

COUNTING THE UNCOUNTABLE, IMMIGRANT AND MIGRANT, DOCUMENTED AND UNDOCUMENTED FARM WORKERS IN CALIFORNIA: RESULTS FROM AN ALTERNATIVE ENUMERATION IN A MEXICAN AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN FARM WORKER COMMUNITY IN CALIFORNIA AND ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION OF THE BEHAVIORAL CAUSES OF UNDERCOUNT

by

Victor Garcia

INTRODUCTION

This coverage report is on an Alternative Enumeration (AE) carried-out for the Ethnographic Evaluation of the Behavioral Causes of Undercount Study, a project of the Undercount Behavioral Research Group of the Bureau of the Census. The AE is one of ten projects selected nationally to study undercount behavior of Hispanic populations in the United States and Puerto Rico.

The population in the ethnographic site is primarily made up of Mexican and Mexican American farm worker households who reside in a Californian farming community on a permanent basis. These proletariat households have no or few ties to the peasant economy in Mexico. In other words, the households are not comprised of peasant migrants who come to mind when we think of farm workers in California. Farm worker householders at the site do not pack up and leave when the harvest is poor or over, do not move to another harvest site nor do they return to a home base in Mexico. This California community is their home. However, some temporary household members, called *arrimados* in Spanish and who are related to the householder and spouse through kinship, reside locally during the lettuce harvest and return to Mexico after the season.

PROFILE OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC SITE

The ethnographic site for the Alternative Enumeration is located in a small rural farm worker community situated in a major coastal valley of California.

The Sample Area

The sample area is located in a new housing development in the western half of the farm worker town. The homes in this neighborhood are the newest in the community. The first dwellings were built in 1980; the most recent ones in 1986. Unlike residences in other neighborhoods, most of which were constructed immediately after World War II, the houses of the sample area are in excellent condition. Houses are structurally sound and well maintained. In addition, unlike other residences in the community, the properties are not altered to accommodate more people: they do not have illegal add-on rooms, secondary units in backyards, and garages converted into bedrooms.

The AE sample area is comprised of 133 contiguous housing units, almost equally divided into two housing tracts. The first is a relatively new housing project, developed by a private, non-profit housing corporation (*1). This tract contains approximately 67 two and three bedroom single-family units. The second housing development --adjacent to the first-- was built by a private developer. Sixty-eight two and three bedroom single-family dwellings were constructed in this tract for low and moderate income home buyers.

Estimates place the number of residents in the Alternative Enumeration sample area in the Spring of 1990 at 672. Over 90 percent of the households are of Mexican descent, and many of them depend on agricultural work for their livelihood. The households are low-income and, consequently, often depend on government programs to make ends meet, especially during periods of chronic unemployment and underemployment. During these harsh economic times, they depend on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Food stamps, and on other types of government assistance (*2).

The Surrounding Community

The community is one of three in the valley. It covers one-square mile in area. It is located in a major transportation junction in the midst of fertile soils which together with an abundance of water and mild weather permits the growing of vegetables on a year-round basis. Since its founding, it has been an agricultural settlement: first, as a farming town, where farmers and their families lived; and from the mid-1960's to the present, as a farm worker community, where agricultural workers are housed throughout the year. In the early years, the community was booming with numerous packing-sheds, processing plants, and coolers, all of which provided revenues and employment. Recently, the community has suffered from chronic economic blight. The closure of nearly all of the agricultural enterprises in town coupled with changes in field production — which favor migrant workers over resident laborers--have resulted in a loss of city revenues and in greater unemployment and underemployment of the resident farm worker population.

According to preliminary 1990 Census data, the town has about 5,500 inhabitants, nearly 85 percent are of Mexican descent; a little under 10 percent are of Asian extraction, mainly Japanese and Filipinos; the remainder are "white". Data from a 1988 survey reveal that the Mexican descent population is relatively young -- the average age is 26 years (Garcia, N.D.). The data also show that a significant number of the Mexican descent population are *ex-braceros* [contracted workers] and their children (*3). They and their children immigrated from the rural Central Plateau Region of Mexico where they had been *campesinos* [peasants] who practiced subsistence and cash-crop farming. Except for a common regional origin, this population has highly heterogeneous social characteristics, as it is comprised of both U.S. citizens and Mexican citizens who are permanent U.S. residents, Catholics and Protestants, lower and middle class, monolingual English and monolingual Spanish speakers, and bilingual speakers of both Spanish and English.

Resident farm workers work when they are able to find employment. The common vicissitudes of farm work--the weather and the commodity market--too often prevent local

farm workers from obtaining gainful employment year-round. In addition, growers and other agricultural producers prefer to hire migratory labor which is highly exploitable and, as a result, resident workers have become a reserve labor force in the Valley. Resident workers, on the average, work anywhere from 12 weeks to 36 weeks out of the year (Garcia, ND). These work weeks are not 8 hour days, 5 days out of the week, but range from 2 to 10 hours, 3 to 6 days out of the week (Garcia, N.D.).

Matters are further complicated by the incomes earned by the majority of the resident farm workers. Since local workers do not work directly for growers, but for labor contractors, their wages are at the minimum required by law, \$4.50 an hour. Consequently, annual incomes are low. Income data from the 1988 survey, cited earlier, shows that annual incomes vary significantly, from \$5,000 to \$50,000 a year, with an average of \$13,416 (*4). These annual incomes include Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Social Security Supplement payments, unemployment compensation and disability benefits. Over half of the sample--93 households--earn incomes at or below the official poverty level; and an additional 49 households--a little over a quarter of the sample--earn incomes that qualify them for social service programs (*5).

