which includes people's orientations regarding different aspects of labor activity. In this work we consider the respondents' preferences concerning their work at the enterprises of this or that type of ownership structure. **The relevance** of the research is associated with the complexity and inconsistency of the process of formation of market labor preferences and people's motivation in modern transitive Russian society with pronounced regional perspective. **The problem** is expressed in the fact that this process does not clearly increase the employees' market motivation and their choice of enterprises of private ownership structure as a preferred place of employment. Nevertheless, it serves as an important socio-cultural background for the development of population's labor competitiveness in the market economy. It is obvious that the socio-cultural phenomena of an individual competitive in the labor sphere in the domestic market economy is the motivation

to achieve success in it, on the one hand, and their choice of a production environment that would allow the most complete realization of their orientations.

It is logical to assume that with the development of market relations both in the regions and in Russia as a whole, the importance of the socio-cultural phenomena representing these relations should grow in people's mass consciousness. In our opinion, people who have market labor motivation and focus on employment at non-state enterprises are more competitive amid the socio-cultural situation in Russia.

The issue of labor preferences and population's motivation was widely studied in Russian sociology back in the Soviet period. However, it generated the researchers' special interest at the end of the previous century [1]. In our opinion, the regional aspects of this issue are particularly important for such analysis; they were analyzed mainly in works by L.A. Belyaev, as well as E.V. Andrianov, V.A. Davydenko, G.P. Bessokirnaya, E.V. Kargapolov [2; 3; 4; 5] and several other researchers. In particular, we should pay attention to a major publication analyzing the employees' labor motives amid the crisis situation in the financial-economic system of our country in the late 2000-s. Its authors revealed the prevalence of the "Soviet

patterns of behavior” in the people’s system of labor values in the Tyumen Oblast [3].

An important element of the research novelty of this work is its territorial aspect. It focuses on Krasnoyarsk Krai as one of the most developed modern industrial regions in Siberia. We emphasize that modern foreign literature does not analyze these phenomena in the context of Siberian regions. The financial and economic crisis and the ways to overcome it coinciding with the contradictory modernization processes in our country are particularly relevant for studying the performance of these phenomena. Particular attention should be paid to lack of domestic scientific publications which would use these indicators to analyze the population’s competitiveness in the region.

#### **Knowledge coverage, existing methodological and technical approaches**

In modern foreign sociology and related sciences the analysis of competitiveness has a long tradition whose thorough analysis goes beyond the scope of our research. It is hard to disagree with the opinion of P. Bhawsar and U. Chattopadhyay that “competitiveness has become a buzzword like globalization. This has attracted the attention of researchers, governments and business organizations because of its close connection with the success of a company” [6, p. 665]. The authors analyze modern ideas about competitiveness, traditional and modern models of its study and measurement; offer new research areas of this phenomenon, which, in our opinion, can be effectively used in the Russian sociology.

In our opinion, of particular interest is the study whose authors carried out a qualitative content analysis of the text material of literature on competitiveness using special software for quality data analysis (QDAS) as a research tool. They examined 34 definitions of compe-

titiveness (1998–2013) with separate 837 words used to describe the concept. The authors came to the conclusion that the “term “competitiveness” is equally related to the corporate level of the economy, as well as the country or nation as a whole. Specific sector, industry and regional competitiveness are much less common in definitions. It is obvious that “competitiveness” is a quality and ability to achieve something at the international, global level with one’s own products and services” [7, p. 379]. Analysis of publications on international competitiveness in the context of the economic theory indicates that in recent years interdisciplinary phenomena such as education and human capital have been repeatedly appealed to [8].

