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Economic, Social and Political Lives of *Homo Agricola*[*]

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The purpose of this paper is to consider the economic, moral and political aspects of farmers' life in different epochs of economic thought and in today's days. The paper reviews the concepts of "*homo economicus*" and "*homo politicus*" and try to discover their characteristics in *homo agricola.* Economists, especially agricultural economists, in their sophisticated mathematical models seem to reduce farmers' behavior to economic behavior or rather to self-interested *homo economicus*. However, as it is demonstrated, one component of *homo agricola* can be of economic and another one of political nature. Those components can be separated or can be together. Institutional economics, social economics and socio-economics are closer to actual human nature than *homo economicus*. The further research challenge is to develop the model that will be able to fully explain the questions involving all human behavior of *homo agricola*, that is farmer or rural man with set of different objectives.

Keywords: agriculture, economics, politics, history of economic thought, governance

In an economic profession, it has been generally accepted that economics is the science that studies how societies use scarce resources to produce valuable commodities and distribute them among different people (Samuelson, 1948), or examines human behavior as a relationship between given ends and scarce means which have alternative uses (Robbins, 1932).

It has been claimed that economics consists of a set of purely descriptive hypotheses explaining regularities in the behavior of producers and consumers (Varian, 1992). Opposite to this argumentation, this paper considers economic theory as an essentially normative discipline that cannot ignore ethical considerations (Etzioni, 1988), and there should be room for social and political concern in economics.

In mainstream economy, behavior is often formalized following the rational actor-approach. Some economists regard economic man as a construct or abstraction useful for getting definite theoretical results, a concept they use largely since its consistency with their deductive mathematical models or since believed usefulness in generating successful predictions even if it is not realistic (Tomer, 2001). Economists may consider the character of economic man to be close to human reality in certain spheres of activity, such as when dealing with anonymous transactions in competitive markets but not descriptive of human behavior in other spheres (Viner, 1991, pp. 75-76).

The successes achieved by mathematical and statistical methodology as well as computer programming tools over the course of the 20th century seemed to justify unlimited faith in the ability of optimization models

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to explain all economically significant forms of human behavior. As a result, in core economic journals, the material relates to economic theory, and "economic theory itself has been continuously more abstract and mathematical" (G. Stigler, S. Stigler, & Friedland, 1995, p. 339).

Recent literature suggests that the great majority of economists dealing with agricultural issues are possibly not interested in going beyond the boundaries of conventional neo-classical economics. For example, Von Cramon-Taubadel and Nivyevskiy (2009), taking a sample based on complete coverage of 11 peer-review journals in agricultural economics during 1989-2008, concluded that farm size/structure, reforms/policy and productivity/efficiency had been the most important subject categories of 200 articles dealing with transition or transition countries. Also, Zawojska (2008) when examining thematic profile of 392 papers published in the proceedings of the 12th Congress of European Agricultural Economists (having taken place in Gent, Belgium in 2008) under the title "*People, Food and Environments: Global Trends and European Strategies*", revealed that the most studied topics covered: trade/competitiveness, efficiency/productivity and consumers/consumption. In both cases, method-driven research and sophisticated quantitative and qualitative techniques were dominated.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing that mainstream economics and its models are unable to solve the most urgent societal and political challenges. It seems important for economists to aspire to an integrated approach that incorporates the best of all the different schools of economics thought, not limiting themselves to the conceptions of any specific school, and particularly to a value-free neoclassical economics. Hence, there is a great challenge for integrating economics with both moral and political considerations. According to Theodore Schultz, the Nobel Prize winner in 1979, in traditional agricultural settings, farmers are not responsive to normal economic incentives but instead often respond perversely with the implication that the supply curve of farm products is backward sloping (Schulz, 1964, p. 81), and they often have no profit opportunities.

In the literature of economics, sociology and politics much has been written about different models of man, however, relatively little has been said about man named by ancients "*homo agricola*".

The aim of this study is to consider the economic, moral and political aspects of farmers' life in different epochs of economic thought and in today's days. The paper is of descriptive character and is based on literature review.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The second section reviews the models of humanity in the history of economic thought. Afterwards, *homo agricola* is examined through economic, moral and political lenses. The paper ends with concluding section that summarizes previous sections and proposes recommendations for further research.

