

Labor beyond employment

For any country, a qualitative, as well as quantitative, statistical description and analysis of the local structure of the labor market, is an incumbent premise for defining general labor policies. In order for countries to be able to characterise the structure of the labor market, international organizations, primarily the International Labor Organization, have been developing and proposing variables for classifying workers and forms of labor in general over the years. These classifiers are also pertinent for ensuring synergy between countries, and they are shared internationally, with some modifications taking into account local contexts.

In addition, the classification of forms of labor is germane at the legislative level to determine the scope of labor legislation and the actors of labor relations.

Different countries employ different models for classifying employment and forms of labor, although for the most part the classification is based on international variables. Georgia is no exception and the Georgian National Statistics Office relies on the recommendations of the International Labor Organization.

In the classification of forms of employment we find three main dimensions, these are:

- Formal and informal employment
- Standard and non-standard forms of employment
- Employment and self-employment (which overlaps with the above two categories)

Each of these concepts has defined variables according to which this or that form of employment falls into a particular category, although some labor practices are difficult to describe with standard classification variables or barely fall within the classification threshold. This difficulty is primarily due to the fact that sometimes it is formidable not only to determine the specific type of employment but also to ascertain whether the matter concerns employment as such - whether it constitutes an employment relationship between the employer and the employee. There are groups of workers who are not employed, and as they do not qualify as self-employed, they fall in the category of the so-called "gray area" between hired employment and self-employment, their forms of labor may be different and in some cases take the form of entrepreneurial or other types of relationships. At the same time, it can belong to both formal and informal sectors, and in some cases, it can look like both standard employment and non-standard forms of employment.

In developing countries, such as Georgia, small businesses are particularly inclined to avoid entering into labor relations and assuming employer obligations and responsibilities. As a result, different types of formal or informal relationships are formed in a number of economic sectors. In such cases, we often face non-standard forms of labor, disguised employment / dependent self-employment. Typically, in cases where the employer tries to avoid hiring, there is a disproportionate balance of power between the parties, and as a result, we encounter more vulnerable, unstable forms of employment, a labor force without a labor code and social guarantees. The forms and structure of labor in this system are sporadic and varied, making it difficult to describe them using standard labor relations parameters and classifiers.

Often in one enterprise, we encounter labor relations of different types and forms at the same time or entrepreneurial relations similar to labor relations.

Below are some examples of labor practices common in Georgia, the description of which makes it difficult to speak unequivocally whether there is an employment relationship in a particular case (relationship between employer and employee) and if so, what form of employment we are dealing with.

Trade at markets

According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia,¹ in 2020, 201 economic entities were operating in Georgia, engaged in market trades and the organization of markets, of which 30.3% (61 units) were located in Tbilisi. As for the number of traders, there are 53,900 trade points in the territory of the markets and fairs operating in Georgia, where on average **37,800 persons trade in one day**.

If we look at the organization of labor in the markets, formally we are dealing here with an entrepreneurial relationship between a landlord and a tenant. Traders pay different types of formal fees to the market administration, usually, these are 1. One-time payment for the right to trade 2. The daily or monthly payment for renting a commercial space 3. In some markets, there is a mandatory insurance payment, which provides for fire insurance. In return, the trader has the right to operate in a specific area of the market. It is difficult to talk about the existence of an employment relationship between the market administration and the trader since the variables necessary for the conclusion of the employment relationship are not met, first, the trader does not receive periodic remuneration from the market administration, the trader is not formally required to work every day (although they are required to pay the rental fee every day), etc. On the other hand, market and fair traders somewhat meet the classification of self-account workers. According to the International Labor Organization, self-account workers are those who work independently or with a partner (s), whose pay is directly dependent on income from the production of products or services, and do not have other employees on a regular basis.

