Demographic and Socioeconomic Determinants of Environmental Prioritization over Economic Growth

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The role of individuals in prioritizing the environment over economic growth is crucial for achieving sustainable development. Individual actions, such as adopting eco-friendly habits, reducing waste, and conserving resources, collectively help mitigate pollution and environmental degradation. This study explores the demographic and socioeconomic determinants of prioritizing the environment overgrowth. The study uses data from the World Values Survey conducted between 2017 and 2021 across 66 countries. The logistic regression model estimates reveal that women, never-married individuals, and urban residents are likelier to prioritize the environment, whereas men and married individuals exhibit lower likelihood. The impact of age suggests no difference in the probability of prioritizing environment over the different age cohorts. Employment status also emerges as a significant factor, with students, wage-employed, self-employed, and retired individuals displaying a greater likelihood of prioritizing the environment than homemakers. Additionally, social class positively correlates with environmental prioritization, with upper-middle-class individuals being more inclined to prioritize the environment than individuals from lower-income groups. The income of the individuals is negatively associated with the likelihood of prioritizing the environment. These findings underscore the complex interactions between demographic and socioeconomic factors in shaping environmental attitudes. The study's findings have important implications in providing valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders to design targeted interventions that empower individuals to play an active role in fostering a sustainable future.

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INTRODUCTION

Environmental deterioration and climate change have emerged as critical challenges due to their impacts on people's daily lives through extreme weather events, water scarcity, and pollution-induced health problems. These issues have prompted individuals and global communities to personalize efforts to address environmental concerns. The current wave of environmental degradation can be traced to the pro-growth objective of many nations on the cost of the environment in the post-World War II era. The detrimental effects of environmental degradation have catalyzed a rise in environmental activism. Contemporary, there is a growing awareness of the consequences of rapid economic growth on the environment.

In this regard, the environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC) hypothesis is a widely recognized theory among economists that explains environmental concerns (Grossman & Krueger, 1995). According to theory, there is an inverted U-shaped relationship between a nation's income and environmental degradation. EKC states the tradeoff between economic growth and the environment. The existing literature has pointed the presence of EKC in most of the economies (see: Osuntuyi & Lean, 2023; Shahzad et al., 2017; Bano et al., 2024) Existing literature suggests that the debate around environmental degradation and economic growth is particularly relevant in least-developed countries and during the early stages of development (Acharyya, 2009; Shair et al., 2024; Yasmeen et al., 2024). Initially, economic growth tends to increase pollution; however, as nations become wealthier and acquire more resources, they begin investing more in environmental protection, supported by stricter rules and regulations. The main message of the book *The Limits to Growth* (Rome, 2015) is that the Earth's physical limits prevent humans from consuming resources and producing pollutants beyond what the natural world can sustainably manage.

The concept of sustainable development gained significant momentum with the release of the Brundtland Report, also known as *Our Common Future*, in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). Cassen (1987) defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of present generations

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This definition emphasizes that societal structures and technology impose constraints on the environment's capacity to fulfill the needs of both current and future generations. According to the report, the environment and economic growth (development) are inseparable. However, many developed and developing economies pursue development practices that harm the environment (Cassen, 1987, p.14). These trends degrade the environment and exacerbate poverty and vulnerability for many people (Cassen, 1987, p.20). One of the significant achievements inspired by the Brundtland Report is the adoption of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. This agenda is built around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The SDGs are committed to preventing environmental degradation while promoting sustainable production, consumption, and the responsible use of natural resources. Additionally, these goals emphasize taking necessary action against climate change to ensure that the planet can meet the needs of both present and future generations.

