

SPACES OF  
BELONGING

TIMES OF  
IMMOBILITY

TRANSLOCAL  
NETWORKS

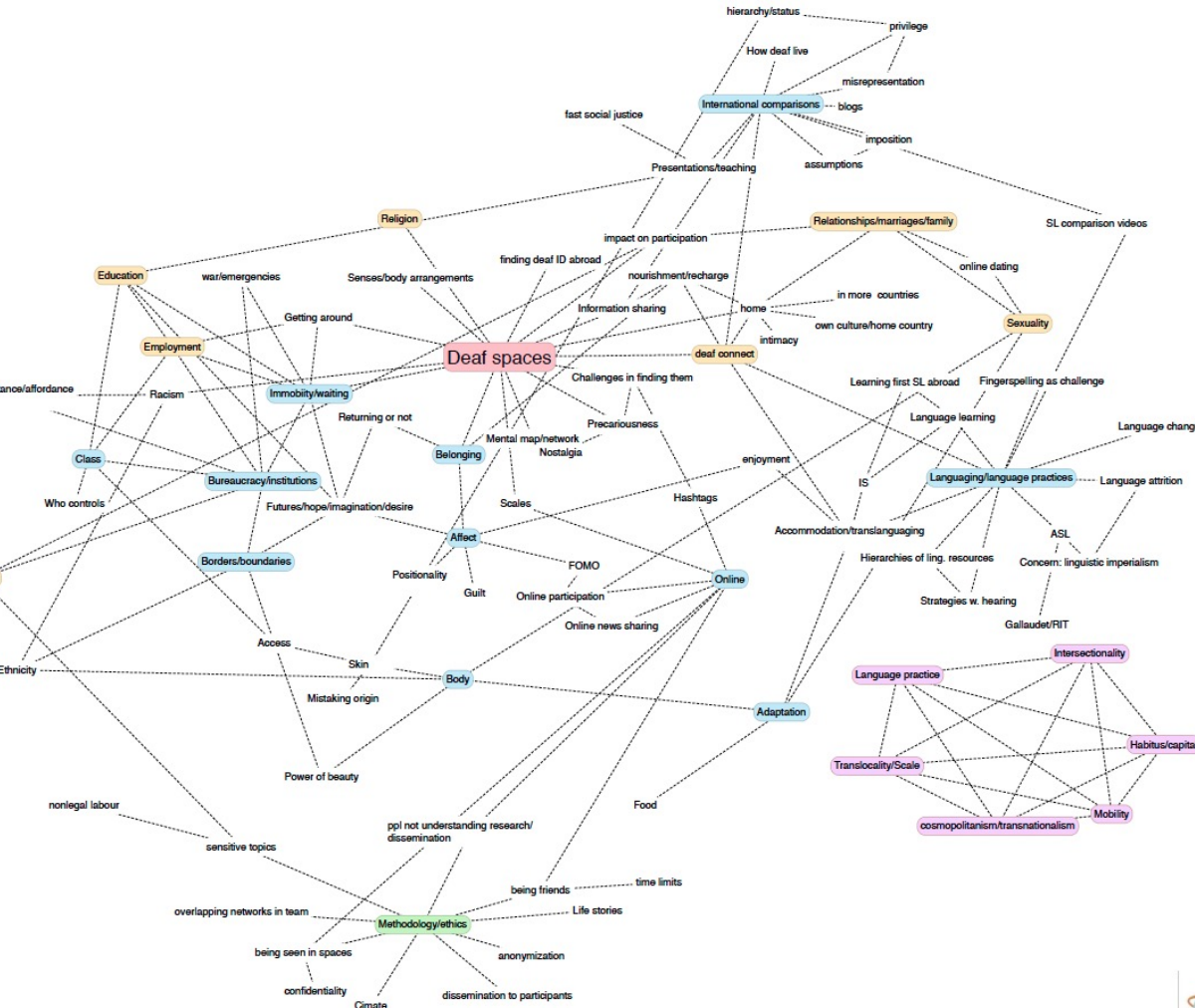


# Being a deaf research team: reading groups (2017-2022) as key activity

- Discussions about:
  - The assigned texts (**building shared theoretical framework**)
  - Research positionality
  - Research findings
  - Methodology
  - Being a deaf academic
- Mentoring junior scholars
- ***Signing* about the concepts**



# Data analysis

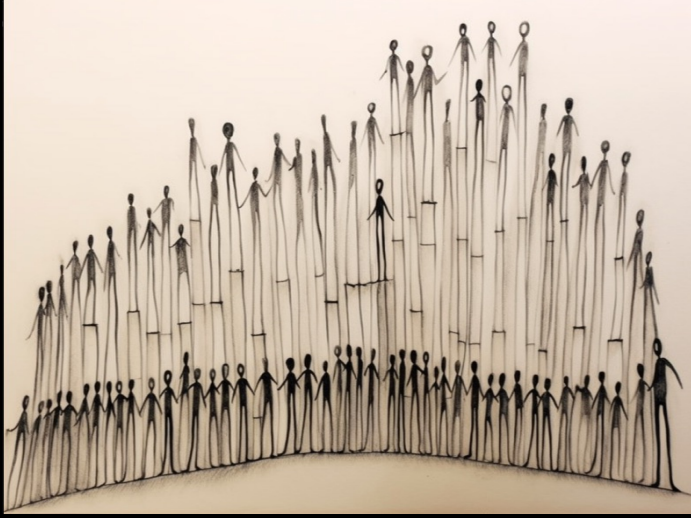


- **Software Sidekicks:** Using Atlas.ti and Nvivo to store, manage, and analyze complex qualitative data
- **Insight Jigsaw:** Reading groups, conceptual maps and shared hashtags to cross-compare and analyze data.



data organised in four key themes





## COMMUNITIES

- Groups of people with shared interests and collective experiences
- Focus on stability, groundedness
- Stronger, deeper connections



## NETWORKS

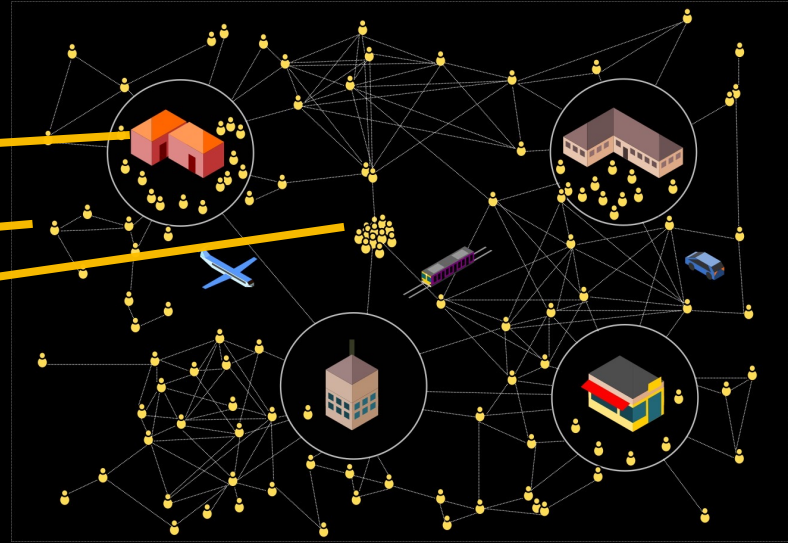
- Set of nodes and ties (relationships)
- Fluid, complex, dynamic, process-oriented
- Ties: strong or weak, bridges between clusters, interdependence