The essence of the problem is that the employees of the market have to work in difficult working conditions, and the administration of the market is completely relieved of all obligations. Lease agreements in Georgia are often short-term, and after the expiration date, the market administration can arbitrarily increase the rental payment. In addition, the market administration is not obliged to take care of the market territory, to provide infrastructure for the market traders, which would shelter employees from cold weather, rain, and wind. Traders themselves pay utility bills. Also, they do not have places to store products in the market territory, and, thus, they have to pay a fee for storing products. The administration does not provide lavatories and clean water for traders, for which they have to pay an additional fee.

¹ https://www.geostat.ge/media/39643/ბაზრების-და-ბაზრობების-ორგანიზებით-დაკავებული-ეკ.სუბიექტები_2020.pdf

Traders can not enjoy the minimum benefits that hired employees have - paid leave, maternity leave, and reimbursement of leave from the state budget; Their right to not show up for work during illness is also hindered, as in such a case they still have to pay rent. They cannot participate in the accumulative pension scheme. Market employees are deprived of all types of social guarantees. They are the most vulnerable segment of society, which most needs solid guarantees and job protection, however, contrarily, their job is most vulnerable.

To summarize, market traders are indeed not involved in the labor relations, and in the entrepreneurial relationship between them and the market administration, there is a noticeable imbalance of forces in favor of market administration. We end up with a category of workers who are outside the scope of the Labor Code, the state does not see them as employees, can not offer social benefits, thus making their labor vulnerable.

Employment at beauty salons

Small beauty salons are a good example of such forms of employment, when in one enterprise we can identify several types of entrepreneurial or labor relations. An example of hairdressing practice is cited in the ILO 2018 Statistical Definition and Measurement of Dependent Self-Employment as an evident example of disguised employment or dependent self-employment. According to the document, a common feature of beauty salons is that hairdressers "rent" a chair from the salon owner, also buy the necessary materials (shampoos, dyes, etc.) from them, and are obliged to follow the salon pricing policy, apply corresponding tariffs. They charge a service fee to customers, however, a portion of the fee is paid to the salon owner. In some cases, they pay state taxes and make social contributions. If they do not have clients on a particular day, they are left without pay. The work schedule, the opening time of the salon, and the distribution of new clients among the hairdressers working in the salon can be determined by the salon owner. In these cases, hairdressers are self-employed in the sense that they can retain their clients, they have invested in their skills, and can also employ their own equipment. However, the salon owner controls prices, certain aspects of market access, and work organization (ILO, 2018).²

According to the common practice in Georgia, the owner of the salon is a private person or persons who can be considered as self-employed / owners of their own business. They usually do not have employees hired in the salon, instead, we can encounter the following forms of labor:

1. **Self-employment.** The owner provides the service him/herself
2. **Disguised employment / informal employment / informal business relationship / dependent self-employment.** The owners have so-called partner specialists, such as hairdressers (so-called stylists) who provide the service. There may be both a formal, written contract between the owner and the stylist, as well as an informal agreement on the rules for redistributing the income received.

² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_636042.pdf

There are cases when stylists use the territory of the salon owner to carry out their activities. Arrangements between the stylist and the owner may be different, for example, the stylist pays the monthly rent and the customer pays the stylist the service fee or the customer pays the salon, while the stylist receives a certain share of the total profit. In either case, the salon owner does not appear to be an employer who would hire a stylist in exchange for a monthly remuneration. In such a case, they would have to maintain and increase the number of salon users, also, the accounting processes would be more complex, they would have to provide the stylist the sick leave, the 24-day paid leave, maternity leave, and other benefits envisaged in the Labor Code. It is much more profitable for a small entrepreneur to avoid hiring and maximize the distribution of production risks to other workers.

3. **Informal employment.** The salon may also employ, for example, a janitor who is in an employment relationship with the salon owner, in terms of the content, but this relationship may take the form of informal employment, without an employment contract. In many cases, such a position may be held by family members or relatives of the owners.

