

Pluriactivity, Identity of Farming and Their Relation to the Question of Class Location of Farming Households

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Abstract: This paper is a methodological one, addressing the issue of how to deal with questions of identity, of farming, and its relation to the class locations of households engaged in farming and off-farm employment concurrently, which is usually called “pluriactivity”. The paper first examines and assesses why and how this problem arises out of different abstract conceptions of class, the social-class-identities of productive activities, the occupational identities of individuals and how the household boundaries are drawn in empirical research. Next, the paper makes suggestions for how to overcome these problems by paying attention to the problem of emergence, that is, how to describe and decide the very unity and identity that several income generating activities and forms of employment bring about concerning the class location of individuals and households. The leading argument of this essay is that the same or similar types of activities or types of employment derive their identity not from within themselves as separate entities but from the larger scheme of material, social or cultural objectives which the individuals and households, acting on the principle of “we-intentionality”, try to achieve by using their labour and resources as instruments.

Keywords: Pluriactivity, social identity of farming, ideal-typical conceptions, social class, conceptions of social class, class locations of farmers, class location of households.

Öz: Bu metodolojik deneme, eşzamanlı olarak tarım içi ve tarım dışı istihdamda yer alanın çiftçi bireyler ve çiftçilikle uğraşan hane halklarının tarımsal üretim faaliyetlerinin toplumsal kimliği ve toplumsal sınıf konularının tefrik edilmesi bakımından doğurduğu metodolojik ve kuramsal sorunların neler oldukları ve bunların nasıl bir yaklaşımla aşılabileceği hakkındadır. Çalışmada önce bu sorunların soyut düzeydeki farklı toplumsal sınıf anlayışları, üretim ve istihdam faaliyetlerinin toplumsal sınıf kimliği ve bireylerin mesleki kimlikleri hakkındaki kavramlaştırmalar yanında ampirik araştırmalarda hane halkının sınırlarının nasıl çizildiğine dair tercihlerden niçin ve nasıl ortaya çıktığı incelenip, değerlendirilmektedir. Bunun ardından gelir getirici faaliyetlerin dahili bütünlüğünden nasıl bir aşkın kimliğin ortaya çıkmakta olduğunu incelemek suretiyle karşılaşılmakta olan sorunların nasıl aşılabileceğine dair öneriler sunulmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel iddiası şudur: Bireyler ve/veya hane halkları tarafından yürütülen üretim faaliyetleri ve içinde yer aldıkları istihdam biçimleri kimliklerini tek tek kendi ayrı kimliklerinden değil, “bizlik” ilkesi ile hareket bireylerin ve hane halklarının kendi emek ve kaynaklarını kullanmak suretiyle erişmek veya elde etmek istedikleri maddi, toplumsal ve kültürel amaçların geniş çerçevesi içinde şekillenen aşkın toplumsal kimlikten kazanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Çoklu istihdam, çiftçilik biçiminin toplumsal kimliği, ideal-tip kavramlar, toplumsal sınıf, toplumsal sınıf kavramlaştırmaları, çiftçilerin toplumsal sınıf konumu, hane halklarının toplumsal sınıf konumu.

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DOI: 10.12658/M0667
insan & toplum, 2022.
insanvetoplum.org

Received : 12.11.2021
Revision : 16.03.2022
Accepted : 16.03.2022
Online First : 12.04.2022

Introduction

When engaged in empirical research, researchers very often find themselves in need of adjusting their conception of a given phenomenon in abstract and the very referents of this particular phenomenon in its concrete manifestations. This process is usually known as the *operationalization of a concept*, aiming at increasing its construct validity on the basis of which its measurement can be done with some degree of confidence and sound inferences can be made by using empirical data created out the research process. This process requires a perpetual re-examination of the very conception of the phenomenon in abstract and a coherent interpretation of the qualities and/or quantities that its referents are assumed to have when they are encountered in the empirical settings. The process is also a revealing one in many respects, including but not limited to: (i) that one can gain insights about how layered the conception of the phenomenon is in itself, (ii) that whether it is a subtype of a larger phenomenon differentiated from other subtypes by the degree, value or number of its component elements or (iii) that it is an entirely different one that can be understood not in terms of, say, the values of certain parameters or of the variables on the same scale, but in the qualitatively distinct organization of these elements in an emergent fashion.