View of the Image of a Man From Different (Socio) Economic Perspectives

In the context of economics, the following images of a man, alternative to *homo economicus*, have been found in the reviewed literature: *homo faber* (Bergson, 2005), *homo corporativus* (Bastien & Cardoso, 2007), *homo sociologicus* (Boudon & Viale, 2000; Podgórski, 2008; Ng & Tseng, 2008), *homo socio-economicus* (O'Boyle, 1994; Tomer, 2001), *homo sapiens oeconomicus* (Dopfer, 2004), *homo politicus* (Nyborg, 2000; Faber, Petersen, & Schiller, 2002; Becker, 2006; Grant, 2008), *homo-oeconomico-cooperativus* (Hettlage, 1990), *homo moralis* (Zak, 2008; Den Uyl, 2009), *homo reciprocans* (Gintis, 2000; Hagedorn, 2002; Bowles & Gintis, 2002), *homo sustinens* (Siebenhüner, 2000), *homo ecologicus* (Dryzek, 1996; Becker, 2006), *homo hierarchicus* (Dumont, 1980) and *homo equalis* (Nowé, Parent, & Verbeeck, 2001).

Following Becker, we can say that every concept of the human being is an abstraction. "It is a construct which reduces the complexity and variety of human beings to a few characteristics" (Becker, 2006, p. 18).

Economic theory mainly relies on the assumption that economic agents may be likened to a "*homo oeconomicus*". *Homo oeconomicus*, the man who acts on pure economic motives alone, is the concept of man at the heart of mainstream economics. He or she is selfish, rational and acts to maximize expected utility (profit, wealth, private benefits etc.). Adam Smith, however, referred not only to selfishness (Smith, 2000a) but also to sympathy as a specific characteristic of the human being (Smith, 2000b). He did not consider self-interest to be synonymous with selfishness and thus devoid of ethical considerations. Self-interest is a very significant motivation but it is not enough. Beyond self-interest there are other critical missing variables, such as ethics. *Homo moralis*, sometimes substituted by *homo reciprocans*, differs from *homo economicus* in that it takes into account the ambivalence of human morality (Hagedorn, 2002, p. 38).

Many heterodox economists are not strictly anti-mainstream; they generally wish go beyond the mainstream in order to develop an economics with a better conception of how the economy is integrated with society.

Table 1

Characteristic Comparison of the Economic Man

Mainstream economics	Heterodox economics		
Homo economicus	*Homo institutional economicus*	*Homo social economicus*	*Homo socio-economicus*
Self-interested: has well-defined preferences for things and experiences that provide satisfaction for the self	May be self-interested, but what he wants is mainly determined by institutions and societal evolution	Oriented to striving for individual economic betterment like *homo economicus*	Self-interested and oriented to obtaining pleasure
Rational (i.e., perfectly adaptive): he makes decisions that lead to his maximum utility or output under the given conditions (optimizing behavior)	Is not rational in the manner of *homo economicus*; he is not a lightning calculator of utility, and he does not attempt to maximize utility	Sometimes, he is as rational as *homo economicus*, but more often he behaves non rationally, reflecting both his habits and biases	Is not a rational decision maker; his decisions are sub-rational due to his rather limited intellectual capabilities
Separated from his physical world and other humans (individuals and collective entities)	Is not separated from his human and physical outer world	Oriented to belonging to communities and institutions; promotes the welfare of the entire community	Oriented to others, family, community, society and the obligations and commitments, often moral in nature that membership involves
Unaffected by culture/values, society, politics, and so forth unless these enter his preferences	Behaves in line with habits and rules, is strongly influenced by institutions, and learns from his social experience	Acts out of a concern for justice, human dignity, duty, loyalty and other moral and ethical considerations	He chooses largely on the basis of emotions and value judgments, and only secondarily on the basis of logical-empirical considerations
Has given, unchanging character which is not an object of theoretical and empirical study	Does not have a given, unchanged character	Develops his character in order to realize his higher personal potential	

Note. Source: Own compilation based on O'Boyle (1994), Whalen (1996), Etzioni (1988), Hodgson (1998) and Tomer (2001).

Table 1 presents one by one the main characteristics of economic man in different economic perspectives.

