

POL486: Networks in International Politics

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1 Introduction to Network Analysis

1.1 Olga V. Chyzh. Network analysis in international relations. In Cameron G. Thies, editor, Handbook of International Relations, pages 158–170. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2025.

1.1.1 Networks in International Relations

Core Premise: International politics is inherently networked. Actors (states, organizations, individuals) are interconnected nodes, and their relationships (alliances, trade, conflict) are ties.

Significance of Networks:

- Membership in international clubs (e.g., NATO, EU, WTO) offers security, prestige, and economic benefits.
- Exclusion can lead to insecurity and foreign policy revisionism.
- Network embeddedness affects policy options and resource access.

Historical Context: IR scholars have long recognized the networked nature of global politics, but network analysis provided the specific tools to better align theory with empirical evidence.

Critique of Traditional IR Research:

- Network scholars criticized previous IR research, particularly the **dyadic design**, for its failure to account for interdependence among actors.
- The assumption of independence in dyadic analysis can lead to confounding bias, attributing effects to incorrect causes. For example, the US-Japan and US-South Korea relationships influence the Japan-South Korea relationship.

1.1.2 Methodological and Theoretical Contributions

Primary Contribution: Network analysis offered a way to measure previously unmeasurable concepts like system polarity, social power, and prestige. It also generated new research questions about connectivity.

Three Main Research Approaches:

- **Global Network Properties:** Studies focus on properties of the entire network, such as density of fractionalization, to explain outcomes like conflict and cooperation.
 1. **Example:** Maoz (2006) used network analysis to create a theory-informed measure of international system polarization, a concept previously hard to operationalize.
 - **Example:** Cruz, Labonne, and Querubin (2020) found that greater fractionalization (power divided among more clans) in local kinship networks in the Philippines was associated with better public goods provision.
 2. **Actor Positions:** This approach analyzes the positions of individual actors within a network to understand power and influence.
 - **Brokerage/Gate-keeping Power:** Held by actors connecting otherwise discontinued clusters.
 - **Network Centrality:** Used as a proxy for concepts like country prestige (Renshon 2016) or an organization's agenda-setting power (Carpenter 2011).
 3. **Overlapping Membership:** This approach examines how overlapping memberships reinforce each other's effects.

- **Example:** Parkison (2013) showed that sustaining an insurgency depends on the overlap between military networks and personal networks (kinship, friendship).
- **Example:** Eldredge and Shannon (2022) found that countries with high membership overlap in inter-governmental organizations are more likely to object to each other's human rights treaty reservations.

1.1.3 The Debate and Normalization of Network Analysis in IR

The 'Us-vs-Them' Debate: Early proponents of network analysis adopted a provocative framing, creating divisions within IR.

Points of Resistance: Critics argued that the traditional dyadic approach had not impeded major theoretical advances (e.g., the democratic peace) and that research designs should be tailored to the specific question, rather than assuming interdependence as the default.

Mainstreaming the Approach (c. 2016):

- An exchange in *International Relations Quarterly* between proponents and critics marked a key moment.
- A special issue on networks in *Journal of Peace Research* showcased the breadth of applications.
- The field of political methodology quickly welcomed and published inferential network analysis research.
- Subsequently, network research began appearing in top disciplinary journals, at major conferences, and in university curricula.

1.1.4 Current Research and Future Directions

Addressing Endogeneity: Developing tools to separate actor-level effects from network-level effects (e.g., democracy vs. clique size in trade).

Flexible Conceptualization: Re-evaluating the unit of analysis, such as treating alliances themselves as nodes to study action-reaction processes.

Expanding Scope: Applying network analysis to subnational and transnational levels, including rebel groups, NGOs, and political elites.

Social Media Data: Utilizing vast, inherently networked data from social media to study mobilization, censorship, and misinformation.

Future Directions:

- **Develop IR-Specific Theories:** Move beyond borrowing sociological theories to build network theories tailored to IR's unique actors and assumptions (e.g., anthropomorphizing states).
- **Model Hierarchical Networks:** Incorporate asymmetrical and hierarchical relationships, not just horizontal ones between equal actors.
- **Integrate Casual Inference:** Bridge network analysis with experimental and quasi-experimental methods to test network predictions more rigorously.
- **Model Co-evolution:** Better theorize and model the endogenous relationship where actor characteristics are both a cause and an effect of their network ties.

2 Network Centrality

2.1 John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell. Robust action and the rise of the Medici, 1400-1434. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(6):1259–1319, 1993.

2.1.1 Introduction and Core Argument

Central Claim: The rise of Medicean political control (1400-1434) in Florence, leading to the Renaissance state, was driven by **network disjunctures** within the elite that the Medici alone spanned.

Methodology: To understand state formation, one must move beyond formal institutions, groups, and goals to the **relational substrata** of people's actual lives. **Ambiguity and heterogeneity**, not planning and self-interest, are the raw materials of powerful states and persons.

Key Concept: *Robust Action*, Cosimo de Medici's (1380-1464) control style, characterized by **multivocal identity** as '**sphinx**', which harnessed power from these 'network holes' and resolved the inherent contradiction between 'judge' and 'boss' in organizations.

2.1.2 Core Concepts Explained

Political Centralization and the Judge/Boss Contradiction

- State-building involves centralizing power, a contradictory process requiring both reproduction (rules creating roles, interests, collective action patterns) and control (others' interactions serving one's interests).
- The contradiction: A founder cannot be both an impartial 'judge' (legitimacy through non-self-interest) and a controlling 'boss' (direct intervention undermines legitimacy).

