

CERAPS

SEMINAIRE INTERNATIONAL

Jeudi 7 mars 2019

Salle R.3.48

14h-16h30

LAURA CARTER -- ABSTRACT

**"Experiences of secondary education
in postwar Britain: the view from 1968"**

This paper arises from a collaborative research project, 'Secondary education and social change in the United Kingdom since 1945', which commenced in October 2017, and on which I am a postdoctoral Research Associate. Over the next four years, our project seeks to write a new history of secondary education, encompassing both the independent and state education sectors, and including all four countries within the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland). Our project focuses on the everyday experiences of parents and pupils, rather than on the structures of education imposed upon them by policy changes 'from above.' In emphasizing subjective experience, we seek to challenge sociologically constructed categories that stress the inevitability of Bourdieusian social reproduction, which have hitherto dominated studies of British education, social class, and social mobility.

In this paper, I use empirical, longitudinal data from the 1946 British Birth Cohort Study to examine the popular attitudes of young British adults towards education, from the vantage point of 1968. I consider how their experiences of education throughout the 1950s and 1960s shaped and reflected their aspirations, expectations, and sense of self, across their lives from youth to employment to parenthood. The paper concludes by arguing that understanding how 'ordinary' people in '68 thought about education as a core element within Britain's postwar social democracy reveals the everyday political reverberations of the radical events and ideas of that iconic year, at the very moment when these structures were being called into question across Europe.