In this regard, how to conceptualize the identity of farming and how to identify the social class location of the individuals and households engaged concurrently in farming and off-farm employment are two inter-related issues which researchers need to deal with in empirical studies on farming and farmers. These questions are usually dealt with by means of developing (in an inductive fashion) or adopting from already available literature (in a deductive fashion) “pure” or “ideal-typical” concepts as instruments in at least one of the following forms: (i) a heuristic device for exploration, (ii) an analytical criteria or a qualitative norm for analysis, (iii) a (theoretical) benchmark for making comparisons, (iv) a model for explanation, and (v) a framework for interpretation. For instance, ideal-typical conceptions of subsistence, the commercial family, capitalist and corporate farming, or alternatively peasant farming, simple commodity production, petty commodity production and capitalist production are usually employed to describe the social identity of farming and thus directly or indirectly of the social class location of families engaged in agricultural production as units of observation. Once the identity of farming is defined in such terms, the attention is turned in the next step into identifying their subtypes by classifying farms either by size (area of land farmed or owned) and/or by scale in gross/net income generated (such as large or big, medium and small-scale farming). However, the definitions of these concepts and what exactly they refer

to vary greatly, depending on policy purposes, historical and local circumstances, theoretical perspectives and the political inclinations of the researchers (Davidova & Thomson 2014, pp. 15-17; Darnhofer, et. al., 2013, pp. 11-18; Bernstein, 2010, pp. 2-8; von der Ploeg, 2013, ch. 1, Niska, et. al. 2012; Woodhouse, 2010).

On the other hand, for both policy makers and scientists, the current state and future of various forms of farming, especially of “peasant” and “family” farms, are two major topics of concerns ranging from debates on sustainable agriculture to food safety, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change; from farmers’ decisions for farm exit to problems of labour supply, from social and economic development to income distribution, and from social conflict to social change. A growing body of literature, as examined by Suess-Reyes and Fuetsch (2016, p. 117), indicates that “decreasing income and severe pressure to respond to rapidly changing economic, social, political, technological and natural environments compel farming families to engage in new, sophisticated business strategies to ensure the generation of family income and the transgenerational continuity of the family farm”. In general, these strategies rest on increasing the net earnings of households by diversifying agricultural production, which is often called “farm gate pluriactivity”, and/or generating income from off-farm employment, which is often called “beyond farm gate pluriactivity” or multiple job holding (Loughrey, et. al., 2013, p.1; Weltin, et. al., 2017, p. 172). But in their details the strategies employed by families may rather be more complicated, as examined by Oostindie (2018, p. 261) in a sample of Dutch family farms, and Lobley and Potter (2004, p. 502) in the case of farms in England. Furthermore, the generation of and increasing dependency on income from off-farm sources and employment now seems to have trespassed a symbolic and even a qualitative threshold in many countries which forces one to question whether the identity of farming and the social class positions of the farmers and farming households should be considered in new terms. For instance, Weltin, et. al.’s findings from their survey of 2154 farming households from 8 different EU countries in 2009 (2017, p. 174) indicate that for 32% of farming households, income from farming constitutes less than 50% of their income. In Turkey, according to the Household Budget Survey (Hanehalkı Bütçe Araştırması) data, the percent of farming households in which income from agriculture constitute less than 50% of their disposable annual total income has risen from 27,8% in 1994 to 64,9% in 2017.¹

1 Calculated by the author. The author has been granted permission to access to these data by TUIK via an official document dated 04.07.2019, document number: 27964695-622.03-E.15933.

Given these significant changes in the world of farming, the main question this paper is concerned with is that, if the diversification of sources of income and off-farm employment are the main instruments for the survival or “resilience” (Ashkenazy, et. al., 2018) especially of peasant or small farms, what implications has this diversification for the identity of farming and of the class location of the farmer and his/her household? This paper contends that how to answer this question depends on how the researchers deal with the following four central issues when designing and conducting their research in an empirical settings: (1) the problem of the identity of productive activities carried out within the broad field of agriculture, (2) occupational identity of the individuals and of the households, (3) the problem of household boundaries and (4) the problem of emergence, that is how to describe and decide the very unity and identity that these several income generating activities bring about concerning the class location of individuals and households.

