ABSTRACT
              This review of the literature on cultural adjustment
is divided into four sections: the nature of cultural adjustment;
acculturation as a model of cultural adjustment; psychological
responses to acculturation; and a model of cultural adjustment
developed by the author as a result of his immigration from Puerto
Rico to the United States mainland. Language, cognitive style,
identity, attitudes, and acculturation stress as experienced by
Puerto Ricans are discussed. Also considered are the processes of
adaptation, assimilation, integration, rejection and deculturation.
The report suggests the need for more research to explain the process
of cultural adjustment from a modern society to a less modern one.
(JCD)

Cultural Adjustment and the Puerto Rican

Joseph O. Prewitt Diaz
The Pennsylvania State University

Dr. Prewitt Diaz is currently the Coordinator of Bilingual Education Teacher
Training and Puerto Rican Studies.

2

Cultural Adjustment: A Review of the Literature
and an Application

ABSTRACT

The literature on cultural adjustment is scarce. The purpose of this paper has been to examine the literature and to define cultural adjustment. The final section of this paper is an application of the definition of cultural adjustment to the writer's migratory experiences. The paper is divided into four sections and concludes by recommending research on the cultural adjustment process of those persons migrating from a modern society (mainland United States) to a less modern society (Puerto Rico).

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to report on a review of the literature
on cultural adjustment. The paper is divided into four sections: the
nature of cultural adjustment, acculturation as a model of cultural adjust-
ment, psychological responses to acculturation, and a practical model of
cultural adjustment.

Interest in the behavior of migrants, in its causes and consequences,
and on its effect on individuals and.on the group, is as old as any topic
in the social sciences. A review of the literature leaves one with the
impression that the prediction of an individual's ability to adapt in a
foreign environment is an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task.
The purpose of this paper, then, is to try to define cultural adjustment
and to apply this definition to the writer's migratory experience.

THE NATURE OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The term "cultural adjustment" has not been defined adequately in the
literature. Segall (1979) describes cultural change, Padilla (1980)
describes cultural adjustment from a perspective of acculturation, Triandis
(1972) explores the phenomenon by analyzing subjective culture, and Berry
(1976) from a human ecology point of view.

Culture

For the purposes of this study, it is important to define each part of
cultural adjustment. Kroeher and Kluckholm (1952), as quoted by Berry
(1976), in defining culture emphasize a number of characteristics found in
the definition of culture: a set of attributes and products of human
societies, characteristic only to the human species as it is aggregated in

its societies. Herskowitz (1955) defines culture as the man-made part of the environment.

Triandis (1972) proposes the concept of subjective culture. Subjective culture is the cultural group characteristic way of perceiving the man-made part of his environment. The perceptions of rules and group norms, roles, and values are aspects of subjective culture. Physical proximity and interaction between groups seem to be vehicles by which subjective culture is shared in a society.

Berry (1976) suggests that culture is the way of life of a group of people. Culture is basically a form or pattern or design; it is an abstraction from concrete human behavior, but it is not itself behavior (Berry, 1976:10). It might be inferred from this discussion of the meaning of culture that it is a dynamic process in which the person perceived its interaction with the environment.

Adjustment

The second construct in the process is adjustment. Arkoff (1968) suggests that adjustment is a person's interaction with his/her environment. The construct of adjustment comes from the concept of adaptation in biology, which refers to the biological changes that facilitate the survival of a species (Arkoff, 1968).

Atwater (1979) suggests that adjustment is a two-way process where the person fits him/herself into a given circumstance and, at the same time, changes the circumstances to fit his/her needs. That is, adjustment is a dynamic process in which the person changes, his/her environment changes, and his/her relationship with the environment changes.

The process of adjustment is both physical and psychological. Spielberger and Sarason (1978) have identified adjustment as the body's response

to stress. Prolonged extreme exposure to painful stimulation, heat and cold, fatigue, frustration, and anxiety produces a syndrome of bodily responses referred to as stress. Under conditions of stress the sympathetic system effects changes in the gastrointestinal and urinary tracts, the circulatory and respiratory systems, and in the functioning of certain organs and glands. Spielberger and Sarason (1978) suggest that the reason some people develop bodily disorders in response to psychological events has to do with their life experiences.

