

ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATORY

RESEARCH REPORT #10

**BARRIERS TO CENSUSING
SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES**

Final Report for Joint Statistical Agreement 88-20

June 1990

Submitted by:

**Ann M. Rynearson
Principal Investigator**

**Thomas A. Gosebrink
Co-Principal Investigator**

**with Barrie M. Gewanter
Research Assistant**

**International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis
St. Louis, Missouri 63110**

Sponsored by:

**Center for Survey Methods Research
Bureau of the Census
Washington, DC 20233**

Leslie A. Brownrigg, Technical Representative

This research was supported by a Joint Statistical Agreement with the Bureau of the Census. The views, opinions, and findings contained in this report are those of the author and should not be construed as an official Bureau of the Census position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
DETAILED FINDINGS	10
Rationale	11
Research Design	12
Literature Review	13
Social Science & Social Service Statistics	13
Government Statistics	15
Reports and Studies	16
Ethnographic Methodology	17
Research Team	17
Study Population	18
Participant Observation	19
Semi-Structured Interviews	19
Research Results	20
Dissonance	22
Conceptual Categories	22
Residence Patterns	24
Gender Roles	30
Life Cycle	31
Disconnections	33
Time of Arrival	34
Age	36
Gender	40

Disconnections and the Census	42
Precensus Media	43
Mail Returns	44
Enumerator Interviewing	45
Discord	46
Residential Factors	46
Settlement Patterns	46
Neighborhood Relations	49
Mobility within & between Communities	51
Economic Factors	54
Labor Force Participation	54
Informal Sector Participation	56
Socio-Political Factors	57
External Institutions	57
Internal Organization	59
CONCLUSION	65
A Tale of Two Clusters	66
Suggestions for Improving the Census	68
Recommendations for Future Research	71
Epilog	72
REFERENCES	73
APPENDICES	
Tables	80
Interview Questionnaires	91

Barriers to Censusing Southeast Asian Refugees

Executive Summary

This report details the results of a study to determine barriers to censusing of Southeast Asian refugees (SEAR) in the United States. In Joint Statistical Agreement with the Bureau of the Census, the research team studied census-related behavior of Southeast Asian refugees by conducting a detailed ethnographic study of Lowland Lao refugees in St. Louis, supplemented by comparative material from research on local Amerasians and by a review of statistical and social science literature. The project also builds upon ten years of participant observation and an alternative enumeration of SEAR in St. Louis after the Dress Rehearsal Census of 1988.

Research results are organized into three domains of census-related behavior of SEAR: culture, language and social structure. **Cultural dissonance** arises out of differences between the cultural patterns SEAR bring with them from the homeland and the implicit assumptions built into the U. S. Census. **Linguistic disconnections** result from factors attenuating channels of communication between census and SEAR populations. **Structural discord** derives from modes of relations which tie the refugee community to the larger American society. Taken together all these factors lead to undercounts of SEAR. As theoretical concepts they help explain the undercount and in practice seem to be a reason for it.

Cultural dissonance may lead to many misunderstandings. Analysis here focuses on differences in conceptual categories, residence patterns, gender roles and concepts of the life cycle. Among the Lao and other SEAR, conceptual categories may easily mislead enumerators. Relationships among people may not match census definitions. The elaborate fictive kinship may identify a man as an "uncle" only because he comes from the same village as his "nephew." Naming practices, including the widespread dependence on nicknames may also confuse enumerators who depend on Lao neighbors to identify the "official" name of even a well-known person.

Several residence patterns differentiate Lao and "mainstream" American culture. The culturally defined positions and social roles of young single males in SEAR countries will lead to an undercount of this population segment. Although these "invisible nephews" frequently live with refugee families, they are not counted as household members because they are not part of the family. Any participation in marginal economic activity will make this segment even less likely to be counted. On the other hand, females of the same age cohort will not be a source of census undercount unless they are "problem" youngsters who have drifted away from the family and into casual living arrangements with age mates. All such ephemeral groups of young SEAR, and other minorities as well, will be undercounted or more likely not counted at all by the census.

Where separate Lao families share the same space, the definition of which household occupies what space may differ between census and Lao culture. Lao tend think of space as social rather than physical. Co-resident families may not be enumerated simply because they are not thought of by Lao as identified with a certain "address," not because they do not count in a socio-cultural sense.

Lao and other SEAR have expectations for gender roles that are culturally at odds with the presumed census norms. Men are expected to deal with the official world. Women (especially homebound women) are less comfortable in dealing with strangers. Concepts of the life cycle mean that the transition to "old age" for the Lao is much earlier than for Americans. As they age, refugee women and especially men are expected to withdraw from everyday hassles and to focus their attention on spiritual concerns. Hence homebound young women and older retired people who are most easily available physically to census enumerators may not be a good source of information. Culturally prescribed gender roles and stage in the life cycle are not the only reasons for this, as we will relate discuss under the rubric of "disconnections."

Principal concerns leading to communicative **disconnections** between refugees and the census are related to problems of language and literacy. They focus on arrival time,

age and gender variables. These factors impact different stages of the census process: precensus media outreach; mail returns; and enumerator interviewing.

For most refugees, English language and literacy competence seems to range from least skill at the time of arrival through a gradual acquisition of some facility to a final stage of self-reported decline in skill levels. Our findings as well as published research indicate that while language coping methods do develop, refugees become increasingly insecure with language use as they become more aware of their long-term skill deficits. At the same time refugees develop alternative channels within the community to let them communicate with the larger society, freeing many individuals from the need to use English on a daily basis.

Age affects communication with both the old and the young. Elderly refugees, besides being culturally withdrawn from worldly concerns, are poorly prepared to deal with written and spoken English. Widely held expectations about the elderly refugees' ability to learn English results in their exclusion from training in the camps, reduced time in English classes in the U. S. and finally in a self-fulfilling prophecy that they "can't learn." Although potentially a source of diffuse support for the census, the elderly are unlikely to be the usable connections themselves.

School aged children, on the other hand, are generally assumed to be adept learners and hence able to serve as ideal interlocutors. There is a widely held stereotype of refugee children as academic stars. While many SEA youth have performed well in school, many others, especially those who arrived after puberty, seem to have done more poorly both academically and socially than anticipated. In their research on SEAR in San Diego, Rumbaut and his colleagues¹ highlight the situation of school-age children who arrive after physical puberty has begun. The researchers refer to such children as the 1.5 generation because they belong neither to the first generation of refugees who were born

¹ Rumbaut and Ima (1988); Nidorf (1985); Ima and Rumbaut (1989).

and reached maturity elsewhere nor to the second generation of those who are born or arrive as small children and grow up in the American setting. Many of these in-betweens encounter social and scholastic problems. While confirming the generally high level of dependence on schoolchildren as interpreters, the St. Louis study challenges the presumption that refugee youth are always the best language connection between census and the refugee household.

Gender differences influence the relative effectiveness of men and women as communication channels to the non-refugee society. Men's traditional place in SEA society, their better opportunities for formal education in the homeland, experience in language courses and initially higher levels of work force participation explain their differential acquisition of English skills. In refugee camps many women were at home in the camps with the children during English classes. In the U. S. as well, they are also homebound by small children. Elderly women are the refugees least likely ever to acquire adequate skill or confidence in English language and literacy to deal with the census but the most likely to be at home during the daytime..

Time of arrival, age and gender, compounded by other cultural and linguistic patterns affect information flows at the census contact points of precensus media, mail returns and enumerator interviewing. Our research found that the "media blitz" prior to the 1988 Dress Rehearsal Census in St. Louis made only the very slightest impression on refugee informants. Mail returns would have a better response if they were addressed to a household member,² a key indicator of importance for the refugees. If convinced that the mail was "important" SEAR said that they sought assistance from a trusted "cultural broker." For enumerators visiting during the day, elderly refugees and women are a formidable barrier. Our research showed that most households have a regular

² Unfortunately it is not practical for the census to attempt this.

communication channel, a person whose assistance must be gained for successful connections involving the use of English language and literacy.

Discord involves barriers to full and accurate census counts which arise out of problematic links between refugee communities and the larger society. Structural links can be divided into three major domains: residence, economy and the socio-political sphere. Under **RESIDENCE** we discuss settlement patterns, neighborhood relations, and mobility within and between communities.

In spite of a government sponsored dispersal policy, settlement patterns of SEAR in the United States continue to be residentially concentrated. Refugees recombine into communities to benefit from social, cultural, political and economic supports. Ultimately some households may strike out on their own for better living conditions, but still maintain close social ties with the community. To the extent that refugees only interact within their own community, they often do not develop skill levels adequate for dealing with the larger society. Census may not locate such individuals. For densely clustered refugee communities, multiple contacts with community leaders or culture brokers are vital for accurate censusing.

Refugees are separated and isolated from the larger society by settlement in dangerous neighborhoods. These settings reinforce SEAR preferences for association with co-ethnics. Americans also make relatively little effort to interact with or understand their new neighbors. The actual physical threat of living in America's underclass neighborhoods teaches refugees to avoid contact with neighbors. These reality-based socialization processes construct formidable barriers for census enumerators.

Refugees' early years of residence are characterized by extraordinary levels of mobility within and between communities. Individuals, households and even communities move for better job or public assistance opportunities. Domestic or communal social conflicts result in hasty departures. Breakups of political alliances for a variety of reasons also propel SEAR, in this case Lao in St. Louis, to seek different

residences in the city or even in another state. Moving may answer needs for greater social satisfaction or even for a more salubrious climate. Indeed mobility is a particular curse for the census and a common cause of undercount among all parts of the population. This barrier to accurate enumeration is especially common for SEAR communities.

Various types of association with the ECONOMY can be a source of discord between refugees and American society. Labor force participation rates for 1975 arrivals have attained levels similar to the larger society. Nationwide statistics show, however, that for those arriving later, employment in the work force is only about 40% of the rate of the general population. Refugees out of the workforce do not have opportunities to acquire some skills and resources connecting them to the society.

Even for refugees who are employed, work may not provide the anticipated level of learning experiences. Most St. Louis Lao actually work in companies where other Lao are also employed, and where the boss/owner deals with refugee workers through a few interpreters. With communication handled by a few fluent English speakers, other Lao find that work generates only the most marginal contacts with representatives of the larger society. Hence it is unnecessary for many refugees to deal directly with the larger society even at the workplace.

In those situations where work generates income in the informal economy, little contact takes place. In its benign forms, babysitting, "picking"³ cans or earthworms, selling food specialties to other Lao, money is earned but interaction is minimal. Where illegal activity, such as gambling, might occur interaction is aggressively avoided. In these cases, discord between refugee communities and the larger society becomes an immediate and direct obstacle to accurate censusing rather than a remote, proximate cause related to skill levels.

³ When speaking English, Lao use this English parallel of a Lao word for harvesting or gathering.

SOCIO-POLITICAL FEATURES of refugee communities and the surrounding American society have enormous impact on censusing. Unlike other immigrants, refugee communities are enmeshed in a web of external institutions which include social service agencies, schools, churches, and all levels of government. As individuals and groups SEAR interact with these institutions and their personnel in a variety of ways. Potentially such contacts provide access to the refugee community. On the other hand, the contrasting and sometimes conflicting expectations of the various institutions may create uncertainty and distance between the refugee community and American agencies.

Lao and other SEAR spend most of their time involved with the internal community organization, which has far more influence on their daily lives. As in their homeland, Lao in St. Louis negotiate social life through both horizontal and vertical links. They are engaged in a series of ongoing exchanges among near equals, including "mini-brokers," community members who can provide help with some interethnic affairs while themselves needing assistance in other matters. For other problems individuals, turn to Lao culture brokers, powerful patrons who provide access to mainstream institutions. Vertical ties between patrons and clients are fragile and quickly changing, in part because of perceived cost to the clients. "Community leaders" who are highly visible to outsiders (i. e. Americans) are constantly rising and falling in power and influence. No one person can give access to the highly fragmented community.

In conclusion, barriers to censusing of SEAR can be understood in terms of cultural dissonance, communicative disconnections, and social discord between refugees and the census. Interplay of all these factors elucidate the difference in degree of SEAR undercount between two St. Louis neighborhoods in the 1988 Dress Rehearsal Census. In one cluster, which we studied in 1988, 11% of the Lao residents were omitted from the census count.⁴ Although no official figures are yet available for the second neighborhood,

⁴ Technically there was no undercount of refugees, due to the erroneous inclusion of 16 Lao who did not in fact live in the blocks enumerated.

we predict a far higher undercount of SEAR living there because of more severe problems of dissonance, disconnections and discord. The paper concludes with recommendations for ways to improve census results on SEAR in the future and a call for research on related topics.

