



Poverty is a Person: Human Agency, Women and Caribbean Households

Theresa Ann Rajack-Talley

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In the Caribbean, poverty is the other side of paradise. Economic hardship and social exclusion coexist with idyllic beaches and picturesque scenes of island life, and poor communities, both rural and urban, with substandard living conditions and a lack of access to basic services, belie the story often sold in tourist brochures. In *Poverty is a Person*, Theresa Ann Rajack-Talley, in a participatory approach to development studies, raises the voices of those usually muted in poverty research. The people-centred approach forces a questioning of statistical data on poverty and how that data is used to craft responses and solutions to meeting the needs of the most marginalized persons in Caribbean societies. The book provides a synopsis of poverty from a "people perspective" and is supported by case studies of households and communities. The lack of humanity in traditional poverty studies is brought to the fore and in particular, the gender dimension of poverty - what it is that women do on a daily basis to survive and provide for their families. Rajack-Talley, in a refreshing take on research and development, highlights how social inclusion can influence positive change and improvement and how the employment of social capital can be harnessed as an important element in poverty reduction. In pulling together an understanding of social exclusion, women's roles in negotiating poverty, and the role of human agency generally, *Poverty is a Person* highlights the need to remove the prohibitive parameters of traditional poverty studies and suggests a paradigm shift in the approach of Caribbean countries to employ a more effective and targeted approach to the multidimensional facets of poverty.

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