

# AGRARIAN REFORM COMMUNICATION: CONCEPTS AND METHODS

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## *Introduction*

THE WIDELY FELT NEED FOR AGRARIAN REFORM COMMUNICATION DERIVES from the trend that in many countries<sup>1</sup> agrarian reform is pursued as a goal and considered an indicator, of development.<sup>2</sup> Quite naturally, because of its strong capacity to spur societal progress, more and more governments<sup>3</sup> make agrarian reform one of their national policies.

Pushing agrarian reform toward development can enhance such need, as it may promote development once successfully communicated to the people it affects. It means that in a given communication situation, the people must not only be fed with the necessary information on agrarian reform, but with the necessary information fed to them, they must be moved to change for the better some, if not all of their agrarian ideas, outlook, values and attitudes.

To describe such process is the over-all aim of this paper.

Specifically, this paper deals with agrarian reform against the background of communication. It 1) discusses the nature of agrarian reform communication; 2) points out basic concepts from the social sciences that are relevant to such communication; and 3) describes some methods of agrarian reform communication.

Examples from Philippine experience will be given, whenever necessary, to illustrate the relationship between agrarian reform and communication.

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<sup>1</sup> Among these countries are the United Arab Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines.

<sup>2</sup> The term "development" is here taken to mean what Peter Dorner views as "a process resulting in an improvement in levels of living for vast numbers of people at the bottom of the income distribution pyramid, a general decrease in poverty, a reduction in high rates of unemployment and underemployment, a greater equality in the distribution of income, more wide-spread participation by all groups in the economic and political affairs of the nation, as well as an increase in output and productivity." Cf. Peter Dorner, "Needed Redirections in Economic Analysis for Agricultural Development Policy," *The American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. LIII (February 1971), pp. 8-16.

<sup>3</sup> Governments of both developed (e.g., Japan) and developing (e.g., the Philippines) countries.

### *Nature of Agrarian Reform Communication*

There are two key concepts subsumed under the term, "agrarian reform communication". These are *agrarian reform* and *communication*.

Agrarian reform, according to the United Nations, refers to the improvement in

...the institutional framework of agricultural production. It includes in the first place, land tenure, the legal or customary system under which land is owned; the distribution of ownership of farm property between large estates and peasant farms of various sizes; land tenancy, the system under which land is operated and its product divided between operator and owner; the organization of credit; production and marketing; the mechanism through which agriculture is financed; the burdens imposed on rural populations by governments in the form of taxation; and the services supplied by governments to rural populations, such as technical advice and educational facilities, health services, water supply and communication.<sup>4</sup>

Briefly, there is agrarian reform when the agrarian structure<sup>5</sup>, or any of its components,<sup>6</sup> is improved.

Communication, on the other hand, is the transfer of information from one individual to another through the use of symbols.<sup>7</sup> Theoretically, after the latter individual (the receiver of the message) has received the information, he experiences a change in his ideas, values and/or attitudes. And it happens mainly because the former (the source) had sought this change. As Berlo says:

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic Affairs, *Land Reform: Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development* (New York: The United Nations, 1951), pp. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> In this paper, agrarian structure is defined as the arrangement or interrelation of all the components of a human organization based on land and man's relations with it, that exists within social limits in a given territory. It is, according to the United Nations, that "complex of institutions with interconnecting sets of relationships between tenure structure, production structure and structure of supporting services, and other related rural institutions each constituting an integral part of the wider whole." Cf. United Nations, *Progress in Land Reform*, fifth report, Vol. 1 (New York: The United Nations, 1970), pp. 30-31; also see Vol. III of the same report, p. 303.

<sup>6</sup> Its major components are the *land*, the *people* who have relations with it, the *technology* they use, the people's *institutional* (social, economic, religious, political, cultural) *practices* as these relate to the land, and the *symbolic means* (e.g., language) they use in associating, communicating and interacting with one another. For a discussion of these components, see my paper mentioned in footnote 31.

<sup>7</sup> For further discussion see David K. Berlo, *The Process of Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960); Colin Cherry, *On Human Communication* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1957); Wilbur Schramm, *The Science of Human Communication* (New York and London: Basic Books, Inc., 1963); Edwin Emery, Philip H. Ault and Warren K. Agee, *Introduction to Mass Communications* (New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1960); Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1959); and Leothiny S. Clavel, "Anthropology and Mass Communication: Synthesis and Symbiosis," in Mario D. Zamora and Zeus A. Salazar, eds., *Anthropology: Range and Relevance* (Quezon City: Kayumanggi Publishers, 1969).

