



EKONOMIKA ZDIEĽANIA A RUSKÁ MENTALITA: KONTRADIKCIE A VÝHLADY

SHARING ECONOMY AND RUSSIAN MENTALITY: CONTRADICTIONS AND PROSPECTS

Yuliya Karpovich¹

K získaniu popularity niektorých oblastí hospodárstva, ktoré zapadajú do moderného konceptu trvalo udržateľného rozvoja, patria aktívne skúmané modely, ako napríklad model obehovej ekonomiky, zelenej ekonomiky, ekonomiky zdieľania alebo jednoducho „zdieľanej“ ekonomiky. Cieľom výskumu je odhaliť postoj ruských občanov k modelu ekonomiky zdieľania a poskytnúť obraz o zmene tohto trhu za posledných niekoľko rokov. Výsledky výskumu naznačujú, že prístup a popularita modelu zdieľania zdrojov sa líši v závislosti od veku jednotlivca. V Rusku čím je človek starší, tým má širšie možnosti zdieľania tovaru, ale menšiu ochotu. Charakterizovaná je možná úloha štátu v regulovaní ekonomiky zdieľania v Rusku.

Kľúčové slová: ekonomika zdieľania, efektívne využívanie zdrojov, ďalší predaj, zdieľanie automobilov

The gaining popularity of certain areas of the economy that fit into the modern concept of sustainable development includes such actively researched models as the circular economy model, green economy, the economy of sharing or simply "sharing" economy. The goal of the research is to reveal the attitude of Russian citizens to the model of sharing economy, to give the picture of changing this market over the last several years. The results of the research show that the attitude and popularity of sharing resources model varies depending on the age of the individual. The older a person, the wider his or her opportunities to share goods, but the lower the willingness to do it in Russia. Possible role of state in regulation sharing economy in Russia is characterized.

Key words: sharing economy, effective use of resources, resale, car sharing
JEL: O13, P14, P36

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1 INTRODUCTION

The sharing economy is a rather complex issue, and the processes of sharing can both “shake up” and reinforce “business as usual” by continually reconfiguring its diverse spectrum of economic activities. At the same time, the sharing economy creates new forms of inequality and polarization in property relations. At the same time, wider access to digital technologies expands the possibilities of using those resources that were not previously involved in the economy and, in fact, were ineffectively used.

Also, the paradox of the sharing economy lies in the fact that, on the one hand, it is considered by scientists as an integral part of the modern market economy, in the classical model of which private property dominates, but on the other hand, it can be considered as its alternative. This duality requires focusing on the characteristics of the resource sharing economy and answering the questions: "How does it simultaneously create different types of economic activity, and also contribute to the deconstruction of the continuing practice of market dominance?"

2 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT

The interpretation of the concept of "sharing economy" differs depending on how extensively the author looks at this phenomenon:

- the sharing economy means the economy where more and more consumers prefer renting rather than buying things through Internet technologies (Birdsall 2014);
- the sharing economy is the economy that centers around activities carried out through digital platforms that provide equitable access to goods and services (Richardson 2015);
- the sharing economy is a phenomenon that provides full access to goods and services that are not used by their owners or are used very rarely. In this way, accessibility becomes more important than ownership. The sharing economy is based on the use of information technology to provide people with information on optimising resources by moving surplus goods and services (Fang, Ye and Law 2016).

3 PROBLEM OF RESEARCH

At present, the opinions of scientists about the importance of the sharing economy and the need for its development in Russia are divided into two opposite camps. Some believe that this model has many advantages, and that is why it is in demand in Russia and requires support. They include the following key advantages:

- low cost of joint use of property per individual;
- people are not afraid to share the same things with others. The b2b segment is growing - companies prefer to lodge business travelers in apartments for rent, rather than in hotels. Many travelers with children and pets choose apartments because there is a larger area, there is an opportunity to cook something. Hotels are often full on days of major events, and the likelihood of finding a vacant apartment for a few days is higher;
- an economic model that opens up a potentially new path to sustainable development and environmental protection. Repeated use of, for example, a car can change the volume of production in the automotive industry and reduce the burden on nature, since fewer non-renewable resources will be consumed, while the volumes of personal consumption will not decrease, but will also increase due to repeated transactions with the same objects of consumption. (Heinrichs 2013);
- the opportunity of obtaining additional income for households.

