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"Sharing economy" or on-demand service economy?

A survey of workers and consumers in the Greater Toronto Area

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Executive summary

In the span of just a few years, the term “sharing economy” has become entrenched in the public discourse. What kinds of activities does this term describe? And who is participating in it? This report presents the first in-depth snapshot of both workers and consumers who identify themselves as participating in the “sharing economy” in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It also looks at who is providing services within this sector, the conditions of their work, and public perceptions of the need to change regulations to keep up with this new sector.

Out of the 2,304 residents surveyed, nine per cent say they have worked or currently work in the “sharing economy” and 38 per cent say they have purchased services within this sector. As a portal for paid work, the “sharing economy” represents a small, but significant, piece of the GTA’s labour market. The services provided span more than just Uber and Airbnb — the two poster children for the “sharing economy.” A quarter of those who say they've worked in this sector provide car/ride provision services such as Uber or SafeHer. Just over a quarter (27 per cent) say they provide cleaning services mediated through online platforms such as Cleanify. Those are the top two services workers in this survey identified, followed by home cooked meals (21 per cent), food delivery through apps such as Doordash (19 per cent), carpooling through platforms such as Blancride (19 per cent), and home rentals such as Airbnb and VRBO (17 per cent). They also work in home repairs (such as TaskRabbit), parking sharing (such as Rover), and office sharing (such as Hoffice).

Workers who say they've provided "sharing economy" type services may not be who you think. They are young and educated: 71 per cent are under the age of 45 and 90 per cent say they've attended college or university.

While educational attainment is slightly higher for consumers than workers, the market is being driven by people who have higher education — whether it is about working to provide or buying on-demand services.

More than half of the workers in this survey have children and 48 per cent have been doing this kind of work for over a year — so it's not a temporary "gig" for many.

We asked respondents who worked in the sector to identify the three biggest downsides or challenges to working in the on-demand service economy. The three most frequent answers: "I don't make enough money" (41 per cent), while 38 per cent say customer disputes are an issue, 37 per cent say it's hard to get enough work.

People who have worked in this sector of the economy have a variety of reasons for doing so: 64 per cent agree that they do it to make extra money, 63 per cent because they like it, 55 per cent because it's the only way to make a living right now, and 53 per cent say it's something to do until they can find something better. These answers are indicative of overall labour market conditions in the GTA, with the rise in precarious work and with barriers to young workers' ability to find secure, full-time jobs. For some workers, the on-demand service economy may represent a method of coping in a tough labour market.

While "sharing economy" service provision is often touted as giving people the flexibility and freedom to earn what they want when they want, it comes at a cost. For most of the workers in this survey, providing services isn't exactly a get-rich scheme: 58 per cent say their household income is less than $80,000 a year, 58 per cent say this work brings in more than half of their personal income, and 41 per cent say they don't make enough money doing this type of work.

As for freedom, which is often marketed by companies touting "sharing economy" type work, consider this: workers are responsible for the costs and the risks connected to this work. This sector is often applauded as a way to raise income from your assets, whether it is your house, your car, or your driveway, but when things go wrong, platform owners might offer little support. Twenty per cent of workers in this survey say dealing with the company that owns the platform is an issue.

The on-demand economy is one of the most precarious labour markets in the GTA. Workers in this sector are considered independent contractors and therefore are denied protections like minimum wage and overtime pay provided through the *Employment Standards Act*. Their work is contingent upon service demands made through an online platform, with the expectation of just-in-time service delivery.

While many of the survey respondents who currently work in this sector have positive feelings about it, the majority of both worker and consumer respondents say the "sharing economy" should be more stringently regulated. They're looking for strengthened safety regulation, regulations for business responsibilities and for worker protection. The largest majority across all categories believe there is a need for more health and safety regulation (78 per cent), followed by business responsibilities (72 per cent), and worker protection (65 per cent).

The public debate has centred on whether to regulate the likes of Uber and Airbnb. These results support a call for strong regulations — and not just for Uber and Airbnb, given the broad span of companies and services operating in the GTA — to ensure that this newly developing part of the GTA's service sector is harnessed in the interests of consumers, workers, and the broader public.

