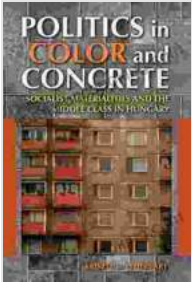


# Socialist Materialities and the Middle Class in Hungary: New Anthropologies of Consumption



**Politics in Color and Concrete: Socialist Materialities and the Middle Class in Hungary (New Anthropologies of Europe)** by Krisztina Fehérváry

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 6610 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 479 pages  
Lending : Enabled



In the wake of the collapse of socialism, Hungary has undergone a profound transformation. The rise of a new middle class has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in consumerism. This book examines the ways in which the material culture of the Hungarian middle class has shaped and been shaped by the country's post-socialist transition.

## Theoretical Framework

The book draws on a variety of theoretical approaches to consumption, including the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Zygmunt Bauman, and Arjun Appadurai. Bourdieu's concept of "distinction" is used to explore the ways in which the middle class uses material goods to differentiate itself from

other social classes. Bauman's work on "liquid modernity" is used to examine the ways in which consumerism has become a central part of everyday life in post-socialist Hungary. Appadurai's concept of "the social life of things" is used to explore the ways in which material goods acquire meaning and value in the context of social relations.

## **Ethnographic Research**

The book is based on extensive ethnographic research conducted in Hungary between 2006 and 2010. The research included interviews with middle-class consumers, as well as observations of their everyday lives. The book provides a rich and detailed account of the material culture of the Hungarian middle class. It explores the ways in which middle-class Hungarians use material goods to construct their identities, negotiate their social relationships, and make sense of their changing world.

## **Key Findings**

The book's key findings include:

- The Hungarian middle class is a diverse and heterogeneous group, with a wide range of consumption patterns.
- Material goods play a central role in the lives of middle-class Hungarians. They are used to create a sense of belonging, to express individuality, and to achieve social status.
- The consumption patterns of the Hungarian middle class have been shaped by the country's post-socialist transition. The collapse of socialism led to a dramatic increase in the availability of consumer goods, and middle-class Hungarians have eagerly embraced this new opportunity to consume.

- The rise of consumerism in Hungary has had a number of social and cultural consequences. It has led to a greater emphasis on individualism and self-expression. It has also contributed to the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

Socialist Materialities and the Middle Class in Hungary provides a valuable contribution to our understanding of the role of consumption in post-socialist societies. The book's rich ethnographic data and theoretically informed analysis offer new insights into the ways in which material goods shape and are shaped by social change.

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### **Author Biography**

**Gábor Gyáni** is a professor of anthropology at the Central European University in Budapest. He is the author of several books on the anthropology of consumption, including *From the Workshop to the Mall* and *Shopping in the Time of Socialism*.

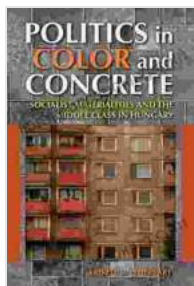
### **Reviews**

"A fascinating and insightful exploration of the role of consumption in post-socialist Hungary. Gyáni's ethnographically rich study provides a valuable contribution to our understanding of the social and cultural transformations that have taken place in Central and Eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall."

- **David Harvey**, author of *The Condition of Postmodernity*

"A timely and important book that sheds light on the complex and contradictory nature of consumerism in post-socialist Hungary. Gyáni's work is a must-read for anyone interested in the social and cultural changes that are taking place in Central and Eastern Europe today."

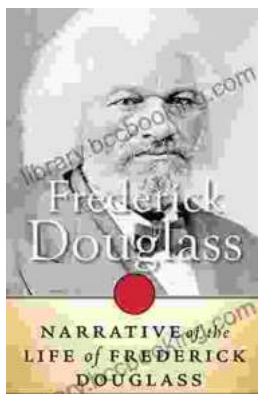
- **Michael Burawoy**, author of *The Politics of Production*



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