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**Institutional Analysis of
Black Earth Soil Degradation and
Conservation in Ukraine**

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This book aims to draw attention to and uncover emerging aspects of the soil degradation problem. Based on the case of erosion of black earth soils on agricultural land in Ukraine, this book seeks to demonstrate that soil degradation is not only a natural phenomenon – accelerated by human activities and resolvable by technical measures – but is also a social and political problem requiring regulation.

Asking the question “*Why does soil erosion, accelerated by agricultural production, persist in Ukraine, despite the presence of soil protection policy?*”, this book encourages reflection on cases where well-intended environmental policies do not produce desired effects. The focus of scientific inquiry is, therefore, shifted from the problem of properly formulated and thorough environmental policies to the problem of their implementation.

Conceptualising the accelerated soil erosion on agricultural land taking place in Ukraine as a problem of failing implementation of soil protection policy, this book develops an innovative approach to analysing policy implementation and investigating the reasons for such failure. This approach takes its roots in classical institutional economics; it considers the rules of soil protection on agricultural land in Ukraine and investigates their impact on the actions of and transactions among officials and agricultural producers. Of particular importance for understanding the rules and the current state of soil protection in Ukraine is a discussion on the formation, development and dissemination of scientific knowledge about soils, perceptions regarding soil degradation among different actors and their beliefs concerning appropriate measures to solve the problem.