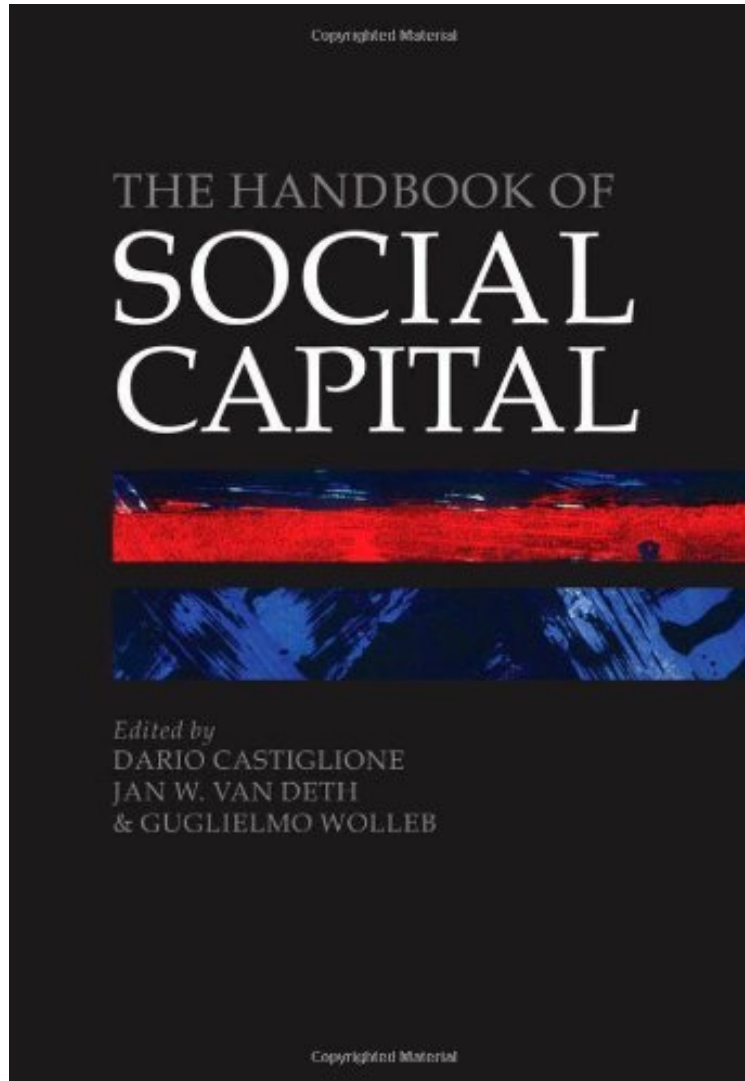


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The Handbook of Social Capital

Dario Castiglione, Jan W. van Deth, Guglielmo Wolleb

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Dario Castiglione, Jan W. van Deth, Guglielmo Wolleb : The Handbook of Social Capital before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Handbook of Social Capital:

Social capital is a relatively new concept in the social sciences. In the last twenty or so years it has come to indicate that networks of social relationships represent a 'resource' for both the individual and society, since they provide support for the individual and facilitate collective action. Although this is not an entirely new idea, the more systematic way in which social capital captures such an intuition has created a new theoretical paradigm and helped to develop a series of innovative research programs in politics, economics, and the study of human well-being. The

concept has gained currency beyond academia, extending its influence to political and policy-making circles at local, national, and international levels. It has also affected the way in which social surveys are conceived and public policies assessed. As the idea of social capital has spread, the literature about it has increased exponentially. After twenty years of rapid expansion it is time for a more considered and critical assessment of how the original concept has been adapted and refined, and how successful its application has been. The Handbook of Social Capital intends to do precisely that. It offers a state-of-the-art view of discussions about the concept of social capital and the way in which it has been applied in empirical research. The organization of the Handbook reflects this intention by focusing on conceptual development and analysis in the first part; by identifying two main areas of research in which social capital has favored the development of new and influential research programs--political participation in democratic societies, and economic development; and by exploring the more normative and policy oriented consequences of social capital. All chapters comprising the volume were specifically written for the Handbook by some of the main experts in the fields. The book provides an authoritative and innovative introduction to the study of social capital.

About the Author Dario Castiglione is Reader in Political Theory at the University of Exeter. His main research interests are in the history of political thought, theories of democracy and civil society, and European constitutionalism. Jan W. van Deth is Professor of Political Science and International Comparative Social Research at the University of Mannheim (Germany). He was Director of the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) and is a Corresponding Member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was convenor of the international network Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy (CID) of the European Science Foundation and is national coordinator of the German team for the European Social Survey. Guglielmo Wolleb is Professor of Economics at the University of Parma (Italy). He teaches Microeconomics and European Regional Policies, and is Director of the Master in 'Manager of development and cohesion policies,' and President of the Post- Graduate Course 'Local development and international cooperation'. His current research focuses on local development policies in Italy and Europe.