In the third case, it is easy to identify informal employment, as it usually meets most of the parameters offered by the International Labor Organization Recommendation 198 to member countries in determining the existence of the employment relationship:

- Existence of subordination and dependence on the employer;
- Working conditions are defined by the employer;
- The degree of employee integration in the company;
- The work is conducted only or mainly for one party;
- The work is performed by the employee him/herself (they have not hired another person);
- Work is completed at specific times or in a pre-arranged location;
- The work has a specific duration and is continuous;
- Work performance requires that the employee be available at a specific time;
- The client provides the employee with the necessary equipment to perform the work;
- The employee receives periodic remuneration;
- This remuneration is the sole or main source of income for the employee;
- Rights are recognized (weekly vacation, annual leave);
- Reimbursement of business trip/transportation expenses for the employee;
- The employee has no financial risks related to the performance of the job.

Some of the same parameters are met for the second form of employment presented above, although it is more difficult to determine whether there is an employment relationship between the salon owner and the stylist, as the stylist may have some freedom in organizing their own work (although individual cases may be completely different). Also, the stylist's self-perception is important to consider, in most cases, they will consider themselves self-employed and not as hired employees.

An important aspect of identifying an employment relationship is also the analysis of the employee's economic and personal dependence on the employer. Labor relations give rise to the economic and personal dependence of the employee on one employer. Economic dependence means that the employee assumes production risks, even in part. Since employees have one major employer, a major

portion of their income is generated from this employment relationship. Consequently, they are not open to other players on the market. The demand-supply between these two parties is usually not in equilibrium, the volume of the demand depends on the economic situation of the client company at a particular moment, therefore, it is obvious that the employee shares the production risks. In addition, the volume of the employee's work and consequently the income may increase and decrease in the face of increasing or decreasing demand for products, while such fluctuations do not apply to the hired employee, consequently, their degree of stability is high. And if we compare the situation of the self-employed in terms of economic dependence, it is true that the self-employed also share the risks of production, however, they have more opportunities because they do not depend on only one customer. As for personal dependency, ie subordination, naturally, the client company strictly determines the working conditions, time, place, content of the work (Muehlberger 2007b). This is why the term *dependent self-employment* is often used to describe cases where an employee has hired another person as self-employed, although the economic and personal dependence of the employee on them as an employer is evident.

In the case of salon workers, it is clear that in both types of relationships discussed above, both cleaners and stylists have an economic and personal dependency towards the salon owner, although production risks are largely shifted to their side. Hired employees, in a classical sense, are less likely to share production risks, for example, when the company's orders are periodically reduced, their wages do not change. What happens, for example, in the case of a salon stylist? Their income is directly proportional to the orders received. Should the number of customers reduce, the revenue also decreases. This is one of the main factors that make the job of the stylist vulnerable and unprotected in the business relationship described above.

Similar forms of labor can also be found in sewing salons, beauty salons, beauty centers, car service centers, fast food outlets, bakeries, etc.

In these sectors, the chaotic forms of business or labor relations described above are most often a certain hybrid of the landlord-tenant relationship and the labor relationship, where the balance of power is usually upset in favor of the property owner. Why is this form of activity problematic for the employee-tenant? Below are some key issues:

1. The most problematic similar relationships occur when no contract has been concluded between the parties to the working relationship and there is only a verbal agreement. In this case, neither party is protected, especially the employee, who may fall victim to a unilateral change in the verbal agreement. For example, there are cases when the property owner asks the employee to pay additional fees, increases rent, or reduces the share of profit. Given the high unemployment rate in the country, it is quite likely that the breakdown of the existing relationship will be more damaging to the employee than to the employer/property owner, therefore the bargaining power is unequal between the parties.
2. As noted, the transfer of production risks to the employee side of the relationship falls into the category of vulnerable employment and at the same time, employees are constantly experiencing a lack of financial security. This problem usually also leads to a burnout problem as a chain reaction. Employees are focused on serving the maximum number of customers because their income is directly

proportional to the number of clients, therefore, they are focused on devoting as much time as possible to work and less - to rest.