Barriers to Censusing Southeast Asian Refugees

Detailed Findings

RATIONALE

In recent years, the Census Bureau detailed the differential undercount of minority populations of the United States. Among other avenues to improving results the Bureau has sponsored a series of research projects to study causes of undercount among targeted populations (cf. Valentine and Valentine 1971). This project is among a group of studies sponsored by the Center for Survey Methods Research, Bureau of the Census, for the purpose of investigating minority group behavior in the U. S. which might be related to an undercount of these populations. The present paper reports the results of an ethnographic study of barriers to censusing among Southeast Asian refugees (SEAR).

Southeast Asians are a new and rapidly growing part of the U. S. population. From a miniscule presence in 1970, they mushroomed to over 300,000 by 1980 (Refugee Reports 1989a:12). By the end of 1989, almost one million had been admitted.⁵ With numbers adjusted for high fertility levels in this country one projection places their 1990 numbers at 1,300,000 (Bouvier and Agresta 1987:295-296). By the year 2030, Southeast Asian refugees and their descendants are expected to be the largest Asian American group (ibid., p. 291).

The necessity for research on an undercount of this newly important group was confirmed by Rynearson and Gosebrink's ethnographic analysis of the Lao refugees in 1988 St. Louis Dress Rehearsal Census (Rynearson and Gosebrink 1989). In the South St. Louis area studied, 11% of the Lao residents were omitted.⁶ Of those the

⁵ This figure includes 920,061 refugee admissions plus at least 10,000 Amerasians and their families (Refugee Reports 1989a:12; 1989b:10).

⁶ Rynearson and Gosebrink found that a total of 29 Lao had been living on the block at the time of the Census. (This figure represents a reconstruction of March 1988 rather than the numbers found there during research in August 1988. There had been in-movers, out-movers and births in the intervening months.) Dress Rehearsal Census count missed 6 of the 29, or 11%. Most interesting was a woman, her son and daughter, who moved out between the Dress Rehearsal Census and the time of the alternate enumeration. We listed the apartment as vacant and did not at first realize that Census had missed them entirely.

Census found living there, 41% were erroneously included, being residents of a nearby block.⁷

The report that follows begins with the research design. This includes a discussion of the literature about SEAR, including statistics, and then turns to a discussion of the ethnographic methodology: the research team, study population and the use of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The research results constitute the body of this paper. Finally, we end the report with some general conclusions, ideas for promising research, and specific suggestions for improving the census.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The current project involved an intensive year-long study of census-related behavior of the Lowland Lao⁸ community in St. Louis, Missouri, with limited additional observations of newly arrived Amerasians.⁹ This information was supplemented by published data on SEAR groups in other areas. Two principal types of data collection were employed: literature review (including statistics) and ethnographic methodologies, especially participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The rapidly growing descriptive literature on SEAR is integrated into our general analysis of the research findings. Here we will summarize methods of accumulating nation-wide statistics on the population

⁷ Three large Lao families, with a total of 16, were included in the list of block residents, although they actually lived elsewhere. Thus 1988 Census results show 39 Lao in the 2 blocks (not including the 6 they missed). Hence 41% of those the Census lists are erroneously included.

⁸ It is important to differentiate between Lowland Lao, the dominant ethnic group of Laos, and the immigration category "Laotians" which includes numerous tribal groups from that country, most notably the Hmong.

⁹ Amerasians are the children of American servicemen and Vietnamese mothers during the Vietnam War. To date about 20,000 Amerasians and their families have been resettled in the United States, and an estimated 30,000 more are expected in the next few years (Refugee Reports 1989:12).

Literature Review

Social Science and Social Service Statistics

Using research collections in area universities we reviewed relevant literature on SEAR. Academic researchers, social service providers and the United States government are the principal generators of statistical data about refugees in the United States. Each compiler has particular goals in collecting the information. Each type of statistics has specific uses but also significant limitations.

We had initially planned to supplement government-derived statistics with data from the social sciences and social service providers. To our surprise we discovered that almost all nation-wide statistics from the latter sources were derived from government data. Seldom if ever has a group of immigrants been subjected to so much numerical analysis as Southeast Asian refugees. From the moment of their arrival in refugee camps of first asylum until they have been in the U. S. more than three years, they are counted and recounted, by sex, age, race/ethnic group, years of education, time in camps, number of children... The list goes on and on. There is, in fact, almost too much data. On being asked for a detailed breakdown of ethnic groups in different areas, one government statistician refused, saying the file was too enormous to mail (Gordon 1989, personal communication).

In an effort to get more information about the location of refugees in specific areas, the team contacted a network of well known ethnographers and refugee specialists both in academic and care giver capacities throughout the United States. Unfortunately these contacts did not elicit statistics that would be useful for our current research. The specialized uses of statistical data and the types of scholarly and service provider interactions with SEAR populations make their statistical data only very marginally helpful for any aggregate purposes for which we might hope to employ them.

Alternatives to government statistics proved disappointing. Academic researchers frequently report the difficulties in using service provider lists to generate data about about

SEAR populations. For example, one recently published study of SEAR in five cities reports that "we had been led to expect that administrative lists were accurate and complete...[but]..this information proved to be grossly inadequate" (Caplan, Whitmore and Choy 1989:182).¹⁰ Such academic research relies on samples rather than a comprehensive count of an entire community. These researchers usually assume that a suitable replacement for individuals who might disappear from a study can be found in their sample of remaining community members. The numbers represent community members who are convenient and available to be studied (Liu and Cheung 1985:493). The assumption is then generally made that the sample is representative of the total refugee population.

Another potential source of information on the SEAR population is the host of agencies meeting their special needs. Social service providers depend on refugee counts, usually the higher the better, for programmatic purposes. The nature of their relationship with SEARs is generally very short term, however, and accurate counts are especially difficult to maintain for any length of time. Social service providers may well caution data users that their "files" or "lists" need to be updated as the same "client", either an individual or household, drifts in or out of an agency's purview. Individual SEARs are available to and on agencies' rolls to meet particular needs, for example participation in a particular program. Once these needs are met or bureaucratic limits on eligibility exceeded, the refugee's rationale for keeping in touch with the agency disappears. In addition when service providers and academic researchers attempt to track SEARs they are frequently frustrated because of the extraordinary mobility of SEARs both within and between communities. This topic is addressed below during the discussion of the discord existing between the larger society and communities of refugees.

¹⁰ See also, Liu and Cheung 1985; Strand(1989), inter alia.

Since statistics from social scientists and service providers are insufficient to provide a general picture of refugee arrivals and distributions, the following description is drawn largely from government-produced reports. It will serve as an introduction to the subject of SEAR in the U. S.

Government Statistics

The historical record of the past decade and one-half for SEAR in the United States is partially sketched in bald government statistics. After the Communist takeover of Southeast Asia in 1975, hundreds of thousands of refugees began fleeing Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Many of these people eventually found new homes in the United States. Table 1¹¹ displays total arrivals from each country between 1975 and 1989. The data are compiled from reports by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR); Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS); U. S Department of Health and Human Services; and the Bureau for for Refugee Programs of the Department of State. The principal limitation of this data is that it does not include Amerasian immigrants. Less serious limitations are that the total numbers for each immigrant group in the most recent years have been and will be revised in subsequent reporting years. In addition, the numbers for the earlier years apparently have been rounded off to the nearest hundred.

Table 2 gives current Southeast Asian refugee population for each state. These data, compiled on a monthly basis, are from ORR. The figures are adjusted for secondary migration. Despite official government policy to disperse the refugee population, marked concentration or clustering patterns have developed, with over 50% of the refugees now living in California, Texas and Washington. Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of Southeast Asian refugee populations in states with more than 10,000. The main deficiency of these data is that they are not adjusted for births and deaths since the refugees

¹¹ All tables mentioned here are located in Appendix A.

arrived in the United States. A second factor worth noting is that even though the data are collected on a monthly basis, the last published monthly report was April 1988.

Official government data collection does not include where refugees are located within states. However, some statistics from the INS can be used as a surrogate for this level of specificity. United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, provides information on the number and nationality of people adjusting their status from refugee to immigrant within each of the top 50 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the country in 1987 and 1988, as shown in Tables 4 and 5. (Comparable figures are not yet available for 1989.) These data apply only to one year rather than being cumulative. While they do not give figures on total refugee populations of each area, these "green card" statistics show clustering patterns even more intensive than the distribution displayed on a state-by-state basis.

As well as demonstrating the increasing numbers of refugees and asylees from Southeast Asia seeking and receiving permanent resident status, Table 6 portrays their decade by decade emergence. From virtually without a presence in the 1960s to basically Vietnamese in the 1970s, and finally to include an admixture of Cambodians, Laotians and Vietnamese in the 1980s, Southeast Asians are a new and increasingly significant element of the United States population mosaic. Table 7 is Bureau of the Census count for all Asians in the United States in 1970 and 1980. The novelty of Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian and Vietnamese as ethnic categories among Asian groups is strikingly illustrated by the "percent of Asian population" columns for 1970 and 1980.

Reports and Studies

Review of the scholarly literature was speeded and enhanced by the use of database searches especially Dissertation Abstracts, ERIC, and Social Science Abstracts and Social Science Index. In addition Rynearson's association with St. Louis' International Institute provided access to periodicals and reports dealing with general refugee issues and

particularly SEAR matters which would have been unknown and or difficult to obtain without this type of contact. While the scholarly literature and the reports of service providers have been extremely valuable to us, it must be observed that their scope is surprisingly narrow in focus. Health, especially mental health, education and labor force participation of SEAR are extraordinarily well documented, discussed and explained. However, analytical, or even descriptive accounts of community dynamics are not particularly well represented in the literature. As our detailed findings will demonstrate, where the published literature and our research are parallel, references are copious. In other situations the present research is set apart and stands on its own.

Ethnographic Methodology

Research Team

In order to broaden methodology and results, the research team consisted of an anthropologist, a political scientist and a sociologist. Dr. Ann Rynearson, the anthropologist, and Dr. Thomas Gosebrink, the political scientist, had designed and executed the 1988 Alternative Enumeration. Barrie Gewanter, the sociologist, has had experience in ethnographic interviewing and statistical treatment of results. This triangulation allowed us to view the data from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. In addition Rynearson's long term professional and personal contacts with the Lao refugees in St. Louis, occasioned by her International Institute work, provided the opportunities for and legitimacy to the research's team's participant observation activities and indepth interviews with the Lao people, the research population. In the project, Gosebrink and Gewanter had primary responsibility for the interviews, while Rynearson focused on participant observation, involving other team members where possible. All three worked together to analyze the results.

Study Population

The primary research population for the ethnographic portion of this study is the Lowland Lao in St. Louis, Missouri. This group is ideal for ethnographic study, being a small, clearly bounded community embedded in a large, complex urban environment. Their beginnings as a group are recent and they are well known both administratively and ethnographically. No group can perfectly image the whole complex of SEAR communities in the United States, but this detailed case study permits numerous observations suggestive of processes in other populations.

At the present time, there are about 600 individuals or 100 Lao families in the greater St. Louis area.¹² This figure parallels the total number resettled in the area over the last 10 years. Although there has been some out-migration over time, this has been balanced by an almost equal number moving in. Like most Southeast Asian refugee populations in the U. S., the community's history is clearly limited in time. The first Lao family only arrived in St. Louis in 1979. Numbers grew rapidly between 1980 and early 1982, when changes in Thailand almost halted the flow of Lao refugees to the U. S. and other third countries. A second and smaller influx arrived in 1986 and 1987. Admissions once again slowed in 1988 and only two families arrived in 1989. This slowing reflects changes in the international refugee program, which has devoted more numbers to Vietnamese, Amerasians and refugees from other continents, as well as improvements in the political situation in Laos itself which are making return home more feasible. Set against the decline in new arrivals is community growth through births. In San Diego, Rumbaut and Weeks (1986:444) found that Lao had a total fertility rate (TFR) of 6.55, compared to a TFR for the general American population of 1.8 per woman. As discussed below, this rate is lower in St. Louis, but in this predominantly young population, there are considerable births every year.

¹² A discussion of the history of Laos and how the refugees came to be here is beyond the scope of this already lengthy paper. For further information see Halpern (1964); Whitaker (1972); Dommen (1985); and volumes edited by Adams and McCoy (1970) and Stuart-Fox (1982).

Participant Observation

Members of this community graciously permitted us opportunities to learn about them through face to face interactions. This kind of involvement, usually classified as participant observation, covers a wide range of activities. First Rynearson and later other team members spent time with Lao in stores, schools, homes, churches, at their work sites, in social service agencies and in the neighborhoods. Frequently such "time spent" was simply for visiting. At other times we observed Lao at religious gatherings, which in Lao tradition are frequently followed by social activities. Team members attended weddings, meetings and parties.

During participant observation information, advice, support and material assistance quickly become the "quid pro quo." As this report later shows, such exchanges did occur and they are consistent with Lao cultural expectations and behaviors. Inevitably special relationships were formed between team members and individual Lao. Long-time friendships encouraged people to let us "behind the scenes" to the personal level of life within the Lao community. For ethnographic researchers such data provide insights illuminating the dynamics of other cultures.