Sustainability also intensifies the debate about prioritizing the environment over economic growth. To achieve sustainable development, individuals, among other stakeholders, are pivotal in prioritizing the environment. Individual efforts, such as; adopting eco-friendly practices, minimizing waste, conserving the environment, reducing pollution, and mitigating environmental degradation, are commendable. Individuals can generate demand for green products and technologies by embracing sustainable consumption. Individuals can also play a role in encouraging businesses and governments to implement environment-conscious practices. Against an individual's role in shaping the environment, this study examines the demographic and socioeconomic factors influencing individuals' willingness to prioritize environmental concerns over economic growth. The study's findings have important implications in providing valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders to design targeted interventions that empower individuals to play an active role in fostering a sustainable future.

LITERATURE REVIEW
The existing literature in the context of determinants of prioritizing environment overgrowth suggests that women tend to express more significant concern for the environment compared to men (Arnocky & Stroink, 2010; Zelezny et al., 2000). Women are found to hold stronger pro-environmental attitudes (Steel, 1996; Tranter, 2011) and engage more actively in environmentally sustainable practices (Torgler & Garcia-Valiñas, 2007). This women's more inclined to pro-environment is often linked to societal roles that portray women as "caregivers and nurturers," fostering greater environmental awareness and responsibility (Givens & Jorgenson, 2011). Moreover, urban residents tend to be more inclined to the environment than growth vis-à-vis rural residents (Israel & Levinson, 2004; Jones & Dunlap, 1992). It implies the immediate and visible impacts of pollution and environmental degradation in urban areas (Sulemana, 2016a; López de Calle Bastida, 2023).

Younger individuals tend to exhibit more significant environmental concern compared to older people, which may be explained by the latter's reduced inclination to support environmental protection, as they are less likely to experience its future benefits (Lengfeld & Gerhards, 2008; Gan et al., 2008; Combes et al., 2018). Additionally, married individuals are less likely to prioritize environmental concerns than unmarried individuals, as they tend to be more growth-oriented (Xu & Li, 2018).

Employment status is an essential factor influencing individuals' choices regarding environmental protection. The level of engagement with environmental concerns can vary due to factors such as time constraints, personal values, access to information, and the extent to which one's occupation is related to environmental issues (López de Calle Bastida, 2023; Sulemana et al., 2016b). Social class is also a significant determinant of environmental prioritization. Compared to individuals from lower social classes, those who identify as working class, lower middle class, upper middle class, or upper class tend to express significantly higher levels of environmental concern, both in African and developed countries (Torgler and Garcia-Valiñas, 2007). The prosperity or affluence hypothesis suggests a link between wealth and environmental concern. Proponents of this theory argue that environmental quality is both a normal good and a public good, meaning that as people's incomes increase, they are more likely to demand better environmental quality (Diekmann & Franzen, 1999; Franzen, 2003; Kemmelmeier et al., 2002). However, some studies have identified a negative relationship between income and environmental quality, indicating that higher income levels do not always correlate with more significant environmental concerns (López de Calle Bastida, 2023; Xu & Li, 2018).

METHODOLOGY
The primary objective of this study is to examine the influence of demographic and socioeconomic variables on the likelihood of individuals prioritizing economic growth or environmental protection. Given that the dependent variable is binary, a binary logistic regression model is employed to further the analysis (Shair et al., 2022; 2023). The econometric model used in this study is specified as follows:

$$PEOEi = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Male_i + \beta_2 Urban_i + \sum_{k=1}^{3} \beta_{k3} AGE_{ki} + \sum_{k=1}^{3} \beta_{k4} Marital\ status_{ki} +$$
$$\sum_{k=1}^{6} \beta_{k5} Employment\ status_{ki} + \sum_{k=1}^{5} \beta_{k6} Social\ class\ group_{k1} + \beta_7 Income_i + \varepsilon_i \quad\quad\quad (1)$$

where i indicates individuals, k indicates the categories of the given variable, βs, are the constant coefficients to be estimated, and ε is the error term. The definition of the variables used in the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Definition of the variables

