Personal networks and ethnic identities

The case of Argentinean immigrants in Catalonia - Spain

Javier Avila Molero

Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona

Immigration

1. Is a radical change of social and cultural context
2. In the first phase the process of immigration implies:
   a. The fragmentation of the personal networks in the home country
   b. The need to build a new personal network
      In the host country

Question:

How do Argentinean immigrants build personal networks in Catalonia?
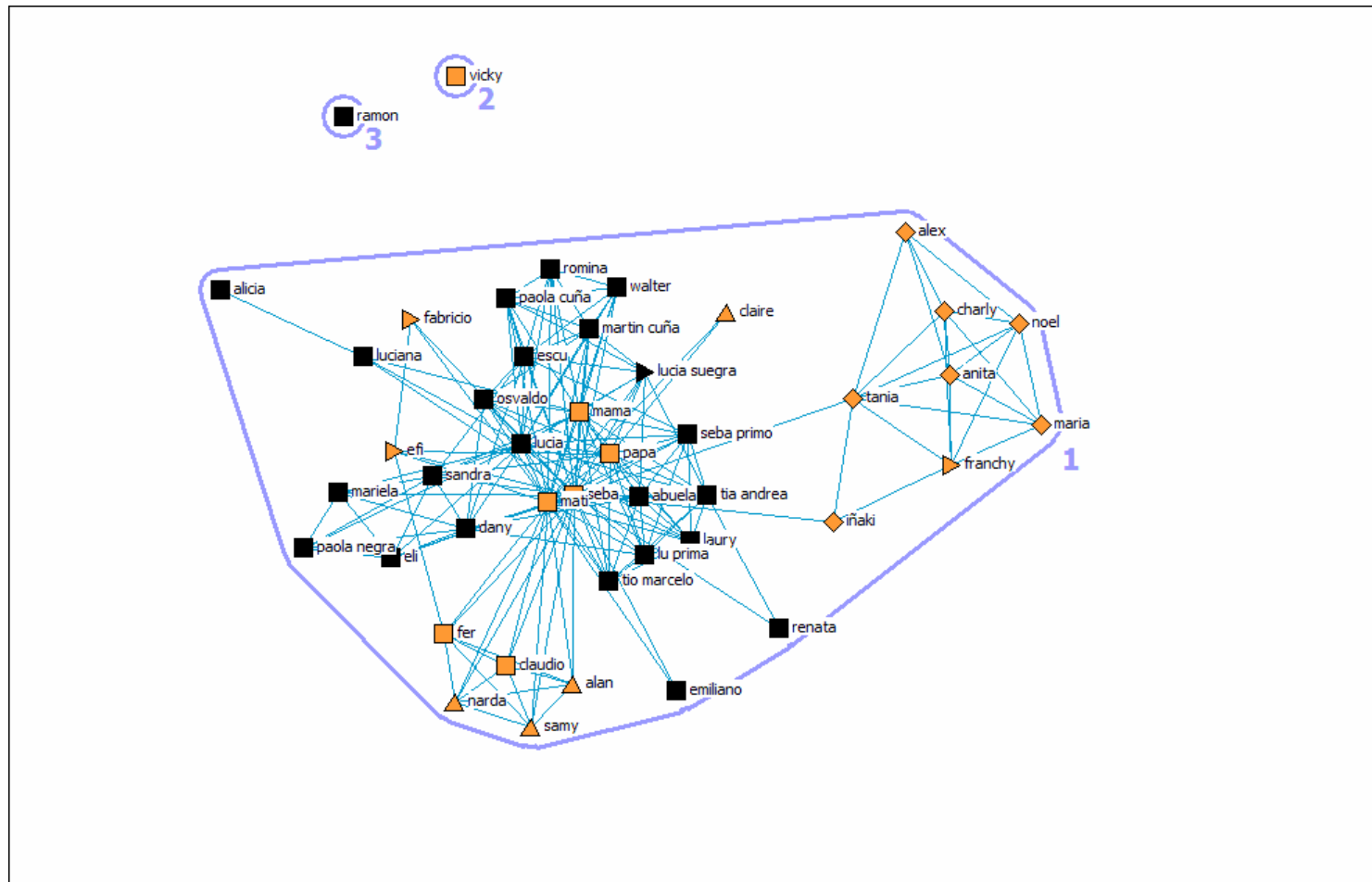
The research

Ours Tools for research:

    a.   Egonet survey for personal networks (45 alters)

    b.   Qualitative interviews about personal network using Egonet

    c.   We are collecting data in two waves (2006) (2007)

1. 2006: We collected 50 personal networks of Argentineans in Catalonia (Egonet) (first wave).

2. 2007: We are in process of collecting a second wave of personal networks (second wave)

3. We are finding very important changes in the structure and composition of immigrants´ personal networks from one year (2006) to the other (2007)
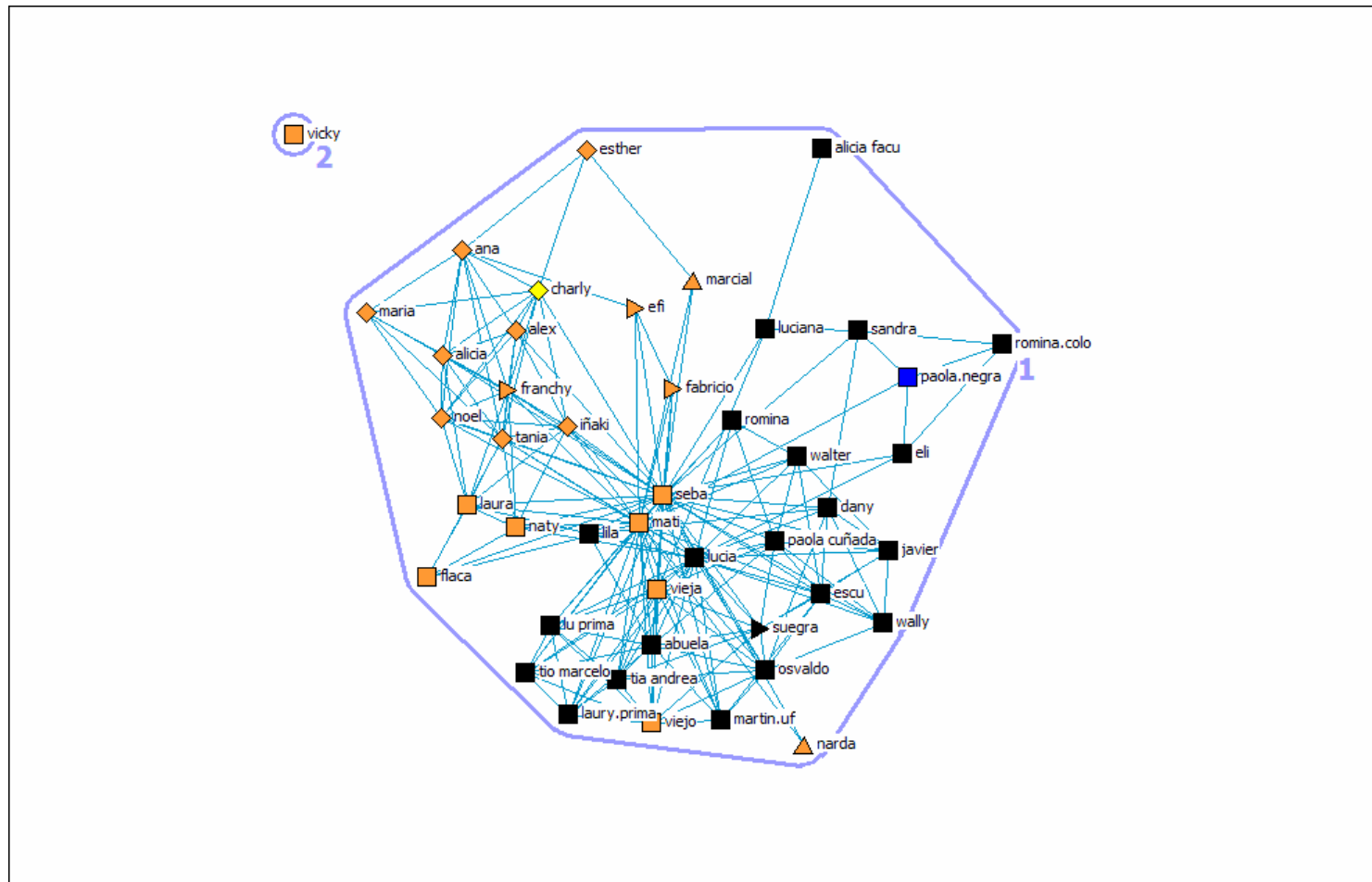
Personal Networks and immigrant identity

1. Immigrant develops a new life in many new social settings.

2. In the first phase of immigrant adaptation, social life has important changes.

- Personal networks can help us to understand the complexity of the change in:

  - The new context of immigrants´ social interaction
  - The development of a new ethnic identity