Strong regulations are in order. Regulators should cast their net widely, to encompass: (1) Protections for both on-demand service economy workers and consumers; and (2) Protections/requirements for on-demand service workers that go beyond car ride provision and home rentals. The results from this survey indicate the on-demand service workforce has spread into cleaning services, food preparation services, food delivery, and home repairs. In each of these service categories, provincial and municipal regulators should carefully consider protections for both workers and the consumers who buy these services.

Introduction

The "sharing economy" has become a catch phrase describing a business model that links providers and consumers of services through online platforms.

It has garnered a great deal of media and policy interest. But how pervasive is the "sharing economy" in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)? Is it the collaborative way of the future or does it deepen the chasms of inequality that divide us in this city?

This study reports on findings from a survey commissioned by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and conducted by Environics Research to collect data on the "sharing economy" in GTA. This represents the first detailed snapshot of "sharing economy" participants — both consumers and workers — in the GTA.

What is a "sharing economy"?

CCPA-Ontario and Ryerson University's Centre for Labour and Management Relations created a typology of GTA businesses that use an online platform to enable consumers to purchase services on demand. We found more than 100 businesses active in the GTA that provide on-demand services through online platforms. Some of those businesses are more like peer-to-peer service exchanges, some are more akin to collaborative consumption, and others are clearly on-demand service provision.

Those businesses connect workers and consumers for a range of activities beyond home sharing and car/ride provision, including goods trading, parking rentals, and food delivery. While the services in this list of sharing economy options aren't "sharing" — they are business transactions — they reflect the types of online platform-based economic activities currently underway in the GTA. We used this typology in the survey to help respondents understand what we mean by the "sharing economy", listing real businesses from our typology to help respondents recognize the type of work and services we wanted them to tell us about.

The "sharing economy" encompasses a wide range of activities, though the two most prominent ones described in mainstream media tend to focus on home rentals and car/ride provision. Using the word "sharing" to describe business transactions — payment for goods and services — can be, at best, misleading. Some call it the "gig economy" but we think the "on-demand service economy" better describes the nature of transactions within this segment of the economy. For the purposes for this survey, we used the words “sharing economy” based on the assumption that survey respondents might recognize that terminology more readily than alternative terminology.

Language matters. Multinational companies use words like “sharing” in marketing their business model. True sharing does not include business transactions. In this report, we use the words “on-demand service economy” to describe the types of services and companies that are referenced as “sharing economy” players in the broader public discourse. The words “sharing economy” are only used in relation to the survey questions that respondents answered about their participation in this emerging segment of the economy.

How pervasive is the on-demand service economy?

As would be expected, many more GTA residents purchase services than provide them. While nine per cent of respondents say they have worked in the on-demand service economy, almost four in 10, or 38 per cent, say they have purchased services in this sector.

Who is working in this sector, who is buying services, and what are the differences or similarities between these two groups? The next section provides a demographic snapshot.

1. What do we know about on-demand service economy workers?

What type of services are they providing?

Among the respondents who work in the on-demand service economy, 25 per cent say they provide car/ride provision services such as Uber, 27 per cent say they provide cleaning services via online platforms, 21 per cent say they provide home cooked meals. Those are the top three sharing economy services that respondents say they provide in the GTA.

Despite the high profile of home rentals and food delivery, only 19 per cent say they’ve worked delivering food and 17 per cent say they list their home on online platforms such as Airbnb — the same percentage of respondents who say they list office space on online platforms. That’s slightly more than those who offer home repairs (16 per cent) and parking sharing (14 per cent). These responses suggest that workers in this sector provide a number of different services — it’s not just Uber and Airbnb.

