

Preface and acknowledgments

This book owes large debts to many friends and colleagues. The analysis draws upon a unique database, the World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Values Surveys (EVS), conducted from 1981 to 2007. These representative mass surveys provide data from countries containing almost 90 per cent of the world's population and covering the full range of variation, from societies with per capita incomes as low as \$300 per year, to societies with per capita incomes one hundred times that high; and from long-established democracies with market economies, to authoritarian states and ex-socialist states.

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This study builds on our previous books based on the World Values surveys, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World* (2003), which examined changing attitudes towards gender roles, and *Sacred and Secular* (2004), which analyzed the role of religion in the contemporary world. Some preliminary ideas from this study were first presented as conference papers, generating useful feedback from discussants and colleagues at various professional conferences, including the Mid-West Political Science Association meeting in Chicago in March 2008 and the American Political Science Association annual meeting in Boston in August 2008. We also appreciate the opportunity to discuss these ideas at the CommGAP/World Bank and Harvard University Workshop on the Role of the Media in the Governance Agenda in May 2008. Invaluable feedback was also generated from discussion with colleagues at the meeting of World Values Survey Conference and General Assembly in Istanbul in September 2008, generously hosted by Yilmaz Esmer and Bahçeşehir University. The theme of the book received encouragement in conversations over the years with many colleagues. We are also most grateful to all those who went out of their way to provide feedback on initial ideas, or to read through draft chapters and provide chapter-and-verse comments, including Mark Franklin and Cees van der Eijk.

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