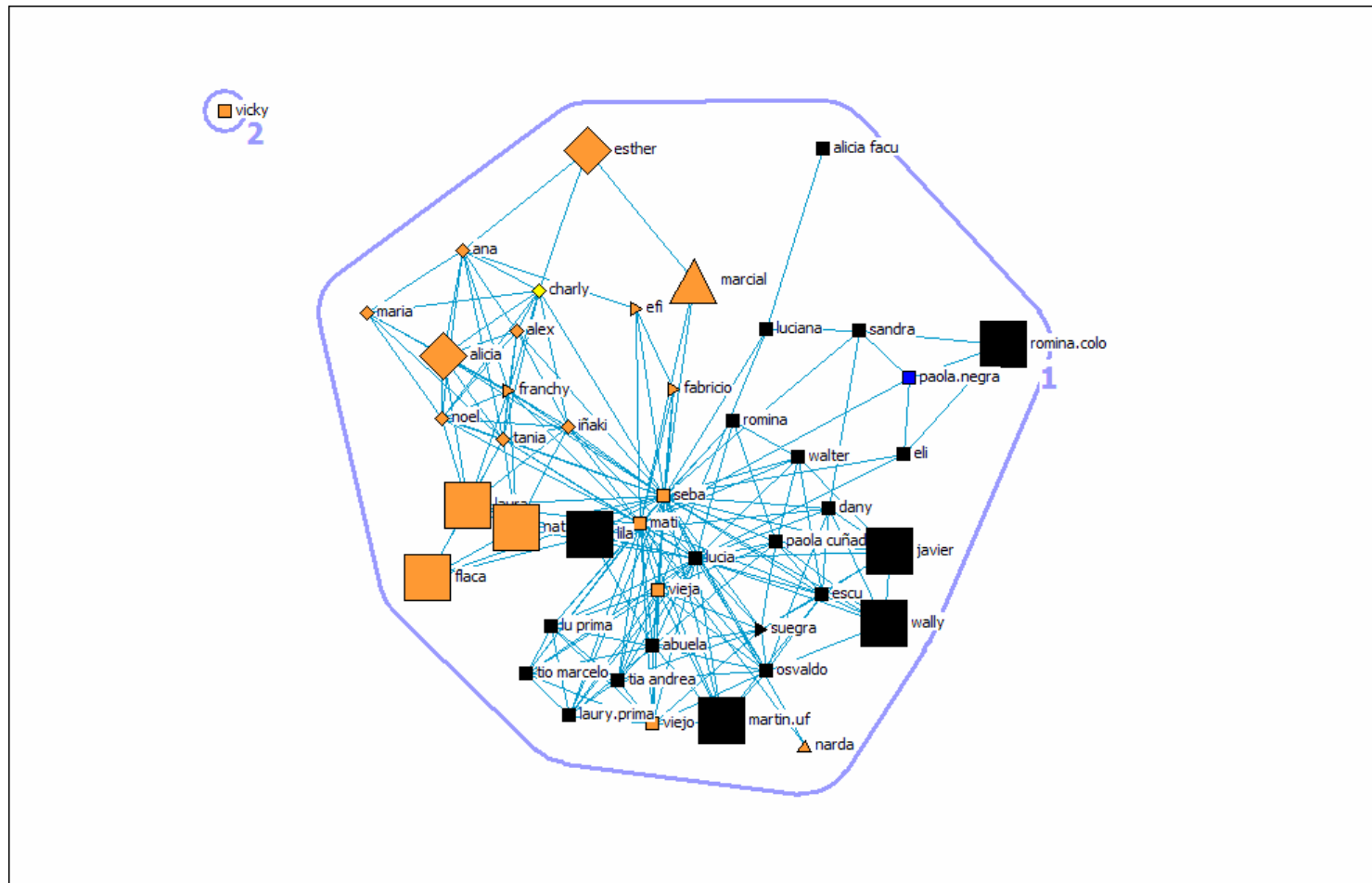 This process is especially intense in the first phase of immigrant adaptation to the host society.
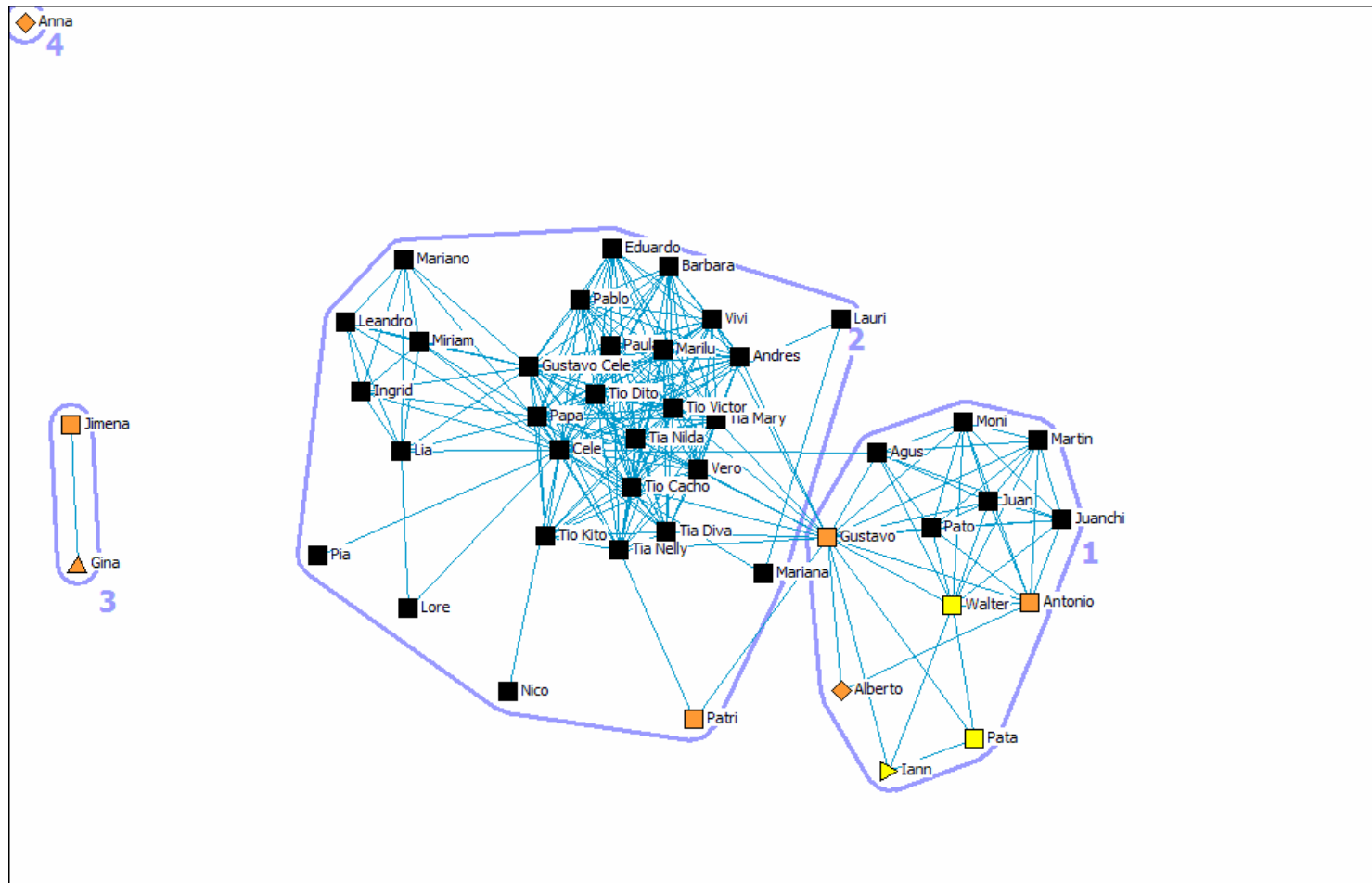
Case 1: Aldana (2006)

