

Effect of global poverty reduction on wild animal welfare

Abstract

This thesis aims to find a connection in the form of theory or economic model between two concepts - world poverty and wild animal welfare. By synthesising contemporary knowledge, we aim to answer the question of whether there are scientifically-based explanations for the relationship between decreasing global poverty and welfare of wild animals. We also aim to answer the question of whether the welfare of wild animals is worsening or improving with declining global poverty. Assuming that animals are sentient beings, their welfare is negatively affected by the variety of human activities. These activities can be undertaken by humans intentionally (e.g. hunting) or unintentionally, with the industrial activities leading to the disruption of animal habitats or chemical contamination of the biosphere. We approach the problem of reducing global poverty on wild animal welfare in two ways. First, we find an explanation of the relationship between the growth of society's wealth and environmental degradation from a macro-perspective using the environmental Kuznets curve and its derivative – animal welfare Kuznets curve. Using these curves, however, the interpretation of the impact of poverty reduction on wild animal welfare can only be very limited. Instead, we propose the need for a wild animal welfare Kuznets curve. The second perspective is qualitative, comparing the legislative and institutional framework of the four countries selected by their GDP per capita. We find that even economically more developed countries with lower poverty headcount ratio may have weaker legislative protection for wild animal welfare than less developed countries with higher levels of extreme poverty. However, the representativeness of this thesis is limiting in this regard due to the low number of countries compared. It would be appropriate in future to conduct research on the dependence of GDP per capita and legislative protection of wild animal welfare comparisons incorporating more countries. The objectives of the thesis were met, the link between the two concepts was found through the Environmental Kuznets Curve model, and a qualitative approach offers a direction for further research in this multidisciplinary area.

Keywords: global poverty, wild animal welfare, environmental Kuznets curve, wild animal welfare Kuznets curve, impacts of human activities, habitat disruption, legislation for animal protection