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The Diffusion of Maoism in Global Communist Networks, 1964-1972

What is Global Maoism, Why Study it, and What puzzles?

“Maoism doesn’t exist. It never has done. That, without doubt, explains its success.”

This remark by Christophe Bourseiller, a prominent French writer on the radical left, encapsulates the paradox at the heart of Maoism’s global appeal. It also illustrates the intrinsic difficulty of defining Maoism, particularly for systematic scholarly analysis. In this project, Maoism is conceptualized as a heterodox variant of Marxism, with its scope confined to formal Communist movements. The term "heterodox" is inherently relational—it depends on the orthodoxy it challenges (Hsiao and Pfaff 2022). Maoism is heterodox because it diverges from core tenets of Marxism-Leninism, and this divergence produced concrete consequences: a schism within the Communist world akin to a Catholic-Protestant divide. As noted by historians in this field (for example, Dirlik 2014; Lovell 2019; Meisner 1982, 1999), Maoism departs from mainstream Marxism-Leninism in several fundamental ways. First, it advocates for a revolution led by a popular-based united front—much broader than the French *Front Populaire*—instead of a professional vanguard party. Second, it contends that socialist revolution is viable in colonized and underdeveloped countries, emphasizing the revolutionary potential of the peasantry rather than dismissing them as reactionary forces. Third, it prioritizes subjective factors, especially revolutionary will, over the "objective conditions" emphasized in classical Marxism, rejecting its

“scientific” determinism and accommodation with the status quo. Fourth, Maoism is a Third World-oriented ideology that envisions a global reordering led by the periphery.

This paper does not aim to provide a comprehensive intellectual history of Maoism. Rather, it focuses on the social consequences of Maoism: how did Maoism travel across the globe? The term *Global Maoism* refers to the international diffusion of Maoist ideology following the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s. Paradoxically, Mao's global influence peaked only after his excommunication from the Soviet-led world communist movement. From that moment onward, Maoism gained traction among radical actors worldwide.

During the Cold War, Maoism shaped global politics and catalyzed a new generation of radical movements. At the height of the 1960s, Mao Zedong's *Little Red Book* became required reading for radical students from Berkeley and for Black Marxists in Zambia. Maoist ideas diffused rapidly and left enduring impacts on discourses around radical thought, decolonization, racial justice, and global political realignment. The Three Worlds Theory and the notion of peasant nationalism challenged prevailing development paradigms in the Global South and posits the question of alternative modernity (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 2009). Before Maoism, revolutionary leaders in the Third World either adopted poorly adapted Soviet-style systems or remained subordinated within the global capitalist hierarchy. Maoism also offered an early critique of racial capitalism, extending class analysis to the global system (Gao 2013; Kelley and Esch 1999). For colonized peoples, Maoist theory promised that China's revolutionary experience could be replicated globally, with the “countryside” of the Global South one day encircling and overcoming the “cities” of the West (Cook 2014). Furthermore, Maoism articulated a third ideological position in the bipolar Cold War, envisioning an alternative to both U.S. and Soviet hegemonies (Plys 2024). Maoism's influence extended beyond political

movements. It reverberated across the intellectual field, shaping discourses on both the left and the right. While theorists of the New Left, such as Alain Badiou, drew upon Maoist principles, even some strands of the far right—such as *nazi-maoismo*—appropriated Maoist strategies for their own purposes (Boncardi and Cooke 2017; Cook 2014; Robcis 2012).

The global spread of Maoism is surprising in several respects. As Julia Lovell notes, the period of Maoism's international diffusion arguably marked the peak of China's soft power, even as its material capacities were at their weakest. Even more remarkable was the ideological breadth of Maoism's appeal: it reached nearly every corner of the world and attracted disparate constituencies, including radical students in the West, anti-colonial and nationalist leaders in Africa, Marxist revolutionaries in South and Southeast Asia, and dissident intellectuals in Eastern Europe (Alexander 1999). In some countries, Maoism sparked large-scale social movements and insurrections; in others, it inspired only sporadic gatherings and left little trace. This variation raises critical puzzles about the mechanisms and conditions underlying the diffusion of Global Maoism.

Early scholarship—particularly in historical studies—has offered several explanations for the global spread of Maoism. A common interpretation emphasizes Maoism's versatility: its fluid and often contradictory ideological claims made it appealing to a wide range of actors (Bourseiller 1996). In other words, Maoism's ambiguity conferred a high degree of adaptability. Another strand of research invokes the idea of "Third World Internationalism," suggesting that Maoism resonated as an expression of anti-colonial autonomy, thereby attracting a broad and diverse following from black nationalists in Africa and America to radical leftist thinkers in Europe (Dirlik 2004). A third explanation centers on geopolitics—especially the ideological

contestation between China and the Soviet Union—and highlights the Chinese Communist Party’s active promotion of Maoist ideas during the 1960s.

While each of these accounts provides valuable insights, they remain insufficient in explaining the full extent and variation of Maoism’s global resonance. The claim about Maoism’s polysemous nature is descriptively accurate, but analytically limited: it does not explain why such ambiguity translated into mass appeal. As McDonnell (McDonnell, Bail, and Tavory 2017) has observed in the context of resonance theory, the widespread appeal of an idea cannot be fully explained by its elusiveness—doing so risks tautology, where Maoism is said to resonate because it is vague, and its vagueness is confirmed by its wide resonance.

The “Third World internationalism” explanation also has notable limitations. Most critically, it cannot account for the appeal of Maoism in advanced industrial societies, particularly in Europe. The geopolitical account—focused on China’s ideological competition with the Soviet Union—offers a more empirically grounded explanation. However, the actual scope and effectiveness of these efforts remain open to question. As Lovell (2019) notes, the global diffusion of Maoism occurred during a period when China’s political and economic power was at its nadir. Internationally marginalized and diplomatically isolated from both the capitalist West and the Soviet-led Eastern bloc, China maintained limited official and unofficial ties with most countries. Although the PRC hosted numerous foreign rebels and intellectuals—training some as guerrilla leaders or ideological sympathizers—the content of these trainings, based on declassified records, was primarily technical rather than ideological. Moreover, China’s support for foreign Maoist movements was often subordinated to its own national interests. In several Third World countries such as the Philippines and Zaire, the Chinese government supported regimes it ideologically opposed, labeling them “reactionary” while maintaining diplomatic

relations. The most symbolic instance of this realpolitik was Mao's historic rapprochement with Richard Nixon, which shocked many within the global Maoist left. In short, the rise of Maoism as a transnational movement often diverged from—and at times directly contradicted—China's foreign policy priorities.