The other group of experts call the sharing economy "the economy of poverty", believing that it contradicts the Russian mentality, is alien to Russia due to the country's unpreparedness to use the mechanisms of sharing resources proposed by this model. In addition, the high risks of personal data leakage as a result of widespread digitalization and the need to exchange them for the implementation of joint property rights, stop some citizens from adopting this method of saving resources. In addition, when sharing resources, there is also a risk of not only information leakage, but also theft and damage to property, while the mechanism for covering damage in case of joint ownership of property or digital exchange of information is not regulated in modern legislation. A number of users have a negative attitude towards sharing services due to the fact that they have a fear of damaging someone else's property and being liable for compensation.

If sharing companies "disloyal" to the consumer enter the market, a liability vacuum arises, because neither the car rental companies, nor the companies that bring together the customer and the contractor do not want and will not be responsible primarily for criminal situations. This is the most important aspect of security. And insurance products that would be suitable for sharing services have not yet been invented in Russia. The current regulatory problem in Russia is that the traditional regulation of analogue industries is trying to extend to sharing services. Relatively speaking, they are trying to tie and oblige to follow the standards of hotels on the Airbnb service, which provides services for short-term rental housing around the world

- which is not only difficult to do, but this is a different model. Actually, no work of the service will be possible.

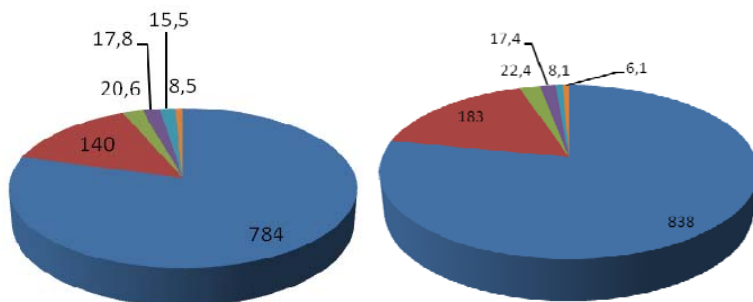
This contradiction in approaches is primarily due to the conflict of generations. Millennials (people of generation Z) do not strive to make crazy money, own apartments and cars, or acquire luxury goods. They value the flexibility and freedom that joint consumption, rent and other mechanisms of the sharing economy provide. The active process of digitalization of economic relations greatly facilitates, firstly, the exchange of information on the possibilities of joint ownership of property for people who are not only in different regions of one country, but even in different countries, and, secondly, the process of joint property management itself.

People of the older generation who grew up in the era of the Soviet Union, on the contrary, are very wary of the sharing economy. This can partly be explained by the fact that for them the presence of their own home, car and other property is a sign of solvency and success. And sharing for them is something akin to public property in a planned economy - common means no one, and, unfortunately, it is associated with the low quality of housing (student dormitories, non-privatized middle-rise houses) and services (free medicine).

4 SURVEY

Active development of the sharing model of the economy in Russia was stimulated by pandemic and post-pandemic restrictions. Thus, according to statistics, the sharing economy in Russia in 2020 grew by 39%, exceeding 1 trillion rubles. The three leading market segments have remained unchanged: reselling things from hand to hand, looking for a part-time job and car sharing. The sharing economy includes c2c sales - both through Avito, Yula and others platforms, and through ads in social networks - as well as all kinds of services for short-term rental of goods and services: online freelance exchanges, car sharing, co-working, etc. etc. The structure of the sharing economy market in the Russian Federation in millions of rubles is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Structure of the sharing economy market in Russia



Source: processed by author using RBC, 2020.

The hand-to-hand resales market (c2c commerce) remains the main driver of growth in the sharing economy. Its share in the entire Russian sharing economy grew over the year from 73% to 78%, or to 838 billion rubles. The main reasons for this are not only the expansion of the number of players and the list of services provided, but also the fact that delivery is taken into account in this segment, which has become especially in demand with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

The need to adjust the family budget introduced the c2c model to new users. The crisis introduced the old ones to delivery. The user base has grown and will continue to buy more with the economic recovery, supporting the growth in gross volume of c2c transactions.

The second largest segment of the sharing economy was services for finding a part-time job - 183 billion rubles against 140 billion rubles a year earlier. Tax breaks for the self-employed established last year could be named as one of the reasons for such growth.

Thus, these two segments of the sharing economy have become almost the only ones that should be grateful to the pandemic and its consequences for favorable conditions for development. The rest of the segments, on the contrary, were seriously affected by the virus. Thus, the third largest segment of the sharing economy – car sharing – due to the suspension of services at the beginning of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, decrease the total number of trips per year from 78 million to 70 million. The revenue of car-sharing services in 2020, however, still increased by 9% to 22.4 billion rubles. The reason was both an increase in the average rental period for a car and an increase in tariffs.