Nodes are destinations of mobile deaf people  
created by

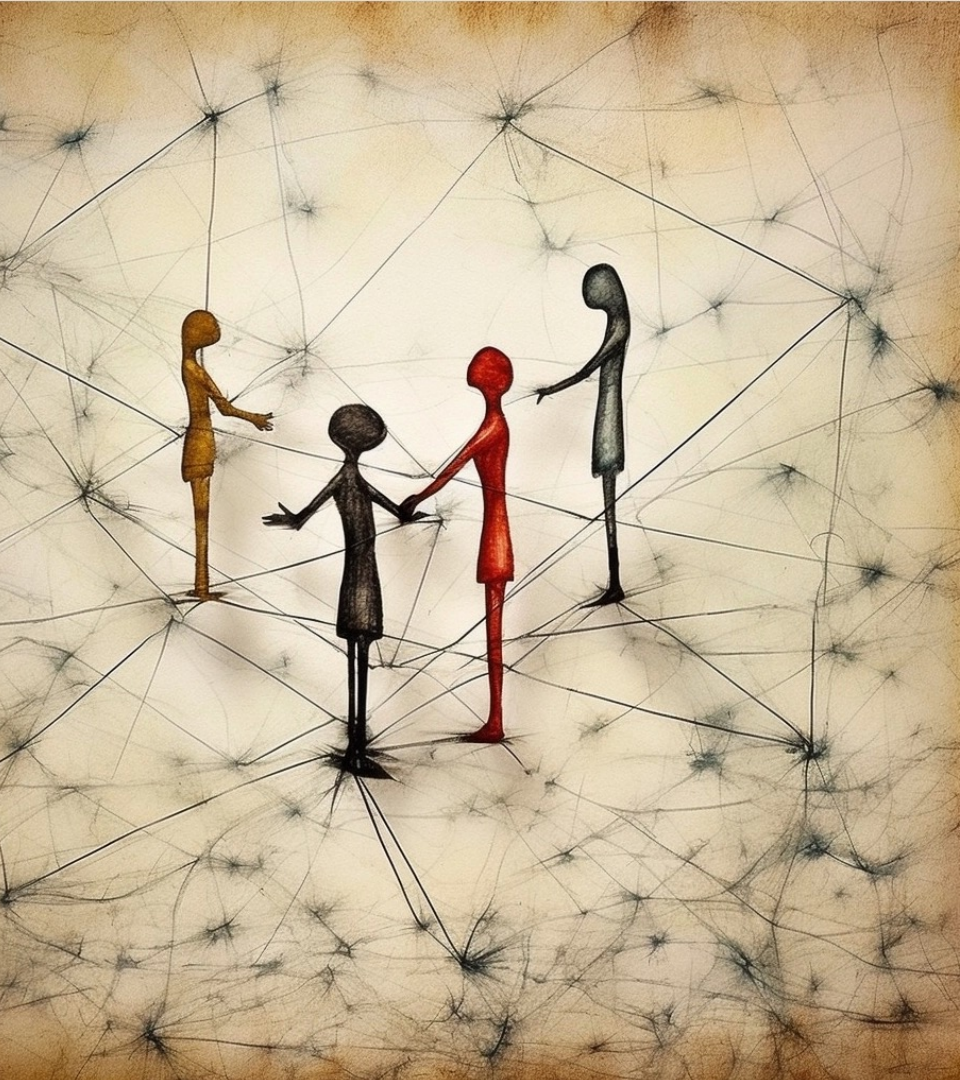
Institutions as nodes

Individuals as nodes

Events as nodes



Ties between nodes expand/contract



Deaf networks *make* international deaf mobilities *possible*

- gathering information
  - finding accommodation
  - asking for support
  - gaining sponsorship
  - finding guides
- 
- Networking is about *keeping and building connections*
  - **Network capital:** skills & resources required for networking (visa, phone, housing, transport, social skills)

# NetworkING in research

- **Existing networks:**

- Benefits: Specific **contacts** for particular issues
- Drawbacks: Risk of **echo** chambers, lack of diversity, anonymity concerns

- **Network expansion tactics:**

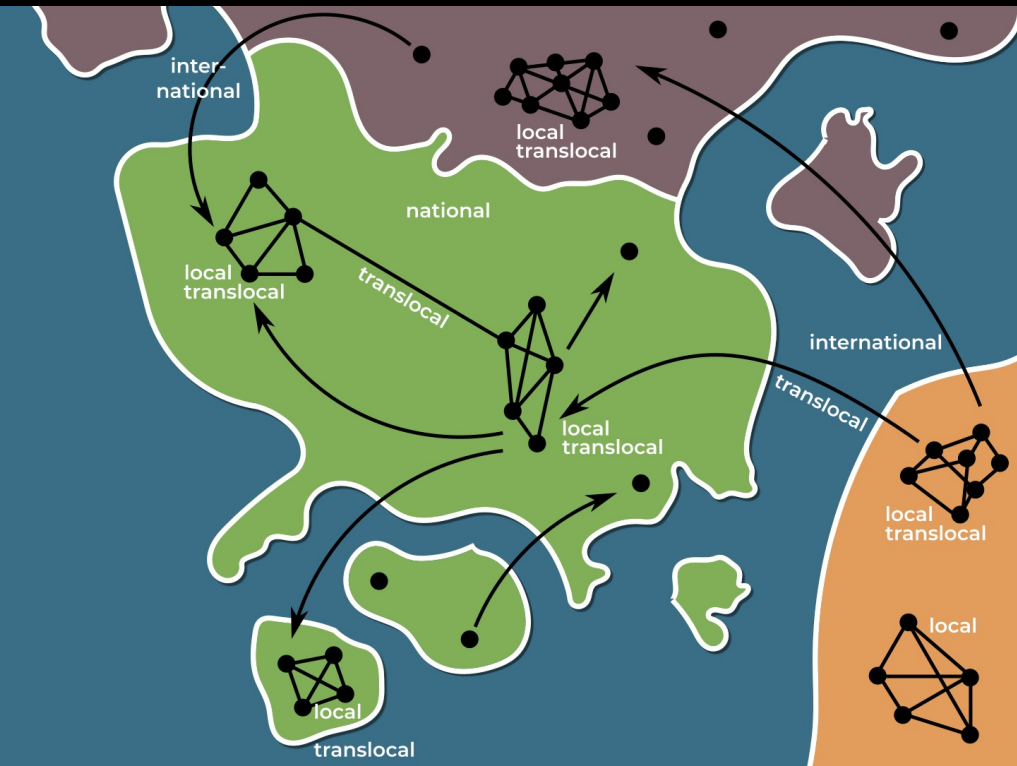
- **Snowball** sampling (eg. Amandine's camp experience)
- **Direct** outreach (eg. Annelies at events)
- Work with **assistants** (Steve and Annelies)
- **Facebook video** (Erin's strategy)

- **Positionality effects on networking:**

- **Insider/outsider** dynamics in migrant/professional networks
- **Conformity** factors: ethnicity/race, gender, communication style
- **Perceived roles:** 'Authority figures' (e.g., a tourist in Bali, a presenter at events, an NGO worker)