The Theoretical Promises of Global Maoism

How do we understand the rapid spread of Maoism across the world since the 60s in a sociological way? The existing accounts, though from other disciplines, embodies some popular explanations on ideational diffusion and its lack thereof. For example, the Third World Internationalism argument represents a world-system tendency. My focus on the global Communist movement also has its theoretical promise, that is, to empirically test a new framework on cultural diffusion at the macro-level.

World polity theory dominates the explanations of global cultural diffusion. Founded by neo-institutionalist John Meyer, world polity theory regards the world system as a global cultural framework which homogenizes local culture by agentic actors, which coincides with the core mechanism in neo-institutionalism — isomorphism (Meyer 2010; Meyer et al. 1997). Access to the world polity templates and levels of structural embeddedness – for example, numbers of international NGOs (INGO), determines whether they are sharing the global culture. World polity does not always work because of “decoupling” between declared values and *de facto* values, for example, unachieved gender equality. However, the program suffers from several problems. The most criticized point is world polity theory assumes only one world cultural pattern because emulation of global culture provides *universal* legitimacy. The disparity between world polity and local culture in this paradigm is the recognition of world polity as a sign of

decoupling rather than counterhegemonic resistance. In other words, world polity theory leaves little room to those marginalized, heterodox, and radical ideas because they are excluded by world polity. It could also be the case that the world society network delivers two opposite cultures simultaneously, for example, the global network of INGOs provides infrastructure for both LGBTQ and anti-LGBTQ movements.

Moreover, it is often unclear how a novel culture diffuses in world polity. The agents of cultural diffusion are often without specification, like “international trade” or “international organization.” The problem is from another problematic assumption on the singularity of world polity, or use Andreas Wimmer’s term, “multiple domains in world polity.” Wimmer defines a domain as “segment of the global social space that emerges when boundaries interrupt theoretically possible connections between actors.” (Wimmer 2021:1399) In that sense, world polity is not a homogenous but polycentric field comprising multiple overlapping domains differ in their basic characteristics. This move diversifies the subject matters of world polity theory beyond normative values and dominant practices in a Western-centric way (Wimmer, Lee, and LaViolette 2024). Also, local conditions have autonomous effects on cultural diffusion. The difference between local culture and world polity is not decoupling but incorporation between local configuration of power, cultural compatibility, and global domains (Wimmer 2018; Wimmer and Feinstein 2010; Wimmer et al. 2024). Another point of multiple domain theory is different power configurations determine mechanisms of diffusion (Wimmer 2021). Yet, how do we empirically test those theories? Moreover, how does multiple domain theory speak to other theories beyond cultural diffusion and world polity? In this report, I try to connect those extensions of world polity theory to empirical use by a set of a priori inquiries on two networks of global Communist movements. I first come up with some hypotheses based on claims from

world polity theory and its extension, theories from social network analysis, and other relevant theories from political sociology and explain how to operationalize them. Next, I conduct analyses on those measures with minimum historical knowledge and pre-existing theories. After briefly reviewing the results, I conclude with future development of this study.

Hypotheses and Preview of Analysis

How do we translate the theories above into operationalizable hypotheses in the case of global Maoism? I propose several hypotheses with both empirical (historical) or/and non-network theoretical considerations as well as network-centered considerations. I will present my hypotheses and reasonings with elaborations on how it addresses both key network assumptions and related theories like world polity or multiple domains. I will also provide how to operationalize them. The hypotheses, their theoretical bases, and the operationalization, are summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Hypothesis in Wimmer 2021	Theory from Existing Non-network Account	Theory from Network Account	Measure
H1: Countries more deeply embedded or being in the core position in official Communist network will be more likely to adopt Maoism.	(NA; covered in traitional world polity theory)	Threshold-Collective alignment theory; Existing ties on collective action; Multiplex Diffusion	Structure hole and innovation; robust action; roles	Centrality measures; constrains

H2: Countries less deeply embedded or in the periphery position in official Communist network will be more likely to adopt Maoism.		Decoupling from world polity; world system theory; postcolonial assumption (Third World Internationalism)	in network	
H3a: Countries with a closer tie to the Soviet Union and its allies may be less likely to adopt Maoism.	Hierarchical and monocentric domains	Sino-Soviet competition thesis; social influence; international pressure	Social contagion vs. structural equivalence	Distance; community detection; equivalence
H3b: Countries with a closer tie to China or other countries with Maoist movements may be less likely to adopt Maoism.	slows risker innovations diffuse (H9, H16)			
H4: Countries with Maoist organizations are more likely to cluster with other Maoist-infected countries.	Local configurations of power (A3); Domain overlap boosts diffusion (H11); density of ties on diffusion (H13)	Micro-level diffusion process?	Homophily; Local network closure	Community detection; homophily; distance

H1: Countries more deeply embedded or being in the core position in official Communist network will be more likely to adopt Maoism.

H2: Countries less deeply embedded or in the periphery position in official Communist network will be more likely to adopt Maoism.

The first and second hypothesis are in opposite pairs. The original version of world polity theory suggests that the degree of embeddedness within a certain network may facilitate the diffusion and acceptance of certain ideas. There is little doubt that for “traditional” world polity theory, some measures like degree centrality and/or eigenvector centrality predicts acceptance of cosmopolitan ideas (Meyer 2010; Meyer et al. 1997). However, for radical and heterodox ideas, it may be a little more complex. Radical ideas are radical because they are not accepted by existing cultural frames and ideological systems, and resistance is to be expected (Doten-Snitker, Pfaff, and Hsiao 2024; Hsiao and Pfaff 2022; Wang and Soule 2012). A more embedded position may be less likely to adopt radical ideas because a high degree of centrality means more constraints to overturn the status quo. In the language of world polity theory, a detachment to world polity may lead to the “decoupling” – a concept somewhat close to “radical” in the sense of unorthodoxy. Multiple domain theory also implies a similar conclusion: in a less hierarchical and institutional domains, competition rather than coercion or isomorphism dominates the mechanism of diffusion.