Homo institutional economicus or institutional economic man is quite different from *homo economicus* or economic man; with respect to the indicated characteristics, he remedies some deficiencies of economic man and thus, represents an improvement. The character of *homo social economicus* or social economic man includes the higher aspects of human nature than of institutional economic man. *Homo socio-economicus* or socio-economic man, as opposite to *homo economicus*, is not rational or sometimes semi-rational. As said by Etzioni (1988, p. 253), his/her behavior is determined by two separated and often conflicting parts. The first one is similar to *homo economicus* in that he is self-interested and oriented to obtaining pleasure. The second part is oriented to others as well as the obligations and commitments that membership involves.

One of the main critiques of the *homo economicus* model is that in some situations individuals do not behave like economic man, i.e., in real world, humans do not always act rationally or in pursuit of self-interest.[1] Additional critique concerns the narrowness of behavior analysis. Table 2 consists of different kinds of criticism of the conventional neoclassical concept of the maximizing man.

Table 2

Critical Views of the (Neo)classic Conception of Homo Economicus or Rational Choice Paradigm

Authors	Comments
Veblen (1899, p. 232)	Anthropological foundations of modern economics failed to account for the complexity of human choice in a dynamic world. Economic man "is an isolated, definitive human datum, in stable equilibrium except for the buffets of the impinging forces that displace him in one direction or another".
Mises (1949, pp. 62, 651)	Rejection of mechanical version of rational choice, *homo oeconomicus.* "Economics deals with real actions of real men. Its theorems refer neither to ideal nor perfect men, neither to the phantom of a fabulous economic man (*homo oeconomicus*) nor to the statistical notion of an average man (*homme moyen*)".
Maslow (1971, p. 310)	Materialist approach: "skilled, exact, technological application of a totally false theory of human needs and values, a theory which recognizes only the existence of lower needs or material needs".
Simon (1947, 1976, 1986)	Agents often have multiple goals and use these goals to eliminate alternatives from the choice set in order to make choice more manageable. Rather than maximize their utility, they make decisions that are good enough or satisfactory and that represent reasonable or acceptable outcomes. The economic man represents the objective rationality in an ideal model. In reality, no one (individual or organization) can fulfill the requirements in the classic model of decisions processes.
Jager & Janssen (2000, p. 307)	The unrealism of the maximization model as a description of human behavior. In real world, humans do not always act rationally or in pursuit of self-interest.
Becker (2006, p. 18)	"The construct of *homo economicus* implies specific and limited perspectives on the relation of the human being with future generations or the relation of the human being with nature".
Brockaway (1995, p. 25)	Greed is not rational and therefore the image of "rational greedy economic man is a contradiction in terms".

Note. Source: Review of the literature.

Different Lives of *Homo Agricola*

The Myth of Virtuous *Homo Agricola*

According to Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman polymath, "*homo agricola*" is a country, rustic, rural individual; a peasant or farmer (Romeo, 1979, p. 7).

The myth of virtuous farmer originates in ancient Greece and Rome. In ancient Greece, where nearly 80% of the population farmed for a living, any study of economics was first and foremost a study of managing a farm. The word "economy" comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* (*oikonomiké*) meaning "household management" or stewardship in the new testament.

Aristotle usually used word "*oikonomiké*" ("the economic") to refer to anything which is related to the use of wealth in order to achieve the good life (Aristotle, 1995). However, he held that *oikonomiké* and its related technique, chrematistics,[2] referred not only to the house but also to the polis.

There is no question that farming is the oldest respectable profession. More than two thousand years ago, Cicero wrote: "of all the occupations by which gain is secured, none is better than agriculture, none more

[1] In order to focus attention upon the discrepancy between the perfect rationality assumed in classical economic theory and the reality of human behavior, Herbert Simon, for example, introduced the term "bounded rationality" (Simon, 1991).

[2] Chrematistics "is a form of acquisition which the manager of a household must either find ready to hand, or himself provide and arrange, because it ensures a supply of objects, necessary for life and useful to the association of the polis or the household" (Aristotle, 1995, pp. 26-30).

profitable, none more delightful, none more becoming to a freeman" (Cicero, Griffin, & Atkins, 1991).

Centuries before Cicero, Xenophon—Greek philosopher, in one of the earliest work on economics titled *Oeconomicus*,[3] declared that agriculture was a noble profession, the only essential occupation of man and the mother of all arts:

> We went on to determine that for the true gentleman agriculture was the finest occupation and science of all those by which men gain a living. For we came to the conclusion that this occupation was the easiest to learn and the most pleasant to be occupied in, and that it, more than all others, made the body fine and strong, whilst it allowed the mind full leisure to have some care for both friend and country. We decided also that agriculture in some degree was an incentive to bravery, in that it not only produces the necessaries of life, and that, too, where there are no bulwarks of defence, but also maintains those who occupy themselves in it (Ruskin, 1876, p. 38).
>
> Agriculture, too, teaches us to help one another; for just as in facing their foes men must join together, so must they in agriculture (Ruskin, 1876, p. 33).