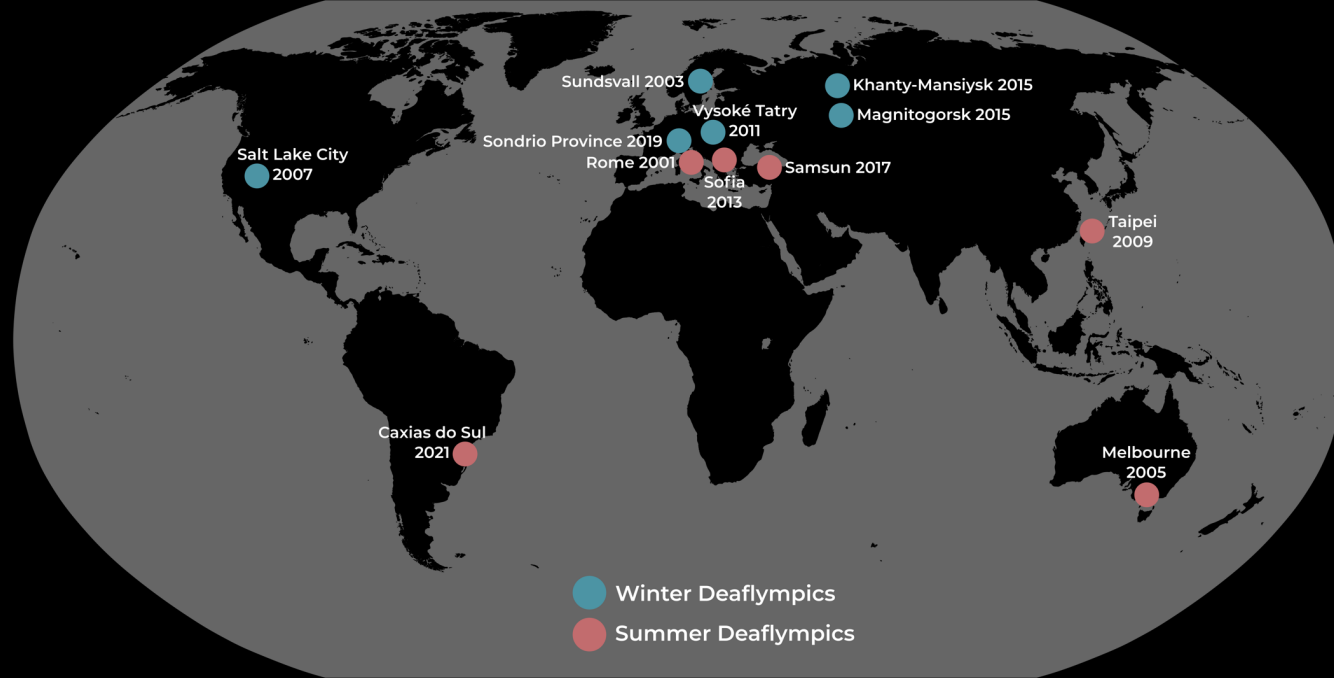
# Networks are translocal



- Translocality highlights **global connections between place-nodes**
  - eg. deaf Indian migrant in London following an online course in India
- It explores mobilities as **place-based**
  - Eg. deaf village in Bali impacted by tourism
- Translocality includes **local-local** connections (eg. in one country)
  - eg. connections between deaf refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp and deaf Kenyans



- 
- A large crowd of people is gathered at an outdoor event. In the foreground, several people are seated at a red table, which has various items on it, including a Coca-Cola bottle, a water bottle, and some food. A man in a bright yellow vest and a straw hat is seated on the left, while a man with a large tattoo on his arm is seated on the right. In the background, a sign for the 'Association Culturelle des Gays et Lesbianes de Paris' is visible. The scene is lively and crowded, with many people standing and talking.



## International 'families' and their **mental maps**

- Deaf individuals form networks or "families" (e.g., Deaflympics athletes).
- Host cities sign names = event memories.
- Sign names anchor deaf histories (e.g., "Rome" = chaos, Summer Deaflympics 2001).
- **Translocal networks connect locations that hosted the same event in the past**



# Mobility

## Voluntary

Moving to a new country (e.g., for work, leisure)

## Involuntary

Fleeing a country (e.g., due to war, persecution)

## Compelled/Privileged

Compelled mobility (e.g., moving for work due to a weak economy)

# Immobility

Staying put by choice (e.g., in a refugee camp, or after failed attempts to move)

Being stuck (e.g., in a refugee camp, or due to visa/residence regulations issues, care duties, disabilities)

Privileged immobility (e.g., staying in a comfortable home during lockdown)



A man in a dark jacket is seen from the back, looking up at a wall densely packed with numerous antique pocket watches and alarm clocks of various sizes. The scene is dimly lit, with the light source coming from the left, casting long shadows and highlighting the intricate details of the clock faces and mechanisms. The overall atmosphere is one of contemplation and the passage of time.

# Immobility and temporality

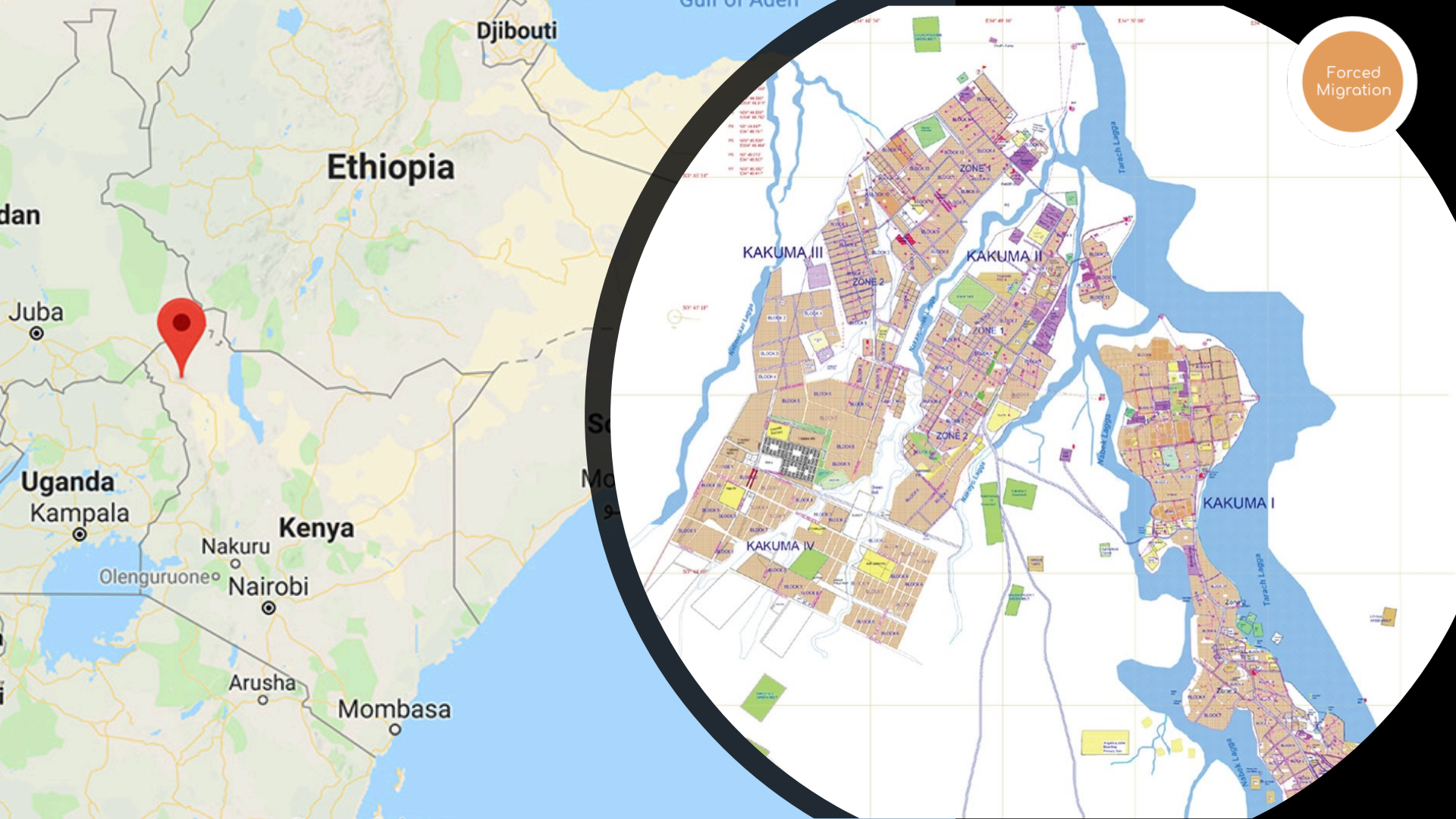
- Uncertainty & unpredictability
- Power dynamics in waiting
- Boredom & frustration
- Productive waiting (learning, caregiving, entrepreneurship, connections)



# Temporality in research

- **Bodymind Impact:** Recognizing our physical and mental influence on research and writing (cancer, depression, disabilities, maternity) = **crip time**
- **Slow scholarship** route led to deeper and longer-term insights