Variable	Description	Type
Prioritizing Environment or Economic Growth	Coded 1 if primary preference is protecting the environment, and 0 if primary preference is economic growth.	Binary
Male	Coded 1 if respondent is male, 0 otherwise.	Binary
Urban	Coded 1 if respondent is from urban area, 0 otherwise.	Binary
Age	Coded 1 if individual is from 18-30 year old, 2 if individual is 31-49 year old, and 3 if individual is above 49 year old.	Ordinal categorical
Marital status	Coded 1 if individual is single, 2 if currently married, and 3 if formerly married.	Multinomial categorical
Employment status	Coded as 1 if the respondent is wage-employed, 2 if self-employed, 3 if retired, 4 if a homemaker, 5 if a student, and 6 if unemployed.	Ordinal categorical
Social class group	Coded as 1 if the respondent is from the lower class, 2 if from the working class, 3 if from the lower-middle class, 4 if from the upper-middle class, and 5 if from the upper class.	Ordinal categorical
Income	A scale ranges from 1 to 10, where 1 indicates lowest income and 10 indicates highest income.	Ordinal discrete

DATA AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Data source

This study utilizes secondary data from the most recent World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 7, conducted between 2017 and 2021. The dataset includes 66 countries and comprises responses from 82,678 participants after accounting for missing values. The WVS is the largest non-commercial academic survey program dedicated to the rigorous scientific study of global social, political, economic, religious, and cultural values. All variables used in this research were drawn from this survey, which is conducted worldwide every five years to provide comprehensive insights into societal dynamics.

Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study for the whole sample are presented in Table 2. The data also compares individuals who prioritize the environment with those who do not, based on demographic variables. Approximately 59% of the sample prioritizes the environment. The gender distribution is similar across both groups, with around 47% identifying as male. Urban residents are slightly more likely to prioritize the environment (68.1%) compared to those who do not (66.5%). Age distribution reveals that younger individuals (16–29 years) are marginally more represented among those prioritizing the environment (26.0%) than among those who do not (24.7%). The middle-aged group (30–49 years) shows no notable difference, with approximately 39.8% in both groups. However, individuals aged 49 and above are more prevalent among those who do not prioritize the environment (35.7%) compared to those who do (34.2%).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study

Variable	Whole sample				Prioritizing environment	Not prioritizing environment
	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	Mean	Mean
Prioritizing environment	.5894752	.4919318	0	1	1	0
Male	.473565	.4993033	0	1	.4711739	.4896346
Urban	.6781742	.467179	0	1	.6814528	.6654987
Age: 16-29 years	.2524377	.4344132	0	1	.2600616	.2472281
Age: 30-49 years	.3963333	.4891377	0	1	.3983582	.3956524
Age: above 49	.3512289	.4773568	0	1	.3415802	.3571194
Marital status: Married	.6359864	.481155	0	1	.6297338	.6499346
Marital status: Formerly married	.1234076	.3289062	0	1	.1177532	.1237049
Marital status: Single	.240606	.4274537	0	1	.252513	.2263606
Employment status: Wage employed	.4625001	.4985944	0	1	.4742707	.4447373
Employment status: Self-employed	.1432694	.3503492	0	1	.1432504	.1493713
Employment status: Retired	.12584	.3316706	0	1	.1206178	.1276835
Employment status: Homemaker	.1327055	.3392579	0	1	.123963	.1424257
Employment status: Student	.0587371	.2351333	0	1	.0638644	.0528743
Employment status: Unemployed	.0769479	.2665102	0	1	.0740337	.0829078
Social class: Upper	.0198859	.139609	0	1	.0189838	.0205489
Social class: Upper middle	.2121344	.4088218	0	1	.2203604	.204808
Social class: Lower middle	.3888604	.4874942	0	1	.3936627	.3861721
Social class: Working	.2641345	.4408737	0	1	.2585086	.266994
Social class: Lower	.1149848	.3190053	0	1	.1084845	.121477
Income	4.910375	2.090321	1	10	4.931814	4.907753

