

# Social Networks and Child Soldier Recruitment

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### Networks of Cooperation and Conflict In The Middle East

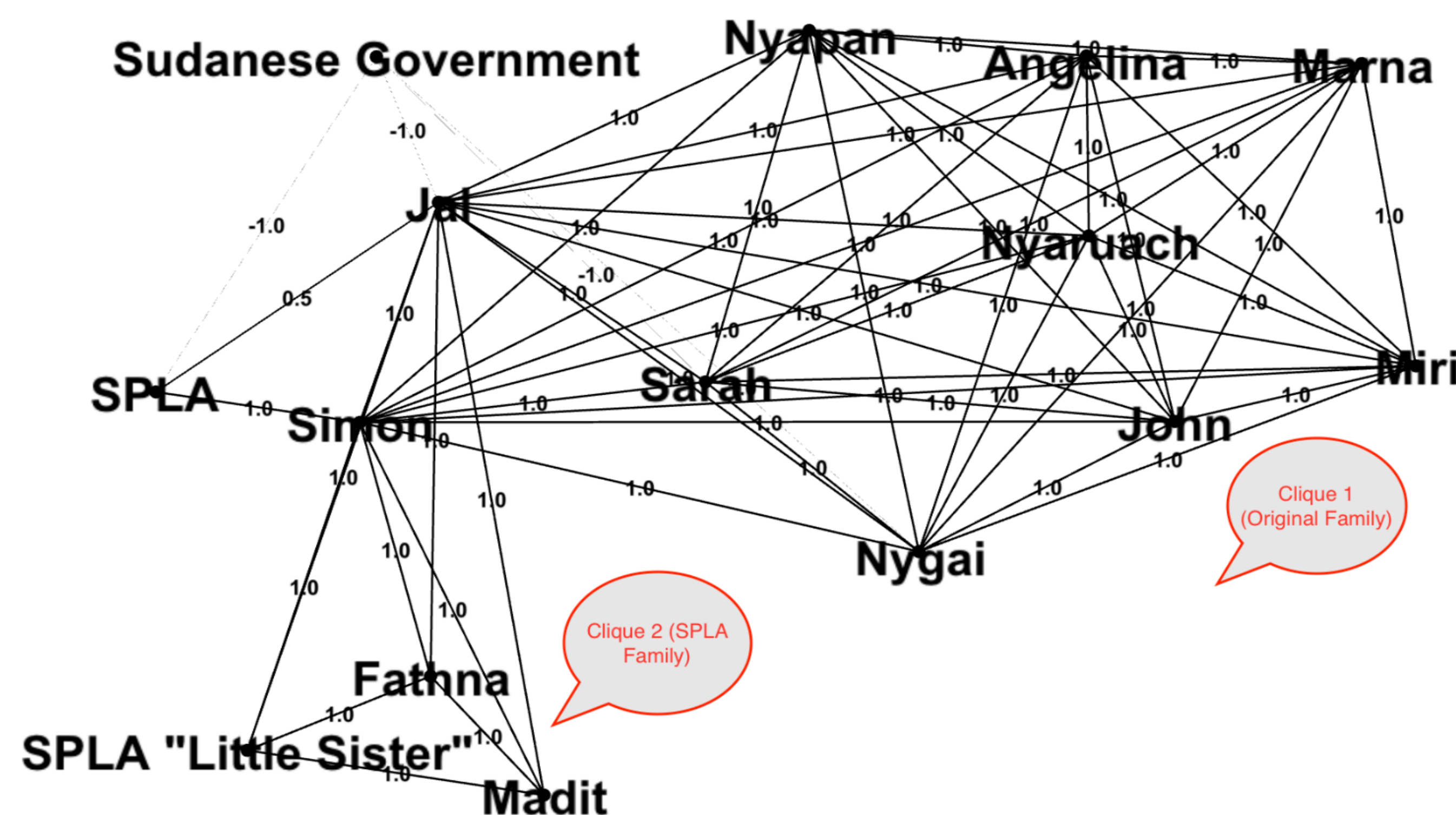
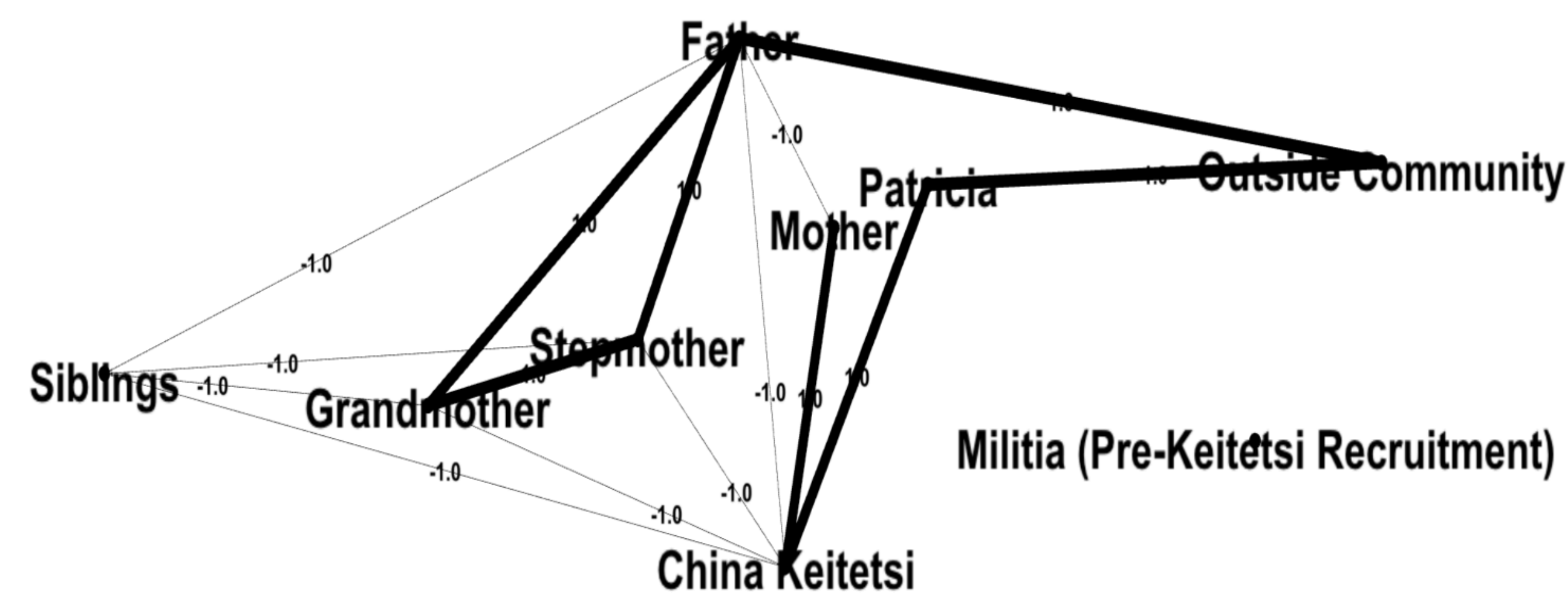
## Introduction