Our basic purpose in communication is to become an affecting agent, to affect others, a determining agent, to have a vote in how things are. *In short, we communicate to influence -- to affect with intent.*<sup>8</sup>

Considering the above definitions, agrarian reform communication means the process of transmitting and receiving ideas, values or attitudes which aim at or result in any improvement in the agrarian structure. It is the flow of a *message* (information) from a *source* through a *channel* (means) toward an intended *receiver* (audience), that seeks to correct certain defects in the agricultural frame of production.

In an agrarian reform communication situation, the source of a message may be a government agency working for agrarian reform, a public official, an extension worker, a journalist, or the like. Contents of the message include ideas about land tenure; land tenancy; credit, taxation and marketing with respect to agricultural productivity; cooperatives; and social services aimed at improving the agrarian structure. Channel may be the vocal chord, a radio or a TV station, a printed page, or a movie. The receiver may be anybody or any group belonging to an agrarian community; for example, the tenants or the landlords.

This means that agrarian reform communication may be carried out on the level of either mass or face-to-face communication. On the level of mass communication, agrarian reform communication uses the mass media, such as the press, radio, television and cinema, and is directed to a mass audience in an agrarian community. On the level of face-to-face communication, it is conducted through the use of such physical faculties as speech, gestures, and other bodily means of communication. In contrast to the level of mass communication, there is on this level some personal contact between the source and the receiver.

Proceeding from the Source-Message-Channel-Receiver Model, agrarian reform communication, when successful, is characterized by several conditions. Theoretically, when the source and the receiver belong to the same culture, have more or less the same levels of knowledge, are governed by the same social system, pay the same amount of attention to the message, and possess the same communication skills,<sup>9</sup> agrarian reform communication will most probably be understood by the receiver. This understanding may lead him to action (feedback), and if his action is in the direction predetermined by the source, the communication, it may be said, is successful. Its success depends for the main part on the ability of the source of a given message to influence the thinking or action of the receiver.

Let us take, for example, a radio announcer in the Philippines who, on his radio program, tells a specific group consisting of farmers to

<sup>8</sup> Berlo, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

affiliate themselves with the cooperatives of their respective places. In so doing, he must choose a language that is intelligible to the listening farmers and words that suggest respect for them, because in Philippine culture smooth interpersonal communication is fostered by respect words. He should use, as is usually done, such phrase as "*Ang inyong abang lingkod*" (Your humble servant) and such words as "*po*" and "*ho*" which heavily imply the connotations of the English "Sir" and "Madam".

In this example, we have the radio announcer as the source of the message, the message which states that farmers should join certain cooperatives, the radio as the channel, and the listening farmers as the receivers.<sup>10</sup> The announcer's speaking behavior is influenced by Philippine culture in terms of its norms regarding smooth interpersonal communication. But while he adapts his speaking behavior to the kind of message he communicates, the message necessarily has to adapt also to the intelligence and personality of its receivers by seeing to it that it is not beyond their comprehension. The choice of the radio as the channel is an adaptation, too. It is so chosen because, unlike the newspapers, magazines, television and cinema, it can reach many farmers, including those in the remote areas.

The communication just described may yet succeed, partly because the announcer and the listening farmers belong to the same culture and social system. The manner of the announcer's speech is influenced by the culture and the social system; but as the manner of speaking<sup>11</sup> is widely observed, his message can be understood by the farmers to whose intelligence and personality its degree of difficulty has been adapted. The communication succeeds as the farmers join the cooperatives he refers to.

Agrarian reform communication is an example of development communication, which is concerned with the institutions and forms in which messages that aim to bring about development are transmitted and received. As development communication, it serves its own purpose when it results, in addition to the growth of a nation's agricultural strength, in political stability, higher per capita income, and social and cultural integration, among other occurrences. These particular and other related occurrences decisively influence one another as a result of such communication.

In clearer terms, agrarian reform communication must, from the point of view of politics, be in accordance with the objectives of power and government; it must, ideally, contribute to the perpetuation of power and government. From the point of view of economics, it must help bring about

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<sup>10</sup> For discussion purposes, we assume that the audience is composed of farmers. Actually, this may be an incorrect assumption, since the audience may also include non-farmers.

