

Abstract

In this dissertation thesis, I focus on changes in the assessment and measurement of quality of life and development after the crisis of 2008 and the reflection of these changes in the political strategies of Western countries. I follow up on the public debate and on many books and professional articles whose authors dealt with the causes of the crisis, with the reactions of governments and international institutions to its manifestations as well as with its effects on the quality of life of Western society. The thesis aims to find out whether the dramatic events of autumn 2008 led to a more significant change in Western society and its institutions, like many experts, politicians, and public figures expected at the beginning of the crisis. First, I focus in this context on the analysis of institutions, which is based primarily on the study of strategic documents, books, and proceedings published after the crisis as well as on articles published in the world media. Subsequently, I engage in the analysis of social preferences, for which I use data on subjective quality of life collected within the European Quality of Life Survey. The results of the institution's analysis show that economic growth is still considered (even after the crisis) a major condition for the development of Western countries after the crisis. However, more attention is paid to how the benefits of growth are distributed across society and to its impact on the environment. This is also reflected in the fact that the influence of social and environmental indicators, which have supplemented the hitherto dominant economic indicators, has increased in the assessment of the quality of life and development after the crisis. On the other hand, the analysis of preferences shows that the crisis not only has not weakened the relationship between economic factors and subjective well-being but on the contrary has strengthened it. This means that the social consensus that material well-being is a prerequisite for quality of life is stronger in Western countries after the crisis than before. Based on these findings, I conclude that the crisis of 2008 did not lead to a fundamental (paradigmatic), but only a partial (parametric) change in the assessment and measurement of quality of life. In addition to expanding existing knowledge about the impact of the most recent global economic crisis on the development of Western society, the contribution of this research also lies in understanding how Western institutions respond to major crises. On the one hand, the research confirms in this context the relatively high resilience of Western institutions to crises, but on the other, it reveals that this resilience may prevent solving systemic problems which led to the crises, which increases the risk of their recurrence.