

Enclaves and Dilemmas of Rural Communication. Family Farmers and the Agricultural Press¹³

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Abstract

The present paper discusses, at the same time, a theoretical, historical and political thesis of rural communication which argues, on the one hand, that “the one who tills doesn’t read” and, on the other, that “the one who reads doesn’t till”. Our purpose is to analyze the representations of the countryside emergent from the quasi-interaction between the family farmers from the pampas of Córdoba and the texts of the commercial agricultural press, in a current context of a deepening of capitalism in the pampas agriculture and an increasing mediatization of Argentine rural life. We postulate that, within the framework of rural family farms’ transformations associated with these conditions, family farmers of southern Córdoba (Argentina) build, in the reception of agrarian newspaper supplements, convergent and divergent representations with their socio-productive strategies of expansion, maintenance and retraction. In this sense, the readings of this heterogeneous layer of agricultural producers about the positions of sense mediatized by the national and local commercial agricultural press both constitute enclaves of their social situation and install their own dilemmas about their contemporary condition.

Keywords: communication, family farmers, agricultural press, reception, development

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1. A Thesis on Rural Communication in Question

This paper discusses, at the same time, a theoretical, historical and political thesis of rural communication which argues, on the one hand, that “the one who tills doesn’t read” and, on the other, it adds that “the one who reads doesn’t till” (Díez Rodríguez, 1980.) The affirmative counterpart of this thesis, controversial in modern farming conditions, argues that the oral condition is the exclusive and stable texture of rural communication and, ultimately, the radio is the communication mode compatible with this oral condition (Mas Canosa, 1991.)

The questioning of this thesis is based on historical, theoretical and political issues. On the one hand, rural communication studies identify some current experiences of reading as a usual practice for certain agricultural subjects from the pampas of Córdoba (Carniglia, 1998). Likewise, a personal history as a descendant of family farmers recognizes, since 1960, numerous reading and writing practices, even by those family members themselves and other actors with a poor and incomplete schooling.

On the other hand, the theory of mediated communication recognizes the increasing availability of media or located technological and symbolical institutions and the very much widespread literacy among urban and also developed rural western audiences and in some of its peripheries (Lahire, 2004; Manguel, 2005). Both are two key conditions of more or less widespread reading of books, newspapers, magazines and other printed media general and specific to agricultural activities, agrarian processes and rural livelihoods. The publics also read text messages from other media, like television news and documentaries, and/or “read” in everyday conversations that revisit the mediatization in this era of consumerism, technology and media ecology.

Finally, given reading as a metaphor of knowledge (Darnton, 2003), our discussion refers to the agricultural policy and especially to the more or less exclusive and conservative models of rural development that emphasize the mere techno-productive modernization of the countryside and its correlates of information and communication, for example in the rural extension. Such models reduce the role of the direct producers and other agricultural workers, e.g. in the generation, circulation and appropriation of knowledge for the transformation of the rural local, national and global universes that always include

them under subordinate and unstable conditions such as the so-called family rural properties or family farms from the Argentine pampas (Archetti y Stölen, 1975; Barsky, 1992; Balsa, 2006). This family farms shows a predominance of family workforce devoted to extensive agriculture, livestock, dairy and a combination of these and other activities.

2. The Position of the Object of Study

The pampas of Córdoba province (Argentina) comprise the ten departments located in the south central region of the mediterranean province. Extensive agricultural and livestock activities dominate this space and are currently in charge of 26,405 relatively heterogeneous commercial production units with an average surface area of 471.09 hectares (Carniglia, 2009).

In this territory and particular environment of the Argentine Pampas, the history of family farms - predominant quantitatively- has gone through the following stages within the last two centuries:

- Prolonged transition of smallholdings and smallholders between colonial and modern agriculture (1810-1870),
- Emergence of tenants and settlers in the expansion of modern agriculture under the agro-export regime (1871-1935),
- Capitalization, diversification and expulsion of productive units in the context of industrialization (1936-1975),
- Crisis of small farms in a context of agriculturization, technical change and neoliberal policies (1976-2001),
- Relative recovery of farms in a post-neoliberal transition and crisis of the articulation between country and industry (2002-)

In this sense, the present research belongs mainly with the mediatized rural communication of the last agrarian stage already mentioned.