Semi-structured Interviews

But participant observation did not directly address nor always answer specific research questions. Behaviors that might have an impact on the 1990 Census were explored through semi-structured interviews. (Appendix B contains the two-part interview schedule.) We interviewed a sample of the Lao community in St. Louis during the first three quarters of 1989. Twenty-eight informants were selected according to criteria of gender, age, length of time in the United States, marital status and approximate levels of economic well-being. Officially we interviewed 17 women and 11 men, but the sexual imbalance is mitigated by the fact that husbands were present and actively participating in five of the interviews with women. Informants ranged in age from 21 to

62 and in length of time in the U. S. they varied from barely one month to nine years. Choice of informants was based on Rynearson's familiarity with community members, on suggestions from translators and sometimes on serendipity.¹³ With the assistance of three Lao interpreter/research assistants, we conducted interviews in the homes of informants, at times most convenient for them. We attempted to match researchers with same-sex respondents, but this was not always effective, since spouses, other relatives, neighbors and friends often joined in the conversations.

We believed that research results would be more complete if the setting remained informal, and Lao willingly obliged. Generally water or another beverage was given to the interviewer and occasionally, dinner was offered by the host. In almost all cases and in order to encourage informality, more than one family member was present and other Lao stopped by while interviews were in progress. Multiple conversations and television often supplied the audio background. We used the interview schedule as a guide which permitted us to probe various possible avenues of responses. Often we followed in the direction that the Lao informant led us rather than staying wedded to a predetermined blueprint. The interview schedule itself grew and changed somewhat as the project advanced. As a result of changes over time and the particular concerns of informants, we did not cover every question with each respondent. Thus different numbers of people answered different questions. We believe, however, that this more flexible approach led to more enlightening findings.

Over five hundred pages of transcribed dialogue and interviewer observations were coded and analyzed with the assistance of **Factfinder**TM an analytical software program. Keywords were chosen to group together responses to census-related matters. The volume of data gathered included a rich variety of ethnographic detail. Interview data served both to clarify and validate participant observation findings and vice-versa. We

¹³ In one case, as was suggested above in the discussions related to statistical problems, we lost one of our panel of informants due to a dispute he had at work.

found that our research either supported or challenged information and analysis previously reported in the scholarly literature and in government and service provider reports. These results are reported in the pages that follow.

Research Results

As we analyzed the incoming data, certain patterns began to emerge. We began to realize that the U. S. Census is predicated upon a mainstream view of American society. In large part this is unavoidable because expectations about standard responses are necessary in conceiving of and tabulating a mass, modern society. These mechanical imperatives assume that people responding to the census share basic spoken English skills and mainstream concepts of household, familial relationship, time, naming conventions and the like. Furthermore, census posits and depends for the success of its mission on a responsive and cooperative citizenry.

We argue that the chief barriers to obtaining a full and accurate count of Southeast Asian refugees lie in differences in culture, language and social organization as assumed by the census and as used by these newcomers to America. Multiple contrasts between Lao in Tracts One and Two in St. Louis are the prism splitting our analysis into distinct but related concepts of cultural dissonance, communicative disconnections and social discord. We think of cultural **dissonance** as the mismatch between concepts, attitudes and behaviors assumed by the United States Census and those lived by the Lao and other SEAR. The first section of our research findings concentrates on the confusion introduced by the cultural differences among refugees and the United States Census. Communicative **disconnection** occurs in channels used for transmitting messages between communities. Of particular importance is the fact that English language and literacy skills vary among different subgroups of the population. Hence the second section discusses the kinds of

people likely to suffer communicative disconnections with the society as well as the impact of such disconnections on various steps of the census process. Social discord arises from potential weaknesses in the structural links between the refugee community and the larger society. The third section outlines some problems arising out of contacts occurring with the larger society. Together, the barriers arising out of dissonance, disconnection and discord lead to an undercount of Southeast Asian refugees.

Dissonance

The most notable differences between census cultural concepts and those of Lao and other Southeast Asian refugees involve the areas of conceptual categories, residence patterns, household composition, gender roles and perceptions of the life cycle. The differences have serious effects on the census count.

Conceptual categories

Many inaccuracies in census results arise from culturally patterned concepts of relationships. First of all, enumerators are likely to be confused by dissonance in naming practices. Within the Lao community there is a high level of personal knowledge (about who is living where, with whom, etc.) but no one knows official names. Everyone has a nickname, either a descriptive label ("Shorty"), an animal mascot ("Tiger") or a relational term ("Father of__"). In an effort to be obliging, neighbors or members of the household may provide an enumerator with speculative versions of names. For example, one man is known as "Chanh." Everyone knows his "real" name is longer, and in referring to him to outsiders they will call him "Khamchanh," or "Somchanh," or "Sengchanh"(all common combinations). The less well educated of the women often do not know the long official names of their children, all of whom are called by nicknames. In fact, most people are known by their own or their children's nickname. For example, a woman might be known as "Mother of a boychild nicknamed 'Shorty. '"

Furthermore, individuals and families are linked by a complex set of bonds based on both fictive and real kinship. When asked what they missed most about Laos, all of our interview respondents immediately said, "my relatives." The matrilineal residence pattern of their homeland created an ongoing informal group of related and cooperating individuals. Most of the closest relatives were left behind or separated in the refugee process, and their absence creates a real gap. "I could never trust the people in the refugee camp," said one Lao man, "they were strangers. Before we lived with our cousins, we knew them. With the strangers, we didn't know--maybe they would rob, rape, kill us. We had to watch them all the time." Once settled in the United States, Lao often move from one area to another to be closer to relatives (Mortland and Ledgerwood 1987). Even quite distant relationships are activated. For example, two young men said they were brothers, although they had different last names. On being asked about the exact biological ties, it turned out that one man was the other's father's younger brother's wife's older brother's grandson. But they had grown up together and considered themselves cousins (when they were fighting) and brothers (when they were feeling close).

There is also an elaborate system of fictive kinship. Some is based on coming from the same hometown. One woman explained that she called another man "grandpa" because when she was a child he would sometimes come to visit her grandmother and her family. Another calls an older man "uncle" because "he comes from the same home town so we must be related somehow." Very close friends also count themselves as relatives, even when they come from different areas. Sometimes ties of fictive kin are built up for perceived political purposes, in order to manipulate the other by the normative demands of kin. Rynearson, for example, maintains ties with three people who call her "sister." It is somewhat difficult to differentiate fictive kin relations (which tend to have stronger affect) from relations between Lao in general. Except in dealing with the highest patrons, everyone is addressed by name (more often nickname) and a kinship term derived from age. For example, women of one's own generation are referred to as "Older sister x" or

"Younger sister y" and men of the next ascending generation are called "Uncle y." Only when speaking to someone in a lower generation is the kinship term dropped.

Problems are compounded still further by differences in American and SEAR kinship terminology. Luong (1984) has described differences between Vietnamese and American concepts of kinship categories. Lao terminology, too, is quite different from the American system. For example, as a term of respect a Lao man refers to his mother-in-law by the same word as grandmother. As Lao become more familiar with American practices, they may call the same person as either mother-in-law or grandmother--in succeeding sentences. If the man is living with his wife's family, as is often the case, this is likely to make tracing household relationships difficult. Similarly, the Lao use the same word for nephew, niece, cousin and grandchild. Confusion from translating this into the categories on the census form is likely to be serious.

Hence, while not likely to cause an undercount *per se*, all these varied differences in the conceptual categories of Lao and Americans are a potent source of confusion and inaccuracy for the census.

Residence patterns

Cultural differences in expectations about residence are likely to lead to a dramatic undercount, particularly of certain segments of the population. A significant source of error in censusing for this population can be attributed to an undercount of a category we call "invisible nephews,"¹⁴ young singles, mostly male. Demographically, the age and sex composition of the Southeast Asian refugee population is predominantly young and male. Gordon (1987:161) indicates that in 1985 the median age for all refugees was 24.6. In recent years Khmer and Lao refugee arrivals had a median age of 17 or 18. For all

¹⁴The kinship term *lan* in Lao refers to nephews, nieces, grandchildren and cousins, i.e. any junior relative outside the nuclear family. Most of the young singles resident in Lowland Lao households stand in this relationship to the family.

SEAR groups, male refugees exceed females 58% to 42%, although proportions are more nearly equal for Lao and Khmer. The greatest departure from parity between males and females is among those aged 15 to 24 (ibid.). Hence there are disproportionately more young single males as compared to the general American population.

Young single males are most likely to be missed due to culturally patterned transiency for young men before marriage. In Laos and Northern Thailand it is not uncommon for young men to stay with married couples while they "seek their fortune" away from home. Phommasouvanh (1979:85) points out that in Laos sons traditionally "build their fortunes" elsewhere. Girls marry and bring the husband to the ancestral home. Lao married couples in St. Louis often take in one or more single young men (and more rarely women), who share expenses and eat with the family. Partly this reflects a wish to save money on housing, especially before all adult family members are working. In some cases these people are relatives of nuclear family members, if only classificatory ones. Others are family friends: in one recent case a Nigerian youth, abandoned by his own people, lived in a Lao household for several months.

In 1988 we conducted an indepth ethnographic census of all residents of two census blocks in South St. Louis. We found that over 33% of the Lao households¹⁵ contained such "nephews." This was far higher than the numbers reported in Caplan, Whitmore and Choy's more formal survey of 400 Lao households in five cities (1989:39).¹⁶ Their respondents reported young singles living with families in only 9% of the Lao households. Almost 12% of all SEAR households reported such boarders. Other literature also indicates this pattern of young men boarding with families is fairly widespread. As early as 1979 single young Vietnamese were living with unrelated families in an attempt to reconstruct the extended families they had left behind (Phung 1979). Nidorf (1985:85)

¹⁵ N = 14.

¹⁶ Caplan, Whitmore and Choy also surveyed 690 Vietnamese and 294 Sino-Vietnamese households in the same study, for a total N of 1,384 (Caplan, Whitmore and Choy 1989:39).

also noted that unaccompanied minors and other youth sought to recreate family structures in San Diego. Zaharlick and Brainard (1987:354) found that young singles were among the most likely to become secondary migrants, relocating in households of relatives or non-relatives.

Although they may live in the household, for census purposes these young singles are not really part of it. Our research reveals that Lao in St. Louis count community size in terms of number of (nuclear) families, not individuals, and equate family with household. Since the young singles are not (nuclear) family members, they are not always seen as household members either. One man we talked to said quite clearly that although his household actually consisted of six people (him, his wife, his unmarried sister, and his wife's brother), he would only count four for the census. These two young singles would therefore not be reported by a Lao household head filling out the form. They would, in effect, be invisible. In St. Louis the presence of these youths is not a secret which might affect welfare eligibility, as might be the case in other cities. They are just not seen by the Lao as fully functioning community members and hence are socially irrelevant. For example, clerical workers for the local Lao mutual aid association must frequently prepare a roster of Lao residents in the city. They must be convinced to include these young men.

Traditional patterns are reinforced by the Lao perception of American residence norms. Rynearson's familiarity with the community suggested that the category of unrelated young men would be a source of undercount. Hence our interviews included questions about whether any individual from outside the nuclear family had ever been a member of the household. 80% of those questioned said that someone had lived with them in the past, in most cases a male relative or a friend of a male relative. Only 33% of those interviewed have someone living with them now. This echoes our findings during the alternative enumeration, when we also found 33% of the households with "nephews." Our specific attention to this issue plus our closer relations with the families might help explain the

discrepancy between our 33% and Caplan, Whitmore and Choy's 9% of all types of families with young singles.¹⁷

Young Lao men seem to prefer living with families, at least until they are in their early or mid 20s. As they get older those who do not marry Lao women may form liaisons with young American girls. Sometimes (though rarely) the girl comes to live with the Lao family. More often, the young man spends more and more of his time with her, while maintaining a base residence with a Lao family. Eventually these partners may set up separate households together. Some young men even maintain two cars, one to drive during the work week and another to "chase girls" on weekends.

Unlike the Lao, young people of other ethnic groups sometimes do not remain with families. Our preliminary research with Amerasians and other young Vietnamese indicates that some elements of these populations might well be undercounted. For Vietnamese the norm is for young men to live with their families until marriage, and many do. But Vietnamese and Amerasian youth quickly learn that in America 18-year-olds may legally leave their family. After disputes with parents, they frequently go off to join households of young people of both sexes. Living arrangements tend to be very fluid, with individuals changing houses two or three times a week.

