

Caravanning as a Promising Tourist Industry Direction in the Primorsky Krai (Primorsky Region) of Russia

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Abstract: In Russia, the number of the vehicle owners is growing rapidly; the chain of the quality motor roads is extended. In this regard the development of the national organized and active auto-tourism emerges full blown. This study presents the prospects for the auto-tourism development in the Primorsky Krai (herein after Primorsky Region) of Russia. The auto-tourism varieties are specified. The necessity of establishment in Russia of the well-developed roadside infrastructure for the purpose of the auto-tourism development is justified. The experience of the different countries demonstrates that the success of the tourism development directly relies thereon how much support this industry receives from the state.

Key words: Caravanning, domestic tourism, inbound tourism, caravanning, camping, extreme tourism, touristic infrastructure, marketing tourism surveys, tourism product

INTRODUCTION

Auto-tourism features a long history. The first trips by the private vehicles were taken with the development of the automobile industry.

One of the most common definitions of auto-tourism is the following one: “auto-tourism means people traveling to the countries or regions different from the permanent place of their residence during which the main means of transport is a private or rented vehicle”. Among all the types of the active tourism this one is the most comfortable one that matches different tourists’ preferences during traveling and leisure time.

In the recent year, the interest in the auto-tourism in Russia increased significantly. This can be explained by a number of reasons. The private car pool increased significantly due to the import of the foreign cars. The reliability of the automotive vehicles has improved. The off-highway vehicles obtained a wide circulation. The options for repair of the foreign cars improved (Martysenko and Starkov, 2013). It is important to note that today the vast majority of the vehicle owners is represented by young people. In recent decades, the chain of the quality motor roads was extended. More and more caravanners appear that promote this type of tourism by learning the new tourist destinations and routes (Martysenko, 2013a). One of the essential reasons is the increased criminal safety ensured while traveling

across Russia. The normalization of situation in the country gaining a more sustainable nature also favors the development of the specified industry.

This study represents the review of experience of the auto-tourism development in Russia and abroad. Such experience is rather useful for evaluation of the prospects for the auto-tourism development in the Primorsky Krai of Russia where this type of tourism can attract a significant amount of the Russian and foreign tourists.

PROCEDURE

In order to determine the options for the auto-tourism development in the Primorsky Krai it is needed to specify the advantages of auto-tourism against the other types of tourism on the territory of Russia.

Auto-tourism in Russia is basically an independent type of tourism. Different people choose this type of tourism for different reasons. There are people who simply enjoy driving a car. Auto-tourism provides the largest freedom of choice: of the own route (road, halting and parking points), travel duration, winging the programme during traveling. A person traveling by car is not limited within the space. One can visit cities and villages, different places of interest. Presence of the motor vehicles enables it for a tourist to be very mobile and see the maximum of the attractions available. A caravanner can change his route, stop or continue the travel at any time.

Auto-tourism provides not only the possibility to schedule one's time at one's own discretion but also to choose the fellow passengers. Automobile trips are often made in the company of the fellow-thinkers and friends allowing communicating with the people that one has chosen on one's own. In this case, it is possible to divide the costs among the trip participants. The group auto-tourism allows optimizing the luggage content and increase the travel safety due to the mutual support in the unforeseen situations.

The introduction of GPS (or Global Positioning System) also contributed to the auto-tourism development. The navigators enable route planning with due regard to the road marking and the traffic jams on the road, saving the previous routes history, performing the approximate fuel calculation and so on.

Russia is a very big country and the choice is huge, it all depends on the tourist's preferences and his vision of the perfect holidays.

MAIN PART

Let's consider the auto-tourism types and promising directions of the auto-tourism development in Russia. About 81% of the car drivers use their cars for long-distance travels where 19% went for a trip at a distance of 1000-2000 km, 17% for even longer distances. One third of those surveyed demonstrated interest in the automobile racing.

One of the most common of auto-tourism in Russia is traveling to a place of resort with encampment or to a parking area equipped for reception of caravanners. Most often this includes traveling to the seaside. The most of the time of the travel duration is spent at the destination point chosen for the leisure activities. The feature of this type of auto-tourism is that the followers of this type often return to the resort.

Currently the educational auto-tourism is becoming more and more expanding. The tourists move along the route (primarily, a loop one) all the time. The stops are made for observation of the sights or overnight accommodation. The followers of such type of auto-tourism always seek for the new routes.