However, existing theories also suggest an opposite direction for us. From the wisdom of network theory, a more well-connected position enjoys exposures to different ideas and more fluid position to get rid of constraints for its multifaced roles—or robust actions (Burt 2004; Padgett and Ansell 1993). Also, existing social connections could serve as the channels to spread radical ideas, especially the heterodox one with some risks (Gould 1995; Loveman 1998). A posterior look on the success of Maoism may also imply the involvement of well-connected

members, as threshold theory and collective alignment process suggests the influence of powerful actors on ego's behavior change (Ermakoff 2008; Granovetter 1978). Becker et al. (2020) discusses how Luther as a resourceful, respected, and informed actors increased the odds of acceptance of Reformism in other cities. In that sense, we may also suggest that radical ideas like Maoism may be more likely to take roots in a well-connected country.

To operationalize embeddedness in global Communist networks, I employ two analytic strategies from social network analysis. First, I draw on three standard measures of network centrality—degree, eigenvector, and betweenness—to capture different dimensions of positional embeddedness. Degree centrality reflects the sheer number of direct connections a country maintains, indicating its level of activity or exposure. Eigenvector centrality emphasizes ties to other well-connected actors, capturing influence through indirect prestige. This is especially appropriate for calculating centrality of two-mode projected network from mere count of ties to shared memberships with more valuable nodes with successful application in some indexes like INGO Network Country Score (Hughes et al. 2009). Betweenness centrality captures the extent to which a country serves as a bridge or broker between otherwise disconnected parts of the network, suggesting the power of weak ties and possibly less constraints (Granovetter 1973). I also include a measure on network constraint to measure brokerage (Burt 2004, 2009). This measure provides a slightly different meaning from betweenness centrality. Taken together, these metrics offer a multidimensional picture of how centrally located—and thus embedded—each country is in the global Communist network with different theoretical assumptions.

Second, I use regular equivalence to identify countries that play structurally similar roles within the network, regardless of their specific connections. Unlike centrality, which focuses on position, regular equivalence highlights role similarity—for instance, countries that serve as

peripheral followers, regional intermediaries, or ideological centers. By combining centrality and equivalence-based approaches, I aim to uncover both positional and relational forms of embeddedness in the global diffusion of Maoist movements.

H3a: Countries with a closer tie to the Soviet Union and its allies may be less likely to adopt Maoism.

H3b: Countries with a closer tie to China or other countries with Maoist movements may be more likely to adopt Maoism.

These hypotheses do not express opposing dynamics but rather reflect two facets of the same underlying mechanism: the influence of powerful alters. While rooted in specific Cold War histories, the logic remains consistent with general network theory. During the Maoist moment, China represented the heterodox challenger, while the Soviet Union embodied the orthodox center of Communist legitimacy (Dirlik 2014). A country's proximity to either hegemonic bloc—measured through direct or indirect ties—may have constrained its ideological autonomy and discouraged the emergence of rival interpretations like Maoism. It again invokes the influence of powerful alters, yet this time we are shifting the interest from posterior analysis to a theoretical debate on the origin of ideational diffusion: structural equivalence or contagion? In other words, does ideational diffusion happen through direct exposure or equal structural positions and/or role similarity (Burt 1987; Galaskiewicz and Burt 1991; Leenders 2002)? There are many different framings of this question, but they all distinguish two mechanisms: first, diffusions happen through immediate connections and communication process; second, structural constraints, i.e., occupying the similar positions in the global network or share the same configuration of connections with other nodes, is the reason why they converge toward similar ideas due to parallel constraints and incentives.

World polity theory may dismiss the role of power players as they usually envision the world society as stateless (Meyer 2010). Multiple domain theory makes the remedy by taking both global/local power configurations and the way actors contact back. Wimmer proposes that the density of ties within a domain and the scope of diffusions are positively related, and overlapping of domains will boost the diffusion. Although they are just some proposals rather than empirically validated theories, they are still helpful for hypothesis-building.

I adopt three strategies to test these hypotheses: geodesic distance, structural equivalence, and community detection. The first strategy is to calculate each country's shortest path length to both China and the Soviet Union, reasoning that ideological influence—under the contagion model—diminishes with relational distance. This metric captures how proximally embedded a country is within each hegemonic bloc and tests whether ideological transmission follows paths of direct or near-direct exposure. The second strategy assesses the structural equivalence argument in ideational diffusion process. It identifies the role similarity rather than contact with specific nodes. Finally, a community-detection process tests the two theories on diffusion as well as multiple domains together. I identify cliques and cohesive clusters of countries using modularity-based community detection algorithms to see (1) does Maoism diffuse only in specific communities; (2) do countries in the same communities and cliques with China and Soviet Union have a higher or lower likelihood to adopt Maoism; (3) are countries in multiple communities more likely to adopt Maoism.

H4: Countries with Maoist organizations are more likely to cluster with other Maoist-infected countries.

The theoretical resources are mostly exhausted when we arrive here. Yet the question proposed here is no less important than previous ones: How do we operationalize “domains?” Measures on similarities like homophily are predicting whether edges exist rather than the behavioral outcome of egos. Common community detection techniques contradict with the concept of “multiplexity” – as they usually detect exclusive community membership. I propose that a k-clique measure may be helpful because it allows overlap among clusters.

Data

For this paper, I construct two networks from *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs* (YICA) from 1964 to 1972. YICA was a series of yearbooks of the activities of communist parties throughout the world published from 1966 to 1991 by Hoover Institution. YICA is one of the most authoritative sources on global Communist movements in English. The first part of the book provides overviews of Communism in each country. It usually starts from the biggest Communist party in a country and may include other smaller groups. I code two matters from the overviews: first, the international connections of major Communist parties. By “major” I referred to the biggest Communist party with most members and recognitions from other parties as the representative of their home country in the global Communist network. For example, in France there are multiple “Communist” parties and groups, yet I only code the global interparty relations of the French Communist Party (PCF) because they are the main force of Communists in France and widely regarded so by all other parties, even rivals. In other world, they are in the domain of official Communists. Second, whether Maoists established a formal group. They may take over the main party or establish a new group.