Q. In the last few years, which of the following types of "sharing economy" services have you personally worked in or offered or sold, if any?	
Car/ride sharing (e.g. Uber, SafeHer)	25%
Cleaning service (e.g. Cleanify)	27%
Home cooked meals (e.g. Meal Surfers, Chez Lisgar)	21%
Food delivery (e.g. Doordash, Foodora, Grabb, Just Eat, Mama Earth, UberEats)	19%
Carpooling (e.g. Blancride)	19%
Home sharing (e.g. Airbnb, VRBO)	17%
Home repairs (e.g. TaskRabbit, Handy, Jiffy, Repair Café, Repairathon)	16%
Parking sharing (e.g. Rover)	14%
Office sharing (e.g. Hoffice, IQ Office, Workhaus)	17%
Other services	1%

Note Totals might not add due to rounding

Some of these results also suggest to us that people may not be clear about which parts of their working lives fall within the "sharing economy" and which parts do not, pointing to the need for further research. The responses also suggest that people who provide services in this segment of the economy might do so in multiple platforms. They might, for instance, deliver food and drive for Uber.

Who is working in the on-demand service economy?

The on-demand economy is one of the most precarious labour markets in the GTA. Workers in this sector are considered independent contractors and therefore are denied protections like minimum wage and overtime pay provided through the *Employment Standards Act*. Their work is contingent upon service demands made through an online platform, with the expectation of just-in-time service delivery.

Given the precarious nature of the work, it is important to understand the demographic make up of the on-demand service workforce along the lines of gender, race, age, education, and immigrant status. In the overall labour market, women, immigrants, and racialized workers tend to be over-represented in low-paying, precarious jobs. Is it any different in the "sharing economy"?

Almost one in 10 survey respondents in the GTA has worked in the sharing economy. Only four per cent of respondents are currently working in the

Age	
18–29	32%
30–44	39%
45–54	12%
55+	17%
Total	100%

sector; five per cent used to. Among the nine per cent of respondents who say they provide or have provided sharing economy services, 51 per cent are men, 48 per cent are women, and one per cent is transgendered. A majority of workers, 54 per cent, are racialized, while 46 per cent are non-racialized.

The majority of on-demand service economy workers (69 per cent) are Canadian-born. For those who are born outside of Canada, 21 per cent were born in Asia.

The majority of respondents, more than 70 per cent, who say they worked in the "sharing economy" are under the age of 45: 32 per cent are 18–29 years of age, 39 per cent are between 30 and 44.

It is also notable that 51 per cent of people working in this sector have children under the age of 18. Presumably, the income they are receiving from this work contributes to supporting their children — a contrast to the more prototypical image of a young person only working in this sector to help pay for their new car or a backpacking trip abroad.

Most on-demand workers (90 per cent) have some post-secondary education: most frequently they have an undergraduate education (43 per cent), followed by those who have attended college or technical school (30 per cent), and those who are post-graduates or went to professional school (18 per cent). Only 10 per cent of on-demand service workers have a high school diploma or less.

Where in the GTA do on-demand service workers live?

The GTA is a large region. Where do the bulk of workers who provide services within the "sharing economy" live? Almost half (46 per cent) live in Toronto: 11 per cent in Old Toronto, 14 per cent in Scarborough, 10 per cent in

North York, seven per cent in Etobicoke, four per cent in York, and two per cent in East York. York region followed with 23 per cent of on-demand service workers: 8 per cent come from Markham while 15 per cent live in the rest of York. Only 19 per cent live in Peel region: 11 per cent live in Mississauga and eight per cent live in Brampton. Durham region represents nine per cent of respondents who say they've worked in the "sharing economy" while Halton region represents only three per cent.

How long have on-demand service economy workers been providing services?

The majority of current workers (62 per cent) have been working in this emerging sector for more than a year, compared with 35 per cent who say they used to provide these services. A little less than one third of current workers (31 per cent) say they've been providing services for six months to one year, compared with 37 per cent of respondents who say they used to work in this sector.

The majority (68 per cent) of respondents who have worked in the sector think they'll still be working in, or return to, the "sharing economy" one year from now.

How much do on-demand service workers earn?

Sixty-three per cent of respondents who work in the sector say they work full-time and 14 per cent work part-time.