3. There is no organizational regulation of work in the workplace, work and break time -as provided by the Labor Code - is not ensured, employees can not enjoy the same benefits as hired employees - paid leave, overtime pay, sick leave, ma/paternity leave and minimal remuneration for maternity leave by the state, remuneration for working during official holidays, etc. For both the informal workers and the disguised self-employed, there is a high probability that workers will not be able to enjoy the benefits provided by the Labor Code.

4. Employees find themselves beyond the social protection systems. Employees involved in the forms of employment described above are benefiting from the accumulated pension system. It is true that in Georgia, even those involved in formal and standard labor relations do not have access to various social security guarantees, such as, above all, unemployment insurance, but in the case of informal and disguised employment, workers are a priori deprived of these prospects.

5. The types of employment described above virtually preclude the possibility of unionizing employees, which can have two main reasons: Firstly, this is the perception. If a person does not identify themselves as an employee, and the employer - as an employer, it is clear that they will not perceive themselves as carriers of labor rights, that can be demanded and enforced. The second reason is also that informal and non-standard workers are usually disintegrated and scattered, lacking a physical gathering space, which reduces the prospect of organizing.

The role of the state and the review of best practices

For decades, there has been a strong tendency in Georgia to form employment relationships different from hired employment, which has a logical historical explanation. As a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the structural transformations carried out through the so-called "shock therapy" (Bernabe, 2005) in Georgia it was not possible to create the necessary environment for the formation of solid institutions and formal economic relations, thus, the economic and labor relations were mainly informal. According to the International Monetary Fund, the share of the shadow economy in the total Georgian economy in 1991-1999 ranged from 62% to 72% (Medina, Schneider, 2018).³ Although we observe a downward trend in the shadow economy, according to the same indicators (53.07% - as of 2015), we can still say that the share of the shadow economy in the country is high, which naturally points to informal economic and labor relations. At the same time, as of 2020, 31.7% of employees in the non-agricultural sector in Georgia are informally employed (Georgian National Statistics Department).

Informal economic and labor relations are more prevalent during small business activities. Small entrepreneurs usually try to avoid business relationships that put more responsibilities on the business,

³ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2018/01/25/Shadow-Economies-Around-the-World-What-Did-We-Learn-Over-the-Last-20-Years-45583>

try to avoid concluding labor relations or just any kind of formalization. What is the state policy in regards to establishing informal relations on the one hand and frameworks different from labor relations on the other?

Due to the fact that citizens in Georgia are deprived of formal employment opportunities, it is clear that informal or non-hired employment is the only way for them to earn a living. State that fails to offer its citizens alternatives, turns a blind eye not only to the disguise of labor relations or shadow labor relations but even to informal economic activities.

If we evaluate the state approaches and standards in general, **it can be said that state structures make more efforts to prevent informal business activities and ensure their formalization than to identify informal employment.** This is evident in the existence of a registry of payers of fixed taxes. Under Georgian law, the status of a fixed taxpayer can be granted to a natural person who is registered as an individual entrepreneur, is not a value-added taxpayer, and carries out one or more fixed taxable activities, namely owns a bakery, beauty salon, or car maintenance and repair service.⁴ Persons registered for the mentioned activities pay a monthly fee, which is set at 30-100 GEL per tax object. In the case of beauty salons, the fee is set at 50 GEL for one chair/table. The imposition of such a tax by the state indicates that it is interested in formalizing certain activities and receiving state fees in the form of taxes, although it is not interested in detecting labor relations in salons, bakeries, or auto service facilities and formalizing these relations. As of today, 25,274 entities are registered in the Register of Fixed Taxpayers. Roughly speaking, this means as many small organizations where it is expected that there are informal or other forms of labor relations that put the job operator in a vulnerable position.

Why is it important for the state to be interested not only in the collection of taxes from barbers or bakeries but also in the workers behind these entities, their employment forms, and working conditions?

First and foremost, it is important because there may be informal business relationships where the principle of equality in the negotiations between business partners may be violated and citizens may be restricted from going to court in case of breach of contract.