<sup>11</sup> The manner of speaking, in the example, can attract and maintain the listeners' attention, a factor that contributes to the success of the given communication.

greater agricultural production, improved marketing facilities, stronger social services system, and better definition of property as it relates to the agrarian structure. From that of traditional culture, it must promote the introduction of necessary innovations as long as these are compatible with the institutions and customs of those people who should be covered by them. Otherwise, it must engage in a viable and appropriate information campaign to prepare the people for the innovations: this is, above all, to ensure social and cultural cohesiveness.

Agrarian reform communication, in short, does not directly effect — it simply helps bring about — physical or quantitative changes, such as greater agricultural productivity. The changes it causes are qualitative in nature, and they usually come as modifications in existing attitudes, values, motivations, and ideas.

### *Basic Conceptual Tools*

Practitioners<sup>12</sup> in the field of agrarian reform communication should be equipped with basic knowledge of cultural and human behaviors. For lending itself as some reference point to their thinking regarding agrarian reform, this knowledge will enable them to understand their roles and limitations as communicators in a given agrarian reform communication situation. With it, also, they may be able to determine how and to what extent they may create the public opinions they desire, since it can suggest to them the possible responses of people to specific informational and/or motivational communications, like agrarian reform communication.

A practitioner should be aware of this knowledge, because it can constitute the theoretical framework within which he may solve problems, plan programs and create new ideas as all these — problems, programs and ideas — address themselves to agrarian reform. But while the theoretical framework can guide his thinking and, on analysis, his actions based on his ideas, there is still need for extensive gathering of data on the results of his actions to confirm the validity and firmness of the framework.

Actions are related to communication as they affect or indicate its meaning. In operational terms, actions carry messages with them; or better still, actions may be or are messages themselves, as those who see or witness them react to them in some way.

In short, when a practitioner is testing for himself the validity of his theoretical framework, he may give out “actions-messages” that aim to elicit some response from people. Conceivably, he should be able to identify and understand this response to the degree that he may use

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<sup>12</sup> They include extension workers, policy-makers, classroom teachers, mass communicators and researchers who promote the idea of and work for agrarian reform.

it to determine whether his communication (i.e., through actions) has been a success or a failure.

All this implies that while performing one's duties as communicator, one should be guided by certain conceptual tools from the time the process of communication begins until it ends, or, in some cases, until it leads to a new start of that process. The agrarian reform communicator, in effect, does not only need to know the basic concepts that will help him communicate most effectively; he should also determine how these concepts stand or appear with the results of communications based on them. This determined, he can somehow understand how, where, when and why these concepts may influence his future communication.

The seven basic concepts from the social sciences that will be pointed out in this section must serve as mere guide to practitioners in the field of agrarian reform communication. Since their usefulness depends on their applicability to specific situations, they should not be taken as the only framework within which practitioners may form their ideas in agrarian reform communication situations.

The first and apparently the most important of these concepts is *culture*. It is likely to be so, because agrarian reform communication is undertaken within and by way of culture.

Culture refers to the way of life of a people in a given place at a given time<sup>13</sup>. Its five categories, Beals and Hoijer<sup>14</sup> say, are: 1) *technology*, the ways of behaving by means of which men use natural resources to meet their various needs; 2) *economics*, the patterns of behaving and the resultant organization of society with respect to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services; 3) *social organization*, the ways of behaving and the resultant organization of society relative to the preservation of smooth and harmonious relations between individuals and groups within a society or its segments and other societies; 4) *religion*, the patterns of behaving relative to man's relations to supernatural beings; and 5) *symbolic culture*, the systems of symbols and the techniques of using them, that are operant in the transmission of knowledge.

The concept of culture in relation to agrarian reform communication deserves a lengthy treatise, and any paper of the same scope and objectives as the present one cannot give justice to the discussion of it (the concept). Besides, to my knowledge, there has been no substantial study on the relationship between culture and agrarian reform communication. Even the discussion here of their relationship is largely theoretical in nature and in approach.

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<sup>13</sup> For more definitions of culture see A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; Peabody Museum, 1952).

<sup>14</sup> Ralph L. Beals and H. Hoijer, *An Introduction to Anthropology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965).

Under the concept of culture, agrarian reform communication is at any instant a cultural reality. It may be about specific agrarian ideas, values or attitudes being transmitted to affect the "technology", "economics", "social organization", "religion", and/or the "symbolic culture" of an agrarian group. It necessarily has to exist in culture, since it is here where it acquires meaning and results. It is a cultural phenomenon brought about by people for people under limitations imposed by widely recognized norms of behavior.