Even though most respondents who do this work are working full-time, only 16 per cent of workers made more than 90 per cent of their income from it. Almost 60 per cent of respondents say that income from "sharing economy" activities account for 50 per cent or more of their personal income. Sixty-eight per cent of racialized respondents and 59 per cent of respondents who are immigrants made more than 50 per cent of their income from these activities.

Q. How long have you/did you work in the "sharing economy"

	Currently	Used to provide services	Total
More than a year	62%	35%	48%
Six months to a year	31%	37%	34%
One to six months	4%	15%	10%
Less than a month	4%	12%	8%

Employment status	
Working full-time	63%
Working part-time	14%
Going to school and working	6%
Going to school and not working	4%
Unemployed or laid off	3%
Stay at home full-time	4%
Retired	7%
	100%

Q. In a typical month, about what proportion of your personal income comes from the work you do providing services in the “sharing economy”?

	Total
Over 90%	16%
75–89%%	24%
50–74%	19%
25–49%	13%
Less than 25%	29%
	100%

Household income	Workers	Total
Under $40,000	19%	15%
$40,001 to $60,000	20%	16%
$60,001 to $80,000	20%	15%
$80,001 to $100,000	15%	13%
$100,001 to $150,000	12%	14%
More than $150,000	8%	11%
Prefer not to answer	7%	15%
<80,000	58%	46%

Fifty-eight per cent of respondents who do this work say their household makes less than $80,000, while 15 per cent make $80,001 to $100,000 and 12 per cent make $100,001 to $150,000. Eight per cent say their household makes more than $150,000.

What is it like to work in the on-demand service economy?

People who have worked in this sector of the economy do so for various reasons: 64 per cent agree that they do it to make extra money, 63 per cent because they like it, 55 per cent because it's the only way to make a living right now, and 53 per cent say it's something to do until they can find something better.

These responses are indicative of overall labour market conditions in the GTA, including the rise in precarious work and barriers to young workers searching for secure, full-time jobs. For some workers, the on-demand service economy may be one of the few ways to cope in a tough labour market.

Most people (71 per cent) who have worked in the GTA's "sharing economy" recommend this type of work to others while 29 per cent say they would recommend against working in the "sharing economy."

When respondents describe, in their own words, what it is like to work in this sector, 45 per cent say they don't know how to respond. About one in five (19 per cent) feel positive about the experience in general, nine per cent say they find helping others is rewarding, six per cent say it's a way to make money, three per cent say it's unpredictable and there's a lack of security, and 10 per cent say "other".

We asked respondents to identify the three biggest downsides or challenges to working in the on-demand service economy. The most frequent answers: "I don't make enough money" (41 per cent), 38 per cent say cus-

Q. As someone who has worked in the "sharing economy", which of the following have been your three biggest downsides or challenges?

	Total
I don't make enough money	41%
Customer disputes	38%
It's hard to get enough work	37%
If I get sick I don't get paid	35%
Unpredictable hours	34%
Having to be on call too much of the time	29%
Not having any benefits for things like dental and prescriptions	27%
Dealing with the company that owns the platform	20%
Other	3%
Have not experienced any challenges	7%
DK/NA	8%

tomer disputes are an issue, 37 per cent say it's hard to get enough work, 35 per cent say "if I get sick I don't get paid", 34 per cent say unpredictable hours, 29 per cent say it is hard being on call too much of the time, and 20 per cent say dealing with the company that owns the platform is an issue.

2. What do we know about "sharing economy" consumers?

While nine per cent of respondents say they have worked in the GTA's "sharing economy," a greater proportion of this survey's respondents have purchased services through this route: almost four in 10 (38 per cent) of GTA respondents say they have purchased "sharing economy" services. That said, the majority of respondents say they do not participate in the "sharing economy."

What type of services do consumers buy?

We asked respondents who have purchased services to choose from a representative list of on-demand services offered within the GTA, offering respondents a drop-down menu of options.

Car ride/sharing services are, by far, the most often used — a little more than half of the 38 per cent of respondents who have purchased on-demand

Q. In the last few years, which of the following types of "sharing economy" services have you personally bought (i.e. used as a consumer), if any?