In addition to works on economic topics, most foreign publications devoted to empirical research devoted to competitiveness consider its multiplying factors from the standpoint of management psychology and management based on comparative research, as well as the study of individual organizations and spheres of activity. Among them, an important place belongs to analysis of factors in regional and national culture. For example, R. Takeuchi et al. considered cross-level (individual and orientation) effects of the influence of high-performance working systems on the employees’ relations in 76 Japanese institutions (representing the total of 56 companies) [9]. Similarly, H. Peretz and Y. Fried (2012) analyzed the impact of cultural differences in 21 countries on performance appraisal and identification of the employees’ competitiveness [10].

In our view, the prevalence of such studies is largely associated with the established foreign approach according to which the socio-cultural factors participate in the economic process at the level of individual organizations and the negative processes occurring within them

can also have an impact on the whole society. Therefore, socio-economic management in a competitive society begins with the analysis of management models. Its objective is to determine which characteristics yield the best results at the economic and social levels [11].

In the context of the topic under study, of particular interest are major national and international projects on competitiveness and its formation, primarily among social groups of young people, implemented in a number of countries around the world. In particular, special attention should be paid to the project “The system of indicators of youth competitiveness in Hong Kong” which was launched in 2011 for a four-year period. This project analyzed the concept of “youth competitiveness” in detail and studies the competitiveness of different categories of students. The research group, having analyzed more than 100 publications on this issue, identified 14 elements of the category “youth competitiveness”: “abilities”, “team spirit”, “communication skills”, “integrity”, “civic awareness”, “sustainability”, “emotions”, “work experience”, “employment structure”, “education system”, “personnel policy”, “internal competitiveness”, “management”, and “social system” [12].

Another project was implemented by the European Commission – “Erasmus + Competitive European Youth” – in 2015. The study covers young people aged 14–18 receiving education in ICT and project management and living in different European countries: Spain, Hungary, Cyprus and Lithuania [13].

“The Programme for International Student Assessment” (PISA) includes a “bank” of questions on students’ cognitive abilities and competencies. It tests the focus on competition among school youth in a comparative inter-country perspective [14].

However, these works, as a rule, do not cover the actual sociological and socio-cultural problems; which, in our opinion, creates one of the serious problem areas in study of this phenomenon.

In modern domestic science, competitiveness also has different interpretations depending on both subject area (sociology, psychology, economics, management theory) and the level of the competition subject under analysis, for example: individual – organization – sector – region – state. The population’s competitiveness is considered mainly in two aspects. A significant number of studies from the standpoint of economics and management is devoted to the research of labor resources competitiveness and ways to improve it, employees of an enterprise (organization), residents of the region or other social entity or territory as a whole [15; 16; 17; 18; 19]. For example, the study of competitiveness of regions of the Siberian Federal district puts an emphasis on economic, social and environmental competitiveness [20, p. 136]. It seems that the number of types of competitiveness is much greater than that indicated by researchers, but this issue is beyond the scope of our research. It is important that only statistical indicators are usually used for analysis, yet it seems to be clearly insufficient to study competitiveness. Moreover, the population of the territory as the most important social subject of competitiveness is left “behind brackets”.

A slight exception is the study of personnel competitiveness of organizations in the framework of management, which also applies socio-psychological and psychological techniques. From the point of view of sociology, psychology and pedagogics, competitiveness is studied through survey and test methods. Such studies are mainly aimed at improving the

training of competitive specialists in educational institutions and analyzing the competitiveness of different categories of young people [21; 22; 23].

The underdeveloped aspect of the issue is the relations between labor motivation and employees' competitiveness; a positive exception, in our opinion, is the work by T.G. Ozernikova [24]. In particular, the author states that "a high level of motivation of internal and instrumental types characterizes the development of the social component of competitiveness and, consequently, a higher overall level of competitiveness" [24, p. 73]. However, the sociological analysis of the population's labor preferences as socio-cultural indicators of its labor competitiveness still remains beyond the scope of sociological research.