The choice of the auto-tourism type is determined by the principle of the auto route planning: either choosing the "travel for the car" or "a car for travel".

The auto-tourists' striving for increase in the comfortability of the "on-the-road-traveling" gave birth to such type of auto-tourism as caravanning.

Caravanning provides for traveling and living in the camping cars or auto-trailers. On their way the caravanners usually make stops at the specially-equipped

sites (camping areas for caravanners). Caravanning is the most convenient and comfortable type of the auto-tourism and traveling by cars.

Caravanning has gained ground in the USA and Europe. Over the last years the caravanners from Europe also arrived to Russia. At the moment they are focused on the major cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg. Presently, <2000 camping cars arrive at Moscow annually. Today the tourists have to leave their camping cars at the random and unspecialized parking areas. In the major cities of Russia, it is suggested to construct camping areas for caravanners.

Caravanning has a great future in Russia (Martyshenko and Loksha, 2013; Kozlova and Shmarkov, 2008). Handling this category of tourists includes a number of the related services: from the domestic services to the camping cars hire on-the-road repair and maintenance of the appliances.

But not all of the tourists appreciate the travel comfort the most. Often the emotional driver to the auto tourism is the leap of faith or personal achievements. In particular cases the extreme auto-tour conditions are chosen intentionally. One of the types of auto tourism is jeeping.

Jeeping is extreme kind of the leisure and tourist activities involving the off-road covering of the touristic routes by the jeeps (or off-road vehicles).

Jeeping suggests either the use of the personal specially-equipped cars or the extreme tour is arranged by the tourist companies leasing their own vehicles.

In the recent years, the popularity of the motor rally increased significantly. As a rule such motor rallies are arranged by the sponsoring organizations. A motor rally is always arranged for some purpose: sports, testing or propagandistic one. The motor rallies often feature their own name and take place at certain intervals. An example of such motor rally is the international vintage car rally "Peking to Paris 2013" a significant leg of which went across Russia.

The motor rallies are often dedicated to some outstanding events. For example, the extreme motor rally by the specially-equipped cars Moscow-Kamchatka dedicated to the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi-2014 found a wide response (international polar expedition Amarak).

Though, lack of thrill experienced by the citizens of the modern cities attracts an increasing number of auto-tourists from all over the world the extreme tourism will never become a mass one.

In order to promote the development of the domestic auto tourism in Russia the "Roads of peace and cooperation" programme was prepared. This programme

represents the long-term plan of development of the Federal target programme "Tourism development in the Russian Federation".

This programme sets the tasks on investigating the issues of the further European, Asian, Northern and Southern countries integration through restoration of the ancient trade links between the West and the East; between Russia and the other countries, enhancement of the Trans-Eurasian transport network covering the land and water bodies (the Caspian and Black Sea, etc.).

The basis for development of the good neighborly relations in the area of economy, politics, social and cultural development is establishment of the open transport corridors for the friendly international expeditions suggesting the use of the caravan tracks for the scientific-and-research, touristic and sports purposes.

The studies within the frameworks of this programme are also aimed at the improvement of cooperation between the government authorities and social structures for the purpose of determination and implementation of the prospects for the further integration, development of trade, cultural links, tourism and sport.

The auto tourism may become a really mass activity only provided that the tourist enterprises will be involved and will perform an organizing role. Introduction of the well-organized and developed auto tours and the sale thereof at the tourism services market will enable (Tarasova and Korneev, 2013):

- Regulation of the flashpacking
- Distribution of the tourist flows among the tourist resort areas (promotes to the development of the new routes that were not available even for the bus tours; releases the load from the most popular resort areas)
- Including this kind of tourism into the ratings, evaluation of attractiveness of the various points of interest
- To secure those traveling by cars by offering the developed and proven routes and the insurance for the duration of traveling
- To promote the popularization of the local history and regional ethnography among the tourists through familiarization with the historical and architectural monuments of Russia
- To promote the formation of the environmental consciousness of the participants
- To promote the development of the tourist market due to the introduction of the new auto tours that will increase the rate of investments in the Russian tourism.

AUTO TOURISM IN THE PRIMORSKY KRAI

The Primorsky Krai is one of the most important transport hubs connecting Russia with the Asian-Pacific Region inhabited by 40% of the world population or 2.7 billion people. The capital of the Primorsky Krai-Vladivostok is rightfully called the automobile capital of Russia, not because the car production has been developed in Vladivostok but because the number of the cars per head of population in the region is the biggest in Russia (Martyshenko and Starkov, 2013).

