

ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION OF BEHAVIORAL CAUSES OF CENSUS UNDERCOUNT OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS AND SALVADORANS IN THE MISSION DISTRICT OF SAN FRANCISCO

by
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INTRODUCTION

This is the final report on the behavioral causes of census undercount of undocumented Latino immigrants in a heterogeneous urban neighborhood. The project was based on hypotheses concerning the undercount of the Latino immigrant population with particular attention to undocumented and Salvadoran immigrants. Previous research on census enumeration identified Latinos as a population with a high undercount (de la Puente, 1992). This Latino population was predicted to have a high undercount because of large numbers of persons with illegal status in the United States who seek to remain invisible to government officials. Frequently, this population is engaged in employment in the underground economy, such as domestic service, gardening, and other service jobs paid in cash. Many new immigrants may initially reside with friends and relatives who may also go uncounted, particularly if they view their stay in the United States as temporary. Others may want to conceal their presence in order to protect resources (public assistance).

RESEARCH SITE

San Francisco's Mission District has a long history of sheltering Latino immigrants. One-third of all Latino immigrants to the United States have traditionally settled in California (Godfrey, 1985). San Francisco exemplifies a recent trend in major cities in which diverse Latin American groups share communities and, through interactive processes, acquire a new group identity as "Latinos," an ethnic minority group in the United States. The 1980 Census reported the Latino (Hispanic) population in San Francisco as 39 percent Mexican origin, 6 percent Puerto Rican, 2 percent Cuban and 53 percent "Other Spanish Origin." Although Central Americans have not been well studied, researchers suggest that San Francisco may have the highest proportion of Latinos of Central American origin of any major U.S. city (Godfrey, 1985; Castells, 1983). Recent estimates indicate that over 100,000 Salvadorans now reside in San Francisco, primarily in the Mission District (Godfrey, 1985). San Francisco's fastest-growing Central American groups in recent years have been from Nicaragua and El Salvador and may outnumber Chicanos (Smith and Tarallo, 1989). Opponents of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 point out that the law excluded most refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua from eligibility for legalization, because they arrived after January 1, 1982.

The Mission District is located between Civic Center and Daly City. The specific area the study focuses on is the Inner Mission. The Inner Mission is defined on the north by 17th Street and on the south by Army Street. The western border is Valencia Street and on the east, the James Lick Freeway (Highway 101). The neighborhood consists primarily of

modest single-family dwellings and apartment buildings. The 1980 Census shows 39.3 percent of owners were Latino and 48.0 percent of the renters were Latino. Polk's San Francisco Directory (1980) shows a Spanish surname for 74 percent of the heads of households along Alabama Street, between 21st and 23rd streets. Twenty-fourth Street is the main corridor of the barrio. At 24th and Florida, St. Peter's Catholic Church now serves a predominantly Spanish-speaking congregation. Along the 13-block thoroughfare, 54 percent of businesses indicate Spanish surnames or products (Godfrey, 1985).

The Mission District serves as a port of entry to the United States for many Latino immigrants. Spanish speaking churches and businesses offer the means of incorporation and adaptation to the new environment. The presence of undocumented immigrants is evident in the reports of immigration raids and the vulnerability of persons seeking employment. Their participation in the underground economy seems to be verified by media reports of "drive-by hiring halls" at the corner of Valencia and Army streets that serve employers wanting to benefit from the illegal status of Latino immigrants living in the Mission. Several agencies in the area offering English as a Second Language (ESL) classes serve as a link between day workers and employers, particularly gardening, child care and domestic service.

Like some other urban areas, the Mission District is undergoing gentrification. Many of the old buildings dating to a more prosperous time for the area are being renovated into condos. Several one-room hotels were closed after the 1989 earthquake and are being remodeled into apartment buildings priced for middle class couples and single persons. Whites and Asians unable to buy property elsewhere in San Francisco are flocking to the Mission. As one informant noted: "There is lots of housing available in the Mission. The problem is that the housing is meant for yuppies. Latino families can no longer afford to live here." The community reflects a population in transition. While some blocks have already undergone a complete transition, others have not been touched. Many blocks have one-room apartments on one side and condos on the other.