We argue that Vietnamese conceive of Amerasians as typically being street children, homeless, "dust of life" not because they lack a living space but because they are not part of a traditional extended family. Nidorf (1985) found that unaccompanied Vietnamese minors in San Diego even refer to themselves as "dust of life." They also report being called so by others. She concludes that "[l]ack of family brings humiliation and self denigration--a feeling of being an outcast" (Nidorf 1985:413). Young Vietnamese in irregular households, particularly Amerasians, lack the primary basis of social identity in patrilineal Vietnam (Phung 1979:77). Where young people establish such varieties of

¹⁷ It seems likely that such young men would be more likely to be dropped from household rosters in places where there is a high welfare dependency rate among refugees.

flexible and changing living arrangements, they are likely to be unavailable to the census particularly as they remain marginal to the Vietnamese community.

An undercount is less probable for young SEAR females. Among the Lao in St. Louis, girls are often married to older men who have been able to save enough money for the quite substantial bride price still required. Once married their household is recognized as part of the community. Some later run away to live with family members or boyfriends in other states. In fact Rumbaut and Weeks (1986:438) found that Lao had the highest divorce rate of the five groups they studied in San Diego. Marriage patterns vary slightly for other groups. Most Hmong girls are married very early to young men and go to live with their husband's family. Girls who remain unmarried into their early 20s are considered a social embarrassment (Capps 1989). It is possible they may not, therefore, be listed among household members for census purposes.

There is another source of dissonance between the census and Lao cultures' definitions of residence and of household. The boundaries between households is quite thin. Frequently today, although less than in the past, Lao cluster their residences. The marked informality and fluidity of residence can be seen in mini-clusters, where several separate households almost seem to be one. Often there is no clear demarcation of public or minicluster space from the private domain of any separate apartment. Whether two related families live in the same or adjacent apartments, the Lao often see them as sharing one household or at least one compound, as was the case in Laos. In our interviews, people used the word "apartment" to refer to the whole building, not just one apartment in it. Doors remain unlocked even in dangerous neighborhoods and Lao wander in unannounced, unchallenged and often unacknowledged. Sleeping and eating arrangements are flexible, and it would be misleading for the outside visitor to either rely on casual observation or questioning to determine who "really" lives where. The census focuses on physical space; the Lao on social space.

Traditionally Lao residence pattern tend to be matrilineal, with daughters bringing their husbands to live in or near their parents' household (Whitaker 1982; Phommasouvanh 1979). This pattern continues in the United States, and in fact one of the major causes for secondary migration is the desire to be reunited with such kin. To achieve this preferred residential arrangement two or more married couples may share an apartment, e. g. parents and married children or two married sisters and their families. In 1988 at least three Lao households in St. Louis each contained three related nuclear families living together. Although arising partly from a desire to save money and share child care, these multifamily households are by no means the poorest in the community.¹⁸ This complex household pattern may cause problems for the enumerator, depending upon who is interviewed initially. Information might be distorted if an enumerator interviewed a woman who had not yet entered the labor force and was taking care of all the families' children. In such a situation it might be easy to miss the other nuclear family(s). However, compared to "invisible nephews," information on multifamily households can be elicited with just a few questions, since these adult married people "count."

Another less common but still acceptable residential arrangement is the household made up of two or more unrelated families. Particularly in the early years, the desire to save money may lead to this alternative. Caplan, Whitmore and Choy (1989: 39) found 6% of Lao households fitting this pattern. At the present time, we know of no such households in St. Louis, but they were once fairly common. One family was seen as the base, and the others were said to be living "with [name of head of household]." For example, a young married couple, with no relatives nearby, might live with another family until they have saved enough money for an apartment of their own.

Despite the acceptability of these multifamily apartments, most Lao households in St. Louis now consist of the nuclear family only. In the early days after resettlement this was

¹⁸ For example, one such family paid \$65,000 cash to purchase a store.

less often the case, but there does seem to be a preference for apartments containing only the nuclear family. It is the desire to live close to households with relatives that leads to the clusters discussed elsewhere. Nationally, Caplan, Whitmore and Choy (1989:39) found that 54% of Lao households consisted only of nuclear families. This contrasts with only 44% of Vietnamese families living in nuclear family households.

Gender roles

Census results may be affected by the gender of the person contacted. In our research we found that men dominated in relations with outsiders. They usually handle mail and are more willing and accustomed to interacting with official strangers. In interviews where both men and women were present, men monopolized the conversation, even when the interview was supposedly with the wife. Bliatout (1985:186) notes that SEAR men tend to be dominant. Goldstein (1988:8) also found that Hmong men are responsible for dealing with the outside world. This is a cultural pattern common in Southeast Asia and derives from Buddhism. A higher value is placed on religious and political life than on economic or domestic matters. Hence men tend to dominate in the former domains, while women are more concerned with domestic matters, including trade and business outside the household (Kirsch 1975; 1985; Keyes 1975; 1984; Potter 1977; Phommasouvanh 1979). Therefore, men are more accustomed to dealing with government matters as they relate to the household.

Not only are SEAR women less accustomed to relations in the political domain: traditionally they are not supposed to be alone with men, especially strangers. Our Lao informants tell us that any woman alone with a man is assumed to have had sex with him. Similarly for the Vietnamese as well, Tran (1988:756) notes that traditional Vietnamese culture discouraged women from interacting with strangers and foreigners. 77% of the women we interviewed said they would not open the door to speak to a stranger, especially an unaccompanied male. If the stranger was accompanied by a Lao community

member they were more likely to respond. Several said that if they heard a knock on the door they would look to see if they knew the person. If they did not know them they would say nothing or tell them to go away. "If they keep knocking, we let them knock." The most unacculturated women are usually the only people at home during the day and they are extremely unlikely to answer the door or try to interact with census takers.

Life cycle

Census behavior is also affected by striking differences in Lao and American ideas about the life cycle. Various roles appropriate to the oldest and youngest Lao age groups make them differentially able to respond to the census. "Old age" comes much earlier to the Lao. Americans generally view old age as beginning at 65, with retirement from a full time job. If anything, the overall aging of the U. S. population means that this turning point is getting later. In contrast the Lao and other Southeast Asians see retirement from active participation in the economy as a gradual process which begins at a much earlier age.¹⁹ In their homeland, people lived in extended family households, with the senior generation beginning to "take it easy" as early as 35. For men, this meant retirement from the rigors of farm work and increasing involvement in politics and religion. During this phase women assumed a greater responsibility for child care, freeing their daughters to participate directly in the economy. Senior women also became increasingly concerned with religious affairs of the community. This traditional Lao life cycle also had strong religious underpinnings. As Buddhism exalts withdrawal from human affairs, older people were considered closer to Buddha.

Normative expectations about the life cycle remain largely unchanged in the United States, although it is not always possible to fulfill them. In Laos adult children were expected to take care of their parents' needs as they withdrew from mundane economic

¹⁹ Prior to the Communist takeover life expectancy was only 30 to 35 years(Whitaker et al 1972:viii)

concerns. Younger people were considered disgraced if their "aged" (i. e. post-45-year-old) parents had to live alone and support themselves (Phommasouvanh 1979). In the U. S., adult SEAR continue to value traditional life cycle roles and transitions despite pressures from a society which does not consider 35 to be retirement age. Bliatout (1985:185) notes that 35-year-old SEAR grandparents expect to be semiretired. Bach and Carroll-Seguin (1986:396-397) found that labor force participation rates drop off around age 45 for all Southeast Asian refugees. In St. Louis most Lao women over the age of 40 do stay home and take care of children from their own family ²⁰ and those of other Lao. In fact their efforts are critical to the economic success of the community, as they free young women to get jobs. Older men tend to retire or to take lower paying "easy" jobs. Most financial support comes from their adult children. Several years ago the normative strength of this pattern was underscored by an incident in which a young Lao married woman asked for and received money from her middle-aged mother. This reversal of the normal direction of financial support was considered a major scandal. The interaction of "elderly" (i. e. post-45 year-old) adults with the outside world is mediated through their more acculturated children and grandchildren due to traditional Lao cultural expectations of the role of the elderly and the point of transition to that status.

Much of the literature about refugees has emphasized older people's loss of status within the community due to their inability to deal with American society (Gozdziak 1988; Weinstein-Shr and Lewis 1989; Gimbert 1988; Grognet 1989; Yee 1986; Gozdzia 1989). While this may be true in some respects, it is only part of the picture. Elders' isolation is due in part to their adherence to traditional norms appropriate to this phase in the life cycle. In St. Louis, older Lao couples live with their married children in clusters. Senior men often form an informal council of elders to help rule on issues such as disagreements between neighbors and/or fights between husbands and wives. Older men and women

²⁰ Usually their grandchildren, more rarely their own children.

play a leading role in religious activities. In fact, their presence legitimizes family and community ceremonies. Hence while older people are largely withdrawn from American society, they continue to play an important role in internal affairs of the refugee community.

Dissonance between traditional Lao and American notions of life cycle has two important implications for the census. On the one hand, census-takers will be ineffective in approaching people in the elderly/withdrawn stage even though Americans might consider them healthy middle aged. Unfortunately it is just such "elderly" people who are likely to be at home during the daytime when census takers might visit. On the other hand, older people are influential in the refugee community and their general support for the census could be important.

Disconnections

Acquisition and use of written and spoken English language skills is one important way refugees are connected to American society. This connection is difficult to make. Southeast Asian languages are strikingly different from English and from each other (Gedney 1979). In addition, Lao and Khmer use a non-Roman alphabet, and a written system for Hmong has only recently been developed. Hence language and literacy pose major barriers for Southeast Asians encountering the census. ²¹ Lao we talked with in St. Louis exhibited a wide range of language skills. 36% of the individuals we spoke with read little or no Lao; 60% of the women were illiterate in Lao. All people reported some difficulty understanding written English, although the more acculturated experienced fewer problems. Even those with a relatively good command of English need assistance when confronted with problematic documents. There are two parts to our discussion about the effect of linguistic barriers on census results: factors defining categories of people most "at

²¹There is also great variation between individuals in terms of previous experience with western languages, level of education and degree of English proficiency at time of arrival, and scope of training in this country.

risk" and interplay of these variables during census processes. Risk factors include time of arrival, age, and gender. Together these elements variably affect communication between census and the refugee communities during pre-census media outreach, mail returns and enumerator interviewing. We will discuss each of these in turn, first risk factors and then impact on the census.

Time of Arrival

Linguistic problems would seem to be most severe for refugee new arrivals. Dunning (1989: 73) found that 85% of Vietnamese newcomers reported that English was among the principal problems they encounter on arrival. Strand (1989:115) states that Lao refugees ranked English number one among the problems of adaptation on arrival. Nicassio *et al* (1986:25) note that 86% of the Lao he studied reported that learning to speak and understand English was "highly stressful." In a scathing study of English training in the refugee camps, Tollefson (1989) points to the massive weaknesses in the programs and their ineffectiveness in preparing refugees to operate in American society. The Lao themselves frequently recall their early difficulties. "When I first arrived, I didn't understand nothing," said one man. "The teacher said, 'stand up, ' and I sit down. She said, 'What's your name?' and I said, 'Fine and you?'"

There is some disagreement as to whether and how much English skills actually improve with time. Such progress would seem logical, particularly with English training in this country. Indeed, Dunning (1989:72) found that 47% of Vietnamese who received English training said that their English ability improved between time of arrival and time of interview. On the other hand 51% reported no improvement and 2% reported a regression. Official statistics from the Office of Refugee Resettlement are equally puzzling (see Table 8, Appendix A). ORR's 1989 Report to Congress compares refugees by length of time in the U. S. As might be expected 19.9% of newcomers reported that they spoke no English. This percentage declined over time to 6.5% of those who have been here 19-

24 months. Interestingly, however, the figure jumps sharply after that with 20.8% of those who have been here 25-30 months reporting that they spoke no English. The percent of people speaking English well or fluently shows a similar profile (ORR 1989:146). On the other hand, Rumbaut (1989:148) found that the percentage of Hmong in San Diego who said that they spoke English "not at all" or "poorly" declined from 99.1% in 1975 to 28.4% eight years later. He found similar improvement for Vietnamese and some improvement, although less dramatic, among Khmer and Chinese. There was also some advance in literacy.

Our ethnographic observations among the Lao in St. Louis indicate that there is a difference between self-reported and actual level of English competence. As time goes by, people learn a variety of strategies for communicating in English. For many this is kind of pidgin or shorthand. With patience and ingenuity almost anything can be communicated in this way, but it is difficult. Many Americans, unaccustomed to dealing with limited English speakers, may give up in disgust before full understanding is reached. Hence the Lao are frequently made aware of what they still do not know. Their general level of frustration may increase with repeated "reality shock", leading to the kind of downward curve seen in the ORR statistics. During fieldwork, we frequently had lengthy conversations with people who discussed their language difficulties with us, reporting that they could not speak English "at all." They spoke English throughout the conversation.

While competence or the perception of competence in English may not improve over time, most refugees do develop strategies for handling transactions with the outside world, especially through links to known and trusted translators. At this point it is important to note that newcomers, new arrivals, suffer not only from undeveloped English skills but also from an absence of ties into the internal communications network of the refugee community.