The world-longest highway going across the entire territory of Russia connects Vladivostok with Moscow. After putting into operation in 2010 the last section Chita-Khabarovsk the road became rideable for the passenger cars along the entire length. The auto tourists from Russia and the other countries of the world gained the unique opportunity to ride along the route and to see the great country firsthand. That is why Vladivostok can and become a large center of the auto tourism.

Currently most of the tourists travel by their own cars and use for the accommodation purposes either the tents they take with them or use the private houses widely offered by the local residents of the near-shore settlements (Martyshenko, 2013b).

This kind of tourism is considered to be unorganized. Presently it is prevailing in the coastal tourism of the Primorsky Krai (Martyshenko and Ilyjin, 2012). So, long as the unorganized tourism was not wide-scale it did not harm the environment of the region but as its growth resulted in threatening the environmental conditions of the coastal areas and the very vulnerable ecosystems of the insular territories (Martyshenko, 2012).

Today the uncontrolled tourist activities in the Primorsky Krai region represent the biggest problem that seriously affects the aesthetic properties of the landscape.

The defining role of infrastructure in the auto tourism development: According to the Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service) of Russia there are precious few road service facilities across the country and they are distributed among the huge territory in a rather non-uniform manner. Almost the half of the motels is located in the Central district of Russia. The sufficient number of the roadway inns is also situated in the Southern District. The other regions of the country fall far behind. Totally there are slightly >2000 motels in Russia while in the USA there are >40,000 of those.

The motorway service in Russia is only being established. The number of the parking lots along the motorways is insufficient and the quality truck parking

areas are not available. For example, there are only 2 specially-equipped truck parking points in Russia while in Germany there are 4000 of those.

The development of the motorway infrastructure and the related services is the only segment of the road construction that may ensure the acceptable return to the investors. In its turn, business awaits the exact rules of the game. It is needed to ensure the regulation of the motorway service facilities. Otherwise, there will be no investors into the roadside infrastructure the risks will be high. If the law concerning the basis of the government and private sector partnership will be adopted there is chance that the large network companies will master this segment introducing their own quality standards.

The Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation expects that until the year 2020 the amount of investment in the development of the transport infrastructure of Russia will make about 12.3 trillion rubles of which 7.3 trillion rubles of the public investment, about 5 trillion rubles funds obtained by means of the non-budgetary financing vehicles in the area of the public and private sector partnership.

The Russian researcher Pankrukhin believes that development of the road tourist infrastructure may attract another 4 millions of tourists (Pankrukhin, 2012a).

The experience of the different countries demonstrates that the success of the tourism development directly relies thereon how much support this industry receives from the state.

Foreign experience in the auto tourism development:

Auto tourism is the basis for development of the good neighborly relations between the countries of the world in the area of economy, politics, social and cultural development.

In the developed countries, the road infrastructure and auto tourist servicing have been paid serious attention for a long time. So, it is not surprisingly that we fell far behind in this regard. The relevant standards have been developed in the world and all we have to do is to examine and maintain them. The studies conducted in the USA have shown that the number of the car accidents on the roads where construction of the required amount of the rest areas was justified from the scientific and engineering perspective is reduced by one third compared to the roads along which there are no such rest areas.

A number of publications by the Russian writers was dedicated to the foreign experience in the auto tourism development (Aksyonov and Monastyrenko, 2012; Mamov, 2010). However, the experience in the auto tourism organization, the legislation and profit-making mechanisms remain under investigated.

In this study, we would like to turn attention to the two kinds of auto tourism that are not developed in Russia at all while in the West they constitute a substantial share in the auto tourism revenues.

Caravanning may be rightfully mentioned as the first kind. This kind of auto tourism originated from the USA and then gained widespread currency in Europe. Caravanning as a travel business component may be divided into a few interrelated parts:

- Specialized equipment for caravanning
- Specialized areas for stops and parking by the caravanners
- Various specialized services for caravanners

The number of people buying the camping cars and trailers in Europe grows steadily. Auto tourism has proven its viability and contributes significantly to the economy of the European and North-American countries.