The poverty that plagues farm workers manifests itself in many ways. In particular, it is obvious in their incomes, housing and home possessions, diet and nutrition, and social isolation. Their incomes are below or close to the poverty level. Their homes are often in need of repairs and are overcrowded. Their home possessions are used and inexpensive. Their diets consist of cheap foods which have very little nutritional content. They seldom can afford to attend community events. The economic plight of the farm workers is often attributed to their lack of a work ethic, but in reality their plight is the result of local labor practices adopted by growers and grower-shippers in the Valley.

The poverty and the low-income cycles that pull many of the farm worker households into their whirlwinds are broken in some cases. However, these instances are few: it seems that the only way out for them is to get out of farm work altogether. The households that are fortunate enough to escape the whirlwinds are those that have workers who are foremen, crew managers, machine operators. However, these positions are few and not available to everyone. Another way out for the households is to employ workers outside of agriculture, as laborers in assembly plants, cashiers and clerks at retail stores, clerks and typists in local government departments, and maintenance personal in many of the service establishments. However, these jobs are also limited in number, forcing many of the households to depend on farm work for their livelihood.

In spite of the poverty, the families do everything possible to keep their neighborhoods from looking run down. Homes are clean, yards are planted with roses and other flowers, and the streets are free of litter. In addition, unlike other impoverished cities, it is not ridden with crime. In fact, the local chief of police is quick to point this out, often boasting of the community's low crime rate, the lowest for a town of its size in the state. Most striking is a strong sense of community. Nearly all of the families know each other and in many cases they are related through fictive kin ties of *compadrazgo*, a relationship established

between parents and godparents. This solidarity manifests itself on weekends, when locals get together for soccer matches and other recreational activities, and in September, when the local Mexican civic organization sponsors a parade and a three day festival to commemorate Mexican Independence Day.

METHODS

This section of the paper will cover the methods employed in the Alternative Enumeration. It includes site selection, field research, undercount hypotheses, and analyzes.

Site Selection

The AE site was primarily selected because it qualified as a rural concentration of Hispanics with some undocumented migrant laborers present, one type of site specified in the "Proposed Study Plan for Ethnographic Evaluation of the Behavioral Causes of Undercount" (Brownrigg and Martin 1989). The site is in a rural town set in an intensive agricultural area, and contains Mexican and Mexican American farm workers who are both non-migratory and migratory, and both documented and undocumented residents. At the time of the 1990 Census, the immigration of the vast majority here had been regularized; less than 2% of the residents in the sample area were undocumented as far as we were able to determine.

The site was also selected because resident farm worker families residing in single family dwellings are typical of the town. The migratory farm workers who reside in the town are a minority of the farm worker population there and do not occupy single family dwellings. Rather, most of them live in hotels, apartments, storage rooms illegally used as living Quarters located behind businesses that line the major street of the community. However, some migrants--*arrimados*--live with kin in the local residential neighborhoods. They stay during the lettuce harvest and leave for their homes in Mexico after the season.

Another reason for selecting this site, and not another neighborhood, is the number of our key contacts who live there. These contacts facilitated the collecting of data needed for the study: they provided information about themselves and others; introduced their kin and friends in the site; and, if needed, "vouched" for the credibility of the researchers. Sound rapport exists with these contacts: they trust and respect the principal investigator (PI) and the research associate (RA). The PI developed acquaintances with several contacts at the site over a four year period, from 1986-90, while he was collecting ethnographic data for his Ph.D. dissertation. The RA did the same when she was conducting a field study in the area from 1986-88.

Field Research

The Alternative Enumeration was carried-out during a 40 day period: from June 15th to June 30th, and the entire month of July 1990. After we received the match report in December 1991 from the Bureau of the Census, the follow-up research was completed from January 8th to January 16th, 1991.

The fieldwork and analysis of the Alternative Enumeration were conducted by the PI and RA. The two of us are both bilingual and bi-cultural. In fact, the RA is a native of Mexico: she was born and raised in that country. We found that our background was useful in establishing communication and building rapport with the Mexican and Mexican American households that we were not familiar with. In addition, we discovered that our knowledge of the site and its residents, including their origins in Mexico, was useful in conducting the Alternative Enumeration. We knew when was the best time to make observations and to be seen strolling down the streets talking to local folks. During the week, the moments of opportunity were in the evenings after supper, and in the weekends, Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Alternative Enumeration

The Alternative Enumeration was primarily conducted by the RA in both Spanish and English, depending on the language of the respondent. She is familiar with the residents at the site, and they are well familiar with her: by far, she is no stranger in the town.

Traditional anthropological field methods were important in collecting the enumeration data. It was difficult to practice at the site a major field method of anthropology--participant observation. What prevented its use is that the site is a residential neighborhood with no center of activity. People were mainly inside their homes or in their backyards. There are no stores, community centers, and churches, only a small park that is always vacant. The lack of a centralized activity area makes participant observation difficult. However, it was useful to gather information at community centers and other facilities outside of the site, where folks congregate to meet and to celebrate special occasions. Participant observation at these establishments provided us with some clues on household membership.

Although there were no optimal vantage points for participant observation within the site, we made observations during casual strolls through the neighborhood and during house visits. Periodically, we visited the site during the week to observe the number of cars parked in the drive way or along the curb, and to count the number of children playing in the yards. These visits also gave us a chance to enumerate others. They allowed us to observe teenagers and adults doing yard work, repairing automobiles, and working in their garages. Together, the observations gave us a general idea of who made up the membership of some of the households.

Observations were also made during home visits. Homes at the site were visited at least once to verify our observations and information collected through informal interviews with neighbors and other community folks. During the visits, care was taken to see and to talk to as many household members as possible. Notes from these observations were compared with those taken during the strolls. In addition, while in the home, attempts were made to determine what languages were used by whom. We would intentionally speak to the occupants in either English or Spanish to see how well they responded. We would also look for literature, especially newspapers and magazines, to see in what language it was

written. We took notes also on the language of television and radio programs watched and listened to by the occupants of the home.

