METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS STREAM PLENARY

WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL 2021, 09:30 - 10:30

APPLYING SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS OF WORKING LIVES

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For this keynote in the *Innovative Methods* stream, I was tasked with considering how sociology applies social research method(s) to social problems. The broad area of the keynote's focus concerns inequalities in working lives, and the social research method that it considers is the long-established tradition in which social scientists analyse data that already exists.

The talk will reflect on the benefits for analysing contemporary worlds of work of this well-known research method, and consider the limitations. It focuses specifically on doing secondary analysis of data on work when work is viewed in a more holistic sense than as waged employment only. Case studies examined include unpaid domestic work, work-life balance including in the current COVID-19 pandemic-hit context. Official data sources on many key areas of our working lives are limited, a result of a heavy emphasis in data collection on work performed by powerful groups in society. The keynote aims to stimulate a discussion about the most innovative social research methods with which sociologists can recognise all forms of work and better research inequalities in working lives, including in the current challenging times.

Tracey is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Nottingham, UK. Her broad research interests lie in work, employment and social inequalities. She has published on work time, job quality, unpaid domestic work, work-life balance, and financial hardship, among other topics.
Tracey is currently working on three projects: two on COVID-19, gender, class and inequalities in working lives and a third interrogating and evaluating what 'work-life balance' means as a concept via gaining insights from Denmark. They are funded by: the Economic and Social Research Council (as part of UK Research and Innovation's rapid response to COVID-19); Health Data Research UK; and the British Academy/Leverhulme Trust (supported by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy).