



TASA The Australian
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TITLE: Not Happy: How emotions can help re-theorise inequalities

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The task of this work in progress presentation is to consider the potential for the sociology of emotion to support an expanded understanding of inequalities. In particular, an analysis of happiness and the good life in modernity will be adopted in order to capture specific aspects of inequality in social and emotional experience. While there is growing evidence that individualised pursuits of happiness are increasingly common (Oishi 2013), much of the empirical social research in this field could be seen as encouraging rather than challenging this trend (Davies 2015). Yet self reported happiness scores are typically higher in nations with greater equality (such as Sweden and Denmark), and nations with high levels of inequality (such as the United States) rank poorly despite having high levels of total wealth. In order to frame this analysis, we will draw from the recognition or redistribution debates between Honneth and Fraser in order to assess the role of respect and equality in the making of the good life.

In addition, Burkitt's notion of the ongoing relationality of emotion in interaction will allow for a theoretical approach that recognises the complex emotional experiences of inequality.