Informal interviews at and outside of the site were of use in collecting enumeration data as well. At the site, we interviewed neighbors to get information on a particular household or to verify information. The interviews were conducted with people who we had established rapport with and, thus, had an understanding of why we were canvassing the community. The interviews were brief and to the point. Basically, the respondent was asked who were the members of an adjacent home or of a home down the street. The interviewees were also asked to inform local residents of our task and to help us assure them that we meant them no harm.

Informal interviews were also conducted outside of the site. These interviews were conducted with community leaders who know and have rapport with some of the residents in the site. The leaders were asked if they knew a particular resident; and if they did, they were questioned about the resident's household size and composition. In addition, the leaders were asked to help us build rapport with the households that did not know us by informing them that we were conducting an Alternative Enumeration under the auspices of the local Community Health Center.

Genealogical constructs were also helpful in obtaining data on the size and composition of all the households. We drew up limited genealogies of the households. Only immediate family, such as parents, brothers and sisters, and off-spring of brothers and sisters, were considered. The genealogical constructs facilitated the collection and recording of data, and made kinship inquiries interesting to the respondents. In particular, the respondents found the kinship diagrams intriguing, and in some cases, they requested we draw up their entire genealogies for them to keep as a record of their families.

The genealogical constructs were also useful because, if a household had kin at the site, information would be made available to us and used in the Alternative Enumeration. In addition, we would find out how many folks were related through kinship at the site. In some cases, the constructs were compared with extensive genealogies collected in the community over a 4 year period. The two were compared to verify information on household size and structure.

We discovered that, while the Alternate Enumeration was moving along, a "census evaluation activity" was being performed by the Bureau of Census. We were informed by our contacts that the enumerator of this special Census evaluation was knocking on doors and inquiring about the accurateness of the responses made in the Census forms. The household information that he sought was to be compared and contrasted with the responses made by the householders in April, 1990. We did not meet or see this person, but he was described by our informants as a "white" male who did not understand nor speak Spanish. His demeanor was depicted as "persistent" and "impatient".

The Census evaluation activity made our enumeration efforts difficult in two major ways. One, the Spanish/English form [Spanish on one side and English on the other] being passed out to the households in the neighborhood by the special enumerator was intimidating. What was intimidating was the following clause in the form copied verbatim from the English version *6]:

We [the Bureau of Census] collect information for this study under the authority of title 13, United States Code, and it is confidential by law. The same law requires that you answer the questions to the best of your knowledge. We will compare your responses to this survey with the information you provided in the census to evaluate the completeness of the census. We use all information we obtain only for statistical purposes and only sworn Census Bureau employees see this information.

From interviews with key contacts, we learned that many of the residents interpreted the statement as meaning that the Bureau of Census was checking to see who was making misleading statements. This belief contributed to the confusion over and fear of the official Census. Consequently, we believe some of the respondents felt compelled to answer our questions according to how they replied in their Census forms or how they replied to the official Census enumerator. In these cases, if the respondents neglected to report some household members the first time around, they would be very reluctant to include them the second time around as well; or they would claim that the omitted household Members had been included in the Census, when, in fact, (as we learned whence saw the match report) they were not.

The second difficulty caused by the Census evaluation activity that made our Alternative Enumeration difficult was the frustration of the residents. Many of the respondents were extremely upset about having to answer questions a third time around: first, in the Census form or to the official Census follow up enumerator; second, to the field worker in the Census evaluation activity; and third, to us. In fact, as a consequence some households--three or four of them--were not willing to answer our questions and, as a result, we were forced to obtain information about these households from their neighbors.

Resolution fieldwork

Follow-up field research was conducted from January 8th to 16th, 1991, to collect data that would help us resolve any discrepancies between the Alternative and Census Enumerations. During this phase of the study, we made attempts to re-contact all of the households in question. We would ask them to explain the inconsistencies in their case. If they were unwilling to discuss the matter (and four of them were unwilling to do so), or if they insisted that the Census was wrong, we would interview neighbors or kin of the households in question to see whether they could provide us with any insights.

DATA ANALYSIS

Together, the PI and the RA recorded information in a file using the Lotus data program and filled out and coded AE sheets. The PI performed the data analyzes and verified conclusions with the RA.

Two analyzes of the match between the two sets of enumeration data, from our Alternative Enumeration and from the Census Enumeration, are presented in this sub-section. The first of the two is the quantitative analysis and the second the qualitative analysis.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Although we enumerated 133 Household/Housing Units (“HH/HUs”), the match report provided by the Center for the Survey Methods Research only proposed links for 115 of these HH/HUs. Among the HH/HUs for which links were proposed, 44 households had discrepancies. In other words, in 44 HH/HUs there were either unmatched Individual Records (“IR”) or the link proposed between the AE and the census HH/HU was incorrect. To be precise, 42 HH/HUs had unmatched IRs, and 2 HH/HUs were not linked correctly. In the erroneous linkages, the housing units matched, but the household members listed at these addresses did not match at all.

Alternative Enumeration List: Individual Reports Not found in the Census Enumeration

Out of the 42 HR/HU sets which contained at least one unmatched individual report, twenty-eight of them were housing units in the Alternative Enumeration (AE). The total number of unmatched IRs in the 28 HH/HUs in the AE is forty-two, that is, 42 people appear on the AE and not on the Census.

Non-Residents on Census Day

In the Alternative Enumeration, there were 10 households with a total of 12 individual reports that were not in the Census for legitimate reasons. The 12 people were not present during Census Day for 2 reasons: five of the individuals were newborns [persons who were born after Census Day]; and seven of them were “in-movers” [persons who moved into the home or joined the household after Census Day].