Age

As observed in the section above, age is related to cultural dissonance. Age is also a factor in disconnections between census and the very old and the very young in refugee communities. English language and literacy barriers are particularly serious for elderly refugees. First of all, their levels of education in the homeland were generally lower than younger people. There is evidence that level of education and English language learning are positively correlated (cf. Caplan, Whitmore and Choy 1989:211; Green and Reder 1986:314). Hence older people are disadvantaged by their relatively lower educational levels. Furthermore, the camp education system discriminates against elderly refugees by excluding those over 55 from English classes on the grounds that they are not employable in the U. S. (Gozdziak 1988:19; Weinstein-Shr 1989:2-3).

Once in the United States, the elderly report difficulty in learning English for a number of reasons. Because of their lack of education in the homeland older refugees are unfamiliar with classrooms and the routines and discipline of formal language learning. Elderly Cambodian woman told Gozdziaak that they didn't want to upset the teacher by admitting they didn't understand what was taught (Gozdziaak 1988:20). Older refugees are embarrassed when they cannot do well in a class with younger people (Gozdziaak 1989: 5). They find it difficult to understand the cultural content of English classes. "Many say that they need 'experience to understand some of the things' and cannot understand by 'looking at strange pictures or reading a book.'" (ibid. p. 5).

Both student and teacher may share the belief that the elderly have unusual difficulty learning language, but as Grognet (1989:9) points out, this belief is not supported by research which controls for physical and mental health factors. Rynearson's ethnographic research indicates that there is a self-fulfilling prophecy that older people "can't remember" what they learn in English classes. The following statement by an elderly woman is very common. "My teacher is good teacher. She tell me, I understand. But I go home and its' gone, all gone. My head not good. Too old to learn."

The elderly have little chance to practice English because they have so little contact with English speakers (Tran 1988:756). The continuation of the traditional life cycle leaves the elderly withdrawn from contact with the outside world, remaining at home to take care of small children while younger household members go out to work. What English they know they learn passively from watching TV and listening to their school age children and grandchildren. Older refugees have little confidence in their ability to understand or be understood. Indeed, they have developed strategies for coping with linguistic barriers. Elderly Lao we interviewed said that when somebody came to the door they just didn't answer unless it was another Lao. They told us that when the phone rings and they are home alone, they just say "Nobody home" and hang up. Mail is passed along to their more literate children and grandchildren. Census takers are thus likely to encounter severe language barriers in dealing with the elderly, particularly with those few who live alone.

English training programs targeting the elderly have been characterized as "sparse" (Grognet 1989:11). But this is hardly the case for Southeast Asian refugee children. Money and effort is spent on educating the children on the premise that they can serve as interpreters because of their presumed greater language learning skills. Special programs for refugee children begin in the camps and continue in the United States. In 1989 alone the federal government allocated 15.2 million dollars for programs to help American school systems provide English language training for refugee children (ORR 1989:B-13).

This strategy seems to have paid off. Rumbaut (1989:169) found that Indochinese high school students in San Diego rank second only to Asian Americans in grade point average. Their outstanding performance has been amply highlighted by the popular press. But media attention to the Asian "Whiz Kids" masks diversity in performance and attitudes. For instance in San Diego, Rumbaut and Ima (1988:58) found that even though Indochinese youth were less likely than classmates to be suspended, they were disproportionately likely to be suspended for fights resulting in physical injury. Lao and

Amerasian high school students in St. Louis have been involved in numerous interethnic fights and subsequent suspensions.

There are continuing reports of gang formation and illegal activities among Southeast Asian youth (Peters 1988:88ff). William Cassidy, an expert on law enforcement has estimated that "4,000 young Vietnamese in the United States drift in and out of loosely organized gangs around the country, forming 'a subculture of young, mobile, violent criminals'" (Cassidy, cited in Gozdziaik 1988:33). In St. Louis hostilities between rival Lao gangs led to the murder of one young man in 1988. For low-achieving individuals the "desire for materialistic trappings of success" may lead into juvenile delinquency and crime (Baizerman and Hendricks 1988: 24). Our ethnographic research reveals that this situation is especially severe for Amerasians who are more likely than other youth to experience school problems and see attractive alternatives in gang activity. Some refugee youths may compensate for their marginal status by developing a "hip flashiness" which they associate with success and adjustment (Nidorf 1985:402). Lao teenagers in St. Louis often spend considerable amounts of money for "punk" fashions.

The situation is even more extreme for young Vietnamese and Amerasians grouped into households of single males and/or females. They find work in St. Louis "Chinese" restaurants where the hours are long, the work is hard, but payment is in cash. Others may meet their economic needs by "getting by" in the underground economy. The decision to leave home, to work in the informal economy and to live in marginal households precludes any sustained and meaningful contact with the larger American society and increases the probability of their being missed by the census. Perhaps even more importantly, Vietnamese and Amerasian young people choosing this lifestyle will also be marginal to the organized Vietnamese community and hence unlikely to be found by the census through community outreach.

Some studies also indicate variations in the levels of academic performance among the Indochinese ethnic groups. In San Diego Vietnamese youth scored highest on measures of

academic achievement with Khmer and Lao doing less well (Rumbaut and Ima 1988: 32). Within groups there are even greater differences. Parental socio-economic status and educational attainment in the homeland are strong predictors of levels of academic achievement (ibid., pp. 37-39). But Ima and Rumbaut find that age at arrival is most critical to becoming English proficient (ibid., pp. 71-72). Those children arriving before physical puberty do far better than those arriving afterwards. Unfortunately many parents, eager to get their children as much education as possible, reduce their children's ages during interviews (ibid., p. 72), so official biodata not necessarily accurate. This is a problem for children who are already post-pubescent but are placed in classes with much younger children (Nidorf 1985).

Nidorf, Rumbaut and Ima point to what they call the "1.5 Generation," those who arrive after puberty (Nidorf 1985; Rumbaut and Ima 1988; Ima and Rumbaut 1989). Born in the homeland and reaching adulthood in the camps and the US, they are caught between the old world and the new, between two generations, and between refugees and ethnics (Rumbaut and Ima 1988:1-2). Among the Lao in St. Louis, some students are academically outstanding, including a class valedictorian and scholarship winners. Many others, however, hang on until their age makes it possible for them to leave or be expelled. Such youths frequently complain that after five or six years in American high schools they never learned to read and write. Often they don't even try, convinced of their failure in advance.

Like most people, census takers may assume that young people in refugee households will be the best interpreters. This assumption may be correct in many cases, but not all. There is considerable variation in English language and literacy skills of refugee youth. In contrast most if not all of the elderly will be unable to answer questions or complete the census form without the assistance of an interpreter.

Gender

Gender also plays a role in communicative disconnections. A number of factors influence the relative effectiveness of men and women as channels to the larger society. Among them are communicative traits characteristic of traditional roles, differential levels of education in the homeland, English language training in the camps and in the United States, and amount and type of participation in the American society after arrival, especially employment outside the home.

As discussed in the section on cultural dissonance, traditional gender roles in Lao and other societies tend to place men in the forefront in affairs related to religion and politics (including such matters as the census). Males also tend to dominate channels of communication in these domains. In fact, it is difficult to evaluate Lao women's linguistic proficiency in situations where both men and women are present. In our interviews men dominated 90% of the interviews where both men and women were present. The remaining 10% of the cases were very marginal males with little status in the community. On the other hand, where only women are present, they may be able to communicate quite well, as is consistent with their traditional competence in handling economic affairs in their homeland (Rynearson 1985).

Many studies, including our own, have consistently found men reporting greater linguistic fluency than women (cf. Caplan Whitmore and Choy 1989:30-31). The most consistent predictor of English fluency is education in the homeland. In this regard also, men have an advantage over women. SEA educational systems, whether traditional Buddhist schools or French imports were oriented toward males. In San Diego Rumbaut (1989:144) found that the average levels of education for SEAR was 7.4 for men and 4.8 for women. In our sample men averaged 6.8 and women averaged 4.2 years of education. Once in the refugee camps, men were more likely to attend English language classes. In contrast with the bias against those over 55 (discussed above), the male-female differential was more a matter of opportunity than overt discrimination. Child care

responsibilities often prevented women from attending classes because day care was not provided. 81.8% of the men vs. 40% of the women we interviewed had studied English in the camps. Child care duties also affect women's attendance at ESL classes in the United States. However, almost everyone had studied English in St. Louis, but rarely for more than three months.

In our 1988 ethnographic evaluation of the Dress Rehearsal Census we found that inaccuracies and omissions arose primarily from interviews with homebound women. The most glaring example was the household of an elderly woman, a single head of household who cared for others' children while collecting AFDC benefits. Her household was completely omitted from the 1988 Census. She was well known to us, but by the time of our alternative enumeration she and her family had moved to California. Another striking case was a family consisting of a husband, wife and three children. An enumerator apparently visited during the day, when the unemployed wife was home with her infant son. The return for the household lists only the wife and son, and their names and biodata were badly scrambled.

Males and females also differ in their relations with the larger American society. Refugee men participate in the wage economy at a significantly higher rate than do women. This is especially the case in the early years after arrival, when nearly twice as many men as women are in the labor force. Eventually the gap between men and women narrows to approximately 15% greater participation by men (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986: 384). In the early 1980s almost all the St. Louis Lao, especially the women, stayed home, enrolling in English classes and becoming oriented to life in the city. Having arrived during the worst of the recession, the Lao found entrance to the job market rather difficult at first. Eventually, with help from the local refugee resettlement program, the men began to find work. At that point, it seemed "too hard" for most of the women to work, even "too hard" to enroll in English classes. Daunted by their lack of education (about 4 years in most cases), most women stayed home, caring for their children and maintaining

(insofar as possible) a traditional home.²² Moreover, many husbands said that they preferred for their wives to stay home, to cook and maintain a traditional household. Soon, however, this changed. Strict application of state laws resulted in cuts or sharp reductions in welfare and foodstamps to families with one working member. Other families passed the 18 month limit on Refugee Assistance and could no longer "eat welfare-foodstamps." Another important factor was increased competitive consumption within the community; more and more Lao families purchased cars, color TVs, and more recently VCRs.²³ Achieving and maintaining an acceptable standard of living required the wife as well as the husband to work. By early 1983, increasing numbers of Lao women in St. Louis were entering the job market (Rynearson and DeVoe 1984).

Labor force participation increases exposure to English used by coworkers and employers. Again, the management of domestic affairs, especially providing child care, delays entry of women into the labor force. Homebound women have less opportunity to increase their skills either at school or workplace. This, coupled with their lesser education in the homeland and refugee camps and with traditional patterns of male domination in relations with the outside world, explains why women are less likely to be able to serve as channels for communication between census workers and the refugee community.

Disconnection and the Census

All the dynamics described in this section (gender, age, etc.) come together with other cultural and linguistic patterns to impede the flow of information between refugees and the census at the three main stages, precensus media outreach, mail returns, and enumerator interviewing. We will now describe potential communication problems at each

²² This was the situation when DeVoe and Rynearson began research in mid-1982 (for a report on our findings, see DeVoe and Rynearson 1983 and Rynearson and DeVoe 1984).

²³ Recently one Lao woman complained to Rynearson about her neighbor, "Why does she have to come over here to make copies [of movies] all the time? Why can't she buy two VCRs like everyone else? "

stage that might lead to an undercount. This section is based almost entirely on our own research because there has been little published work on refugees and the media.

Precensus media outreach Print and electronic media were used for outreach before the Dress Rehearsal Census conducted in St. Louis in 1988. Our discussions with the Lao raised serious questions about the effectiveness of this approach for creating awareness among Southeast Asian refugees, while also suggesting alternative, more effective strategies. We found that the Lao only pay attention if they need specific information. Kim (1989:98) found that only 2.2% of the Lao he studied in Illinois actually read newspapers.²⁴ People we spoke to did not subscribe to magazines or newspapers. Some of the Lao do occasionally leaf through the neighborhood newspapers distributed free to all households in the area. They use them to look for jobs, housing and sometimes for sales on desired merchandise. In other words they only pay attention to newspaper ads if they need something specific; they do not browse the Sunday paper as some Americans might.

Electronic media are ubiquitous in Lao households. Even newcomers get TVs within a few months of arrival. 67% reported being interested in news on TV. Some respondents regularly watch "Wheel of Fortune" and at least one person was a fan of the Three Stooges. But like Americans, no one paid much attention to TV ads. Lao households and cars also have radios. Although the vast majority reported that they sometimes listened to the radio, most did not understand what was being said. They were primarily interested in music. Three quarters of the households we visited have VCRs and most of the time in front of the TV is spent watching rented movies from Thailand, China and India. Such movie videos are usually available at ethnic markets and are exchanged between households.

²⁴ Of the four groups in his study, the Lao were actually the highest in newspaper readership. He was, however, focusing on Lao who arrived before 1979, the better educated "first wave."