# Journeys to Kakuma Refugee Camp

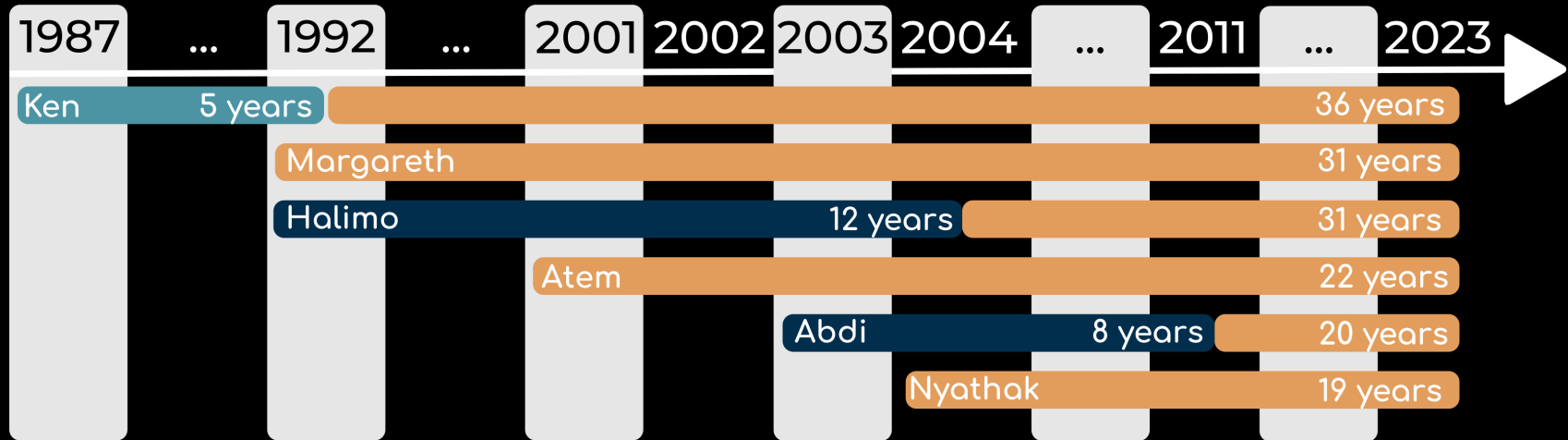
| <b>Name</b>      | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age (birth year)</b> | <b>Nationality</b> | <b>Year (age) of arrival in the camp</b>    | <b>Reason/journey to Kakuma Refugee Camp</b>                    |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Atem</b>      | Male          | 27 years old (1991)     | (South) Sudanese   | 2001 (10)                                   | Political instabilities<br>Resettlement<br>Pursuit of education |
| <b>Halimo</b>    | Female        | 38 years old (1980)     | Somali             | 1992 in Dadaab (12)<br>2004 in Kakuma (24)  | Political instabilities<br>Resettlement                         |
| <b>Abdi</b>      | Male          | 27 years old (1991)     | Somali             | 2003 in Dadaab (12)<br>2011 in Kakuma (20)  | Political instabilities<br>Resettlement<br>Access to healthcare |
| <b>Margareth</b> | Female        | 28 years old (1990)     | (South) Sudanese   | 1992 (2)                                    | Political instabilities<br>Resettlement<br>Pursuit of education |
| <b>Nyathak</b>   | Female        | 18 years old (2000)     | (South) Sudanese   | 2004 (4)                                    | Political instabilities<br>Resettlement<br>Pursuit of education |
| <b>Ken</b>       | Male          | 37 years old (1980)     | (South) Sudanese   | 1987 in Ethiopia (7)<br>1992 in Kakuma (11) | Political instabilities<br>Resettlement                         |





Forced  
Migration

# Years of residence in refugee camps



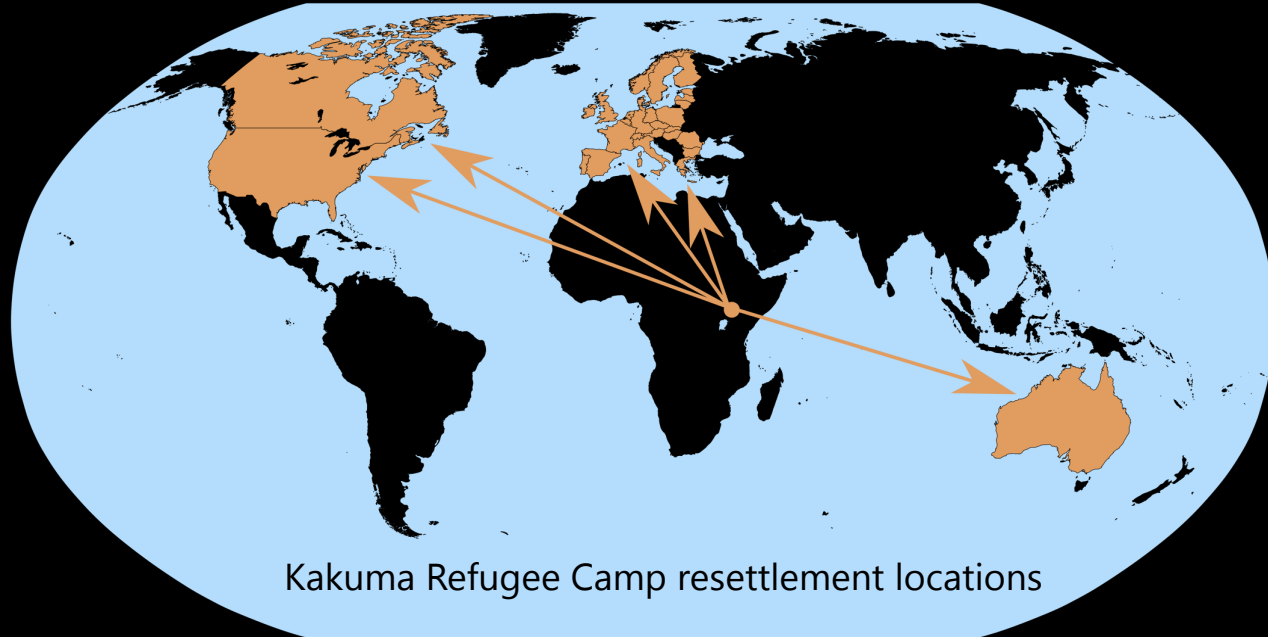
Ethiopian refugee camp

Dadaab refugee camp

Kakuma refugee camp

# Future mobilities?

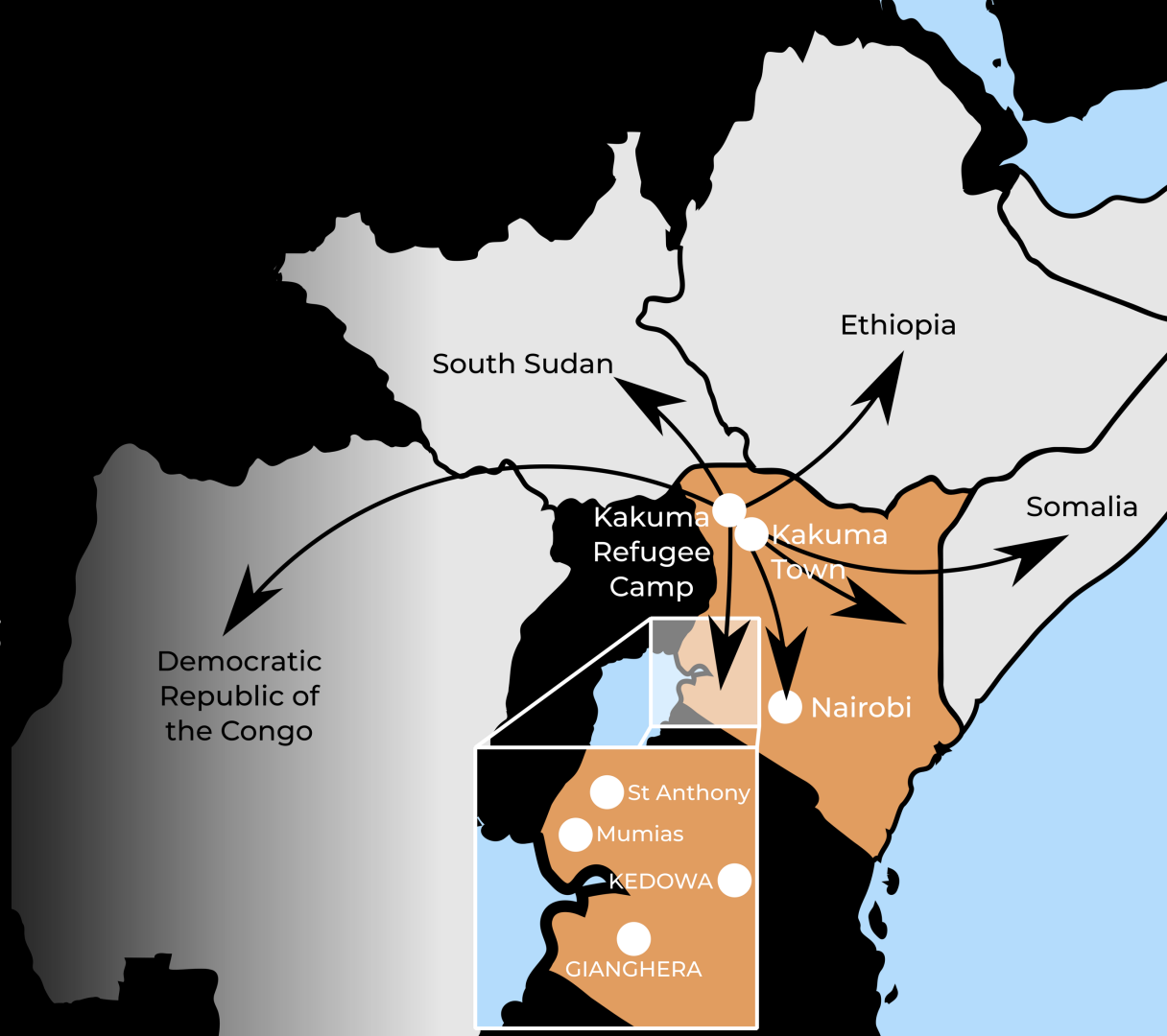
- **Protracted displacement** occurs as most refugees cannot
  1. return,
  2. integrate, or
  3. resettle
- Unpredictability and feelings of unsafety add to the challenges of living in the camp.
- Some deaf resettled (Example: Chris)