Every economist is familiar with physiocrats's doctrine (the 18th century) which celebrated farmers, emphasized the importance of agriculture and held it to be the solely real source of national wealth.

Virtues of farming were celebrated by many more recent thinkers, among others by Ralph Waldo Emerson. For example, in his collection *Society and Solitude* under the title "Farming", he said about farmers and farming in this way:

> (Farmer) stands close to nature; he obtains from the earth the bread and the meat. The food which was not, he causes to be. The first farmer was the first man, and all historic nobility rests on possession and use of land (Emerson, 1870).

On the other side of coin, there is an image of irresponsible *agricola* who operates purely for profit, showing no regard for his impact on the soil, water, air and animals:

> By avarice and selfishness, and a groveling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or the means of acquiring property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives. He knows Nature but as a robber (Thoreau, 1854).

British professor of sociology Frank Furedi (2001) wrote that in today's times, the countryside "bears the stigma of evil". He described the negative public attitudes towards farmers in the following way:

> According to conventional wisdom, farmers have become parasites on the poor tax-paying public. Moreover, farmers are said to be using irresponsible methods which threaten to damage the food chain, with unknown consequences. (…) intensive farming methods could lead to "life-threatening illnesses", and noted that the "risk to consumers" is incalculable (Furedi, 2001).

Contemporary negative images of farmers, as shown above, stand in sharp contrast to those of the past. Certainly, both the farming economy and relationship between people and nature have changed over time but it seems that idyllic myths about the countryside persist to this day. Unfortunately, some standpoints may suggest that "today's ideal countryside is one where there are fields and trees and hills, but no people" (Furedi, 2001).

In fact, there are still people, including myself, who view rural people, farm profession and the family farm as very important, not only economically, but also morally and politically (see for instance: Danbom, 1997; TNS Opinion & Social, 2010).

The Sphere of *Homo Agricola* Self-Interest: *Homo Economicus*

The crucial question is of what motivates economic activity of peasant or farmer. Obviously, a first response might be the preference for self-interest pursuance or seeking whatever is beneficial or advantageous

[3] Xenophon's Socratic dialogue on household management was translated by Cicero into the Latin *Oeconomicus* (Botley, 2004, p. 9).

for him/her (ex. personal well-being). Self-interest is primary motivation grounded in the material necessities of self-preservation, thus pursuit of self-interest is natural, ubiquitous and necessary to keep us alive (see for example Grant, 2008).

As van der Vaart, de Boer, Hankel, & Verheij (2006, p. 750) said:

> To us modern agriculturalists, "Why farm?" seems like a non-question. Intensive food production is what supports our large, complex societies. It frees many of us to become specialists, enriching life in ways beyond mere provisioning: as doctors, entertainers, scientists. Without crop cultivation, our current population densities and growth rates would be impossible to sustain.

David Hume, a Scottish philosopher, in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* provided one of the clearest illustrations of the problem of morality, namely trust (between farmers). He wrote of two farmers:

> Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so tomorrow. Tis profitable for us both that I shou'd labour with you today, and that you shou'd aid me tomorrow. I have no kindness for you, and know that you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains on your account; and should I labour with you on my account, I know I shou'd be disappointed, and that I shou'd in vain depend upon your gratitude. Here then I leave you to labour alone: You treat me in the same manner. The seasons change; and both of us lose our harvests for want of mutual confidence and security (Hume, 1737).

If we assume self-interested behavior of farmer, it is possible to change what he/she does by rewarding some responses and penalizing others. Individuals will obey the rules if marginal costs of not doing so outweigh the marginal benefits. In like fashion, they will curtail action which is levied and increase that one which brings subsidies.[4]

It seems that when the liberal state makes policy, it is the stereotyped "economic man" which it has in mind. Indeed, it was also true for the former Central and Eastern European countries, which in the 1990s implemented liberal or neo-liberal reforms, including domestic and external liberalization of agriculture. During transition period, the main emphasis was on successful market agriculture and more liberal market policies. Such approach to transitional agriculture was applied among others by Lerman, Csaki and Feder (2002, p. 5), according to whom:

> Transition in agriculture includes abolishing central planning; reducing government intervention; eliminating price controls; developing functioning market services; and encouraging the emergence of rural credit institutions, technological improvement, new capital investment patterns, and agricultural labor adjustment. The most visible and widely debated component of this process, however, is land reform, that is, the transformation of farms operated on traditional socialist principles to operations based on market-oriented principles.