Robust Action:

- **Definition:** A style of control where single actions can be coherently interpreted from multiple perspectives simultaneously (multivocality), serve as moves in many 'games' at once, and blur public/private motivations.
- **Mechanism:** Leads to 'Rorschach blot identities', where others attribute their own distinctive identity to the ego (Cosimo).
- **Goal:** Maintaining **flexible opportunism** and discretionary options in unpredictable futures, rather than pursuing specific, fixed goals. This involves **positional play:** maneuvering opponents into clarifying *their* (not your) tactical lines of action.
- **Resolution of Judge/Boss:** Credible robust action works because the center (Cosimo) appears to have **no unequivocal self-interests**; he 'merely' responds to requests. Control is diffused, as others infer and serve his inscrutable interests.
- **Preconditions:** Requires specific network structures for channeling requests and opaque, coherent interests to be credible.

2.1.3 Historical Context: Florence (1400-1434)

Transition: From late medieval urban factionalism to a regionally consolidated Renaissance state.

Ultimate Causes: Unsuccessful class revolt (Ciompi revolt, 1378-82) and severe fiscal crisis due to wars (Milan and Lucca wars, 1424-33).

Medici's Rise: Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464) founded a dynasty, consolidated a Europe-wide banking network, and sponsored the Renaissance.

Cosmio's 'Sphinx-Like' Character:

- Contemporaries deeply appreciated his power, yet eyewitness accounts describe him as indecipherable.
- He remained in the background, acting through deputies, with little known of his direct responsibilities.
- He never assumed lasting public office and rarely gave public speeches.
- His actions appeared reactive, serving his 'extremely multiple interests'.
- His replies were often brief and obscure, sometimes Delphic or using proverbs, allowing double interpretations.

2.1.4 Methodology and Data

Approach: An 'archaeological dig' into the structural preconditions for Medici's success, focusing on the composition and social network structure of the Medici party versus their opponents, the 'oligarchs'.

Sources: Based on extensive historical work, especially Dale Kent's 'The Rise of the Medici' (1978). Supplemented by 1427/1433 catasto (tax registers), Najemy (1982), and Martines (1963).

Data Types (9 types of relations among elite families):

- **Kinship:** Inter-marriage ties (assymetric, 1394-1434).
- **Economic:** Trading/business ties, joint ownerships, bank employment, real estate ties.
- **Political:** Patronage and personal loans (multifaceted motives).
- **Personal:** Friendship, mallevadori (surety) ties.

Definitions:

- **Family:** Operationalized as 'people with a common last name' (clan), consistent with Florentine social reality and data limitations.
- **Elite:** Families meeting any of three criteria:
 - 2+ members speaking in Consulte e Prtiche (1429-34);
 - 3+ members qualified for scrutiny (election to high office) in 1433;
 - Magnate clan (215 families identified, 92 for network analysis).
- **Blockmodel Analysis:** Aggregates actors (families) into structurally equivalent 'blocks' based on common external ties with outsiders, not dense internal relations (cliques). Used to visualize marriage and economic networks ('strong ties', fig. 2a) and political/friendship networks ('weak ties', fig 2b).

2.1.5 Empirical Findings: Attributional vs. Network Structure

Attributional Analyses (Challenging Traditional Views):

- **Economic Class (Wealth/Change in Wealth):** Both Mediceans and oligarchs were wealthy, but their wealth distributions were statistically identical and highly heterogenous. Not a Marxist class struggle.
- **Social Class (Presitge/Political Age):** Oligarch were more skewed towards older participants due to the *absence* of 'new men' from their party, not absence of particians from the Medicean side. Mediceans were more socially heterogenous, and relative to neutrals, were distinctly 'old-guard patrician'.

- **Neighbourhood Residence:** No statistically significant difference, both parties mirrored each other in geographical concentration, especially in San Giovanni. San Giovanni was the most polarized quarter.
- **Conclusion:** There was a **structural mismatch** between contemporaries' clear cognitives typifications (oligarchs as old, wealth patricians; Mediceans as heroes of rising new men) and the objective heterogeneity and overlap of social groups at the behavioural level. Classical group theories of parties (pluralist/neo-Marxist) are insufficient.

Social Network Structure (Blockmodel Analysis):

- **Predictive Power:** Marriage and economic blockmodels remarkably predict political partisanship, despite attributional identity. The Medici family itself bridged both sides.
 - 93% of families within the 'Medicean circle' were Medici partisans.
 - 82% of other partisan families (excluding neutrals) joined the oligarch side.
- **Medici Party Structure:** An extraordinarily **centralized 'star' or 'spoke' network system**.
 - Medici partisans were connected to other partisans and the oligarch elite almost solely *through the Medici*.
 - Medici partisans had remarkably few intraelite network ties, being 'structurally impoverished'.
- **Oligarch Party Structure:** Densely interconnected, especially through marriage, but this density led to **cacophony and cross-pressure**, not cohesive collective action (e.g., Rinaldo Albizzi's failed mobilization).
- **The Structural Atomization Puzzle:** Why did this centralized spoke system maintain itself.
 - Medici followers had clear incentives to form cross-ties to alleviate dependence.
 - The Medici discouraged **multiplex ties** (overlapping marriage and economic relations) with their followers, and also segregation of types of ties with the Medici themselves.
- **Resolution: Double Segregation of Attributes**
 - **Patrician Supporters:** Wealthy, old patricians (e.g., Guicciardini, Tornabuoni blocks) inter-married with the Medici, but resided *outside* the San Giovanni quarter.
 - **New Men Supporters:** Connected to Medici through economic or personal loan ties (e.g., Ginori, Orlandini, Cocco-Donati blocks), but resided *within* San Giovanni.
 - **Mechanism:** Patricians and new men despised each other and had limited interaction. Only the Medici linked these segments. This structural isolations inhibited defensive counter-alliances ('revolt of the colonels').
 - **Medici Strategy:**
 - * In marriage and friendship, Medici were highly selective (snobbish, marrying other patricians).
 - * In the economic sphere, they associated heavily with new men, unlike other elite families.
 - * Their distinctiveness was *associating with new men at all*, not representing them.
 - **New Men's Responsiveness:** 90-96% of new men economically/politically tied to Medici became active partisans. This was not due to active Medici mobilization of new men as a whole, but the *oligarchs extraordinary inaction* towards them, leaving new men 'structurally available'. Oligarchs' polemics branded Medici as 'class traitors' ("heroes of then new men").
- **Control Mechanisms:**
 - Spoke structure ensured dependence and channeled communication through Medici.
 - Double segregation prevented counter-alliances among partisans.
 - Formal affine relations with distant patricians (less frequent contact) contrasted with friendly, useful business ties with local new men (where status gap ensured deference).
 - Attributional heterogeneity made Medici a potent 'swing vote'.
 - **Contradiction was key to control**, especially with intense surrounding cognitive group identities.

