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Sommario/riassunto	Is America bitterly divided? Has America lost its traditional values? Many politicians and religious leaders believe so, as do the majority of Americans, based on public opinion polls taken over the past several years. But is this crisis of values real? This book explores the moral terrain of America today, analyzing the widely held perception that the nation is in moral decline. It looks at the question from a variety of angles, examining traditional values, secular values, religious values, family values, economic values, and others. Using unique data from the World Values Surveys, the largest systematic attempt ever made to document attitudes, values, and beliefs around the world, this book systematically evaluates the perceived crisis of values by comparing

America's values with those of over 60 other nations. The results are surprising. The evidence shows overwhelmingly that America has not lost its traditional values, that the nation compares favorably with most other societies, and that the culture war is largely a myth. The gap between reality and perception does not represent mass ignorance of the facts or an overblown moral panic, Baker contends. Rather, the widespread perception of a crisis of values is a real and legitimate interpretation of life in a society that is in the middle of a fundamental transformation and that contains growing cultural contradictions. Instead of posing a problem, the author argues, this crisis rhetoric serves the valuable social function of reminding us of what it means to be American. As such, it preserves the ideological foundation of the nation.

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