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# Connecting, Mediating, or Dividing?

## How Brokers Navigate Networks

How is collaboration achieved in projects and networks? Under what circumstances is it essential to join forces? And when is it imperative to de-couple third parties? This talk deals with these questions by attending to the particular role of the broker. The idea of the broker – an individual that stands between two other parties – is central to the idea of coordination in general and especially to the increase in networking and collaboration we currently see globally. While brokerage has always been a central idea in social network theory, brokerage traditionally has been viewed as a particular structural pattern in which two otherwise disconnected people are connected through a third party. This talk argues for a broadened approach to brokerage by attending to the actual social behavior of third parties, and applies this process-based view to a wide range of social phenomena.

David Obstfeld is Associate Professor of Management at California State University, Fullerton. His award-winning research examines how the knowledge-intensive, network-based social processes that result in organizational change and innovation unfold at the local and firm levels. Currently, Professor Obstfeld is working on a book on these issues for Stanford University Press.

[http://business.fullerton.edu/Management/Professor\\_Pages/bio/obstdavi/](http://business.fullerton.edu/Management/Professor_Pages/bio/obstdavi/)

Public  
Lecture

Oct 23, 2013  
18:00

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