Distribution of "sharing economy" services for those who have purchased them	
Car/ride sharing (e.g. Uber, SafeHer)	55%
Home sharing (e.g. Airbnb, VRBO)	33%
Food delivery (e.g. Doordash, Foodora, Grabb, Just Eat, Mama Earth, UberEats)	29%
Goods trading (e.g. Bunz, Freecycle)	15%
Cleaning service (e.g. Cleanify)	10%
Home cooked meals (e.g. Meal Surfers, Chez Lisgar)	10%
Carpooling (e.g. Blancride)	8%
Home repairs (e.g. TaskRabbit, Handy, Jiffy, Repair Café, Repairathon)	8%
Parking sharing (e.g. Rover)	7%
Office sharing (e.g. Hoffice, IQ Office, Workhaus)	5%
Other services	1%

services say they've used services such as Uber. At second place, 33 per cent say they've used home rental services such as Airbnb and VRBO. Food delivery is a close third, with 29 per cent saying they've bought food orders via services such as Doordash, Foodora, and Just Eat. Goods trading, cleaning services, home cooked meals, carpooling, home repairs, parking, and office sharing represent a much smaller proportion of services purchased, ranging from five to 15 per cent of purchasing activity. These consumer results do show a different pattern than that of the people who work in this sector and point to the need for further research.

Who buys services in the on-demand service economy?

The majority of purchasers of these services are women (54 per cent), while 46 per cent are men. That is a reversal from service providers, where the local on-demand service economy workforce has more men than women in it.

This difference between those who purchase and provide services also shows up in the share of racialized consumers. While the majority of the local on-demand service economy workforce is racialized, the majority of consumers is non-racialized (60 per cent). And, while the overall share of immigrants and Canadian born are similar, the share of purchasers who were born in Asia is much lower than the share of workers who were born in Asia.

Consumers in this sector have a slightly older age profile than workers, with 67 per cent under age 45 compared to 71 per cent of workers, 16 per cent are between 45 and 54, and 17 per cent are over 55.

Age	
18–29	27%
30–44	40%
45–54	16%
55+	17%
Total	100%

Half of all on-demand service economy consumers have an undergraduate education. Respondents with a post-graduate or professional school degree and those with a college or technical school education comprise of 21 per cent each, while only eight per cent of respondents with high school or less say they are "sharing economy" consumers. While educational attainment is slightly higher for consumers rather than workers, the market is be-

Employment status	
Working full-time	64%
Working part-time	10%
Going to school and working	6%
Going to school and not working	3%
Unemployed or laid off	5%
Stay at home full-time	2%
Retired	9%
	100%

Household income	
Under $40,000	14%
$40,001 to $60,000	17%
$60,001 to $80,000	16%
$80,001 to $100,000	10%
$100,001 to $150,000	17%
More than $150,000	13%
Prefer not to answer	12%
	100%

ing driven by people who have higher education — whether it is about working to provide or buying on-demand services.

Most consumers of on demand services work full-time (64 per cent), with a small proportion working part-time (10 per cent).

Consumption of these services is quite evenly distributed across household income levels. While almost half of consumers (47 per cent) are in households with incomes of $80,000 or less, that is sharply lower than the 58 per cent of workers who are in households in that income range.

Where do on-demand service economy purchasers live within the GTA?

While the overall distribution of living locations is similar to workers, there are some differences. On-demand service economy consumers are concentrated more in Toronto than workers, and less so in Peel and Durham. Toronto dominates, with 52 per cent of all on-demand service economy con-

Q. Do you think each of the following aspects of the "sharing economy" need to be more regulated, or not?

	Total	Purchased	Provided		
			Current	Past	Total
Health and safety standards	78%	76%	82%	64%	72%
Business responsibilities of the platform owner (e.g. registering as a service provider, paying business taxes, having insurance…)	72%	70%	70%	63%	66%
Protections of the rights of people who work in the sharing economy	65%	65%	67%	66%	66%

sumers in this survey, followed by Peel region (17 per cent), York region (15 per cent), and Durham and Halton (both at eight per cent).

