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**ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES: AGE, SALARY, AND STATE  
EFFECTS**

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.6652>**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the intricate relationship between various demographic factors—specifically age, salary, and state of residence—and individuals' attitudes towards environmental policy. Drawing upon a comprehensive dataset, this research aims to identify the key determinants influencing agreement or disagreement with environmental initiatives. The initial analysis of the provided data reveals suggestive patterns, indicating that while middle-aged respondents show marginal favorability towards environmental policies, both younger and older demographics exhibit slightly more negative opinions. Furthermore, a notable overrepresentation of women in the sample suggests a potential gender disparity in environmental concern, aligning with broader trends observed in the literature. The study also explores the impact of socioeconomic status, as indicated by salary, on environmental policy agreement, noting that higher average salaries are not consistently associated with greater support across all states. Geographic variations are also examined, highlighting differences in policy agreement across states like Texas, New York, Michigan, Virginia, Minnesota, and Arizona. This expanded manuscript will delve deeper into these preliminary findings, incorporating additional contextual information and robust statistical analysis to ascertain the significance of these relationships. By adhering to the EANSO Journals Manuscript Preparation Template, including a minimum word count of 3000 words, and maintaining a human tone, this revised article seeks to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the demographic drivers behind environmental policy attitudes, thereby contributing valuable insights for policymakers and environmental advocates alike. The expanded discussion will also address the limitations of the current dataset and propose avenues for future research to further elucidate these complex interactions.

**KEYWORDS:** Environmental attitudes, demographic factors, age, salary, state, environmental policy, public opinion.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental policy agreement is a critical area of study, particularly as global environmental challenges intensify and necessitate collective action. Understanding the factors that shape public opinion on environmental policies is crucial for effective policy design, implementation, and public engagement. This manuscript delves into the complex interplay of demographic variables—specifically age, salary, and state of residence—and their influence on individuals' attitudes toward environmental policies in the United States. The initial investigation into this topic, based on a dataset encompassing various demographic indicators and environmental policy agreement responses, revealed several intriguing, albeit preliminary, relationships. These initial observations suggest that demographic characteristics play a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive and support environmental initiatives. For instance, early findings indicated nuanced differences in policy agreement across age groups, with middle-aged individuals showing a marginal inclination towards support, while both younger and older cohorts appeared to harbor slightly more negative sentiments. This contrasts with some broader trends in environmental attitudes, where younger generations are often perceived as more environmentally conscious [1].

Furthermore, the preliminary data highlighted a notable overrepresentation of women within the sample, a demographic trend that warrants further exploration given existing literature on gender disparities in environmental concern [2]. The influence of socioeconomic status, as proxied by salary, also emerged as a relevant factor, though not in a straightforward manner. While some salary brackets showed a correlation with policy agreement, the relationship was not consistently positive across all states, suggesting that regional economic contexts and local priorities might mediate this association. Geographic variations were particularly pronounced, with states such as Texas, New York, Michigan, Virginia, Minnesota, and Arizona exhibiting distinct patterns in environmental policy support. These state-level differences underscore the importance of considering localized socio-economic and political landscapes when analyzing environmental attitudes.

This expanded manuscript aims to build upon these foundational insights by providing a more comprehensive and rigorously analyzed exploration of the demographic drivers of environmental policy agreement. We will integrate additional contextual information from recent research and public opinion polls to enrich the discussion and provide a more robust interpretation of the findings. The objective is to move beyond mere observations to offer a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which age, salary, and state influence environmental attitudes. By doing so, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights to the academic discourse on environmental sociology and political science, while also offering practical implications for policymakers and environmental advocacy groups striving to foster greater public support for sustainable policies. The subsequent sections will detail the literature review, methodology, expanded results and discussion, and conclude with a summary of key findings and recommendations for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

The existing body of literature extensively explores the multifaceted nature of environmental attitudes and their determinants. A significant portion of this research focuses on demographic variables, recognizing their crucial role in shaping public perception and support for environmental policies. Among these, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic location consistently emerge as key factors influencing environmental concern and behavior [3, 4].

**Age and Environmental Attitudes:** Research consistently indicates a complex relationship between age and environmental attitudes. While some studies suggest that younger generations tend to exhibit higher levels of environmental concern and a greater willingness to support stringent environmental policies, this is not universally true across all contexts and political affiliations [1, 5]. For instance, recent findings from Pew Research Center (2021) highlight that while younger generations are generally more inclined to support phasing out fossil fuels, significant intra-generational differences exist, particularly among Republicans, where younger individuals (18-29) show greater support for climate policies compared to their older counterparts (60+) [1]. This suggests that political ideology can intersect with age to produce varied environmental perspectives. The initial findings of this study, indicating slightly more negative opinions among both younger and older cohorts compared to middle-aged respondents, warrant further investigation to reconcile with broader trends and understand the specific nuances within the studied population.

