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Cultural Patterns of Soil Understanding

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Natural scientific approaches towards soil, as used in common soil science, are not the only effective and valuable ones. We live in a mentally heterogeneous world with fairly different patterns of nature relation and different ideas on how to deal with soil. Even within soil science and agronomy, there exist quite different approaches towards soil. This situation of different approaches needs a careful attention and consideration: to see their different effects on soil and people, and also for soil communication and sustainability issues. The search on *cultural patterns of soil understanding* is a search for inter-disciplinary and (sub-)cultural differences, as well as for common human traits of soil perception and conceptualization. The aim of this effort is to become and strengthen potential *bridge builders*: people who can act as networkers and knowledge brokers between different realities of life, perceptions of soil, and types of knowledge. In this presentation, an overview on a *variety of cultural understandings of soil* will be given, linked with hypotheses about its implications for soil science, soil education and communication. Eventually, soil scientists may need to know and to reflect their own paradigm in relation to other ones, and maybe even to ponder on whether paradigmatic changes may be needed, and – if yes – which ones. Key words: soil perception, concepts of soil, soil relation, mental patterns, frames, symbols, multi-disciplinarity, cultural differences, soil communication



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