

The moral and emotional politics of food banking in (post)pandemic London



This presentation asks the question of how among food bank volunteers and employees a deep ethic of care towards food bank guests can co-exist alongside pervasive judgement regarding their neediness and expectations? Using 6 months of ethnographic fieldwork at an independent food bank in north London during the pandemic, I argue that volunteers and employees are constantly caught between an emotional compulsion to satisfy guest needs, the scarce and uneven availability of resources, and a set of rules designed by management to delimit food bank use. This produces an incessantly messy guest relationship, within which judgement towards their behaviour becomes one predominant way of squaring the moral and emotional dilemma of being unable to meet their needs. I want to suggest that this messy moral and emotional politics has broad consequences for the imaginaries of welfare.

Presentation followed by
commentary, Q&A.

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**Dr. Harry Pettit, David Robins Research Fellow
in Urban Geography, University of Reading**

Thursday November 25th

1-2 pm MS Teams

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