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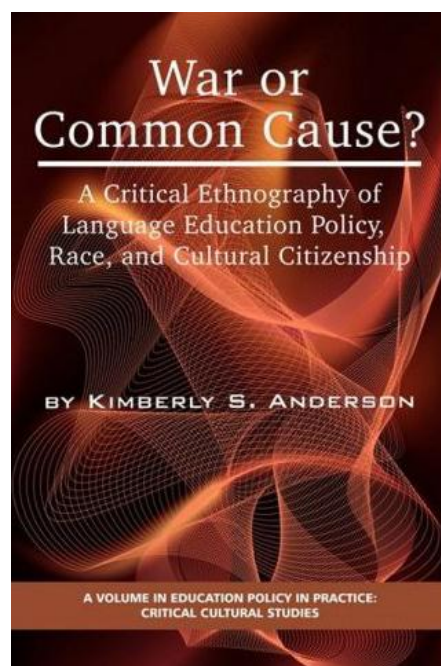
Anderson, Kimberly S. (2009). *War or Common Cause: A Critical Ethnography of Language Education Policy, Race and Cultural Citizenship*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

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Reviewed by Trish Gibson
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Kimberly Anderson's book *War or Common Cause* is an important contribution to a growing body of literature which seeks to move along multiple levels of analysis to understand how policy processes shape, and are shaped by, their socio-cultural context. Anderson, following Levinson and Sutton (2001), is concerned with deconstructing the instrumentalist approach to policy to demonstrate how policy is discursively constructed and "appropriated, created, and contested across diverse social and institutional contexts" (p. 11). The idea is to make explicit the multiple meanings and effects of policy so that policy can be more sensitive to a wide range of views or become democratized.



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Anderson also draws upon critical linguistic anthropology to examine how discourse is used by the school community members to reinforce their own interests in the debate on cultural citizenship. She seeks to contribute to existing literature on race by moving beyond the black/white dichotomy to examine how Latinos, African-Americans, and to some extent, Whites, constructed themselves in policy debates. Anderson chooses to depart from the legal concept of citizenship, and instead draws upon the concept of “cultural citizenship” (Rosaldo 1994), which Anderson defines as “a person or a group having voice, belonging, institutional access, and the power to participate fully in the various facets of community life” (p. 2). In this way, Anderson draws upon a more complete and substantive notion of citizenship, which explicitly is attentive to the way people view their relationship to policy-making.

This study is primarily concerned with how California’s Proposition 227, which mandated English emersion for English Language Learners (ELLs), affected the way community members constructed each other in the particular context of California Elementary, a pseudonym for the school where Anderson herself taught from 1992-1994. In 1996, she returns for summer research and from 1998-2000, Anderson blends the role of teacher (participant) and anthropologist. Anderson is explicit about her own desire to contribute not only to research, but to improve practice as an educator. Anderson is particularly careful in revealing her own positionality and concerns with blending research and participation in this study.

The experience of California Elementary, which went through extensive demographic associated with an influx of immigrants that accelerated dramatically in the 1980s, offers important insights into how discourse and policy interact. Anderson draws upon Bordieu’s (1991) concept of “performative utterances” to demonstrate how community members of California elementary attempt to represent the social world in ways that align with their own interests. Two “sides” of the debate formed around opposition/support of bilingual Spanish-English programs in the school.

According to Anderson, the “African American/English Only (EO)” side of the debate wanted to get rid of bilingual education in the local context, while the “Latino/Bilingual” side wanted to exclude African Americans from bilingual education at the local level. Yet at the national level, both sides promoted bilingual education for all, arguing for their interests in contextually specific, seemingly contradictory ways. Anderson also highlights how many people in the school crossed over or straddled categories, not fitting clearly within either side, such that people positioned themselves differently within the debate at different times. Anderson finds that the same discourses of pro- and anti-bilingualism that portrayed the opposite side of the debate as anti-American or culturally deficient are used even after the passage of Prop 227. Anderson also demonstrates the diversity in implementation of Prop 227, which set no clear guidelines for implementation at the local level.

Anderson points to the fact that both sides of the bilingual education debate in California Elementary voiced concerns that pointed to the fact that the reforms had been forced on them and they felt a lack of cultural citizenship. While all community members saw the value in bilingual education, Anderson views the fact that they did not get to voice their concerns or participate in meaningful debate over Prop 227 as a major cause of their failure to reach common ground.

Anderson goes on to describe how the media in Georgia responded to the new influx of Hispanic immigrants. Anderson argues that we can learn much from comparing Georgia and California, as California has been a national hub of immigrants for some time, but the Southeast has only recently experienced a large influx of immigrants. However, as an employee of a regional education policy center, Anderson’s positionality limits the kind of information to which she could gain access. Thus, the levels of analysis between the two cases are very different. Anderson mainly draws upon examples from national discourse for the case of Georgia, while she is primarily concerned with examining micro-level interactions between school community members in the case of California. Her treatment of Georgia is particularly thin compared to the several chapters on the

case of California. It would have been preferable if Anderson would have steered clear from framing her research as comparative, and instead left this section as more conjectural.

Anderson concludes by arguing that there is a need to move beyond discourses that ignore historical context and common experience, so that teachers could move beyond polarizing discourse to work together toward common goals. A major point of contention for teachers at California Elementary revolves around the fact that certified bilingual teachers continue to receive a hefty stipend, even after Prop 227 passed mandating English immersion for ELLs. While Anderson recognizes that district and state level policy on monetary stipends for bilingual certified teachers constituted a barrier that made it difficult for teachers to cooperate, she suggests that bringing teachers together to share their expertise in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) and language acquisition techniques could have produced more cooperation and collaboration (p. 116).

Yet, Anderson herself experienced disappointment when she attempted to organize a Professional Discussion Group (PDG) in 1998 that would allow this type of collegial environment to deal with building tensions. The group did not experience high rates of participation, and the members that did attend were member of the “Latino/bilingual” side of the debate. While Anderson draws attention to the social construction of polarizing discourses and their destructive elements, at times, Anderson tends to overemphasize the ability of people to cross these socially constructed, yet powerful, boundaries to work toward the common good. Yet, as her study suggests, creating conditions of cooperation could provide a first step toward organizing against and dismantling unfair policies at the state level.

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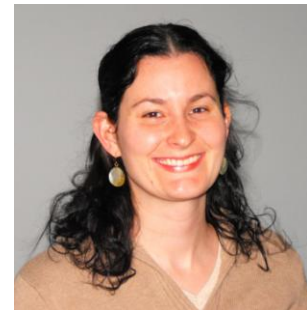
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About the Reviewer

Trish Gibson is a third-year doctoral student in the department of political science at Indiana University. She specializes in the study of comparative politics and public policy. Trish earned an M.A. in Diplomacy and International Commerce with a concentration in International Organizations from the University of Kentucky. She is interested in studying the intersection between bilingual education policy and citizenship. Currently, Trish is working on a comparative study of the design and implementation of bilingual education across four states in Southern Mexico.



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