Consequently, our object of study, that is, the contemporary reading of rural newspaper supplements by family farmers in southern Córdoba pampas, lies in one of the possible and little explored intersections between, on the one hand, the intertwined theories of communication generated in the disciplines of

society, culture and human beings and, on the other hand, the different complex understandings of the rural issues set by specific social studies (Carniglia, 2012).

The first field of theories is indispensable, for example, to study the history and current behavior of readers and other audiences of media (Ang, 1996; Alasuutari, 1999; Dayan, 2001; Fornäs, 2008; Mata, 2000; McQuail, 1997; Morley, 1999; Murdock, 1990).

The second perspective proves unavoidable to assume that the Argentine countryside has different rural realities (Barsky y Gelman, 2001; Giarracca, 1999; Lattuada y Neiman, 2005), such as different socio-productive units and associated actors from the Argentine pampas and other modern agricultural regions, e.g. agriculture that is commercial, extensive, unirrigated and with temperate climate, industrial and global. Family rural properties or family farms are distinguished because of their history and visibility among the mentioned units (Carniglia, 1994; Cloquell, 2007; Forni, 2001; Forni and Tort, 1984; Gras, 2009; Martínez and Tort, 2003; Neiman and others, 2001; Tort and others, 1991, Tort and Román, 2005).

Thus, given the reading condition as a symbol of modernity (Darnton, 2003), we assume the latter from Berman (1989), and hence the contemporary agriculture, with an acute awareness of its two faces: on the one hand, a creative and transforming mark through a productive expansion based on the incorporation of knowledge and technologies and, on the other, a destructive condition, for instance, in the expulsion of rural social actors and the environmental problems that are generated (Lattuada and Neiman, 2005; Brignol, 2006).

3. About the Background

Our analysis of the background focuses three addressed areas on their specificities and relationships: a) it revises several studies on the Latin American agricultural press; b) it systematizes the studies on the audience of the media, especially those from the rural region; and c) it discusses an a priori perspective on the situated reception of newspapers, radio, television, films and other multimedia formats compatible with our vision of rural communication, e.g. the (re)production of meanings within situated human relations or bonds.

a) The revision of the studies on the agricultural press highlights that:

- - The amount of research on this subject in Latin America is small but the contributions generated are significant,
- - An empirical emphasis associated with practical concerns predominates in the research,
- - The studies are in general sub-theorized in both the conceptual and the methodological and practical aspects of the relationship between mediatized communication and rural life in a particular socio-cultural and historical context,
- - There are not many studies known on the always situated relationship between the different texts and the rural publics, audiences, or recipients, e.g. the group of readers of the publications and other specialized media (Carniglia, 2009; 2011).

b) The systematization of the studies on the media audiences, particularly those of the rural area, shows strange and concise references to mediatized rural communication in the five traditions of the international and national study on audiences, namely the approach to the effects, uses and gratifications, cultural studies, literary theory and criticism, and perspective of the reception (Dayan, 2001; De la Peza, 2003; Gray, 1999; Grimson and Varela, 1999; Jacks, 2006; Jensen and Rosengren, 1990; Saintout and Ferrante, 2006; Varela, 2002). Thus, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, half of the world's population still living in the countryside constitutes a hidden and unknown actor of the research of readers, viewers, listeners and internet users of rural communication in general and mediatized communication in particular.

