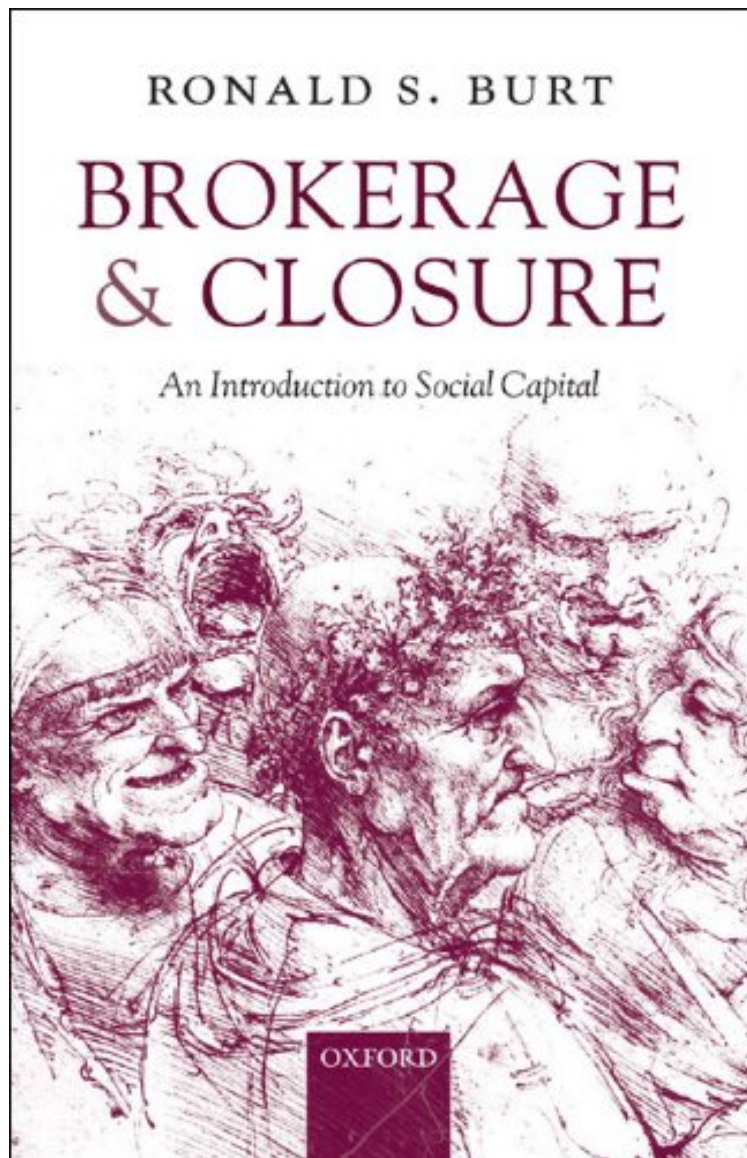


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## Brokerage and Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital (Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies)

*Ronald S. Burt*

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**Ronald S. Burt : Brokerage and Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital (Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Brokerage and Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital (Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies):

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Tertius Gaudens or Tertius Iungens StrategiesBy Dr Graham A

Durant-Law CSCIt's no secret that I am a fan of Professor Ronald Burt's work. His book "Structural Holes: the Social Structure of Competition", is a seminal publication. Unfortunately I cannot say the same for "Brokerage and Closure", although I would still give it four stars. Read in sequence and in conjunction with each other they offer the knowledge management practitioner and network analyst some useful insights. Once again Burt's writing style is academic in flavour, with many examples. At times it is heavy going, but I still think well worth the effort. Burt remains interested in the structure of networks and particularly the links, or relationships, rather than node attributes. I think the focus on links rather than nodes is important. I just wish the software tools were better at showing link attributes, although I note NetMiner 3 is becoming more powerful in this area. One of the taken for granted but important assertions Burt makes is relationships amplify diversity and individual power, however in turn many diverse links enhance the power of relationships. The central theme of this book is still around brokerage between structural holes, but this time he introduces the idea of closure. For Burt closure is about reputation building. Unlike brokerage closure is typically not the direct result of efforts by an individual. Instead closure emerges from dense linkages in a network where one individual is 'favoured' over others for some reason. Typically this arises because this individual employs a Tertius Iungens strategy rather than a Tertius Gaudens strategy, although Burt does not make such a clear-cut distinction. One of the paradoxes Burt highlights is the tension between brokerage and closure. Closure results in trust and a dense or tightly knitted network, but it can also result in group-think and conformity, a problem I see in some public list-serves at the moment. On the other hand brokerage opens the network to new opportunities, but ultimately is reliant on trust networks. From this I deduce that Tertius Gaudens strategies slowly evolve into Tertius Iungens networks, but here I could be wrong. It also seems to me that most organisations are optimised for closure. All in all this book was an excellent read, although I do believe "Structural Holes: the Social Structure of Competition" should be read first. I would recommend this book to any serious knowledge practitioner or network analyst. I remain convinced that understanding structural holes matter. I am also convinced understanding who is employing a Tertius Gaudens or Tertius Iungens strategy matters! Regards, Graham

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a good solid book on the subject of professional networks By mark marlin Very thorough and well written. Very data intensive. Of course, the downside to being so thorough and data intensive is that it's rather dry. Overall, a good solid book on the subject of professional networks. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Social Capital By Lynn Ronald Burt is a leading author in the field of social capital. This paper edition of the earlier book covers most of what you will need to know to get up to speed on the literature. It is worth the new book price for anyone seeking to expand his/her knowledge in the field. A good companion book is Castigline, Deth, and Wolleb (2008) The Handbook of Social Capital. Oxford

Social Capital, the advantage created by location in social structure, is a critical element in business strategy. Who has it, how it works, and how to develop it have become key questions as markets, organizations, and careers become more and more dependent on informal, discretionary relationships. The formal organization deals with accountability; Everything else flows through the informal: advice, coordination, cooperation friendship, gossip, knowledge, trust. Informal relations have always been with us, they have always mattered. What is new is the range of activities in which they now matter, and the emerging clarity we have about how they create advantage for certain people at the expense of others. This is done by brokerage and closure. Ronald S. Burt builds upon his celebrated work in this area to explore the nature of brokerage and closure. Brokerage is the activity of people who live at the intersection of social worlds, who have a vision advantage of seeing and developing good ideas, an advantage which can be seen in their compensation, recognition, and the responsibility they're entrusted with in comparison to their peers. Closure is the tightening of coordination in a closed network of people, and people who do this do well as a complement to brokers because of the trust and alignment they create. Brokerage and Closure explores how these elements work together to define social capital, showing how in the business world reputation has come to replace authority, pursued opportunity assignment, and reward has come to be associated with achieving competitive advantage in a social order of continuous disequilibrium.

Burt is among the best social network writers in articulating ideas from a research tradition that is notoriously difficult to put into words. Brokerage and Closure is the next step in research on social capital. \* AMR, Management \* About the Author Ronald S. Burt is Hobart W. Williams Professor of Sociology and Strategy at the Graduate School of Business, University of Chicago.