Kakuma Refugee Camp resettlement locations

# Mobility of refugees *outside* the camp

- Movement between camp and home country
- Mobility within Kenya
  - deaf vocational training in Kakuma town
  - deaf residential high schools



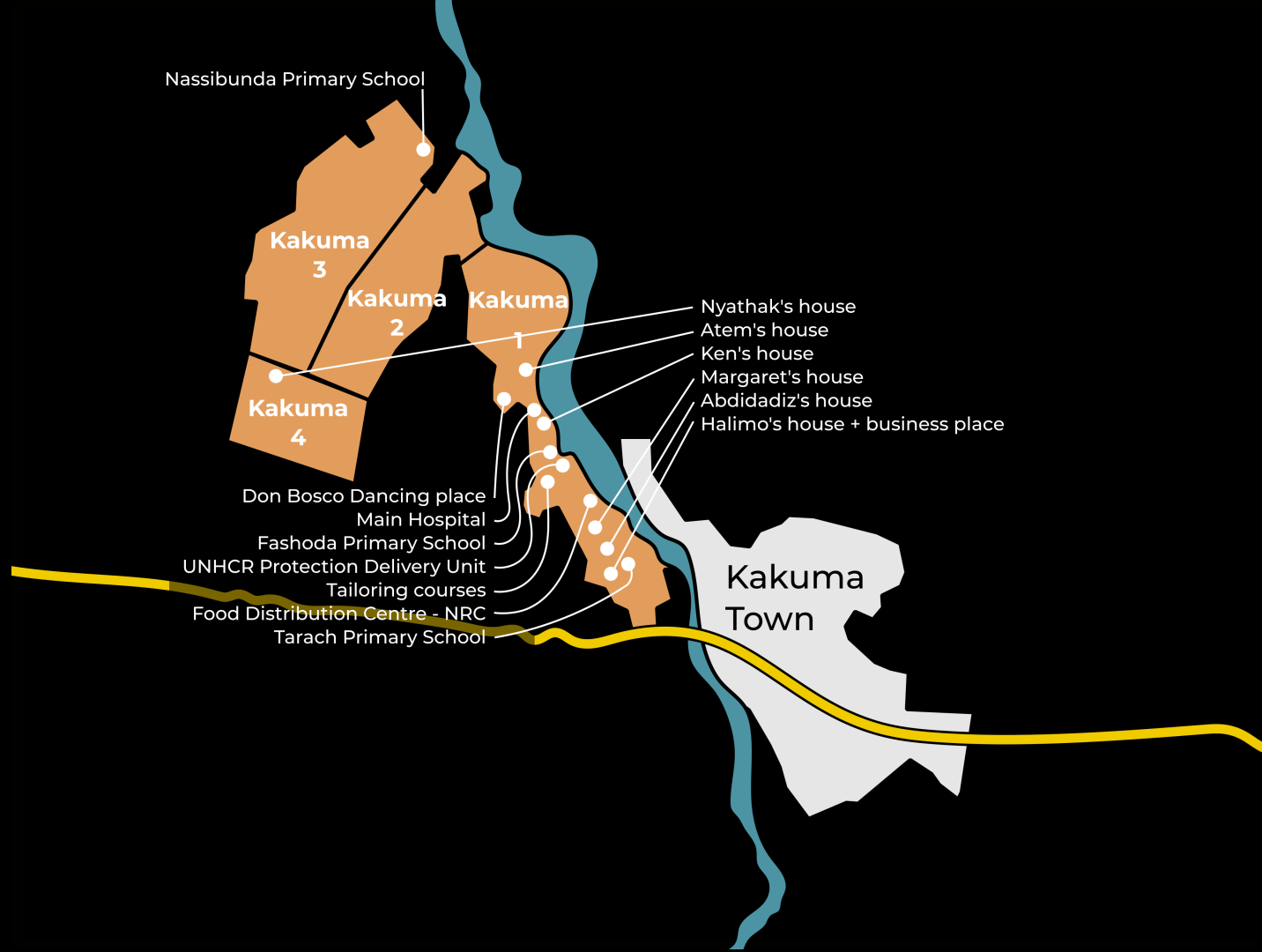




# International mobilities into the camp

- eg. Starkey Hearing Foundation event. "Help the helpless"
  - Purpose:
    - Information, ear checks, hearing tests, hearing aid distribution
  - "Quick fix" problem:
    - Poorly adjusted devices and ill-fitting molds
    - No long-term audiology care or battery supply
  - Critique: foundation's approach lacked understanding of deaf refugees' reality







Deaf place-  
nodes in  
Kakuma  
Refugee Camp

- Deaf refugees experience in-camp mobility
- Deaf refugees network, learn languages
- Distance, time, terrain, weather affect mobility



## Educational spaces as institutional nodes in Kakuma Refugee Camp

### Deaf units in three schools:

- Deaf refugees find or recruit deaf children for the schools
- Some units have Somali or Sudanese majority, leading to **colorism and deaf people switching schools**





# Halimo's house as a key deaf space

Socialisation at her place involved  
the exchange of **gossip,**  
**information and advice.**

Halimo as a leading figure –  
important **individual node**



Forced  
Migration





Forced  
Migration





- **Deaf-hearing** relationships:

- Deaf refugees claim few hearing friends from other ethnicities or countries
- Negative portrayals; e.g., Somalis describing South Sudanese as having bad manners, thieves, bullies

- **Deaf-deaf** relationships:

- **Friendships** across different nationalities & ethnicities accepted
- **Marriages** more common with those from same ethnicity or nationality





# Immobility and loss of freedom after moving

Marriage  
Migration

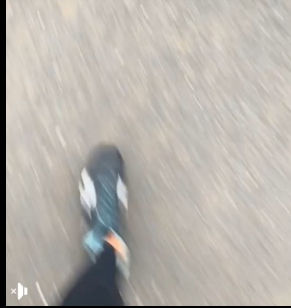
- Context: Meera's transition from India to UK post-marriage.
- Mobility: Limited in India, brief freedom with a theater group
- **New restrictions in the UK:** mother in law wants to "retire": Household chores, childcare

*"I felt I was trapped, just like I was with my family back in India."*

*"They thought deaf [people] are dumb; they thought, because I'm from India, they could use Indian women [...]. British Indians are different, [but] Indian women they oppress. Why? Because we are weak? "*