This state of the field of study requires new efforts for the research on the audience that, widening the current cultural emphasis, add and unite a perspective of society, another of the media, and a third of their audiences (Carniglia, 2012).

c) Thompson (1998) defines reception as a situational and routine activity that puts into play the abilities for the hermeneutic or interpretive process. In this sense, our discussion of his study on the situated reception of newspapers, radio, television, films and multimedia formats in modern contexts sets the need to expand or complement the author's perspective in three directions: i) to incorporate a social, cultural and historical analysis on the formation of public from the audiences; ii) to distinguish analyti-

cal dimensions for the empirical study of the reception of the media, in this case, the reading of the agricultural press by family farmers from Córdoba pampas, and iii) to spread a more precise and operational understanding of the texts, and of its associated representations, as one of the symbolic forms or messages from the media (Carniglia, 2009).

4. Objective and Research Method

Our study analyzes the representations of the countryside emergent from the quasi-interaction between the family farmers from the pampas of Córdoba and the texts of the commercial agricultural press, in a context of a deepening of capitalism in the pampas agriculture and an increasing mediatization of Argentine rural life (Carniglia, 2009).

Given the available background and the theory assumed, the empirical research on our object of study comprises three units of observation (message, audience and context) and their corresponding methodological strategies convergent in a "incorporated" or "embedded" unique case study, consisting of one case (the family farmer) with multiple units of analysis for comparison purposes.

In general terms, this research on mediatized rural communication comprises a triangulation strategy or methodological convergence. This is understood as a knowledge plan -using mainly the qualitative method- that combines several observations, theoretical perspectives, sources of data, and methodologies into one single investigation, favoring their complementation (Carniglia, 2009).

Thus, the selected method comprises:

a) a bibliographic-documentary study of Córdoba family farms and their most visible actor, the family farmer or grower, distinguishes the continuities and transformations in the evolution of two centuries in the pampas of Córdoba (Carniglia, 1994; 2012; Tell, 2008) and, in particular, this study analyzes how the subjects head of those agrarian units make themselves and are made as public of the media (Carniglia, 2010);

b) a textual analysis of the main positions of sense -under a qualitative and quantitative, medium-term and comparative format- that question such readers to distinguish i) the structure of the two largest circulation agricultural publications in the south of Córdoba, e.g. rural supplements of Clarín and Puntal newspapers, and ii) the profile of both papers, e.g. the representations and the textualized readers in the more prominent news and opinions of those newspapers, in particular the cover story and the opinion column by the responsible editor of these weeklies published from 1997 to 2005 (Carniglia, 2011).

c) a set of twenty semi-structured interviews, conducted in three relatively different areas of southern Córdoba, to a purposive sample of farmers, selected by their status as the head of rural family farms established: i) the consumption habits of the agricultural press and other specialized media; ii) the interpretations of the positions of sense emerging from the previous analysis of the journals; iii) different aspects of the experience as an agricultural producer; and iv) characteristics of the head of the farm, his/her family and the production unit (Carniglia, 2012).

5. The Thesis Involved

After the research carried out, the thesis that expresses the results generated with such objectives and methodological strategy postulates that within a current framework of, on the one hand, rural family farms' transformations associated to the deepening of capitalism in the pampas agriculture and, on the other hand, of an incipient mediatization of Argentine rural life, family farmers of southern Córdoba (Argentina) build, in the reception of the local and national agricultural press, convergent and divergent representations with their socio-productive strategies of expansion, maintenance and retraction (Carniglia, 2009.)

6. The Constitution of the Public Within a Rural Social Category

Our conception of the public understands the creation of rural audiences within a socio-cultural and historical matrix (Mata, 2000; McQuail, 1997).

The usage of the concept family rural properties (FRP) is thought to provide a better understanding of a triple articulation of conditions in this social category: in it the family as a (re)productive institution, the firm or company as the production organization and the rural life with its agricultural activities, agrarian processes and rural livelihoods are intercepted and cross (Bokemeier, 1997; Gasson and others, 1988).

We address the origins, histories, transformations and possible scenarios of those socio-productive units of modern agriculture in Cordoba to understand how, from their own reading experience of the commercial agricultural press, they recover the past and try to build material and symbolically their own life world and their family group's for current and future generations. In that process as well the members of the family rural properties make themselves and, at the same time, are constituted as audiences and publics of the general and specialized media (Carniglia, 2010).

