



## Material World: A Global Family Portrait

*By Peter Menzel, Charles C. Mann, Paul Kennedy*

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In an unprecedented effort, sixteen of the world's foremost photographers traveled to thirty nations around the globe to live for a week with families that were statistically average for that nation. At the end of each visit, photographer and family collaborated on a remarkable portrait of the family members outside their home, surrounded by all of their possessions—a few jars and jugs for some, an explosion of electronic gadgetry for others. Vividly portraying the look and feel of the human condition everywhere on Earth, this internationally acclaimed bestseller puts a human face on the issues of population, environment, social justice, and consumption as it illuminates the crucial question facing our species today: Can all six billion of us have all the things we want?

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## **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

In honor of the United Nations-sponsored International Year of the Family in 1994, award-winning photojournalist Peter Menzel brought together 16 of the world's leading photographers to create a visual portrait of life in 30 nations. *Material World* tackles its wide subject by zooming in, allowing one household to represent an entire nation. Photographers spent one week living with a "statistically average" family in each country, learning about their work, their attitudes toward their possessions, and their hopes for the future. Then a "big picture" shot of the family was taken outside the dwelling, surrounded by all their (many or few) material goods.

The book provides sidebars offering statistics and a brief history for each country, as well as personal notes from the photographers about their experiences. But it is the "big pictures" that tell most of the story. In one, a British family pauses before a meal of tea and crumpets under a cloudy sky. In another, wary Bosnians sit beside mattresses used as sniper barricades. A Malian family composed of a husband, his two wives, and their children rests before a few cooking and washing implements in golden afternoon light. *Material World* is a lesson in economics and geography, reminding us of the world's inequities, but also of humanity's common threads. An engrossing, enlightening book. --*Maria Dolan*

#### From School Library Journal

YA?A fascinating look at the material possessions of families throughout the world. These people have been determined "average" for their countries and have agreed to have photographers move the contents of their houses outside in order to create visible representations of their relative standards of living. The dirt house and few possessions of Mali residents contrast with the 4 cars, 45-foot long sofa, and 12+ oriental carpets lined up outside the luxury home of a family from Kuwait. Each chapter includes the original spread of possessions, statistics about each family and country, as well as further pictures of daily life and some observations by the photographer. Interspersed among the chapters, which are divided by region, are pictorial representations of such interesting comparisons as televisions, meals, and toilets. Almost all of the pictures are in full color. Menzel hoped this would be "a unique tool for grasping cross-cultural realities." It is that and much more.?Susan H. Woodcock, King's Park Library, Burke, VA  
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#### From Library Journal

Although *Material World* might appear to fall into the genre epitomized by Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* (1955), the book truly defies facile classification; it seems at once art, photojournalism, human geography, and visual anthropology. It is a remarkable and captivating coupling of photographic art with economic and demographic statistics. Very largely the work of 16 photographers, including Menzel, the book is most outstanding in its color photographic portraits of 30 families with their material possessions arrayed nearby. Each family represents one of 30 different countries--some poor, some rich--and each approximates what World Bank and UN statisticians deemed to be "average" for its country. Tables associated with the photographs provide statistical portraits of the families and their nations; photographers' notes on their specific projects enlighten the viewer. Though the format allows superficial browsing, the combination of detailed photographic presentations of material goods with the commentaries and statistics invites careful reading and cross-cultural comparison. Readers should find the comparison worth making. Strongly recommended for all libraries. [A CD-ROM of the same title is available; for more information, see p. 21.-Ed.]-James D. Haug, East Carolina Univ. Lib., Greenville, N.C.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Teddy Hathorn:**

This Material World: A Global Family Portrait is great guide for you because the content and that is full of information for you who have always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This book reveal it data accurately using great arrange word or we can say no rambling sentences inside. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole details in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but hard core information with wonderful delivering sentences. Having Material World: A Global Family Portrait in your hand like getting the world in your arm, info in it is not ridiculous a single. We can say that no reserve that offer you world within ten or fifteen second right but this reserve already do that. So , this is certainly good reading book. Hi Mr. and Mrs. hectic do you still doubt this?

#### **Bruce Bracey:**

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