The following presents a brief examination of what these problems are, how and why they emerge from different conceptions of class and of other key phenomena as well as the methodology and technical aspects of research process, and discusses how they can be overcome in the conclusion section.

The Question of Social Class

Social class is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional concept referring in current literature to at least two distinct phenomena: (i) a taxonomic group of individuals who share common attributes and therefore a common location with its associated positive and negative privileges in a system of ‘socially structured and reproduced material and symbolic inequalities’ prevailing in a given society, (ii) a group of individuals who identify or imagine themselves as a distinct group by reference to their location in a given structure of social inequality and act on the principle of what Giovagnoli (2021, p. 1) calls “we-intentionality” in managing their lives and their relations with other people. As such, the former conception of class can be employed with some ease in empirical research acting on the principle of, for instance, methodological individualism and thus can look for qualities or attributes at an individual level. The second conception of class would require, however, for one to specify the very attributes and referents by means of which it should be identified and/or is identified by the individuals themselves, as well as deciding if the amount or degree of these attributes reach a level or go over a threshold which qualify them to be counted as relevant.

How to bridge the gap between these two conceptions of class in abstract as well as in empirical research has been one of the central issues of debates on class. Marx’s definitions of the “class-in-itself” and the “class-for-itself” is an example and

this issue continues to be the case in contemporary debates on macro- or micro-classes (see for instance Grusky, 2005) and class boundaries especially by reference to forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1984), of consumption and life-styles (Pakulsky, 2005; Karademir-Hazır, 2014, 2016). Furthermore, in whichever form it is conceived, the researcher needs to deal not only with the presence or absence but also the amount, degree or type of the attributes in all of the individuals or groups of individuals in a given society and thus decide whether class is a concept applicable only to certain individuals or all of the individuals attached to the same system of structured inequalities in ways other than what a certain conception assumes to be the case. It is primarily due to problems of conceptualization and operationalization at this very basic level that we now have the untenable concept of, for instance, “under-class” as a distinct taxonomic group of people falling outside most conceptions of class but within the boundaries of society and its system of structured inequalities (cf. Bilton, et.al., 2002, p. 120).

There are on the whole two main approaches adopted by scholars to deal with class in abstract- that is, as a conceptual/theoretical question. One is to start from the root cause or causes which are held to be responsible for the production and reproduction of distinct economic-material, social and symbolic outcomes. The construct validity of these types of abstract conceptions is usually judged by their success in their capacity to predict or explain the outcomes in the form of socially recognized differences of advantage and disadvantage, as well as patterns of behaviour among individuals and/or groups. In very broad terms these types of approaches share a common assumption that it is the system of production and the ways in which individuals are attached to this system that mark or define the boundaries of their class location and the material basis of their interests, their class identity and the reasons for their distinctly different ways of life. Individuals’ relations with the system of production may be assumed to rest on, for example, the relations of production, the social or technical division of labour, what individuals bring to the market for exchange (or their market situation) or where they stand in relations of exchange etc. Many classical and contemporary scholars and traditions of sociological thought, including Marx (1998, pp. 41-42; 2001, p. 9), Weber (1996, pp. 268-289; 1964, pp. 424-429), Durkheim, and many contemporary scholars inspired by their work including Wright (2001, 2005a, 2005b), Goldthorpe (1987), Bourdieu (1984), Breen (2005), Grusky and Galescu (2005), Savage et. al., (2015), Grusky and Sorensen (2001), Sorensen (2005), and Weininger (2005) take this kind of approach to class.