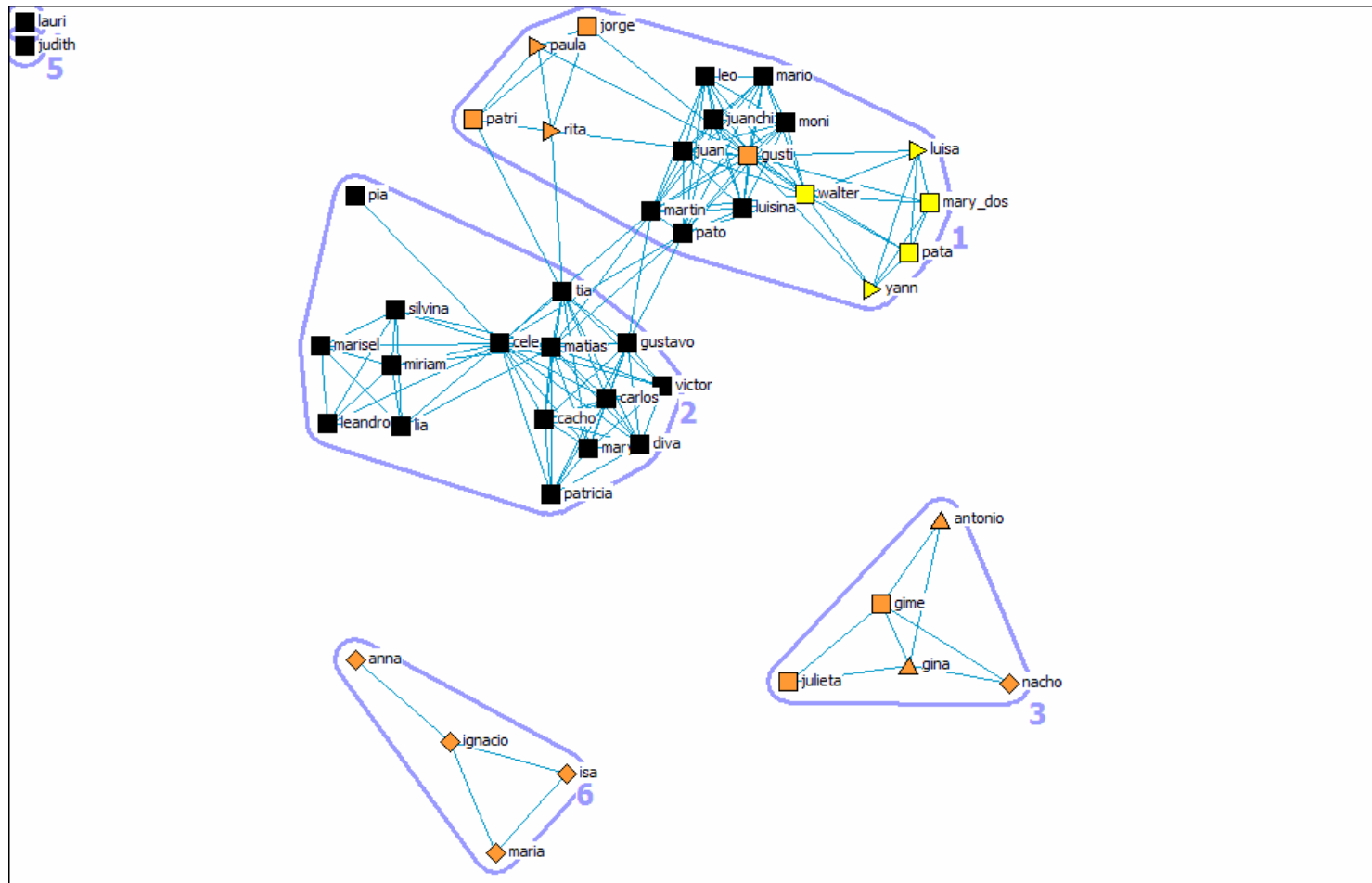# Case 1: Aldana (2007)

Case 1: Aldana
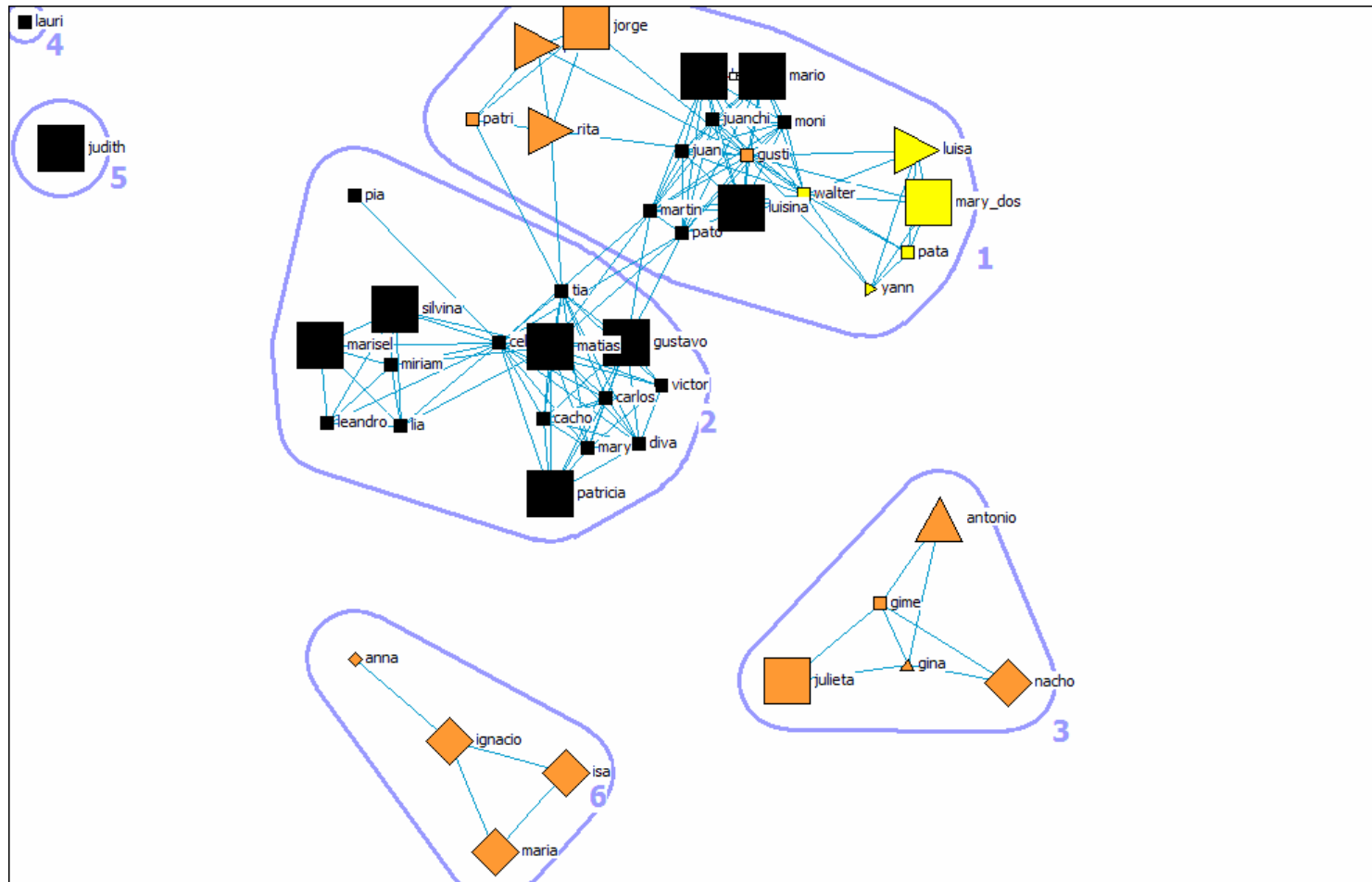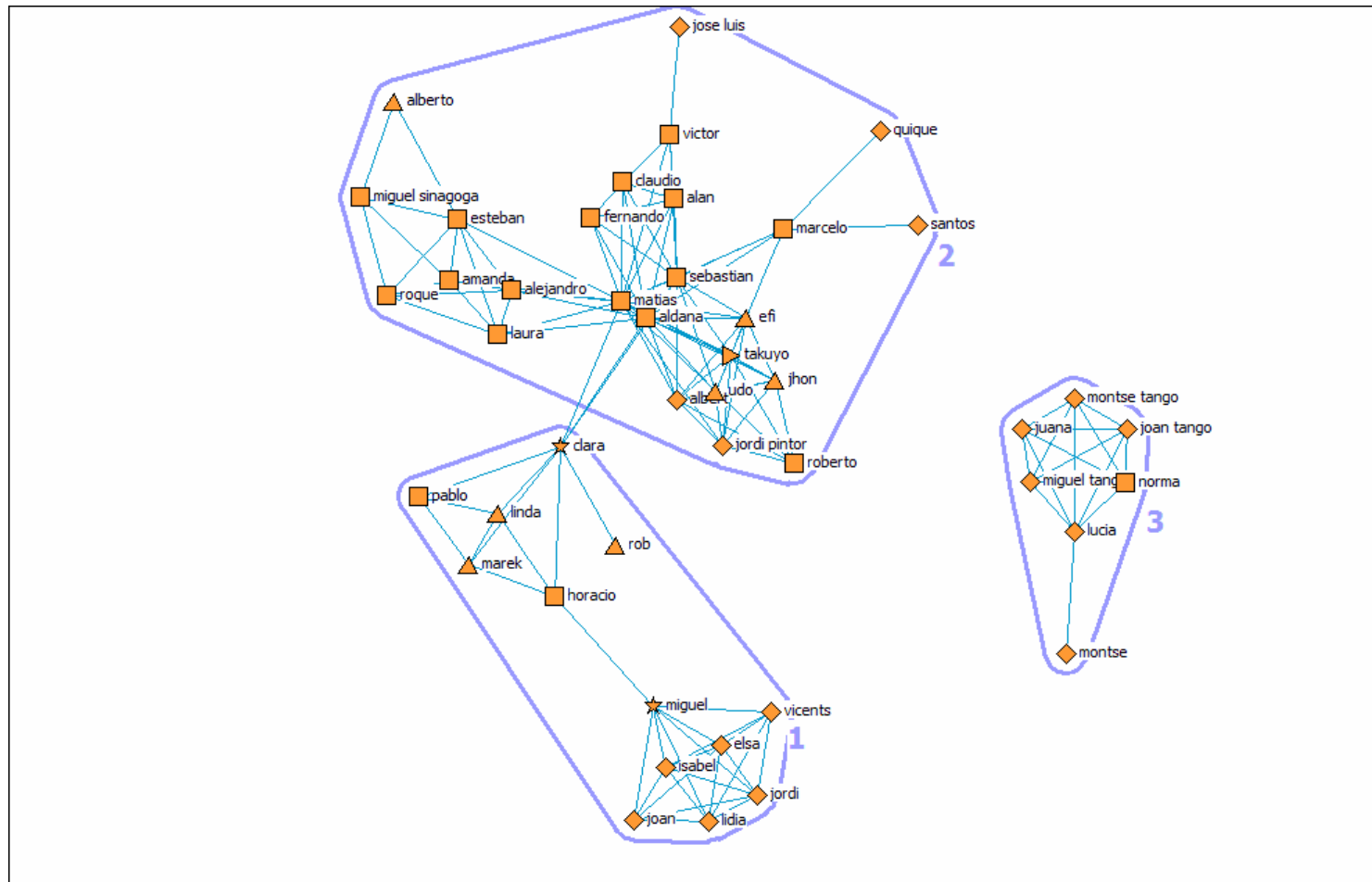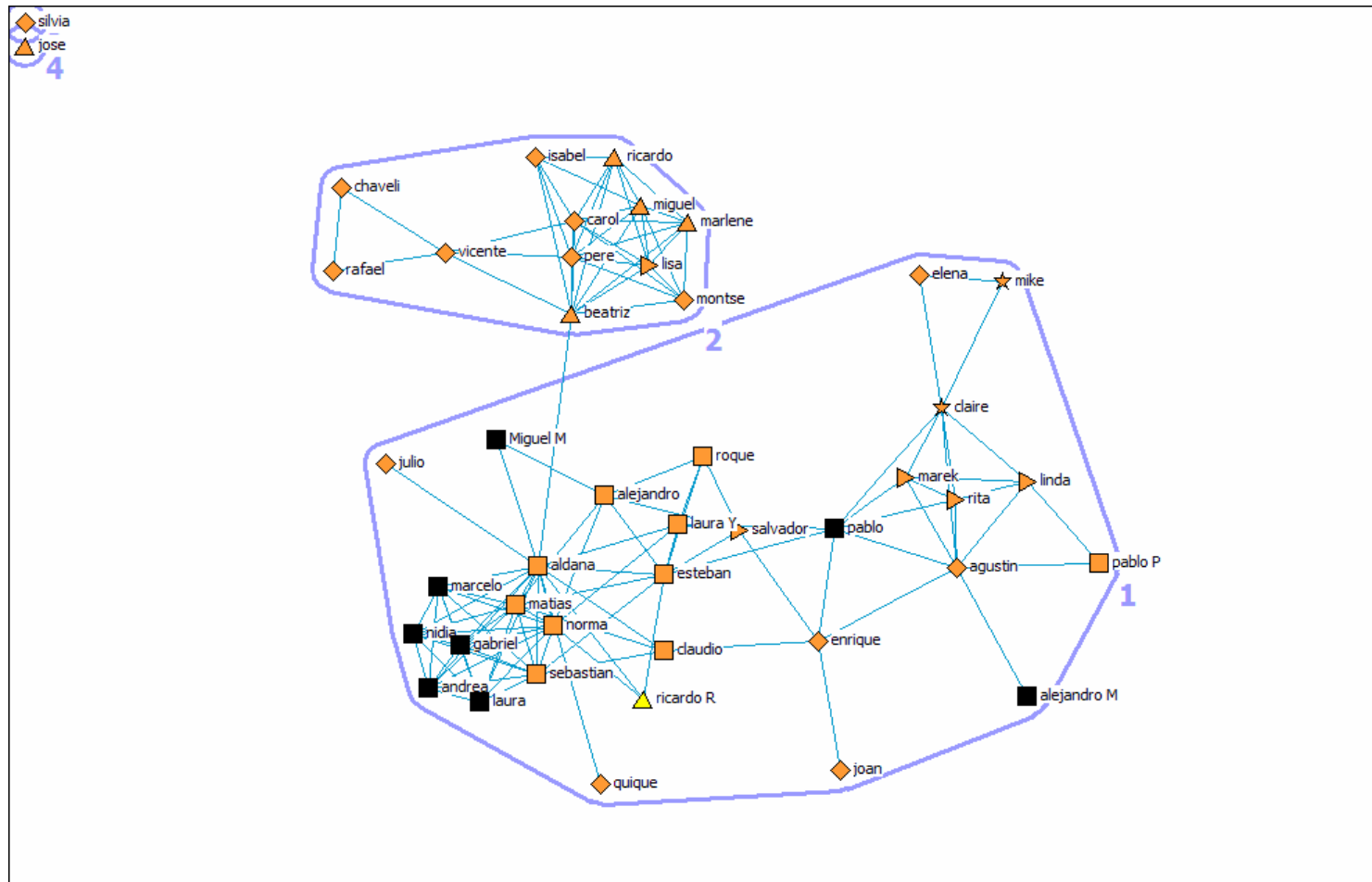# change 2006-2007