The history of the rural farms from Córdoba pampas shows five clearly defined unit stages with a predominance of family workforce devoted to agriculture, livestock, dairy and a combination of these and other activities (see Chart A).

Chart A. *Family farms in Córdoba: agrarian situations and rural communication.* Source: Carniglia (2009; 2010)

AGRARIAN PERIOD	RURAL COMMUNICATION
Prolonged transition of smallholdings and smallholders between colonial and modern agriculture (1810-1870)	Oral communication, and a reading experience mediated by rural and urban agents?
Emergence of tenants and settlers in the expansion of modern agriculture under the agro-export regime (1871-1935)	Emergence of institutional magazines of the major corporations of farmers
Capitalization, diversification and expulsion of productive units in the context of industrialization (1936-1975)	Publication of commercial and official magazines, and dissemination of radio in the countryside

Crisis of small farms in a context of agriculturization, technical change and neoliberal policies (1976-2001)	Broadcast television in rural areas. Editing of weekly rural supplements by the newspaper
Relative recovery of farms in a post-neoliberal transition and crisis of the articulation between country and industry (2002- . . .)	Digital and multimedia formats and the worldwide web are added to the media experience of some farmers

These rural properties show a significant capacity of endurance and adaptability to various critical junctures in the agriculture of the Argentine mediterranean province. Their reproduction is, at the same time, the record of a significant decrease in number of productive units, as, for example, between 1969 and 2002 around half of the agricultural farms in the pampas of Cordoba disappear. They show as well evident qualitative changes in their dual condition of socio-productive forms -that is in the relations of labor, land and capital control- and as a lifestyle of the rural world. However, the simultaneous unstable, subordinated, and subordinating condition of these units is produced along all this large and dynamic trajectory.

In this sense, it is to be understood that the socio-cultural and historical characterization of a particular group of farmers, those related to family farming, contributes to the research of the always situated reception, in this case reading, of the press specializing in agricultural production and rural life.

7. The Mediatization of Rural Issues

From our comprehensive perspective of rural communication, media reception, particularly the contemporary reading of the agricultural supplements of Argentine newspapers, is conceived as a set of practices, representations and uses. This relatively (dis)continuous system is constituted in the quasi-interaction between the actors of the public, such as the family farmers of southern Córdoba, and media texts, the agricultural press in this case, in a particular socio-cultural and historical context, as the countryside of the Argentine pampas crossed, as previously said, by the current deepening of capitalism and a growing mediatization of rural issues (Carniglia, 2009).

In this state of affairs, the mediatization of rural issues lies in the increase in quantity and quality of media, messages and events, among others, that seek visibility, credibility and legitimacy of the rural actors, practices, objects, discourses and representations, the agrarian processes and the rural worlds in the context of the ever troubled socio-cultural and historical link between the country and the city in Argentina.

In this country, agriculture in the Pampas since the 19th century has at the same time taken on the functions of food provider, tax revenue, and currency, among others. These functions present a current contradictory or at least paradoxical condition of the agrarian question in Argentina, i.e. of the advance of capitalism in and from the countryside.

Thus, in the Argentine pampas of the first decade of the 21st century a complex mediatization of the country or rural issues occurs through, among others, the following phenomena:

- The continuous transmission since 1996 of the denominated Canal Rural (Rural Channel), a specialized cable television signal, with national and international scope,
- The renewal of more or less classical specialized publications -commercial and/or institutional,
- The approach to new topics by the newspapers and/or the renewal in the treatment of other classic topics such as the technological issue,
- The emergence of new journals, audiovisual programs and multimedia devices on general and/or specific agricultural topics,
- A significant trend towards the increase in advertising spaces and the objects promoted in the commercial media, that is, media funded by advertising and/or the sale of copies and connections,
- The appearance of new, or renewed, functions by the rural supplements of newspapers, for example the transmission of news and views from the country to the city,
- The growth and renewal, at least in part, of the roles and jobs of agricultural journalism,
- The cattle auctions on TV
- The increasing organization of business and technical events related to different productive activities and technological objects,
- The sustained importance, by continuity and increasing call, of the agro-dynamic and/or static exhibitions organized by public institutes such as INTA (National Institute of Agrarian Technology) and, on several occasions, by companies also in charge of publishing projects related, as previously said, to the

different Argentine rural issues, for instance the largest trajectory and/or circulation national newspapers, and

- The extension of the practices, representations and uses of the reception of the general and specialized media by different actors in the denominated rural sector (Carniglia, 2012).

8. Positions of Sense in Rural Supplements

Our understanding defines rural supplements from a dual perspective relevant to the demarcation of their positions of sense according to the agricultural activities, the agrarian processes and the rural worlds: cultural object and multimodal text.

a) We consider the weekly rural supplement of commercial newspapers of general information a socio-cultural object (Chartier, 1996; Littau, 2008), e.g. a product with matter, form, meaning, function and context whose structure must be analyzed to discriminate which positions of sense are set and which readers dominate its pages.

In this sense, our textual analysis shows that the design in general and the most important multimodal news in particular of the two most widely read rural supplements in the south of Córdoba show some similarities in form, in this case size and use of color, and content, for example the matrix of topics covered in the highlights. Furthermore, these publications are different in other aspects of design -the organization of the cover, the number of pages, the organization of sections and the ratio of advertising-and content, such as the relative frequencies of the cover story topics.

Clarín Rural, the largest circulation agricultural supplement in Argentina, integrating the agricultural press, is associated to an economic, technical and agrarian format or model systematically reproduced despite the dynamic rural condition of the period corresponding to the vast corpus analyzed (456 weekly agricultural supplements between 1997 and 2005). Its link to this model is supported from the structure and profile of the newspaper with at least four related textual devices (Carniglia, 2011).

In contrast, the treatment of the highlights in Tranquera Abierta corresponds to a model of commercial agricultural press defined as corporate and land-primary, because the livestock theme predominates and the local agricultural corporations are privileged sources of mediatized news (Carniglia, 2009).

b) Moreover, the agricultural supplement contains several multimodal texts that correspond to different genres such as news and advertising. As signifiers woven into circulation, in this case printed words and images, that make up both a fetish of communication and an object of knowledge and pleasure, each text is constituted in a multiple way.

In this respect, among the most prominent positions of sense within the news frames in these newspapers, particularly the rural supplement of the "first national daily", five repeated messages that appeal to family farmers and other readers outstand, stating:

- A growing and systematic questioning of the official agricultural policy based on a particular agrarian ideology,
- The benefits of the agriculturization process in progress based on the growing of soybean,
- The different agricultural technologies as tools to improve production and profitability of any production unit,
- A model or stereotype of a professionalized agricultural producer with control of various productive resources, and
- An understanding of the agricultural production and the agrarian processes as highly important for the regional and national economy (Carniglia, 2009; 2011).

9. Some Features of Rural Actors and Their Properties

Our diachronic study shows that, after two centuries of many significant changes, in a context of conflicts between models and interests about the country of Córdoba pampas, the family rural properties of southern Córdoba survive, more as a renewed social category rather than a new one, in situations of relative heterogeneity within the twenty-first century agriculture.

Besides, if the twenty male and female farmers in our intentional sample are representative, at least scarcely, of their peers' contemporary condition, it is worth making conclusions about the relative diversity of family agro producers in the south of Córdoba (Carniglia, 2009).

Indeed, as social agents, these producers share the condition of responsible for the administrative tasks and the coordination of production processes and, in some situations, one or more of the physical tasks of agricultural work in farms operated by and for families. That is, in these socio-productive units: a)

their backgrounds are generally associated with one or more of the previous family farms; b) the physical and/or administrative tasks of commercial production and production for self consumption are provided, at least in part, by the members of the family; and c) the ultimate purposes of agricultural production and other agrarian and extra-rural activities are oriented to the reproduction of the family.