In many developed countries, economic efficiency arguments (maximization of productivity and labor efficiency) resulted in the dramatic expansion of industrial agriculture, which, on one hand, provided benefits such as lower-cost foods, but on the other hand made it increasingly hard for small family farmers to stay in business, so both the number of people engaged in agriculture and the number of farms has declined sharply. When all we have is a couple of industrial farms, it's no longer a lifestyle, they are not farming for the joy of farming or feeding, the factories are farming for profit.

Self-sufficient, subsistence farming is often viewed by governments as an indication of economic inefficiency, and its eradication is perceived as a sign for a modern economy. Family-owned and managed farms still play a vital role in many countries, including Poland. Interactions in family farms are distinctive,

[4] As a good example can serve higher incentives for farmers to grow non-food bio-fuel crops, which combined with other factors caused food shortages (and even food riots) in several countries as well as boosting food prices around the world in 2007 and 2008.

because they are embedded in identity of household and farm thus in the parent-child relationships found in the household, and therefore are characterized by altruism.

Through analogy to any family unit of production, altruism makes each family member employed by the family farm a *de facto* owner of the farm (Stark & Falk, 1998). An interesting, in this context, are results obtained for Northern Ireland by Jack and her colleagues (2009), indicating that small-scale farm household behavior is influenced not just by current farm income, but also expected capital asset returns. Increased wealth, associated with continuing land ownership and off-farm income remove the pressure from farming income to fund all family consumption needs. This enables households to sustain low-income farming activities in order to pursue other objectives such as wealth management (including tax efficient transfer of wealth) and lifestyle. Consequently, the results indicate that the survival of small-scale family farms may be much less sensitive to agricultural support policies than has been commonly suggested.

According to Simon (1993, p. 160), appropriate attention to altruism substantially changes theories of the economy. Economists generally model altruism as a utility function in which the welfare of one individual is positively linked to the welfare of others (Bergstrom, 1989).

The paper of Lenz (2008) argued that because human nature is neither truly altruistic nor truly egotistic, there is a need for moral norms, otherwise they would be superfluous.

Liberal and neo-liberal policies stimulating efficiency-driven agriculture have also resulted in problems of rural community decline and disconnect between farmers and their community. Mintz (2006, p. 5), for example, identified this problem as follows: "Every day more and more people eat more and more food that has been grown, processed, or cooked for them by fewer and fewer others".

The findings of Goldschmidt[5] (1947), Lobao (1990) and Mcilvaine-Newsad, Merrett, Maakestad and Mclaughlin (2008) indicated that large-scale industrial style agriculture is generally related to worse socioeconomic conditions for rural communities than smaller-scale family based farms. The former has harmful effects on many indicators of community quality of life, particularly those involving the social fabric of communities (Lobao & Stofferahn, 2008).

Given the shifts in the structure of agriculture towards an extremely large-scale, economically dominated system, an important step in modern agriculture transition is rebuilding direct links between farmers and consumers. An alternative farming type operation there may be small-scale civic agriculture. Lyson (2004) defined this form of agriculture as a locally-based agricultural and food production system that is closely linked to a community's social and economic development. Some examples include farmers markets, pick-your-own operations and community supported agriculture operations.

Lyson (2004, p. 93) argued that,

> As social institutions and social organizations, farmers' markets can be important components of civic agriculture. As bridges between the formal and informal sectors of the economy, they enable individual entrepreneurs and their families to contribute to the economic life of their communities by providing goods and service that may not be readily available through formal market channels. They embody what is unique and special about local communities and help to differentiate one community from another.

The rise of civic agriculture coincides with the rise of the post-productivist slow food movement, which arose in Italy, but has now spread around the world (Mcilvaine-Newsad, Merrett, Maakestad, & Mclaughlin,

[5] Goldschmidt in his original study put forward the hypothesis that rural community welfare is negatively associated with the scale of farms surrounding them.