Case 2: Carla (2006)
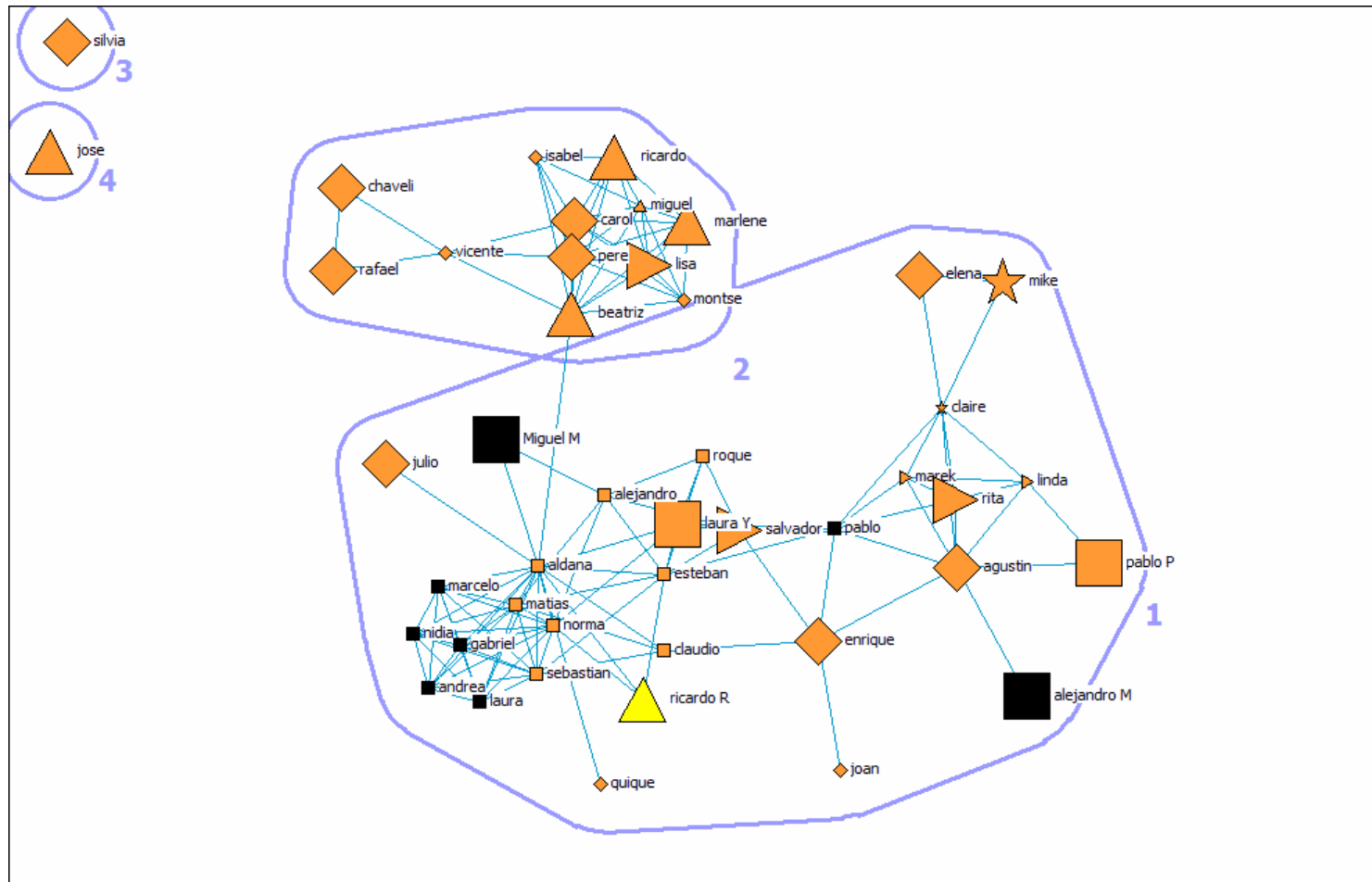
Case 2: Carla (2007)