To clarify the influence of culture and agrarian reform communication on each other let us take the case of a tenant I met in Capiz, a province in Central Philippines, during my research in 1970 on the ethnography of the place.

The tenant referred to was illiterate and had worked under a very influential landlords for more than twenty-five years. During my interview with him about traditional agriculture, I asked him whether he would like to own the land he tilled if Government gave him a chance to own it. He said "yes" without hesitation but on second thought, he changed his answer to a negative one.

In support of his second answer, the tenant said he could not afford to see his landlord landless, because the latter had been very kind to him: the landlord financially helped him when his wife gave birth to their three sons and two daughters, when he or anybody in his family got sick and when his three sons got married. But he was convinced that his owning the land could result in some improvement in his socio-economic life. For while he was confident he would be recognized in social circles as a landowner, a respected status in Capiz, he believed he could increase his income.

Yet, he was not sure, he added, whether his landlord would be willing to dispense with the land. Since the latter inherited it from his (the landlord's) parents, he thought it was significant to the landlord, it having more than just financial value.

Apparently to the land was attached some "sentimental" value as by the property the landlord could remember his dead parents, who provided for him out of the produce of the land.

I, then, did not pay much attention to the tenant's answer. But as I recalled them while writing this paper I realized that the tenant indirectly stated two variables to consider in communicating agrarian reform to him. Briefly, these are *attitude*<sup>15</sup> and *value*<sup>16</sup>.

The attitude concerned was the tenant's unwillingness to own the land he tilled because it was actually owned by someone to whom he

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<sup>15</sup> Here, "attitude" refers to the manner of thinking, feeling and/or acting that indicates one's opinion, mood or inclination regarding a fact or state.

<sup>16</sup> By "value" is here meant a standard of behavior that is considered ideal by a people and that governs their thinking, feeling and/or acting in social situations.

had to demonstrate what the Capiceños call *utang nga kabalaslan* "(debt of reciprocal favor)". The value involved was *utang nga kabalaslan* itself which is one's moral and social obligation to reciprocate, at the present or in the future, the favors and graces one has received from another.<sup>17</sup>

Operationally, in communicating agrarian reform to the tenant one should aim at changing the above-mentioned attitude and value. The tenant's attitude should be changed to one with which he becomes predisposed to use all acceptable means in an effort to own the land, primarily for this reason: That he should own the land he tills because it is in line with the societal goal of achieving social equity and that because he is the one who exerts most or all of the physical efforts needed in production.

Meanwhile, the *utang nga kabalaslan* value worked on the tenant in a rather indirect manner. He did not want to own the land he tilled, because he had some *utang nga kabalaslan* to his landlord which he had not yet "paid" by equally returning the favors the latter had granted him. In real terms, he simply did not like to displease his landlord. It is culturally observed, in Capiz, that one should not think ill of or do harm to another who has done him a favor; otherwise, one will be regarded as some kind of a traitor and therefore unworthy of his fellowmen's respect.<sup>18</sup>

In this regard, the appropriate agrarian reform communication should make it clear to the tenant that *utang nga kabalaslan* can be "paid" in some other way, such as providing the landlord with manpower for free whenever he needs it; and that the Philippine Government, which works for agrarian reform, will help in seeing to it that the landlord is reasonably paid for the land the tenant may own.<sup>19</sup> Of course, there are other ideas that should be communicated in addition to the ones already discussed, and these include the argument that by making him owner-cultivator he may be able to improve his socio-economic conditions and, as he achieves greater productivity, to contribute to economic development.

In sum, the relationship between culture and agrarian reform communication may be generally expressed as follows: While culture determines the nature of the kind of agrarian reform communication that will succeed in it, agrarian reform communication can direct the changes that will occur in culture.

By implying or alluding to it we have indicated, too, the concept of *change*, the second one to be described. Technically, change is a departure from the status quo and in view of agrarian reform communica-

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Leothiny S. Clavel, "Folklore and Communication," *Asian Studies*, Vol. VIII, No. 2 (August 1970), pp. 221-222.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Leothiny S. Clavel, *The Oral Literature of Capiz* (Quezon City: Fely L. Villareal, 1972).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the Philippines' Republic Act No. 3844, otherwise known as the Agricultural Land Reform Code.

tion it means a modification in existing attitudes, values, ideas, or motivations.