In Germany there are 683,000 officially registered camping cars and 570,000 caravans. Inclusive of the stationary camping trailers for recreational purposes (used for camping at the long-term parking areas), the number of caravans exceeds 1 million items (according to the survey conducted by the German Tourism Association and the Caravanning Industrie Verband (CIVD). According to the CIVD, people in different countries prefer different kinds of the caravan vehicles (Fig. 1-3).

According to the European Caravan Manufacturers Federation (ECF), the total amount of the camping cars and caravans in Europe registered as vehicles reaches 1353140 and 4044 items, respectively. In 2009, the total turnover in the caravanning industry (sale and maintenance of the special equipment) made 10,567 billion

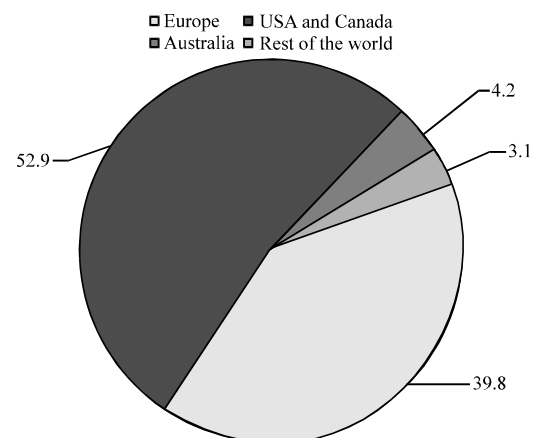


Fig. 1: Share in the sale of caravans among the countries of the world

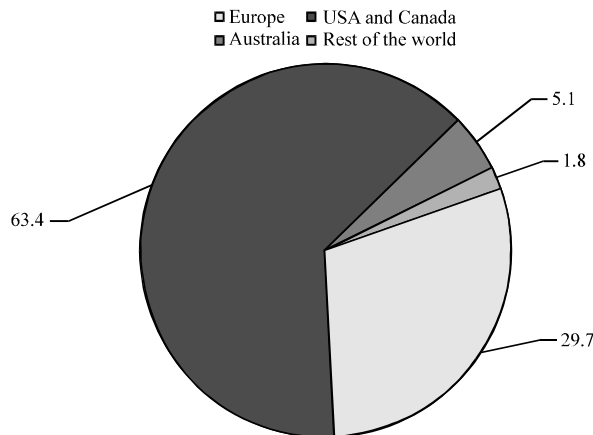


Fig. 2: Share in the sale of camping cars among the countries of the world

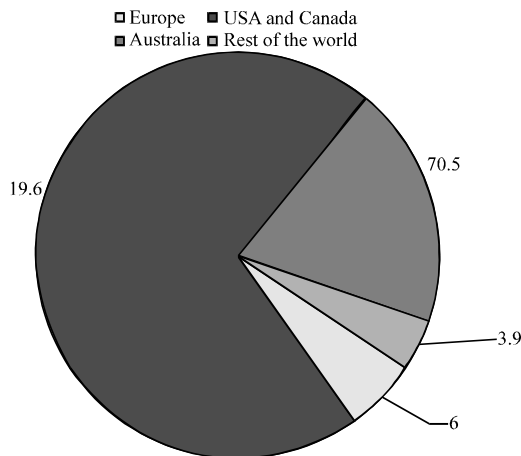


Fig. 3: Share in the sale of auto campers among the countries of the world

euro. And the year 2011 showed the new increase in the Europeans' interest in caravanning. In the end of August 2011 the largest European show in Dusseldorf showed the record attendance of 179,000 people. Moreover, for the first time 62% came for the particular purpose to buy the equipment. This is an especially important and positive point since Caravan Salon Dusseldorf is considered to be the barometer in terms of forecasting the future seasons. Besides, the largest manufacturers of the equipment for caravanners gladly noted the unprecedented sales growth up to 20% for the last year.

As for caravanning as a tourism segment, according to the European Federation of the Association for Camping and Caravan areas (EFCO&HPA) annually about 23% of all the holiday-makers in Europe falls at the camping and caravanning sector (this sector covers

different areas, sites equipped for leisure activities and tourism that suggest full self-service and the customers are charged for accommodation only).

The statistics show that a European auto tourist makes not <3-4 trips per year, a half of which means long trips for a >1000 km.

As to the USA, it should be noted that the Americans are rather active. They do not like staying at home, they rather prefer going somewhere, discovering new cities, nature and people.