Case 2: Carla
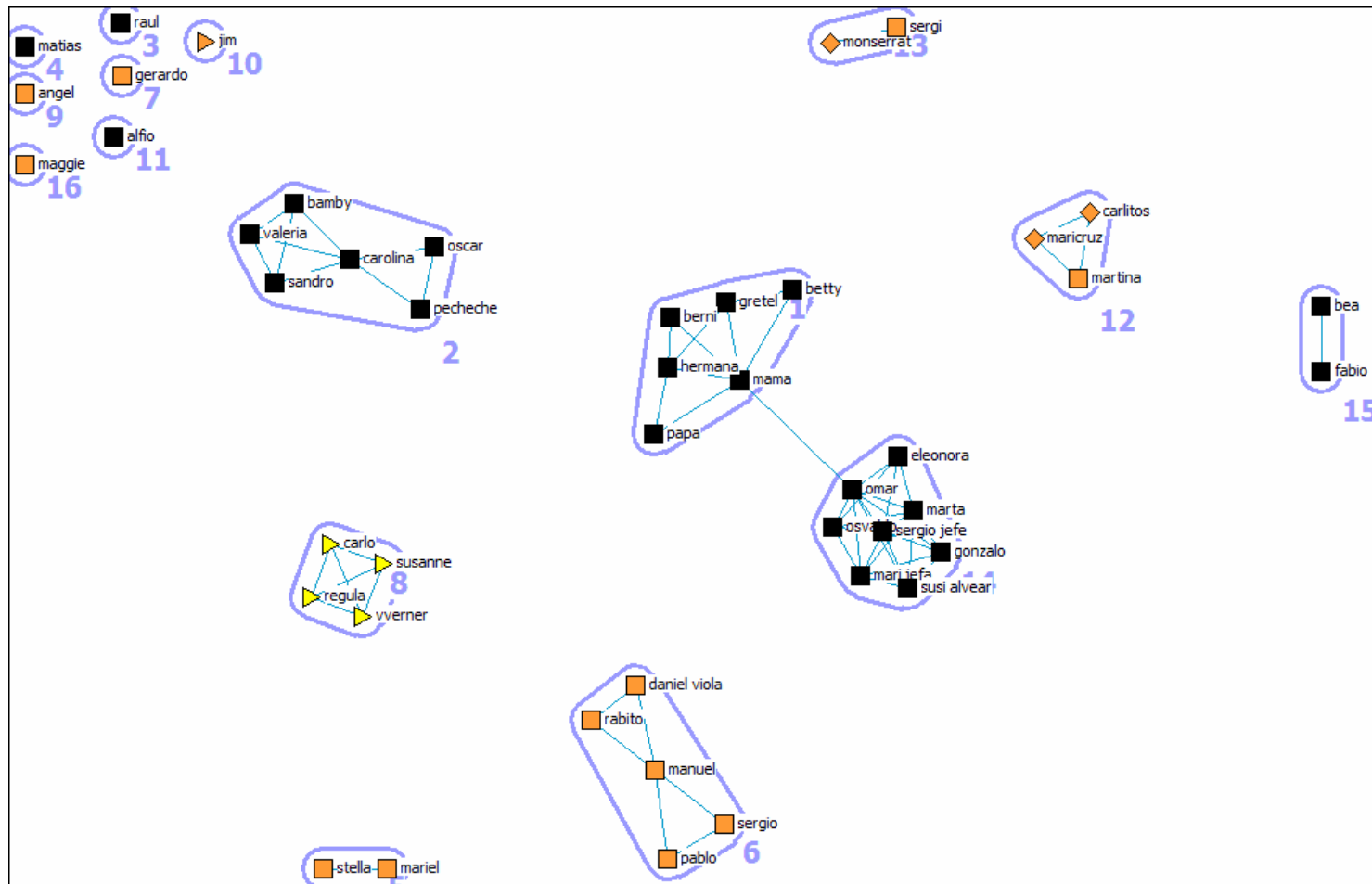
Case 3: Marcos (2006)
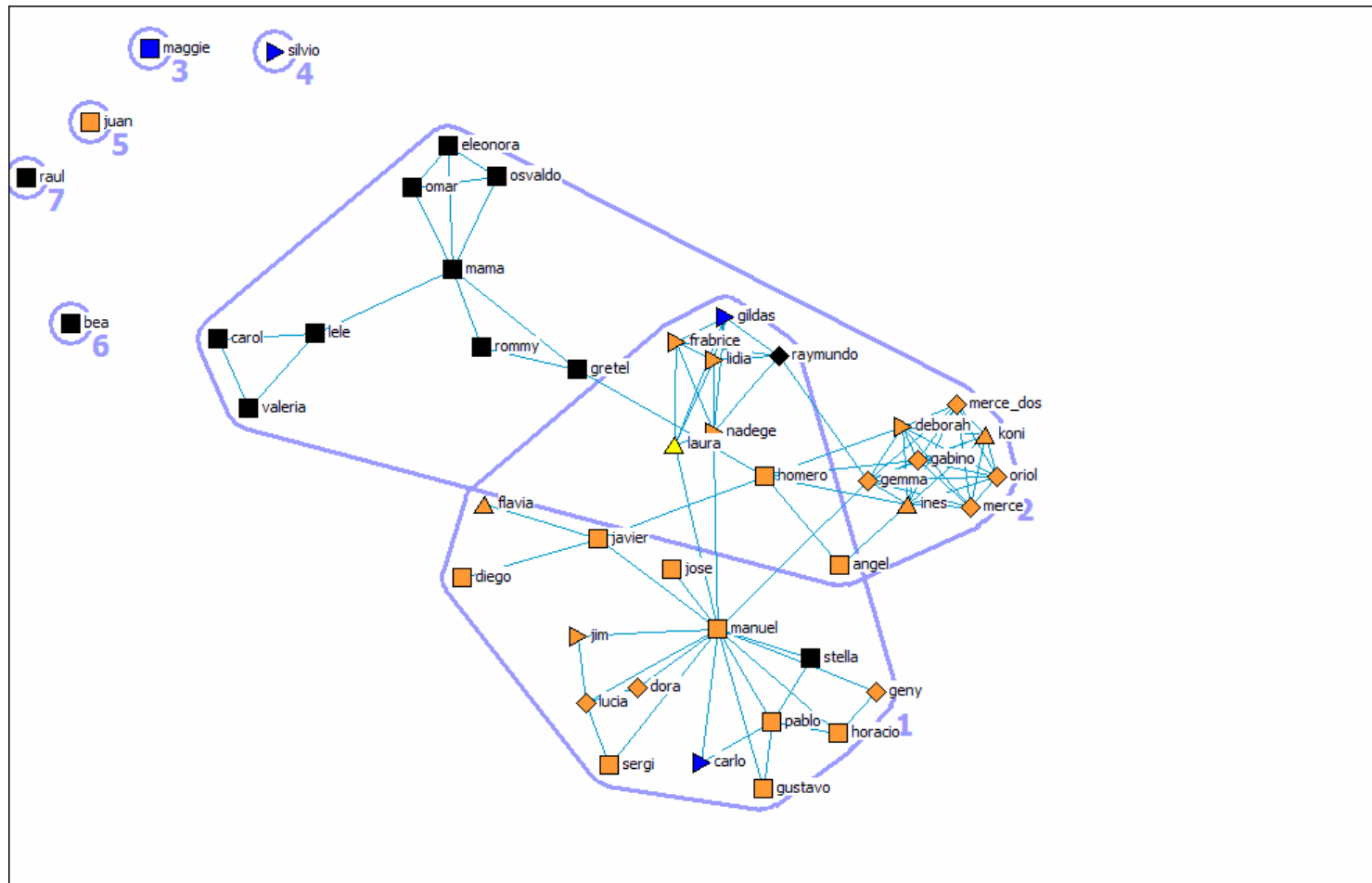
Case 3: Marcos (2007)
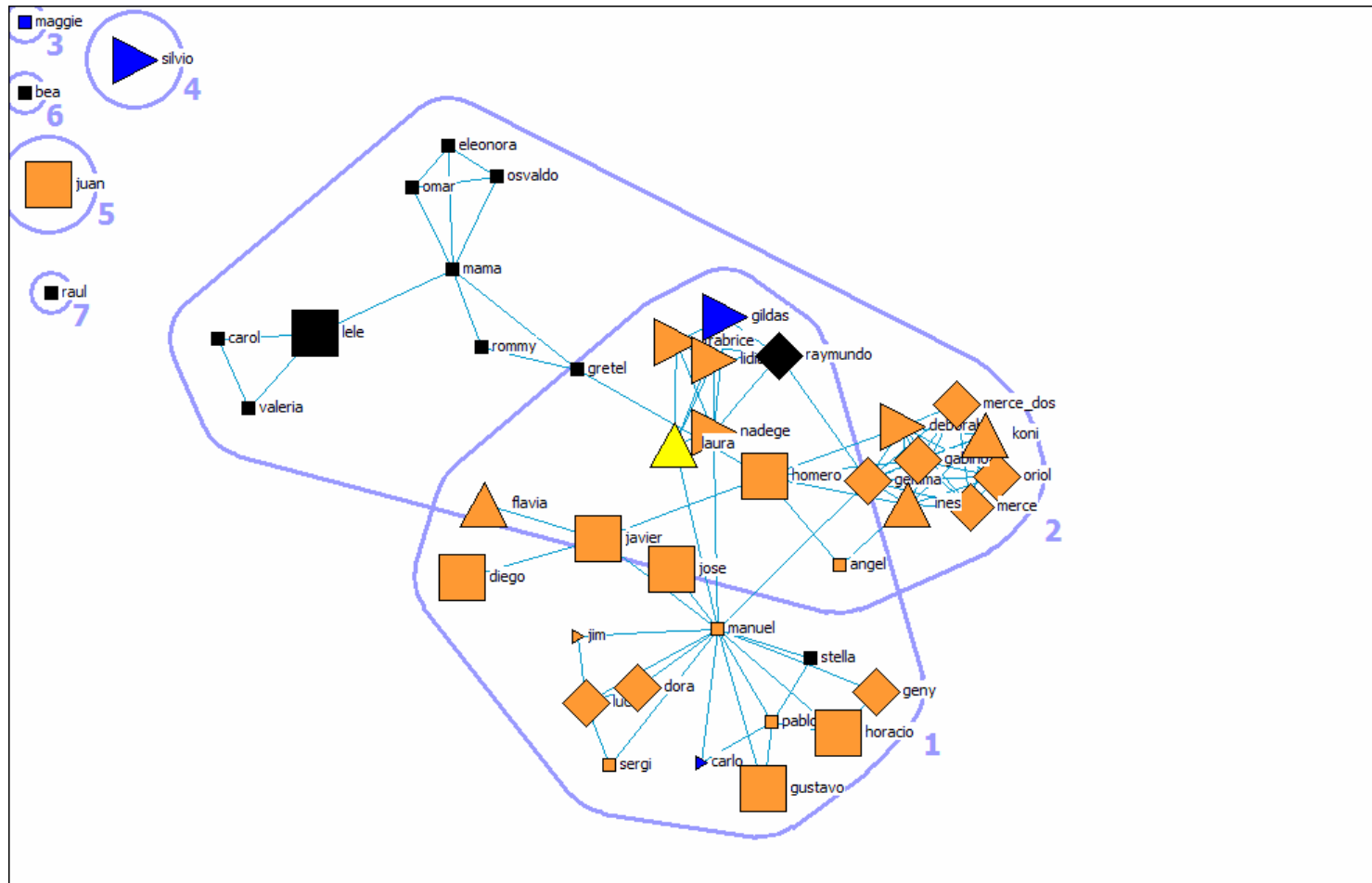
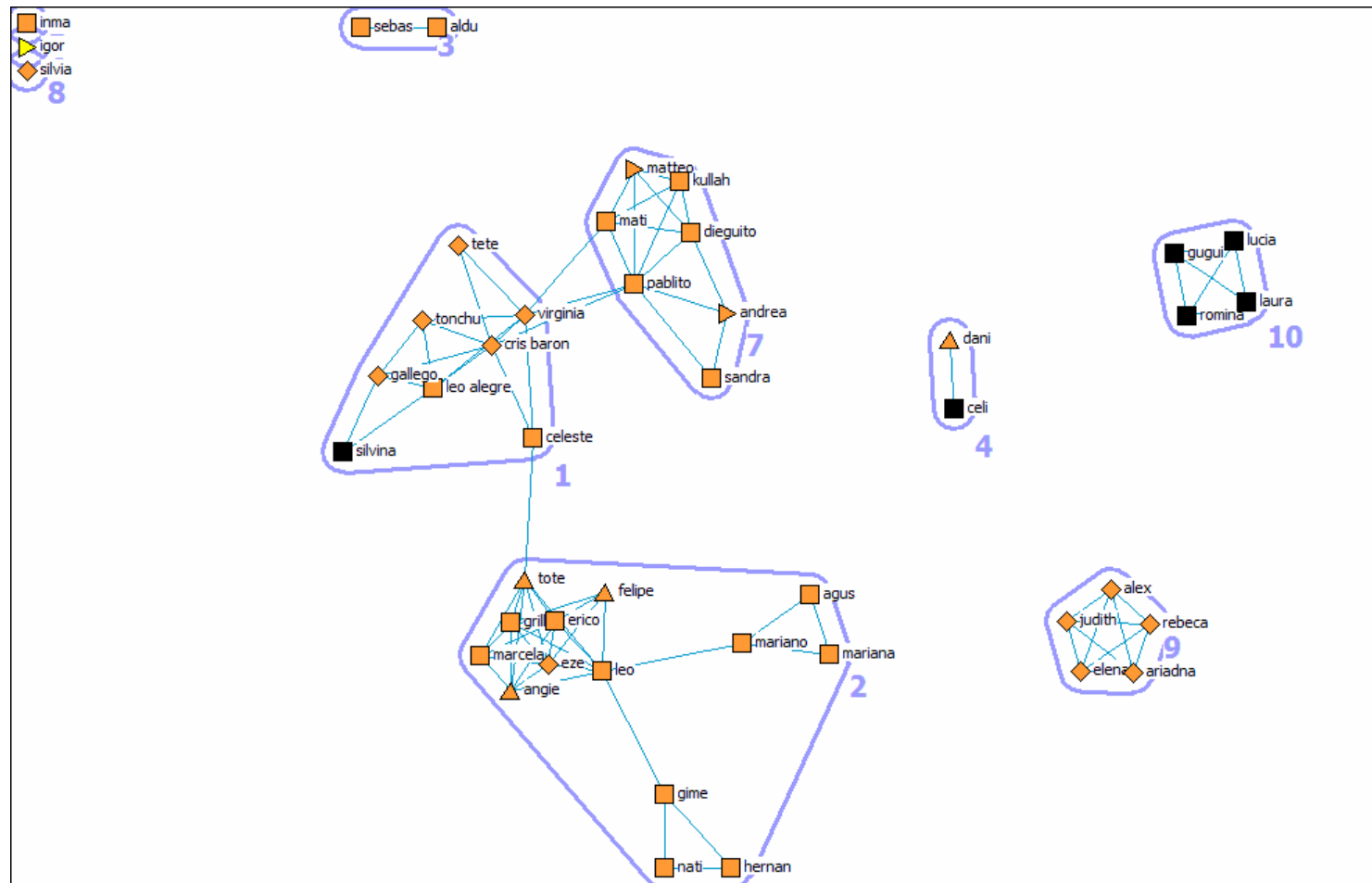# Case 3: Marcos change (2006-2007)