Residents on Census Day

In all, there were a total of 30 people in 18 different households who did not show up in the Census. The 30 were included in the Alternative Enumeration.

Respondents in 7 households with a combined total of 12 IRs informed us that they had reported the people in the Census and cannot explain why they did not show up in census. We are unable to explain it, as well.

There are various explanations for the omissions in the other cases, among them, people

with clandestine income sources, confusion by the respondent as to who should or should not be included in the Census, and unwilling participants. More specifically, respondents in 4 households [5 IRs] claimed that the individuals were not reported because they earned income and "should not" be considered as residing in the household. We interpret that these persons represented clandestine income sources for the households. Respondents in 2 households [a total of 4 IRs] claimed that the people were present on Census Day, but moved out soon after, and therefore did not include them in the census. Respondents in two other households with 3 IRs claimed that the people were not present during the Census but they reside in the household periodically.

We were unable to explain the omissions in 2 cases: 2 households with 2 IRs each [a total of 4 IRs]. In another case, 1 household with 2 IRs, the respondent was unwilling to participate in the AE. We have no idea why the 2 individuals were not included in the Census Enumeration

Census Enumeration List: Individual Reports Not found in the Alternative Enumeration

Eighteen HH/HUs in the census enumeration contain individual reports not found in the AE. In these housing units, the total number of individual reports in the census enumeration is twenty-six: 26 individual records unique to the Census.

In all, respondents in 10 households with a total of 18 individual reports claimed that the people were not present on April 1st, 1990, and they cannot explain why these records show up in the census: these are erroneous enumerations. Respondents in 4 households with 1 individual report each claimed that the people moved out before the time the Alternative Enumeration began. We did not find out why in 4 other households with one household member in each were not reported in the Alternative Enumeration.

Unmatched Households

The addresses of two housing units (HUs) matched, but the households (HH) in each unit did not. There are major discrepancies in the households as listed in the AE and census. The individual reports in each housing unit did not match at all. We do not have any clues as to why housing unit addresses are the same, indicating the same HUs, but the people listed in the households do not match at all.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Prior to the Alternative Enumeration, we generated 5 hypotheses on why Census enumerators may miss residents in the site for testing. In this analysis, the hypotheses were tested.

Undercount Hypothesis Number One: Mobility

Concept

Temporary members of the households, such as *arrimados*, may not be reported in the Census. Since *arrimados* are not year round household members, many householders believe that they are not to be included in the Census. *Arrimados* join the households on a temporary basis for a variety of reasons, among them, the lack of housing, family /domestic problems, and co-residence practices. Some of them are migrants who work locally during the lettuce harvest and return to Mexico after the season. A number of the migrants may stay for an extended period of time but they, too, will return to Mexico.

Test

This hypothesis helps to explain 2 households with a total of 3 unique individual reports. In these cases, the people were part of the household on Census Day, but they were not included because they live in more than 1 household in the community. They are local *arrimados* who stay with kin until they can find gainful employment, at which time they set-up their own homes.

Undercount Hypothesis Number Two: Language and Illiteracy Barriers

Concept

Many of the residents in the site are monolingual Spanish speakers who may not be able to comprehend the English language and, thus, not be able to complete English language census forms. In addition, many of the adults, especially the immigrants, may have little or no education and, as a result, may be unable to read and write in their native Spanish language which would prevent them from completing the census forms on their own.

Test

This hypothesis does not explain any cases of omission. It appears that language and literacy were not factors in Census omissions. However, it was a factor in conveying accurate information about the household members: information, such as names [first, middle, and surname], ages, and year of birth. In many individual reports on the Census, names were confused, surnames were switched for first and middle names and names were misspelled. Years of birth were wrong. Inaccurate and incomplete information on the census records made it difficult to decide whether matches were correct in the "Resolution" phase of the study.

The problem behind the inaccurate information in the census individual reports is language. Many respondents in the site are monolingual speakers of Spanish and it is our understanding that Census Bureau enumerators were monolingual in English. Furthermore, it appears that the Census Bureau enumerators were not too familiar with the site and its population. They did not know when was the best time to knock on doors and solicit information, for example.

We learned from our contacts in the neighborhood that not knowing the Spanish language made it difficult for the Census Bureau enumerators to communicate with the respondents.

We were told that, when the enumerator made efforts to do so, many folks would lose their patience, especially when he would show up during inopportune moments, like dinner, and had difficulty dealing with mundane items, such as spelling Spanish names and surnames. To complicate matters, the enumerator was not familiar with the kinship terms used by the local folk. When these incidents occurred, the householder, or whoever answered the door, would not name all of the household members intentionally, but would only name a few, so that the enumerator would leave. Other inopportune moments were when folks had returned from a day's work out in the agricultural fields, tired and busy with household chores, tending children, cleaning, washing, and cooking. During these moments, the respondent was in no mood to answer questions, especially when the enumerator did not speak Spanish.

What is needed to understand all aspects of language barriers in enumerations are hypotheses that address the enumerators' characteristics. In face-to-face interviews, the enumerator's familiarity or lack of familiarity with the culture and language of the population to be enumerated as well as their knowledge of the site and population are key factors. These new hypotheses should be as follows:

Enumerator's Ignorance of Language and Culture

An enumerator's knowledge of the language and culture of the population in the enumeration site is important. Monolingual speakers of English and monocultural "American" enumerators may not be able to communicate effectively with monolingual speakers of Spanish and monocultural Mexican residents. In the best of cases, the lack of adequate communication may result in the misspelling of names and inaccurate birth dates and ages. However, in the worse of cases, the lack of effective communication between enumerator and respondent may result in omissions of people from the census enumeration.