2.1.6 Network Dynamics: How the Medici Party Emerged

No Grand Design: Cosimo did not design his party or initially intend to take over the state. The network patterns emerged from oligarchs' previous actions and inadvertently channeled material to the Medici.

1. Dynamics of Patrician Marriage (1385-1420):

- **Context:** Oligarchs' reconsolidation of control after the Ciompi revolt (1378).
- **Historical Trend:** Increasing rates of **neighbourhood exogamy** in Florentine elite marriage. This dissolved older 'neighbourhood solidarity' mode of elite organization (quasi-feudal, intra-neighbourhood hierarchies).
- **Elite Closure (Post-Ciompi, 1382):**
 - * **Shunning 'Class Traitors':** Patrician families (like Medici) who sympathized with Ciompi were severely ostracized in marriage by victorious oligarchs. This created the **structural barrier** seen in Figure 2a between oligarchs and Medicean patrician blocks (Guicciardini, Tornabuoni).
 - * **Oligarch Co-optation and Cross-Neighbourhood Cycles:** Oligarchs began forming **cross-neighbourhood marriage cycles** to co-opt potentially bridging "swing vote" families (e.g., Rondinelli). This created a dense, citywide elite, closing in on itself.
 - * **Outcast Patrician Exogamy:** Structurally isolated, outcast patricians (like Medici) were forced to marry fellow isolates *outside* their neighbourhoods to preserve status, leading to higher exogamy rates among them.
- **Medici's Anomalous Position:**
 - * **Survival:** Veieri di Cambio's (Medici clan head) defusion of a pro-Alberti revolt in 1393 and Giovanni de Medici's later circumspection (avoiding politics, squelching discontent) saved the Medici name from utter ostracism. This earned them begrudging oligarch gratitude.
 - * **Limited Co-optation:** Oligarchs slowly relented in the 1420s, allowing some intermarriage with Medici (e.g., Albizzi, Gianfigliuzzi blocks), but only after the Medici were already deeply isolated.
 - * **Exploiting Structural Holes:** Oligarchs over-focused on containing San Giovanni (Ricci's old home), creating a 'structural hole' in the Santo Spirito quarter. The Medici gradually exploited this, directing 100% of their own marriages to Santo Spirito by the early 1430s, often 'wife-receiving' (less status-picky).
- **Adaptive Learning:** Elite tactics evolved not from grand strategies but as a mutually adaptive learning process, with families making 'boundedly rational local action' from their egocentric network positions.

2. Dynamics of New Men Economic Ties (1420s-1430s):

- **Catalyst:** Milan and Lucca wars (1424-33) led to devastating tax extraction, threatening family patrimonies.
- **Neighbourhood Politics Revival:** Tax assessments by neighbourhood intensified local politics.
- **Oligarch Repression:** Patricians legislatively targeted new men; successful repression abolished new men's nascent corporate forms (religious confraternities), leaving them without local support.
- **Medici as Exception:** Locked in by their dense marriage network, most oligarchs rejected appeals from new men. The Medici, with their 'structurally contradictory position', had the discretion to respond to pleas from San Giovanni new men.
- **Medici Self-Consciousness:** The surge of supplication from San Giovanni new men during the Milan war galvanized the Medici into self-awareness as a political party. Oligarch actions (e.g., Rinaldo Albizzi's class alliance request to Giovanni de Medici, which Giovanni equivocally refused) further solidified the Medici as a distinct faction.

2.1.7 Network Identities: Robust Action and Legitimacy

Credibility of Robust Action: The contradictory attributions of ‘Medici self-interest’ (hero of new men vs. patrician) were credible because the disparate groups of Medici supporters rarely had the opportunity to compare notes privately. Even if they had, low trust would have prevented agreement.

Opaque Self-Interests: Medici goals (money, prestige, power) were tied to specific roles, not an overarching utility function. In chaotic times, the “games themselves are all up for grabs”, making revealed preferences impossible to infer *a priori*. Cosimo’s and Giovanni’s “shrewd and multivocal opportunism” was a feature of varying game structures, not fixed personal goals.