There are however some other scholars who proceed, in a sense, in the opposite direction, and try to construct their conception of class and class locations on the basis

of quantitatively and/or qualitatively distinct outcomes and or attributes expressed in the amount of income, wealth, education level and/or patterns of consumption and lifestyles, etc. as distinct locations in the stratification system (see Gottschalk, 2001; Grusky, 2001b; Pakulski, 2005; Kalaycıoğlu, et. al., 2010; Karademir-Hazır, 2014, 2016; Sunar, et.: al., 2016). It can be said that this kind of approach treats the question of class as a matter of what one owns, how one behaves and/or what one has achieved rather than how and why one comes to own, behave or has achieved to hold a particular location.

In one of the classic examples, Marx (1998, pp. 41-42), identifies, in “pure forms”, as he says, three major classes of contemporary capitalist society in terms of ownership and then asks the famous question: “What makes wage-labourers, capitalists and landlords constitute the three great social classes?”, and his answer is that it is ‘the source of their income’. And yet he does not seem to be fully satisfied with his own answer as this would necessarily require the recognition, as he indeed does, of the existence of a long list of other social classes with different sources of income and that are located next to or in between these three identified classes. A contemporary neo-Marxist, Wright (2005b, p. 180) asks the same question in the reverse order: “If “class” is the answer, what is the question?” He then lists six main questions, related to distributional location, subjective location, life chances, antagonistic conflicts, historical variation, and emancipation. Grusky’s (2001a) anthology is a good indicator that no answer has yet been credited as the one which provides the most common referents of the concept. On the contrary, social class as a concept continues to be one of the topics of classical sociological disputes (see Anderson, et. al., 1987, pp. 1-2; Martin, 1987) and what it is and how it is defined and operationalized depends on several things including what one is going to do with a particular conception of class, as stated also by Wright (2005, p. 180) himself and many others (see Marshall, 1997, pp. 1-30; Hamilton & Hirszowicz, 1993, pp. 1-28). These kinds of approaches to class have an inherent tendency to look for the kind of qualities or attributes which are mostly society or culture specific, or temporal and require researchers to identify the cultural or social equivalents of attributes or behaviours which are considered to be the qualities locating individuals and groups in a system of inequalities. For instance, ownership of a particular type of house (detached, semi-detached or apartment, etc.) or the type of flooring in the residential unit refer to or represent an important component of one’s class location usually in a very temporal fashion or may be society specific.

These examples indicate that different approaches to and different conceptions of social class lead researchers to look for different things in different corners of social

life and/or different manifestations of the same things in the same corners. However, the diversification of sources of income through engagement of individuals and households in more than one particular occupation or economic activity complicates the conceptions of class in general and particularly among farmers in several ways and poses several problems for allocating farmers to a class location. The following presents a brief examination of what these problems are in their actual forms, and how and why they emerge before proceeding in the conclusion section to a discussion of how they can be overcome.

The Problem of the Identity of Productive Activities

In order to strengthen their capacity to cope with price fluctuations in the market and also to increase the amount of their household income, farmers often change their existing crop patterns or get involved in new, additional activities (such as apiculture, animal farming, poultry farming, fishing, fish farming, and even food processing). Several structural factors including the size and type of their farms as well as of other resources at their disposal act as important factors enabling or constraining their capacity to diversify their sources of income. For instance, as mentioned also by Darnhofer, et. al., (2016, p. 114), annual crops including vegetable varieties can easily be changed from one year to the next, but the changing of fruit trees may need a time span of 10 years and a dairy farm may need an even longer one. Since all these activities remain agricultural, under this type of diversification a household may be considered a pure farming household and the farm run by it as a family farm, as long as it is also the chief or sole owner of the means of production and the sole or the main source of farm labour. However, even if the household remains a pure farming household it does not follow that the social and economic identity of its farming remains the same. On the contrary, the kind of farming it does may be called subsistence, commercial, capitalist, hobby or with any other name depending on what it does with the outcomes of its activities: feeding itself, gifting it to neighbours, spending the accumulated sources and income on communal ceremonies (as done in some agrarian societies), or using them as capital to further develop an already existing capitalist enterprise. Furthermore, modern farming is almost unthinkable without the adoption of new farming technology and this technology may significantly alter the level of the need for keeping all of the domestic workforce on the farm and as well as the level of dependency on wage labour. For instance, equipped with modern, efficient farming machinery, a household of two adults may run hundreds of acres of wheat farm without employing any wage labour. A small labour-intensive farm, on the other, may require very large amounts of wage labour input, the rate of which may exceed that of household labour. When a relational concept of class is adopted