Enumerators' Lack of Familiarity with Site and Population

The enumerator's familiarity of the site and its population is also important to an accurate enumeration. Knowledge of the two provides the enumerator with needed information. A knowledgeable enumerator will know the best day of the week or the best time of the day to conduct an enumeration. Likewise, he will know the inopportune moments and, hopefully, will not bother hard working and tired folks during these times.

Undercount Hypothesis Three: Concealment to Protect Resources

Concept

Many of the households periodically depend on government programs to make ends means, such as AFDC, Food Stamps, and Medical. Fearing that the Census is in contact with governmental agencies that operate these programs, they will only give the enumerators what they provided the "Eligibility Workers"--hiding income sources, and the true size and composition of the household.

In order to remain eligible for the programs, farm worker families do not mention or list all of the household members on their applications. They only list immediate family members:

parents and children. Farm workers are well aware that if they list all of the household members, especially temporary members, their assistance is reduced or their eligibility is lost altogether. Often, what the temporary household members can pay in rent is not enough to make up for the reductions in assistance or for the complete loss of assistance. Hence, to prevent a loss, farm workers portray their households as comprised of a nuclear family only, knowing that AFDC and Food Stamps are primarily established to assist families with children under 18 years of age.

Test

This hypothesis explains 4 households with a total of 5 individual reports among them. Respondents in these cases, it was discovered, did not report individuals for fear of jeopardizing the family's eligibility for government programs. In these cases, the respondents did not report adult children and adult household members who were not immediate family members. They only reported spouses and children under the age of eighteen.

The reason behind the omissions in these instances is that AFDC and Food Stamp programs only provide assistance to parents and their children who are under 18 years of age. This aid is not to be shared by others who are not entitled to the benefits of the programs. In fact, if adults, other than parents live at home, the family may no longer be eligible for the programs because the income of these adults is considered in determining whether or not the family has a low income, and is therefore in need of assistance. The income of these adults is taken in to consideration in spite of the fact that they may only be temporary members of the households and their income is not at the complete disposal of the host household.

Undercount Hypothesis Four: Irregular Housing and Household Arrangements

Concept

Occupants of irregular housing set ups, such as garages converted to living Quarters, many of whom are *arrimados*, may be missed in an enumeration. In addition, "bedroom" renters (individuals or families who rent bedrooms), many of whom are also *arrimados*, may also be missed. In many instances these irregular housing and household arrangements lead to serious overcrowding that, at times, may be a hazard to the safety of the occupants. Folks in these living arrangements, especially those that are not in the primary household of the lease or mortgage holders are not revealed to strangers because of the fear of being turned into the authorities. Consequently, these half clandestine residents may not be revealed to government enumerators.

Test

This hypothesis does not explain any omission cases. The houses in the ethnographic site sample area are relatively new (constructed since 1986) and have not undergone the modifications found in other dwellings in the community. The houses have not been altered to accommodate more people. They do not have add-on rooms, nor secondary units in backyards nor garages converted into bedrooms.

Undercount Hypothesis Number Five: Passive and Active Resistance as a Strategy to Deal with Outsiders

Concept

Many folks at the site, for a variety of reasons, do not take too kindly to strangers. Besides the fears previously mentioned, there is a concern that strangers might be Immigration officials or bill collectors. As the PI learned, disheartened, during the initial phase of his dissertation field work, local residents look at strangers, especially those who ask too many questions, with much suspicion, and at times, provide them with false information. In many ways, this practice may also be carried over from their rural Mexican background. Many of the immigrants lived in small, tight knit communities and consequently are very suspicious of outsiders.

Test

This hypothesis does not appear to explain any of the cases. In fact, we found that in nearly all of the households in the sample area people were knowledgeable about census enumerations. They were well familiar with enumerations in Mexico and in this country as well. In Mexico, decennial enumerations have been carried out in the Spring without interruption since the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919). In the Mexican countryside, enumerations are conducted by local school teachers. In many instances, these school teachers live in the *Pueblos* (towns) or *ranchos* (ranches) and if they do not reside locally, they reside in one of the surrounding communities. In Mexican cities, the population is counted by *Jefes de Manzana* (block bosses) who are appointed by the *Delegacion* (a government body) to represent their communities in local government. In both countryside and cities, the enumeration is carried out by people who know the population and whom the population knows. There is a mutual respect between the enumerator and populace and the two share the same culture and speak the same language.

The population at the enumeration site was well aware of the U.S. Decennial Census either through past experience or through media outreach efforts. Some of the households participated in the 1980 enumeration and as a result knew what to expect. Others, who did not participate before, were aware of the Census through radio and television public announcements. In fact, all of the households, regardless of experience, were well aware of the 990 Census. Public announcements on Spanish language radio and television programs aired during peak listener and viewer times together with efforts by community organizations, these announcements successfully prepared the population for the Census. Many of the households understood the importance of an accurate enumeration for the Hispanic population, were willing and ready to be counted.

Upon receiving their Census forms, which were in the English language, their eagerness began to dissipate. The majority of the residents at the site were literate in the Spanish language. However, some folks stood firm in their desire to participate in the Census, and called the toll free number only to discover that the person answering the telephone calls did not speak Spanish which, of course, complicated matters further. Other folks took the initiative and sought help from neighbors, kin and community organizations in completing the forms.

Additional Unmatched Individual Reports in the AE List

Seven households with 12 individual reports could not be used to test hypotheses. Respondents in these households claimed that the individuals were reported and they cannot explain why they do not show up in the census. Information from independent sources verify that the individuals were present on Census Day. We believe that the respondents are not attempting to mislead us.