Legitimacy (*Pater Patriae*):

- Cosimo was enshrined as *pater patriae* upon his death, transmuting his ambiguity into public interest.
- He achieved this not by directly defeating oligarchs or slinging mud, but by **positional maneuvering**.
- His ‘reactive character’ forced oligarchs into aggressive, self-interested offensive actions (e.g., repression, attempted seizure of city hall).
- During the fiscal crisis, Cosimo channeled his bank’s assets into state debt funding, gaining the appearance of Florence’s ‘financial saviour’ while his opponents faced ruin.
- This led new men and political neutrals to delegitimize the oligarchs (labeling them as self-interested) and embrace Cosimo as saviour of the republic, leading to his triumphal recall from exile.
- His robust, multivocal actions gained him the “legitimizing aureole of protector of the status quo”, transforming his party into a state.

2.1.8 Conclusion

State centralization and the Renaissance arose from tumultuous historical events filtered through elite transformation. Cosimo did not create the Medici party but shrewdly learned network rules. He used a shroud of **multiple, impenetrable identities** to maintain robust discretion and Solomonic legitimacy.

Understanding state building requires delving into the **relational substratum** of lives, recognizing the **localized, ambiguous and contradictory nature** of actions, networks, and identities. This heterogeneity explains the birth of political power.

3 Communities

3.1 Marina G Duque. Recognizing international status: A relational approach. *Inter-national Studies Quarterly*, 62(3):577–592, 2018.

3.1.1 Central Argument and Thesis

Problem: International relations scholarship relies on the concept of ‘status’ to explain phenomena like war and foreign policy, but lacks a clear understanding of what status is and how it is achieved.

Critique of Conventional View: Previous research treats status as a function of a state’s attributes, particularly material capabilities like wealth and military power. This approach is a form of material reductionism and fails to capture the social nature of status.

Author’s Thesis (Relational Approach): Status is not derived from state attributes but from **social recognition**. It is a relational process where a state gains admission into a ‘club’ after being deemed to follow its rules of membership. Status is therefore influenced by two key social processes:

- **Self-reinforcing Dynamics:** Recognition breeds more recognition.
- **Social closure:** A state's existing relationships and its similarity to other states influence its ability to achieve status.

3.1.2 The Conventional (Attribute-Based) Approach and Its Flaws

Definition: Defines status as a state's ranking on valued attributes, such as economic military, and technological capabilities.

Key Flaws:

- **Material Reductionism:** Reduces status to material power, making the concept analytically redundant.
- **Fetishism:** Mistakenly treats social relations as inherent properties of states. It equates status with possessing symbols (e.g., nuclear weapons), but these attributes have no intrinsic value without social agreement.
- **Reification:** Treats the status order as external to states, making status achievement an autonomous act rather than a social process of recognition.
- **Empirical Mismatch:** Fails to explain why some states with significant material resources receive low status (e.g., North Korea as a 'rogue state') or why others receive more recognition than their capabilities would suggest (e.g., Italy, Egypt).

3.1.3 A Relational Theory of Status

Definition (from Max Weber): Status is an "effective claim to social esteem in terms of positive or negative privileges". This has four key dimensions:

1. **Effective Claim (Recognition):** A state's claim to status must be recognized by others to be effective. Status involves admission into a 'club' based on following its distinctive lifestyle and rules.
2. **Social Esteem (Symbolic):** Status is based on 'social honour', which can be attached to any symbol, material or ideational. The value of attributes is socially constructed, not intrinsic.
3. **Social Hierarchy (Privileges):** The status order is a hierarchy that grants privileges to high-status members and disadvantages to low-status ones. This is maintained through **social closure**, where high-status groups form dense internal ties and justify their privileges based on their distinctiveness.
4. **Conventions (Practices):** The status order is regulated by conventions (norms and rules) that emerge from the practices of states themselves.

Two Key Relational Processes:

1. **Status is Self-Reinforcing:** Because status comes from peer attribution, states that are already highly recognized are more likely to attract additional recognition. This is a purely structural effect.
2. **Social Closure Shapes Status:** This has two implications:
 - **Connectedness matters:** A state's existing relationships, especially with high-status actors, influence its ability to gain status.
 - **Similarity begets recognition:** States tend to recognize other states that have similar values (e.g., democracy) and resources, a concept known as **homophily**.

3.1.4 Empirical Strategy and Methodology

Data: The network of diplomatic embassies from the Diplomatic Contacts Database.

- **Rationale:** Establishing an embassy is a costly and symbolic act of recognition. The network of embassies provides a comprehensive map of recognition practices.

Unit of Analysis: The **network of embassies** (a relational measure), not just a state-level count of embassies received. This preserves information about the structure of relationships (i.e., who recognizes whom).

Method: Temporal Exponential Random Graph Model (TERGM):

- **Advantage:** This model can test for both attribute-based (exogenous) effects and relational/structural (endogenous) effects, such as reciprocity and popularity. It also avoids statistical biases common when analyzing relational data.

3.1.5 Key Findings

The Relational model performs much better in explaining embassy ties than conventional attribute-based models.

Relational dynamics are powerful drivers of status recognition:

- **Popularity (Self-Reinforcement):** States with more embassies are significantly more likely to attract additional ones. A state that is one standard deviation above the mean in embassies received is **2.4 times more likely** to get another one.
- **Reciprocity:** States are **almost six times more likely** to have an embassy in another country if that country reciprocates.
- **Transitivity:** States are more likely to establish an embassy where their existing diplomatic partners also have a presence.

Similarity (Homophily) is crucial: States are significantly more likely to recognize other states that are similar to them in terms of democracy, human rights, economic freedom, and military spending. The relevance of attributes is socially defined.

State attributes have mixed and often counter-intuitive effects:

- While military capability positively correlates with recognition, higher wealth (GDP per capita) and possessing nuclear weapons are associated with a *reduced* likelihood of receiving an embassy.

Fundamental Values Matter: Values like democracy, human rights, and economic liberalism are at least as important for gaining recognition as material resources.

