

**International Sociology of Sport Association
World Congress 2013
Vancouver, Canada**

Labour migration, national identity and basketball

**The acculturation experiences of the Lithuanian
Diaspora in the east of England**

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Geography

England



Lincolnshire



A8 countries (since 2004)



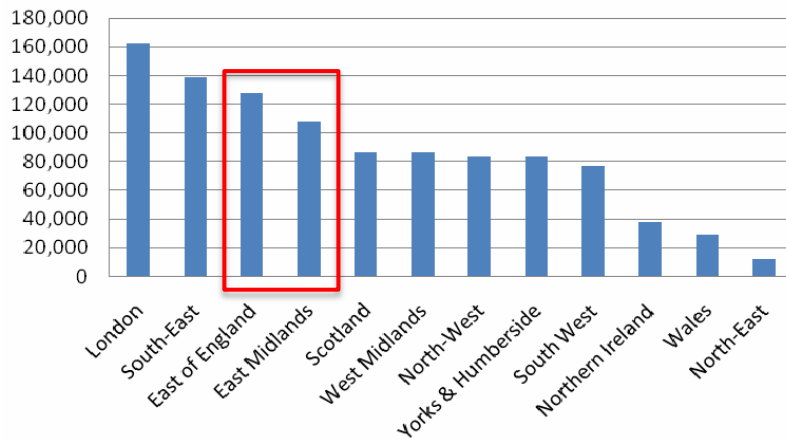
Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Estonia

Background

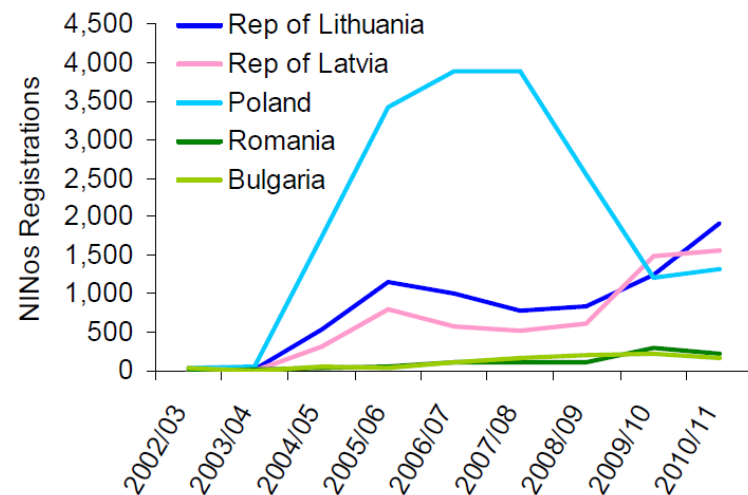
- Growing political interest in A8 migrant workers in the UK, especially in East of England.
 - Right-wing press debate (e.g. Hitchens, 2011 in [Daily Mail, 18.09.11](#))
 - ‘Moral panic’ and Boston council ‘task and finish’ report 2012
 - The rise of UKIP in 2013 local elections ([25% of vote in Lincs.](#))
- Academic interest in sport and *labour migration*, sport and *community integration* (i.e. developing ‘bridging’ social capital) and sport and *national identity*.
- Existing research tends to focus on well-established migrant populations in UK or elite athletes.

Lithuanians in Lincolnshire

A8 Work Registration May 2004 – June 2010



NINo Registrations in Lincolnshire 2003-2011



...and basketball?

- 100% growth in Lincolnshire Basketball League over five years due to new Lithuanian teams.
- New league (EMBL) created in 2012/13 season (rival to LBBA).

Problem situation

Very little research on *experiences* of A8 workers (Cook et al. 2011; 2012)

Labour migration research focusses on elite athletes
(e.g. Maguire & Falcous 2010)

Basketball is the national sport of Lithuania receiving
more public funding than next 9 most popular sports
combined (Cingiene & Laskiene 2004)

Local level racism and violence
suggest integration may be a problem
(unexplored according to Burrell 2010)

What are the
acculturation experiences
of Lithuanian labour
migrants in Lincolnshire?

What role does basketball
play in the acculturation
process and in the
expression of national ID?

Sensitising concepts

Concept	Studies	Utility
Acculturation	Weedon 2012 Evans & Stead 2012	<i>Adapting</i> to host political economy, rather than <i>adopting</i> a strategy; migrants from similar cultures are more willing to engage with host culture (Nat ID strengthened in less similar).