Another part of YICA is overviews of Soviet-controlled international organizations. Those organizations served as the popular branches of the Soviet Union to develop its influence in different fields. For example, World Federation of Scientific Workers was an association for scientists with a goal of “to be involved internationally in all aspects of the role of science, the rights and duties of scientists and their social responsibility.” The Soviet Union successfully mobilized protests against nuclear testings in other countries (i.e. without the Soviet Union) from the scientific field. I keep the information of memberships on the country level. The real numbers of members are unknown, and YICA estimates members came from over 100 countries. Also, it is very likely that some countries are involved in those organizations with only few members, which had little impacts in domestic affairs. Therefore, I regard a country-level “membership” as countries that had at least one representative standing in the committee of those organizations. Usually, people who had some substantial influence in their home countries and were not opposed by the Soviet Union because of the diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and their home countries can stand in the committee.

The first network illustrates official interparty connections of main Communist parties. Each node represents a country, and edges are connections between two parties. Three cases are counted as a connection: (1) official meetings and visits, for example, one party leader visits another party leader; (2) joint statements, for example, two parties co-published a statement against the Vietnam War; (3) references in official publications, for example, congratulation on other parties’ anniversaries. I only code friendly connections for this stage of analysis because currently I have no good ideas to code antagonistic connections like attacks against China in Soviet newspapers. The second network is a bipartite network on affiliation of main Communist parties. I also ensure the two networks have the same set of nodes for consistency of analysis.

There are some common treatments for both networks. Information of nodes include whether Maoist groups with significant visibility emerged (coded as 1/0), whether the country was ruled by a Communist regime (coded as 1/0). Note that in some analysis countries ruled by Communists will be excluded. The consideration is empirically motivated: most Communist countries in 1968-1970 were ideologically fixed and heterodox thoughts were strictly prohibited. Therefore, when taking about the diffusion of Maoism, Communist countries are not in the scope of analysis although they play an important role in the diffusion. All networks are undirected, though in the first network the edges are inherently directed. To avoid a sampling-from-dependent-variable issue, I also add vertices not included in *YICA* as isolated nodes. The benefit is to keep countries with limited connection with the Communist world.

Findings from Network Analysis

The Basic Profile

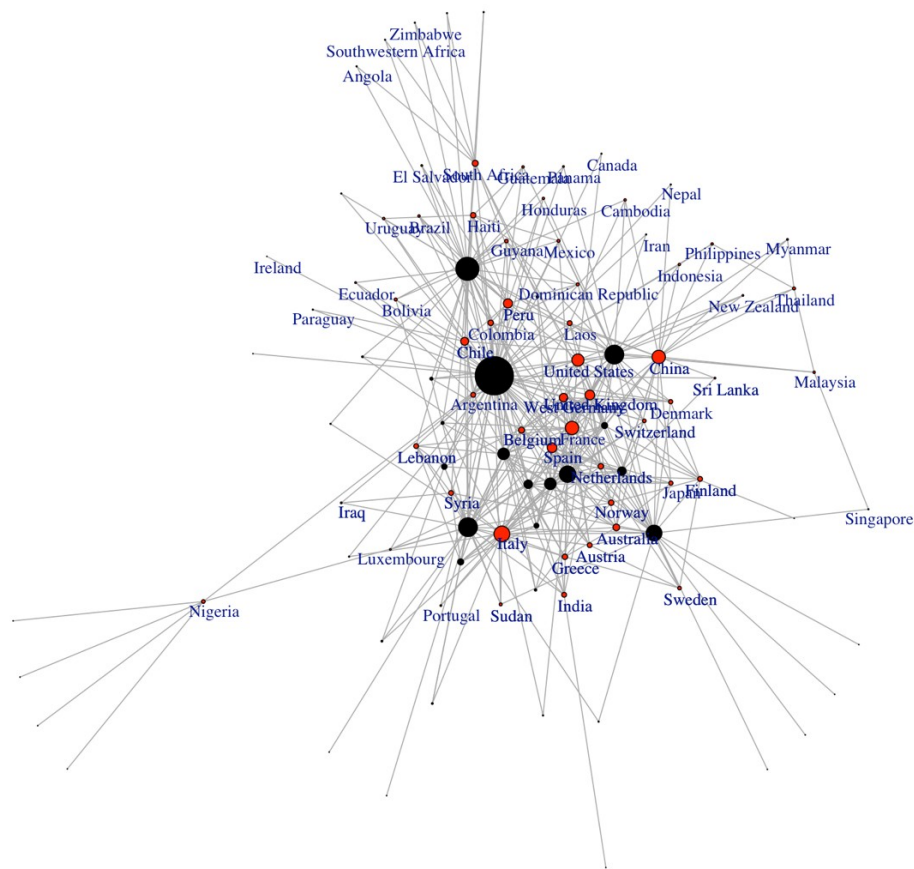
Table 2 summarizes the structural properties of the two networks examined in this study: the interparty network and the affiliated network. As the affiliated network is a bipartite network, I didn't calculate transitivity of the network because bipartite networks do not have a closed triad in nature.

Table 2. Properties of Networks		
	Interparty	Affiliated
Number of Nodes	142	152
Number of Edges	404	350
Edge Density	0.040	0.030
Mean Degree	5.69	4.61
Diameter	5	4
Transitivity	0.23	NA
Homophily (by Maoism)	-0.081	-0.007

Note: homophily of affiliated network is calculated in projected network.

The interparty network contains 142 nodes and 404 edges, resulting in an edge density of 0.040 and a mean degree of 5.69. This indicates that on average, each node (representing a party) is directly connected to approximately 5 to 6 others. The transitivity score suggests a moderate level of social closure. An interesting finding is homophily: countries with Maoist organizations and movements are not likely to have more ties.