The methodological and technical approaches have been covered in various publications devoted to the socio-cultural processes in the regions carried out under the program "Problems of socio-cultural evolution in Russia and its regions" (supervisor N.I. Lapin) using the standard methodology "The socio-cultural image of a region" [2; 25; 26; 27] and others. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize that there are no attempts to analyze the phenomena of labor preferences in the context of population's competitiveness in a region, which is rather relevant amid the current socio-cultural situation in Russia.

Taking into account the specific features of the applied approach, competitiveness in general can be considered as an integral characteristic expressing an individual's ability to compete in the labor market, having a complex hierarchical structure, and arising from various socio-cultural factors. Labor preferences are an important element of

its structure. At the same time, they serve as determining socio-cultural factors.

We put forward a **hypothesis** according to which the share of respondents with market labor motivation and focus on employment at private enterprises in Krasnoyarsk Krai from 2010 to 2016. If it is confirmed, we can talk about the upward trend in population's competitiveness in the region in the existing socio-economic conditions.

#### **Research methods**

The studies researched in the present paper are based on the Standard program and methodology "Socio-cultural image of a region" by the Center for Socio-cultural Changes at Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (TsISI IF RAS) [26]. According to this methodology, "population surveys were carried out by means of a formalized interview at the respondents' place of residence by a stratified, multi-stage, zoned quota sample represented by sex, age and level of education, random at the stage of respondents selection. The sample representativeness is ensured by observance of proportions between the population living in various types of settlements (districts of a large city, medium and small towns and rural settlements), the age and education structure of the adult population of Krasnoyarsk Krai". The survey covered a total of 28 settlements in the region [27, p.5]. The article is based on data obtained in the course of studies conducted in 2010 (n = 1000 respondents), 2012 (n = 1300), 2014 (n = 1000), and 2016 (n = 1000). The first three of them were implemented in the context of projects supported by the Russian Foundation for Humanities (RGNF), the fourth was proactive: its tools included a number of questions from the methodology of "The socio-cultural image of a region".

**Labor motivation of the region’s residents as an indicator of its competitiveness**

The use of the methodology “The socio-cultural image of a region” makes it possible to identify changes in labor motives of the population for seven years – from 2010 to 2016. It should be noted that the methodology has been used for several years in many studies conducted in the context of this program (this makes it possible to perform comparative studies). Respondents were offered the statements describing different labor motives. In total, the methodology includes five statements, the respondent is asked a question “What kind of work would you prefer today if you could choose?, choosing one of the statements (Fig. 1) [27, p. 228].

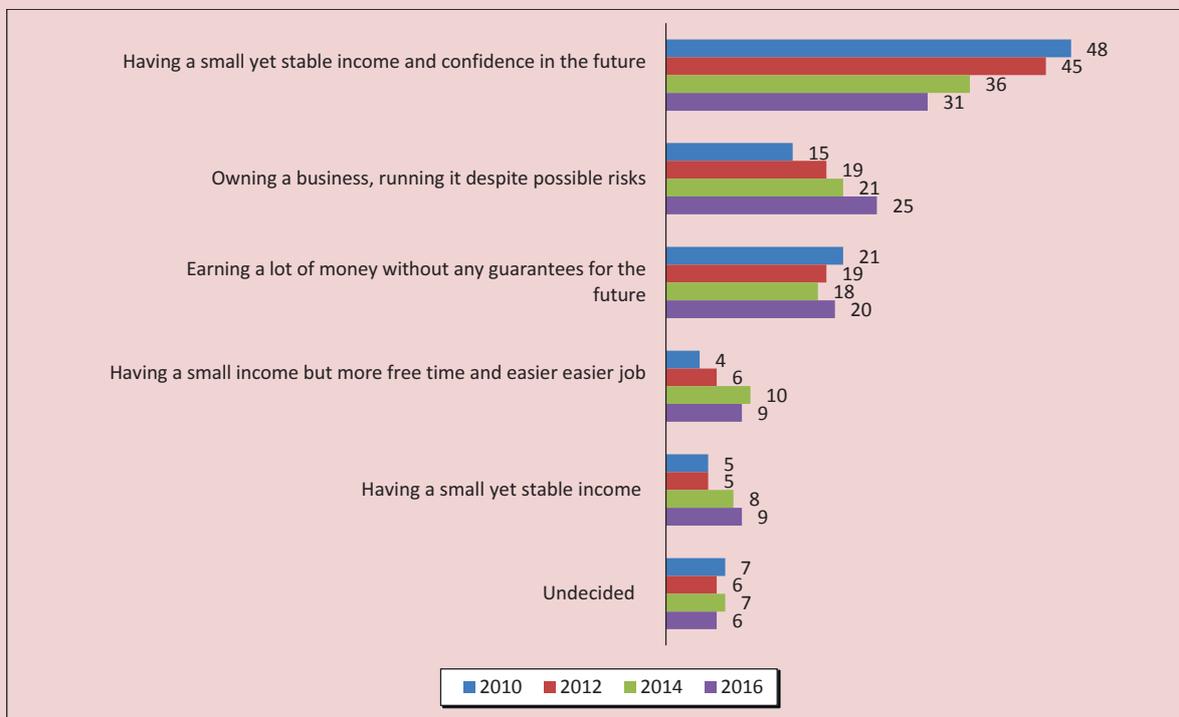
The first two indicators express market labor motives, the next three, respectively, non-market ones.