Arkoff (1968) enumerates the psychological factors involved in adjustment. Arkoff describes these factors as needs, such as: autonomy, dominance, deference, aggression, abasement, nurturanc succorance, sex, achievement, and affiliation needs. In order to understand these psychological factors, Arkoff (1968) suggests that there are some basic ideas in understanding adjustment. The ideas are motives, or a pattern of need-impelled, goal-directed activity. Frustration, which refers to anything which interferes with need-impelled, goal-directed activities, results in conflict, anxiety, activation of defenses, and learning. The idea of conflict consists of simultaneous, but mutually incompatible, patterns of behavior. Anxiety refers to arousal caused by threat to one's well-being. The idea of defenses includes those patterns of behavior which are employed to protect oneself against threat. Learning refers to changes in behavior that come through practice and experience.

The above discussion leads the writer to conclude that, for the purpose of this paper, cultural adjustment is the capacity of a person to define the characteristics of the group which the persons belongs to (C_1) and the host group (C_2). The person has to modify his/her behavior in order to become a member of a particular group. Finally, the person will have to

sustain an adequate contact with the new environment where integration
might occur.

ACCULTURATION: A MODEL OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

In 1954, the Social Science Research Council defined acculturation as
culture change that is initiatea by the conjunction of two or more autono-
mous cultural systems. Padilla (1980) refers to acculturation as the
phenomenon which results when groups of individuals having different
cultures come into first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the
original culture patterns of either or both groups. Humphrey (1941) asserts
that, in acculturation, although interaction between elements is of essence,
one culture is altered more than the other; and the preponderant direction
from the flow of meanings is from the culture possessing the greater number
and kind of utilitarian symbols to the culture having the fewer. In the
contact of cultures it is clear also that those layers of carried culture
which are most immediately affected by contact are those most directly
involved in getting a living and in protection from the elements. Humphrey
(1941) indicates that when value competes with value, unless the new value
functions as a direct sanction for an accepted utilitarian symbol, or for
complexes of these symbols, the old value predominates over the new.

Szapocznik and Kurtines (1980) and Cohen (1972) discuss the cultural
adjustment problems encountered by mental health workers in Puerto Rican
and Cuban communities in the mainland. Benson (1978) discusses the nature
of the cultural adjustment process for individuals crossing cultural
boundaries. Szapocznik and Kurtines (1980) have found that the accultura-
tion process requires the contact of at least two autonomous cultural
groups. Berry (1980) suggests that acculturation may be viewed as the

reduction of conflict within an interacting system. Brein and David (1971)
indicate that culture change has at least three phases: contact, conflict,
and adaptation. Finally, culture change takes place in two levels, that
of the group and that of the individual (Berry, 1980).

Berry (1976, 1980) suggests that adaptation is a useful concept for
the study of acculturation. In cultural adjustment changes are made which
reduce the conflict by making cultural or behavioral features more similar.
Berry (1980) suggests that if adaptation is viewed as the reduction of
conflict, then the group and individual options taken to lessen accultura-
tion conflict may be used to examine possible variations in this phase of
acculturation.

The literature (Berry, 1980; Padilla, 1980; and Szapocznik and Kurtines,
1980) suggests four types of possible variations to adaptation. These are
assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation. In assimilation,
the person relinquishes his/her cultural identity and moves into the larger
society. Integration implies the maintenance of cultural integrity as well
as the movement to become an integral part of a larger societal framework.
In rejection, the person self-imposes withdrawal from the larger society.
Finally, deculturation is characterized by striking out against the larger
society and by a feeling of alienation and loss of identity. Berry (1980),
in his article, also mentions other types of adaptations as identified by
groups. It is important to note that in the study of cultural adjustment
there are many individual and group responses. This paper will examine
some psychological responses to acculturation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO ACCULTURATION

Berry (1980) identifies six areas of psychological functioning which

respond to acculturation: language, cognitive style, personality, identity,
attitudes, and acculturation stress.

Language

It is a common experience that following contact, a language shift
typically occurs which is more likely to take place in the non-dominant
group. Benson (1978) indicates that intercultural communication is central
to the cultural adjustment. Morris (1960) and Sewell and Davidson (1961)
indicate that foreign students who interact more with host country
individuals tend to be more satisfied with their overseas experiences.