Figure 1. Overview of Interparty Network



Centrality

Table 3 provides summary statistics of centrality measures and constraints by whether Maoism exists in a country. T-test result is included to tell whether a significant difference between Maoist and non-Maoist countries exists. Measures are normalized for the ease of

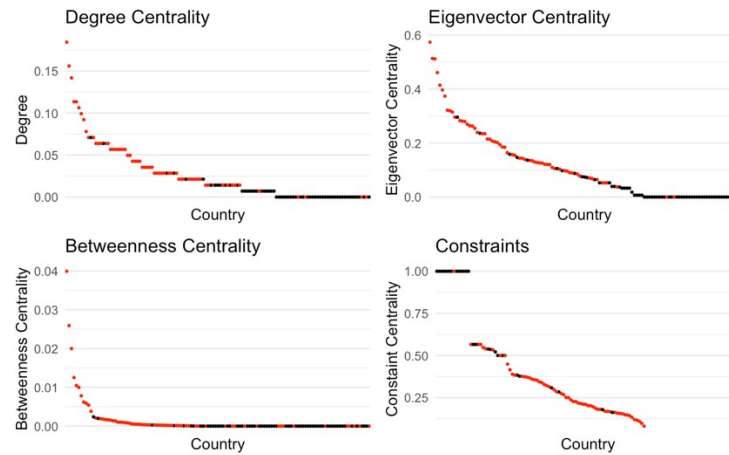
comparison. The constraint measure, like closeness betweenness, is uncalculatable for isolated countries because they do not have any relations with a network, let alone network constraints. To reduce missing values, I replace all missing constraint parameters as zero because it aligns with the ground truth: isolated countries as well as well-connected countries in a structure hole are all free of constraints from alters. Figure 2 provides visualization of degree centrality distribution for a more intuitive interpretation.

Table 3. Summary and Comparison of Normalized Network Measure for Interparty Network

	Overall		Non-Maoist		Maoist		Comparison	
	Mean	Std.dev	Mean	Std.dev	Mean	Std.dev	t-statistic	p-value
Degree	0.027	0.034	0.007	0.013	0.046	0.013	-7.738	0.000
Eigenvector	0.112	0.128	0.032	0.059	0.188	0.059	-8.673	0.000
Betweenness	0.001	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000	-3.143	0.003
Constraint	0.289	0.310	0.302	0.407	0.277	0.174	0.444	0.658

From the results, we may conclude that countries with Maoism's presence tend to occupy significantly more central positions in the network. First, Maoist actors are considerably more central in terms of degree and eigenvector measures. The mean degree for Maoist nodes is 0.046, compared to just 0.007 for non-Maoists—a highly significant difference ($t = -7.738$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, eigenvector centrality is much higher among Maoist actors (mean = 0.188 vs. 0.032), indicating that Maoist nodes are not only well-connected but also embedded within more influential network regions ($t = -8.673$, $p < 0.001$). Betweenness centrality, which captures a node's potential as a broker between different parts of the network, is also significantly higher for Maoists (0.003 vs. 0.000, $t = -3.143$, $p = 0.003$), albeit with a small absolute magnitude due to the sparsity of the network. The results also indicate the nearly peripheral positions for non-Maoists, although the result may be distorted by numbers of isolated nodes.

Figure 2. Centrality Measures in Interparty Network (Maoists with red dots)



By contrast, constraint does not differ significantly between the two groups. Although non-Maoists show a higher average constraint (0.302 vs. 0.277), this difference is not statistically significant ($t = 0.444$, $p = 0.658$). This suggests that while Maoist actors are more structurally central, they are not necessarily less constrained in a formal structural hole's sense. The finding may indicate that although Maoists are highly connected, many of these ties occur within densely interconnected communities, limiting their role as cross-cluster brokers in Burt's sense.

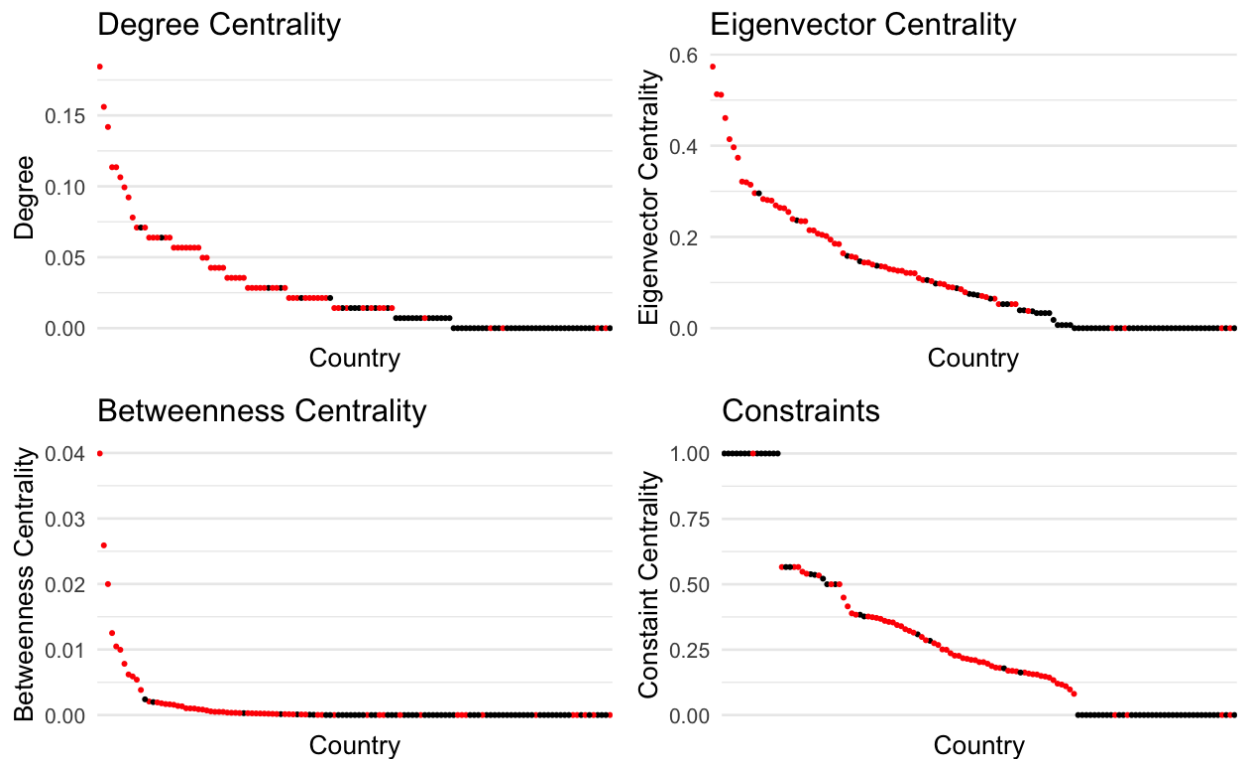
Table 4 and Figure 3 present the centrality analysis of the *affiliated* network, which is a two-mode projection based on shared memberships in Soviet-dominated international organizations. Unlike the direct interparty network, this structure captures indirect ties—actors are connected not through formal bilateral relationships, but through institutional co-participation. Accordingly, the meaning of centrality in this context requires a different interpretation.