Although we are unable to prove this assumption, we believe that these discrepancies may be due to the special census evaluation carried out which we were conducting our Alternative Enumeration. For reasons unknown to us, the omitted individuals may not have been reported to the official census enumerator but after learning of the evaluation study, families may have decided to report them. Information and rumors at this site fly like wild fires! It is highly possible that in these cases, the respondents were fearful of running into trouble with the federal government, so they decided to include individuals who were not reported the first time around.

In addition to the 7 households mentioned above 3 other households could not be used to test the hypotheses. In 2 of the households the respondents in the neighborhood claimed that the 4 people in question moved out after April 1st. The third household with 2 individual reports is a non response: the respondent was unwilling to answer any questions. She was upset at us because "too many Census people are coming around asking the same questions" : a reference to the official census enumeration and the special census study.

Additional Unmatched individual Reports in the Census

As the quantitative analysis revealed, there were 18 households with a total of 26 unmatched individual reports in the Census, which means that our enumeration missed 26 individuals. It is difficult to explain the reasons behind these omissions in the majority of the cases.

In 10 households with a total of 18 unmatched Census individual records, respondents in the households claim that the specific individuals we did not include on our AL were not present on April 1st. They informed us that the Census is wrong in its enumeration. In these cases, we believe that one of two things is happening. Either the respondents correctly informed the Census as to the number of people in the households because it is "official" and they did not tell us the truth for reasons that we are unable to determine at this time. Or, the respondents reported in the census household members who were not present in April but who are occasionally present during other times of the year and whom the respondents wanted to have counted as part of the household. It is possible that these members are *arrimados* or migratory farm workers.

In 4 households with a total of 4 unmatched census individual reports, the census did not discover -- as we did-- that the individuals named in the census are not regular members

of the household in those housing units. The individuals we deliberately left off our AE list were respectively away at college, recently moved out, or move periodically from one HH/HU to another within the community or the valley.

In 4 households, involving 1 unmatched individual each, we are unable to resolve the discrepancy. The difficulty is insufficient data on the census record; names and demographics are missing so there is no basis for a match to any AE record or to identify a resident of the site.

Unmatched Whole Households

We were unable to use 2 housing units with totally unmatched households to test the behavioral hypotheses. The addresses matched but the individuals listed for each housing unit did not.

CONCLUSION

Most of the unmatched individual reports in the Alternative Enumeration that can be explained are the result of omissions made by the respondents in the census forms. The omissions were at times deliberate, as in the case of leaving off income earners who may jeopardize the household's eligibility for government assistance, or they were innocent mistakes, the result of confusion, as in the case of the *arrimados*. It is not clear to many respondents whether or not these few household members should be included in the census, in spite of the fact that the *arrimados* were living with them on April 1st. In addition, *arrimados* were "movers" --moving from one household to another in the community.

It is important to note that the vast majority of the migratory *arrimados* (migratory workers who reside with the households during the lettuce season) were not included in the census. They were not present on Census Day, and even if they had been, they would not qualify for enumeration under a strict application of 1990 Census rules because *arrimados* do not have a "usual home" in any particular household in the community. Each year, many of these individuals join local households in late April and early May and remain with them until late November. They spend more time in the local community than they do in their Mexican home towns. Community leaders, families and researchers, including this writer are of the opinion that these *arrimados* should be included in the Census. The workers are members of the community for a significant amount of time (sometimes up to 9 months). Local businesses depend on their patronage and would not remain solvent without them. And at the same time, the migratory workers also place a strain on local services.

In regards to the unmatched individual reports in the official census enumeration (people missed in the AE), they are difficult to explain. In the majority of the HH/HU cases, 10 out of 16, the respondents claimed that the omitted individuals were not present on April 1st.

Yet, they show up in the census enumeration. Why? We do not know. As mentioned earlier in the report, it is possible that the respondents reported household members who were not present April 1 but occasionally are present during other times of the year because they wanted them counted as part of the households. Fearful of being accused of making false or misleading statements, they opted to tell us that the omitted individuals were never reported or were not present on April 1.

Understanding "Clandestine" Income Earners and *Arrimados* in a Farm Worker Population

"Clandestine" income earners are crucial to the farm worker household. A basic and essential task in the survival and social reproduction of all households, including farm worker households is maintenance. As defined here, maintenance is providing for the subsistence needs of the household. These needs consist of shelter, clothing, food, and other necessities, such as medical and educational expenses. Maintenance is accomplished in many ways. The major method of meeting subsistence needs is through hard work in the agricultural fields.

When hard work is not enough, the households seek assistance from government programs, such as Assistance for Families with Dependent Children and Food Stamps. They also seek assistance from programs such as Women with Infant Children (WIC) and Med-Cal (a medical program for low income families subsidized by the State of California) that defray some of the costs of living more than provide an income. AFDC provides grant funds to minor children under the age of 18 for such items as shelter, utilities, clothing and other basic needs. The amount received depends on the number of children in the family. Food stamps are redeemable at grocery stores for food. The amount of food stamps given to a family depends on the size of the family.

The Social Service Department of the County, which is in charge of the AFDC and the Food Stamp program, has a flawed notion of what households in general should look like. This notion is an "official" view of the number in the household and who should be in a household. It portrays the household as small, composed of 4 members, and made up of a nuclear family, parents, and children only. It fails to include household members who are not immediate kin, such as siblings and cousins of the parents, who in many instances live with the nuclear families making them extended family households.

Too often the qualifications requirements of governmental assistance programs, especially AFDC and Food Stamps do not coincide with the living arrangements adopted by the farm worker households. These living arrangements often include kin members, other than immediate family, *arrimados* who become part of the household for a short (under one year) or an extended period of time (over one year). They also include adult children of nuclear families who remain at home after the age of 18 or who have returned home after finding it difficult to survive on their own. The farm worker households take in kin members as boarders and keep adult children at home in order to keep living costs down and at times to have access to an additional source of income.