The census block I selected for the study exhibits many of characteristics which typify the uniqueness of the Mission District. Sixty-nine percent of the residents are Latinos. The remaining are White, Chinese, Filipino, and African American. The block includes recently arrived immigrants from Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico and Guatemala, first and second generation Latinos and Filipinos, poor Whites, middle class couples, and single white collar workers. Latino residents are largely low paid service workers; a few are semi-skilled workers. White residents ranged from young college students and white collar workers to middle-aged and older residents living on public assistance.

The study block includes both residential and commercial buildings. Two sides of the block house businesses and shops on the first floor and apartments on the top. Restaurants on the block serve Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Mexican and Japanese food. Asians own a grocery store and one of the three clothing stores. There is also a gift store, record shop, bakery and jewelry store. All of the Latino businesses employ Spanish-speaking employees and the Asian-owned businesses have numerous signs in Spanish. All of the

shops and restaurants cater to Latino customers. Along with the commercial occupants, there are 106 housing units on the block. The housing units include duplexes, single family houses, and apartments. There are several apartment buildings, including single room occupancy hotels and one to three bedroom apartments, ranging from standard to sub-standard conditions. One side of the block includes a mixture of duplexes and single family houses that residents own or rent.

Both the city government and the Latino community joined the Census Bureau in outreach efforts in the Mission. Mayor Agnos appointed a voluntary committee to advise the Bureau's staff working in San Francisco. The Mayor's Committee for a Complete Count consisted of representatives from the Latino, Asian, African American and homeless communities. The Committee encouraged the local census office to provide assistance centers in the various ethnic neighborhoods, hire bilingual enumerators, distribute bilingual materials and to do outreach in target areas. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) also sponsored a national campaign for a complete census count in the Latino community. MALDEF distributed posters, flyers and balloons advertising the census. They organized local meetings to educate the community and to solicit the assistance of cultural brokers such as social service providers, teachers and clergy. As a result of all this activity, census awareness in the sample area was fairly high. Several shops displayed census posters and social service programs in the area provided assistance in filling out the forms. The local Spanish radio station aired informational bulletins.

Local efforts for a complete count of the Latino population in the Mission District identified several obstacles to achieving a complete count: illiteracy, lack of English comprehension, and distrust of government officials were concerns this community shared with other Latino communities. In addition, the ongoing gentrification in the Mission District and the damage caused by the October 1989 earthquake made city planning maps outdated, and there was little time to make revisions before mailing census forms.

METHODOLOGY

Methods specified in the Joint Statistical Agreement included behavioral observations and an Alternative Enumeration to be performed during a six-week period beginning within three months after Census Day 1990. The six-week field work began June 6, 1990 and was completed July 18, 1990. During this period an Alternative Enumeration was conducted and systematic observations were carried out to test hypotheses about the behaviors causing undercount. Between January and March, 1991, a matched Alternative Enumeration list and census list were analyzed and a resolved list of housing units and persons was prepared.

During the six weeks of field work, I was assisted by four research assistants. The team consisted of (1) a thirty-two year old Nicaraguan woman who resided on the ethnographic site; (2) a thirty year old Nicaraguan man living in the Mission; (3) a twenty-one year old Salvadoran immigrant woman living in the Mission; and (4) a sixty year old

Spanish-speaking Yaqui man residing in the Mission with past experience doing outreach with IV drug users in the area. My primary research assistant was the Nicaraguan woman living at the site. The other research assistants were called upon when circumstances arose that called for assistants of the same ethnicity or gender of residents, or when I needed assistance in gaining entry to the neighborhood drug users. For instance, entering the single room occupancy hotels was not only dangerous for women researchers, but we were unable to get residents to talk to us. I later returned with the sixty year old male research assistant, who knew many of the drug users in the hotel, and he was able to obtain information.