Cognitive Style

Included here are all perceptual and cognitive behaviors (Berry, 1976)
in addition to the work in the field-dependent and field-independent
cognitive sytles (Witkins and Berry, 1976). Szapocznik and Kurtines (1980)
suggest that there may be a bicultural style, depending upon whether one
is operating for the moment in the C_1 or the C_2. Such is the case of
second-generation Cubans in Miami, where there are instances in which they
characteristically need to participate in both cultures.

Personality

Spindler (1968), working with the concept of reactive movement, and
Linton (1943) and Wallace (1956), in a discussion of reaffirmation and
revitalization movements, showed how individuals and groups continue on
the course toward the dominant culture, while some move toward a native-
oriented pole. Still others achieve a synthesis in their personality,
merging elements which are characteristics of both groups (Wintrob and
Sindell, 1972). Szapocznik, Scopetta, and King (1978) hypothesize that to
learn about the host culture is clearly adaptive, but to simultaneously
discard those skills which effectively allow one to interact with the

culture of origin, such as language and relationship style, is not adaptive. Thus, in a bicultural setting, when adaptation to a host culture occurs in the way that acculturation has been traditionally conceptualized, then it inherently leads to psychosocial maladjustment.

Identity

Brand, Ruiz, and Padilla (1974) indicate that there is a fairly clear preference for an identity associated with the dominant group. On the other hand, there is a substantial proportion of persons in the society maintaining a regional or ethnic identity, distinct from a national one. Thus, the re-affirmation of cultural heritage, either by claiming a traditional identity or rejecting the new culture, is clearly in evidence.

Attitudes

There have been three scales developed, one for attitudes toward the assimilation, integration, and rejection modes (Berry, 1970, 1976). These studies have attempted to show that these are fairly independent attitudes, that they can vary from group to group, and that the variation is to some extent dependent upon cultural and psychological characteristics of the two groups in contact. Pesner and Auld (1980), in a study on second-language learning, indicate that becoming bilingual and bicultural is a function of the person's attitude towards the language to be learned and to the host culture.

Acculturation Stress

This includes those behaviors and experiences which are generated during acculturation and which are mildly pathological and disruptive to the individual. Berry (1980) suggests that acculturation stress will be highest where the cultural distance is greatest and where the insistence that the journey to be taken is strongest.

