

Three Models of Acculturation: Applications for Church Planting

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Common Problems...

- 1. Missionaries go to an unreached country without a specific target people.
 - The people most open to the Gospel are immigrants.
 - If the missionaries focus on a diaspora population, how should this influence their church planting strategy?
- 2. Church planters want to start a church among a specific diaspora population.
 - How do immigrants differ from non-immigrants among this people group?

Acculturation

- **Acculturation:** How members of one culture are influenced by the members of another culture.
 - In contrast to:
 - **Enculturation:** How people learn their first culture.
 - **Assimilation:** The process of adopting a new culture and losing the old.

3 Models of Acculturation

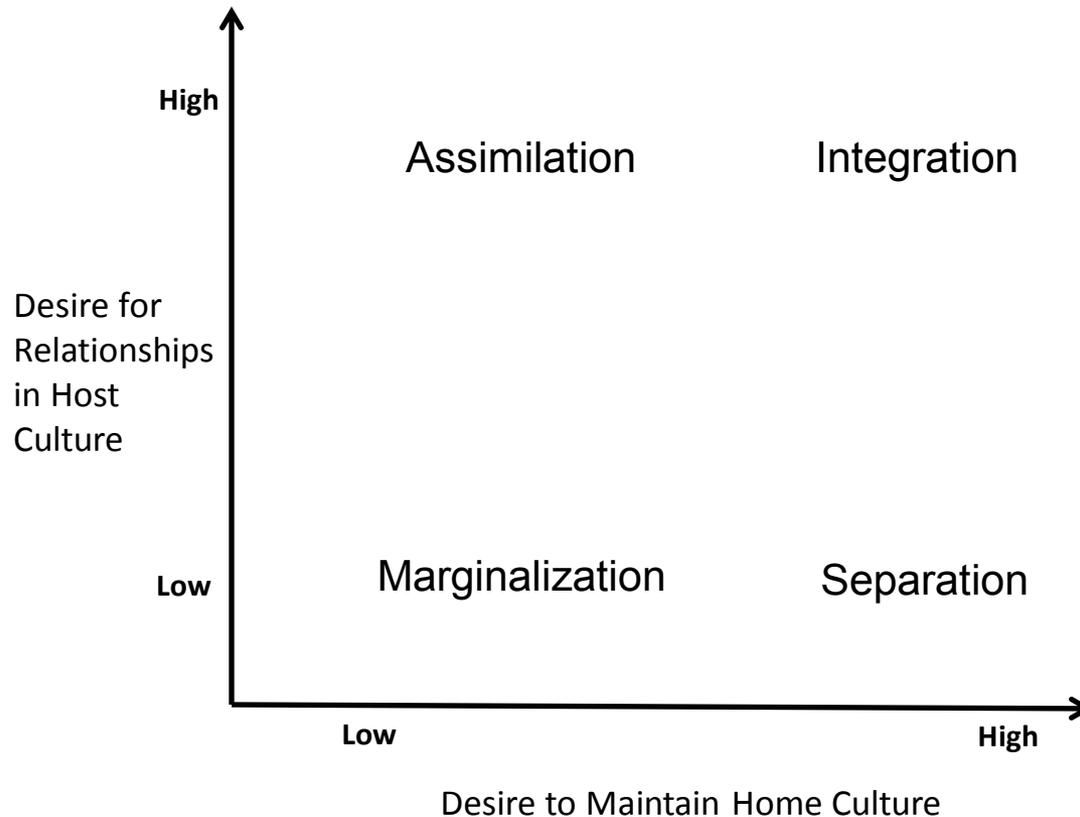
- **Psychological Model:** A description of what we can expect in terms of an individual's **behavior, thoughts, and feelings** in various conditions.
 - One dimensional melting pot model
 - Two dimensional strategies model
 - Social identity model

Model 1:

One dimensional melting pot model

- Immigrants assimilate into culture over time.
 - 1st generation: More at ease in home culture.
 - 2nd generation: Equally at ease in both cultures
 - 3rd generation: More at ease in host culture.
- Church planting Application
 - These transitions need to be programmed into the DNA of young churches

Model 2: Two Dimensional Acculturation Strategies



Model 2: Two Dimensional Acculturation Strategies

- Individuals will be attracted to churches that use strategies similar to their own.
- Church planting strategies:
 - **1. Separation:** Churches that focus on maintaining the home language and culture.
 - Comfortable
 - May hinder assimilation or integration
 - Unable to reach other cultures
 - May not be attractive to forward-looking potential leaders.

Model 2: Two Dimensional Acculturation Strategies

- Church planting strategies: (cont.)
 - **2. Assimilation:** Churches that encourage the use of the host culture, even if all the members are immigrants.
 - Attractive to immigrants who want to assimilate or integrate.
 - Allows for, and encourages, multi-ethnic churches.
 - Potentially able to reach members of host culture.
 - Can only reach people who speak the host country language.
 - **3. Integration:** Elements from both cultures and languages are integrated into the life of the church.
 - Attractive to bicultural individuals, or individuals who want to become bicultural (including recently arrived immigrants).
 - Unlikely to be attractive to outsiders or third generation immigrants

Model 2: Two Dimensional Acculturation Strategies

- Church planting strategies: (cont.)
 - **4. Marginalization:** Churches that do not feel the need to be part of either the immigrant or host cultures.
 - They create their own culture according to their needs and values
 - Greater freedom to develop Christ-centered community
 - Most Attractive to
 - the marginalized
 - people high in individualism.
 - Individuals raised in highly urban, multi-cultural cities where relationships are formed by common interests rather than ethnicity and culture.
 - Least attractive to people well-integrated into one culture or another.

Model 3: Social Identity Model

- People need a strong sense of group-identity.
- People are motivated to view themselves positively.
- Therefore, people are motivated to think and act in a way that makes them feel good about themselves because of their group memberships.
 - People want to enhance their self-esteem through group memberships.
 - Immigrants can increase their self-esteem by joining churches that raise their status
 - Are they valued by the group?
 - Are the leaders socially desirable, competent role models?