On the role of religion in the political agronomy of Conservation Agriculture

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Aim

Showing the importance of the concept of *normative practice* to understand the role of religion in agricultural development cooperation
Conservation Agriculture (1)

Foundations for Farming's explicitly faith-based approach to agriculture:

- Planting basins or furrows in combination with mulch, seeds, fertilizer and a cereal-legume rotation
- Agricultural activities and means have an explicit religious meaning
- Farming God's way
Conservation Agriculture (2)

Andersson and Giller's critique (2012):

- Exclusion of alternative agricultural approaches (political)

- Not applicable at all scales and under all circumstances (agronomic)

--> Needed: farmer-oriented, participatory agronomic R&D
Evaluation

• With Foundations for Farming the 'character' of agriculture is easily lost out of sight

• With Andersson and Giller:
  • Opposition of scientific experimentation to faith-based approach

• Suggestion that faith and religion doesn't play a role in agricultural development with 'farmer-oriented, participatory agronomic R&D'
Normative Practice Approach (1)

Constitutive side
- Pistic norms
- Moral norms
- Economic norms
- Technical norms
- Analytical norms

Regulative side

After: Hoogland and Jochemsen 2000; Jochemsen 2006; Glas 2012
Normative Practice Approach (2)

(Institutionalised) Religion:
faithful listening to and worshipping of what is considered ultimate reality (pistic norm)

Agriculture:
providing food and fiber for human existence (economic norm)

Agronomic science:
theory-formulation of production-ecological phenomena (analytical norm)
Implications

- Constitutive
  - Juxtaposition of practices
    (agriculture, agronomic science, religion)
- Regulative (directional)
  - Potentional incommensurability

--> Farmer-oriented, participatory approach to agronomic R&D not a 'neutral' approach