**Gender and Environmental Attitudes:** The concept of a "Green Gender Gap" has been a recurring theme in environmental sociology, suggesting that women often express higher levels of environmental concern and pro-environmental behaviors than men [2, 6]. This gap is particularly pronounced in certain age groups, with the Environmental Voter Project noting its largest manifestation among 18-24 year olds [2]. Explanations for this phenomenon are diverse, ranging from differences in socialization and values to varying perceptions of risk and vulnerability to environmental hazards. The overrepresentation of women in the current study's sample, as noted in the introduction, aligns with the broader recognition of women's significant role in environmental advocacy and concern, making it imperative to explore how this demographic characteristic influences policy agreement within the dataset.

**Socioeconomic Status and Environmental Attitudes:** The relationship between socioeconomic status, often measured by income or salary, and environmental attitudes is also multifaceted. While some theories suggest that higher socioeconomic status correlates with greater environmental concern due to a greater capacity to address environmental issues or a post-materialist value shift, other research indicates that environmental concerns can be prevalent across all income levels, albeit with different priorities [7, 8]. For example, a Pew Research Center survey in 2024 revealed that Americans are split on the economic impact of climate policies, with equal proportions believing they help or hurt the economy, and a significant portion seeing no difference [9]. Furthermore, studies have explored the link between income inequality and environmental impact, with some suggesting that higher income inequality may lead to a larger ecological footprint [10]. The current study's observation that higher average salaries are not consistently associated with greater environmental policy support across all states underscores the complexity of this relationship and the potential mediating role of regional economic contexts.

**Geographic Location and Environmental Attitudes:** State-level variations in environmental attitudes and policy support are well-documented, reflecting diverse political landscapes, economic dependencies, and cultural values across the United States [11, 12]. The Yale Climate Opinion Maps (2024) provide granular data on public opinion regarding climate change beliefs, risk perceptions, and policy support at various geographic levels [11]. For instance, states with economies heavily reliant on extractive industries, such as North Dakota and Wyoming, tend to show lower support for stricter environmental regulations compared to states with less reliance on fossil fuels [12]. Conversely, states like Minnesota

and Washington exhibit some of the broadest support for tougher environmental regulations [12]. The initial analysis of the current dataset also identified distinct patterns of environmental policy agreement across states like Texas, New York, Michigan, Virginia, Minnesota, and Arizona, necessitating a deeper examination of the factors contributing to these regional differences. This literature review establishes a framework for understanding the demographic influences on environmental attitudes, providing a foundation for the detailed analysis presented in the subsequent sections.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the relationships between demographic variables (age, salary, and state of residence) and attitudes towards environmental policy. The primary data source for this analysis is a survey dataset that includes responses from individuals across various U.S. states. The dataset comprises six key variables: Gender, Age (binned into Young, Middle-Aged, and Elderly categories), State of residence, number of children, Salary, and responses to a question regarding agreement with environmental policy.

**Data Collection and Sample Characteristics:** The survey data was collected with the aim of understanding public opinion on environmental policy. While the exact sampling methodology is not detailed in the original manuscript, an initial assessment of the sample characteristics reveals certain demographic distributions. For instance, the sample overrepresents women (nearly 60% of respondents) compared to the U.S. general population (50.4% women in 2023) [13]. Age distribution appears reasonably representative, with the largest group being middle-aged, consistent with 2022 demographic data [14]. However, the average number of children per household in the sample (around 1.3) is lower than the national average (1.9-1.94) [14], potentially due to oversampling households with zero children or the binning of families with more than three children. The mean salary of respondents (\$78,942) is higher than the national median (\$52,000 in 2023) [15], suggesting a potential skew towards wealthier individuals or those residing in higher cost-of-living states. Geographically, the sample demonstrates good regional spread across the U.S., although smaller states are underrepresented, and larger states like California appear underrepresented relative to their population size.

**Variables and Measurement:**

- **Dependent Variable:** Agreement with environmental policy, measured on a scale (e.g., strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree).
- **Independent Variables:**
  - **Age:** Categorized into three bins: Young (34 or under), Middle-Aged, and Elderly (60 or older).
  - **Salary:** Continuous variable representing reported annual income.
  - **State of Residence:** Categorical variable identifying the U.S. state where the respondent resides.
  - **Gender:** Categorical variable (Male, Female).
  - **Number of Children:** Ordinal or ratio variable indicating the number of children in the household.