by reference to relations of production, as done in the Marxist approach, different ratios of dependence on wage labour are taken as proxies for the identification of class identity of farming unit (such as semi- or full capitalist farm) without there being any change in the size and scale of farming. This logically requires classification of the first type of farming as simple commodity production, since it exploits no or very little wage labour, and the second as a capitalist one. How to decide about the social class identity of farming households on this basis has been one of the central topics of dispute between Marxist and Chayanovian approaches dealing with the nature of capitalist development in agriculture, and it still continues to be an important one as exemplified by theoretical manifestos published by Bernstein (2010) and von der Ploeg (2013, 2017). However, one does not need to be a capitalist in order to get all of one's farm work done by wage labour. On the contrary, many peasant and family farmers need wage labour in order to get farm work done on time and to engage in any other kind of gainful activity they may need to do. As a result, not only large capitalist farms but many small labour-intensive farms are now usually run by their owners by means of employing seasonal wage labour at least for the performance of critical and the most demanding tasks. In many cases of seasonal wage workers, they are also farm owners and are not necessarily poorer than their employers. Therefore, availability and employment of wage labour is an indispensable component of modern family farming especially in the production of labour-intensive crops, and this seems to have become also a structural imperative under the conditions of declining average household size and the aging of the farmers.

Occupational Identity of the Individuals and of the Households

Very often, the diversification of sources of income involves (with or without diversification in agriculture) off-farm employment, and this may assume several forms. One form is self-employment in trades, crafts, arts, transportation and services as a whole unit. This form is not unique to modern times. On the contrary, involvement in crafts (including weaving, carpentry, pottery, etc.) has always been an integral part of peasant production and of their survival in the past, and it still continues to be the case today among farmers. This form of diversification may not change the class location of the members and of the household as a unit, but it may change the identity of the occupational activity on which its class location is considered to be resting. As a result, a farming household may still occupy, let's say, a petty bourgeoisie position in the class order simply because of owning means of production and by being directly involved in a production process, but the core component of its occupational identity may not be farming. Instead, it may be more appropriate to consider and call it a trading household or something else by reference

to the identity of the key activity and how central this activity is to its economic and social wellbeing. However, if diversification takes place in activities or in areas where members are no longer self-employed this may lead to a qualitative change not in the occupational but in the social class identity of the members and of the household as well.

In the current literature on social class, the problems posed by this second type of diversification is dealt with by giving priority (i) either to the activity (and hence the occupational or social class location it represents) from which the highest amount of income is earned at individual or household level, or (ii) to the class location of the head of the household (which means giving priority to the authority structure of the household). This type of reasoning may prove practical in large surveys but it suffers from the problems of taking a snap-shot approach to the issue of class. For instance, at any given moment a particular activity may be the one from which a household earns the greater amount of its total income but this does not mean that that particular activity is the most stable and reliable source of income for the household nor that it is the basis of its self-perception and reproduction. As indicated by Sönmez (1993) and Sevgili (2022), farmers in Turkey often make a distinction between the activity or job from which they earn the greater part of their income and the one which is stable and reliable for them. This distinction is made on the basis of their practical consciousness resting on their longer-term observations about the ups and downs of their survival. This is because even when households are continuously and concurrently involved in farming and off-farm activities, their assessment often considers which particular activity (and thus the occupational identity accompanying it) has been the most stable and reliable causal component of their livelihoods and has taken them through moments or periods of crises in the labour or commodity markets. This type of assessment does not necessarily require us to adopt a self-placement approach to class though; in fact, it would be the best approach to take in studies dealing with village or community systems of social stratification. But it should alert us to include in our conception of class an important component that exists in its social nature, that is length and nature of duration in a given location. This dimension of class has been recognized by Bourdieu (1984, p. 114) as well as by Mills, who thinks that classes should be considered as groups of people in which “individuals could potentially spend the whole of their lives” (Mills, 2014, p. 443). Furthermore, given the growing precariousness of labour markets even for the very secure professions of the past, the significance of farmers’ practical consciousness cannot easily be dismissed by claiming it to be “subjective”.