As part of the 1988 Dress Rehearsal Census in St. Louis there was an intensive "media blitz". A study conducted by the Gallup Organization found that 55% of the black and 67% of the general non-black population of the city was aware of the Test Census (DeLuca 1988). However, of all the Lao we spoke with, only two remembered anything about the media blitz, including the very large and obvious billboards. Even the Lao college students we interviewed were unaware of the campaign. Thus the usual outreach through print and electronic media seems to have had little impact on the Lao in St. Louis.

Mail Returns Several of our findings have implications for obtaining complete and accurate mail returns from Southeast Asian refugees. As noted above, the Lao population varied widely in literacy levels. All people reported difficulty understanding written English, although some experienced fewer problems than others. A few Lao said they would use a dictionary to figure out the meaning of mail they considered important, but most said that they would seek the help of persons with better English skills. In part this seems to be a culturally patterned reliance on patron-client ties. In part it is a learned response to possible pitfalls in dealing with mail in America.

Initially sorting the mail is a problem. Junk mail often looks like official government documents and vice versa. In the past, some Lao have made plans to use the "\$50,000 Grand Prize" money they believed they had received. Others discarded or set aside months of important messages from insurance companies, lending agencies and landlords. The Lao use a variety of strategies for sorting the mail. They look for familiar return addresses, such as banks and utilities. More importantly about a third of the informants reported that mail is initially divided into that addressed to named household members and that addressed to "Occupant" or "Resident." Mail not addressed to a household member is discarded without being opened.

Mail identified as important is handled in a variety of ways. In 60% of the households we visited, the husband deals with the mail, and in another 20% both husband

and wife share the responsibility. If they do not understand something, the more acculturated use dictionaries. The others look for help both inside and outside the household. Older children educated in American schools will often be the first to be asked to explain mail which is difficult to understand. Parents are not always satisfied with their children's explanations, however. Some informants reported that they often check the same materials with at least two different helpers. Often they seek aid from known and trusted culture brokers. Anthropologists use the term "culture brokers" to refer to those individuals who are able to bridge the gap between cultures. These may be either Lao who speak and write English well or Americans who are accustomed to dealing with refugees. Data from our 1988 study revealed that most people who needed assistance with mail returns sought help from a refugee mutual aid association, a local church or the International Institute. Census returns completed with this type of assistance were significantly more accurate.

Enumerator Interviewing Our research indicates that enumerators should expect difficulties first with gaining admittance to the home and then with communicating with Lao and other refugees. We have already discussed the problems associated with getting women and the elderly to open doors to strangers.

Almost every household seems to have regular channels to the outside. These individuals are members, either adults or children, with the best command of English. Anyone seeking to communicate with the household should plan contacts when this person is most likely to be home. In St. Louis, as we have seen, those Lao who remain at home during the day rather than go to work tend to have poor English skills and to be less acculturated. English-speaking adults and children are likely to be at work or school until late afternoon or early evening, the best time to visit and communicate with a Lao household. Informants report that daytime visitors sometimes leave a note asking the English speaking member of the household to call back in the evening. This seems to be

an acceptable way of making contact with the household member most likely to be able to handle an enumerator's questions.

Discord

While levels of encapsulation vary, refugees throughout the US have built cohesive communities within a relatively short time. Clear boundaries of language, culture and residence have contributed to growing awareness of community identity. Consequently, refugees interact with the outside world primarily as collectivities. In this section we deal with the structural interface between the refugee community and its surrounding socio-economic environment, particularly with those features likely to cause problems in obtaining an accurate census count. Our discussion is divided into three main sectors: residential, economic and socio-political. Issues of interest related to residence include settlement patterns, neighborhood relations (with Americans), and mobility within and between communities. Economic issues addressed are labor force participation and the informal economy. The discussion of socio-political factors begins with institutions external to the community itself (primarily social service, churches and mutual aid associations) and concludes with a discussion of internal community organization, contrasting the horizontal ties of neighbors, friends and kinsmen with the vertical ties of patron clients.

Residential factors

Settlement patterns Of primary interest to the census are settlement patterns-- i. e., who lives where. SEAR in the U.S. have lived in a number of different patterns each of which has different implications for the ease of contact with census and the nature of relations with the larger society.

From the earliest years of the program, official government policy has been to resettle refugees widely across the country to reduce adverse impacts associated with over-concentration (Mortland and Ledgerwood 1987; Tollefson 1989). The American melting pot ideology, regardless of whether it exists or not in reality, flies in the face of SEAR preference for living with their compatriots. Refugees across the US, drawn by emotional, social and economic supports, have tended to form tight knit communities of varying size and degrees of encapsulation. They range from an extreme of large mono-ethnic communities in the Central Valley of California (Schein 1987) to smaller communities of only a few families in rural New England (Hanks 1987). Although the cultural and linguistic differences described above exist everywhere, their impact is heightened where encapsulation is extreme and individuals live most of their lives in isolation from Americans.

While not a perfect match, the history of the Lao in St. Louis largely parallels development of refugee communities throughout the U. S. There have been three stages in the area-wide distribution of Lao, reflecting changing economic and social conditions. Initial policy had been to spread refugees throughout American communities. Each sponsor was responsible for finding suitable housing and paying the deposit and one month's rent out of the resettlement funds allocated for each refugee. Hence initial residence patterns of the Lao and other refugees reflect sponsors' decisions. According to one International Institute official, apartments are chosen according to "availability, price and proximity." Most Lao were resettled by agencies or churches in the city,²⁵ but about 15% were sponsored by suburban groups and hence were scattered outside the city. Housing policies of the sponsors thus resulted in a degree of residential concentration for all the refugee groups. In the case of the Lao particularly this pattern was intensified still

²⁵ Due to an historical oddity, the "city" of St. Louis is administratively separated from its surrounding areas which are also heavily populated. The current population of the city is less than 400,000, while the SMSA is almost 3 million. Thus, when people in St. Louis talk about moving out of the city, they usually are referring to the surrounding suburban parts of St. Louis County, not rural areas.

further by later moves, often within weeks or months of arrival as they moved toward particular buildings or blocks with a lot of co-ethnics.

By the second stage most of the outlying households had moved, either to join relatives in other states or to live closer to the larger Lao concentration in the city. This clustering is striking because of the high visibility of the Lao residents. In 1982, Rynearson and DeVoe studied a large apartment building containing Lao, Vietnamese, American blacks and American whites. At first glance, however, there seemed to be only Lao. Members of the other groups passed, almost invisibly, through the highly visible social life of the Lao, who had created the atmosphere of a small village. In 1982, about 30% of the Lao in St. Louis lived in that single complex (DeVoe and Rynearson 1983). This clustering pattern has been repeated at many other sites both then and in the succeeding years.

Really tight concentrations are less practical in the Southside neighborhood where most refugees now live. Nevertheless, Southside Lao tend to live in mini-clusters with the same general patterns. In most cases, all the units in a single large building or in several adjacent buildings are occupied by Lao. The mini-clusters are separated by no more than a block or two. In the summer of 1988, 46 % of the Lao households in St. Louis were located within a Southside area of less than one square mile. 14% were concentrated in Cluster Two near the International Institute and some 20 households were scattered across the suburban areas.²⁶ Our 1988 research project, "Asian Americans in a Mixed Neighborhood" surveyed two Southside blocks containing these mini-clusters of Lao. (Because of the way the census blocks were drawn we did not survey whole clusters, which included several more households across the street or on adjacent blocks.)

In the last three or four years, there has been a third stage, an increasing movement back into the suburbs, as families save enough money to buy homes. Most people still

²⁶ The remainder were located in different parts of the city and in far outlying areas.

live in miniclusters on the Southside, but with time, acculturation and economic prosperity, an increasing number of Lao in St. Louis are moving out of the clusters into improved housing in safer areas. For the most part these families have sufficient English and knowledge of American ways to respond to the census as their American neighbors do. However, they are still part of the social network of Lao in the city. They are still on the lists of the Lao Mutual Aid Association and are known by many of the leaders.

Similar processes of clustering followed by a geographical dispersion have been observed elsewhere. In Minneapolis, for example, Baizerman and Hendricks (1988:36) found refugees moving toward the suburbs, with Lao youth the most likely to report "moving to the suburbs" as one of their life's goals. Similarly, Tyler (1987) reports that Cambodians in Atlanta began in housing projects in the most dangerous parts of the city and have gradually spread outward into better housing. Hackett (1988) reports that in Washington, D. C., ethnic Chinese from Cambodia are buying houses in the suburbs, not remaining in traditional Chinatowns. Such dispersal is an emerging pattern rather than the usual situation for SEAR in the United States.

Outside the large encapsulated refugee communities of California and other high density states, most Lao and other SEAR still tend to live in clusters, or mini-communities. Census takers can expect to find several households in any area where they find one. This clustering is important because it increases the social distance from neighbors, while also creating a network of channels for communicating with the outside world.

Neighborhood relations Both participant observation and guided discussion with the Lao reveal that there is very little interaction with outsiders, i. e. non-Lao, in the neighborhood. Contacts are at most superficial and routine. At worst they are tense and even hostile, including threat of real physical danger. Of those we interviewed, even relatively fluent English speakers said that they do not, on the whole, advance

conversations with their neighbors beyond the level of "Hi." This is true regardless of the ethnic or racial identity of the neighbors. The refugees seem to lack confidence that they can understand and communicate with Americans. In a study of Lao living in Alabama and middle Tennessee, researchers found 80% of refugees experience stress through problems in understanding the behavior of Americans and 82% reported difficulties because Americans did not understand Lao cultural ways (Nicassio et al 1986:25). Among the Lao in St. Louis even the most acculturated spend their free time associating with other Lao.

Earlier studies (e. g., Starr and Roberts 1982) also found predominantly negative perceptions of SEAR by their American neighbors. Our participant observations among Americans in Cluster One, supposedly the "friendlier" area, revealed considerable hostility toward the refugees and other newcomers who were seen as threatening property values and neighborhood life style. White informants had a surprising set of stereotypes about the refugees, including the belief that the SEAR were able to buy expensive cars because the government gave them 1% loans.

Interaction with neighbors may be further inhibited by refugees' experiences in the areas in which they are first settled. Housing is cheap in these neighborhoods, but they also tend to have high rates of crime and racial tension. Lao in St. Louis have frequently been the targets of interethnic abuse and violence. In one case, they believed they were being attacked by a "mob" of armed blacks from their apartment complex. In another, a white bicycle gang sought to terrorize them. Experiences in such neighborhoods have produced an aversion to strangers, especially low income black Americans. As one informant succinctly put it, "They shoot my window, they shit my house." ²⁷

Most refugees we spoke with reported that they would not readily answer a knock on the door unless they knew the person. In Cluster Two, particularly, gangs of local

²⁷ Referring to both vandalism and local youths' habit of using the entry halls of Lao buildings for sleeping and toilet purposes.

teenagers go from apartment to apartment knocking on the doors at all hours of the day and night. The Lao suspect that this is a prelude to burglarizing a home where there is no response to the knock. Virtually every discussion sooner or later comes around to tales of vandalism, burglary, mugging or arson experienced in such neighborhoods, especially in Cluster Two. Thus, reality-based fear adds to refugees' feelings of social distance towards outsiders.

Mobility within and between communities In its longitudinal studies of SEAR households, the Office of Refugee Resettlement has regularly found that one third of the individuals covered are not in the same household one year later (cf. ORR 1989: 146; ORR 1987:119). A high level of mobility takes place between households, clusters and communities. Being less closely attached to the household and hence community, young singles have the highest mobility, as do newcomers just working out their social and economic position (Mortland and Ledgerwood 1987).

Movements of individuals and households among the Lao within the St. Louis community take place for a number of reasons. The motivation may come from changing political allegiance to cluster leaders or to people who are seen to be good sources of jobs. As has been noted for Lao in other parts of the country, political alliances are very fragile and subject to dramatic shifts according to which leader is seen as providing the most services (Van Esterik 1985; Bliatout 1985).²⁸ Other reasons for moving arise from quarrels and other strains of living in close proximity. The Lao are essentially non-confrontational (Epstein 1985), so the usual solution to conflict is to move to another cluster or even another city. The specific make-up of any particular cluster can change monthly, even weekly, as families and individuals redistribute themselves around the city.

²⁸ Socio-political factors are discussed below under "Discord."

But central apartments never stay empty long; as soon as one family moves out, another moves in. Hence although their specific makeup is fluid, clusters and miniclusters tend to be surprisingly stable, even given occasional dissolutions.

Although the residence pattern of the Lao in St. Louis has always been characterized by clustering, the clusters themselves have shifted over time. First of all, most people live in a cluster, but membership/residence of each cluster is quite fluid. Households frequently move between clusters, and household membership of single males and multi-family households form and reform almost constantly. We will discuss households' moves between clusters below.