*"[I said] if they abused me, I would call the police, [...] They backed off"*

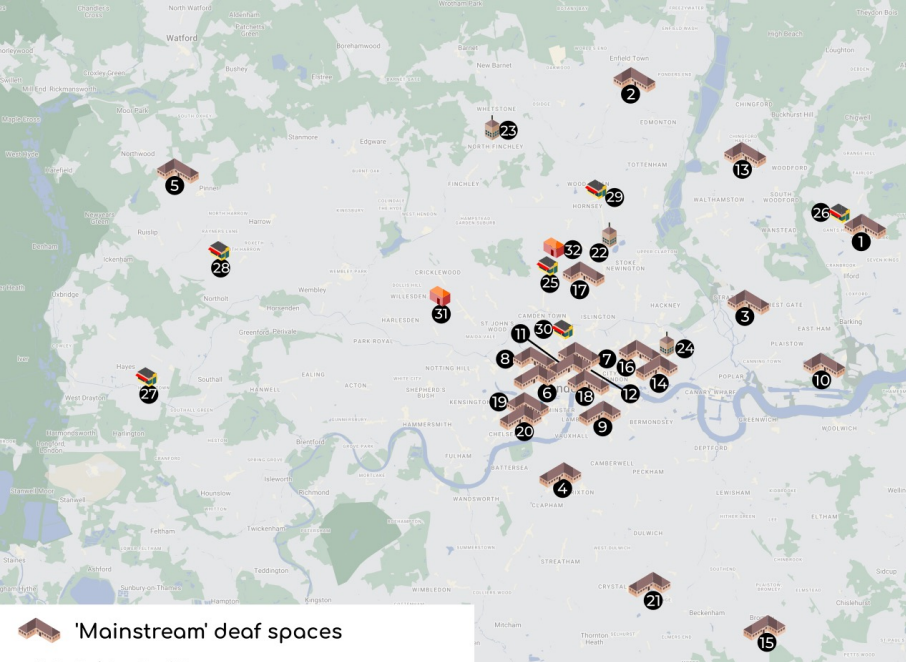
# Migrant's experience of lockdown



- Diverse experiences: from **keyworkers to homeschooling**
- Family **conflicts** and cultural expectations
- **Integration delays** for migrant women
- **Online emotional support** from India
- One person **enhances** connections and skills during lockdown
  - Interaction with deaf Hare Krishnas in India
  - Participation in creating moral stories
  - Strengthening relationships and enhancing Indian Sign Language skills

# Where do deaf migrants go?

- 2018 snapshot: map based on Steve's and Sanchu's observations
- Migrants have **own networks** (eg. City Lit & Shakespeare Pub, later slides)
- ALSO become **part of the UK deaf networks**
  - Services and spaces uniquely '**migrant deaf**' **focus are limited**
- Migrants "**sample**" different groups to find belonging
  - **Temporary, borrowed** deaf spaces (e.g., pub evenings)
  - Event nodes are **interconnected** (migrants attended several)
  - Barrier: British deaf often meet in "**closed groups**"
- Need **active networking**, can take a while to find spaces to belong
  - Entry points (eg introductions, finding events through Facebook) required for network access



## 'Mainstream' deaf spaces

1. Redbridge Deaf Centre
2. Enfield Deaf Club
3. 888 Club
4. Clapham Deaf Club
5. Harrow and Brent Deaf Centre/Diwali
6. Slug & Lettuce
7. Shakespeare's Head
8. Conduit Street
9. Deaf Church events
10. Saint Marks Church & Community Centre
11. City Lit
12. Deaf Day
13. BSL (Cafe) Social
14. The Rooted Forum & Al Isharah Deaf Club
15. Bromley Deaf Pub
16. The East London Mosque & London Muslim Centre
17. British Deaf Association
18. Deaf Unity Cafe
19. Deaf Social Event Victoria
20. Holy Trinity Church
21. BSL Social (Cafe) Meet up



## Traditionally-rooted deaf spaces

22. St John's Deaf Community Centre
23. Jewish Deaf Association
24. DeafPlus



## 'Temporal' deaf spaces

25. Deaf Rave
26. Deaf Street Party
27. Somaliland Event
28. Hare Krishna event
29. Cryptocurrency Investment Opportunity event
30. Somalia Event



## Researchers' homes

31. Sanchayeeta's home
32. Steve's home



# The History of the National Deaf Club.

BY M. S. FRY.

It was Christmas Eve, 1902, in London. Never have I spent a more cheerless time than that day, when I was utterly alone in the metropolis.

do, and being quartered in dismal lodgings presided over by an equally dismal and sour landlady, eternally smelling of the beershop hard by, I strolled and strolled through the labyrinth of bewildering streets, peering now and then into a face, hoping against hope for a friendly greeting or glance of recognition.

At last I found myself in Piccadilly Circus, and then there started a perfect hailstorm.



SOME OF THE PIONEERS OF THE CLUB.

I had no friends—all those of my boyhood had disappeared. In vain did I search my old haunts—St. Saviour's, "The Castle," and other places where the best of the deaf of those days used to congregate. Not knowing what to

Without a moment's hesitation, I ran into the nearest shelter, which happened to be the "Brighton Hotel"—now, alas! no more—whose landlord was Mr. T. C. Collingwood, a kindly soul, who ultimately became a great

## De-centering of permanent deaf place-nodes

- The deaf club as we know has become **decentred**
- Deaf clubs showcase **resilience** and require preservation
- Shift focus from permanent grounded deaf place-nodes to vibrancy of **deaf networks**
- **Technology and social media's** role in fostering connections
- **But also!** Negative impact of traditional space closures on **deaf international visitors and migrants**

Labour  
Migration





# Examples of places where deaf migrants gather

## Shakespeare's Head Pub

- Easily accessible central location
- Attended by grassroots deaf and international deaf
- Deaf migrants bond with those who share backgrounds, languages
- Use of International Sign (eg visitors, newcomers), national sign languages (eg India, Nepal), and BSL
- Age restrictions
- Cheap drinks available, but alcohol may deter non-drinkers.

## Al Isharah

- Basic Quran classes for deaf adults in BSL
- Limited socializing options after Quran classes (only inside food joints, for those who can afford it)
- Diverse nationalities: e.g. Algerian, Pakistani, Somali, and British
- Alcohol-free environment suits those with religious restrictions



# City Lit as a central institutional node for deaf Migrants

- Long-standing **social hub** for deaf people
- RAD (deaf **services**) are based in City Lit
- City Lit: variety of **courses**, including BSL, English, Maths, and computing for deaf people
- Highly **international**
  - Participants: Latvia, Romania, Venezuela, Iran, Kuwait, Mongolia, Sierra Leone, Poland, Pakistan, Ireland, Australia, and many, many more
- **Deaf migrants learn English, learn about "British culture" and socialise**

Labour  
Migration

Marriage  
Migration

BUT! Many deaf migrants struggle to find information:



- Lack of knowledge of British Sign Language (BSL)
- Difficulty locating institutional support
- Limited networks
- Xenophobia and Islamophobia

**Networking plays a crucial role in finding help, but it can be hard work.**

*"We asked local deaf people at pubs for help, but they were unsure. After a long search, we finally found a deaf person who could help us understand our situation."*



A detailed illustration of a large, multi-story building under construction, built entirely from wooden planks and beams. The structure is precariously balanced, with many beams protruding and hanging from the edges. Numerous people are shown working on the structure, some standing on narrow beams, others hanging from the sides, and some at the base. The scene is set against a bright, cloudy sky, suggesting a high-altitude or precarious construction site.

# Precariousness

Deaf place-nodes'  
precarious nature:

- City Lit college: **budget cuts and restructuring** leading to reduced courses
- Spaces in pubs: **temporary, may move, hit by lockdowns**
- Impact on deaf newcomers:
  - Frequent shifting of deaf place-nodes makes it **harder to network and belong**



# Social media networking

- Hashtags on Instagram, like #DeafTravel and #DeafWorld
- Facebook groups based on similar interests (e.g. solo deaf travellers, Black deaf travellers)
- Curiosity about places people see online (eg deaf village in Bali)
- Locate hosts (eg. Couchsurfing)

# Translocal deaf circuit

Ciptakan  
BENGKALA  
yang: Bersih  
Elok  
Nyaman  
Gairah  
Kreatif

Some place-nodes have become part of **widespread deaf tourist imaginaries as idealized deaf spaces** ("too poor for CIs = more authentic" and/or "thriving Deaf spaces").