3.2 Wayne W Zachary. An information flow model for conflict and fission in small groups. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 33(4):452–473, 1977.

3.2.1 The Problem of Fission in Small Groups

Central Issue: How and why fission (splitting) occurs in small, bounded groups is a long-standing topic of study in social anthropology.

Traditional Perspectives: Fission has been studied through lenses like descent theory and ecological adaptation.

Proposed Model: This study uses a new formal model based on **information flow** within a social network to analyze and predict fission.

Core Thesis: Fission is the result of an **unequal flow of sentiments and information** across the ties in a social network. This differential sharing leads to the formation of subgroups with greater internal stability, eventually causing a split.

3.2.2 Case Study: A University Karate Club

Context: The model was developed using data from a university karate club observed over three years (1970-1972).

The Conflict: A dispute arose between the club's instructor, **Mr. Hi**, and the president, **John A.**, over the price of lessons.

Factionalization: The club divided into two ideological factions:

- **Mr. Hi's supporters:** Viewed him as a spiritual mentor.
- **John A.'s supporters:** Viewed Mr. Hi as a paid employee attempting to raise his salary.

Process of Fission:

- Factions were not formally organized but emerged from existing friendship networks during political crises.
- Crises strengthened friendship bonds *within* factions and weakened bonds *between* them through selective interaction.
- After a series of confrontations, the officers, led John A., fire Mr. Hi.
- Mr. Hi's supporters resigned and formed a new club, completing the fission.

3.2.3 Social Network Models and Their Limitations

Standard Social Network Model: Represents individuals as points (**nodes**) and their relationships as lines (**edges**).

- **Graph Representation:** A visual diagram of nodes and edges.
- **Matrix Representation:** A square matrix of 0s and 1s, where a 1 indicates an existing relationship between the individuals presented by the row and column.

Key Limitation: Standard social network analysis is **static** and structural, ignoring the **processual aspects** of social activity. It is therefore inadequate for analyzing the process of fission.

3.2.4 The Capacitated Network Model

A Processual Model: This model views the network as a system of channels for information flow, enabling a processual analysis.

Model Specification: Defined as an ordered triplet (**V**, **E**, **C**).

- **V:** The set of individuals (nodes) in the network;
- **E:** The **existence matrix**, a standard 0/1 social network matrix indicating if a tie exists.
- **C:** The **capacity matrix**, which quantifies the relative strength (or potential for information flow) of each existing edge.

Determining Edge Capacity:

- Directly measuring "political information" flow is impossible.

- **Assumption:** The amount of information transmitted between two individuals is a **linear function** of the number of different social contexts in which they interact.
- **Method:** A scale of 8 interaction contexts was created (e.g., academic classes, bars, karate tournaments). The value for each edge in matrix C is the total number of contexts in which that pair of individuals was observed interacting.

3.2.5 Analysis and Results

Technique: The **maximum flow-minimum cut** labeling procedure.

- This technique models information as flowing from a **source** (Mr. Hi) to a **sink** (John A.).
- A **minimum cut** is the ‘bottleneck’ in the network – the break with the smallest capacity that separates the source from the sink.
- The **Max-Flow Min-Cut Theorem** states that the maximum possible flow between a source and a sink is equal to the capacity of the minimum cut.

Hypotheses Tested:

1. The minimum cut in the network will align with the factional divide.
2. The minimum cut will accurately predict membership in the two new clubs formed after the fission.

Findings: The model was highly accurate.

- It predicted faction membership with **100% accuracy**.
- It predicted membership in the post-fission clubs with **97% accuracy**.
- The single error involved an individual who was structurally part of John A.’s faction (and correctly placed on the sink side of the cut by the model) but joined Mr. Hi’s club for an overriding personal reason (an upcoming black belt test).

Uniqueness: The minimum cut was proven to be unique by reversing the network (source becomes sink) and re-running the analysis, which identified the same cut.

3.2.6 Conclusion and Implications

The Mechanism of Fission: The model reveals a ‘vicious cycle’ feedback mechanism.

- **Organizational Feedback:** Factional behaviour strengthens the network’s structural ‘cut’ or bottleneck.
- **Ideological Feedback:** The network bottleneck prevents the flow of information and shared understanding between factions, which in turn intensifies ideological division.

Generalizability of the Model:

- The presence of a **unique minimum cut** in a capacitated network model of any small group may indicate a structural weakness that could lead to fission.
- The model is flexible and can be built using different types of relationships (e.g., kinship) and other methods for assigning edge capacity.

Power of the Model: The capacitated network model is more powerful than standard network models because it is **processual**, not static, and incorporates more information (the capacity matrix C). It views the social system as an information processor.

4 Communities II

4.1 Roger V Gould. Multiple networks and mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871. *American Sociological Review*, pages 716–729, 1991.

4.1.1 Core Argument and Critique of Existing Research

Thesis: Successful social movement mobilization depends not on the sheer number of social ties, but on the **interplay between formal organizational networks and pre-existing informal social networks**. The **structure** of these networks is a crucial factor.

Critique of Prior Social Movement Research:

- Research often treats network factors as individual-level variables by simply counting a person’s social ties and using that count in regression models.
- This reductionist approach obscures two critical issues:
 1. **Network Structure:** The way social relations are patterned, which can create effects on a supra-individual level.
 2. **Network Multiplexity:** The existence of multiple, overlapping types of social ties (e.g., organizational and informal) between individuals.
- By focusing on a single network, previous studies have often neglected how pre-existing informal ties continue to matter even late in the mobilization process.