In the USA, there is a great number of camping areas along the highways (the so-called RV parks) providing all the necessary conditions for travelers: drinking water, power supply, sewage system, shower, bath, kitchen, garbage dumps, pet relief areas, etc. In the USA, there are companies specializing in the mail forwarding services. They deliver letters and parcels to any specified place for a certain amount charged.

The American camping areas like the European ones are classified by their "star-rating" according to the list of facilities they provide. There are particular camping brands and chains.

It should be made clear that in the USA camping is a kind of social tourism that is widely available. Many tourism researchers pay attention to the unreasonable high prices for the tourist services in Russia (Pankrukhin, 2012b). In Russia the restrictions on the prices shall be introduced and the prices shall be made more transparent to the customer. By the way, some countries actively developing tourism on their territories introduce restrictions on the prices for particular kinds of the tourist services (for example, China).

But today the flow of the foreign caravanners to Russia is constrained not by the prices but by other factors. Negotiations with the foreign tour operators from France, Italy, Germany, England and other countries specializing in organization of the caravan tours demonstrate the readiness of the tour operators to increase the caravanner flows by times. For this purpose at least minimum caravanning infrastructure shall be organized in the most popular tourist regions of Russia.

This problem may be solved within the shortest possible time since there is a number of advantages in organization of business for development of this kind of tourism compared to the other kinds. The obvious advantages of this direction are:

- The much less cash-consuming construction stage
- Possible more flexible approach to the land plot picking since no capital construction works are suggested, absence of necessity of many approvals and appraisals enabling more options for reasonable prices

- Possible organization on the basis of the already existing resort complex or reconstruction of the one out of use
- A smaller staff required makes it easier to find the necessary amount of the qualified personnel
- No dependency on the public transport
- The possibility to develop unified projects and developing on the basis thereof a chain of the similar camping places enjoying the information and advertising support by the professional, administrative and business entities
- Social and environment-oriented value both of the project developing the organized ecotourism, family recreation, auto tourism and the related infrastructure

All these advantages as a whole make this business to be more attractive to the investors. From among, the services that could essentially increase the attractiveness of auto tourism in our country the car rental can be distinguished. This kind of services is not developed in our country at all. When it comes to the methods of travel organization almost 90% of the auto tourists in Russia choose traveling by their own cars which presents a contrast to the similar data about Europe and the USA: in the USA only 30% of drivers travel by their own cars, the rest prefer rental services in Europe this rate makes about 50%.

The price of a middle-class family caravan makes about 40000 USD. Of course, there are plenty expensive luxury motor caravans the price of which may reach 120-150000 USD. That's why many Europeans consider the maintenance of such a vehicle as economically unviable. For this reason, many caravans running across Europe are taken on lease (from €100 per day). The travel companies also pay special attention to caravanning. For example, the fly and drive tours are in great demand the tourists arrive at one or another point on the planet and set off on a journey by a leased camper.

SUMMARY

The fact of overload of the European auto tourism industry and the route originality are to the good of the Russian auto tourism. It is needed to arrange promotion of the Russian auto tourism at the international market with the use of the modern marketing solutions. It is required to destroy the established image of Russia in Europe as a country that is not attractive for tourists because of the poor safety level.

The deterrent of development of this kind of recreation and tourism in Russia is the high end-consumer

cost of the camping cars and caravans which is almost twice as much as the European one. Thus for example, the simplest model of the Hymermobil inclusive of the customs charges costs 50,000 Euro which makes it unattractive for the Russian holiday-makers. Under such conditions caravanning cannot become a mass phenomenon.

Unfortunately, the cars of such class are not produced in Russia. Such production may appear but only in the presence of the established market and achievement of the minimum sales level that will ensure the viability of such a project. Currently, the customs charges for the camping cars and caravans import to Russia rather feature a blocking nature and hamper the auto tourism growth.

As the foreign experience shows, it is the government support that enables it to fully realize the prospects of the auto tourism infrastructure construction to attract investment in the development of the roadside services as well as to turn the domestic and inbound tourism into an important revenue side of the state budget.

CONCLUSION

The territories of many Russian regions have the great potential in terms of design of the various auto routes. One of such regions is the Primorsky Krai. It is possible to implement the cluster approach to the auto tourism development within the Moscow-Vladivostok high or a section of it (Martyshenko, 2013b).

Today the Primorsky Krai is granted the broad tax privileges applied to the new kinds of business which create favorable conditions for investments by the foreign companies in the auto tourism infrastructure.

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