- Deaf schools
- Deaf villages (eg Bengkala in Bali)
- Deaf clubs
- Deaf organisations
- Deaf restaurants
- Deaf coffee shops
- Gallaudet University in DC



# Nodes on the Translocal Deaf Circuit in Bali



The "Deaf Village"



Wayhu, "the Bali Deaf Guide"



Deaf school



Deaf Burger King



# Deaf guides as nodes



Wahyu: Indonesian  
*Day tours, deaf schools, deaf village*



Gio: French (lives in Indonesia)  
*Tour group, Instagram-worthy spots*

- Two deaf guides in Bali: Wahyu and Gio
- Different aspects of working with deaf guides:
  - **Linguistic** authenticity
  - Supporting **local deaf economy**
  - Deaf value systems sometimes clash: Deaf Expect All Free (e.g. expectations of **discounts or free services**) vs. The Deaf Ecosystem (e.g. supporting deaf businesses):







## Informal guiding (not on the "deaf circuit")



- Sign language use = deaf tourists **easy to recognize**
- Local deaf individuals **approach** them, showing **agency** as volunteer guides
- Local deaf networks use platforms like WhatsApp **to coordinate between locations**
- **Translocality:** **simultaneous local & international connections & mobilities**





## Bengkala: a 'deaf village'

- *Desa Kolok* ('deaf village')
- Hereditary deafness – local sign language
- Research site for *Kata Kolok* ('deaf talk')
- Deaf tourist destination

# Video: Belonging and the deaf village

- **High expectations** of Bengkulu:
  - deaf utopia, signing everywhere, easy interaction
  - **"strong deaf people"** with a conscious and politicized deaf identity
- **Disappointment** despite experiencing DEAF-SAME











Wahyu Cahyadi Balideafguide with Naimo Duale and Levent Marasli.

58 mins · 🌐

This morning I escorted guests to Deaf school, they are both is very happy to volunteer to teach a few hours with deaf children for to understand about British culture and Deaf child at classroom is very understanding because she teach with sign language with Levent Marasli and Naimo Duale from London, UK,



# Deaf school tourism



- Global South deaf schools remain important tourist destinations, invoking **nostalgia**
- **Unannounced visitors** common in Global South; not allowed in Global North
- Some find deaf school tourism problematic (**disruptive, "zoo"**), but: others accept donations and **voluntourists**

# Video: Different experiences of mobility

Tourist  
Mobility




- Tension of mobility & immobility:
  - Wahyu's local mobility & international immobility
- Encountering immobility:
  - Travel through meeting tourists
  - Photo evidence





# Impact of COVID-19



Can Bali survive a continued coronavirus closure?

South China Morning Post, 9 Sept, 2020



- Shift from over-tourism to **non-tourism**
- Struggles to meet basic needs
  - Deaf Balinese **return** to home villages
  - Limited healthcare access, participant's death
- Use of their international connections for **support**
  - Fundraising and food runs
- Hope as Bali reopened

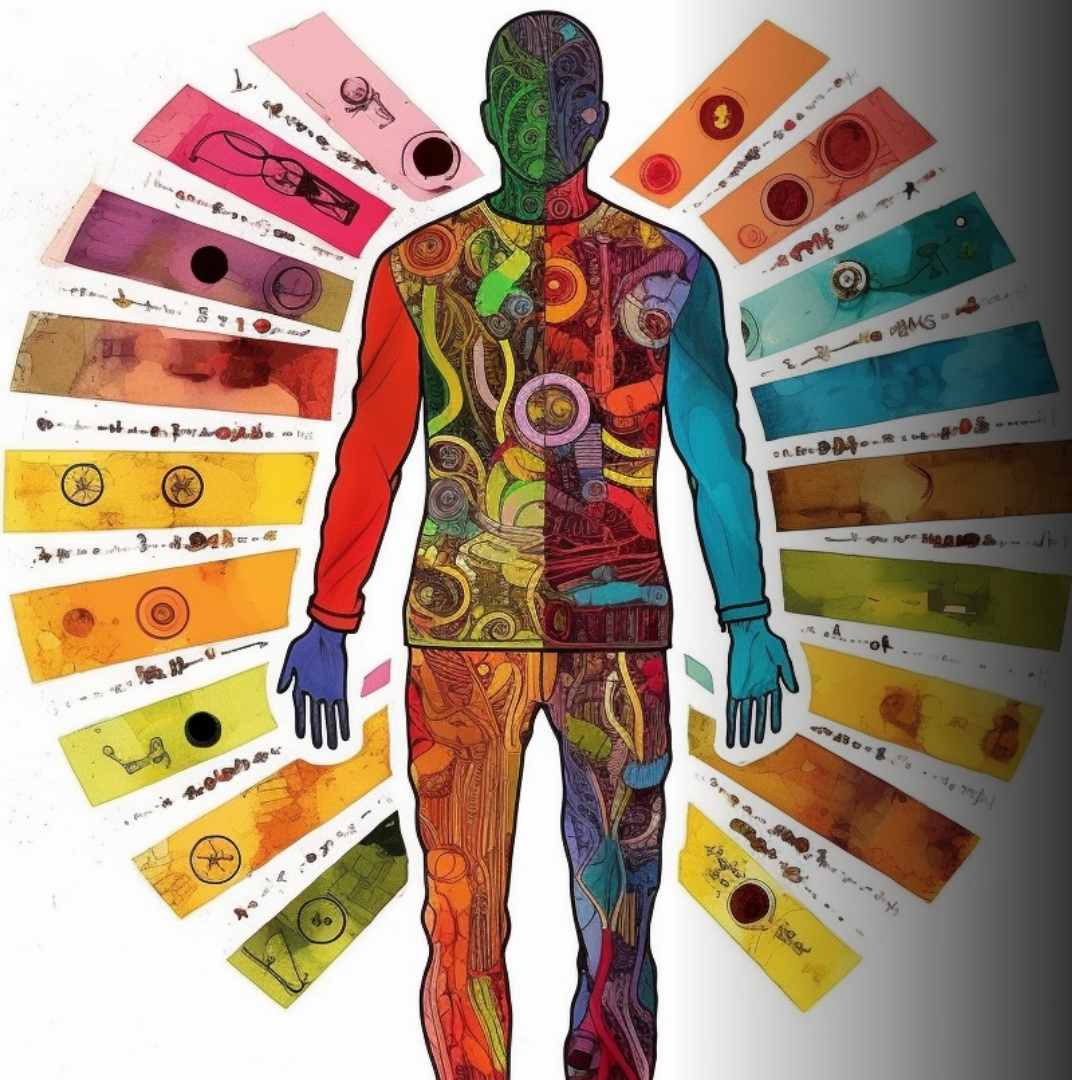


With Tourists Gone, Bali Workers Return to Farm and Fishing

The New York Times Oct. 2, 2020

# Belonging

- Belonging relates to **feeling at home** within a group/place/space
- Belonging is **broader than "deaf community"** (not centralising "deaf")
- Belonging is **broader than "deaf identity"** (not just about "who am I")
  - Identity politics: The emphasis on certain identities, like **"Deaf-first"**

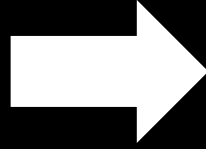
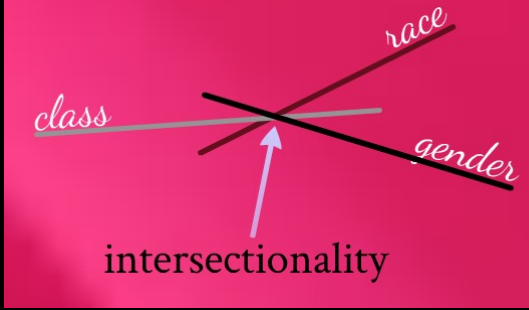


# Lenka

- White deaf **Czech** woman came to UK for work & life experiences
- Explored sexuality & companionship in her 30s, *after* migration
- Initial belonging with **Czech deaf gay friends**
- Uncomfortable in **mainstream lesbian spaces**, felt "on display"
- Later formed "core group" of diverse **hearing lesbian friends (ethnic minorities + migrants)** with first female partner
- Belonging experiences evolved with social locations & life stages
  - Currently **with White British deaf woman**, finds more belonging in **deaf spaces**
  - Brexit + new family in UK: Aspirations for British **citizenship**







Working-class Black women  
being doubly/triply  
oppressed because of  
patriarchy, racism, classism  
(Crenshaw 1989)

Addition of other  
dimensions in  
intersectionality  
theory

*Notes: Intersectionality is  
**not** just "multiple  
identities", and analyses  
**must** consider race!*

## **Intersectionality studies often neglect international mobility in their focus**

Use **multi-scalar and translocal** approaches to explore **belonging and systematic oppression** across local, national, regional, and global scales.





