

**New Practices of Giving:  
Ethics, Governmentality, and the Development of Consumer-  
Oriented Charity Fundraising**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis emerges in the context of recent developments in the field of charity fundraising. In particular, in order to increase, or simply maintain, fundraising levels charities have had to develop innovative devices which both take charity giving into the spaces in which individuals carry out their daily activities, and provide mechanisms through which they are able to give to charity in their daily lives. This thesis focuses on one such attempt. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate both the practices of constructing alternative giving and the materials which result from this, and the practices of giving and receiving an alternative gift. Alternative giving refers to a fundraising device which is built around a range of gift cards or certificates produced by the charity, each of which represent one particular item or service provided by the charity to its beneficiaries. The cards or certificates are then sold at a price which is designed to mirror the actual cost of providing the item or service represented and are intended to be used by the purchaser as a gift for a friend or relative. As such, alternative giving, as a form of fundraising used by international development charities, raises a number of questions, particularly in terms of how it affects the relationships between individuals and charities, and individuals and the specific beneficiary. Therefore, this thesis draws on literatures around ethics, governmentality, consumption and gift theory to examine the implications of alternative giving for these relationships. Having drawn these literatures into conversations with empirical research based around interviews with charities and those engaging in alternative giving, and a range of textual materials surrounding this, the thesis argues that practices of alternative giving are carried out by ethical subjects who are situated within broad sets of social relations, and which matter to how connections in the charitable act are manifest.

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