3. Should the "sharing economy" be regulated?

Finally, we asked all respondents — those who do and those who don't participate in this sector — if they thought there is a need for more regulation of the "sharing economy" in these areas: health and safety, business responsibilities of the platform owners, and protection for workers. A majority believe there is a need for more regulation.

The largest majority across all categories (78 per cent) believe there is a need for more health and safety regulation, followed by business responsibilities (72 per cent), and worker protection (65 per cent).

This ranking is consistent with both workers and purchasers, but a greater proportion of current workers believe there is a need for more regulation across all categories than past workers.

Implications of the "sharing economy" as work

These survey results provide the first detailed snapshot of the sort of on-demand services popularly known as the "sharing economy" that people in the GTA provide and purchase.

The results of the survey illustrate the reach of these services into the lives of residents: about four in 10 residents buy these services and about one in 10 have worked to provide them — though it's important to note only four per cent of respondents in this survey say they are currently working in the "sharing economy." The terminology and its business proponents may dominate news headlines, but it is not the biggest player in the GTA labour market.

What also becomes apparent in this survey is that this emerging way of doing business reflects existing divisions within the broader labour market. Consider these findings: higher income earners are more likely to purchase these services and lower-income earners more likely to provide them. Racialized workers provide the majority of these services while non-racialized consumers buy the majority of them. Consumers are more likely to live in Toronto than on-demand service providers.

The fact that more than 70 per cent of on-demand economy workers in this survey are younger than 45 could reflect the precarious labour market in which Millennials have come of age. Full-time, secure jobs aren't as readily available so the on-demand service economy is becoming one of the ways in which these workers make ends meet — even for well-educated degree-holders. It appears that work in the so-called "sharing economy" is part of the patchwork of precarious jobs that too many workers must rely on.

That the majority of the workers in this survey expect to still be doing this one year from now may reflect the hopelessness that more secure work will materialize: 55 per cent say it's the only way they can make a living right now.

The good news is that most of the respondents who say they work in the "sharing economy" enjoy the work and most would recommend it as a way to make a living. But the work does have clear downsides: 41 per cent say the biggest challenge is that they don't make enough money, 38 per cent say customer disputes are an issue, 35 per cent say if they get sick, they don't get paid, 34 per cent don't like the unpredictable hours, and 29 per cent don't like being on call so often.

And while "sharing economy" service provision is often touted as giving people the flexibility and freedom to earn what they want when they want, it comes at a cost. For most of the workers in this survey, providing services isn't exactly a get-rich scheme: 58 per cent say their household income is less than $80,000 a year.

As for freedom, consider this: workers are responsible for the costs and the risks connected to this work. This sector is often applauded as a way to raise income from your assets, whether it is your house, your car, or your driveway, but when things go wrong, platform owners might offer little support. Twenty per cent of workers in this survey say dealing with the company that owns the platform is an issue.

There are other work issues as well. For instance, more than a quarter of the workers in this survey told us they are providing cleaning services. They face financial and safety risks ranging from the cost of supplies to security issues around entering homes without the protections provided in more traditional employment relationships. They may be trying to supplement their income through the platform-based market, but a "sharing economy" cleaner lacks the supports that all unionized cleaners in, say, hotels enjoy.

Workers providing these services are also vulnerable to racist and sexual harassment. And the customer ratings that accompany most of the platforms make it difficult to address this harassment.

We cannot put the toothpaste back in the tube with respect to the "sharing economy." We can call it what it is though: the on-demand service economy. And we can turn to strong regulations to ensure that this newly developing part of the GTA's service sector is harnessed in the interests of consumers, workers, and the broader public. Based on findings in this survey, there appears to be widespread public support for stronger protections for on-demand service workers and consumers.

The public debate has centred on whether to regulate the likes of Uber and Airbnb. Strong regulations are in order. Regulators should cast their net widely, to encompass: (1) Protections for both on-demand service economy workers and consumers; and (2) Protections/requirements for on-demand service workers that go beyond car ride provision and home rentals. The results from this survey indicate the on-demand service workforce has spread into cleaning services, food preparation services, food delivery, and home repairs. In each of these service categories, provincial and municipal regulators should carefully consider protections for both workers and the consumers who buy these services.