Married individuals make up 63.6% of the total sample, with a slightly lower proportion prioritizing the environment (62.9%) compared to those who do not (65.0%), while single individuals, comprising 24.1% of the sample, are slightly more represented among those prioritizing the environment (25.3%) than those who do not (22.6%). Formerly married individuals account for 12.3% of the sample, showing minimal variation between the two groups. In terms of employment status, wage-employed individuals, representing 46.3% of the sample, are more likely to prioritize the environment (47.4%) than those who do not (44.5%), and students, making up 5.9%, show a similar trend (6.4% vs. 5.3%). On the other hand, homemakers and unemployed individuals are less likely to prioritize the environment, with homemakers comprising 12.4% of those who prioritize versus 14.2% of those who do not and unemployed individuals accounting for 7.4% versus 8.3%. Self-employed and retired individuals show little difference across the two groups.

The upper class constitutes a very small portion of the sample (1.99%), with a slightly lower representation among those prioritizing the environment (1.90%) compared to those who do not (2.05%). The upper-middle class, accounting for 21.2% of the sample, is more represented among those prioritizing the environment (22.0%) than those who do not (20.5%). Similarly, the lower-middle class, the largest group at 38.9%, shows a slight increase among those prioritizing the environment (39.4%) compared to those who do not (38.6%). In contrast, the working class (26.4%) and lower class (11.5%) are less represented among those prioritizing the environment, with the working class at 25.9% versus 27.0% and the lower class at 10.8% versus 12.1%. Income levels, measured on a scale of 1 to 10, show minimal variation, with individuals prioritizing the environment having a slightly higher average income (4.93) than those who do not (4.91).

Overall, prioritizing the environment appears slightly more common in urban areas and among younger age groups. Additionally, it is more common among single, wage-employed, and student individuals, whereas homemakers, married individuals, and the unemployed are more represented among those who do not prioritize the environment. Furthermore, individuals prioritizing the environment are more likely to belong to the upper-middle or lower-middle class and have slightly higher incomes, while the working and lower classes are more represented among those who do not prioritize the environment.

Bivariate Analysis
In the empirical analysis, the majority of variables are categorical, except income. Therefore, it is appropriate to use cross-tabulation and Chi-square tests to evaluate the association between the covariates and the outcome variable. To achieve this, a bivariate analysis was conducted, as presented in Table 3. The results indicate statistically significant relationships between the covariates and the prioritization of the environment, as evidenced by Chi-squared tests with p-values of 0.000. Among males, 58.01% prioritize the environment compared to 59.80% of females, indicating a slightly higher tendency among females. Urban residents are more likely to prioritize the environment (59.52%) than rural residents (57.76%). Age-wise, younger individuals (16–29 years) show the highest proportion prioritizing the environment (60.19%), followed by those aged 30–49 years (59.13%). These findings suggest that females, urban residents, and younger individuals are marginally more inclined to prioritize the environment than their counterparts.

Table 3: Bivariate analysis of the categorical variable with outcome variable

Variable	Outcomes	Prioritizing	Not prioritizing	Chi-squared
Gender	Male	58.01	41.99	Pearson chi2(1) = 29.6254 Pr = 0.000
	Female	59.80	40.20	
Area	Urban	59.52	40.48	Pearson chi2(1) = 25.1763 Pr = 0.000
	Rural	57.76	42.24	
Age	16-29 years	60.19	39.81	
	30-49 years	59.13	40.87	Pearson chi2(2) = 29.3403 Pr = 0.000
	Above 49 years	57.89	42.11	
Marital status	Single	61.55	38.45	
	Currently married	58.16	41.84	Pearson chi2(2) = 81.3352 Pr = 0.000
	Formerly married	57.73	42.27	
Employment status	Wage employed	60.50	39.50	
	Self-employed	57.94	42.06	
	Retired	57.57	42.43	
	Homemaker	55.56	44.44	Pearson chi2(5) = 175.8428 Pr = 0.000
	Student	63.43	36.57	
	Unemployed	56.19	43.81	
Social class	Upper	56.65	43.35	
	Upper middle	60.35	39.65	
	Lower middle	59.05	40.95	Pearson chi2(4) = 65.1483 Pr = 0.000
	Working	57.80	42.20	
	Lower	55.81	44.19	

