

## **ABSTRACT**

Empirical evidence consistently shows that an emphasis on materialistic values negatively correlates with quality of life, both at an individual and societal level. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of this interrelationship. The thesis is divided into two parts – theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part presents concepts both of quality of life and materialism as well as contemporary approaches to their research and measurement. Special attention is paid to the concept of eudaimonic well-being as a core concept of optimal human functioning, and to the concept of post-materialism as a value orientation that emphasizes self-expression and quality of life.

The thesis is based on two propositions referring to the relation between quality of life and materialistic value orientation. On the one hand, materialism facilitates an economic development and market economy of a given society. At a certain level of economic development there is a tendency to shift to post-materialistic values associated with autonomy, self-realization and personal growth. This value shift is not effortless, as the other proposition claims. The consumer-driven culture produced by the modern economy promotes material values. It claims that the route to happiness and well-being is through more material goods, popularity and image. As consumer culture has become more dominant, the aspirations of materialism have been adopted and pursued by society at large. Materialism becomes culturally approved value in a globalized world.

In the empirical part of my thesis I tested hypotheses I derived from the theoretical part. To test the hypotheses I used data from the fourth wave of World Values Survey. In this survey took part over 100 000 respondents from 70 states and 5 continents. The analysis was in general in accord with my hypotheses. It showed among others that (a) the rich societies tend to be more post-materialistic, and (b) the more post-materialistic society is, the more people it are satisfied with their lives. In agreement with self-determination theory and theory of post-materialism, autonomy was found as the most significant predictor of satisfaction with life.