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Review of *Controversial Issues in Social Policy*. Howard Jacob Karger, James Midgley, & C Brene Brown (Eds.). Reviewed by Mizanur R. Miah.

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is not sufficient for those needing medications and require the situated/knowledge of the case manager as the key figure in medication monitoring. This, Floersch suggests, compromises some of psychiatry's authority over medical matters. In his concluding chapter, while not asking for the return of the fifty-minute hour, Floersch, seems to call for the return of ego psychology or of "clinical" case management as a means of bringing "a theory of the self back into management work." He does not, however, articulate how a case manager's psychodynamic understanding will translate into well medicated, and well mannered, consumers, who spend their money wisely. His work does collect a formidable amount of actual experiences obtained during the provision of strengths case management services. Funneled through the strainer of the ethnographer, that experience results in a clear, well documented and researched book that adds significantly to our understanding of the daily realities faced by those who provide services to the mentally ill. It raises many points worthy of further inquiry.

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Howard Jacob Karger, James Midgley and C. Brene Brown (Eds.),
Controversial Issues in Social Policy. Boston: Allyn and Bacon,
2003. \$ 24.67 papercover.

Social policy is one of the core areas of social work education. Controversies surrounding social policies come up in classroom discussions, professional meetings, in public discussion, as well as in the media. A critical understanding of these debates should help strengthen the profession as well as should be used as an effective teaching tool. By putting together a selection of 18 debates, argued for and against by reputed scholars in the field, Professors Karger and Midgley, and Ms. Brown have made a valuable contribution to the social work profession.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I includes three debates on general issues in social welfare policy. In debate one, James Midgley and Howard J. Karger address whether the American Welfare state is compatible with the free market economy. While James Midgley believes it is, Karger essentially opposes

the position. In the second debate, Jon Meyer and Stephen Erich argue on the issue: "Should the federal government fund faith-based social service organizations?" Meyer believes it should, while Erich asserts that it should not. In debate 3, David Stoesz argues for the privatization of social services, whereas Ira C. Colby argues persuasively against their privatization.

Part II of the book examines issues of poverty and inequality and contains nine debates. In debate 4, Marion Wagner and Rebecca Van Voorhis argue in favor of the legislation for protecting the rights of gay and lesbians, while John F. Longres finds special legislations to be unnecessary. Debate 5 pertains to whether or not governmental policies are solving the problems of homelessness. Larry W. Kreuger, John Q. Hodges, and Debi L. Word argue that they do, whereas John J. Stretch finds homelessness a prevalent feature in the "midst of plenty" in America. Debate 6 focuses on whether welfare-to-work programs have had any significant effect in reducing poverty. Sandra K. Danziger believes that it does, but Eileen Trzcinski and Deborah Satyanathan doubt that welfare-to-work programs have decreased poverty. Debate 7 addresses the issue of whether an asset-based welfare policy really helps the poor. Michael Sherraden, the originator of the idea of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), argues that the assets have substantial positive effects on the well-being and development of poverty-stricken households. Contrarily, James Midgley argues that IDAs, with all their noted advantages, will not really help the poor. In debate 8, Ann R. Alvarez argues that affirmative action policies have really increased equality in the labor market, but Sally C. Pipes maintains that they do the exact opposite. Debate 9 pertains to the issue of whether privatizing social security is good for women or not. William W. Beach argues that every type of worker and family would benefit if they could place their current Social Security tax dollars in private investment funds. Contrarily, Patricia Ireland argues in favor of the protection of the federal Social Security system for women. Debate 10 addresses whether or not the United States needs a national healthcare policy. Dawn McCarty and J. Rick Altemose offer convincing reasons in favor of it, whereas Robert E. Moffit is concerned that it may curtail freedom of choice for American citizens. Debate 11 revolves around the issue "who really has benefited from the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)" and "whether or not the ADA is working." Howard J. Karger argues that on some levels the ADA is working very well, whereas John C. Bricout doubts its overall efficacy and calls for strengthening the Act's resources and purpose. Debate 12 focuses on the issue: "Has the War on Drugs been Effective?" The Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) maintains that both national and international strategies of the government have effectively lowered the rates of drug use. Susan P. Robbins, however, refutes the position and asks for a rethinking of the national drug policy.

Part III includes four debates on social service policy and its delivery issues. Debate 13 pertains to outpatient mental health commitments for clients. E. Fuller Torrey and Mary Zdanowicz argue for their necessity and benefits, whereas Kia J. Bently and Melissa F. Taylor believe that the existing system is totally inadequate and alternative delivery models should be sought. Debate 14 focuses on managed care. Richard L. Smith and Kristin Steward believe that managed care has essentially benefited consumers by improving the quality of medical care and making it affordable. Contrarily, Heather Kanenburg believes that the current system is quite expensive and fails to offer quality services to all consumers. Debate 15 relates to transracial adoption issues. Elizabeth Bartholet argues convincingly in its favor. She believes that transracial adoption offers a special kind of diversity which should be embraced as well as celebrated. Leslie D. Hollingsworth opposes transracial adoption on the ground that it may separate children from their cultural group and could deprive them of the best assistance and protection. Debate 16 focuses on adoption by gays and lesbians. Stephen Erich argues that gays and lesbians should be accorded the same opportunities for adoption as that of heterosexuals. Howard J. Karger urges caution in pursuing gay and lesbian adoptions because of possible negative impact on children's welfare.

Part IV of the book includes two debates on social work education and professional policy issues. In debate 17, John T. Pardeck and Roland Meinert argue on: Should abortion rights be an accepted social work value? John T. Pardeck argues in favor of it. Roland Meinert maintains that it cannot be accepted as a social work value. The last debate in the book touches on the issue:

whether faith-based social work programs should be required to comply with nondiscrimination standards if they violate the beliefs of those institutions? The debate's context refers to some alleged practices of faith-based schools that may not tolerate gay and lesbian lifestyles. Karen E. Gerdes and Elizabeth A. Segal identify some legal difficulties in imposing any standard regarding sexual orientation but argue that every program should teach and model nondiscrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Lawrence E. Ressler disagrees and maintains that the CSWE standard on nondiscrimination is legally and ethically flawed and should not be applied to all institutions equally.

A valuable feature of this book is the "Editor's Note" at the beginning of each debate, which serves as a thumbnail sketch introducing each selection. *Controversial Issues in Social Policy* will no doubt be very useful as a text in both undergraduate and graduate social work policy classes. While as a collection of contemporary social policy debates it is quite extensive, by no means should the book be treated as exhaustive. Its additional strength lies in its style of presentation. The presentation of topics as controversies, as the authors argue, "is the essence of intellectual discourse" and I believe that we should make the best and most effective use of this critical discourse in our educational process as well as in professional forums.

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Gita Sen, Asha George and Piroska Össtin (Eds.) *Engendering International Health: The Challenge of Equity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002 \$24.95 papercover.

For at least the last twenty years, health theorists have employed social epidemiology to better understand the distribution of health and illness among various populations. Most of the research in this area has concentrated on three main factors, races, sex and income, a set of variables that have sometimes been called the 'Holy Trinity' of social epidemiology. Data about these variables are readily available, and each has been shown to have