The Problem of Household Boundaries

How to draw the boundaries of households in a given empirical inquiry, especially in large surveys, is a theoretical problem as well as a practical one (see Sönmez, 1998). The underlying assumption in most research on class and social mobility is that a household is a resource-pooling and -sharing social unit. In practice it refers mostly to individuals attached to each other by ties of kinship (blood and marriage) and living under the same roof or in the same residential unit. Therefore, any transfer of resources especially between generations is taken to mean a transfer of resources between families connected to each other by kinship. However, this modernist assumption does not always hold true, especially among the farmers. On the contrary, diversification of sources of income outside the farm is usually achieved by a division of labour within the household along sexes and generations and it very often requires permanent settlement of some of the members in a different residential unit away from the farm or the household's main residence. If this is the case, the usual practice adopted in surveys is to count these types of residential arrangements as separate households. In addition, under modern conditions of existence, the social reproduction of households across generations requires young members of households to have access especially to secondary or further education which, in most cases, would not be available where the farm is located, and for the performance of some other duties, say national service. Therefore, these kinds of the members may live away from the unit while still remaining dependent on and/or contributing to the resources of the households of which they are members. In large surveys a strict technical requirement to include in the households only the kinsfolk living together in a residential unit result, therefore, in the exclusion of occupational and other class-related properties of the members living away and leads to the treatment of, say, income sent by such members as transfers from outside or from other families. Furthermore, living in a residential unit together does not necessarily guarantee that residents of the unit pool and share their resources according to the principle of "from each according to ability and to each according to needs", that is according to the core meaning of being a household. On the contrary, as some feminist researchers have also argued, women (see Dobash 1980, quoted by Bilton, et.al, 2002, p. 125), children or the elderly may not be sharing the household resources and benefit from them in terms that qualitatively satisfy the referents of the principle of equal and just sharing or "we-intentionality". Therefore, researchers would need to make certain that the practices of the domestic unit satisfy the assumptions and criteria for considering it as an example of household.

These problems are not new and the problems of applying ideal typical conceptions of class (among farmers) to empirical investigations using statistics were noticed

and discussed half a century ago by Galeski (1972, pp. 106-109). The same problems become much more acute when researchers use survey data, for instance, on occupational distribution of workforce, employment, income distribution, household consumption, patterns of social exclusion, etc., which usually lack the key dependent variables considered to be capturing the qualitative differences on which a given abstract conception of class rests.

The Problem of Emergence

The problem of emergence is related to how to decide about the nature of emergence arising from the articulation or interlinking of various activities, types of employment and sources of income and wealth that members of a given household bring together as a resource pooling and sharing social group. “A total is greater and different than the sum of its parts” is a dictum that is employed when talking about society as a different entity than merely being a sum total of the individuals composing it. A similar understanding or approach is needed for deciding about the class location of individuals and households. There have been several attempts by students of class to address the problems related to the question of emergence by means of linking the causal components of material inequalities either to each other or to certain outcomes. A classic example is provided by Weber’s conception of social class. On class, status and party, Weber (1996, pp. 269-72) adopts a causal approach to (commercial) classes and defines them with reference to a common causal component of exchange in the market on which the life chances of a group of people rest. Therefore, for him, class position is market position. In line with this approach, in his *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1964, p. 424) he first defines what he means by class position: that is “a given state of (a) provision with goods, (b) external conditions of life and (c) subjective satisfaction or frustration” to be possessed by an individual or group. He then argues that “a class is any group of persons occupying the same class status [position]” and makes a distinction between property classes and acquisition classes “when the class situation of its members is primarily determined by their opportunity for the exploitation of services on the market”. Weber recognizes however that “in principle control over different combinations of consumer goods, means of production, investments, capital funds or marketable abilities constitute class statuses which are different with each variation and combinations. Only persons who are completely unskilled, without property and dependent on employment without regular occupation, are in a strictly identical class status”. Wright (2005a, p.18) encounters the same problem when he states that “people are linked to class relations not simply through their own direct involvement in the control and use of productive resources, but through various other kinds of social relations, especially

