

Book Review

Title: *Sexualities: Personal Lives and Social Policy*

Editor: Jean Carabine

Publisher: The Policy Press in association with The Open University, 2004

Paper, ISBN: 1861345186, 176 pp.

Cost: \$29.95 USD

Reviewer: Cassian B.K. Kimhan

This book is the first of a four part series examining the relationship between social policy and personal lives. The theme of this text centers on sexuality. While sexuality is thought by many to be a private affair, Jean Carabine and others reminds us that sexuality is intricately linked with social policies and laws, as well as cultural norms and attitudes. Throughout Carabine's review the reader is encouraged to examine how social policy affects sexuality and vice versa. Most of these discussions take place within the context of the United Kingdom. However, this phenomenon is applicable among many developed nations.

There are discussions on homosexuality, teenage pregnancy, and single parenthood. Possibly the most interesting discussion within this text is Margrit Shildrick's chapter on sexuality among persons with disabilities, a subject which is usually taboo. The author discusses not only the dilemmas persons with disabilities face when wanting to express their sexuality, but also how social policies at present often prevent them from doing so. The personal testimonies and discussions within this chapter are intriguing and offer a rare insight into society's biases against persons with disabilities. It is often forgotten that persons with disabilities have sexual natures too. This chapter is a good reminder of this truth and offers some insight into how society can provide more appropriate care in this domain.

While the text could be dry at times, the readings and directed activities found within would be appropriate within an educational setting focusing on the development or impact of social policies or even in a review of the relationship between sexuality and society.

I would recommend this book as an enlightening review of how social policies influence everyday lives, even in the privacy of one's bedroom.