Without such protections, there will be even fewer limits on worker exploitation in an already precarious labour market. For those workers who are providing on-demand services and enjoying the work, they deserve to know regulators have put in place the full range of regulations to protect them and ensure working conditions meet employment standards in more established sectors of the economy. Regardless of the emergent and shifting nature of the labour market, protections should be solidly in place and governments need to become nimbler as new technologies disrupt traditional employer-employee relationships.

Conclusion

We set out to survey workers and consumers who say that they participate in the so-called "sharing economy" to get a sense of the size of this emerging sector, to see who is engaged in these type of business transactions, and to learn how workers, in particular, are experiencing this new iteration of the on-demand service economy.

We discovered that nine per cent of respondents in this survey identify as having worked in this sector and only four per cent say they work in it now.

We discovered that the range of services provided in the GTA go beyond the Uber and Airbnb poster children of the "sharing economy," They include cleaning services, home cooked meals, home repairs, even parking sharing.

We learned that young and educated workers and consumers are driving this trend. From the workers' perspective, finding work through online platforms might reflect a tough labour market for young people in the GTA: in the absence of long-term, full-time, well-paying (decent) work, the "sharing economy" may be part of how people are getting by. The findings certainly suggest so, with 64 per cent saying they are doing this to make extra money, 55 per cent saying it's the only way to make a living right now, and 53 per cent saying it's a short-term gig until they find something better.

Responses to the question "who provides services in this emerging sector?" suggest that this part of the economy is reproducing many of the dynamics of income inequality that are present in the broader economy. Racialized workers, for instance, are more likely to be providing these on-demand services while non-racialized consumers are more likely to buy them.

Asking workers about the biggest downsides or challenges to doing the work is also revealing. More than one third say they don't make enough money, they don't like the customer disputes, it's hard to get enough work, they don't like the unpredictable hours, and if they get sick they don't get paid. While many of the survey respondents who currently work in this sector have positive feelings about it, the majority of both worker and consumer respondents say the "sharing economy" should be more regulated. They're looking for increased safety regulation, regulations for business responsibilities, and worker protection.

Given the broad range of on-demand services currently being provided in the GTA, regulators would do well to broaden regulatory protections as they consider new measures to protect workers and consumers.

A final cautionary reminder: the "sharing economy" terminology is lodged in the public discussion, but it is misleading. The types of services and companies that both consumers and service providers identify with in this survey can hardly be described as sharing activities. Workers are simply taking advantage of online platform created by business owners in order to provide on call, on-demand services to customers throughout the GTA.

Appendix A

THESE QUESTIONS ON the sharing economy were part of Environics Research's *Focus GTA* — a bi-annual online omnibus survey of residents of the Greater Toronto Area. This survey was conducted between October 5–20, 2016, with a sample of 2,304 GTA residents who belong to an online panel. Environics Research set quotas for age, gender, income, region and PRIZM Social Group in order to ensure that the sample would be representative of the general population. While conducting this survey online makes sense given "sharing economy" consumers and providers negotiate their business through an on-line platform, because an online panel is a population of convenience, no margin of error can be ascribed.

September 19, 2016
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Focus GTA Omnibus
Attitudes towards the Sharing Economy

Now some questions about the "sharing economy". The sharing economy label has been associated with everything from free goods exchanges (such as community book libraries or used clothing swaps) to people using commercial online platforms or apps to sell, buy or rent services such as home sharing, ride sharing and other tasks. You have probably heard of companies like Airbnb and Uber referred to as "sharing economy" companies, but there are many others.