The results of surveys conducted in Krasnoyarsk Krai, indicate significant dynamics in labor motivation of its population. But, at the same time, as can be seen from the figure, the main labor motive remains the same: in 2010, almost half of respondents chose the first statement. Seven years later, their share declined by 17%, but the motive also remains a priority for almost one third of respondents.

During the research period, the value focus on possessing one’s own business rose to the second position (an increase from 15% to 25%).

The desire to have a high income regardless of any guarantees retained the number of its

Figure 1. Performance of labor motives of the population in Krasnoyarsk Krai (% of the number of respondents)



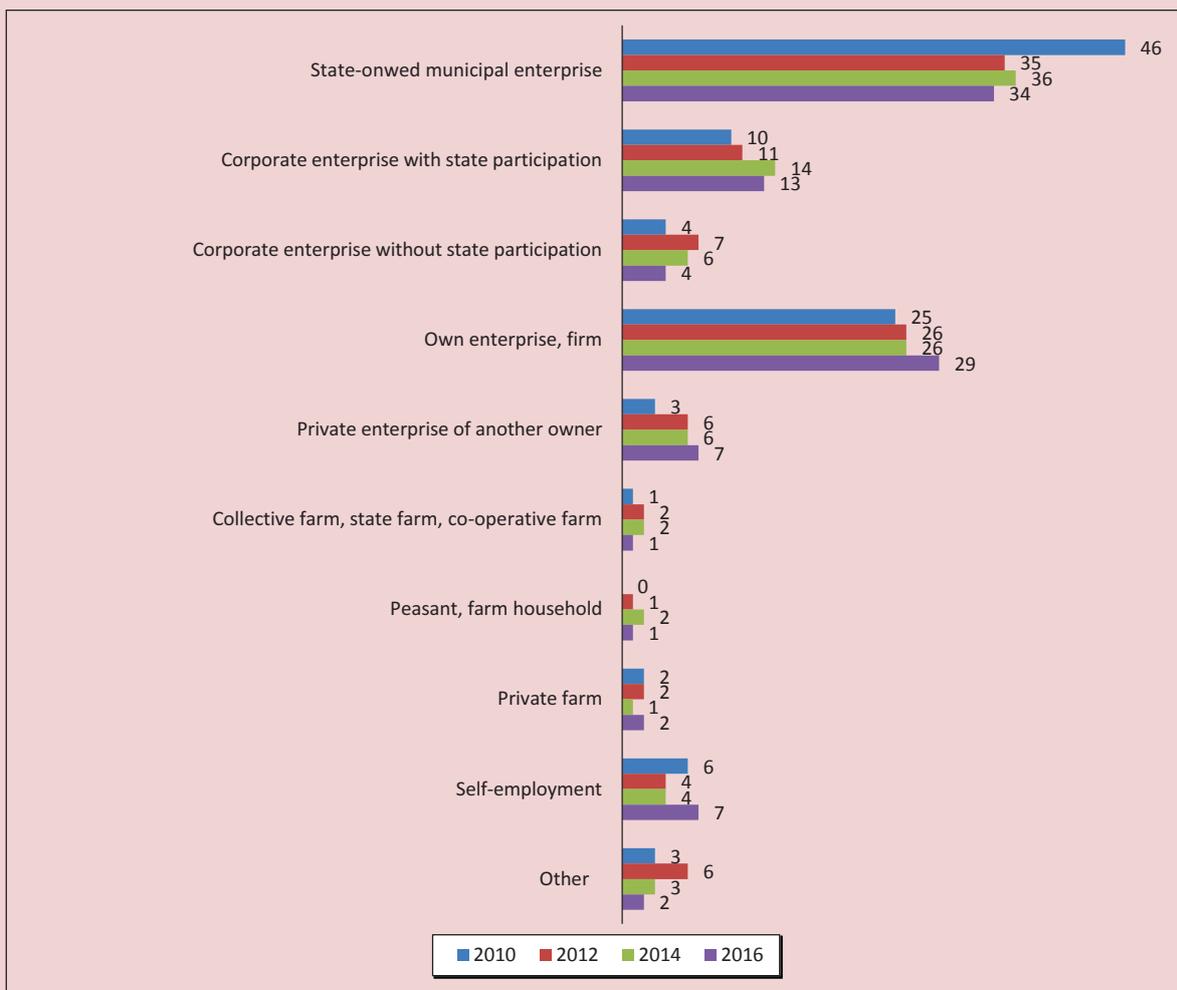
Source: data from residents’ surveys in the Krai.