Sample

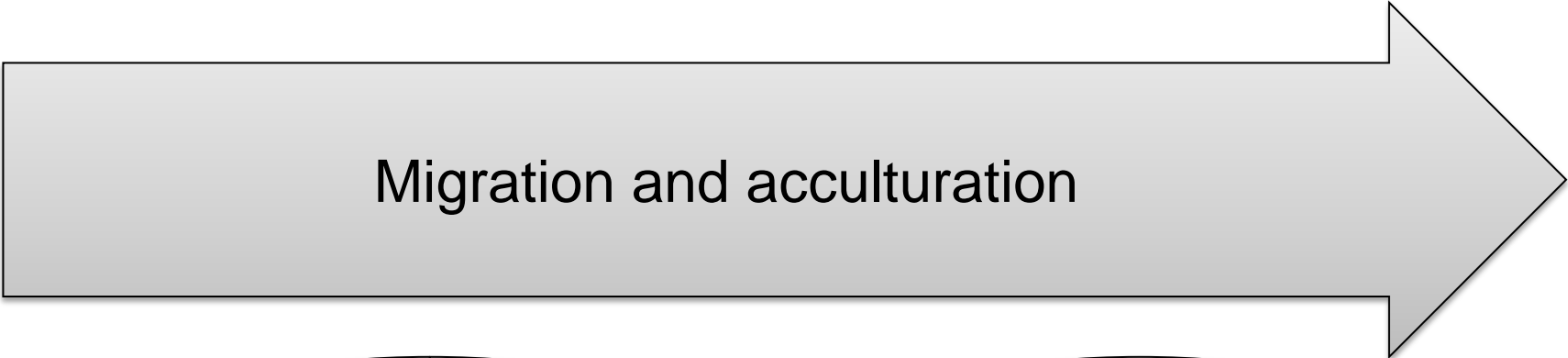
Pseudonym	Years in UK	Role(s) in basketball*
<i>Jokubas</i>	10	Player/coach, referee, league committee
<i>Lukas</i>	3	Player/coach, league committee
<i>Dovydas</i>	9	Coach, referee
<i>Armandas</i>	9	Coach, referee, league liaison
<i>Emilis</i>	6	Player/Coach
<i>Jonas</i>	6	Player
<i>Dominykas</i>	10	Player
<i>Justas</i>	10	Team manager
<i>Nojus</i>	6	Player, coach, referee, league committee
Ave	7.6	

Data collection


- Semi-structured interviews based on research questions, sensitising concepts and theory.
 - Interviews conducted by first author, a member of the league committee and a player and coach in the league.
 - Interviews conducted around times of games and training sessions, normally in sports centre lobby/café.
 - Lasted between 16-42 mins (Mean: 28.2 mins).
 - Language made in-depth interviewing difficult in some cases.
 - Timing and location of the interviews made it difficult to go much beyond 30 mins in most cases (i.e. often after games or training, close to closing time for facilities).