The agrarian reform communicator's knowledge of the concept of change will suggest to him that some qualitative variation of attitudes, values, ideas, or motivations is inevitable as he effectively transmits his message to his audience. To a great measure, the type of variation that occurs can indicate whether or not he has succeeded in the transmission. He has succeeded if the type coincides with that which he had preconceived for the audience to experience; and not, if the contrary. Thus, there is change, when the farmer who had earlier refused to use fertilizers on his crops, decides to use them after an agrarian reform communicator has promoted application of same to bring about bigger productivity.

The third concept we will consider is the theory of *cognitive dissonance*. This theory maintains that man always rationalizes for his behavior<sup>20</sup> and that he tends to make his attitude and behavior consistent.<sup>21</sup> It may be illustrated, thus: A farmer buys X fertilizer fully believing it is the best one. Then, a friend tells him, later, that Y fertilizer is actually better than the one he had bought. Granted that he trusts his friend's opinion, he will soon experience cognitive dissonance. To justify his buying X fertilizer, he will gather more information on the fertilizer, such as its price compared to those of the other fertilizers, its effectiveness and institutional prestige, and use this knowledge to support his argument that may run something like this: That as far as he knows — and he can prove his point — X fertilizer is more efficacious than Y. He will hold that his decision to buy X fertilizer was correct and, despite his friend's claim, his liking for (i.e., attitude toward) it does not change. So, he makes his attitude conform with his behavior (i.e., buying X fertilizer).

Cognitive dissonance, in the context of agrarian reform communication, results from some information-giving situation that leads to some information-seeking situation. The former situation is created by the source of a message and the latter, by its receiver. Cognitive dissonance is experienced by the latter, in that as the target of the message he is the one being urged to change attitudes, values, ideas and/or motivations.

The fourth concept related to agrarian reform communication is the *reinforcement* theory, which proposes that people may change

<sup>20</sup> Elliot Aronson, "Dissonance Theory: Progress and Problems," in Robert Abelson *et. al.*, *Theories of Cognitive Consistency: A Sourcebook* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1968). Cited in Cesar M. Mercado, "Communication Strategies and their Impact on Launching the 1967 'Green Revolution' in the Philippines," *Philippine Journal of Communication Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September, 1971), pp. 25-43.

<sup>21</sup> Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, Illinois: Row Peterson, 1957). Cited in Mercado, *op. cit.*

their attitudes and behavior owing to reinforcement or reward<sup>22</sup> This means that change in attitude and in behavior will be promoted by certain benefits (rewards) and that the larger the benefits are, the bigger is the possibility that the change will follow.

In his study on the "Green Revolution" program in the Philippines, Mercado<sup>23</sup> pointed out how the reinforcement theory explained the farmers' acceptance of IR-8 or, as is popularly called, the "Miracle Rice". He said that once a farmer observed that IR-8 could turn out a high yield (a reward) he would most likely accept and plant it. The high yield was enough incentive for him to try it.

Agrarian reform communication can use this theory in its attempt to persuade people to accept the program of agrarian reform. Applying this theory, it must put across people affected by the program, the message that agrarian reform will reward them with, among other benefits, greater productivity, better income distribution and high employment.<sup>24</sup> The message must spell and stress these benefits.

The theory of *diffusion*, the fifth concept in our discussion, may indicate the proposition that an agrarian reform message can spread from a given point to another one or more in a given territory or group of territories. By diffusion is meant the "transfer of culture elements from one society to another";<sup>25</sup> and in agrarian reform communication situations, the element that "moves" or will "move" is the message (idea, value or attitude) being transmitted.

Thus, the message that is transmitted by, say, an extension worker may reach a farmer who may, in turn, transmit it to his fellow farmers. This spread is, technically, brought about by word-of-mouth communication.

It is possible, though, that the message will reach as many people, initially as a result of mass communication. On a radio program, for example, it is communicated that tenants in the Philippines will finally become owners of the lands they till. Here, the radio station serves as the source of the message. Let us assume that a tenant hears the announcement and decides to inform his tenant friends about it. This tenant becomes, in effect, another source; and as the other tenants communicate this announcement to many others, they, in turn, constitute another source of the same message — and the process may go

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<sup>22</sup> Chester A. Insko, *Theories of Attitude Change* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1967). Cited in Mercado, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Mercado, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. P. Dorner and D. Kanel, "The Economic Case for Land Reform: Employment, Income Distribution and Productivity," in P. Dorner, ed., *Land Reform in Latin America: Issues and Cases* (Madison: Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin, 1971), pp. 41-56.

<sup>25</sup> Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man: An Introduction* (New York: Apple-Century-Crofts, 1936), p. 324.

on as long as possible. The fact that the number of new sources of the same information increases indicates diffusion.