those of family and kinship. If you are married to a capitalist, regardless of what you yourself do, your interests and choices will be partly conditioned by this fact". Wright does not, however, provide an answer to what these types of links and effects imply for the question of emergence. Instead, he adopts an individualistic approach and perceives households with dual or multiple earners as "cross-class households" (pp. 18-19) if and when members in employment do not belong to the same class location. He thus leaves the question of what emerges out of "mediation" if and when causal components of class locations are located in the social space of inter-family or inter-household relations and transfers of resources unanswered. Similarly, Goldthorpe's (1987, p. 278 ?) assignment of wives to their husbands' class locations, of the unemployed to the class location of the head of their household, and of the retired to their pre-retirement occupations is also an example of the recognition that class locations of the individuals and of the households are not simply a total sum of what they do at a given moment and of how much they earn, if a causal approach is adopted.

It is perhaps in Bourdieu's (1984) conception of social class that the problem of emergence is addressed not from the perspective of a dominant factor or from the perspective of additional effects, or an agglomeration effect and crystallization but from the perspective of the nature or the structure of unity. For him, "the structural causality of a network of factors is quite irreducible to the cumulated effects of linear relations" (p. 107), and therefore class position rests on a homology defining the elementary conditions of existence. These conditions of existence and the resultant conditionings "derive from the overall volume of capital, understood as the set of actually useable resources and powers-economic capital, cultural capital and also social capital." (p. 114). As a result, what is needed is to consider "the structure of total assets and not only, as has always been done implicitly, of the dominant kind in a given structure." Once this is done, then "one has the means of making more precise divisions and also observing the specific effects of the distribution between different kinds of capital" (p. 115). Nevertheless, Bourdieu contradicts himself when he appoints a 'functionally dominant or weightier [form of capital] for identifying fractions within a given class locations' (1984, p. 107) since there is no difference, methodologically speaking, between this type of identification of the fractions within a social class and the identification of classes at different locations.

Assessment and Conclusion

The foregoing examination indicates that in the current literature on class there is an important gap between conceptions of social class in abstract and their practical

capacity or sufficiency to capture and represent the phenomenon in concrete research settings even if one is not interested in their capacity for explaining why and how they do so and as well as why and how they explain a long list of outcomes. It also indicates that ideal-typical conceptions of class fail to bridge this gap in many respects and for various reasons. One important cause of this failure is a structural one in that such conceptions are usually constructs external to the empirical phenomenon under scrutiny and as such they are usually devoid of any genuine ontology. They are therefore tools useful not for studying how things come to be the way they are but for judging how close or distant they from a hypothetical or normative state of existence. Only in this sense they are useful tools for analysis and mental devices for searching for the reasons of deviation. Another important cause of failure in different conceptions of class and identity of farming is their tendency to abstract from concrete situations in which the matching of the individuals to the sites of production or to patterns of consumption and via them to the system of inequalities is considered to be taking place in a one-to-one (that is maximum one person-to-one position at a time) fashion. This kind of assumption has some kind of relevance in that individuals own or bear what they own or bear as individuals, are usually employed as individuals, consume what they consume as individuals and live in houses as individuals. It is however difficult to maintain this ontological individualism in understanding how they come occupy a certain location in a class system or in the system of social stratification when they are for instance not the owners of the resources or not in paid employment, etc.

Conceptions of class and farming have in most cases a behavioural component and this component becomes much more visible in studies on social mobility. Put simply, it can be stated as follows: In most situations human behaviour is a conscious and meaningful one involving objectives, aspirations and actions taken to achieve these objectives under and in recognition of a given set of conditions. Without this underlying assumption there is no justification for a researcher to study how farmers do their farming as well as to study how individuals come to occupy a certain position or how they consume the very things that they consume, or to produce the very things they do, etc. Therefore, if a researcher is interested in finding out what emerges out of conscious activities of individuals or groups of individuals, the criteria constructed as external to the phenomenon under scrutiny or derived deductively from a given conception of that phenomenon would be helpful only for gaining some inspiration but not for a decision about the very nature or qualities of the phenomenon that is emerging with its own unity and identity.