For marital status, single individuals have the highest proportion prioritizing the environment (61.55%), compared to currently married (58.16%) and formerly married individuals (57.73%). The Chi-squared statistic is 81.3352, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between marital status and environmental

prioritizing. For employment status, students have the highest proportion of prioritizing the environment (63.43%), followed by wage-employed individuals (60.50%). Other groups, such as the self-employed (57.94%), retired individuals (57.57%), homemakers (55.56%), and the unemployed (56.19%), have lower proportions prioritizing the environment. The Chi-squared statistic is 175.8428, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship between employment status and environmental prioritizing. For social class, individuals in the upper-middle class have the highest proportion of prioritizing the environment (60.35%), followed by the lower-middle class (59.05%). Those in the upper class (56.65%), working-class (57.80%), and lower class (55.81%) are less likely to prioritize the environment. The Chi-squared statistic is 65.1483, with a p-value of 0.000, demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between social class and environmental prioritizing.

The data reveals statistically significant relationships between marital status, employment status, and social class with the prioritization of the environment. Single individuals, students, and those in the upper-middle class are the most likely to prioritize the environment, while married, homemakers, and lower-class individuals are less likely. These findings underscore the influence of demographic and socioeconomic factors on environmental prioritization.

Figure 1 highlights variations in environmental prioritization across demographic and socioeconomic groups. Females (59.80%) are slightly more likely than males (58.01%) to prioritize the environment. Urban residents (59.52%) show higher environmental prioritization compared to rural residents (57.76%). Younger individuals aged 16-29 years (60.19%) are the most likely to prioritize the environment, followed by those aged 30-49 years (59.13%) and above 49 years (57.89%). Single individuals (61.55%) are more inclined to prioritize the environment compared to currently married (58.16%) and formerly married individuals (57.73%). Among employment groups, students (63.43%) and wage-employed individuals (60.50%) have the highest levels of environmental prioritization, while homemakers (55.56%) and the unemployed (56.19%) are less likely. Social class shows similar trends, with upper-middle-class individuals (60.35%) being the most likely to prioritize the environment, followed by lower-middle-class individuals (59.05%). In contrast, those in the upper (56.65%), working (57.80%), and lower classes (55.81%) are less likely to prioritize the environment. Groups such as rural residents, older individuals, married or formerly married individuals, homemakers, unemployed individuals, and those in the lower class are more represented among those not prioritizing the environment.
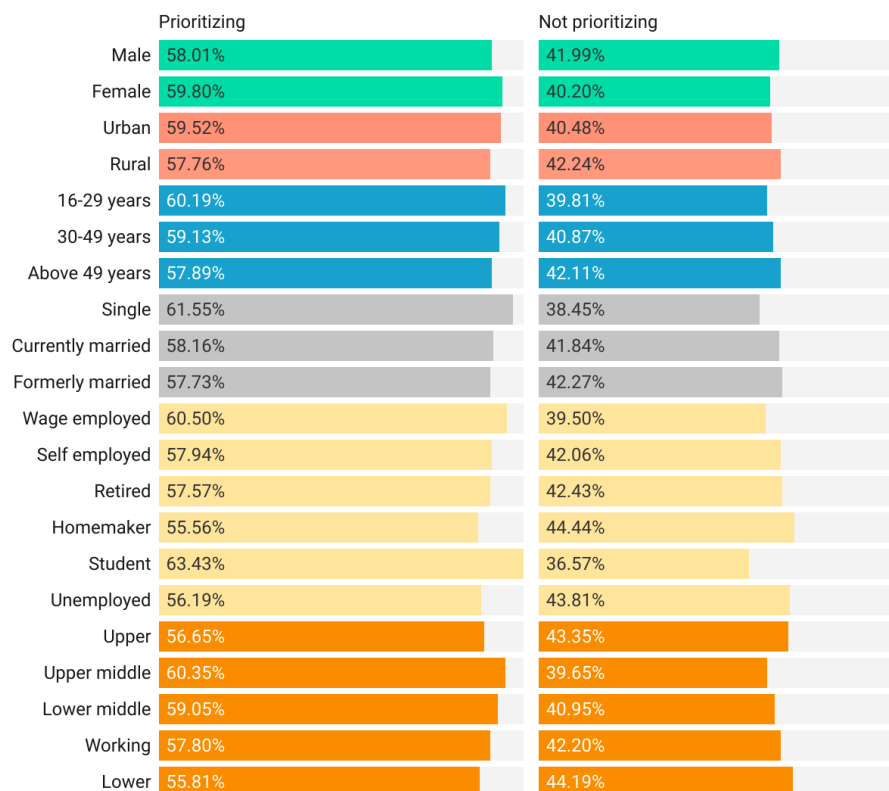