The agrarian reform communicator who understands the theory of diffusion should expect that once he transmits a message it can possibly pass on one after another, since each person is a potential "message center" from which it may spread out.

In folk culture,<sup>26</sup> there are at least three considerations to take when communicating an agrarian reform message to tenants. Generally, a message that seeks to be easily understood must be 1) communicated on the folk level of communication; 2) compatible with the local lores; and 3) so composed as to contain folkloristic ideas. This is what I call the theory of folklore and communication,<sup>27</sup> the sixth concept to be explained.

The folk level of communication, as I said elsewhere,

...refers to the degree of difficulty of a given message or messages beyond which said message or messages are unintelligible and meaningless to the average member of a folk culture. It may also mean the over-all success in conveying to the average member of a folk culture, any symbols, such as signs, signals, words and other sounds, etc., whose meanings and cultural implications are determined by customs and traditions rather than by any scholastic or academic learning and understanding. Beyond this level, no message is easily understood by the folk, for such message must be a product of an intellectual culture, or because the channel through which the message is transmitted is incomprehensible to the folk. The insufficient ability of the source of the message to express his ideas may also contribute to the failure of communication.<sup>28</sup>

The compatibility of a given message with folk knowledge in a given folk society can ensure not only its "understandable-ness" but also its easy acceptability. While the message does not discredit that knowledge, it can, in fact, reinforce the society's adherence to or support for it. In the course of time the message can become part of the local folklore as it is transmitted from one generation to another.

The rate at which the message may be understood in a folk culture may be increased, further, if the message itself contains folkloristic ideas. The folk may react favorably to such ideas, since these are altogether considered to be near sacred, if not definitely sacred. Culturally, the "sacredness" of the ideas lies in the fact that these were thought out by their forefathers and have been tested through several generations. The usual argument is that the ideas still exist because they have been found

<sup>26</sup> Folk culture refers to the way of life of a people whose thoughts and behaviors are largely, if not wholly, predetermined by traditions, centuries-old institutions, and customs.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Leothiny S. Clavel, "Folklore and Communication," *op. cit.*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

to be "truthful" and useful; if they are fictitious and erratic, the folk could have just discarded them in the past.

In view of the theory of folklore and communication, the agrarian reform communicator's target receiver of his message in a folk culture must be the culture's average member. He should aim at communicating to him because at the time of communication, he probably does not have any reliable idea as to whether he will be understood by all of the remaining members. It is thus required of him to know the characteristics of the average member, so that he can suit the nature and degree of difficulty of his message to the member's intelligence and behavior.

Also, since folklore predetermines to a large extent the member's ideas and actions,<sup>29</sup> the agrarian reform communicator should, before communicating to him, know the functions, content and meaning of folklore in the former's culture and society. A message based on this knowledge will possibly be acceptable to the member. If the message is compatible with the local lores, its *integration* into the thinking of the folk who understand it can even happen.

Anthropologically, integration, which is the seventh and the last concept to be mentioned, means the "progressive development of more and more perfect adjustments between the various elements which compose the total culture."<sup>30</sup> Using this concept in agrarian reform communication, it suggests 1) that any idea, product or institution that is successfully sold by agrarian reform communication will constitute part of one's knowledge, and 2) that that idea, product or institution does not supplant preëxisting ideas, products or institutions if it is compatible with them, in fact it will continuously adjust with them in an attempt either to complement or to reinforce them.

For example, in the light of this concept, the idea which the aforementioned Capiceño tenant may learn of his having to own the land he tills to improve his socio-economic life, should reinforce his desire to achieve greater production as when he has actually owned it. Theoretically, he will, as has been pointed out, repulse this idea, if he finds it incompatible with his attitude and value regarding the prospect of owning the land dear to his landlord. But the idea, now constituting part of his total knowledge, can affect his behavior within the agrarian structure as it finds some purpose: Perhaps it could somehow satisfy his psychological need of determining some solution to his problem of improving his socio-economic life. He could not just, as a result, forget the idea, although it offends his values.

The seven concepts so far discussed are not the only ones an agrarian reform communicator should know; there are still many others, such as

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. William R. Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore," in Alan Dundes, ed., *The Study of Folklore* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965); and Maria Leach, *Dictionary of Mythology and Folklore*, 2 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnall's Company, 1949).