Summary of findings



Migration and acculturation



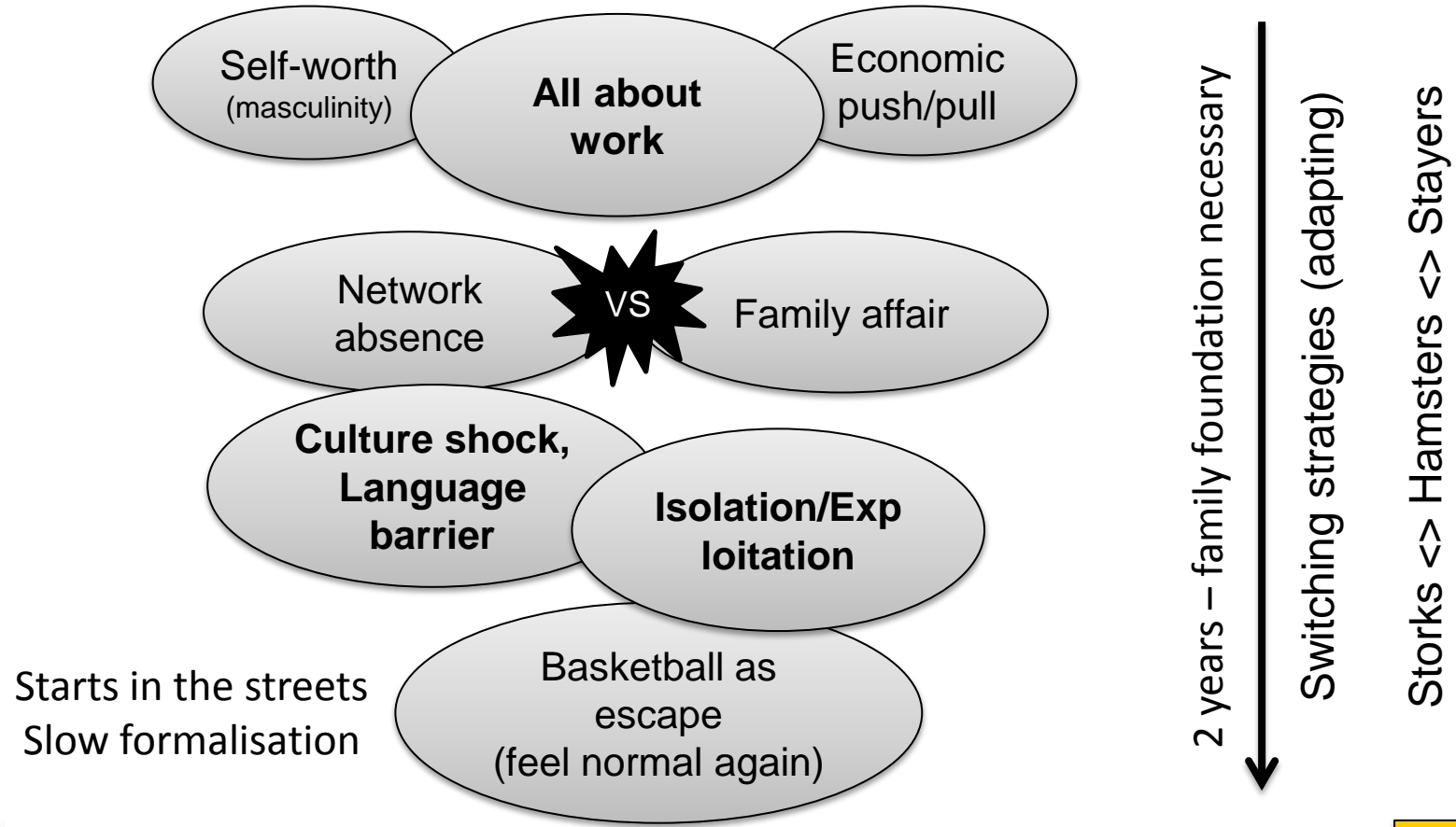
Basketball and
national identity



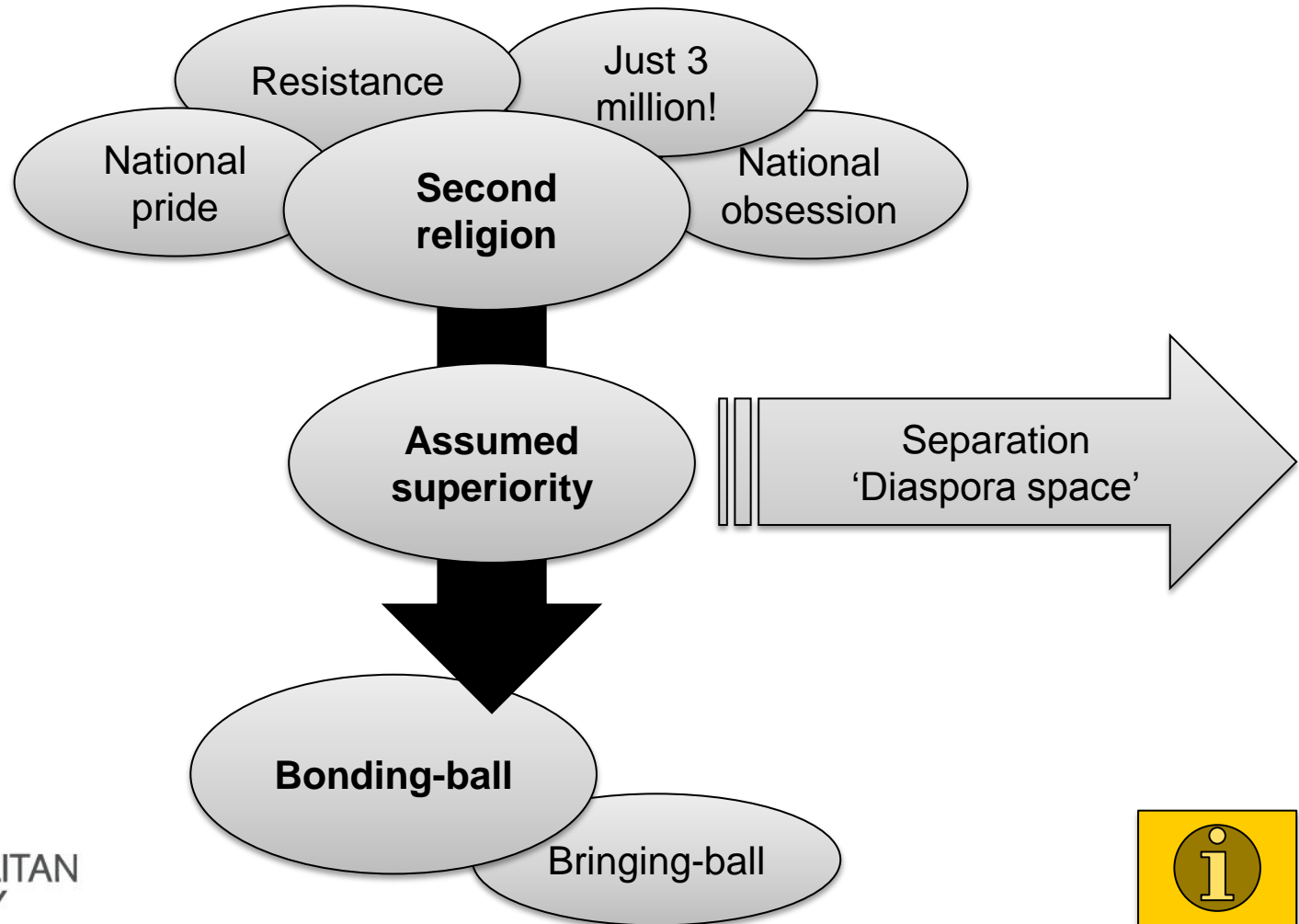
Established and
Outsiders



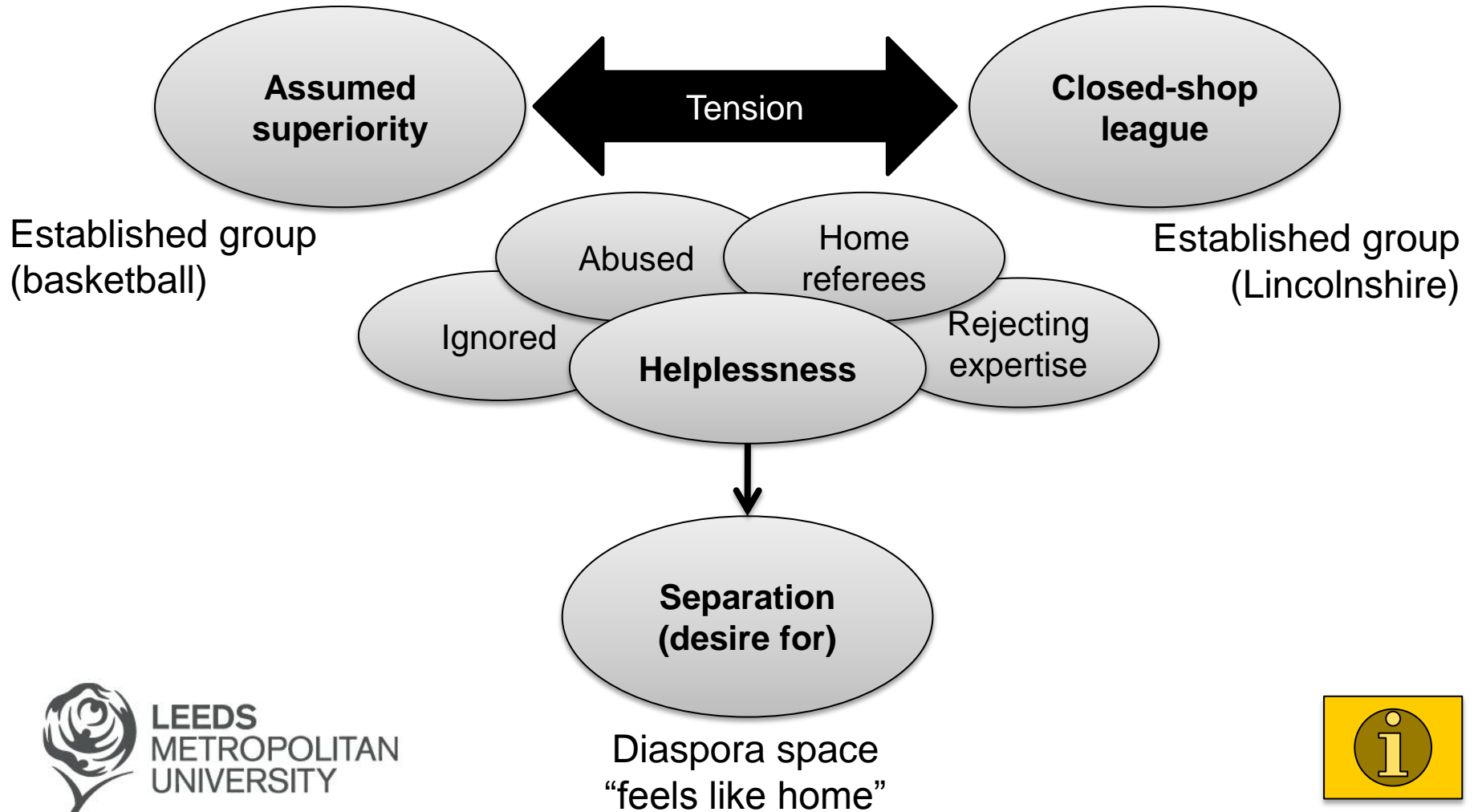
Migration and acculturation



National identity



Established and outsiders



Contributions

- Migration and acculturation strategies change rapidly and remain uncertain (Cf. Eade 2007).
- New understanding of the formation and role of minority-only teams and leagues (Cf. Burdsey 2009).
- Understanding of hostility and conflict may counterbalance current descriptive accounts of experiences of A8 workers (Cf. Burrell 2010).