More dramatic are the sudden disbandings of clusters. Clusters tend to expand and contract for various reasons, but there have been at least four major break-ups in the short history of the Lao in St. Louis. Although there has frequently been severe tension between the Lao and their neighbors, this has seldom led to the final break-down of a cluster. Instead, various landlords have decided to close buildings for renovation due to the severe deterioration of the housing stock, due to its age not abuse by the Lao.²⁹ The announcement of such closings has understandably been very traumatic. When the large building Rynearson and DeVoe had studied was closed down in 1983, for example, people were very upset. "Refugees again!" people said. "I thought this would never happen to me again," one woman told us. Even though there was a one-month warning, people tended to panic and try to move quickly, anywhere they could. Large items were abandoned, and mattresses and bags of clothes thrown out of windows. With rare exceptions, dislocated refugees moved into new or existing clusters of Lao.

Individuals, households and, less frequently, entire populations also move around the country from one refugee community to another. A nationwide network of information, maintained via the telephone, makes everyone aware of conditions in

²⁹Most recently, in March 1990 three Lao families came home from work to find their building plastered with signs reading "WARNING! Do Not Enter!" and "Unfit for Human Habitation."

different sites, e. g., availability and compensation levels for public assistance, types and wages for jobs, availability of housing, etc. In fact Finnan (1981:293) conceives of the Vietnamese refugee community as "an informal communication network binding together Vietnamese friends and relatives across the country and abroad." For example, it is widely known that meat packing industries in such places as Garden City, Kansas actively recruit refugees for the dangerous and rigorous work in their plants (Benson 1988). Refugees are attracted to such places by relatively good salaries, but only expect to stay there for a few years, as living conditions are known to be unpleasant (ibid.).

While pull factors may be a partial explanation for some of the inter-regional mobility of refugees, push factors are also frequently at work. For example, a worksite dispute between two Lao recently resulted in one of the parties packing up his family and precipitously moving to another state. Factional conflicts sometimes lead several families to depart together. Marital dissolution is usually marked by one spouse moving suddenly and secretly to another state, with or without children. Other interpersonal conflicts may also result in departure. Some cases are almost humorous. One man was tired of living "under the wing" of his wife's family, particularly his mother-in-law. He decided to take his family and move to California to go to school. On the night before he left friends threw a farewell party. His mother-in-law was so moved by sad songs of leave-taking that she decided to accompany them to California! She later returned to St. Louis, collected the rest of the family, and returned to her son-in-law in California

For the Census Bureau, the chief implication of SEARs' high rate of mobility between households, clusters and communities lies in the ensuing difficulty in planning appropriate strategies for addressing such a mobile population. At the time of the 1988 Dress Rehearsal Census in St. Louis, for example, about 14% of the Lao households lived near the Institute. The entire cluster disbanded suddenly in December of that year, with 13 families moving in one weekend alone (Little 8/6/89:1A). Plans based on previous

observations of their presence in that neighborhood would obviously be ineffective for the 1990 Census.

Economic Factors

Labor force participation A major domain for interaction or discord between refugees and American societies lies in the economic sector. Two general observations have been made in the literature. First, although refugees begin with a high level of dependence on public assistance, by the third year after arrival labor force participation rates have generally risen to around 40% (ORR 1989:146). Of those actively seeking work, 92% are employed (ibid., p. 130). By the early 1980s, 1975 arrivals were participating at a rate equal to the general American population (Haines 1986:27). Secondly, there has been a general trend toward downward mobility in occupation after arrival in the U. S. The proportion of the SEAR population in blue collar jobs went from 20.5% before migration to 61.3% in the U. S. (Gordon 1989:32). This has led to a flattening of socioeconomic levels within the community. Assuming that blue collar jobs require less direct social interaction, this means that more refugees are isolated from direct contact with Americans at their worksites.

There would seem to be three general types of roles that SEAR can play as workers in the larger economy. The first can be classified as non-participant. In the second situation, refugees work at jobs in the wage economy but primarily in the company of compatriots. In the third situation, the refugee works without the support of his or her countrymen in a job found independently of the cooperative community network. At the two extremes stand those who are largely isolated from Americans due to nonparticipation in the wage economy and those who have extensive, daily contact with Americans in the work place.

Schein (1987) and Habarad (1987) have described communities with a very high rate of public assistance and low levels of participation in the wage economy. They found

considerable "cultural involution" (Habarad 1987:74) arising from the isolation of community members from the larger society. This encapsulation makes individuals less accustomed to dealing with such outsiders as census workers. Many of the same mechanisms operating in other populations dependent on public assistance will also affect such refugee communities, in particular the tendency to conceal the presence of working men, such as young single males. As noted above, very few Lao in St. Louis are currently dependent on public assistance. Those who are, chiefly single mothers and newcomers, tend also to be the most unacculturated and isolated from affairs in general American society.

At the other extreme stand those who only work with Americans. Little research has been conducted with this largely acculturated segment. In St. Louis, a growing number of young singles, both male and female, are moving in this direction, aided by their greater linguistic and cultural familiarity with American life. They should represent little problem for censusing.

In the middle stand the vast majority of Lao in St. Louis. Most work in companies with three or more other Lao. On the one hand, such workers are more capable of dealing with American institutions than their more isolated, less acculturated brethren in other states. On the other hand, their participation in the work force does not necessarily mean full integration into the larger society. Typically they are employed in companies which are highly paternalistic, a management style consistent with cultural expectations in their homeland (Rynearson 1989; Bailey 1987). Employers report using a few refugee workers as intermediaries to transmit orders and other messages back and forth with the workers (Rynearson 1989). Hence most employed Lao do not have to interact directly with the Americans at the worksite on a continuing basis. Nor as we learned during our interviews do they socialize with Americans. Employers often complain that their SEAR workers isolate themselves at lunch and break time and are seen by others as unfriendly. Hence employment and length of time in the U. S. are not necessarily strong predictors of

English language skills or of integration into American society. Still, workers have to interact more than non-workers and acquire at least a superficial familiarity with Americans. Although they may need helpers to do so, they have filled out forms, punched time clocks and rubbed shoulders with their American coworkers.

Informal sector participation Despite their high level of involvement in the wage labor sector, many Lao in St. Louis also maintain an active role in the informal sector, outside the realm of paychecks and taxes. In other areas of the U. S., SEAR participation in the non-wage economy is reportedly even higher. For example, St. Louis informants say that in some places³⁰ refugees get considerable cash income from "picking"³¹ earthworms for sale to national wholesalers for eventual sale in bait shops. While this is not an option in St. Louis, many individuals, especially teenagers and old men, raise money by "picking" or collecting discarded cans for resale.³² Some women, especially those not working full time, make and sell Lao food specialties, going from door-to-door in the Lao community. Perhaps the most important activity in this sector is child care. Older women frequently care for as many as four preschoolers in their homes. This service makes possible the high labor force participation rate among younger adults and redistributes money within the community. As noted above, this is a continuation of traditional roles.

Disarticulation is even greater in the realm of truly marginal economic activity such as gambling and drug and alcohol abuse. Such behaviors provide pressing reasons for refugees to avoid contact with census takers. In homes where card games are in progress, the door is not opened or is firmly shut in the face of outsiders. Since marathon card

³⁰ Which shall remain nameless.

³¹ The Lao use this work as a translation of a Lao word for gathering fruit, fish, and other edibles.

³² Such transactions may or may not be officially recorded and hence part of the regular economy, but in any event they do not involve wage labor.

games may occupy a whole weekend, enumerators may be unable to gain access during this seemingly promising time for a visit.

While other American communities may engage in similar activities in the informal sector, the important point in terms of discord between the Lao and American census society is that informal economic behaviors may reinforce the integrity of the community and insulates it from the larger society.

Socio-political factors

External institutions Another element affecting structural ties between the refugee community and the larger society is the kind and number of institutions or agencies actively working with the refugees. These include government agencies at all levels (e. g., INS, State Public Assistance or Job Service and local police); sponsors and other service providers; churches; and refugee mutual aid associations (MAAs). In states with high concentrations of refugees, government agencies often have specialized offices to deal exclusively with them. Once selected to come to the U. S., refugees acquire a special legal status which entitles them to a range of benefits and services. Hence it is to their material benefit to be identified as such. This is a dramatic contrast to other kinds of immigrants, especially illegal ones.

An elaborate network of social service institutions has been created to handle the resettlement process. Among other programs, the U. S. government has promoted the formation of mutual aid associations as one form of assistance (Mortland 1988; Van Arsdale 1989; Bliatout 1985). Both MAAs and mainstream social service institutions have well-established channels for working with local refugee populations and so can be a source for identifying community members for census outreach. However, their current lists are seldom adequate measures of true community size. Clearly it is in the interest of both types of agencies to document the size of refugee populations in their local areas.

The institutional melange confronting refugees is not homogeneous. Temporal attention can range from a legal limit of a few months of public assistance, to a few years of language training, to lifetime religious conversion. Institutional resources will vary from the provision of specific goods and services to the delivery of apparent largesse. In dealing with various kinds of Americans, refugees face attitudes from the bureaucratically correct to the highly affective. For example, Gold (1987) discusses the experiences of workers in social service agencies devoted to the impersonal provision of service to refugees, while Schein (1987), among others, points to the tendency of middle class women to get involved in a long-term caregiving role. Learning appropriate behaviors and attitudes for dealing with this institutional diversity at best generates uncertainty and at worst fear and avoidance.

On the other hand, in the process of being resettled in the U. S., refugees have become quite accustomed to producing official "papers" containing basic information about their identity. The head of household and/or his wife (more often the wife) must frequently gather all their documents to obtain social services--welfare, food stamps, energy assistance, school, etc. These documents include I-94s during the first year after arrival and "green cards" after that. Although enumerators cannot ask to see documents, the refugees' habit of producing such papers in dealing with Americans may well assist the census taking process.

In our interviews, Lao were asked about their experiences in dealing with institutional service providers, including government agencies, sponsors and the police. Although in general they denied having had any problems, detailed questions and participant observation revealed complex strategies for achieving goals by manipulating institutional gatekeepers. A case from Rynearson's 1987 fieldnotes illustrates some of the strategies and problems Lowland Lao have in gaining access to an institution. It also summarizes some of the features of each kind of caregiver. A widowed mother of three was cut off from all refugee benefits because she had been in the U. S. over three years. Under

Missouri law, she was eligible for Aid to Dependent Children (and food stamps and Medicaid) but it was necessary for her to re-apply, a process which usually takes 8 hours. She enlisted the aid of a friend who, she thought, spoke enough English because "he had been to college." (In fact, he had flunked out of remedial courses at the local junior college.) At the Family Service office they waited for several hours, only to be told that "no caseworker could see them without an interpreter" (presumably from the Institute). She then went to the Institute to ask the Lao caseworker to accompany her, but he was not allowed to go because "she had been here over three years." Arrangements were being made to send her back to Family Service with a letter saying the International Institute could not provide an interpreter, when she went to the *nyay: poh* (Lao traditional lord or patron) to beg for his help. He took her the next day and she successfully applied for and received benefits. In return she was expected to shop at his store, which was considerably more expensive than the nearby Asian ethnic "super store."

Internal community organization Kuo and Tsai (1986:134) have noted that immigrants "work actively to reroot their social networks in the new society and thereby experience success in transplanting their lives from their homelands to the United States." Similarly, Tran (1987: 841) found that refugees with the highest sense of well being were members of ethnic social organizations and had ethnic confidants. Like other arrivals, Lao refugees in St. Louis have developed a tightly knit community with well defined social processes. Perhaps the two most important principles for understanding internal social processes are horizontal and vertical linkages. The literature on Laos and Thailand contains two sharply contrasting views of village level culture. On the one hand some analysts view the village as a basically egalitarian social unit in which the majority of social actions are undertaken through the network of kin, neighbors, and other relative status

equals.³³ On the other hand are the scholars who perceive villagers as belonging to a "dependency culture" in which most social problems and processes are carried out through superior-inferior relations.³⁴ These two interpretations correspond to what we have referred to as the horizontal and vertical axes of life in St. Louis, and both are partially correct.

Over the years Lowland Lao in St. Louis have developed an intra-ethnic' social organization reconstructing important parts of life in their homeland. Within the constraints imposed by the new environment, the organization of the Lao community in St. Louis largely parallels the "nonparticipatory democracy" which Young and others have described for this ethnic group in Laos and Thailand (cf. Young 1968; Mizuno 1976; Keyes 1975). Both verbal statements and observed behavior reveal a strong preference for egalitarian relations among Lao refugees here. Minor status differences are signaled through kinship terms recognizing seniority or through polite forms of behavior,³⁵ but norms of courtesy and polite disinvolvement in directly criticizing or embarrassing others are carefully observed by most people.³⁶ Dislike or disagreement is usually expressed through avoidance rather than through open expressions of hostility or contempt (Phillips 1965; Mizuno 1976). Every effort is made to minimize differences in prestige, wealth or other forms of status. A number of leveling mechanisms operate constantly.