Figure 1: Cross-tabulation of the covariates with outcome variable

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The odds ratios obtained from the logistic regression models offer valuable insights into the factors affecting individuals' likelihood of prioritizing the environment over economic growth. The logit model estimates are presented in Table 4, while Figure 2 provides a coefficient plot of the same model. Model 1 in Table 4 examines demographic variables, Model 2 includes socioeconomic factors, and Model 3 integrates both to assess result

consistency. In the given model 1-3, the sign and significance of the covariates remain stable and consistent, thereby indicating robustness.

Table 4: Odds ratio of the logit model

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Male	0.919***		0.891***
	(0.0127)		(0.0137)
Urban	1.069***		1.029*
	(0.0156)		(0.0159)
Age: 16-29 years (base)			
Age: 30-49 years	1.027		1.010
	(0.0202)		(0.0211)
Age: Above 49 years	0.989		0.985
	(0.0208)		(0.0232)
Marital status: Single (base)			
Marital status: Currently married	0.864***		0.904***
	(0.0166)		(0.0189)
Marital status: Formerly married	0.838***		0.874***
	(0.0231)		(0.0257)
Employment status: Homemaker (base)			
Employment status: Wage employed		1.204***	1.257***
		(0.0263)	(0.0298)
Employment status: Self-employed		1.100***	1.170***
		(0.0289)	(0.0327)
Employment status: Retired		1.065**	1.150***
		(0.0299)	(0.0363)
Employment status: Student		1.361***	1.325***
		(0.0479)	(0.0531)
Employment status: Unemployed		1.020	1.049
		(0.0320)	(0.0347)
Social class: Lower (base)			
Social class: Upper		1.072	1.069
		(0.0609)	(0.0611)
Social class: Upper middle class		1.216***	1.205***
		(0.0359)	(0.0357)
Social class: Lower middle class		1.144***	1.137***
		(0.0289)	(0.0289)
Social class: Working class		1.078***	1.076***
		(0.0277)	(0.0277)
Income		0.981***	0.981***
		(0.00390)	(0.00392)
Constant	1.592***	1.221***	1.332***
	(0.0316)	(0.0352)	(0.0477)
Observations	82,678	82,678	82,678