The problem of emergence can and should be dealt with at the individual level only if individuals exist in the social space and in the system of social inequalities as

atomic individuals only responsible for themselves and rely only on their own effort and resources. However, such cases of individuals would be a very rare instance to come across even in the most individualistic societies. On the contrary, individuals are attached to the system of inequalities mostly through their household and family membership and occasionally through groups larger than such domestic units, such as communes, tribes and associations (see Sönmez, 1998). Therefore, the problem of emergence could be solved to a large extent by examining how individuals combine and organize their individual activities and how their individual efforts are turned into collective effort, agency and a common class location of individual members of a genuine group which act according to the principle of “we-intentionality”.

The objectives may be centring on: (i) either horizontal reproduction within and/or between generations, which would require the accumulation and reproduction of resources and assets that are enough also to prevent downward intergenerational social mobility, and (ii) or upward social mobility within and between generations in the same or in a different field of work and employment. In any concrete setting there would be several ways and means of achieving these objectives depending on the macro, meso and micro conditions including but not limited to legal and political arrangements and social norms affecting the acquisition and transfer of the resources, types and number of resources available, and aspirations and the realistic or rational calculations made by the households and individuals (see Goldthorpe, 2007, pp. 154-177; Çolak-Türe, 2022) themselves. The dominant source of income, the dominant type of resources, the occupation and/or occupational status of the dominant person in the organization of the domestic unit are usually potential candidates fastening the objectives and aspirations to a material mast while the type of domestic unit, the life course of the individuals and of the households may be positioned as mediating factors (cf. Sönmez 1993, pp. 17-19; 2001, pp. 77-78). If possible to identify, these potential candidates can be employed as explanatory or mediating factors or grouping variables in the secondary analyses of qualitative or quantitative data already compiled and available to the researchers but any such analysis cannot address the question of emergence unless it is examined, identified and coded in the same body of the data.

Recognition of the methodological significance of emergence and the willingness to find out what is emerging in its own terms and with its own unity and identity would enable the researchers to perform three essential tasks: (i) to avoid the treatment of separate activities (that is, for instance, a particular type of farming or of employment) only in terms of their own unitary identity, (ii) trace how actions and practices are connected to their outcomes (for instance the amount of income,

patterns of consumption, life-styles, types and amounts of resources put in the service of intra-and inter-generational mobility as well as identities of class, class interest, class culture, class struggle, etc.), and (iii) how these outcomes feedback to re-assessment of the initial objectives and re-organization of the activities and resources. This kind of approach would help the researchers to decide, for instance, if a farm producing for the market by employing wage labour is or becoming a capitalist one not at the level of this particular activity but within the emergent identity of the various activities carried out by the households. Çolak-Türe's study (2022, ch.6) indicates, for example, that the overriding objective of many of the early migrant (guest) Turkish workers in Germany was to earn and save enough to secure and reproduce a solid resource base that is enough for maintaining their family farming across generations: Income earned and saved abroad was the main source of their livelihood; being a worker in Germany and the income earned there had a meaning and function only in so far it helped to achieve their objectives back in Turkey where at least a part of their family was living and continued farming. Contrary to this, Beyaz's study (2019) of migrants (from Rize) indicates that some households continue farming by employing seasonal wage labour from abroad and very often net income from farming is not enough to cover its own cost and therefore the difference is to be paid out of family income obtained from other sources. Their objective is not to continue as farmers or to revert back to farming in the future but to maintain their relations with their ancestral land and keep a resource base for the realization of aspirations for a type of country-living, a life-style which does not prioritize living in the countryside in a permeant fashion.

The diversification of sources of income is not unique to farmers and the approach proposed here would be helpful when studying households which rely on other forms of diversification of sources of income. What is unique about farmers and farming is that, at least in Turkey,² one would find households from all class locations which are engaged in farming in one form or another in whichever form class is conceived. In this sense, their example constitutes a primary one to come across in almost in all types of inquiry.

2 An issue that will be addressed in a separate paper based on an analysis of Household Budget Survey data.

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