



A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid (Historical Studies of Urban America)

Nancy H. Kwak

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Is there anything more American than the ideal of homeownership? In this groundbreaking work of transnational history, Nancy H. Kwak reveals how the concept of homeownership became one of America's major exports and defining characteristics around the world. In the aftermath of World War II, American advisers urged countries to pursue greater access to homeownership, arguing it would give families a literal stake in their nations, jumpstart a productive home-building industry, fuel economic growth, and raise the standard of living in their countries, helping to ward off the specter of communism.

A World of Homeowners charts the emergence of democratic homeownership in the postwar landscape and booming economy; its evolution as a tool of foreign policy and a vehicle for international investment in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s; and the growth of lower-income homeownership programs in the United States from the 1960s to today. Kwak unravels all these threads, detailing the complex stories and policy struggles that emerged from a particularly American vision for global democracy and capitalism. Ultimately, she argues, the question of who should own homes where—and how—is intertwined with the most difficult questions about economy, government, and society.

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