



Remaking the Heartland: Middle America since the 1950s

Robert Wuthnow

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For many Americans, the Midwest is a vast unknown. In *Remaking the Heartland*, Robert Wuthnow sets out to rectify this. He shows how the region has undergone extraordinary social transformations over the past half-century and proven itself surprisingly resilient in the face of such hardships as the Great Depression and the movement of residents to other parts of the country. He examines the heartland's reinvention throughout the decades and traces the social and economic factors that have helped it to survive and prosper.

Wuthnow points to the critical strength of the region's social institutions established between 1870 and 1950—the market towns, farmsteads, one-room schoolhouses, townships, rural cooperatives, and manufacturing centers that have adapted with the changing times. He focuses on farmers' struggles to recover from the Great Depression well into the 1950s, the cultural redefinition and modernization of the region's image that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, the growth of secondary and higher education, the decline of small towns, the redeployment of agribusiness, and the rapid expansion of edge cities. Drawing his arguments from extensive interviews and evidence from the towns and counties of the Midwest, Wuthnow provides a unique perspective as both an objective observer and someone who grew up there.

Remaking the Heartland offers an accessible look at the humble yet strong foundations that have allowed the region to endure undiminished.

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