- Broadening and enriching understanding of Post-Soviet national ID and sport (Cf. Topič & Coakley 2010).

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Thank you for listening...

ANY QUESTIONS?



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Typologies and strategies

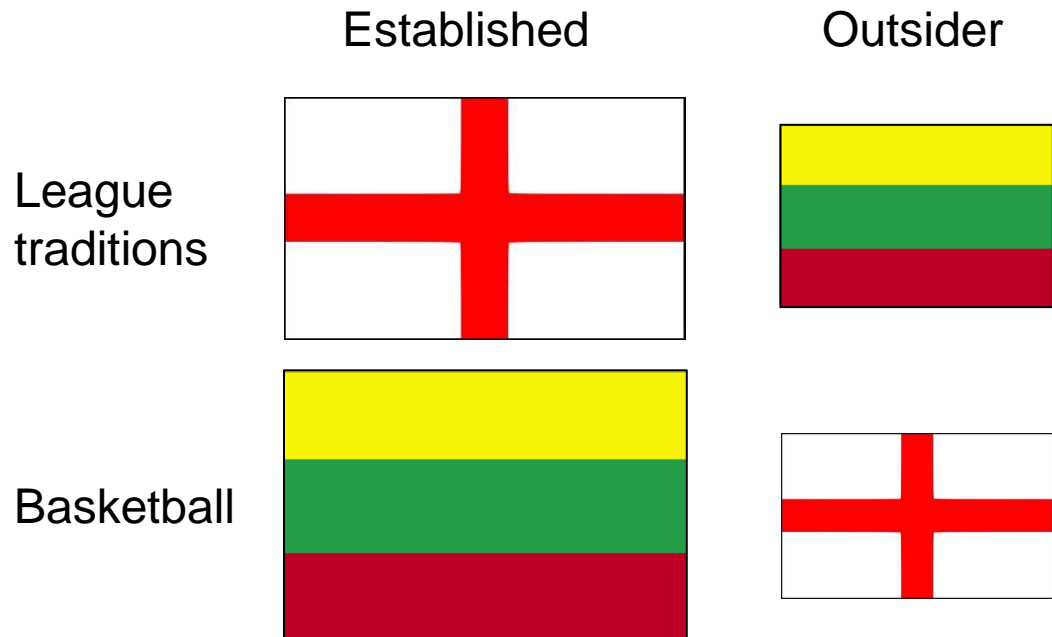
Eade (2007) <i>Polish migration strategies</i>	Berry (1997) <i>Acculturating strategies</i>	Giulianotti & Robertson (2007) <i>Glocalisation projects</i>
'Stayers' have been here for a while and intend to remain for good (22% of Polish migrants)	Assimilation (active interaction with host culture; no desire for keeping indigenous culture)	Transformation (new cultural forms are favoured to the neglect of indigenous culture)
'Searchers' keep their options open deliberately (42% of Polish migrants)	Integration (involvement in both indigenous behaviour and host society are sought)	Hybridisation (synthesise indigenous and host cultural phenomena to make distinct forms)
'Hamsters' or one-off movers aim to build capital and return (16% of Polish migrants)	Separation (indigenous cultural norms are maintained with no desire to embrace host culture)	Relativization (consciously and proactively preserve indigenous cultural forms in new environment)
'Storks' or circular migrants (20% of Polish migrants)	Marginalisation (neither interaction nor maintenance is desired)	Accommodation (pragmatic approach to appropriating practices, institutions and meanings of host culture)