The field work included regular visits to the residents' homes, talking to residents on the street and in coffee shops, and observing the coming and going of people on the block. Gaining access to housing units was a major problem. Most of the houses, duplexes and apartment buildings in the Mission District are closed off to the public with wrought iron gates. In many cases the door bells did not work and even when they did ring, residents were reluctant to open their doors to strangers. Furthermore, we did not want to abuse the hospitality of the residents in apartment buildings who let us in the first time. Consequently, we spent a lot of time waiting in front of buildings until someone entered or exited and then entered the buildings and knocked on apartment doors. Managers were not very cooperative or helpful. In all but one case, they appeared to be concealing the substandard conditions of the apartments. In one case, the manager did not allow us to enter the building. We had to work around his schedule in order to enter the building without his knowledge. In two buildings the managers gave inaccurate or incomplete information. In one of these cases the manager was Hindi and had limited English abilities, and in the second case the manager was illiterate.

Weather became crucial in gaining access to apartments and duplexes behind locked gates. During warm weather, there were open doors and windows throughout the block. We frequently called up to persons sitting on the stairs behind the locked gate or at an open window and were able to engage them in a conversation.

Several key residents were very helpful in gaining access to large apartments closed by iron gates. We gained the cooperation of many immigrant residents by exchanging information about social services available in the community. Purchasing food from street vendors who were residents also helped us win a few friends. I also provided English reading material to one Latino immigrant interested in improving his English speaking and writing abilities. In one building we established rapport by assisting four tenants in contacting the city building inspector to complain about leaky sinks and rotting floors. This building contained the most complex living arrangements. Without the trust and cooperation of the residents, we would never have been able to obtain accurate information.

Contacting residents living in single room occupancy hotels presented another type of challenge. Residents were not allowed to cook in their rooms, which lacked appliances (refrigerator, television set, stove); the rooms were a little more than places to sleep. Consequently, the rooms were usually vacant during the day and evening. We had to target our visits to late Sunday morning or when residents returned from work. We eventually discovered that the coffee shops were regular hangouts for these residents. Broadening the research site to include the surrounding coffee shops was very useful.

Data collected in the field were checked with administrative records. Names of residents were checked through voter registration lists, the reverse telephone directory and street addresses. A few property owners and managers were contacted and asked to verify information collected from neighbors and other sources. This method was particularly important in collecting data on White, middle class residents. Interestingly, these residents

tended to be suspicious of our questions and frequently refused to talk to us, stating that they had already filled out the census form and mailed it in. Administrative records were also important in acquiring the names of non-English speaking Chinese and Filipino elders living on the block. Most of the older Chinese and Filipino residents were afraid to answer the door and were unwilling to talk to us.

I conducted additional interviews with service providers in the Mission District. Teachers, social workers, priests and outreach workers were helpful in assessing census awareness, learning about attitudes towards the census and identifying the characteristics that make the Mission District a target area for complete count efforts. From the city's planning office, I obtained maps indicating addresses to which census forms were mailed. In sketching a map of the study block, I discovered that the maps were not accurate in identifying units in apartment buildings with ten or more apartments.

The use of a variety of qualitative methods was important in resolving discrepancies resulting from different information about marital status, relationships among boarders, and race and ethnic identity. Observations, interviews, and review of administrative records pointed to the distinctions that Latinos made between "official" or legal identity and community identity. For instance, unmarried couples with children frequently referred to themselves as married and divorced women referred to themselves as single; however, they made the distinction when filling out census forms or other government forms. I recorded the official identity and made a note of their community identity. In the case of race and ethnicity, I recorded their self identification even in the cases that they told me that social service providers had done otherwise on the census forms. All relationships within the household were recorded.

FINDINGS

Research findings are presented in three subsections. Beginning with the analysis of the discrepancies between the Alternative Enumeration and the Census, I will describe the types of omissions and errors. An ethnographic profile of the undercount in the study follows. The final section reports the recurring patterns or circumstances that presented barriers to obtaining a complete count of the census block.

