
THE SHARING ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITALIZATION

Babayeva Sabinabonu Davronbek qizi
Student of Group RIQ-3 Tashkent State Transport University
Department of Transport Economics
Phone: +998 50 500 25 40
E-mail: babaevas044@gmail.com

Abstract:	Keywords:
The article explores the phenomenon of the sharing economy as a key component of the modern digital economy. It examines the fundamental principles, advantages, challenges, and development prospects of this model based on international experience, including case studies of Uber, Airbnb, and Zipcar. The paper includes graphical representations illustrating the growth of the global sharing economy market and its segmental structure. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to regulating and adapting platform-based models within the digital society.	Sharing economy, digitalization, platform-based business models, digital economy, sharing economy, digital platforms.

Introduction

The sharing economy is a model in which access to goods and services is provided on a temporary basis through digital platforms, without the need for ownership. This model has experienced rapid growth driven by digitalization, mobile technologies, and changing consumer habits. The sharing economy encompasses a wide range of services—from transportation and accommodation to professional and financial services. It is based on principles such as temporary access, user feedback, rating systems, and reputation. Key players in the market include platforms such as Uber, Airbnb, TaskRabbit, and others.

A prominent example of the transformative impact of the sharing economy can be observed in the operations of Uber, which functions in more than 70 countries worldwide. As of 2023, the platform reported over 5.4 million active drivers and facilitated approximately 7.6 billion rides annually. A study conducted by the Brookings Institution (2022) highlights that Uber has radically reshaped traditional employment models in the urban transport sector by promoting flexible forms of labor, particularly in major metropolitan areas. However, this model has also raised serious concerns regarding the lack of social protections, employment guarantees, and increased economic vulnerability among platform-based workers.

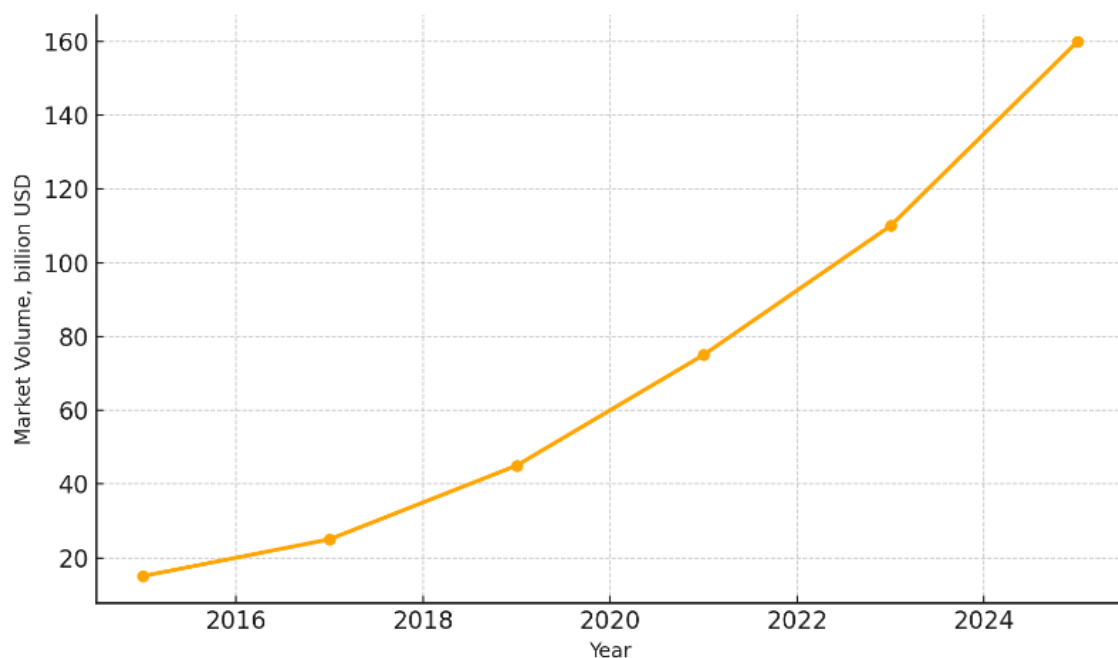


Figure 1. Growth Dynamics of the Global Sharing Economy Market (billion USD)¹

The analysis of the chart demonstrates the steady growth of the sharing economy sector, reflecting the intensification of digital transformation and the increasing trust in platform-based models. The sharing economy market is divided into five key segments: transportation, housing, freelance services, peer-to-peer finance, and commerce. Each of these segments evolves at a different pace, depending on factors such as technological maturity, consumer culture, and regulatory frameworks.

