

Uncharitable (Civil Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives)

Dan Pallotta

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This is an unabashed call to free charity from its ideological and economic constraints. Uncharitable is an unorthodox call to arms, inviting us to think beyond nonprofit ideology and bring economic freedom to the causes we love. Author Dan Pallotta argues that nonprofit ideology is a religious edifice that acts as a strict regulatory mechanism on natural economic law, thereby putting the nonprofit sector at an extreme disadvantage vis-a-vis the for-profit sector. In other words, the very system long cherished as the hallmark of American compassion undermines itself. This irrational system, Pallotta explains, has its roots in 400-year-old Puritan ethics that banished self-interest from the realm of charity. Today, nonprofit ideology creates an economic apartheid that acts against charity's self-interest. While the for-profit sector is permitted to use all the tools of capitalism to advance the sale of consumer goods, the nonprofit sector is prohibited from using any of them to fight hunger or disease. Capitalism is blamed for creating the inequities in our society, but charity, by its own ideology, is prohibited from using capitalism's tools to rectify them, creating the most extreme injustice. By ridding ourselves of these obsolete ideas, Pallotta theorizes, we can dramatically accelerate progress on the most urgent social issues of our time. Pallotta has written an important, provocative, timely, and accessible book that seeks to remedy this wrong and that will forever change the way you think about "charity."

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