Table 4. Summary and Comparison of Normalized Network Measure for Affiliated Network

Overall	Non-Maoist	Maoist	Comparison
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	Mean	Std.dev	Mean	Std.dev	Mean	Std.dev	t-statistic	p-value
Degree	0.503	0.311	0.341	0.333	0.657	0.189	-6.490	0.000
Eigenvector	0.144	0.177	0.151	0.171	0.137	0.184	0.445	0.657
Betweenness	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.002	-0.329	0.742
Constraint	0.034	0.020	0.025	0.023	0.042	0.011	-5.237	0.000

Figure 3. Centrality Measures in Affiliated Network (Maoists with red dots)



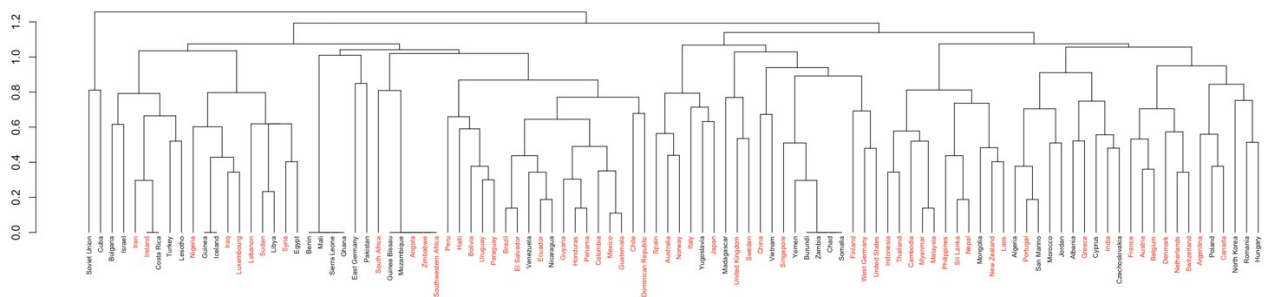
Degree centrality shows a strong and statistically significant distinction between Maoist and non-Maoist countries. Maoist countries have on average, substantially higher degrees (mean = 0.657) than non-Maoist ones (mean = 0.341), with the difference highly significant ($t = -6.490$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that Maoist countries were more widely embedded in multiple international organizations. However, eigenvector and betweenness centrality do not show any significant differences between Maoist and non-Maoist countries. Unlike the interparty network, constraint is significantly higher among Maoist countries (mean = 0.042) compared to non-

Maoists (mean = 0.025), with strong statistical significance ($t = -5.237$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that Maoist actors in the affiliated network were more embedded in locally redundant structures and less significant in the Soviet-organizational domains—sharing institutional memberships with actors that were themselves densely interconnected. In structural terms, surprisingly, Maoist countries were more "constrained" by their co-membership environment. A possible explanation is, in the affiliated network, a lower constrain score means a “bridge” between the two rivalry blocks.

Structural Equivalence

Figure 4 presents the resulting dendrogram, which captures similarity in relational profiles after removing isolated nodes. This clustering approach identifies groups of countries that are structurally similar—not necessarily directly connected, but sharing analogous patterns of ties to other actors in the network.

Figure 4. Dendrogram of Structural Equivalence for Interparty Network



To determine the number of optimal cuts, I deploy a method balancing parsimony and explanatory power. Like BIC measure, it focuses on the sharpest increase on average similarities

of correlations of all groups. The result is presented in table 4. The average similarity has the greatest improvement from 4-cluster cut to 5-cluster cut, and the increase is much smaller from 5-cluster cut to 6-cluster cut. The result suggests that a 5-cluster cut is the optimal option for the dendrogram. There are six kinds of structural positions in the global Communist network after adding all isolated nodes as one category. Table 5 includes the total number of non-socialist members and number of countries with Maoist groups and movements. A Chi-square test is performed to investigate the association between structural equivalence and contagion of Maoism. I remove all socialist countries because they are not the subject matter of this study. One group with only two members—Cuba and the Soviet Union—is removed according to this criterion (and with the empirical knowledge of the Cold War history, the two countries are the most prominent members in the Communist world; this explains the unique structural positions of the two countries).

Table 4. Average Similarity and Improvement above $k-1$ -Group Model

Groups	Average Similarity	Improvement
3	0.197	
4	0.242	0.045
5	0.307	0.065
6	0.322	0.015
7	0.334	0.012

Table 5. Group Size and Percentage of Maoists ($\chi^2=38.81, df=4, p\text{-value}=0.00$)

Group	Size	Number of Maoists	Maoist Percentage in Group	Percentage in all Maoists
1	15	11	0.73	0.17

2	17	11	0.65	0.17
3	44	28	0.64	0.44
4	10	10	1.00	0.16
Isolated	39	4	0.10	0.06

We can conclude several relations between structural equivalence and the emergence of Maoism. First, there is no strong evidence to support structural equivalence in the diffusion of Maoism. Countries with Maoist groups and movements are sparsely distributed across different types of positions. The second conclusion incorporates another piece of information: China is in group 3 in a 5-cut model. However, group 3 has the lowest percentage of Maoism-infected countries, suggesting that countries with equivalent roles do not have a higher probability of adopting Maoism.

However, the result also suggests structures do matter in some other ways. A third conclusion is drawn from group 4, of which all members have Maoist groups and movements. A possible explanation is having Maoist groups and movements *in turn* places them in the same position. Lastly, We reaffirm the shield against Maoism by isolation by its low percentage of Maoist members.

To reaffirm the conclusion, I reiterate the analytical process with the weighted projected affiliated network. The results are shown in Figure 5, Table 6, and Table 7.