The state should ensure the provision of benefits to citizens, as those available in formal, hired employment. Hired employment is generally considered to be the most protected form of labor and, conversely, high rates of informal employment and non-standard employment are associated with low labor standards, insufficient social protection, indicating a high level of vulnerable employment in the country.

Formal employment growth is doubly beneficial for the state, on the one hand, it no longer has tax deficits, the number of income taxpayers increases, on the other hand, formal employment growth contributes to a more stable social environment in the country, involving more citizens in social protection. In addition, formal employment is a facilitator of an employee organization, and organization is one of the most important conditions for employees to exercise their rights.

⁴ <https://www.rs.ge/PersonsPreferentialTax?cat=3&tab=1>

According to the European experience, for those who work in the so-called gray area, for a group of workers who are neither self-employed nor hired and are present in the so-called gray zone, different approaches are found in different countries of the world. Transforming all types of employment into hired employment would be an unrealistic goal, although different countries are finding ways to create social guarantees and better working conditions for this group of employees. To this end, we can distinguish four main areas of policy:

1. Recognition of labor relations and solving the problem of employment misclassification

First of all, the state needs to see, recognize, classify and describe the group of workers in the so-called gray area. Recommendation N198 on Labor Relations was adopted at the 2006 International Labor Conference to assist countries in tackling employment classification. This recommendation introduces that the determination of the existence of an employment relationship should be guided primarily by the facts relating to the performance of work notwithstanding how the relationship is characterized by the parties. This principle is employed by many legislators in different countries, for example, Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom (Williams, Lapeyre, 2017).

In some EU countries, such as Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Portugal, there is a hybrid legal category for a group of workers who are neither employed by hiring nor self-employed. In this way, they are more endowed with certain rights and are involved in social protection systems. In some countries (France, Greece, Luxembourg) "dependent self-employed" are considered to be hired employees and the Labor Code is applicable. And in some countries, specific criteria are introduced according to which an employee is classified as either hired worker or self-employed. (ILO, 2016)

In Georgia, in the first stage, for the state to develop employment policies, it is necessary to identify and describe various employment practices at the national level, be it standard or non-standard forms of labor relations, self-employment, or dependent self-employment. In the second stage, it is important to introduce an obligation for the parties to formalize this type of agreement and, in the best case, to make a specific form of employment declaratory. The purpose of the formalization should not initially be to impose an additional tax burden on the parties but to obtain information for the full picture.

2. Incentivizing hired employment

The government can employ various means to facilitate the transformation of different types of entrepreneurial relationships into labor relations. As mentioned above, the main motivation of a business when avoiding an employment relationship is seeking more financial benefits and more flexibility. How should the state persuade business people to enter the labor relations? One of the mechanisms is to introduce specific criteria for defining labor relations and to impose appropriate sanctions for those who try to disguise labor relations. In some countries, the sanction is to impose an obligation to reclassify labor relations, while in others monetary or civil sanctions are imposed. In most EU countries, the sanction is an obligation to requalify employment relations, while in others it is the imposition of monetary or civil liabilities. In most EU countries, the sanction is an obligation to requalify. An existing business relationship is not abolished but is given the qualification of an

employment relationship from the moment the relationship commenced. Such regulations have the effect of "stimulating declaration". In addition, the employee is given all rights, especially the minimum wage and pension contributions, and the employer is obliged to pay them for the period from the beginning of the business relationship between them and the employee. This is the case in the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. In other EU member states, reclassification is limited to a certain extent (Williams, Lapeyre, 2017).

However, given the Georgian context, the high level of unemployment, and the structure of the employment market, rather than imposing sanctions, it may be more relevant to create incentives for businesses to encourage hiring.