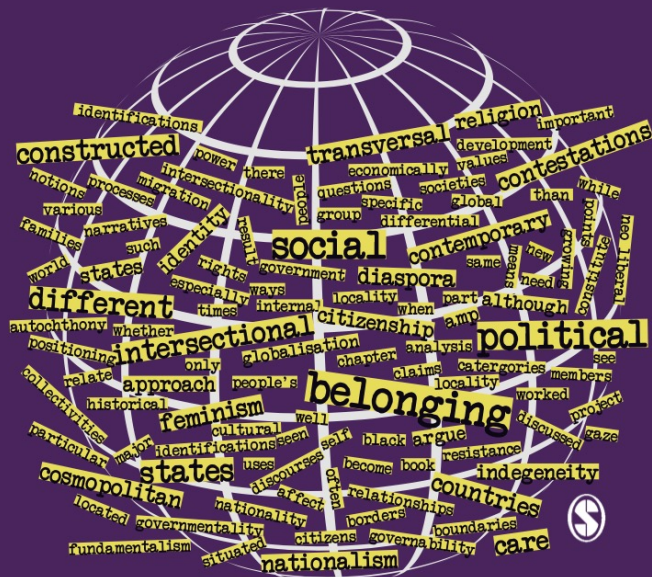
# Samba

- Perception of him as a migrant black young man: "troublemaking youth"
- Found belonging at multicultural, multiethnic church with BSL access: validation as a "proper citizen"
- Barriers with hearing Sierra Leoneans in London (language) & in deaf spaces (racism)
- Holds dual passports, representing British & African (Sierra Leonean) identities
- Maintains connections with Sierra Leone through food, culture & aspirations to help deaf community

# THE POLITICS OF BELONGING

INTERSECTIONAL CONTESTATIONS

NIRA YUVAL-DAVIS

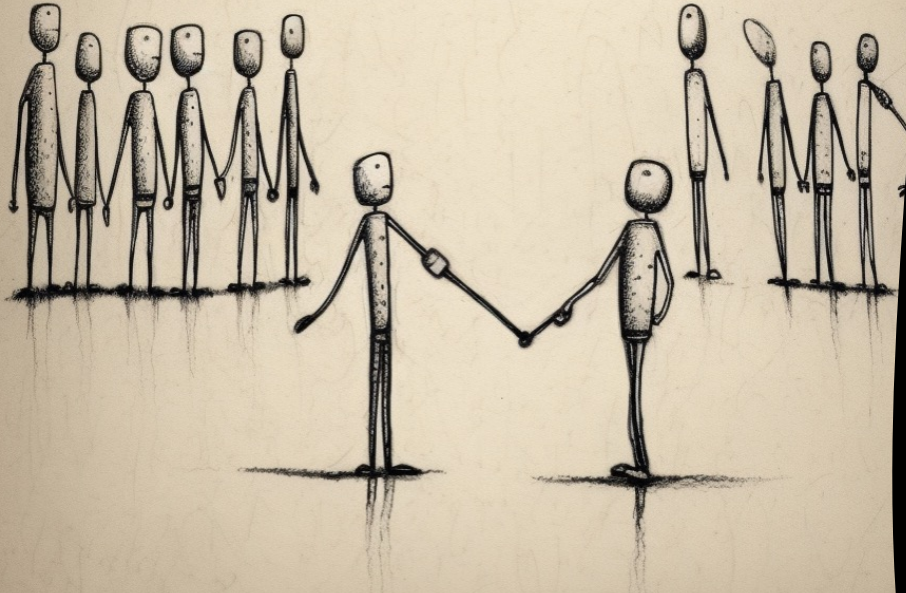


## Analysing Belonging

1. Social Locations: **positionality** along axes of difference (gender, race, ability, etc.)
  - Example: Deaf lesbian or deaf Sierra Leonean
2. Identifications: narrative of **belonging and membership**
  - Example: Not feeling at home in deaf lesbian spaces or not socializing with hearing Sierra Leoneans
3. Politics of belonging: People set and police **group boundaries**
  - Example: "where are you really from?", "why do you not use BSL?"



# Assumptions of belonging



- **Ideals of deaf cosmopolitanism** in host & guest interactions: having an **"authentic"** experience, "seeing how they live"
- **Reciprocity**: Exchanging gifts, meals, stories, teaching some signs
- Expectation of "generalized reciprocity" (**A hosts B and B hosts C**)
- BUT often opportunities for reciprocity not available
  - **Less welcoming** environment for homestays in Europe: "'No, my mother would not allow this, even though she is deaf herself."
  - **Passport, visa and financial barriers**



# Race, ethnicity and the sense of belonging in tourism



- Dutch citizen of Indonesian diaspora in Bali: perceived as SAME due to appearance, says it feels like home in Bengkulu
- Foreigner vs. local prices: deaf tourists of East Asian descent are indexed as "local," especially because their signing is unmarked (as opposed to accents / voice)
- VIDEO: Brian, a Black deaf tourist from the US, was asked questions about his skin colour in Japan and experienced it as benign curiosity
- Feels unsafe in the US, especially the south, because of institutionalized, violent racism
- Belonging in virtual spaces:
  - White deaf travel influencers dominate online representation
  - Brian's aspiration to be an online role model for other Black deaf travellers



1:30:03



# Video: Heena and xenophobia

- Heena and Harish: newlywed couple from India on a deaf tour in Bali
- Tour included Italian deaf tourists
- Heena experienced xenophobic comments from Italian, Roberto
- Heena used **humor to subtly challenge** Roberto's remarks
  - Attempt to diffuse situation without direct confrontation
  - Choice not to escalate: "with people like that, you can't argue"





Yeah, I know.



# LE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS PARIS

LE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

Maillet 2

bienvenue

welcome

Maillet 2



episode five

One size fits all?

This  
is IS

An ethnographic film series  
on International Sign  
by Amélie Rastier & Jean-Michel Beaud

## Deafblind individuals and belonging in WFD Congress

- Deafblind and Black: Korian's experience: Educating people on pro-tactile signing, impact of race
- Deafblind and crip: Tashi: "Even in deafblind space, I face barriers"

I love PT, it makes me smile  
all over my body!





# Wheelchairs and mobility

Professional  
Mobility

**Scales** of (in)accessibility and  
(im)mobility

- Example: deaf people in wheelchairs' experience at the WFD congress in Paris: mobile **internationally**, but (sudden) **local** barriers in transportation, social venues, and accommodations

# Politics of belonging in sports

- Deaflympics as a **precarious deaf space** (vs. the past: party location, role now fulfilled by Clin d'Oeil?)
- Paralympics much better **funded**
- **Professionalization** of deaf sports
  - Privileges non-signing hard-of-hearing athletes (better access to training)
  - Unqualified prior deaf coaches lose opportunities (increase of hearing coaches)
- Challenge: Balancing **inclusion** (of non-signers) and competitive **fairness** (for profoundly deaf)







episode six

Easy come, easy go?

This  
is IS

An ethnographic film series  
on International Sign  
by Alexander Kuchner & Jeroen Rijkdaert

David Pelletier  
France



# Deaf Mobility Studies: Networks, immobility, belonging

- Shift from traditional deaf community spaces to **networks and translocal connections**
- Networks are **maintained and expanded** through the flow of ideas and resources
- Deaf people act as **nodes** in these networks, interacting at different scales (local, national, global)
- Place-nodes can be **precarious** (deaf clubs close, social hubs move, events' focus shifts)
- Variety in **immobility** experiences at different scales and times; can signify both powerlessness and agency
- **Sense of belonging** changes over time and space
- Politics of belonging: marginalized individuals **emphasize or downplay aspects** of their positionality
- The reinforcement of boundaries among deaf groups may conflict with **cosmopolitan** values