

Abstract

This paper attempts to ascertain the effect of certain factors on U.S. public opinion relating to the protection of the environment. In addition, it seeks to describe what voting patterns exist relating to environmental legislation in the U.S. Congress. The effects of the following factors on public opinion relating to environmental protection were considered: family income, political ideology, party affiliation, and ethnicity. An inverse relationship exists between public support for environmental protection legislation and family income, conservative political ideology, and Republican Party affiliation among other factors. Congressional environmental legislation concerning toxic waste, recycling, and global warming has increased in prevalence since 1974 whereas drinking water regulation and species and forest protection have steadily decreased over the same period. Possible explanations for these findings are considered.

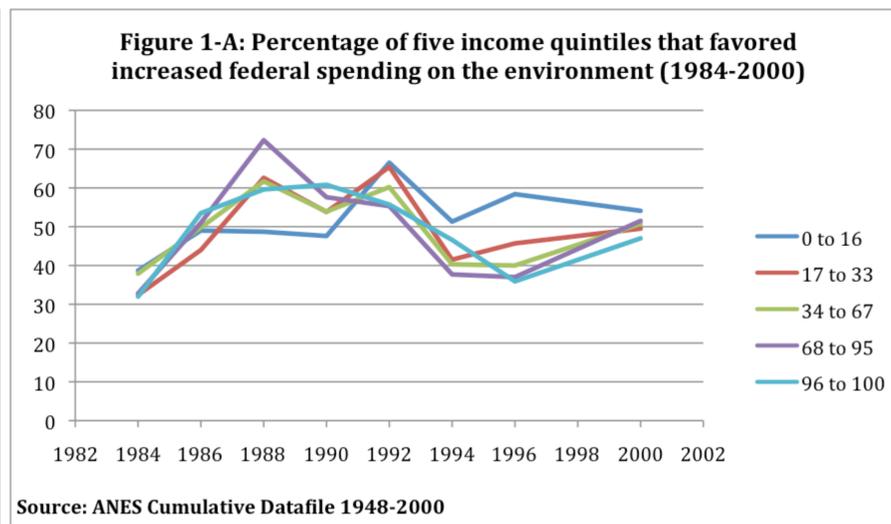
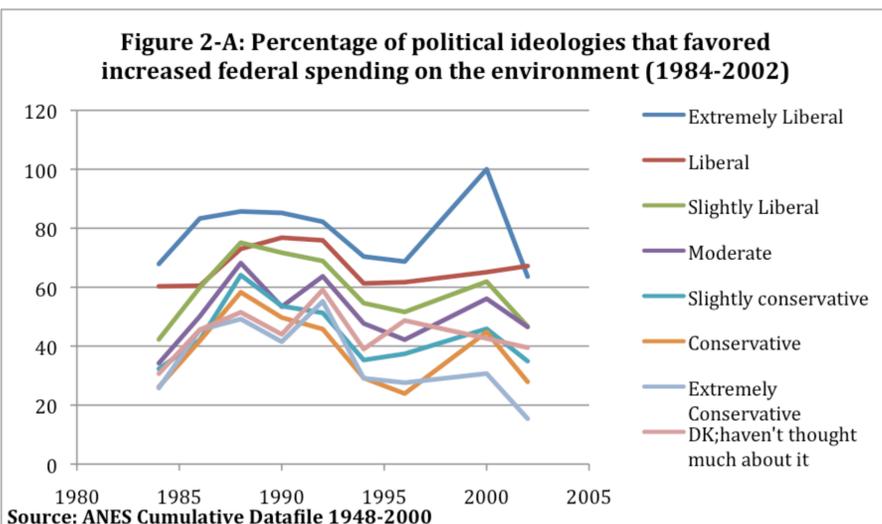
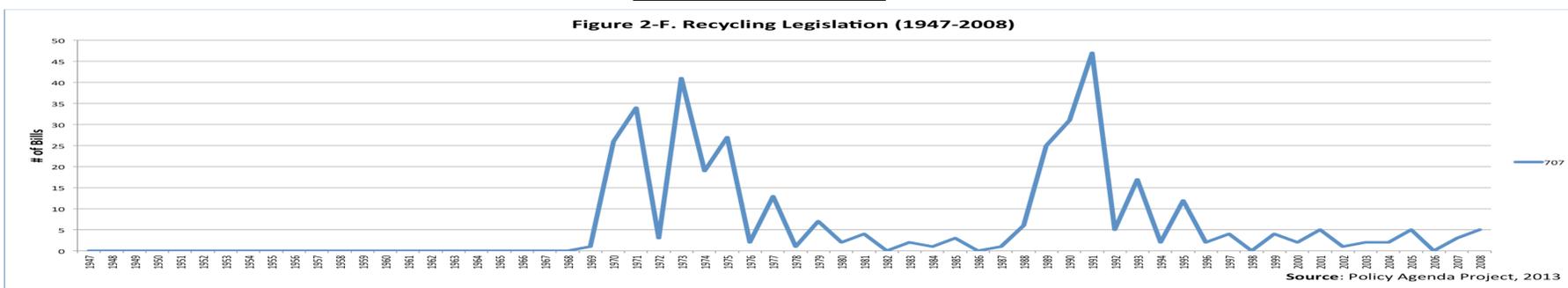
Data & Methods

- ANES, GSS, and Gallup Survey data
- Policy Agendas Project voting tally data
- Various public opinion factors plotted over time:
 - Family Income (see below)
 - Political Ideology (see below)
 - Party Affiliation
 - Ethnicity
- Congressional voting patterns plotted over time:
 - Drinking Water Safety
 - Waste Disposal
 - Hazardous Waste and Toxic Chemical Regulation
 - Air Pollution, Global Warming, and Noise Pollution
 - Recycling
 - Indoor Environmental Hazards
 - Species and Forest Protection
 - Preservation of Wetlands, Ocean Dumping, Etc.
 - Land and Water Conservation
 - Environmental Research and Development
 - Other

Conclusion

- Family income, conservative ideology, and Republican Party affiliation correlate with a decreased support for protection of the environment.
- The prevalence of environmental legislation concerning the following subTopicCode areas has risen since 1974:
 - Recycling (see below)
 - Global Warming
 - Hazardous Waste and Toxic Chemical Regulation
 - Indoor Environmental Hazards
 - Preservation of Wetlands, Ocean Dumping, Etc.
 - Environmental Research and Development
- The following subTopicCode areas of environmental legislation have remained steady or declined since 1974:
 - Species and Forest Protection
 - Drinking Water Safety
 - General Environmental Legislation
 - Other (Eco-terrorism, Environmental Citizenship)
 - Land and Water Conservation

Results



Future Studies

- What effect does public opinion concerning the environment have on Congressional voting patterns with respect to the environment?
- Is it possible that Congressional voting on the environment affect public opinion concerning the environment?
- What factors, other than the ones studied here, affect U.S. citizen's support or lack of support for the environment?