2008). According to DeLind (2002, p. 217):

> civic agriculture can (and should) promote citizenship and environmentalism within both rural and urban settings not only through market based models of economic behavior, but through common ties to place and physical engagement with that place.

As Becker (2006, p. 19) pointed out, "the philosophical tradition suggests that human beings are not only self-related, but that they are, independent of their mere self-interest, systematically related to the community".

Homo Agricola* as *Homo Politicus

For David Hume, moral and political philosophies are a single enterprise. In his view, *homo economicus* and *homo politicus* were identical twins (Hardin, 2008, p. 463).

Farm people do not merely make a living by producing, they can also engage in other activities, such as lobbing for a policy change, subsidies, reduced taxes and favorable legislation. While economic behavior of *homo agricola* can be justified by the idea of *homo oeconomicus*, it is an open question whether the same can be applied to his/her actions in the public arena.

Two of the pioneers of public choice theory (Downs, 1957; Buchanan & Tullock, 1962) decided to equate the behavioral motivation of *homo politicus* with that of *homo economicus*.

Albert Hirschman (2002) in his classic work titled *Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action* explained why and how frustrations of private concerns lead to public involvement and public participation.

No doubts that for farmers and non-farmers alike, the pursuit of their private interests explains not only their economic but also political activity.

According to Hirschman (1970), exit and voice constitute the two alternative means of expressing grievances in political arena. In many cases, however, citizens have no choice to exit, because this option in national politics/policy is unavailable or too costly (ex. implies migrating to another state). In this situation, making voice, i.e., "various types of actions and protests, including those meant to mobilize public opinion" (Hirschman, 1970, p. 30) becomes a realistic and often effective tool for articulating discontent.

Let me give some illustrations of how the pubic conflicts among stakeholders of the agricultural policy (including EU's common agricultural policy) have been signaled through voice. In 1971, West German farmers organized one of the largest post-war protests that gathered in Bonn. Around 50 thousand demonstrators demanded continued price supports to prevent "further injustice in agriculture" (Petrick, 2008, p. 249). Recently, we have observed protests of farmers from across the EU over falling milk and grain prices, against planned abolition of milk quotas, against cuts in subsidies etc.. Manifestations of anger include such phenomena as grain destruction, milk dumping across fields and into rivers, and road blockades by farmers. As well, Poland is a good exemplification of successful collective action within the group of farmers to protest the decisions of national policymakers and bring about more favorable policy outcomes including tax policy and social (particularly farmer retirement) policy (Zawojska, 2006).

Some responses of farmers to policymakers' decisions are not always rational; with strong emotional component they can lead to the risk of inefficiencies or welfare losses labeled by Bosman and van Winden (2002) "emotional hazard". Farmers, destroying what they produce, cause damage to the good of both themselves and society as a whole.

According to political psychology, there are interest independent passions that motivate political behavior.

Those passions revolve about issues of status, justice as well as community and solidarity (Grant, 2008). The human actor labeled *homo politicus* and developed by Faber et al. (2002, p. 328) is based on ethical considerations and essentially characterized by its "striving for political justice". It recognizes this striving as an essential trait of its existence as being capable of reason.

Status passions (such as competitiveness, ambition, vanity and the desire for honor) aim at esteem, distinction or recognition relative to others. Justice passions, such as anger and pity, as reactions to perceived injustice, can motivate people to act politically on behalf of others in an attempt to restore justice. Community and solidarity passions (such as loyalty, attachment and opposite to them enmity) are tied to psychological process of group identification.

The above mentioned passions usually combine together to produce political conflict and political mobilization. These passions overcome collective action problems. There is little temptation to be "free rider" if an individual really wants to assert his dignity or express his outrage, his hatred and his sense of solidarity and nobody else can do these things for him. When taking into account the operation of the passions, explanations of politics based on economic models which assume the rational or *homo economicus* behavior are particularly weak in explaining social movements (Goodwin, 2001; Gould, 2004), and economic interests alone are not sufficient for explaining farmers' motivations for any political action.