However, the diversity of situations in our interviewees, the heads of family rural properties of southern Córdoba, is a sign or an indication more of their complex and heterogeneous conditions in their demographic aspects, productive resources, agricultural activities, and strategies in view of a situation with difficult alternatives for the reproduction of the production unit.

Córdoba family farmers differ, to a more or less extent, in age, schooling levels, number of children, agricultural activities, extra-rural occupations, nationality of ancestors, age of beginning as an independent worker, and membership of producer groups or associations.

Similarly, their rural properties seem even more diverse, since they differ in the number of acres owned and leased, the activities developed despite a well known trend towards agriculturization, the number of cattle available, the number and duties of permanent and temporary employees, and the way of employing the services of sowing, cultural care, and harvest, among others.

Finally, the strategies used in this diversity of conditions show, or at least suggest, situations of expansion, maintenance and removal of agricultural activities. This latter situation does not necessarily mean the complete and irreversible ejection of the agent from the rural area.

10. Practices and Uses of the Reception of a Diverse Rural Actor

Consequently, our research links two socio-cultural and historically situated experiences: on the one hand, their experiences as a family agricultural producer in the pampas of Argentina, and on the other, their activities as a reader of news, opinions and advertising, among other texts in the rural supplements of newspapers.

Reading as a practice is one of the more or less conscious sensory activities through which humans, e.g. women and men, (re)produce both material and symbolic conditions and social relations of everyday life.

Among other modes resulting from the reading of agricultural publications by the heads of the family rural properties, we recognize: i) the display of a repressed pleasure; ii) a casual or random consumption; iii) leafing through the paper and, sometimes, choosing; iv) an analytical glance; v) the cultural tradition; vi) intertextuality; and vii) the multimedia consumption (Carniglia, 2012).

The reading experiences of the agricultural press by Córdoba family farmers include, among others, one or more of the following uses of media, genres, messages and situations of the situated quasi-interaction with the texts specializing in rural issues: i) knowing current aspects of agricultural policy; ii) establishing general guidelines for the more or less immediate productive activities; iii) discussing agricultural issues with family, friends, colleagues, leaders, professionals and other actors; iv) identifying useful technological equipment, supplies and processes compatible with their farm; v) getting informed on prices of production to define agricultural and marketing decisions; and vi) setting positions about relative discourses relating to the agricultural situation in the local and national economy and society (Carniglia, 2012).

11. Convergent and Divergent Representations of Readers

In terms of an updated version of the study of Stuart Hall (1980) on the decoding of media messages, that is the recipient's options, in this case family farmer readers of the agricultural press, the following alternative positions on the interpretation of texts are considered:

- i) an indifferent position, not covered by the author but sometimes important for interpreting the message,
- ii) a domination position, when the public fully accepts the semantic values prevailing in the message,
- iii) an oppositional position, by which the recipient rejects the dominant meaning of the message from a different interpretation, and

iv) a negotiated position, where the subject somehow integrates both dominant and alternative meanings.

In this sense, according to our methodological concept, our fieldwork including semi-structured interviews to the heads of twenty family farms in three southern areas of Córdoba favored the careful record of the reasoning of the readers to the five instructions given by the researcher that made explicit the positions of sense or messages highlighted in both newspapers of the commercial agricultural press. Chart B details all the interpretations of the five messages from the specialized press by Córdoba family farmers included in the sample.