“supporters”: 21 and 20%, respectively. But at the same time it moved from the second to the third position in the general hierarchy of labor motives among the residents of Krasnoyarsk Krai. The focus on easy job with a lot of free time has become more common in seven years, although it occupies one of the last positions in the hierarchy of respondents’ labor values: 4 and 9%, respectively. The motive “having a small yet stable income” also became somewhat more attractive (5 and 9%).

For each survey, the share of respondents who chose “Undecided” was about 6%.

As can be seen, respondents living in the region began to focus a little more on values of labor characterizing its market motives. In 2010, such labor motives were in general marked by 36% of respondents, while in 2016 – by 45%. Nevertheless, non-market values continue to prevail among the respondents, although their prevalence has decreased slightly (57 and 49%, respectively). This suggests the conclusion that traditional labor motives are predominant in the mass consciousness of the population in Krasnoyarsk Krai in 2016, just like seven years ago.

Figure 2. Performance of labor preferences of the population in Krasnoyarsk Krai (% of respondents)



Source: data from residents’ surveys in the Krai.

An important reason explaining such a situation may be the outflow of competitive qualified young professionals with developed market labor motivation to Western Russian regions and abroad.

#### **Labor preferences of Krai's residents in the context of their competitiveness**

Studies show that from 2010 to 2016 the share of respondents working at private enterprises and organizations increased significantly. But given the actual employment, the analysis of the competitiveness of the population must not ignore the residents' preferences in the region regarding their possible employment at enterprises belonging to various types of ownership structures.

Analysis of the obtained data (*Fig. 2*) indicates that in 2010, almost half of the respondents preferred state-owned municipal enterprises as a place of their potential employment – 46%. Work in one's own or in a private (joint stock) company was not very popular. However, in 2012 the share of respondents who would like to work at a private enterprise owned by some other person (from 3 to 6%, respectively) increased slightly. At the same time, the share of respondents who would prefer to work “for the state” significantly decreased (from 46 to 35%). This trend continued in subsequent years.