**Analytical Approach:** The analysis begins with a descriptive examination of each variable to understand its distribution and characteristics within the sample. This includes the use of pie charts for categorical variables like Age and Gender, a map for State representation, a bar graph for the number of children, and a boxplot for Salary. Subsequently, the study explores bivariate relationships between each independent variable and environmental policy opinion. This involves generating bar graphs to visualize opinion by age, gender, state, and the average number of children per response category. A bar graph is also used to illustrate the relationship between opinion and salary. Finally, a more complex three-way relationship between opinion, salary, and state is investigated, presented through a bar graph and a detailed table. Given the exploratory nature of the initial analysis and the varying sample sizes within sub-categories, the study acknowledges the need for more rigorous statistical analysis to determine the significance of observed differences. The expansion of this manuscript will incorporate a more detailed discussion of potential statistical methods for future research, such as chi-square tests for independence or ANOVA, to assess the statistical significance of the relationships identified.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the collected survey data reveals several compelling relationships between demographic characteristics and attitudes towards environmental policy. These findings, while exploratory in nature, offer valuable insights into the complex dynamics shaping public opinion on environmental issues. The discussion below integrates the specific observations

from our dataset with broader trends and research findings from the existing literature, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the demographic drivers at play.

#### 4.1 Individual Demographic Factors and Environmental Policy Opinion

**Age:** The initial examination of environmental policy opinion across different age groups in our sample indicated a nuanced pattern. Middle-aged respondents demonstrated a marginal inclination towards agreement with the environmental policy, as depicted in Figure 7 of the original manuscript. Conversely, both the elderly and younger cohorts appeared to hold slightly more negative opinions. This observation presents an interesting point of comparison with broader research. While some studies suggest that younger generations are generally more supportive of environmental action and policies [1], our data indicates a more complex picture within this specific sample. This could be attributed to various factors, including the specific framing of the environmental policy in question, regional differences, or the unique socioeconomic profiles within our younger and older respondent groups. For instance, Pew Research Center (2021) noted that while younger generations broadly support phasing out fossil fuels, there are significant ideological divides, even within age groups, such as younger Republicans showing greater climate policy support than older Republicans [1]. This suggests that a simple linear relationship between age and environmental concern is often an oversimplification, and other mediating factors, such as political affiliation and specific policy implications, play a crucial role.

**Gender:** Our sample exhibited a notable overrepresentation of women, comprising nearly 60% of the respondents, which is higher than the national average of 50.4% women in the U.S. population as of 2023 [13]. This demographic imbalance is significant when interpreting the findings related to gender and environmental policy. As shown in Figure 8 of the original manuscript, men in our sample were marginally more likely to strongly agree with the policy than women. This finding appears to diverge from the established concept of a "Green Gender Gap," where women typically demonstrate higher levels of environmental concern and pro-environmental behaviors [2, 6]. The Environmental Voter Project, for example, highlights that this gender gap is most pronounced among younger adults (18-24 years old) [2]. The discrepancy in our findings might suggest that the specific environmental policy under consideration, or the regional context of our sample, could influence gendered responses differently than broader national trends. It is also possible that the overrepresentation of women in our sample might have skewed the observed averages,

necessitating a more detailed, weighted analysis in future research to account for population representativeness.

**State of Residence:** The geographic distribution of environmental policy opinion revealed distinct patterns across the states represented in our sample. Figure 9 of the original manuscript illustrated that Texas had the highest number of people agreeing with the policy, while New York showed the most 'strongly agree' responses. Conversely, Texas also exhibited the most disagreement, and Virginia and Michigan had the most 'strong disagreement.' These state-level variations are consistent with the understanding that environmental attitudes are deeply influenced by local economic conditions, political landscapes, and cultural values [11, 12]. For instance, Pew Research Center (2025) reported that support for stricter environmental laws varies significantly by state, often correlating with the state's economic reliance on extractive industries [12]. States like Minnesota, for example, showed some of the broadest support for tougher environmental regulations (71%), while states with significant fossil fuel industries, such as Texas (7% of GDP from extractives), tend to have lower overall support for such regulations compared to states with less reliance on these industries [12]. Our findings for Texas, showing both high agreement and disagreement, could reflect the internal diversity of opinion within a large state with varied economic interests and population demographics. The smaller sample sizes within specific state sub-categories in our dataset, as acknowledged in the original manuscript, suggest that these observed differences, while indicative, require further validation through larger, statistically robust samples.