<sup>30</sup> Linton, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

the economic law of diminishing returns;<sup>31</sup> the anthropological concepts of cultural patterns, acculturation and functionalism;<sup>32</sup> the psychological theories of learning and motivation,<sup>33</sup> and the sociological concepts of ethnocentrism and stereotypes.<sup>34</sup> Owing to space limitations, these related concepts, although useful to the agrarian reform communicator, are not, however, discussed here. In this paper special stress is placed, only on seven concepts that are, to my mind, basic in understanding the nature and influence of agrarian reform communication.

### *Communication Methods*

Communication method refers to the procedure and techniques involved in the transmission of a given information. Mercado calls it "communication strategy".<sup>35</sup>

Based on Philippine experience, there are two communication methods or strategies with respect to directed change, such as agrarian reform. These are *persuasion* and *compulsion*. In his study on the "Green Revolution" program in forty-four barrios in Albay, a Philippine province, Mercado explained these methods or strategies as follows:

Persuasion may be defined as a process of changing a person's or a group's attitude through reason, hoping that the behavior desired by the communicator will follow. Farm and home visits, method demonstrations, result demonstrations, farmers' meetings, rice seminars, field trips, the use of various media such as radio, newspaper, magazine to promote the first "Miracle Rice" were examples of persuasive techniques.

Compulsion may be defined as a process of directly changing a person's or group's behavior toward the direction desired by the communicator through the use of reward or punishment. This strategy included the policy of agricultural credit agencies to give loans only to farmers who promised to plant IR-8 and other recommended rice varieties. The other techniques employed by some landlords were giving planting materials to tenants who did not like to plant IR-8, threatening some tenants with ejection from their farms if they would not plant IR-8, promising to handle the initial expenses for planting, fertilizing and weeding if the tenants planted IR-8, and promising to pay for the number of cavans that would fall short of the expected harvest.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion on how this concept may be related to agrarian reform communication, see my paper, "Some Social, Cultural and Psychological Considerations in Agrarian Reform," which I will deliver before college and university professors in agrarian reform at the Regional Seminar on Agrarian Reform on May 18, 1973 in Iloilo City, Philippines.

<sup>32</sup> My paper, "Some Social, Cultural and Psychological Considerations in Agrarian Reform," discusses these concepts in relation to agrarian reform.

<sup>33</sup> Illustrations of the concepts as these relate to agrarian reform are given in my paper cited in the preceding footnote.

<sup>34</sup> These concepts in the context of agrarian reform communication are briefly discussed in the paper mentioned in footnotes 31, 32 and 33.

<sup>35</sup> Mercado, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-30.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

In other words, the first method is used when communication seeks to "change a person's or group's attitude through reason", so that the desired behavioral change will take place. It assumes that "attitudinal change directs behavioral change."<sup>37</sup>

The second method is, in contrast, based on the assumption that "behavioral change directs attitudinal change".<sup>38</sup> In using it, the communicator's aim is to change a person's or group's behavior, thinking that the changing will result in a corresponding attitudinal change.

Specifically, Mercado's study wanted to determine which of the two methods or strategies "tended to be more effective in changing the attitude and behavior of the farmers toward the new rice varieties [i.e., IR varieties] and the accompanying cultural practices."<sup>39</sup> Its results can offer the agrarian reform communicator some idea on what method or strategy to use in a given communication situation. Summarizing these, Mercado reported that

... the compulsion strategy seemed more effective than the persuasion strategy in jolting the farmer respondents to follow cultural practices needed by IR-8. It seemed to be as effective as the persuasion strategy in convincing farmers to adopt IR-8 and other IR varieties.

... compulsion seems to be a promising communication strategy for meeting crucial problems such as rice shortage.<sup>40</sup>

In all, Mercado's study suggests that compulsive communication can draw the wanted feedback from Filipino farmers. Therefore, the agrarian reform communicator who should get some hint from this, may, whenever possible, make his message compulsive to get utmost results.

Although in the Philippines still untried in the field of agrarian reform communication, a third communication method seems probable and this may be the combination of the two. We may call it the compulsive-persuasive method, for lack of a better term.

The compulsive-persuasive method is one by which a person's or group's behavior and attitude are changed at the same time through the use of force and reason, so that the desired attitude and behavior will come about. It is based on the assumption that attitude and behavior can change and correspond with each other at the same time.