Comparison Between the Alternative Enumeration and the Census

The omission rate for the sample area was 19.4 percent. The census enumerated a total of 115 housing units, of these 101 were occupied on Census Day, 5 were vacant and the remaining 9 were erroneously enumerated. A total of 52 individuals were missed by the census but enumerated by the Alternative Enumeration. Of those missed, 65 percent were males and 35 percent were females. Approximately 29 percent of those missed were not related to the household head. Of those missed 31 percent were Mexicans, less than 2 percent Puerto Ricans and approximately 40 percent other Hispanics. With respect to race, about 37 percent were White, less than 2 percent Black, approximately 8 percent Asian and 54 percent other race.

The largest percentage of misses were found among persons between 19 and 44 years of age. Thirty-three percent of the misses were between 19 and 29 years old and an equal proportion were between 30 and 44 years old. About 13 percent of the misses were under 17 years of age. Fully 15 percent of the missed were between 45 and 64 years old and almost 4 percent were 65 years old or over.

Only 14 percent of the omissions involved monolingual English speakers. Eighty-six percent occurred among persons whose first language was not English. This includes monolingual Spanish and Chinese speakers and bilingual speakers.

Only 14 percent of the misses involved the protection of resources. Two of the cases involved women receiving public assistance and concealing the presence of unmarried partners and/or their sons and boarders. In another case a woman lived in a building that was zoned as a commercial unit. The unit was officially her studio; however, observation over the six week period indicated that it was also her residence.

The majority of the misses occurred in buildings with ten or more apartments. Many of these buildings were miscoded on the census. For example, an apartment with more than nine apartments was listed as an apartment with less than nine apartments. The sample area included six buildings that had more than four apartments. Approximately 40 percent of the misses occurred in buildings with 10 to 19 apartments and almost 37 percent of the misses occurred in buildings with 20 or more apartments. The majority of whole household misses occurred in buildings with 15 or more apartments. A little over 23 percent of the misses occurred in one family houses.

One building with less than twenty apartments appeared as vacant. The owners of a garage were listed as residents. However, the owners used the garage to store equipment for their business.

A curious error involved three housing units that listed prior residents who had moved over five years ago. All three cases involved the same apartment building. The housing units were enumerated by an enumerator. I suspect that the enumerator obtained information from the landlord or the central realty office. On-site managers were much more likely to have reliable information than absentee landlords.

Ethnographic Profile of the Undercount

The following cases were selected to highlight the factors pointed to in the quantitative analysis. The first case involves misses within a household of related and unrelated persons. This case also illustrates the difficulty in censusing buildings that have been renovated into multiple apartments. The second profile involves a case of concealment and language difficulties.

Alejandro's Household

“Alejandro” (age 33) and his female partner (age 30) are Salvadorans who have lived in the United States for three years. Both are employed in service jobs that experience high turnover rates, no benefits and pay minimum wage. Their eleven year old daughter and eight year old son have recently arrived from El Salvador. Like many other recently arrived Latino immigrants in the Mission District, Alejandro and his family had difficulty finding an apartment. Many landlords will not rent to couples with children. Alejandro eventually found a landlord who was willing to rent a three bedroom apartment to a family with children; however, he cannot afford the apartment and therefore must share it with several adults. The apartment is leased under Alejandro's name and he is responsible for paying the \$750 a month rent. Alejandro and his family live with nine other Salvadorans. The apartment has three bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. The apartment is in a building that was once a hotel and has been renovated into nineteen apartments. All the apartments are substandard. The water pipes in the kitchen and bathroom are corroded and leak. The ceiling in the bathroom is rotting from leakage in the upstairs apartment. The paint is peeling in most of the rooms. Many of the tenants cover the soiled walls and peeling paint with posters or photographs cut from magazines. Cockroaches are no strangers to this building.

The residents have organized the apartment into three internal apartments with each bedroom representing a separate unit. Each bedroom has a lock. The bathroom and kitchen are shared; however, each group has a separate section in the refrigerator and much of the dry and canned food is stored in their rooms. Social interaction was usually confined to the unit.