Three segments of the sharing economy experienced a strong drop in income in 2020: carpooling (travel companion search services, a 36% decrease in revenue to 11.4 billion rubles), co-living (short-term rental housing, a 48% drop to 8.1 billion rubles) and co-working (short-term office lease, a 28% decrease to RUB 6.1 billion).

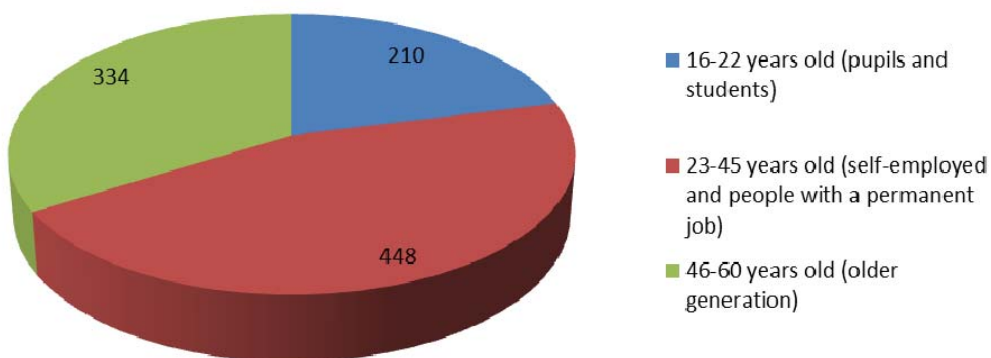
Carpooling has not yet penetrated into city trips. The practice of intra-city co-op travel is largely based on long-term offline agreements between neighbors and colleagues, although platform solutions for short trips are currently being tested in various countries. Its unpopularity is due to the issue of trust (carpooling can seem risky (traveling with strangers) and low traffic in small towns (Maynard 2018).

However, while the sharing economy is gaining popularity in the country's largest metropolitan cities, the rest of even large millionaire cities are not adopting the so actively popular European tendencies of resource sharing. Experts explain this by the unwillingness of cities “on the periphery” to involve citizens in co-working, co-living and car sharing, as well as the unwillingness of local entrepreneurs to take on all the risks of such a business.

The outstripping development of the sharing economy in Russian cities with a population of over one million is due to the fact that it is easier for sharing communities to collect in them a critical mass of supply and demand - this is an important condition that makes joint consumption really convenient and reliable. But the involvement of small towns in the sharing economy is inevitable. This is especially true for the two main industries of sharing economy – C2C-commerce and self-employed services. Cross-border B2C commerce has developed trust in escrow-secured prepayments and has given rise to a national logistics ecosystem that can now be used for domestic shipments of oversized second-hand goods, among other things. In the service sector, virtual orders are steadily gaining volume: translations, design, development, etc. – for which the relative location of the customer and the contractor does not matter.

To answer the question about the readiness of residents on the example of the Perm city with a population of over one million people, a statistical study was carried out, in which about 1000 people took part in three main categories (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The age structure of respondents



Source: processed by author.

The respondents were asked the following questions:

- How old are you?
- Do you have unnecessary things, goods? What is it? Do you want to exchange it? Sell?
- Could you offer your transport / apartment for a joint trip / exchange?
- Do you think that the theory of shared consumption has a future? Why?

An essential prerequisite for the development of a sharing economy in Russia is the National Digital Economy Program (2017). Digital platforms are an alternative to traditional models that gain a competitive advantage due to the Internet. Despite the absolute awareness of the possibilities of platforms for exchanging goods, only 56% of respondents had used them.

Students and pupils from Perm are more likely to apply for the purchase or sale of goods through a C2C platform. One third of the respondents had used several digital platforms to buy or sell items. Among those who had sold something, 45% used the Avito platform, 29% – Yula, 15% – VKontakte, 6% – Instagram, 5% – other sites.

Perm citizens over the age of 60 did not participate in the survey, since when trying to involve this category in the study, it turned out that in order to participate in joint consumption and receive information about the possibilities of the sharing economy, people of retirement age do not have enough skills to use modern digital platforms (Avito, Yula, etc.).

European countries show a more even distribution of sharing economy followers by age due to the higher level of digital literacy and economic activity of the older population: 56% of users over the age of 55 use diverse platforms to exchange resources.