**Number of Children:** The relationship between the average number of children per household and environmental policy opinion presented an intriguing pattern. Figure 10 of the original manuscript indicated that the average number of children was smallest in the 'strongly agree' category and highest in the 'neutral' category. This observation led to the hypothesis that individuals with more children might be less engaged or find the policy less appealing, while those with fewer children might be more receptive. This could be linked to immediate household priorities and resource allocation, where families with more dependents might perceive environmental policies as having a greater direct economic impact. While direct comparative research on the number of children and environmental policy support is less prevalent than other demographic factors, studies on family size and consumption patterns often suggest a correlation with environmental footprint [10]. Further qualitative

research could explore the underlying reasons for this observed pattern, such as perceived trade-offs between family well-being and environmental regulations.

**Salary:** The influence of salary on environmental policy opinion also showed complex relationships. The original manuscript noted that the group with the highest average salary held the 'agree' position, while the lowest average salary corresponded to the 'disagree' opinion. However, it was also observed that the average salary in the 'strongly disagree' category was higher than in the 'strongly agree' category. This non-linear relationship challenges simplistic assumptions that higher income automatically translates to greater environmental support. As discussed in the literature review, Americans are often split on the economic impact of climate policies, with a significant portion believing they either help or hurt the economy, or make no difference [9]. This suggests that perceptions of economic impact, rather than just income level, might be a stronger predictor of policy support. The variability in salary-opinion relationships across different states, as explored in the three-way analysis, further underscores the localized nature of these economic perceptions and their influence on environmental attitudes.

#### **4.2 Three-Way Relationship: Opinion, Salary, and State**

The original manuscript delved into a three-way relationship between environmental policy opinion, salary, and state of residence, recognizing that these factors do not operate in isolation. Figures 11 and 12, along with Table 1 in the original submission, provided a detailed breakdown of average salaries across different opinion categories within specific states. This granular analysis revealed that agreement with environmental policy is not uniformly associated with the highest salaries, nor is disagreement consistently linked to the lowest salaries across all states. For instance, while the highest average salary for the 'agree' position was observed in Minnesota, the highest average salary for 'strongly disagree' was found in Texas. Conversely, the average salary in the 'neutral' category in Arizona was notably high, suggesting that factors beyond mere income levels influence environmental attitudes.

To further contextualize these findings, the original manuscript compared Texas, Minnesota, and Virginia, states that exhibited distinct patterns in environmental opinions. Figures 13 and 15 illustrated that salaries in Texas were slightly higher overall compared to Minnesota and Virginia, while Virginia showed a greater spread in salaries. This suggests that the observed salary differences in environmental opinions within these states might be partly explained by

their general salary distributions. For example, Virginia's lower overall average salary could contribute to some of the differences seen in environmental policy agreement. This highlights the importance of considering the broader economic context of each state when interpreting the relationship between salary and environmental attitudes.

Furthermore, the analysis extended to the three-way relationship involving the number of children, opinion, and state. Figures 14 and 16 from the original manuscript indicated a strong relationship in Virginia, where states with higher average numbers of children tended to have more respondents in the 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' categories, and fewer in the 'strongly agree' category. This suggests that in Virginia, families with more children might be less inclined to favor the environmental policy, while those with fewer children are more supportive. This observation could be linked to perceived economic burdens or lifestyle changes associated with environmental regulations, which might be amplified in larger households. Both Texas and Virginia also showed a significant proportion of families with no children in the data, with the minimum and first quartile on the box plot being zero, indicating a substantial presence of childless households in the sample from these states. This demographic characteristic could also influence overall environmental attitudes, as individuals without children may have different priorities or perceive environmental issues differently than those with dependents.

These complex interrelationships underscore the need for multivariate statistical models that can simultaneously account for the effects of age, gender, salary, number of children, and state of residence, as well as their potential interactions. Such models would provide a more robust assessment of the unique and combined contributions of these demographic factors to environmental policy agreement, moving beyond the descriptive insights offered by the initial analysis. The observed variations across states also emphasize the importance of localized policy approaches that are sensitive to the specific demographic and socioeconomic contexts of different regions.

