

Nikola Patzel · Sabine Grunwald · Eric Brevik · Christian Feller *Editors*

## Cultural Understanding of Soils

The Importance of Cultural Diversity and of the Inner World

The main assumption underlying this work is that soil is inescapably perceived in a cultural context by any human. Cultural framing of soils is common worldwide and highly consequential. Cultural understandings of soil are diverse and often ambiguous. The implications of what place the earth has in people's world view and everyday life can be in line or in conflict with natural conditions, scientific views, or agricultural practices. This gives emergence to different significant webs of meaning influenced by spiritual-religious or secular myths, and by a wide range of beliefs, values and ideas that people hold in all societies. These patterns and their dynamics inform the human-soil relationship and how soils are cared for, protected, or degraded.

Therefore, there is need to deal inter-culturally with different sources and types of knowledge and experience regarding soil; a need to cultivate soil awareness and situationally appropriate care through inter- and intracultural dialogues and learning. This project focuses on the human and intangible dimensions of soil.

To serve this aim, the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) founded a *working group on Cultural Patterns of Soil Understanding* that has resulted in this book, which presents studies from almost all continents, written by soil scientists and experts from other disciplines. A major objective of this project is to promote intercultural literacy that gives readers the opportunity to appreciate soil across disciplinary and cultural boundaries in an increasingly globalized world ...

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