Figure 5. Dendrogram of Structural Equivalence for Affiliation Network

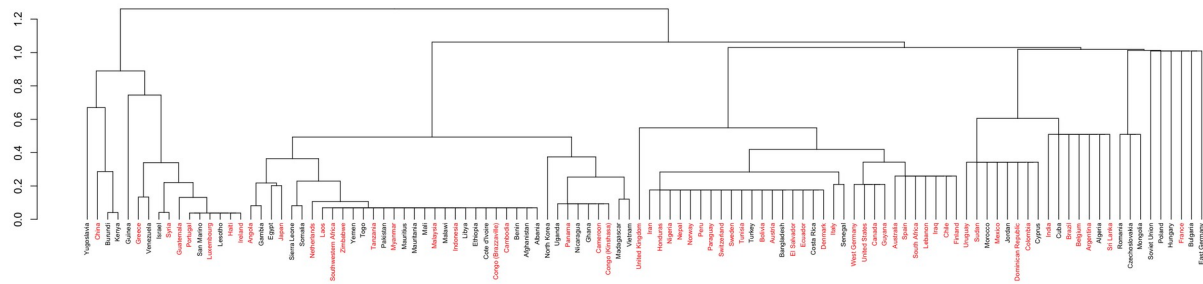


Table 6. Average Similarity and Improvement above k -1-Group Model

Groups	Average Similarity	Difference
2	0.393	
3	0.538	0.145
4	0.556	0.018
5	0.504	-0.052

Table 7. Group Size and Percentage of Maoists ($\chi^2=32.59, df=3, p\text{-value}=0.00$)

Group	Size	Number of Maoists	Maoist Percentage in Group	Percentage in all Maoists
1	33	14	0.42	0.22
2	46	39	0.85	0.61
3	14	7	0.50	0.11
Isolated	32	4	0.13	0.06

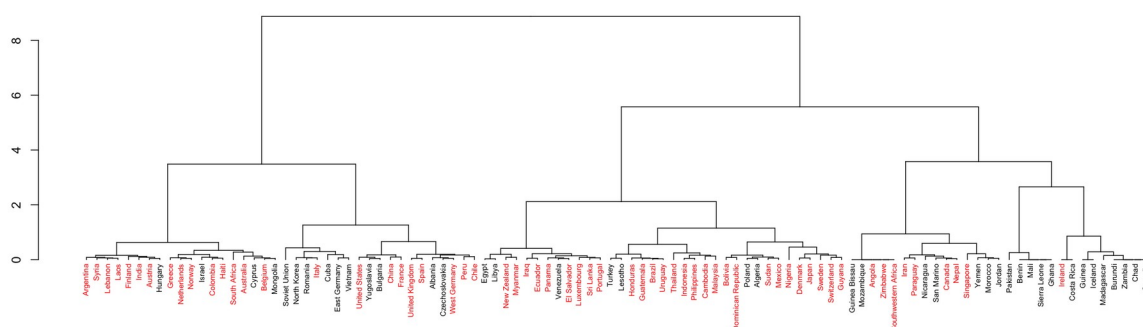
The result is consistent with previous analysis. Soviet Union and China are in group 2 and 3, respectively. Surprisingly, countries shared the same role with China are less likely to have a Maoist group than countries sharing the same structural position with the Soviet Union. Considering the nature of this network—a Soviet-dominated domain—the interpretation is much more straightforward: *countries more embedded in the Soviet-dominated organizational domain are more likely to witness a Maoist emergence.*

Regular Equivalence

To complement the earlier structural equivalence analysis, a role-based clustering was performed using regular equivalence, a more flexible concept that captures similarity in *roles* rather than direct relational patterns. Whereas structural equivalence requires actors to have ties to the same alters, regular equivalence allows two nodes to be considered similar if they are connected to others who themselves play similar roles—mirroring functional analogies such as “broker,” “peripheral actor,” or “ideological center.”

I keep the template of analysis for structural equivalence in my regular equivalence analysis. This time I only include the interparty network because regular equivalence may not be appropriate for compressed bipartite networks. Since regular equivalence captures the relative position (like leaders and followers in Communist network), in a one-mode projections of bipartite networks only co-memberships rather than roles will be detected. Another caveat is the meaning of average similarity: the similarity scores the average pairwise regular equivalence score within each cluster. This score captures the degree to which nodes share similar structural positions, rather than their direct interaction density. Figure 6, Table 7, and Table 8 present the result and comparisons. In other words, the average similarity measures the cohesion of roles in each cluster.

Figure 5. Dendrogram of Structural Equivalence for Affiliation Network

Table 8. Average Similarity and Improvement above k -1-Group Model

Groups	Average Similarity	Difference
2	0.841	
3	0.893	0.052
4	0.92	0.027
5	0.879	-0.041

Table 9. Average Similarity and Improvement above k -1-Group Model

Group	Size	Number of Maoists	Maoist Percentage in Group	Percentage in all Maoists
1	25	23	0.92	0.36
2	32	28	0.88	0.44
3	29	9	0.31	0.14
Isolated	39	4	0.10	0.06

The average similarity score is significantly higher than that of structural equivalence model. Following the same logic, a 3-group cut is optimal. The results based on a 3-group division is striking and presents a very different picture from my previous model: Group 1 and Group 2 exhibit extremely high Maoist adoption rates (92% and 88%, respectively), while Group 3 shows a markedly lower rate (31%), and isolates only 10%. Notably, Group 1 and Group 2 contains the greatest number of Maoist adopters, suggesting that Maoism disproportionately

emerged among countries occupying a particular role position. A temporal conclusion could be drawn from the result: regular equivalence—understood as role similarity—aligns strongly with Maoist adoption.

Distance and Influence

To assess the plausibility of contagion-based diffusion of Maoism, two sets of proximity measures were constructed. First, geodesic distances to China and the Soviet Union were calculated based on shortest-path length in the interparty network, representing institutional closeness. Second, a measure of ideological influence from the Soviet Union was created, defined as the number of international organizations a country shared with the Soviet Union in the original two-mode structure. This measure captures potential exposure to Soviet-centric ideology and organizational alignment through institutional co-membership. The results are reported in Table 10-12.