A representative example in the transportation segment is Zipcar, a car-sharing platform operating in urban centers across North America and Europe. By 2023, the service had over one million members and maintained a fleet of more than 12,000 vehicles. Zipcar allows users to rent cars by the hour or day via mobile applications, thus supporting a shift from ownership to access-based consumption. According to a study by the University of California, Berkeley's Transportation Sustainability Research Center (2022), the adoption of car-sharing services like Zipcar has led to a measurable reduction in private vehicle ownership, urban traffic congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions. The study found that each Zipcar vehicle replaces an estimated 9 to 13 privately owned cars, making the platform a viable solution for sustainable urban mobility. Moreover, Zipcar's model aligns with smart city initiatives by optimizing transport infrastructure and lowering parking demand.

¹ McKinsey Global Institute, 2023

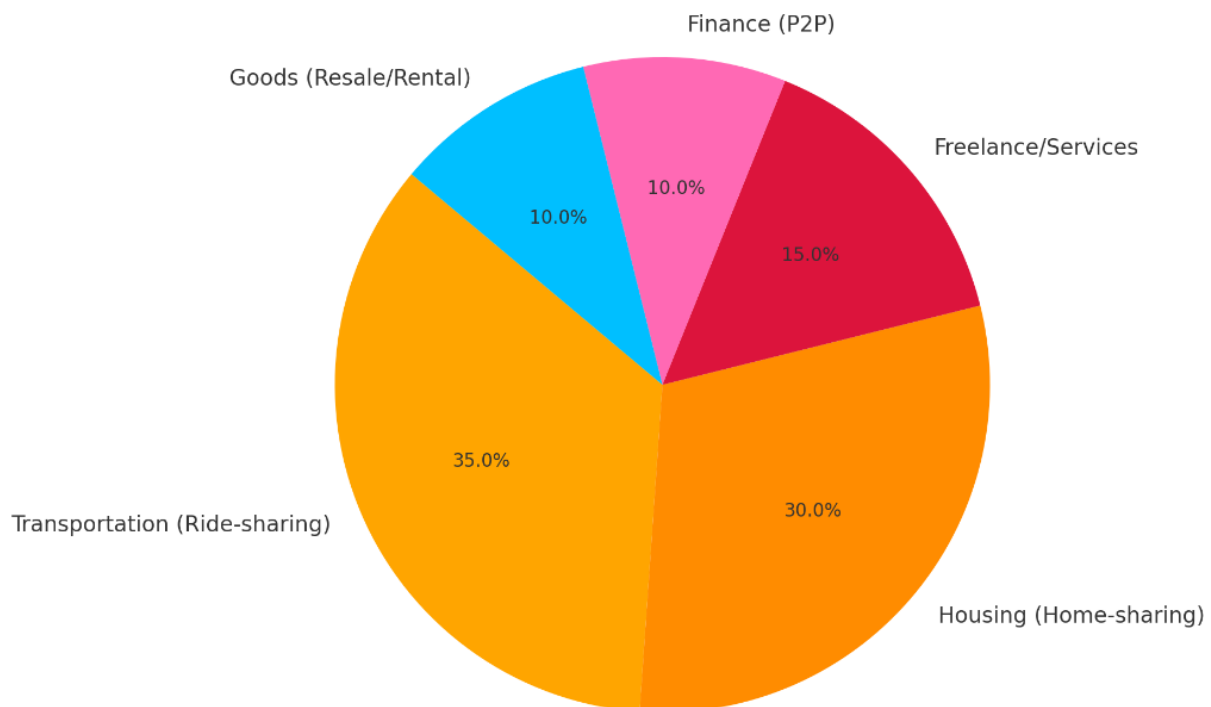


Figure 2. Segment Distribution of the Sharing Economy Market (%)²

The data indicate the dominance of transportation and housing rental segments, while financial and service platforms are gradually strengthening their positions.

A significant case in the housing segment is represented by Airbnb, a short-term rental platform that, by 2023, offered more than 7 million listings across over 220 countries and regions. According to a report by the European Commission (2022), in cities such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Paris, more than 15% of Airbnb listings had previously been part of the long-term rental market. The mass reallocation of residential properties toward short-term rental has led to reduced housing availability, rising rental prices, and heightened social tensions. In response, municipal authorities have imposed stricter regulations, including mandatory host registration, rental caps, and taxation of transactions—highlighting the need for a balanced approach to platform economy regulation. The advantages of the sharing economy include efficient resource utilization, inclusivity, cost reduction, and flexibility. However, key challenges remain, such as legal uncertainty, tax regulation, user rights protection, and risks of social instability.

The future of the sharing economy is closely tied to the integration of artificial intelligence, the growth of the B2B segment, global expansion, sustainable technologies, and increased government involvement in regulation. Platforms are evolving into ecosystems that shape new standards of consumption and employment. The sharing economy is transforming traditional approaches to consumption and business, creating a more flexible, accessible, and

² PwC, 2022

environmentally sustainable economic model. Its successful development depends on balanced policy and legal regulation, technological support, and digital inclusion.

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