As Benson (1978) suggests, the literature in cultural adjustment is limited. Most of the literature is found in studies related to mental health (Cohen, 1972; Szapocznik and Kurtines, 1980; Szapocznik et al., 1978). There exists a need for further research on cultural adjustment for the immigrants who travel back and forth from underdeveloped countries to more developed one.
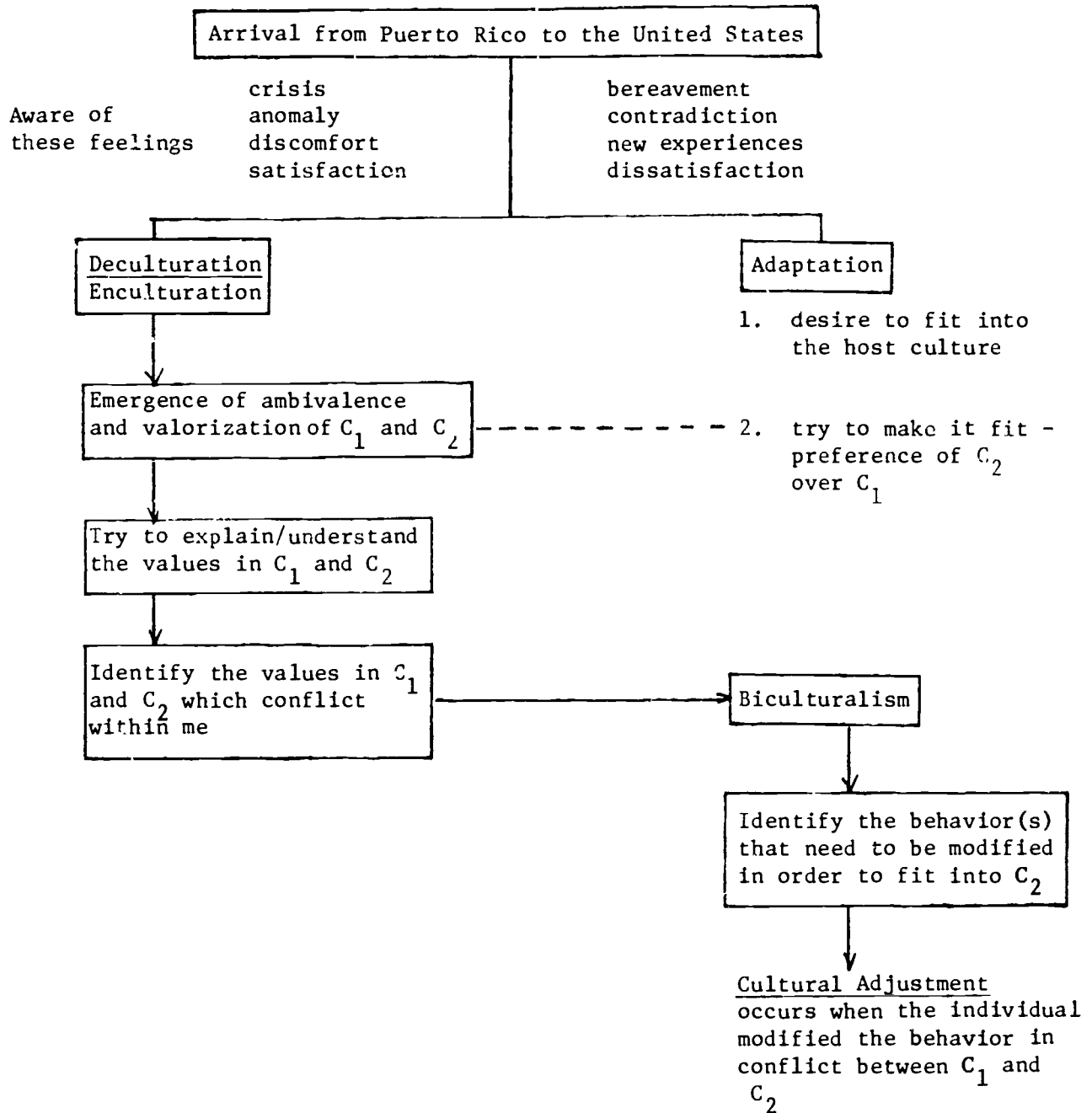
This section has discussed acculturation as a model of cultural adjustment. The final section of this paper will consider the writer's process of cultural adjustment.

A PRACTICAL MODEL OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The author has had the opportunity of undergoing cultural adjustment from Puerto Rico to the United States in the last six years. Figure 1 presents the reader with the steps that the writer underwent in the process of cultural adjustment.

During the initial stage there was a feeling of elation, which might be attributed to the novelty of the migration experience, social freedom, and self-justification (I am here because I want to be here, so I am happy). The second part of the first stage is characterized by culture shock, nostalgia, and non-acceptance. The writer became aware of the feelings as expressed in Figure 1. The two alternatives which follow are to try to fit into the new culture or to try to maintain the writer's personality, language, etc. in spite of the new culture. The left of the figure indicates two behavioral problems which occurred concurrently, deculturation/enculturation. The writer's effort to fit into the new culture identified the values in both cultures. The next phase was to explain and understand the values that were similar in both cultures. Once the writer had identified

Figure 1

A Model of Cultural Adjustment

Arrival from Puerto Rico to the United States

Aware of
these feelings

crisis
anomaly
discomfort
satisfaction

bereavement
contradiction
new experiences
dissatisfaction

| Deculturation |
| Enculturation |

Adaptation

1. desire to fit into
    the host culture

| Emergence of ambivalence |
| and valorization of C_1 and C_2 |

- - - - - - - - - 2. try to make it fit -
preference of C_2
over C_1

| Try to explain/understand |
| the values in C_1 and C_2 |

| Identify the values in C_1 |
| and C_2 which conflict |
| within me |

Biculturalism

| Identify the behavior(s) |
| that need to be modified |
| in order to fit into C_2 |

Cultural Adjustment
occurs when the individual
modified the behavior in
conflict between C_1 and
C_2

the values that were in conflict, the writer was able to regulate the

perception of both cultures, thus becoming bicultural. The writer then

identified the behaviors that needed to be modified in order to fit into

the host culture. The final step presented in the figure is the stage

when the writer modified the behaviors that were in conflict between cultures,

thus cultural adjustment occurred.

