



Materializing Poverty

How the Poor Transform Their Lives

Erin B. Taylor

Poverty is generally defined as a lack of material resources. However, the relationships that poor people have with their possessions are not just about deprivation. Material things play a positive role in the lives of poor people: they help people to build social relationships, address inequalities, and fulfill emotional needs. In *Materializing Poverty*, anthropologist Erin Taylor explores how residents of a squatter settlement in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, use their material resources creatively to solve everyday problems and, over a few decades, radically transform the community. Their struggles show how these everyday engagements with materiality, rather than more dramatic efforts, generate social change and build futures.

"What is poverty? In answer, we need more than statistics, we need to understand what is experienced as poverty. Through scholarly and incredibly rich ethnography Taylor shows the consequence of appreciating that it is the poor rather than the rich whose experience is dominated by materiality. *Materializing Poverty* is an account that respects both the creativity

and the constraints that may accompany poverty. People from all disciplines would be better educated in this essential issue by reading this empathetic engagement which goes beyond the meaning of poverty to how the poor create meaning." — **Daniel Miller, University College London**

Erin B. Taylor is an Australian anthropologist who received her PhD from The University of Sydney in 2009. She lectured there for three years before taking up a research fellowship at The University of Lisbon. During this time, she helped found the popular anthropology website PopAnth: Hot Buttered Humanity.

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