Chart B. *Agricultural press reading profile by family farmers according to production strategies.*
 Source: Author's elaboration based on own data

CASE	STRATEGY	READING OF MESSAGES					READING PROFILE
		I Policy	II Agriculture	III Technology	IV Farmer	V Country	
1	E	N	N	N	N	D	Negotiated
2	E	D	N	D	O	D	Dominant
5	E	D	O	N	O	D	Negotiated
6	E	D	O	N	D	D	Dominant
7	E	N	O	D	D	D	Dominant
9	E	D	D	D	N	D	Dominant
12	E	D	N	O	N	D	Dominant
17	E	D	D	O	O	D	Dominant
19	E	D	D	D	N	N	Dominant
4	M	D	D	O	D	D	Dominant
8	M	D	N	N	O	D	Eclectic
10	M	N	D	D	O	D	Dominant
13	M	N	D	O	O	D	Eclectic
15	M	N	O	D	O	N	Eclectic
16	M	D	O	N	O	O	Oppositional
20	M	D	O	N	O	N	Eclectic
3	M/R	D	D	D	O	O	Dominant
11	R	D	O	O	O	D	Oppositional
14	R	D	N	D	O	D	Dominant
18	R	D	D	O	O	O	Oppositional

STRATEGIES: E= expansion; M= maintenance; R= retraction

MESSAGES:

- I) The current agricultural policy reduces or prevents the improvement of the productive capacity of the country
- II) The dedication to agriculture with technological intensification is becoming more and more convenient
- III) There are diverse technologies available to increase production and improve profitability in any farm
- IV) Nowadays classic and new farmers work in the countryside modernizing their productive forms
- V) The countryside is the most important sector for the regional and national economy

READINGS:

D = DOMINANT; O = OPPOSITIONAL; N = NEGOTIATED

Among the main reading orientations, we point out that:

- Decodings tend to be, in descending order, "dominant" or "oppositional" and, to a lesser extent, "negotiated"
- Message I (agricultural policy criticism) especially and, to a lesser extent, position V (maximum importance of the country) arouse a dominant decoding of readers;
- Message IV (innovative professional farmer) is subject to a reading of opposition by a majority of family farmers;
- Messages II (agricultural intensification) and III (incorporation of technology) obtained, in order of decreasing frequency, dominant, oppositional and negotiated responses;
- Four profiles or general reading orientations characterize the representations of Córdoba family farmers; namely the dominant, the oppositional, the negotiated and the eclectic, with a predominance of the first type;
- Producers under expansion strategies decode the messages of the agricultural press with aggregate dominant (cases 2, 6, 7, 9, 12, 17 and 19) or negotiated readings (cases 1 and 5);

- Farmers under maintenance and retraction strategies read these texts in terms of dominant (cases 3, 4, 10 and 14), oppositional (cases 11, 16 and 18) and eclectic (cases 8, 13, 15 and 20) readings;

- In particular agrarian subjects with maintenance and retraction strategies (except case 4) reject the stereotype of agricultural producer of the national newspaper rural supplement.

12. Enclaves and Dilemmas of a Situated Reading

All these indications show eloquently that, firstly, Córdoba family farmers are somehow indifferent to the representations of the agricultural press, especially those put forward by their most widespread newspaper, e.g. the weekly rural supplement published by general information commercial newspapers of different circulation areas.

Moreover, they recognize all the possible positions of sense about the countryside emphasized, for example, through Clarín Rural, that is: a piece of agricultural policy criticism in the current situation of agricultural production; agriculturization as the main trend of production; agricultural technology as a key and indispensable instrument to improve the economic results of the farm; images of very prominent agricultural producers presented in the texts; and the maximum importance of agricultural and agro-industrial activities in the regional and national economy and society.

Secondly, the interviewees of such public share some of these images, especially those regarding the questioning of the agricultural policy from the opinion articles of both newspapers.

However, always in Hall's terms (1980), family farmers also negotiate or, directly, question such textualized representations by the rural supplements of newspapers. That is, the readings of these agrarian actors also set significant disagreement with regards to messages emphasized by such publications, especially on the meanings associated to the abandonment of mixed farming and, to an incorporation of technology sometimes impossible or very difficult for the conditions of their productive units. The questioning also includes an acknowledgement that the agricultural press, especially the national press, excludes from its reports those actors that, as well as some readers, are more exposed to exclusive and conservative modernization processes of the countryside of Argentine pampas in the 21st century.