Alejandro, his partner and two children live in one bedroom. Six of the thirteen people live in another bedroom as a family. They are a thirty year old woman, her twenty-one year old partner, their six month old child, her two sons (2-1/2 and 9 years old) from two previous relationships and her partner's nineteen year old brother. (These six were the only persons reported on the census.) The third bedroom is occupied by three men, a twenty-five, a sixty-five and a forty-five year old. The twenty-five and sixty-five year old recently arrived in the United States and met on their way from Los Angeles. The forty-five year old is the father of Alejandro's partner.

This apartment is located in a building at the corner. The two story building has nineteen apartments and three different street addresses. One apartment on the first floor has its own entrance and address number. Fourteen apartments on the second floor have another entrance and share the same street address. Four apartments, including Alejandro's, have yet another separate entrance and a separate street address. Each of the three entrances has a mail slot. There are no individual mailboxes. The building manager's residence is located at the entrance to the fourteen apartments and he distributes the mail delivered at this address to the residents. The mail dropped in the mail slot at Alejandro's address remains on the floor and each resident picks up his or her own.

Locating residents was further complicated by the fact that the apartment building was

once a hotel and was renovated into apartments. All the apartments have a kitchen and one, two or three bedrooms. Most of the apartments have a bathroom inside the apartment; however, two of the apartments' bathrooms are located in the hallways. Some of the doors facing the hallways are numbered, others are not. Several apartments have both the kitchen and bedroom doors facing the hallways. In mapping the building we had to figure out which doors belonged to which apartments and which number identified the apartment.

We were doing field work in the apartment building for two weeks before Alejandro's apartment was discovered. The door to this apartment was an unmarked door. The family that was enumerated by the census is located nearest the apartment door. Like most of their neighbors, they would probably not have offered information about the other residents living in the apartment. Given the high number of undocumented persons in the area, the norm is "mind your own business." Furthermore, they probably would not have known the ages, marital status or even the last name of the other persons in the household. During the field work, I found that while Latinos did not know the ages, marital status and last names of their Latino neighbors, they almost always knew their ethnicity. We obtained information from the adults in each of the three living arrangements.

Armando's Household

"Armando" is a twenty-six year old Mexican who has been in the United States for about a year. He has been living in a small studio in the Mission District for the last nine months. He is currently sharing the studio with four other young men from Mexico. Their ages are 22, 28, 25 and 20. They have been living with Armando for the last five months and were residing on the site on Census Day. They are all construction workers.

Armando's household was not censused for several reasons. Although each of the twenty-two apartments in the building has a separate mail box at the entrance of the apartment building, several of the boxes are broken and do not lock. No one in the household can read English; all are monolingual Spanish speakers. They do not have a phone in the apartment and are not likely to use a pay phone to call the census to request a form in Spanish. The studio apartment was very crowded with five occupants. Consequently, Armando and his roommates spend most of their waking hours outside the apartment. The enumerator would have had difficulty finding the men in the apartment.

The members of Armando's household are interested in concealing their presence. The landlord does not know that five men live in this studio apartment. Over the last couple of years, various young men from Mexico have lived in the apartment. As one returns to Mexico or seeks work elsewhere in the United States, another man moves in. Armando is not the person who signed the lease but has "inherited" the rental by being the longest resident in the apartment. As long as the \$400 a month rent is paid the residential manager does not bother the residents. The landlord would only find out about their living arrangements if someone complained. However, as long as they keep the noise down, the other residents mind their own business. As undocumented workers, these men avoid government officials and are very careful about talking to strangers. We had the residential

manager assist us. After explaining the research project and the importance of a complete count of Latinos, including undocumented immigrants, they agreed to talk to us. However, no one was willing to give information about the others. After five visits, we finally talked to each resident individually.

Although Armando's household was not censused, the housing unit appeared on the census and the enumerator reported a Basque couple living in the studio. (In the same building, the census lists families that moved five and seven years ago. All of these cases involved an enumerator during the same month. The pattern of the misinformation suggests that the information was most likely obtained from the landlord who keeps outdated records of residents.)

OBSERVATIONS

The following sections cover observations made during the six-week field work, interviews with social service providers and community leaders, and pre-field activity with the Mayor's Committee for a Complete Count and the MALDEF census campaign.