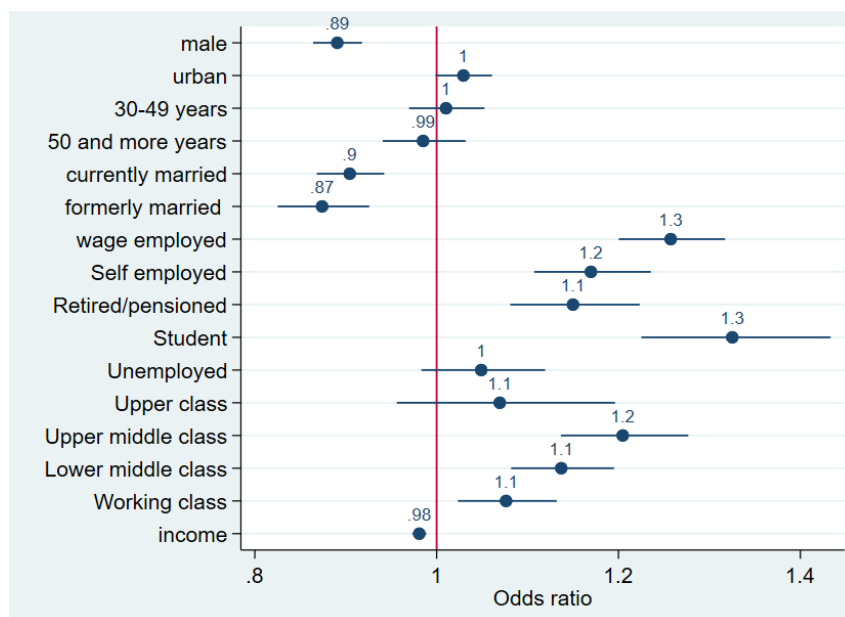*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 2: Coefficient plot of variables

The odds ratio for gender is less than 1, indicating males are less likely to prioritize the environment compared to females. Specifically, males have a 10.9% lower likelihood of preferring the environment. Males are less likely to

prioritize environmental overgrowth due to socialization emphasizing economic priorities and traditional masculine norms, often aligning less with environmental advocacy (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2014). Women, in contrast, tend to adopt nurturing roles, perceive environmental risks more acutely, and prioritize long-term community well-being. Additionally, cultural expectations and differing risk perceptions contribute to this gap, with men often viewing economic growth as more immediately critical than environmental protection.

For the area of residence, urban residents are more likely to prioritize the environment than rural residents. Specifically, urban residents are 2.9% more likely to prefer the environment than those from rural areas. Urban residents are more likely to prioritize the environment due to greater exposure to environmental awareness campaigns, education, and infrastructure promoting sustainability (Rajapaksa et al., 2018). They also experience urban environmental challenges like pollution, directly impacting their quality of life. In contrast, rural residents often depend on economic growth tied to agriculture or resource extraction, making them perceive economic priorities as more immediate and critical than environmental protection. On the other hand, the impact of age is insignificant.

The odds ratio for currently married individuals is 0.904, indicating they are 9.6% less likely to prioritize the environment than single individuals. Likewise, formerly married individuals are 12.6% less likely to prioritize the environment compared to single individuals. Currently, married and formerly married individuals are less likely to prioritize environmental overgrowth due to greater economic responsibilities, such as supporting families or recovering from financial transitions (DePaulo & Morris, 2005; Manzoli et al., 2007). These priorities may lead them to favor economic stability over environmental concerns. On the contrary, single individuals often have fewer immediate economic obligations, allowing them to focus more on long-term and collective issues like environmental protection.

Wage-employed individuals are significantly more likely to prioritize the environment, with a 25.7% increased likelihood compared to homemakers. Similarly, self-employed individuals show a 17.0% higher likelihood. Retired individuals are also more likely to prioritize the environment, with a 15.0% increase. Students exhibit the strongest positive association, being 32.5% more likely to prioritize the environment. Meanwhile, unemployed individuals display an insignificant impact, suggesting no difference in the likelihood of prioritizing the environment than homemakers.