For the purposes of this survey, w**e want to focus specifically on commercial sharing economy platforms where a service is being offered and where someone is doing actual work in return for a fee.**

1.In the last few years, which of the following types of "sharing economy" services have you personally bought (i.e. used as a consumer), if any?
CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

Home sharing (e.g. Airbnb, VRBO)
Car/ride sharing (e.g. Uber, SafeHer)
Food delivery (e.g. Doordash, Foodora, Grabb, Just Eat, Mama Earth, UberEats)
Office sharing (e.g. Hoffice, IQ Office, Workhaus)
Parking sharing (e.g. Rover)
Carpooling (e.g. Blancride)
Goods trading (e.g. Bunz, Freecycle)
Home cooked meals (e.g. Meal Surfers, Chez Lisgar)
Cleaning service (e.g. Cleanify)
Home repairs (e.g. TaskRabbit, Handy, Jiffy, Repair Café, Repairathon)
Other services (SPECIFY)______________________
None, I have not bought any of these sharing economy services

2. In the last few years, which of the following types of sharing economy services have you personally worked in or offered or sold, if any?
CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

Home sharing (e.g. Airbnb, VRBO)
Car/ride sharing (e.g. Uber, SafeHer)
Food delivery (e.g. Doordash, Foodora, Grabb, Just Eat, Mama Earth, UberEats)
Office sharing (e.g. Hoffice, IQ Office, Workhaus)
Parking sharing (e.g. Rover)
Carpooling (e.g. Blancride)
Goods trading (e.g. Bunz, Freecycle)
Home cooked meals (e.g. Meal Surfers, Chez Lisgar)
Cleaning service (e.g. Cleanify)
Home repairs (e.g. TaskRabbit, Handy, Jiffy, Repair Café, Repairathon)
Other services (SPECIFY)______________________
None, I have not worked in or offered any sharing economy services
ASK Q. 3 THEN SKIP TO END

3. Do you think each of the following aspects of the “sharing economy” need to be more regulated, or not?
COLUMNS AND ROWS

a. Health and safety standards
Yes, needs to be more regulated
No, no need for more regulation
b. Business responsibilities of the owner of the platform (e.g. registering as a service provider, paying business taxes, having insurance…)
c. Protections of the rights of people who work in the sharing economy
ASK ALL WHO HAVE WORKED/PROVIDED ANY SERVICES IN THE SHARING ECONOMY IN Q. 2
Now some questions about your own personally experience working or providing services in the sharing economy.

4. Are you currently doing any work providing any sharing economy services or is it something you did in the past and have since stopped?

I’m currently doing work providing services in the sharing economy
I worked providing sharing economy services in the past, but not anymore
I have never actually worked in the sharing economy (i.e. I have only sold goods or traded things where no money was involved) **SKIP TO END**

5. How would you describe your own experience working and providing services in the sharing economy? Has it been…?

Very positive
Somewhat positive
Equally positive and negative
Somewhat negative
Very negative

6. How long have you/did you work in the sharing economy?

More than a year
Six months to a year
One to six months
Less than a month

7. Do you expect to still be working in the sharing economy a year from now?

Yes
No

8. Do each of the following statements apply to you or not, as reasons for why you are working or have worked in the "sharing economy"?
COLUMNS AND ROWS

a. It's the only way that I can make a living right now
Applies to me
Does not apply to me
b. I am doing this to make some extra money
c. It's a short-term gig until I find something better
d. I am doing this because I enjoy it

9. In a typical month, about what proportion of your **personal** income comes from the work you do providing services in the sharing economy?

Over 90%
75–89%%
50–74%
25–49%
Less than 25%

10. Would you recommend working in the sharing economy to someone else as a good way to make a living, or would you recommend against it?

Yes, I would recommend working in the sharing economy
No, I would recommend against working in the sharing economy

11. In your own words, describe what it is like to work in the sharing economy — you can say positive or negative things or a mix of both:
[open ended]

12. As someone who has worked in the sharing economy, which of the following have been your three biggest "down sides" or challenges?
DRAG AND DROP 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD ...RANDOMIZE ORDER

It's hard to get enough work

Unpredictable hours
I don’t make enough money
Having to be on call too much of the time
Customer disputes
If I get sick I don’t get paid
Not having any benefits for things like dental and prescriptions
Dealing with the company that owns the platform

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