#### **4.3 Limitations and Future Research**

While this study provides valuable insights into the demographic drivers of environmental policy agreement, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations and suggest avenues for future research. Firstly, the cross-sectional nature of the survey data limits our ability to infer causality. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial to understand how environmental attitudes evolve over time in response to changing demographic profiles, policy interventions,

and environmental events. Secondly, the sample characteristics, particularly the overrepresentation of women and the higher average salary, suggest that the findings may not be fully generalizable to the entire U.S. population. Future research should aim for more representative sampling strategies to enhance external validity.

Furthermore, the binned age categories and the grouping of families with more than three children might obscure finer-grained relationships. Utilizing continuous age and number of children variables, where available, could provide a more nuanced understanding of their impact. The study also relies on self-reported data, which can be subject to social desirability bias, particularly concerning environmental attitudes. Incorporating objective measures of environmental behavior or implicit association tests could offer complementary insights.

Methodologically, while descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses provide a foundational understanding, future research should employ advanced multivariate statistical techniques, such as regression analysis, structural equation modeling, or hierarchical linear modeling, to disentangle the complex interplay among demographic variables and environmental policy opinion. These methods would allow for the control of confounding variables and the exploration of interaction effects, providing a more robust assessment of the unique contributions of each demographic factor. Additionally, qualitative research, through in-depth interviews or focus groups, could shed light on the underlying motivations, perceptions, and values that shape individuals' environmental attitudes, offering a richer context for the quantitative findings.

Finally, the study highlights the significant role of state-level contexts. Future research could benefit from a comparative analysis across a wider range of states, incorporating state-specific environmental policies, economic structures, and political climates as explanatory variables. This would enable a more comprehensive understanding of how macro-level factors interact with individual-level demographics to influence environmental policy agreement. By addressing these limitations, future studies can further refine our understanding of environmental attitudes and contribute to more effective and equitable environmental governance.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This expanded study has provided a more comprehensive examination of the demographic factors influencing environmental policy agreement, building upon initial observations from a

survey dataset. Our analysis reaffirms the complex and multifaceted nature of environmental attitudes, demonstrating that age, gender, socioeconomic status (salary), and state of residence each play a distinct, yet often interconnected, role in shaping public opinion on environmental policies. The nuanced findings underscore that simplistic assumptions about demographic groups and their environmental stances may not always hold true, necessitating a deeper, context-specific understanding.

Specifically, we observed that while middle-aged individuals in our sample showed a marginal propensity towards supporting environmental policies, both younger and older cohorts exhibited slightly more negative opinions. This finding, when juxtaposed with broader literature suggesting higher environmental concern among younger generations, highlights the importance of considering specific policy contexts and potential mediating factors such as political ideology. The gender analysis revealed an overrepresentation of women in our sample, and while men were marginally more likely to strongly agree with the policy, this deviates from the widely recognized "Green Gender Gap" where women typically show greater environmental concern. This discrepancy suggests that the nature of the environmental policy itself or regional influences might alter gendered responses.

State of residence emerged as a critical determinant, with significant variations in policy agreement across different U.S. states. These differences are likely attributable to diverse local economic conditions, political landscapes, and cultural values, as evidenced by the contrasting support levels in states with high reliance on extractive industries versus those with less. The relationship between the number of children and environmental policy opinion also presented an interesting pattern, with fewer children correlating with stronger agreement, potentially reflecting perceived economic burdens or lifestyle impacts of environmental regulations on larger households. Finally, the influence of salary on environmental attitudes proved to be non-linear and complex, with higher average salaries not consistently translating to greater support, and perceptions of economic impact often outweighing mere income levels.

These findings carry important implications for policymakers and environmental advocates. Recognizing the heterogeneity of environmental attitudes across demographic groups and geographic regions is paramount for designing effective and equitable environmental policies. Tailored communication strategies that address the specific concerns and priorities of different age groups, genders, income levels, and state populations are more likely to foster

broader public support. For instance, policies might need to be framed differently to resonate with younger individuals who may prioritize long-term sustainability versus older demographics who might be more concerned with immediate economic impacts. Similarly, understanding the unique socio-economic contexts of states like Texas, Minnesota, and Virginia is crucial for developing locally relevant environmental initiatives.

While this study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The cross-sectional nature of the data, potential sampling biases, and the reliance on self-reported measures suggest avenues for future research. Longitudinal studies, more representative sampling, the use of continuous demographic variables, and the application of advanced multivariate statistical techniques would further enhance our understanding of these complex relationships. Additionally, incorporating qualitative research methods could provide deeper insights into the underlying motivations behind environmental attitudes. By continuing to explore these intricate connections, we can work towards more informed policy-making and a more sustainable future.

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