Wage-employed, self-employed, retired, and student individuals are more likely to prioritize the environment over growth than homemakers. This is due to differences in exposure, values, and responsibilities (Harakati et al., 2024). Wage and self-employed individuals may encounter environmental awareness through workplaces or broader social interactions. Retired individuals often shift focus to legacy and long-term sustainability concerns. Students are frequently exposed to environmental education and activism, fostering pro-environmental attitudes (Wallis & Loy, 2021). Homemakers, however, may prioritize immediate economic needs and household stability over broader environmental issues, as their responsibilities often center on family and daily practicalities, leaving less scope for focusing on global or long-term environmental concerns.

The odds ratios from the logistic regression models highlight the influence of social class and income on the likelihood of individuals prioritizing the environment over economic growth, with the lower social class serving as the reference group. Individuals in higher social classes are more likely to prioritize the environment, with the upper-middle class showing the strongest positive association—21.6% higher likelihood in Model 2 and 20.5% in Model 3—compared to those in the lower class. The lower-middle class follows, with increases of 14.4% in Model 2 and 13.7% in Model 3. The upper and working classes also demonstrate a positive association, with increases ranging from 6.9% to 7.8%. Upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, and working-class individuals are more likely to prioritize the environment over growth than lower-class individuals due to greater financial security and access to education (Kharas, 2023). On the contrary, individuals from lower-income classes are often content with financial constraints, leading to a greater emphasis on pressing priority economic growth over environmental concerns. Their priorities are focused on fulfilling basic needs and improving their financial stability.

On the other hand, income is smaller and positive but significant; therefore, an increase in income decreases the probability of prioritizing the environment by 1.9%. From the present study, it can be concluded that social class significantly affects environmental preference, indicating that people in the upper-middle social class have the highest propensity. However, income correlates negatively and weakly with environmental preference. Sometimes, when people have more income, they are less inclined to want an environment overgrowth, as higher income is linked with consumerism or is linked to erasing economic processes instead of a sustainable environment (O'Rourke & Lollo, 2015). This implies that the more developed persons' self-interests may view investment or business gains as contrary to the conservation of the environment. Furthermore, higher income underestimates time-pressing environmental concerns and increases concerns about sustaining or enhancing economic performance.

Conversely, income shows a modest but significant negative effect, with a one-unit increase in income reducing the likelihood of prioritizing the environment by 1.9% in both models. An increase in income may make individuals less likely to prefer the environment overgrowth because higher income often aligns with consumption-driven lifestyles

that emphasize economic activities over sustainability (O'Rourke & Lollo, 2015). Wealthier individuals may prioritize personal economic benefits, such as investments or business interests, which can conflict with environmental protection goals. Additionally, higher income can reduce the perceived urgency of environmental issues, shifting focus toward maintaining or expanding economic growth.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study offer valuable insights into the factors influencing individuals' prioritization of the environment over economic growth. Key predictors identified include women who have never been married, urban residents more likely to prioritize the environment, and men and married individuals who exhibit lower likelihood. The impact of age is insignificant, which implies that there is no difference in the probability of prioritizing the environment over the different age cohorts. Employment status also emerges as a significant factor, with students, wage-employed, self-employed, and retired individuals displaying a greater likelihood of prioritizing the environment than homemakers. Additionally, social class positively correlates with environmental prioritization, with upper-middle-class individuals being the most inclined to prioritize the environment than individuals from lower-income groups. The income of the individuals is negatively associated with the likelihood of prioritizing the environment. These findings underscore the complex interactions between demographic and socioeconomic factors in shaping environmental attitudes.

Policies should strategically address demographic and socioeconomic factors to enhance individuals' prioritization of the environment for a sustainable future. Gender-specific interventions, with a particular focus on engaging men, are essential. Individuals from rural areas tend to be less inclined towards environmental concerns; thus, targeted measures are needed to bridge the urban-rural divide and improve environmental awareness and literacy. Skill-building programs are crucial for increasing homemakers' participation in eco-friendly practices. Sustainable development literacy and behavioral nudges should also be directed toward married individuals to foster greater involvement. Tailored approaches are necessary to address the lower participation rates observed among upper- and lower-income groups, aiming to drive environmental activism effectively.

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