Arrimados

Farm worker households take on an extended form comprised of members other than immediate family in order to overcome economic hardships. It allows for co-residence and commensality. Co-residence ("residence together") refers to sharing a home (a house or apartment). Within Mexican culture, there exists an obligation to share one's home, if necessary, with certain kinsmen: to take in and shelter certain close relatives. Co-residence permits the sharing of furnishings and other amenities as well as shelter. Commensality ("the habit of eating at the same table"), on the other hand, refers to the joint consumption of food by a group of people. In most instances, co-residence and commensality go hand-to-hand, that is, people who share the housing unit also share meals together.

The most common living arrangement among farm workers is a nuclear family living under the same roof. In this arrangement, parents and children share the home and are responsible for the rent, utility bills and basic domestic upkeep of the unit. Specifically, who in the family is responsible for maintaining the home depends on the domestic cycle of the family. In some cases, the parents alone take this responsibility. This is the situation for a young family with young children. This is the situation for an older family with school age and young adult children who work outside of the home or help around the house.

Nuclear family households at one time or another become involved in a co-resident arrangement with kinsmen. In most of these cases, a nuclear family household takes in one or two of their kinsmen, usually siblings or other kin of the householders. These relatives are taken into their home until the invited family members are able to find housing of their own.

In other cases, two nuclear families related by kinship, reside together. Most commonly, two brothers or two sisters and their families share a residence. In many of these two couple households at least one of the couples' families are economically solvent, but in some of these arrangements both couples are hurting financially. By coming together in a home, they share a shelter, its furnishings and amenities and the costs of maintaining it. They divide the rent and utility bills, such as electricity, gas, water, and garbage. They also partake in the domestic upkeep of the home to keep it clean and in order.

Co-residential living arrangements involving people beyond the nuclear family of parents and children are usually temporary, in most instances lasting less than a year. One that often goes beyond a year is the co-residence set up to make mortgage payments. In general, however, the co-residence of extra persons or a second nuclear family does not last too long because it is usually the short term solution to an immediate problem. For example, once the single parent or the kinsman in financial straits is able to stand on their own feet, they move out and establish their own residence. Co-residence also does not last because of the many personal problems that arise as a result of personality differences or other conflicts such as accusations of untidiness, selfishness and laziness. For example, in a co-resident arrangement comprised of two families, one member of a family may accuse a member of another family of not helping as much as he should be doing, leading to a dispute that can end in the two families separating. Conflicts easily arise given the

overcrowded conditions that too often results from co-residence in one or two bedroom house.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ENUMERATIONS

In addition to understanding clandestine income earners and *arrimados*, enumerating is Made easier if the following are considered.

Bilingual/ Bicultural Enumerators with Knowledge of the Enumeration Site

The 5 hypotheses tested explain Undercounts in the 1990 Census on basis of the behavior of the respondents. The premise of the hypotheses are correct: the enumerated households are responding or reacting to being counted. However, a closer look would reveal that many are also responding or reacting to the enumerator, the only representative of the Bureau of Census with whom they come into contact. Who the enumerator is determines how successful he or she will be. In an Hispanic community, like the ethnographic site, the enumerator should be bilingual and bi-cultural. Such a person will have a better chance of communicating with and understanding the residents at the site. In addition, the residents would feel more at ease with a bilingual and bi-cultural enumerator and as a result, rapport is more likely to occur. Households would be more trusting and more accepting of such an enumerator.

Equally important is knowledge of the site and its population. In particular, knowing who lives at the site and the daily schedule of the households is of great help. Such information enables the enumerator to know who resides there and when are the best times to stop by. For example, he would know that in a farm worker community, situated in a coastal valley of California, most of the Mexican and Mexican American population work in the fields or the packing sheds from April through October. He would also know that the best time to find farm workers at home during this period is in the evening and on Sundays. Although the majority of the farm workers do not work on Saturday, Saturdays are busy days for them. On these days they tend to do household chores. They clean house, do laundry and go shopping.

Ethnographic Field Methods

When at all possible, traditional anthropological field methods should be employed in carrying out or evaluating an enumeration. These methods have been used successfully by researchers to find out who is who in a village and how villagers are related. As revealed in this report, these field tools are also of use in discovering who lives in a household and the kinship relationships in a household. The field methods successfully provided first hand information on this subject. In addition, when used in conjunction, participant observation, observation, informal interviews, and genealogical constructs not only provided data, they also permitted the verification of the information. Each data set obtained through one field method serves to cross check the information collected through another.

Successful Enumerations and the Community

The analysis of this report reveals that the Census Bureau was successful in enumerating the majority of the residents eligible for enumeration in the ethnographic site as defined in the "List/ Enumerate" Enumerator Instructions. Gross omissions were less than 5 per cent and the net undercount was far less than the national average undercount estimated for Hispanics.

The success can be attributed to the efforts of various community based, non-profit organizations, including the Community Health Center that co-sponsored the Alternative Enumeration. An accurate count and demographic composite of the population is important to these organizations. Many of them use Census figures to show need in the community and to qualify for state and federal programs. An undercount, they correctly argue, will shortchange the local low income population for years to come. 1990 Census figures will be used in grant proposals until the next decennial enumeration in the year 2000.

These organizations began their awareness campaign a couple of months before Census Day 1990. Local residents were informed on the pending enumeration at community meetings and local events. In addition, the organizations placed Census posters in key areas of the community: in the post office, public library, businesses, community centers, schools and churches. Whenever people congregated, English and Spanish language posters conveying the importance of "Being Counted" could be found. A few weeks before and after Census Day, an array of public announcements on Census participation

were aired in Spanish language radio and television. Local leaders from the surrounding area, people known and trusted in the community, would convey this message in the public announcements.