Why do these shades of meaning in the interpretation of agricultural press messages by family farmers of southern Córdoba occur?

Our response favors the situated condition of the reception of the messages of rural communication. An assumption on the socio-cultural and historical nature of rural communication makes us hold that both objects, for example the rural supplements of newspapers, and experiences, for instance the readings of these agricultural press newspapers by Córdoba family farmers, and also cultural processes, particularly the growing mediatization of rural issues, assume an always situated condition within socio-cultural breakups and historical contingencies.

In this sense, the readings of this heterogeneous layer of agricultural producers about the positions of sense mediatized by the national and local commercial agricultural press both constitute enclaves of their social situation and install their own dilemmas about their contemporary condition.

Regarding the former, the enclaves, family farmers identify themselves individually as agrarian social subjects, and collectively as an interpretive community, or a “we”, an audience of mediatized rural communication with certain conditioning factors such as class, productive activity, generation and other socio-cultural and historical circumstances.

These factors are involved particularly when it comes to interpreting in a “dominant” fashion the messages of the rural supplements dealing with agricultural policy criticism and assertion of the importance of the countryside for the economy and society. Besides, the acknowledgement of a relatively specific “we”, e.g. the “small producers”, also emerges in the questioning of the predominant image of the agricultural producer released by the national agricultural press.

Regarding the latter, the dilemmas, these agricultural producers assume some of the conflicts and uncertainties of their subordinate and unstable condition as social actors in a society in recurrent crises, at a macroeconomic and also agricultural level, and with significant fractures, such as the processes of exclusion, not only in the countryside but also in the social whole.

In particular, dilemmas are updated in the interpretation of messages about agricultural intensification, based on the soybean monoculture and the availability of always accessible technology.

Specifically, given the always situated nature of the reception of the commercial agricultural press, a partial answer to the question, but relevant to our reasoning, consists of relating, as expressed in our thesis, the interpretations of these farmers to their productive strategies or situations (see Chart B, Annex section). This analysis involves one of the ways of combining the reader's interpretations with the diverse and heterogeneous conditions of contemporary family farms.

Moreover, the territories of reception, particularly the representations, can show relative autonomy with regard to the textual and social limits of mediatized rural communication. This happens, for example, when conditions of (in)coherence and fear and also the reader's imagination and desire take part in the interpretation of some messages. In this sense, the latter two forces maintain a technological imaginary from the interviewed readers that shows, for example, technological adaptations and inventions (Carniglia, 2009).

Consequently, it is also relevant and important to recognize that, as it has just been shown, the readings of the news and opinions of the rural press do not always converge or coincide consistently with the production strategies, the situations of accumulation, and the general shift of family farmers' conditions.

13. The Political Nature of Rural Communication

Among its findings, our research shows that, on a contextual level, cultural productions, in this case the national agricultural press, present hegemonic versions of the society in which they occur and, at a local level, it shows that social actors including those of an intermediate rural position, such as family farmers, reject and negotiate at least some of the meanings of such messages in the quasi-interactions with texts, especially those from the specialized media.

In this respect, with the repeated conviction of an essential continuity of the just initiated research we close the spiral circuit and return, from a point of view of critical and constructive realism, to the theo-

retical, historical and political character at once of our thesis of mediatized rural communication (Carniglia, 2009).

From the study of communication for rural development in the interior of Argentina, we affirm that “the one who reads also tills” emphasizing that the reception of the agricultural press by family farmers from southern Córdoba is installed in the hard center of a complex and always contentious situation of the modern country of twenty-first-century Argentina.

That is, it is set in the basis of disputes over the visibility, credibility and legitimacy of more sustainable modes of the rural issues in peripheral complex societies, a matter concerning all of us because it is necessary to remove a twenty-first-century Argentine agriculture model that is both exclusive and conservative.

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