4.1.2 Case Study: The Paris Commune (1871)

Historical Context:

- Emerged from social discontent and France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.
- A conflict arose between the French national government under Adolphe Thiers and the people of Paris over the artillery of the **Paris National Guard**, a popular militia.
- The Commune, proclaimed on March 26, 1871, was a two-month experiment in democratic socialism that instituted policies like workers’ cooperatives and universal free education.
- It was brutally suppressed during the ‘**semaine sanglante**’ (bloody week) of May 21-28, resulting in approximately 15,000 deaths among Parisians.

Relevance as a Case Study:

- Insurgent mobilization occurred through a visible formal organization, the **Paris National Guard**.
- The Guard’s structure allows for a critical comparison:
 - Most battalions were recruited along neighbourhood lines (**residential battalions**).
 - An important exception was 35 **volunteer battalions**, which recruited members without regard to their place of residence.
- This setup permits a direct examination of how the **organizational network** (the Guard) interacted with the **informal network** (neighbourhood ties).

4.1.3 Analysis: The Interaction of Formal and Informal Networks

The Role of Informal Neighbourhood Ties:

- The residential recruitment policy was crucial because it linked the formal organization of the Guard to the informal social networks of neighbourhoods.
- Insurgents expressed a powerful, neighbourhood-based identity, with some units refusing to fight outside their home *quartier*.
- While historians have often viewed this ‘localism’ as a strategic military weakness, it was a fundamental **source of solidarity and commitment** to the insurgent cause.

Evidence from Arrest Patterns (Residential vs. Volunteer Battalions):

- **Finding:** During the *semaine sanglante*, residential battalions demonstrated greater cohesion and sustained resistance for longer than volunteer battalions.
- **Data Analysis:** A comparison of cumulative arrests for the two battalion types during the week of fighting.
 - **Early Surrender:** By second day, 45.2% of arrested volunteers had been detained, compared to only 26.4% for residential units. This suggests volunteer units surrendered more readily in the initial, less intense phase of fighting.
 - **Sustained Resistance:** In the final two days, 42.7% of total arrests for residential units occurred, compared to 31.9% for volunteer units, indicating that neighbourhood-based units fought on later into the week.
- **Conclusion:** Pre-existing informal ties were critical for maintaining solidarity even in the final moments of the insurrection, demonstrating that they are not just important for initial recruitment.

4.1.4 Network Autocorrelation Model

Objective: To quantitatively test if levels of resistance in different neighbourhoods were interdependent due to the network of organizational ties.

Methodology:

- **Model:** A network autocorrelation regression model ($y = \rho Wy + X\beta + \epsilon$) was used. This model posits that the outcome in one district (y) is influenced by exogenous variables (X) and by the outcomes in other districts to which it is linked (Wy).
- **Dependent Variables (y):** Two measures of resistance were used: (1) average battalion size and (2) deaths per 1,000 inhabitants.
- **Key Network Matrix (W):** A matrix representing **enlistment overlaps** – the number of Guardsmen from one district who served in the legion of another district.
- **Comparison:** The results of the enlistment network model were compared to a spatial model that used a simple geographical adjacency matrix to check if effects were merely due to proximity.

Key Findings:

- **A positive and significant autocorrelation effect (ρ) was found for the enlistment network model**, but not for the spatial model.
- **Interpretation:** High levels of commitment in one district enhanced commitment in other districts to which it was connected through enlistment overlaps. This interdependence was fundamentally social, not merely geographical.

The Directionality of Influence:

- The model was re-estimated using the **transpose of the W matrix** (W'), which tests for the reverse causal pathway (i.e., whether a district was influenced by outsiders serving in its units).
- **Results:** The autocorrelations coefficient became insignificant.
- **Conclusion:** The influence was **unidirectional**. A district's resistance level was affected by the experiences of its **own residents serving in other districts**, but not by the presence of insurgents from other districts serving within its units. Insurgents serving away from home influenced their neighbours back home, but not the men they served alongside from other neighbourhoods.

4.1.5 Theoretical Implications

Interaction is Key: The effectiveness of formal organizational links is dependent on their **interaction with informal social networks**. The cross-neighbourhood solidarity created by enlistment overlaps only emerged because the individuals forming those links were also deeply embedded in their own neighbourhood ties.

Structure and Multiplexity are Inseparable:

- To understand the effect of enlistment overlaps, one must first recognize the structure of both informal groups (neighbourhoods) and formal groups (Guard units).
- The influence process operated through the entire network structure, including direct and indirect links, which would be obscured by simply counting ties.

Generalizing the Findings for Social Movement Theory:

- Mobilization can be viewed as a 'mapping' of formal organizational ties onto an existing informal social structure.
- **Completely cross-cutting organizations** (like the volunteer battalions) that ignore pre-existing networks struggle to sustain commitment.
- **The intermediate case**, where mobilization largely follows informal structures but also creates links across them (as in the Paris Commune), provides the greatest potential for formal and informal networks to jointly create solidarity

4.2 Cesi Cruz, Julien Labonne, and Pablo Querubin. Social network structures and the politics of public goods provision: evidence from the philippines. *American Political Science Review*, 114(2):486–501, 2020.

4.2.1 Core Research Question and Thesis

Research Question: What is the relationship between a village's social structure and the political incentives for providing public goods?

Main Argument (Thesis): In contexts where **politicians, not communities, are responsible for public goods provision**, greater **social fractionalization can increase public goods provision and electoral competition**.

Mechanism: Social cohesion (low fractionalization) can facilitate **elite capture**. Concentrated social networks give a few clan leaders strong bargaining power to demand private, clientelistic transfers from politicians in exchange for votes, which crowds out spending on public goods. In fragmented villages, this strategy is less effective, making broad public goods provision a more appealing electoral strategy for politicians.

