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0521816726 - Sustaining Abundance: Environmental Performance in Industrial Democracies

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## *Sustaining Abundance*

The ultimate goal of environmental policy is reducing pollution. Attention to environmental problems in the social sciences has brought some bold generalizations about causes of good results but almost no systematic cross-national studies that flesh out major theoretical arguments and test those claims with data. This study makes a seminal contribution to that effort in two ways. First, by taking environmental outcomes over the past thirty years as the central dependent variable, it provides a basis for evaluating national performance in reducing environmental problems. Second, by developing a data set including performance in a number of countries and elaborating on major explanations of environmental performance found in the literature, this study provides the most rigorous available analysis of the determinants of environmental performance. In so doing, it challenges what is probably the conventional wisdom in the social sciences. This book will help to place the study of environmental politics on par with other comparative studies such as Gosta Esping-Andersen's *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Arend Lijphart's *Democracies*, and G. Bingham Powell's *Contemporary Democracies*.

Lyle Scruggs is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Connecticut. His research and teaching interests are in the areas of comparative political economy and environmental policy. His articles have appeared in the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Ecological Economics*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Political Research Quarterly*. He is currently working on a project examining changes in welfare state programs since the 1960s among twenty-one OECD countries.

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Frontmatter

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INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES

**LYLE SCRUGGS**

*University of Connecticut*



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Lyle Scruggs

Frontmatter

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*For Laura*

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0521816726 - Sustaining Abundance: Environmental Performance in Industrial Democracies

Lyle Scruggs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Contents*

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	<i>page</i> x
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<b>1</b> INTRODUCTION	1
<b>2</b> MEASURING NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE	19
<b>3</b> ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE	55
<b>4</b> PUBLIC OPINION, ENVIRONMENTAL MOBILIZATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE	78
<b>5</b> PLURALISM, CORPORATISM, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE	122
<b>6</b> POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS	162
<b>7</b> CHECKING THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE RESULTS	191
<b>8</b> CONCLUSION	204
<i>Appendix I Estimated Measures of Environmental Performance</i>	215
<i>Appendix II Institutions for Environmental Policy Making in Fourteen Countries</i>	219
<i>References</i>	229
<i>Index</i>	245

Cambridge University Press

0521816726 - Sustaining Abundance: Environmental Performance in Industrial Democracies

Lyle Scruggs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Figures and Tables*

### *Figures*

2.1. Spatial Effects of Ambient versus Emission Reductions	<i>page</i> 26
2.2. Ambient Concentration and Total Emission Reductions, SO <sub>x</sub> (1980–1995)	31
2.3. SO <sub>x</sub> Emissions per Capita (1970) and Changes in Total Emissions (1970–1995)	33
2.4. Ambient Concentration and Total Emission Reductions, NO <sub>x</sub> (1980–1995)	36
2.5. NO <sub>x</sub> Emissions per Capita (1980) and Changes in Emissions (1980–1995)	36
2.6. Water Treatment Coverage (1970) and Change in Coverage (1970–1995)	44
2.7. Intensity of Fertilizer Use (1970) and Change (1970–1995)	46
3.1. Results in the EKC Literature versus Expected Results in This Study	60
3.2. Income and Environmental Performance	61
3.3. Three Relationships among Social, Economic, and Environmental Change	65
3.4. Structural Change as a Mechanism for Environmental Change	66
4.1. Environmental Concern (1976–1991)	87
4.2. Environmental Mobilization and Environmental Performance	118
5.1. Environmental Corporatism and Environmental Performance	153

Cambridge University Press

0521816726 - Sustaining Abundance: Environmental Performance in Industrial Democracies

Lyle Scruggs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**Figures and Tables**

5.2. Lijphart-Crepaz Corporatism Score and Environmental Performance	156
5.3. Concertation and Environmental Performance	157
5.4. Economic Integration and Environmental Performance	157
6.1. Single-Party Government and Environmental Performance	178
6.2. Executive Dominance and Environmental Performance	179
6.3. Bicameralism and Environmental Performance	180
6.4. Federalism and Environmental Performance	180
6.5. Effective Electoral Threshold and Environmental Performance	181
6.6. Electoral Threshold and Environmental Party Support	182
7.1. Statistical Effect of an Influential Observation	192