Case 4: Sandra (2006)
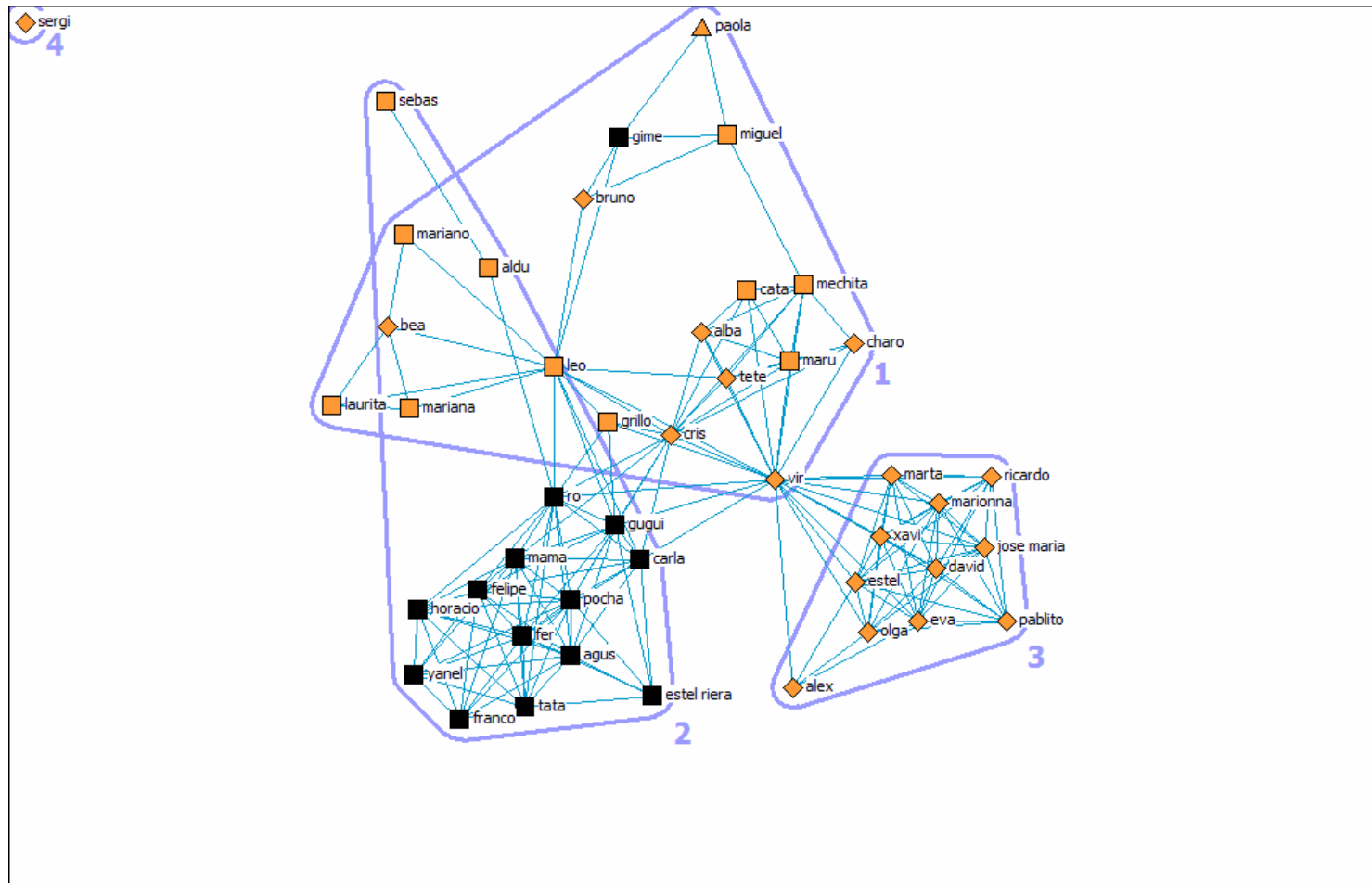
Case 4: Sandra (2007)
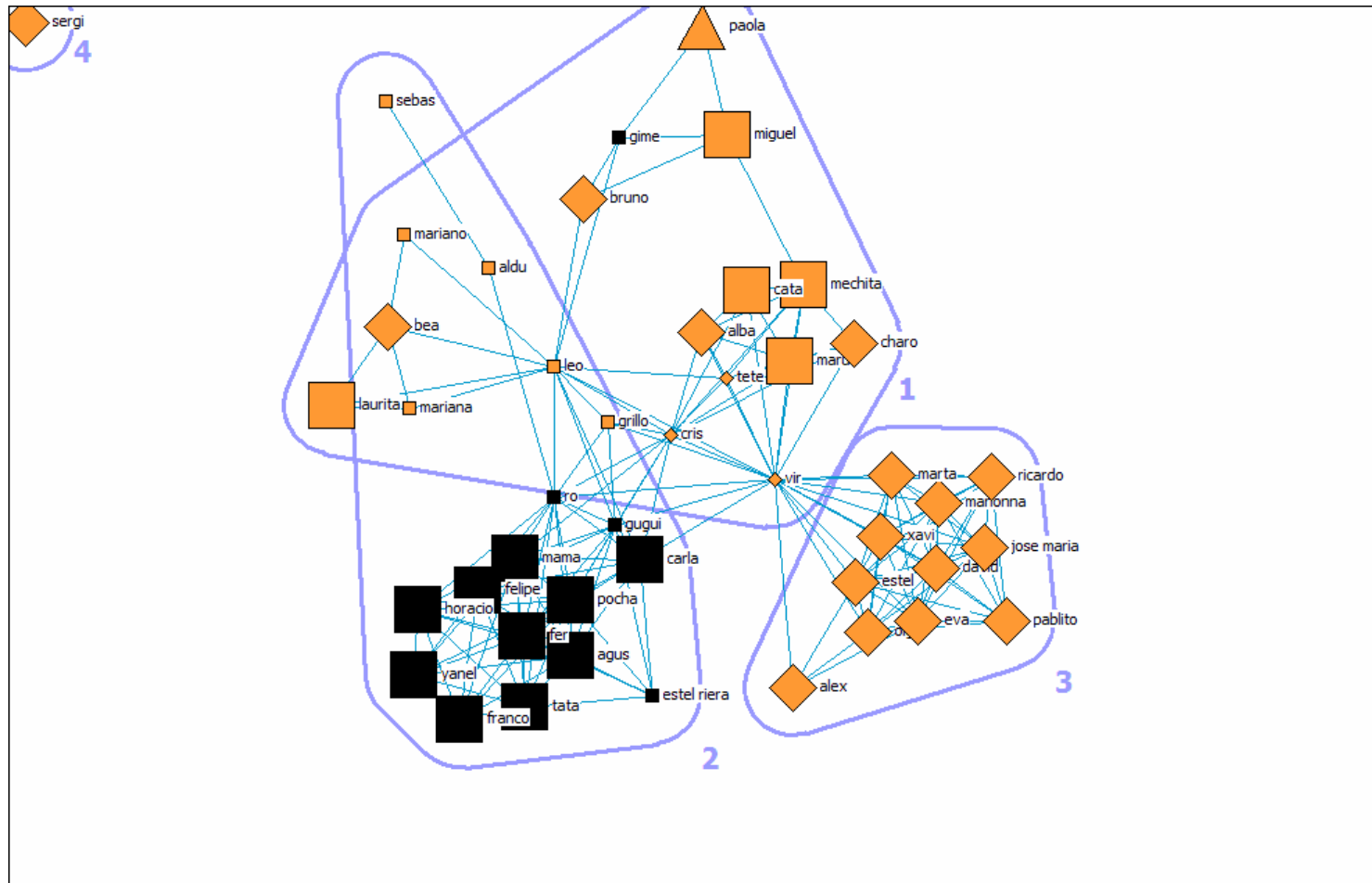