The success of the census can also be explained by past and recent events. Since 1980, there has been a political drive in the region by local Chicano and Mexican leaders to register and mobilize the population of Mexican descent into a voting block. This movement was inspired by the results of the 1980 census which revealed that the "Mexican" population had increased dramatically, by over 20 percent in some surrounding communities. Realizing that their numbers were growing locally and throughout the state, the leadership wanted to capitalize on the growth by turning the population into a political power. These efforts have politicized local residents and have heightened their awareness of participating in local elections and events that will give them political clout. One Major event is the Decennial Census.

The Special Agricultural Workers' Program (SAW) of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) also contributed to a successful enumeration. The SAW program "legalized" a large number of undocumented resident farm workers in the community. Prior to their legalization, many of them would have been reluctant to participate in the Census. However, once they were legalized, or going through the process of becoming so, they were no longer in hiding. They no longer had any fears of being discovered and deported from the country. In fact, the ex-undocumented workers and their families in the AE wanted to be included. When questioned about their willingness and sometime eagerness, they responded that they wanted to be considered "true" members of the community.

END NOTES

1. The non-profit housing corporation provides low income families with affordable housing opportunities. Basically, it subsidizes the cost of the homes through a program in which the prospective homeowners construct 65 percent of the home and pay low interest rates on their mortgages. Together, taking part in the construction and paying low interest rates, reduces the cost of home ownership significantly. Funds for these efforts are obtained from Farmers Home Administration, Department of Agriculture.

2. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) provides monthly payments to needy families with children. It may provide the family's total monthly income or it may supplement income from employment or other sources when a family's total income is below levels established by the State of California. AFDC recipients are eligible automatically for MediCal benefits. A family may also be eligible for food stamps depending on household income, and will qualify for stamps if all members are AFDC eligible.

3. The Bracero Program--designed to provide Mexican labor to U.S. agriculture during World War II--was initiated in 1944 and continued, under the auspices of Public Law 78,

until 1964. When the program ended, fearing a labor shortage, local growers assisted their Bracero workers and their families to adjust their immigration status and to settle down in the area.

4. Household incomes were calculated on the basis of the information provided by the respondents in the sample. Most of the respondents gave their earnings in terms of their weekly or biweekly pay check, rather than in terms of their annual income. In addition, the vast majority of the farm workers of the households did not work the entire year. They worked from 12 to 36 weeks, and the remainder of the year, they receive unemployment payments that are based on their last Quarters' earnings which are low because farm workers earn their lowest wages in the beginning and ending phases of the harvests. (Garcia, Victor, Op. Cit.)

5. Income level is the official means of determining whether or not a household suffers from poverty. However, income alone is not considered in this assessment: the number of household era are also taken into consideration. In 1986, federal guidelines established income levels deemed to be insufficient to support households of a given size. The levels increase as the household size increases; so that for an household of two, the index stands at \$7,372, an household of four at \$11,203, an household of six at \$14,986 and an household of eight at \$18,791.

In addition to the guidelines for poverty, there are a set of criteria used by nonprofit organizations to determine what is called "low-income" families. These criteria place the families above the poverty level, but still deem them to be poor. The cut-off levels according to family size and income differ from that for the impoverished families. These levels are as follows: for an household of two the cut-off level is at \$10,860; an household of four at \$16,500; an household of six at \$22,140; and an household of eight at \$27,780. (Garcia, Victor, Op. Cit.)

6. The form did not have a title, but the form number is D- 1303 (L), (3-90), Office of the Director, United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233.

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Disclaimer: This is the final report for one of the 29 independent Joint Statistical Agreement projects which conducted an ethnographic evaluation of the behavioral causes of undercount. All 29 studies followed common methodological guidelines. This report is based on an analysis of the results of a match between the author(s)' Alternative Enumeration to data from the 1990 Decennial Census forms for the same site. Each ethnographic site contained about 100 housing units. Information was compiled from census forms that were recovered through October 10, 1990. The data on which this report is based should be considered preliminary for several reasons: Between October 10, 1990 and December 31, 1990, additional census forms may have been added to or deleted from the official enumeration of the site as a result of coverage improvement operations, local review, or other late census operations. Differences between October 10, 1990 and final census results as reported on the Unedited Detail File were incorporated in later analyzes of data from this site. The consistency of the authors' coding of data has not been fully verified. Hypothesis tests and other analyzes are original to the author. Therefore, the quantitative results contained in this final JSA report may differ from later reports issued by Census Bureau Staff referring to the same site.

The exact location of the area studied and the names of persons and addresses enumerated by the independent researchers and in the 1990 Decennial Census are Census confidential and cannot be revealed until the year 2062. The researchers who participated in this study were Special Sworn Employees (SSE) or staff of the Census Bureau.

Technical Representative's note: Garcia's was one of four sites overlapped with the 1990 Post Enumeration Survey (P.E.S.) on a triple-blind basis. Neither the researchers conducting the Alternative Enumerations, nor the Census enumerators, nor the P.E.S. interviewers were informed this experiment would take place to preserve the independence of each enumeration. The housing units' addresses and households were triple linked and individual census reports were in triple matched. Some results of the triple linking and matching are discussed in Hamid and Brownrigg, posted on the SRD Internet site.

For more information, contact Leslie A. Brownrigg in Statistical Research Division of the Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20033 (301) 457-4995 or by email to Leslie.A.Brownrigg@census.gov
 or write

Victor Garcia
 Assistant Professor of Anthropology
 Department of Sociology and Anthropology
 Indiana University of Pennsylvania
 Indiana, PA 15701