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)
- 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

Crisis Accommodation (several wks) is linked to Transitional Accommodation (several mths) and both are part of the Homelessness support sector. Private Rental is not connected.
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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