CONCLUSION

There is a need for continued research on the topic of cultural

adjustment. Although some research exists that explains the process of

acculturation from a less modern society to a more modern one (the case of

Puerto Ricans), research which explains the process of cultural adjustment

from a modern society to a less modern one needs to be explored to see if

the process is similar.

The writer has attempted to discuss cultural adjustment by reviewing

the literature on the subject. The last section of the paper was an attempt

to understand the process of cultural adjustment as experienced by the writer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arkoff, Abe. Adjustment and Mental Health. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.

Atwater, E. Psychology of Adjustment: Personal Growth in a Changing World.

Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979.

Benson, P. Measuring cross-cultural adjustment: the problem of criteria.

International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Spring, 1978, 21-37.

Berry, J.W. Human Biology and Cognitive Style: Comparative Studies in

Cultural and Psychological Adaptation. NJ: Sage Publications, 1976.

Berry, J.W. Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In: Padilla, A. (ed.),

Acculturation. Colorado: Westview Press, 1980.

Brand, E.S., Ruiz, P.A., and Padilla, A.M. Ethnic idenrification and prefer-

ence: a review. Psychological Bulletin 81:860-890, 1974.

Brein, M. and David, K.H. Intercultural communication and the adjustment of

the sojourner. Psychological Bulletin 76:215-230, 1971.

Cohen, R.E. Principles of preventive mental health programs for ethnic

minority populations: the acculturation of Puerto Ricans to the

United States. American Journal of Psychiatry 128(12):79-83, 1972.

Herskowit   J. Cultural Anthropology. New York: Knopf, 1955, pp. 326-29.

Humphrey, N.D. On assimilation and acculturation. Psychiatry 4:323-345, 1941.

Kroeher, A.L. and Kluckholm, C. Culture: a critical review of concepts and

definitions. Papers of the Peabody Museum, No. 1:47, 1952.

Linton, R. Nativistic movements. American Anthropologist 45:230-240, 1943.

Morris, R.T. The Two-way Mirror: National Status in Forcing Students'

Adjustment. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960.

Padilla, A.M. Acculturat   . Color o: Westview Press, 1980.

Pesner, J.W. and Auld, F.   The relationship between bilingual proficiency
    and self-esteem.   International Journal of Intercultural Relations
    8:339-351, 1980.

Segall, M.H.   Cross-Cultural Psychology: Human Behavior in Global Perspective.
    CA: Brooks-Cole Publishing Co., 1979.

Sewell, W.H. and Davidson, O.M.   Scandinavian Students on an American Campus.
    Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961.

Spielberger, D.C. and Sarason, I.G.   Stress and Anxiety, Advanced Study
    Institute on Stress and Anxiety in Modern Life.   Germany: Hemisphere
    Publishing Corporation, 1978.

Spindler, G.   Psycocultural adaptation.   In: Narbick, E., Prince-Williams,
    D., and McCord, W. (eds.).   The Study of Personality: An Interdisciplin-
    ary Appraisal.   New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968.

Szapocznik, J. and Krutines, W.   Acculturation, biculturalism, and adjustment
    among Cuban Americans.   In: Padilla, A. (ed.).   Acculturation.
    Colorado: Westview Press, 1980.

Szapocznik, J., Scopetta, M.A., and King, O.E.   Theory and practice in
    matching treatment to the special characteristics and problems of
    Cuban migrants.   Journal of Community Psychology 6:112-122, 1978.

Triandis, H.C.   The Analysis of Subjective Culture.   New York: McGraw-
    Hill, 1972.

Wallace, A.F.   Revitalization movements.   American Anthropologist 58:264-281,
    1956.

Witkin, A. and Berry, J.W.   Psychological differentiation in cross-cultural
    perspective.   Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology 6:4-87, 1975.

Wintrob, R. and Sindell, P.   Culture change and psychopathology: the case of

Cree adolescent students in Quebec. In: Berry, J.W. and Wilder,

G.J.S. (eds.). Social Psychology: The Canadian Context. Toronto:

McCellund and Steward, 1972.