Community attitudes towards the census ranged from cooperative to hostile. We interviewed many Latino immigrants who did not know about the census and others that made every attempt to be counted. Nevertheless, the more common response was one of fear. Latinos had to be assured that it was safe to participate in the U.S. Census, that the information was confidential and that it would not be given to another branch of the government. This attitude or belief was not limited to recently arrived immigrants or high school dropouts. Several students at San Francisco State University working on the MALDEF census campaign reported that a Latino faculty member in the Department of Social Work claimed they were naive to believe that census data was not being given to the "*la migra*." He argued that social workers assisting the census were essentially aiding the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Part of the confusion may have been a result of Congress' deliberations about whether the census should include the undocumented. Social service providers and community activists were aware of the controversy, but less clear about the final decision. While Latinos in general were identified as a target group by the Mayor's Committee for a Complete Count, the undocumented were not specifically identified as a priority for outreach.

Landlords and resident managers of converted buildings were major obstacles in obtaining a complete count. In some cases, they gave incomplete information about residents in order to conceal illegal renovations and substandard housing conditions. We spoke to two resident managers that did not have updated lists of the residents. The lack of reading and speaking English proficiency was not uncommon among resident managers.

We were usually able to obtain the cooperation of Latinos residing in the sample site

after explaining the importance of a complete count to the community in the Mission District. Many Latinos asked us to confirm what they heard on Spanish language radio and television commercials about importance and confidentiality. Every household had at least one radio and most also had a television set. Churches, schools and social services served an important outreach function. However, the undocumented adults did not usually have direct contact with these organizations and were least informed about the census.

Residents encountered a variety of problems in returning the census by mail. Problems included non-delivery of forms, limited English reading and writing ability, and the difficulty of obtaining Spanish forms and not understanding how to fill them out. Mail delivery was a particular problem for housing units located in renovated apartment buildings. Mail delivery problems are illustrated in the ethnographic description of Alejandro's household. The following addresses issues related to language.

Receiving census forms in English was a problem. Many Latino and Asian residents in the sample area had limited reading and writing ability in English. During our visits, residents identified various social service agencies in the community that had assisted them in filling out the form, usually for a one to five dollar contribution. Three residents attempted to obtain forms in Spanish. All three tried unsuccessfully to call the census number listed on the English form. One resident even went to the post office in search of a Spanish form. The television message on the Spanish station was cited as particularly useful in figuring out how to fill out the English form. The census commercial reviewed each category and illustrated how to fill out the form. Following the Spanish instruction offered in the commercial, non-English speaking and writing residents were able to fill out the English form received in the mail.

Specific aspects of the forms appear to have posed some difficulty. Several residents commented on the difficulty they had understanding the directions to fill in the bubbles. Government and school forms in Latin and South America do not use this technique and recently arrived immigrants were not familiar with the idea of filling in a circle to mark a form. We also heard the residents comment on the strangeness of filling out an official government document with a pencil. They had been socialized to fill out "important" and "government" forms with a pen, not a pencil.

However, the major problems were understanding the census definitions and intent. Many of the households we interviewed treated friends and family members that were recently arrived immigrants as "visitors" rather than permanent members of the household. However, these visitors had no plans for returning to their homeland and would be living in the household for six to twelve months. Visitors only moved out after they found employment, saved some money and located a less crowded living arrangement, a plan that usually took at least six months to execute.

Deciding who to list as person one or as householder on the census form caused

confusion. Given the limited amount of spaces for entering individual persons, large households simply selected a family unit within the household, leaving others off the form. Households that included one or more nuclear families and unrelated adults, listed the household member who signed or "inherited" the lease as person one on the census form. However, listing this person as the householder does not capture the complexity of the household and the relationships of the persons in the housing unit. The following persons tend to be "invisible" to the census: unrelated couples and their children living in the same household but each occupying a separate space within the apartment; children from previous marriages; relatives' children; other relatives and other unrelated individuals.