If we look at the portrait of a Russian user of sharing services, we see a slight preponderance in favor of men (55%). In Europe, the prevalence in favor of men among users of sharing economy services is even smaller (52% and 48%, respectively) (Exploratory Study of consumer issues in peer-to-peer platform markets 2017). In the United States, researchers record a complete gender balance in this area (Smith 2016).

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Main results of the research. Potential issues and flaws of methods used. Questions for further research. Contributions.

Participants of the first group in the majority (52%) would prefer to exchange their old sports equipment left over from school days (skis, ski poles and boots, etc.), 39% would like to exchange their wedding dresses and some clothes, the rest of Perm citizens (9%) who participate in this research would be ready to exchange their apartments for someone else's, in another city of the country, but not for the rest of their life, but only during the holidays. After all, they say, it is very difficult to find shelter in a foreign place.

The respondents also believe that the exchange would be most beneficial for them, since old things take up a lot of space, not bringing the proper benefit. This is the opinion of the 67% of participants. Others say that used items are not something to strive for. They consider it easier than making money on new items, but not a source of pride. Such a judgment is easily explained by the youth and fervor of the people of this

group. The most popular directions of sharing economy for them are exchange and rent of things, goods or services.

People from second group have already managed to start a family, children, get an education and a job.

In this group, people most often would like to exchange old children's things (36%), many who have a car and go on vacation for the summer would like to go on a new trip with a cheerful company, and residents of their own apartments for the New Year holidays were not averse to exchanging houses and live outside the city.

Many respondents (52.3%) argued that concept of sharing economy could help us save on many things that are now expensive in stores. Also, thanks to sharing, people would save resources, not only natural, but also human.

The most popular ways of sharing resources for them are exchange / rental of things, car sharing, co-working and co-living.

3rd group includes older people, wise by experience of trial and error, who know a lot about this life. They are more pragmatic and executive than the two previous groups, they are more careful about goods they own.

Such things fell into the field of their action: books, interior items, antiques. People here are ready to make joint routes with colleagues or neighbors, but they are not ready to exchange / rent out their apartment or any personal belongings, wardrobe items. People in this group are ready to provide space for others to work for a few hours.

The opinion of this group was unequivocal. They say that the theory of sharing economy is needed to save money, resources and time. Every new thing produced in the modern world is costly. Exchange and rent will help to protect the world from clutter and improve the environmental component.

The most popular directions for this group of people are car sharing, co-working and food sharing. It is noteworthy that food sharing was not mentioned by any respondent from other groups. However, this can be partly explained by the fact that older people are more often fond of gardening compared to other categories of respondents, and, as a result, they have surplus crops of their own production. For this reason, seasonal food sharing may become one of the popular areas of the sharing economy in the near future. This will overcome distrust of the sharing economy model among older people.

As Sherunkova (2020) notes, about 17 million tons of food waste is generated in Russia which is 28% of the total solid municipal waste. Moreover, most of it goes to landfills. In addition to the garbage crisis, such projects can help improve the quality of life for part of the population.

In order to smooth out the shortcomings of this approach to assessing the applicability of the sharing economy model in Russia, it is advisable to modify the model for partial sharing of resources owned not only by private owners, but also by the state.

If we are talking about the function of the state, we are discussing carpooling, discussing cars, discussing food, but we must also look at education, we must also look at the possibilities of spending time together, we must look at the possibilities of increasing or improving the quality of longevity and health.

Even when no other means of “building trust” are available, Internet platforms manage to achieve sustainability through the institution of online reputation (reviews). This system can be strengthened by creating state cross-platform tools for controlling reputation and blocking fraudsters. Today, sharing companies practice the exchange of data on fraudsters and violators, but as a rule only within their own industry (for example, among car-sharing operators). In China, the unified social rating of the user is being tested, which is influenced by all his transactions. An important factor in the development of shared consumption is trust between the parties to the transaction. As a rule, sharing deals are concluded remotely between users unfamiliar with each other. Therefore, sharing communities especially need tools to screen users and provide financial guarantees.

The creation of an aggregated rating of an sharing economy participant user in Russia would also allow companies to optimize risks and increase the level of user confidence. At the same time, it is advisable for users to provide incentives in exchange for agreeing to provide personal data: discounts for working with services, priority ranking. State participation in regulating sharing economy helps to control taxation system. As far as the sharing economy is digital, all this business goes into "digital". And it will become much easier to control taxes, because we are moving away from analogue business to digital. And here, on the contrary, the trend is towards the fact that tax collection should only be higher.

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