It is possible to assume that at this stage already the share of employees with a passive life strategy in labor significantly decreased. However, this was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in private entrepreneurial practices among respondents, indicating that there are serious obstacles to their implementation. Moreover, such obstacles exist primarily at the institutional level. This certainly indicates that the region lack effective ways to realize human potential in the sphere of different kinds of private labor initiatives.

Data obtained in 2014 demonstrate a similar situation. However, the number of respondents who would prefer to work in a joint-stock company with state participation increased slightly.

In 2016, there was a downward trend in the number of respondents wishing to work at state and municipal enterprises (from 46% in 2010 to 34% in 2016) or engage in “part-time work” (from 10% to 7%, respectively). This can be simply explained by a decrease in the share of such enterprises in the structure of the region's economy.

On the contrary, the share of respondents who prefer to have their full-time job in a state-owned joint-stock company (10% and 13%, respectively) has increased slightly. The results of interviews with respondents indicate that they are mainly attracted by higher wages at such enterprises and social guarantees of for the employees.

During seven years the share of respondents focused on employment at enterprises of different types of private ownership increased slightly:

- an owned company, firm 25– 29%;
- a private company, other owner: 3 – 7%.

The focus on other forms of employment remained at the same level:

- a joint-stock company without state participation: 4 – 4%;
- self-employment: 6 – 7%;
- a private farm: 2 – 2%.

We note that in different years a small share of respondents expressed unwillingness to have a regular job.

As can be seen, the overall hierarchy of labor preferences of the population in the region from 2010 to 2016 did not change much; despite a slightly decreased share of respondents focused on work in state-owned enterprises, it dominates in the hierarchy of labor preferences of the population of Krasnoyarsk Krai.

## Conclusions

We can conclude that the population's competitiveness is studied mainly from the economic and psychological and pedagogical viewpoints in the foreign and domestic literature. Russian sociologists did not pay sufficient attention to this interdisciplinary phenomenon including its analysis in the context of labor preferences and motivation of the population. Meanwhile, labor preferences and population's motivation are both an important factor in the formation of competitiveness of different age groups and one of the elements of its structure.

The analysis demonstrates that the hypothesis was only partially confirmed. In 2010–2016, there was a slight increase in the importance of statements expressing the labor market value. The most significant is the labor motive expressing the desire for a small but stable income with confidence in the future. Judging by the performance of the applied socio-cultural indicators, the professional competitiveness of the population in the region is not growing, but has a certain downward trend.

Non-market labor motivation continues to prevail in the mass consciousness of a considerable share of the surveyed residents in the region. This largely eliminates the positive changes in the labor competitiveness of its population. Moreover, there is a paradox: the increased number of residents in the region who work at various non-state enterprises (of a certain type of ownership structure) has not

led to increased market labor orientation of the employees. Figuratively speaking, amid capitalism, there are many people in the region with a “socialist” mentality and relevant labor competitiveness. Moreover, according to the research results, the share of young people with similar orientations among the respondents slightly increased. It is obvious that the reproduction of the socialist cultural matrix takes place, which requires special in-depth study.

In Krasnoyarsk Krai, just like in in other regions of the country, skilled competitive workers often have to find employment in the “shadow” economy. Such labor activity is nowadays referred to as “gray” (“garage”) economy. Mass migration of skilled competitive workers to other regions of the country and abroad also takes place.

It is important to take advantage of large comparative studies to study competitiveness. In particular, we demonstrate the opportunities and feasibility of using a number of indicators applies in the project supervised by N.I. Lapin to analyze the competitiveness of the population in a region [25]. This may include other indicators such as population's innovation activity. Taking into account the large amount of regional and all-Russian data obtained in the course of the project implementation, it can be said that it is possible to apply a comparative approach to the study of the features of population's the competitiveness in different territories of Russia, including in the context of certain social groups, primarily young people.

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