4.2.2 Context: Local Politics in the Philippines

Public Goods Provision:

- **Municipal mayors** are primarily responsible for delivering local public goods like health centers, schools, and infrastructure.
- Funding comes mostly from **central government transfers** (Internal Revenue Allotment), not local taxes. This makes community-level collective action for funding less relevant.
- Despite available funds, there is significant under-provision of public goods, often attributed to **clientelism** (exchanging private goods/money for votes).

Social and Political Structure:

- **Clans and extended families** are the key actors in local politics.
- Political alliances require securing the support of clan leaders, who leverage norms of reciprocity (e.g., “debt of gratitude”) to deliver blocs of votes.
- Political parties are weak; politics is highly personalistic and organized around families.

4.2.3 Methodology: Identifying Clans and Measuring Fractionalization

Data:

- **Networks:** Constructed from a survey of **20 million individuals** in over 15,000 villages.
- **Public Goods:** 2010 population census data on the presence of schools, markets, health centers, etc.
- **Elections:** Official results for municipal and village elections.

Constructing Family Networks:

- A **network tie (edge)** between two families is identified when a marriage between members of those families is observed.
- This is possible due to Philippine naming conventions, where individuals carry two family names (father’s and mother’s maiden name), revealing a marriage tie in their own or their parents’ generation.

Identifying Clans via Community Detection:

- Clans are proxied by **“communities” in the family marriage network** – groups of families with dense internal marriage ties and sparse ties to other groups.
- The **Girvan-Newman algorithm** is used to identify these communities by sequentially removing network edges with the highest ‘betweenness centrality’. The **Walktrap algorithm** is used as a robustness check.

Measuring Social Fractionalization (SF):

- The primary independent variable is a **Herfindahl index of social fractionalization**.
- **Formula:** $SF = 1 - \sum_{c=1}^C s_c^2$.
- **Interpretation:** The probability that two randomly selected families in a village belong to different clans.

Empirical Strategy:

- Village level OLS regressions with **municipality fixed effects** to control for all municipality-wide factors and focus on variation *within* a municipality.
- **To address endogeneity** (e.g., public goods attracting new families and altering networks), an instrumental variables (IV) approach is used. The instrument is a fractionalization measure built from a network of only individuals aged 45+, representing marriages from a generation prior.

4.2.4 Key Findings

Fractionalization and Public Goods:

- There is a **positive and statistically significant correlation between social fractionalization and the provision of public goods**.
- A one standard deviation increase in SF leads to a 6% point increase in the probability of a village having a health center (a 10% increase relative to the mean) and an 8% point increase for a highschool (a 40% increase relative to the mean).
- The finding is robust to numerous controls (population, wealth, etc.) and the IV strategy.

Fractionalization and Political Competition:

- **Social fractionalization is positively correlated with greater political competition.**
- More fragmented villages have **less concentrated political influence** (i.e., a larger number of different individuals are named by residents as politically influential).
- They also feature **more candidates** running for village office and **narrower win margins** in both village and mayoral elections.

Ruling Out Alternative Explanations: The study finds that social fractionalization is **not correlated with preference heterogeneity** or measures of **collective action**. This supports the theory that elite capture, rather than community disagreement or inaction, is the key mechanism in this context.

Clientelism (Indirect Evidence): Higher social fractionalization is associated with **lower voter turnout**. In the Philippines, high turnout is strongly correlated with clientelism and vote-buying, so this suggests **less clientelism in more fragmented villages**.

4.2.5 Contributions to Theory

Reverses Conventional Wisdom: Challenges the widely held view that social fractionalization (often ethnic or religious) undermines the public goods provision. The effect of fractionalization depends on the **institutional context** – specifically, whether communities or politicians are responsible for service delivery.

Highlights Elite Capture: Provides a framework where social cohesion, by concentrating political influence, can enable elite capture and harm governance. Fractionalization acts as a check on this concentration of power.

Advances Network Analysis: It is one of the first studies to use large-scale, individual-level data to construct family networks to study political incentives at a national scale.

5 Social Networks

5.1 Jennifer M Larson, Jonathan Nagler, Jonathan Ronen, and Joshua A Tucker. Social networks and protest participation: Evidence from 130 million twitter users. American Journal of Political Science, 63(3):690–705, 2019.

5.1.1 Study Context and Research Problem

Case Study: The 2015 Charlie Hebdo protest in Paris, following the terrorist attack on January 7, 2015.

Fundamental Question: Why do some individuals decide to attend a protest while other do not?

Historical Constraint: Pinning down the role of social ties in protest participation has been elusive due to data limitations. Traditional methods relying on recall are error-prone and expensive, limiting empirical

studies of social network structure in protests.

Solution: Use of social media (Twitter) data provides an unprecedented opportunity to observe real-time social ties and online behaviour, coupled with geolocation to measure real-world protest attendance.

5.1.2 Theoretical Framework: Social Theories of Protest

Conventional Wisdom: An individual's decision to protest depends on the decisions of others in their social network.

Influence Mechanism: Social network links serve as **channels of information and peer pressure**.

Core Premise: An individual is more likely to attend if exposed to **closer social contacts who are also likely to attend**.

Protest Valuation (V_i): An individual will participate if their net valuation (V_i) is positive, which is increasing in their exposure to others (j) who value protests highly ($V_j > 0$).

Exposure Factors: Exposure ($E_{i,j}(d_{i,j}, s_{i,j})$) is determined by network position:

- **Network Distance ($d_{i,j}$):** Exposure is decreasing in network distance.
- **Path Strength ($s_{i,j}$):** Exposure is increasing in path strength.