Within post-communist Europe, the Solidarity movement in Poland may exemplify this better than anything else. Independent Self-governing Trade Union of Individual Farmers "Solidarity" established in 1980 was a part of growing Solidarity movement (Cirtautas, 1997) and represented at least half of Poland's 3.2 million smallholders. The organization and mobilization of anger was instrumental in orchestrating fundamental sociopolitical change, providing a new social and moral order and also restoring trust and solidarity in society (see Donskis, 2007). Another example of such social movement can be farmers' riots in the Chinese countryside, from the dramatic events of 1989 to more recent stirrings (O'Brien, 2009).

Modes of Governance for *Homo Agricola*

For many scholars economy cannot be divorced from its governance (Bowles & Gintis, 1993; Skaperdas, 2003). Recently, phenomenon of governance and its modes has sparked intensive debate amongst economic and political scientists (Treib, Bähr, & Falkner, 2005).

Institutional perspective of governance relates to a system of rules that shapes the actions of social actors (Rosenau, 1992) or methods of achieving coordination between actors with divergent interests, ambitions and perceptions. Probably most recent frequently cited governance author, Olivier Williamson, identified three efficient governance structures: via market, via contractual rules or bilateral governance and via hierarchy or hierarchical governance (Williamson, 1975). All three forms are characterized by enormous incentive differences. Following Thompson, Frances, Levacic and Mitchell (1991) and Powell (1990), the paper considers the two opposing ideal types (modes): "market" and "hierarchy". Between these two "network" and "knowledge" are situated. Knowledge governance emerged in present policy processes, for example with regard to rural development (Van Buuren & Eshuis, 2008). The differences between the four modes of governance are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Modes of Governance for Different Homines

	Market	Network	Knowledge	Hierarchy (top/down)
Basic principle	Exchange	Reciprocity	Cognition	Power
Mode of calculation	*Homo economicus*	*Homo politicus*	*Homo sapiens*	*Homo hierarchicus*
Coordination principle	Price	Collaboration	Argumentation	Rules
Roles of government	Service supplier, contract partner	Partner or network manager	Knowledge, infrastructure, developer	Principal ruler
Key value	Public choice	Public value	Public ideas	Public goods

Note. Source: Meuleman (2008) and Van Buuren & Eshuis (2008).

When we assume that *homo agricola* acts merely as *homo economicus* and reacts to such tendencies in the agricultural sector as economic efficiency growth through scale enlargement as well as internationalization, markets seem to be the most proper mode of governance. Market coordinates then through "the invisible hand" of the price-based exchange between self-interested actors.

In cases where different stakeholders have come together to effectively deal either with agricultural or social problems and dilemmas (to act as *homos politicus*), network governance is recommended. Social networks can be even more essential than the existence of formal institutions for effective enforcement and compliance with regulations. However, a history of bad relationships and distrust can hinder a cooperative/collaboration process, taking Poland's agricultural cooperatives as a good example (see for example Chloupkova, G. L. H. Svendsen, & G. T. Svendsen, 2003).

It should be noted that in practice only hybrid forms of governance may be found.

Conclusions

This paper highlights the notions of *homo economicus* and *homo politicus* with an attempt to discover their characteristics in *homo agricola.* As demonstrated, one component of *homo agricola* can be of economic and another one of political nature. Those components can be separated or can be together.

The idea of human nature embodied in the concept of *homo economicus* has met with disapproval from different schools of thought. Hence, the question arises whether agricultural economists, as profession, should reduce farmers' behavior to economic behavior or rather to self-interested, self-regarded *homo economicus*, obsessive benefit-maximizing prototype whose mainstream economic theory takes for granted. In other words, should agricultural economists believe in the myth of *homo economicus*? If so, should they suppose that any stakeholder in agro-food sector behaves like an econometrician or a statistician in order to predict economic events?

Each of the *homines* at the heart of different heterodox economics (institutional economics, social economics and socio-economics) are more realistic, that is, closer to actual human nature than *homo economicus*, partly since the each embodies non-economic incentives and influences. This paper suggests that, in order to take into account the changes that have been occurring in agricultural economy as well as wider socio-economic and political trends, researchers should go beyond productivity, efficiency, technical change etc. as measures of agriculture and rural performance.

The challenge for further research is to develop the model that will be able to fully explain the questions involving all human behavior of *homo agricola*, that is farmer or rural man with set of different objectives:

instrumental (ex. maximizing income), intrinsic (ex. enjoying the farming), social (ex. gaining recognition, belonging to the community) and personal (ex. achieving self-fulfillment and personal growth). In those efforts, however, we should not create any kind of *homo agricola hybridus* or superman on the farm.

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