

Family Homelessness and Citizenship

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Citizenship Theorists

- Formal rights & obligations (T. H. Marshall, 1950)
- Gender, place, culture (R. Lister, 2007; Williams 1996; Young)
- Relationships between citizens (N. Kabeer, 2005)
- Citizenship as practice (L. Desforges, R. Jones, M. Woods, 2005)



Family Homelessness and Citizenship

- Study Aim:
 - Explore the day-to-day lived experiences of citizenship from the perspective of women, with children, who are homeless

‘Poverty generally is experienced as a lack of voice, disrespect, humiliation and an assault on dignity and self-esteem, and a denial of human rights and diminished citizenship’ (R. Lister 2006)



Citizenship as practice

- Sense of identity & self-worth
- Sense of belonging
- Economic & social participation
- Obligations & responsibilities
- Personal agency & decision-making



Policy Context

- State level – Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Sector level – Victorian Office of Housing's Consumer Charter for Homelessness (2006)
- Hanover – Reframing homelessness
- National level – White Paper on Homelessness, Social Inclusion Agenda



Findings

- Uncertainty & unpredictability
- Limited access to housing
- Domination of institutions in people's lives
- Participants not passive recipients
- Right to dignity and respect
- Rights only make sense in terms of how they impact day-to-day life

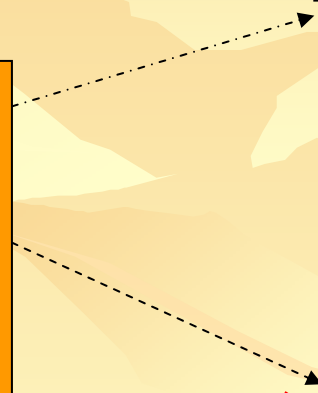


Homelessness support sector

Crisis
Accommodation
(several wks)



Transitional
Accommodation
(several mths)



Public Housing

~~Private Rental~~



Implications

- Reframing homelessness – human rights & citizenship language to think & talk about homelessness
- Gain a better understanding of the gendered experience of women & their children
- Service delivery – respect ‘active citizen’
- Advocacy – challenge punitive obligations



Further information

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