- "No one is born violent. No child in Africa, Latin America, or Asia wants to be part of war." – Ishmael Beah
- Theory:  $b_i + c_i > 0$  for a child soldier to join an army (Siegel 2009)
  - Assume  $b_i$  is negative
  - Social networks affect whether  $c_i$  increases

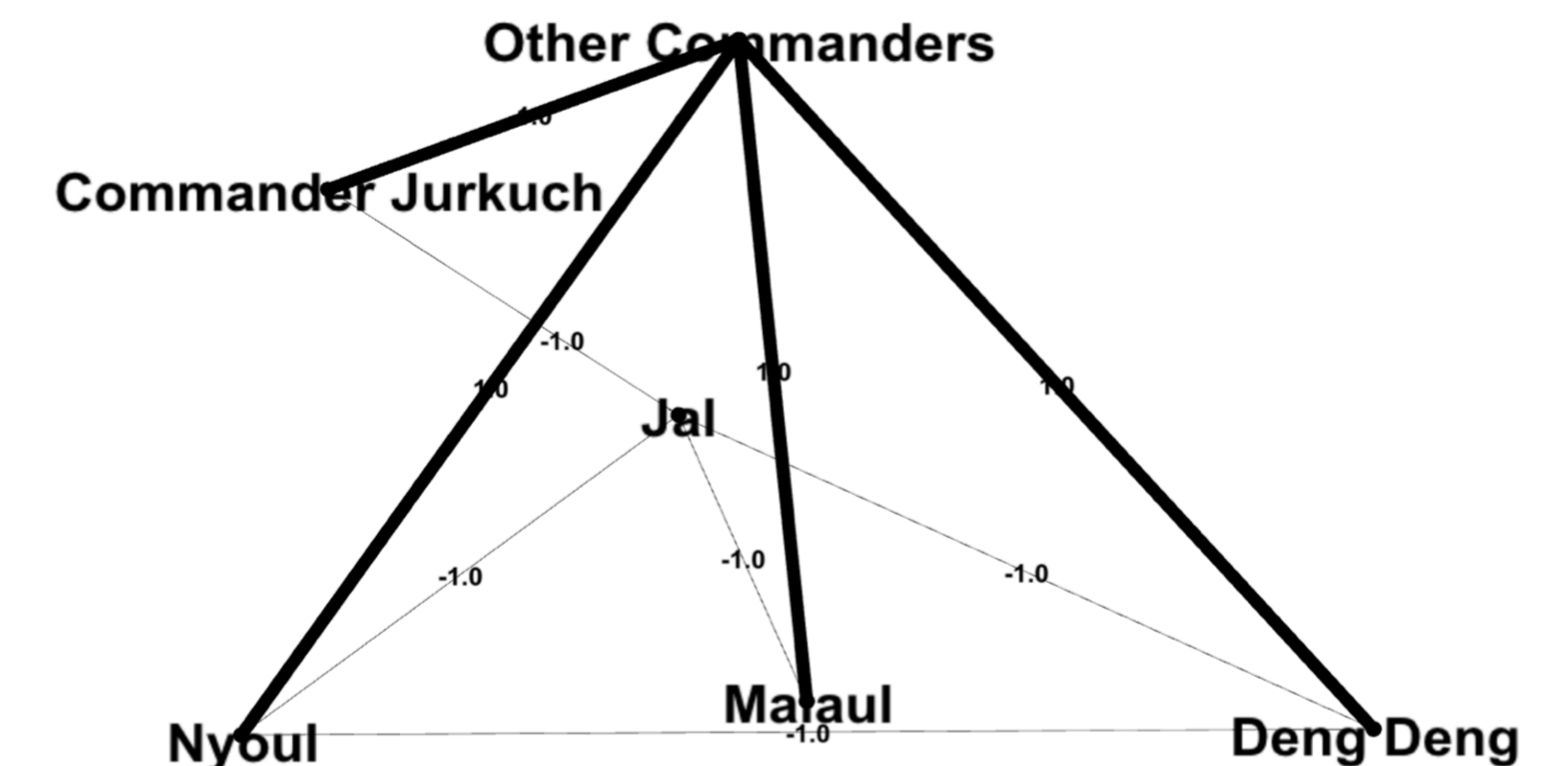
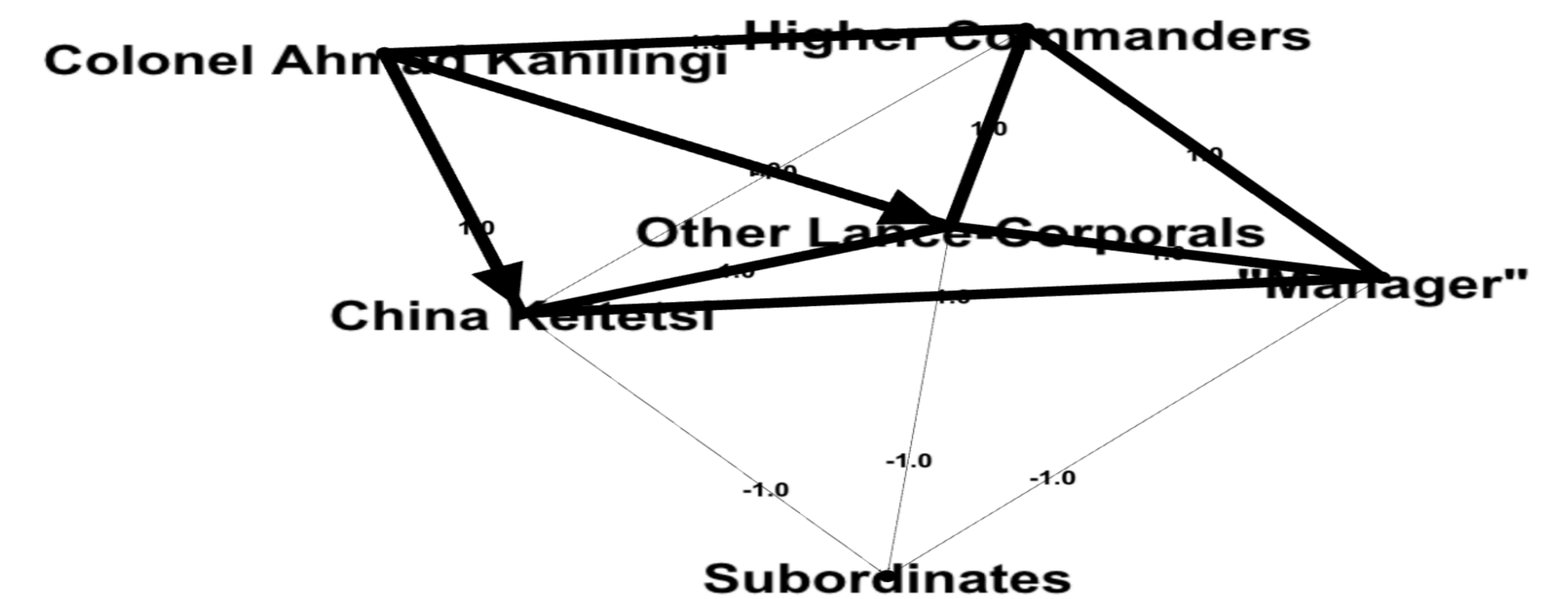
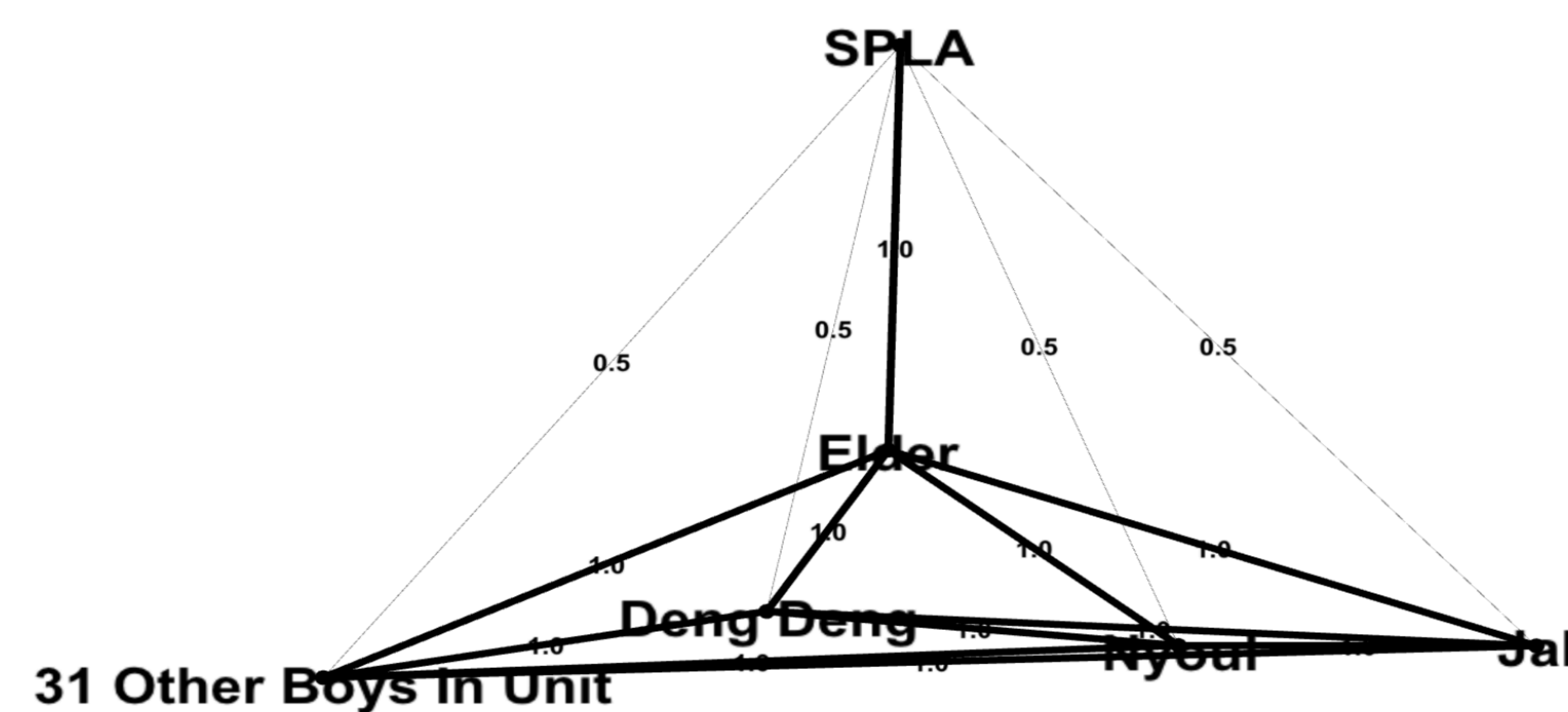
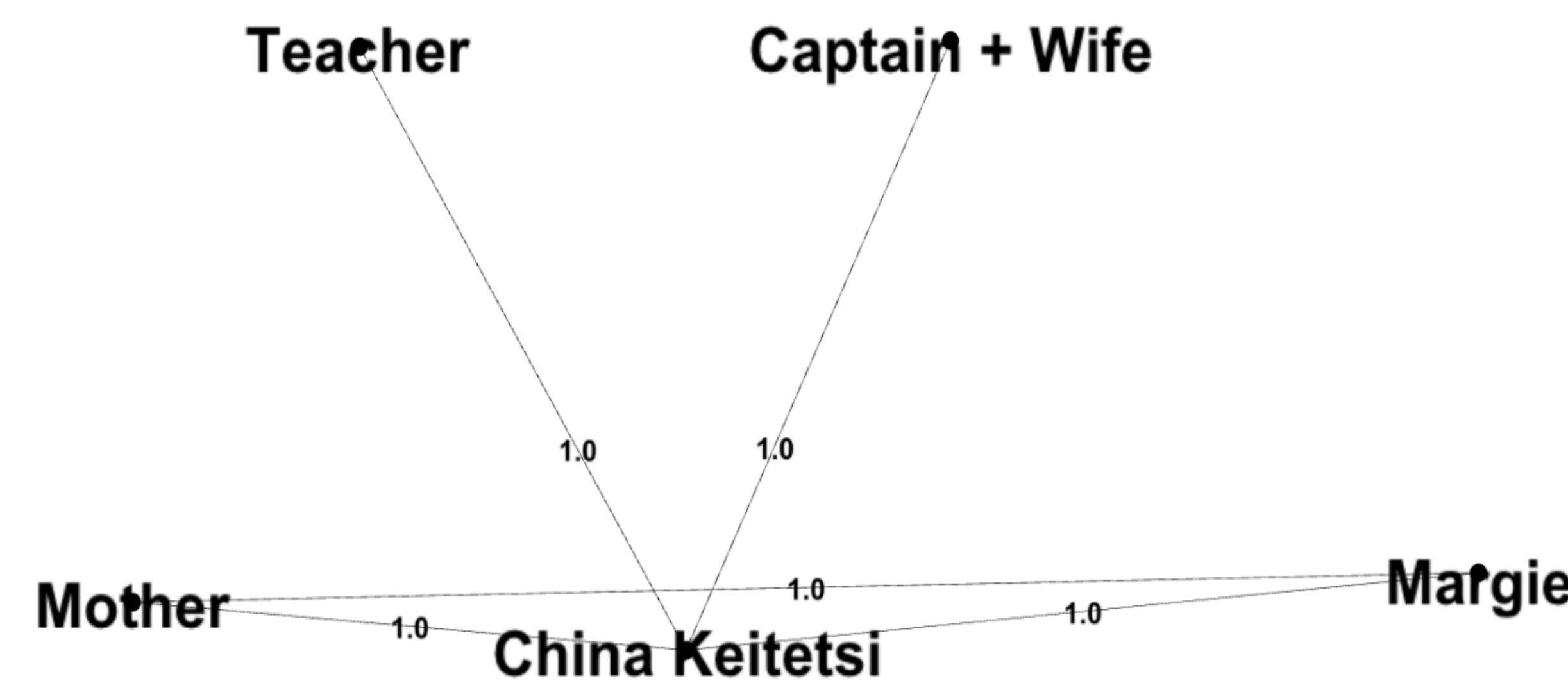
## Methods

- Two autobiographies:
  - "Child Soldier" by China Keitetsi for the Lord's Resistance Army
  - "War Child" by Emmanuel Jal for the Sudan People's Liberation Army

## Networks (Recruitment)



## Networks (Retention)



## Discussion

- How militias recruited Keitetsi and Jal
  - The LRA exploited the eigenvector centrality of Keitetsi's father, with whom she had a negative tie.
  - Jal's father, an SPLA commander, created two parallel families at home and in the SPLA.
- How militias retained Keitetsi and Jal
  - The LRA made Keitetsi a commander, isolating her.
  - The SPLA isolated Jal by making his friends commanders.

## Conclusion

- Prosecution and Reintegration
  - Understanding social networks and retention can shed light on whether prosecuting child soldiers is just
  - Keitetsi could not reintegrate effectively because she was in a position of power in the army but was not as a civilian.
- Future Research
  - Large-N studies
  - The networks of leaving an army

## References

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- Keitetsi, China. Child Soldier: Fighting for My Life. London: Souvenir, 2004. Print
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