Case 4: Sandra change (2006-2007)
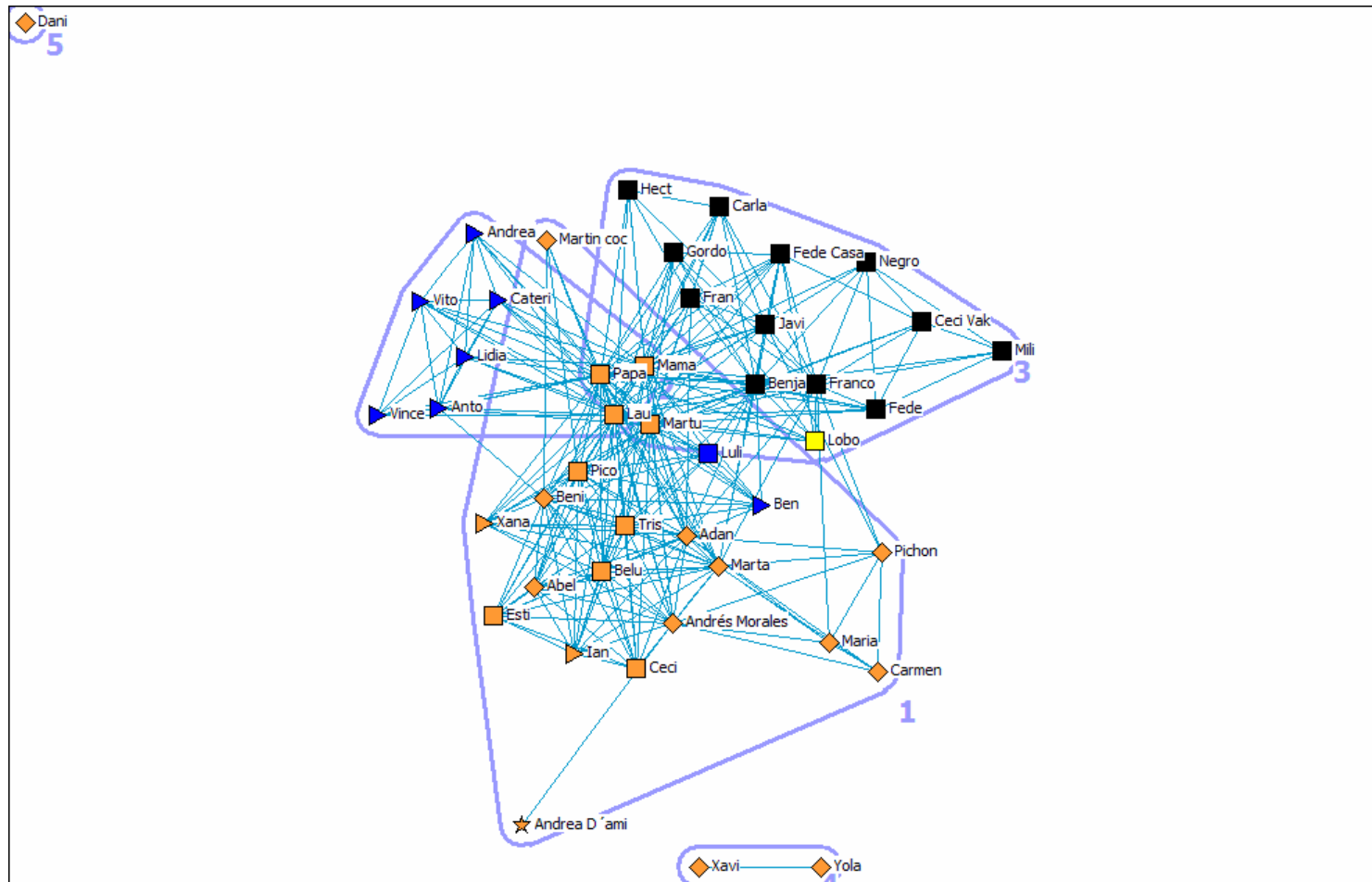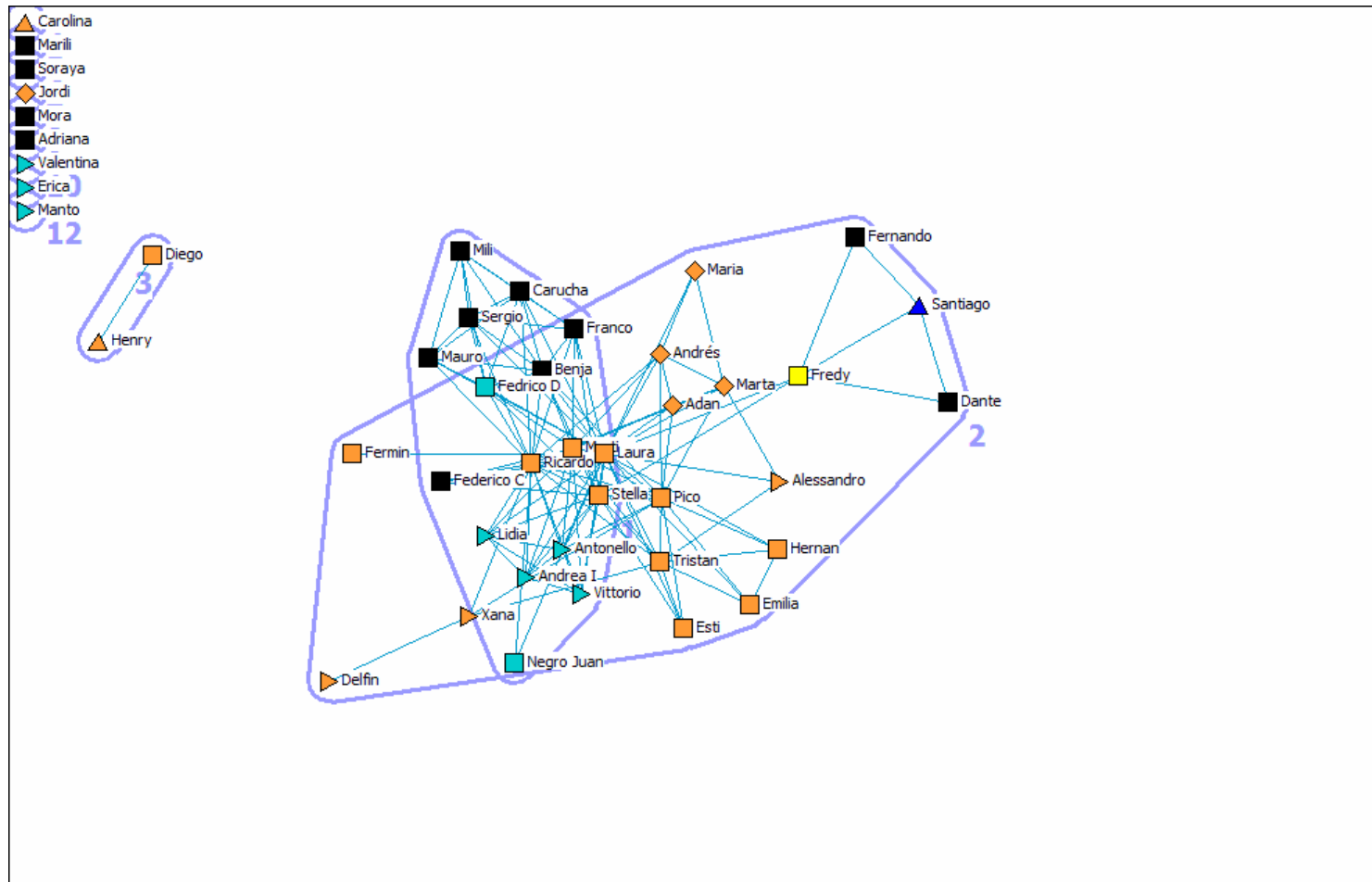
Case 5: Vicky (2006)