Segregated league hypothesis

Characteristics of established-outsider figuration:

1. Legitimization and internalisation of a positive established group identity – all groups are measured against EG standards
2. Lack of a means for outsiders to challenge subordination
3. Tendency for EG to reinforce 'exceptional' minority examples as though 'typical' of each group

(Elias & Scotson 1994)



Also see Burdsey (2009) and parallels with early post-migration of British Asians and 'protection from racism'

Migration and acculturation

CULTURE SHOCK

I don't know anybody, nothing, you know, first couple of weeks it was... very strange. Everything is different you know: cars driving on other side; if you go to shower you've got hot and cold water; you use your phone, put it on charge and it's three pins. It's everything strange. (Lukas)

HAMSTER > STAYER (ASSIMILATION)

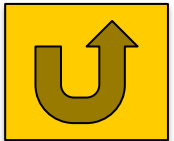
I thought we'll earn some money and get back to Lithuania, so that's how we ended up here, but we're not coming back. We might do, but we just got into the lifestyle here and kind of got stuck. (Nojus)

ALL ABOUT WORK (SELF WORTH)

To get some money for one day, if I was working in my country in the field it was very small money and when I come here I can feel like a man, like people, you know. A better life. (Jonas)

ISOLATION/EXPLOITATION

We didn't know anybody. We needed actually help when we came here but you see some Lithuanians – not very good people you know – they didn't help you, they just want to take money from you. (Dominykas)



National identity

SECOND RELIGION/JUST 3 MILLION!

All my team knows that I'm shooting; I'm going to shoot for people in Lithuania and I'm shouting in Lithuanian language... I always put on a Lithuania t-shirt and when you're playing basketball you will never forget you're Lithuanian, never, ever... it's more than a religion... basketball is what we're proud of; this is what we can show to Europe, the world, that we're three million people and we can play very well. (Dominykas)

ASSUMED SUPERIORITY

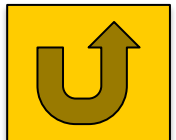
I think Lithuania playing very well basket you know, and Englishmen are learning a bit you know... [but] the English was not better than us. They're trying to be better, they're trying. It's difficult. (Jokubas)

RESISTANCE

...because we were occupied by [USSR] for a really long time, and it was getting our independence back, with them playing basketball, and we were better. (Nojus)

BONDING-BALL

When we go to Wisbech there are all Lithuanian guys, all teams are Lithuanian. They are play Lithuanian songs and you feel like in Lithuania. (Jonas)



Established and outsiders

ASSUMED SUPERIOR

We know about basketball more than English people because most English people knows about other sports like cricket, football you know. Basketball is our life you know. English people try to think 'we're higher because we're English' (Armandas)

HOME REFEREES

And when we play and those English teams and it will be English referees, they do a lot of mistakes, strong mistakes, you know. (Lukas)

SEPARATION

I think there are a lot of Lithuanians that would like separate and maybe be a little bit more closed community... I feel like that, from some English people, like feeling the pressure that we're not welcome, then same from Lithuanian players, don't want to play with English, or we better and should be separate. (Nojus)

CLOSED SHOP LEAGUE/HELPLESSNESS

I introduced everything to league... they didn't want to listen, and that's why I thought we need to try to get, you know, completely different league... But problem is, I think they're more than just happy that we actually got our own league... I haven't had anything from them. Nothing at all. They just ignore me, like completely. I'm gone. No emails or phone calls. Nothing. (Jokubas)