3. Adaptation of social protection systems

Although there are mandatory or voluntary social contribution schemes for the self-employed in many EU countries, the amount of benefits received by this group is usually lower than for the employed. There is still a noticeable difference in terms of social protection between the self-employed and the employed. For example, in Germany and Greece, a large proportion of the self-employed do not participate in health and pregnancy insurance schemes, and only a few countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary) have unemployment insurance schemes for the self-employed (OECD, 2015: 181). However, there are positive examples, for example, in Austria and France there are compulsory insurances for farmers according to their needs and specifications; Also, insurance for artists and related workers in Germany (Artists Social Insurance Funds). In France, the status of "auto-entrepreneur" was introduced in 2008, which improved the protection of certain categories of the self-employed (European Parliament, 2013).

Germany and Italy have taken various measures to close the gap between those hired on a regular wage basis and increase access to social security. In Italy, separate social security funds were set up for the dependent self-employed so that this form of employment would no longer be used to avoid social contributions. (European Parliament, 2013).

The World Confederation of Employment (2016) states that social protection should be built around a person's full career and not just on their employment contracts and statuses. The social protection systems created in Europe during the domination of standard forms of employment need to be developed while developing countries need to create new systems that will adapt to the existing labor market system and modern forms of labor. In the modern labor market, social benefits must meet at least three criteria:

1. Should be mobile, tied to the work of the individual and not to their employer;
2. Should be universal, apply to all employees (regardless of employment status)
3. The employee's social contributions should be tied to the hours worked, the work done and the income generated. (Kajaia, 2020)

Although there are no strong social schemes in Georgia, even for hired workers, the above recommendations are still to be taken into account, even in terms of the accumulative pension system and paid maternity leave. It is important for all types of workers regardless of their employment status to be encouraged and able to join the accumulative pension system, it is pertinent to reduce contributions from 4% to 2% for the self-employed who voluntarily participate in the pension scheme, as this may be an additional barrier for them to join the pension scheme while increasing the state contribution from 2% to 4%. Consequently, the state needs to cover the share of contributions that the employer pays in case of hired employees.

As for paid maternity leave, it is important that, first of all, the amount of paid leave is adequate for the term of maternity leave and the employee's salary (instead of the existing 1000 GEL), and secondly, it is important to expand this benefit and ensure the participation of all types of employees in the scheme.

4. Formation of employee self-perception

In addition to the state-endorsed and pursues policies, it is important to strengthen the mechanism for collective bargaining in the country, in which the role of labor unions and associations, as well as that of civil sector, is pertinent. It is important to study the labor practices and forms of employees in the "gray area", conduct an in-depth assessment of the specifics of their work, to identify and describe problematic sectors. At a later stage, it is important to carry out informational and educational activities, which will nudge workers to self-identify as employees. Why is it important for workers to identify themselves as employees? This promotes their desire and motivation to form a healthy working environment in the workplace and the working conditions regulated by the Labor Code. In addition, self-identification as an employee can be considered as an important precondition for promoting workers' unionization.

Considering the example of stylists again, imagine a stylist who works in a salon and is temporarily in a business relationship with a salon owner. They agree on specific terms, mainly related to profit distribution. For a stylist in such a case, the salon owner is not the employer, and they consider themselves more in the category of the self-employed than the employee, and the organization of their work and the rate of their labor are to some extent negotiable or derived from specific daily needs. In a situation where most of the production risks are borne by the stylist, their motivation is to provide services to as many customers as possible. It is expected that the amount of working time, vacation, work on weekends is organized not according to the norms of the Labor Code, as it happens in the case of hired employees, but more chaotically. However, in the present case, there is no employer and employee as such who should be the parties as defined by the Labor Code and subject to its regulation. The stylist, in this case, can not identify him/herself as an actor in the Labor Code and, consequently, neither party is motivated to follow the norms provided by the Code, which is a necessary prerequisite for a fair and healthy organization of the work environment.

To conclude, labor beyond employment is an important issue and it requires further, in-depth research for this large group of employees to gradually become part of labor policy. It is important to outline research-based strategies on how the existing forms of labor can be transformed into more secure employment. It is important to explore what types of social schemes need to be initiated to ensure the

involvement of all groups of workers in social protection schemes and, ultimately, to achieve a more secure, equitable employment relationship and a protected social environment.

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