One example illustrating this method is the compulsory primary education in the Philippines. The studying citizens, while compelled, are actually persuaded at the same time to support and finish it, the common reason being that it will help them meet the demands of an intellectual society and of an enlightened citizenry. The direct punishment of those who fail to complete it is that they cannot proceed to high

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

school and college; conversely, the reward of those who complete it is their resultant qualification to proceed to these levels of education. Besides, people may take for granted those who have not gone to school or those who cannot read and write. In this case, the use of compulsion is at the same time being justified or made to appear reasonable because it is necessary and beneficial. The aim in all this effort is to lead one to like (attitude) and undertake (behavior) primary education.

In agrarian reform communication situations, this method may be used when implementing certain agrarian reform laws or policies. For example, if a government expropriates a landlord's large estates owing to an agrarian reform law it should, also, make him understand the reason for it. So, the appropriate agrarian reform communication should compel him to observe the law. At the same time, however, it should explain to him the rationale behind the expropriation and, finally, motivate him to submit his estates for expropriation by, perhaps, giving him certain benefits in return. The communication method used is effective, if while in the beginning he was against expropriation (attitude) and was hampering or frustrating such effort (behavior), he, in the end, is actually for it (change in attitude) and will even help facilitate it (change in behavior). In this case, attitude and behavior change at the same time through the use of force and reason.

Despite the absence of studies on it, I would like to claim, based on the results of my researches into Philippine culture and society, that of the three methods discussed the compulsive-persuasive method will generally prove most effective in Philippine situations. In this vein, I believe that agrarian reform may be achieved if the people are compelled to accept it as a program of development, but with a great success on the part of the workers for such reform, in convincing them through the use of reason (persuasion) as to its importance and meaning to national progress. The Filipinos respect legitimate force and authority, and so I maintain that any directed change that uses force and authority within the limits of reason will most likely succeed.

Where agrarian reform has to be communicated to specific audiences, any of the three methods may be used but the third one may be generally preferred in Philippine situations. The simple rule the agrarian reform communicator should observe, though, in choosing the appropriate method for his communication activities is, that he use the method which, in his judgment, will be most acceptable to his target audience and/or which is most practical under given circumstances. Oftentimes, if not always, his common sense must be his guide.

Table 1 shows the different audio-visual media the agrarian reform communicator may use under certain conditions — be he a radio or a TV announcer, an extension worker, a classroom teacher, a public official, a journalist, or an enlightened farmer. But just the same, he

should use the right media at the right time in the right place. His common sense, again, will be his practical guide.

So if a public official would like to communicate an agrarian reform message to tenants in places that cannot be reached by television, the cinema and the newspapers and magazines, he should use the radio. And an extension worker promoting agrarian reform may use the chalk board if the more sophisticated aids, such as a projector or a sound film, are not available.

Table 1

AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA FOR AGRARIAN REFORM ACTION

A. *Aural*

- Phonograph
- Radio receiver
- Tape recorder

B. *Visual*

| <i>Non-Projection</i>  | <i>Projection</i>             |                              | <i>Electronics</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
|  | <i>Still</i>                  | <i>Cinematic</i>             |                    |
| Chalk board  | Opaque projector              | Silent film (conventional)   | Open circuit TV    |
| Wall chart   | Overhead projector            | Silent cart-ridged loop film | Closed circuit TV  |
| Adhesion board   | Slide projector (manual)      | Sound film                   | Radio              |
| Flip book  | Film strip projector (manual) | TV receiver                  |                    |
| Models   | Automatic slide projector     | Closed circuit               |                    |
| Printed matters (newspapers, magazines, books, brochures, etc) |                               |                              |                    |

*Concluding Remarks*

Any government hoping for the success of its agrarian reform project must implement a viable, sustained and effective program of agrarian reform communication. It is claimed that agrarian reform as a development goal may be achieved, if it is successfully communicated to the people it affects. The primary goal of agrarian reform communication is to

engage these people in improving the agrarian structure, or any of its components, in a given place.

The agrarian message in a given communication should not only be informational but motivational. If so, it can attain utmost communication results.

While agrarian reform communication may be carried out on both the mass and the face-to-face communication levels, the agrarian reform communicator should use his common sense in choosing and applying the appropriate audio-visual means and the methods of achieving successful communication. But in all cases there is no substitute for the actual gathering of data (research) on which he may actually base his choice and application. Also, before proceeding with his communication, he should know some concepts that will help him execute his duties most effectively.

The social responsibility of agrarian reform communication is immense as it influences individual thinking and action in the agrarian structure. This should altogether be realized by the agrarian reform communicator. For affecting individual behavior in that structure is directing, in the broad analysis, a truly decisive social change.