Table 10. Distance to China, by Presence of Maoism

Distance to China	Maoist	Total	Proportion
1	17	17	1.00
2	31	42	0.74
3	12	23	0.52
4	0	4	0.00
No Connection	4	39	0.10

For China, a strong negative association emerges between distance and adoption of Maoism. All countries at distance 1 from China in the interparty network adopted Maoism, while 74% of those at distance 2 are Maoism-infected, with a declining 52% at distance 3, and 0 at

distance 4. This result seems to confirm the contagion thesis, while it is unclear whether ideological proximity delivers tie formation or vice versa.

Table 11. Distance to the Soviet Union, by Presence of Maoism

Distance to Soviet Union	Maoist	Total	Proportion
1	45	53	0.85
2	13	31	0.42
3	2	2	1.00
No Connection	4	39	0.10

For the Soviet Union, the relation between distance and adoption of Maoism, an ideology challenging its hegemony, is puzzling. 85% of countries directly connected to the Soviet Union adopted Maoism, while only 42% countries adopted Maoism with a distance of 2 to the Soviet Union. The result is counter-intuitive, as the closeness to the orthodox ideological center increases the possibility of adopting heterodox ideology. Counting the strength of influence gives an even more strange look. With the influence, i.e., being in the “Moscow front” increasing, the percentage of adopting Maoism increase accordingly.

Table 12. Strength of Influence in the Soviet-dominated Organizational Work

Influence	Number of Country	Number of Maoists	Percentage
0	32	4	0.13
1	28	12	0.43
2	32	21	0.66
3	10	5	0.50
4	8	7	0.88
5	8	8	1.00
6	3	3	1.00
7	2	2	1.00
8	1	1	1.00
9	1	1	1.00

These patterns suggest that contagion does matter, but not in a simple linear or hierarchical fashion. Rather than diffusion via a single hegemonic core, ideological contagion appears to operate through competing poles, with countries near either China or the Soviet Union more likely to adopt Maoist discourse—albeit possibly for very different reasons. In China's case, proximity suggests direct ideological influence; in the Soviet case, it may reflect institutional saturation followed by ideological defection. We may need to move to the local structure instead to seek alternative explanation.

Community Detection: k-clique and Mixed Membership Stochastic Block Model

The weird result from distance may be attributed to local network structure, which may be multilayered with fuzzy boundaries. To further investigate the meso-level structure of the network and to uncover possible paths of ideological diffusion, this study applies two complementary community detection methods: k-clique detection and the Mixed-Membership Stochastic Block Model (MMSBM). These two approaches offer contrasting but complementary logics of community structure—one based on local density and overlap, the other on latent probabilistic affiliations that may shift over time.

Identifying cliques, developed by Palla et al. (Palla et al. 2005), identifies communities as groups of overlapping k-cliques—complete subgraphs of size k—that share $k-1$ nodes with one another. A community is formed when a chain of such adjacent cliques is discovered, mapping out dense and cohesive clusters within the network. This method is particularly well-suited for uncovering overlapping communities, allowing nodes to participate in multiple tightly-knit groups. In the context of ideological diffusion, k-clique communities may reflect ideological

cores or revolutionary cells, in which actors are bound by high levels of mutual recognition and interaction – although they may be away from powerful actors like the Soviet Union and China.

Table 13 documents descriptive results of clique analysis with different value of k ($k=3$ and $k=4$)¹ in the interparty network.

Table 13. Selected Descriptive Data for k -clique partition, $k=3, 4$

	3-clique	4-clique
mean of clique N	11.7	5.24
max	165	92
min	0	0
with 0 clique N	57	82
clique with China N	16	5
average clique N	34.81	44.2
clique with USSR N	47	36
average clique N	27.02	16.47
mean of clique N: Maoists	21.77	9.92
mean of clique N: non-Maoists	1.15	0.32

Two things are worth noting: first, significantly less countries share at least one clique with China than with the Soviet Union. However, countries who share clique(s) with China have a much higher mean of cliques they have. That is to say, countries in the small circle with China are more likely to be in more small groups with other countries than those with the Soviet Union. Second, countries with Maoism emerged have much higher numbers of cliques. The two findings suggest a possible explanation: countries embedded in more local communities are more likely to adopt Maoism. To test the result, I solely rely on network measures to run a logit regression to explore the association. The result is in Table 14.

¹ When $k=5$, it returns the same result with $k=4$. $K=6$ is the max size with only 8 countries in.

Table 14. Odds Ratio Reported from Logit Regression with Network Measures

	3-Clique	4-Clique
No. of cliques	0.09***	0.22 +
clique with USSR	2.09**	1.41*
clique with China	(omitted)	
Intercept	-1.387***	-6.67**

Note: * $p < .5$, ** $p < .1$, *** $p < .01$. N=125.

I include three measures: number of cliques and whether a node shares at least one clique with the Soviet Union or China. The dependent variable is whether a Maoist emergence was observed. As sharing cliques with China always brings an observation of Maoism, no parameters are returned. The result is consistent in 3-clique and 4-clique partition with a less significant result in 4-clique. Because 4-clique is more coherent and interconnected (a 4-cliques will have 4 3-cliques because it is a 4-node figure with linkage between any two nodes), the result is more convincing than a 3-clique one. Numbers of cliques increase the odd ratio of having Maoists in one country, while sharing at least one clique with the Soviet Union increase the odd ratio of having Maoists domestically by 2.09 and 1.41, respectively.

The MMSBM, developed by Airoldi et al. (2008), offers a probabilistic, generative model of community structure. Unlike standard stochastic block models, which assign each node to a single latent block, MMSBM allows each node to belong to multiple communities simultaneously, with varying degrees of affiliation. Community structure is inferred from observed patterns of connections, under the assumption that ties are more or less likely between nodes depending on their mixed memberships. Unfortunately, no detailed illustration will be presented because of the limited knowledge of the author. The preliminary result is not satisfying though: every country has an equal probability to fall into 3 groups I specify. For example, Peru has a 33.33% chance to fall into group 1, 33.16% for group 2, and 33.43% for group 1.

Unfinished Analysis 1: Event History Analysis – when did Maoism first appear in those countries?

Unfinish Analysis 2: Case Studies

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