**Tables**

2.1. Total SO <sub>x</sub> Emissions, 1970–1995	30
2.2. Total NO <sub>x</sub> Emissions, 1970–1995	35
2.3. Generation of Municipal Waste per Capita, 1975–1995	38
2.4. Recycling Rates for Paper and Glass	41
2.5. Population Served by Wastewater Treatment	43
2.6. Apparent Fertilizer Use	45
2.7. Progress and Convergence in Environmental Performance	47
2.8. Comparative Environmental Performance Scores	51
3.1. Structural Economic Change and Income	67
3.2. Regression Results: Economic Structure, Income, and Performance	69
3.3. GDP Growth Rates	72
3.4. Geographical Advantage	74
3.5. Regression Results: Income, Geographic Advantage, and Performance	75
4.1. Public Concern about Environmental Problems	85
4.2. Regression Results: Environmental Concern and Economic Growth	89
4.3. Environment and Traditional Economic Goals	92
4.4. Public Support for Environmental Organizations	99
4.5. Environmental Group Membership	101
4.6. Environmental (Left-Libertarian) Party Vote	104
4.7. Postmaterialism Index	106



Cambridge University Press

0521816726 - Sustaining Abundance: Environmental Performance in Industrial Democracies

Lyle Scruggs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**Figures and Tables**

4.8. Regression Results: Effects of Income and Values on Environmental Mobilization	110
4.9. Combined Scores of Environmental Mobilization	112
4.10. Regression Results: Environmental Mobilization and Performance	119
5.1. Environmental and General Policy Styles	134
5.2. Neocorporatist Institutions	155
5.3. Regression Results: Corporatism and Environmental Performance	158
6.1. Characteristics of Political Institutions, 1970–1995	166
6.2. Regression Results: Political Institutions and Environmental Performance	185
6.3. Regression Results: Separation of Powers, Party Government, and Environmental Performance	186
7.1. Test Statistics for Influential Cases	194
7.2. Regression Results: Predictors of Environmental Performance Dropping Influential Cases	196
7.3. Regression Results: OLS and Robust Estimates	197
7.4. Regression Results for Western European Countries Only	198
7.5. Results Dropping Individual Environmental Performance Index Measures	200
7.6. Regression Estimates with Alternative Performance Indicators	202

Cambridge University Press

0521816726 - Sustaining Abundance: Environmental Performance in Industrial Democracies

Lyle Scruggs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Preface*

The seed for this book was planted in 1993 while I was working as a research assistant for Margaret McKean at Duke University. What was initially envisaged as a large-scale collaborative project on cross-national energy policy was narrowed into a dissertation investigating correlates of environmental performance among the advanced industrial democracies. When I arrived at the University of Connecticut in 1998, I put the just completed dissertation on a bookshelf and turned my attention to some other ideas. This was done on the advice of some senior colleagues, who suggested that the break would do me good. It was useful advice. Although I did look anxiously at the binder on my bookshelf a few times in the ensuing twelve months, the time off was refreshing. Ultimately, I think it has made the book a better one.

Meg McKean provided great encouragement and helpful criticism (and copious comments) throughout this project, particularly as it developed as my doctoral dissertation. I have not given (and probably cannot give) her enough credit. Others were also kind enough to read and comment on various aspects of the project along the way. David Vogel read a very early version of the manuscript. His comments provided great encouragement. Michael Skou Andersen, Pete Andrews, Peter Munk Christiansen, Robert Keohane, Michael Munger, Sonja Walti, and Albert Weale have all provided very intelligent and helpful advice. To the extent that what follows does not reflect the intelligence of all of these people, it is not for their lack of effort: the responsibility is entirely my own. The political science editor at Cambridge University Press, Lewis Bateman, has been both extremely encouraging and helpful throughout the process. Last but not least, Margaret Levi was very kind to put this book in the Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics series.

Cambridge University Press

0521816726 - Sustaining Abundance: Environmental Performance in Industrial Democracies

Lyle Scruggs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## Preface

This project would probably not have been possible without the encouraging help from many public officials who provided bits of information, whether in the form of insight into their national regulatory process or details on the pollution problems assessed in this book. On the whole, the experience has reinforced in me the conviction that the inherent ambiguities surrounding social data necessitate fuller, not more circumscribed, comparisons, be they of individuals or countries. Richard Lewis and Wolfgang Gaede provided helpful and friendly support in introducing me to some of these national officials. I also thank the Center for International Studies at Duke University and the Research Foundation at the University of Connecticut for financial support on this project. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Departments of Political Science at both institutions.

I owe a special credit to Peter Lange, my dissertation advisor and a frequent collaborator. He was the one who encouraged me to work on other things upon arriving in Storrs. Peter has provided invaluable advice on this project and beyond. He is a unique and wonderful person and a great friend. Those familiar with Peter's work will probably find his influences all too easily.

Finally, I would like to thank Scott de Marchi and Layna Mosley for their intangible professional and moral support in seeing the project along. Their contributions have been greater than any of us might have realized at the time.