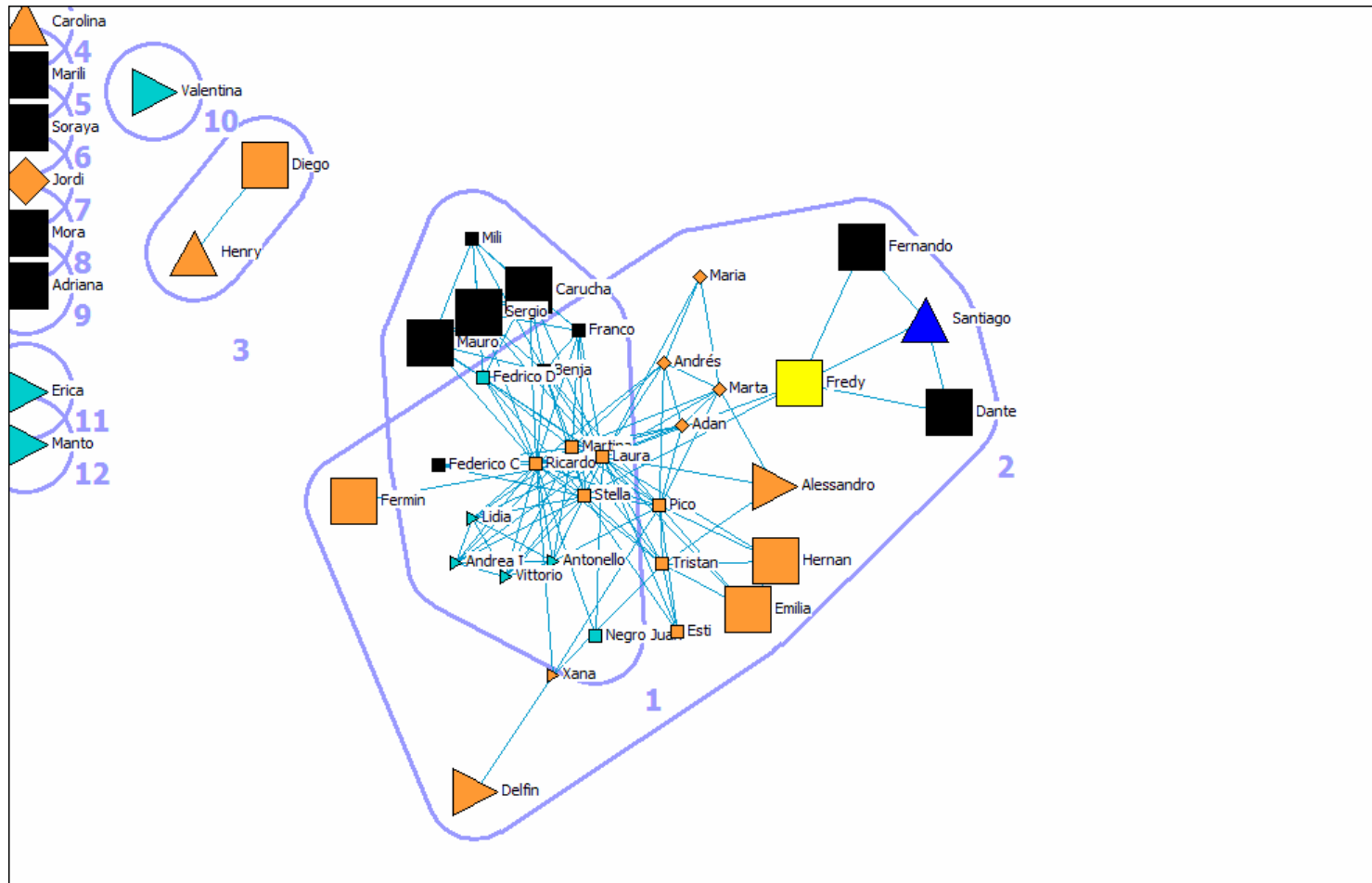# Case 5: Vicky (2007)

Case 5: Vicky change (2006-2007)

Case 6: Santiago (2006)

Case 6: Santiago (2007)

Case 6: Santiago changes (2006-2007)

Finally …

1. **There are significant changes in the structure and composition of the Personal Networks of Argentineans in Catalonia.**

   Composition:
   - **Changes in the number of alters over time (30% - 60%).**
   - **Changes in alter nationality and self-identifications**

   Structure:
   - **Changes in the clusters of Personal Networks.**

2. **The changes develop at the same time in the host country and in the home country.**

3. **Is an indicator of transnational process in immigrant rebuilding of personal networks between the host and home countries.**

Finally …

- What is the relationship between personal networks and changes in immigrant identity?

Immigrant identity:

- Is not an expression of "cultural essence"
- Is an expression of developing situational identities in new social settings
    - produced by interaction between immigrants and people from:
    1. The host country
    2. The home country
    3. Others countries

Finally ...

1. If the social settings are changing then the ethnic identity is changing as well. There is a link between structure and composition of a personal network and the ethnic identity of a person.

2. What relationship is there between changes in personal networks and changes in immigrant identities?

We are working on this answer....

Thank you!!!