Social Networks and Child Soldier Recruitment
Neelesh Moorthy
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)

- 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.

Discussion

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