5.1.3 Methodology and Data Collection:

Platform: Twitter data, collected by NYU SMaPP laboratory.

Real World Measure: User geolocation confirmed physical presence or absence at the protest site.

Sample Definition: Users who sent at least one geotagged tweet containing one of seven specified Charlie Hebdo hashtags (e.g., #CharlieHebdo, #JeSuisCharlie)

Data Sets (n = 764 each):

- **Protesters (P):** 764 users geo-tagged in Paris but more than five kilometers away from the protest site. They were interested and eligible but did not participate at the site.
- **Comparison Set (C):** 764 users geo-tagged in Paris but more than five kilometers away from the protest site. They were interested and eligible but did not participate at the site.

Network Measurement: Full social network information measure out to two degrees (ties and ties of ties) for both sets. The total dataset contained 129,665,566 Twitter users.

Selection Control: The comparison set was carefully chosen to hold constant potential selection drivers like **interest in the political issue** (shared hashtag use) and eligibility (being in Paris). Protestors and comparison users exhibited similar political interest and activity levels based on various measures.

5.1.4 Network Hypotheses (Derived Predictions)

A. Network Distance Hypotheses (Proximity)

- **H1 (Direct Ties):** The average proportion of each protestor's direct ties ($d_{i,j} = 1$) to the other protestors (g^P) is greater than the proportion for comparison users (g^C).
- **H2 (Indirect Ties):** The average proportion of each protestor's ties of ties ($d_{i,j} = 2$) to other protestors (g^P) is greater than the proportion for comparison users (g^C).

B. Tie Strength Hypotheses (Quality of Relationship)

- **H3 (Triadic Ties):** A tie is strong if it is part of a triangle (indicative of a clique). The average proportion of protestors' triangles that contain at least one other protestor is larger than for comparison users.
- **H4 (Reciprocated Ties):** A tie is strong if it is reciprocated (mutual follow). The number of reciprocated ties between individuals in P is larger than the number of reciprocated ties between individuals in C .

5.1.5 Key Findings

The results provided **strong empirical evidence** to support all four hypotheses. Protesters were significantly more connected via all tested tie types.

- **H1:** Protestors are much more likely to be directly connected to others who protest. Over 80% of comparison users had zero ties to others in their set, compared to less than 40% of participants.
- **H2:** Protestors had a larger proportion of ties to other protestors.
- **H3:** Fewer than 40% of protestors had no triadic ties including another protestor, while over 70% of comparison users had none.
- **H4:** Protestors averaged about three reciprocated ties to other protestors, compared to only about 0.18 for comparison users.

General Network Characteristics: Protestors generally had more ties (833 vs. 418) and more ties of ties (134,623 vs. 85,830) than the comparison set.

6 Leader Networks

6.1 Reyko Huang, Daniel Silverman, and Benjamin Acosta. Friends in the profession: Rebel leaders, international social networks, and external support for rebellion. *International Studies Quarterly*, 66(1), 2022

6.1.1 Core Argument and Context

Traditional Focus vs. New Approach: Existing studies on third-party support for rebel groups typically focus on **geopolitical calculations** of states and the **organizational characteristics** of rebel groups. This research, in contrast, argues that the role of rebel leaders' attributes and **elite social networks** has been largely neglected.

The Central Thesis: Rebel leaders' personal backgrounds, specifically their **prior international experiences**, shape their ability to obtain foreign support during conflict.

Mechanism (Micro-foundations): International experiences provide opportunities for future rebel leaders to interact with foreign individuals who may later enter politics or gain prominence in their societies, allowing them to build valuable **interpersonal social networks across borders**. These 'friends in the profession' offer key points of contact when leaders later seek wartime external backing.

The work of rebellion, an 'extraordinary politics', often has origins in ordinary, **pre-conflict relationships**.

6.1.2 Theoretical Framework: International Experiences and Networking

International experiences are especially conducive to developing transnational networks that would-be rebel leaders can utilize for wartime purposes. The authors examine four types of prior international experience:

- **Study Abroad:** Marked by active and heightened social networking with diverse peers, often concentrated in historical hub cities like Paris, Cairo etc. John Garang (SPLA) studied at Iowa State University; his contact there, Brian D'Silva, later led lobbying efforts in Washington for South Sudan's independence. Amilcar Cabral and Agostinho Neto studied together in Lisbon.
- **Exile:** Living abroad as a refugee or exile facilitates significant intra- and inter-ethnic social networking, often in centers like Algiers ("Mecca of Revolution") or Maputo. Paul Kagame (RPF) established a close relationship with Yoweri Museveni during his years in exile in Uganda, serving in Museveni's NRA. Jalal Talabani (PUK) fled Iraq for Syria.
- **Work Abroad:** Extended professional experience in fields like academia, business, or government offers chances to acquire new international networks. Hasan di Tiro (GAM) used extensive international business contacts to secure Libyan military training via an acquaintance who was Libya's ambassador to Sweden. Ernest Wamba dia Wamba (RCD) taught at universities abroad.
- **Military Training Abroad:** Formal or informal training camps serve as key meeting points for future state and rebel elites, fostering lasting connections. Foday Sankoh (RUF) befriending Charles Taylor (NPFL) during guerrilla training in Muammar Qaddafi's Libya, forming an alliance that provided mutual military backing and defined regional politics.

Easing the Principal-Agent Problem: External state support for rebels is often complicated by the **principal-agent problem** – the risk that rebels (agents) will abuse delegated authority for their own ends. State leaders are more likely to view a rebel groups as a 'good, competent agent' if they are personally acquainted with its leadership from past experiences.