The categories and definitions for marital status posed difficulty as well. Although Latino heterosexual unions were not sanctioned by the Church and/or State, their families and community consider them married. Generally, this was an uncomfortable area of inquiry for respondents, particularly when the couple have children. We also obtained inconsistent information from the husband and wife. Marital status was also confusing and difficult to determine in the cases of women living with their children but with no husband or partner. Most of the women referred to their status as single. However, after a series of visits, we discovered that they were actually divorced. They were likely to check divorced on a form but in conversation they identified as single and did not distinguish between single and divorced. The most common pattern in answering marital status is to provide the "official" or "legal" marital status when filling out the census form but to provide the "community" definition when answering the question verbally. Consequently, the answer provided on the census form may differ from that given an enumerator, particularly if they are from the community and of the same ethnic group.

Race and ethnicity categories were also a problem. The Latinos we spoke to did not consider themselves Black or White; however, most knew that U.S. race relations are dominated by a White/Black classification. Most acknowledged their Indian and/or African heritage but were confronted with race categories that did not reflect the existence of persons of "mixed blood." The "official" word from the census that MALDEF and other organizations used in the community was to treat Latinos as White and fill in ethnicity under Hispanic. However, many of the people we spoke to treated the category "Hispanic" as the race category and simply skipped the race section. Identifying the ethnicity of children from mixed marriages posed another set of problems. Respondents were unclear as to how to identify a mixed nationality child, as Nicaraguan or Mexican? Residents reported that social service providers and volunteers at the census assistance centers told parents to select either the father's or mother's ethnicity for the child. We observed that parents were less concerned about identifying the child as Hispanic or non-Hispanic but were concerned about identifying the child's citizenship status. Some marked their own ethnicity as Mexican American and Mexican and their child's ethnicity as "American."

Information submitted by enumerators was more likely to record Hispanic or Latino as ethnicity than did mailed forms. During our field work, the residents always identified ethnicity. Immigrants and second generation Latinos recognize the pan-ethnicity represented in the terms "Latinos" and "Hispanic" but they are quick to identify differences

and preferences between Mexican, Salvadoran, Nicaraguan and other Central and South Americans. While most residents did not know the names of their neighbors, they did know their ethnicity. The only exception observed was when class clouded the common ethnic characteristics. Distinctions between "racial" groups were less precise. For instance, Latinos identified all Asians as Chinese ("Chinos"); however, if pushed they usually did distinguish between Chinese and Filipino. White residents were the least likely to identify the ethnicity of their neighbors accurately. The most common occurrence was the classification of all Spanish-speaking immigrants as Mexican. White managers and landlords made similar generalizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clarify who is to be counted at the beginning of the census activity, particularly in the case of the undocumented.
2. Use Spanish language radio and television commercials to announce the importance of a complete count to the Latino community and to emphasize the confidentiality of the information collected.
3. Reach immigrant groups of Central and South Americans through their important social institutions: churches, schools and social service agencies
4. Include slum landlords and residential managers on the list of "target populations" because they fear exposing their substandard housing.
5. Address Latino immigrants fears about the INS and about landlords and assure Latino immigrants that the information is confidential.
6. Hire bilingual and bi-cultural enumerators essential for reaching the Latino community.
7. Replace "race" by ethnic identification. Make provisions for persons from mixed cultural heritage.
8. Allow people to appraise their residency -- request that all persons be included and then indicate permanent or temporary status.
9. Make Spanish census forms more readily available and accessible. Install more telephone lines for requesting Spanish census forms and information in Spanish.
10. Do not depend on volunteer assistance in target areas rather allocate funds for more paid positions in these areas.
11. Ask city planners to focus more effort on correcting the address files of apartment buildings with fifteen or more apartments in neighborhoods undergoing gentrification and

with a high density of immigrants.

12. Do not obtain information from absentee landlords.

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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. The technical representative for the Census Bureau was Dr. Manuel de la Puente.

For more information about this study, contact Manuel de la Puente in Population Division or 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 **Manuel.de.la.Puente@ ccmil.census gov** or **Leslie.A.Brownrigg @ ccmil.census.gov**