Horizontal relations are expressed through the ongoing give and take of tangible and intangible commodities. In 1982 Rynearson and DeVoe found that the Lao in St. Louis were already involved in an intricate exchange of food, money, services, jobs,

³³ cf. Young (1968); Halpern (1964); Potter (1977); Stanton (1968); Ingersoll (1975); Keyes (1975). Piker (1975:307) argues very convincingly that villagers prefer to rely on kin groups for help. If that is not possible, they turn to patron-client ties or move to unoccupied land. Halpern (1964), among others, has noted that there is plenty of land in Laos. There would thus appear to be fewer pressures toward patron-client relations there than in Thailand.

³⁴ cf. Jacobs 1971; Rubin 1973; Kirsch 1975; Hanks 1975.

³⁵ For example, an honored guest is seated and given a glass of water before anything is discussed.

³⁶ There is, of course, a lively gossip network, and there are many critical comments and even expressions of open hostility toward those who are not present. A constantly shifting set of friendship groups and political coalitions may cause today's "bad" person to be tomorrow's hero or friend. This flexibility is made possible by the avoidance of direct expression of ill feelings.

often turn to powerful patrons, Lao culture brokers. Theoretically, culture brokers may be representatives of either the Lao or the American system.³⁷ For the present discussion we are looking only at those Lao who gain political, social, sometimes even financial advantage from their ability to translate between the two linguistic and cultural domains.

Underlying the apparently convivial relations between near equals are these constant though largely invisible struggles between political patrons. As noted above, some observers of Lao and Thai community structure have characterized it as based largely on a shifting, fragile coalition of patrons and clients. Patrons are involved in an ongoing competition for clients, leading to occasional dramatic confrontations and even fights. But behind the scenes, leaders maneuver constantly for advantage, building coalitions and undermining the efforts of their opponents. Many of the adult men are actively involved in this "game" which gives meaning and interest to their lives. Others have only the most tenuous ties to particular patrons, going to them only in an emergency. Ideally, players maintain two or three ties, at a background level, any of which may be activated to suit a particular occasion or to respond to changing political ascendancy.

It has often been noted that in Thailand, patron-client relations tend to be quite tenuous and fragile.³⁸ The same is true in for Lao refugees in St. Louis. The continuation of the patron-client tie is very much a matter of "what have you done for me lately?" This seems to be due less to a lack of gratitude on the part of Lao clients toward their patron so much as their perception of the costs involved in the client role. Patron-client ties can be expensive in several ways. For example, in the past one patron urged his supporters to buy food from his store. Others expect "Christmas presents." In addition, clients are expected to follow a patron's recommendations on such matters as whether and where to buy insurance.

³⁷ Rynearson is a culture broker from the American side.

³⁸ cf. Piker (1969); Hanks (1975) *inter alia*. For the U.S., see VanEsterik (1985).

**Barriers to Censusing
Southeast Asian Refugees:
Dissonance, Disconnections AND Discord**

Conclusion

A Tale of Two Clusters

This section recapitulates our discussion of barriers to censusing, showing how they relate to the difference in census behavior in two clusters which differ in factors associated with dissonance, disconnections and discord. Next we suggest a series of potentially productive strategies that the Bureau might use to reduce future undercounts of SEARs. We then turn to a "laundry list" of promising topics for future research on factors affecting barriers to accurate censusing. Finally we appeal for a more productive approach to understanding and working with refugee communities especially as regards the census.

Taken together the various elements subsumed in the concepts of dissonance, disconnections and discord combine to help us understand the differences in census counts of SEAR in two areas. Our 1988 study focused on Cluster One (with its 11% omission rate), which is in a relatively safe neighborhood composed predominantly of whites, with growing numbers of blacks, Hispanics and other new immigrants. In the two blocks we enumerated, the Lao had all been in the United States for at least five years. All of the men and all but three of the women were working, as were the adult children of several families. A neighborhood church which sponsored Laotian refugees had become a social center and informally a service provider for local Lao. A Lao-owned store was also a center for community interaction. Residents of the area had access to several powerful patrons who lived nearby. Many of the Lao in this neighborhood remembered having gotten the 1988 census and responding to it, either by themselves or with the help of the church or a Lao culture broker.

Although official figures are not yet available, we predict a much higher rate of omissions and distortions in a second neighborhood then occupied by the Lao, an area which contrasts with the Southside neighborhood in many of the elements of dissonance,

disconnection and discord outlined in this report.⁴¹ The second cluster was in an extremely dangerous high-crime area. All its residents, but especially SEAR, were subjected to continual harassment which included random poundings on the door as well as frequent burglaries, vandalism, arson and crimes against persons. Not surprisingly, the Lao there were very reluctant to open the door to anyone. Friendly interactions with neighbors were extremely rare.⁴² The population of this area was overwhelmingly black, with Vietnamese and Cambodian households around the edges of the highly visible and clearly defined Lao cluster. Lao living there at the time of the Dress Rehearsal Census were almost all members of the latest wave to arrive in St. Louis (1986-87), and the remainder were among the least acculturated of the preceding wave. All the men and many of the women were employed but only at all-Lao worksites. Only a few women remained at home during the day, chiefly older women babysitting or young women with several small children of their own. Only one woman was regularly attending (beginning level) English classes, with the rest staying home to take care of their own and others' children. Although located close to the International Institute, refugees in this neighborhood had little ongoing contact with the agency because of their work and childcare responsibilities. Perhaps most importantly, the Lao cluster leader/patron had recently moved out of the immediate area, leaving only relatively unacculturated and linguistically limited individuals behind. During the present research we interviewed and talked to many individuals who had been living in during the Dress Rehearsal Census. None remembered anything about the Census.

Residents of the two areas were, then, sharply differentiated by gender, age, time of arrival, mode of economic participation, relations with external institutions and

⁴¹ In December 1988 the level of violence and fear in Tract Two escalated beyond bearable limits, and the cluster disbanded. Within two or three weeks, more than 80 Lao moved out of the area, setting up new miniclusters or moving into existing miniclusters on the Southside (Post Dispatch 8/6/89: 1A)

⁴² Although one Lao man told us that he got along fine with his neighbors by repairing their cars for them. Nevertheless, someone shot into his apartment while he was out of town, terrifying his wife and children, so he joined the general exodus.

neighborhood relations and internal socio-political factors. In combination, these factors allow us to predict a much higher undercount in Cluster Two than in Cluster One. Where similar patterns exist elsewhere a similarly high undercount may be expected, perhaps even more severe than in Cluster Two.

Suggestions for improving censusing⁴³

During the precensus stage, the census can increase refugee awareness by:

1) **Printing fliers in native languages.** These can be distributed with imported rental movies or included with other purchases from ethnic markets. To reach homebound mothers they might be distributed through the WIC program.

2) **Inserting "trailers" about the census at the beginning or end of rental movies.**

3) **Providing census information and graphics to ethnic associations, so that they can be included in "ethnic" newsletters or mailings such as those done by mutual aid associations.**

4) **Using ethnic associations and other trusted support organizations and institutions for direct outreach. See below under "Mail Returns."**

⁴³ These recommendations are drawn from our Preliminary Report (May 1989) and follow the three basic censusing stages of precensus outreach, mail returns and enumerator interviewing.

2. **Making appointments.** This can be done through the centers where possible. In some cases the center might introduce enumerators to informal cluster leaders and thus gain access to most households in a cluster.

3. **Hiring an enumerator from among the refugee community or taking a member of the ethnic group as interpreter and bridge.**

4. **Scheduling at least two contacts per household, first to introduce oneself and the next to interview a fluent English speaker or other household representative.** The first contact might be making a phone call or simply leaving a note for an English speaker to call.

5. **Visiting in late afternoons, early evenings or weekends in order to encounter most fluent English speakers**

Census enumerators can also speed the process and improve the accuracy of the results by:

1. **Asking to see the I-94s or green cards for all household residents.** This might require two trips or arrangements through a third party such as a neighbor.

2. **Familiarizing themselves with naming conventions for the various Southeast Asian groups.** The Bureau should produce and distribute these materials as part of the training for enumerators.

The census will obtain a more accurate count of household members outside the nuclear family⁴⁴ by:

1. **Targeting these issues in precensus awareness materials.** Besides general census familiarity, the materials should also address the need to count household members outside the nuclear family. Giving examples might make it more understandable.

2. **Enlisting the cooperation of the SEAR cluster leader or other patrons** As noted above, such informal headmen are used to acting as the interface with the larger society. They are usually good at English and sophisticated enough to understand the importance and privacy of census data. The leader could probably give general information on which households the young single men are living in. In most cases they can help arrange to have the men present or at least to leave their I-94s for the enumerator's visit to each household.

Recommendations for future research

Having completed this project, we remain more than ever aware of the lacunae in the general picture of the interaction within and between refugee communities and the larger society. All too often researchers have focused on refugees as passive participants of the process of intercultural interaction, passengers on a train leading to ultimate assimilation. Implicit and explicit models of adjustment and adaptation underlie almost all studies of refugees in the U. S. We hope that this report has begun the process of looking at refugee communities and their members in terms of their own internal dynamics. Refugees as

⁴⁴ I.e., invisible nephews and additional families.

individuals, as households and most importantly as communities act to sort, develop and use culturally coherent strategies which attain specific and long range objectives.

Our research has suggested a number of topics for further investigation. Among them are:

1. **Mobility.** What determines which people move where?
2. **Communication between refugee communities.** What is the scope of the nationwide network of information sharing and what are its effects?
3. **Contacts with Americans.** How do refugees learn to maneuver within the institutional structure of American society?
4. **Channels between individuals and the larger society.** What is the role of mini-brokers and other horizontal links as opposed to the more visible and better known patron/culture brokers?

Epilogue

Southeast Asian refugees are actively sustaining and enriching their cultures and communities in a sometimes troubling new environment. Some of their behaviors create barriers to obtaining a complete and accurate census count. The barriers and SEAR reality can be ignored, resulting in continuing undercounts. Alternatively, these people can be accepted in the ways they define themselves. The Census Bureau can work through the communities, their leaders, and established channels of communication to achieve a full and accurate census count.

References

- Adams, N. S., & McCoy, A. W. (1970). LAOS: War and Revolution. New York: Harper and Rowe.
- Bach, R. L., & Carroll-Seguín, R. (1986). Labor Force Participation, Household Composition and Sponsorship among Southeast Asian Refugee. International Migration Review, 20(2), 381-404.
- Bailey, T. R. (1987). Immigrant and Native Workers: Contrasts and Competition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Baizerman, M., & Hendricks, G. (1988). A Study of Southeast Asian Refugee Youth in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul., Minnesota. Washington, D. C.: Office of Refugee Resettlement.
- Benson, J. E. (1988). Refugees, Employment, and Upward Mobility. Paper presented at the 87th Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Phoenix, AR.
- Bliatout, B. T. (1985). Mental Health and Prevention Activities Targeted to Southeast Asian Refugees. In T. C. Owan (Ed.), Southeast Asian Mental Health: Treatment, Prevention, Services, Training and Research (pp. 183-207). Washington, D.C.:
- Bouvier, L. F., & Agresta, A. J. (1987). The Future Asian Population of the United States. In J. T. Fawcett, & B. Carino (Ed.), Pacific Bridges: The New Immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands (pp. 285-301). Staten Island, NY: The Center for Migration Studies.
- Caplan, N., Whitmore, J. K., & Choy, M. H. (1989). The Boat People and Achievement in America: A Study of Family Life, Hard Work, and Cultural Values. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Capps, L. L. (1988). Hmong Refugee Adolescents' Perception of Gender Roles and Marriage. Paper presented at the 87th Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Phoenix, AR,
- Cerquone, J. (1986). Refugees from Laos: In Harm's Way. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Committee for Refugees Issue Paper.
- DeLuca, D. (1988). Preliminary Executive Summary: Census of St. Louis City. Advertising Council, Washington, D.C.
- DeVoe, P. A. (1988). Employers of Southeast Asian Refugees: Motivations and Perceptions. Paper presented at the 87th Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Phoenix, AR.
- DeVoe, P. A., & Rynearson, A. M. (1983). Social Relations in a Refugee Neighborhood: Indochinese in St. Louis, Missouri. Washington, D.C.: Office of Refugee Resettlement.

- Dommen, A. J. (1985). Laos: Keystone of Indochina. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Dunning, B. B. (1989). Vietnamese in America: The Adaptation of the 1975-1979 Arrivals. In D. W. Haines (Ed.), Refugees As Immigrants: Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese in America (pp. 55-85). New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Epstein, S. (1985). "Leave the Lotus Unbruised; Leave the Water Unmuddied:" Conflict Avoidance in Traditional Lao Society. Passage, a Journal of Refugee Education, 1(2), 63-64.
- Finnan, C. R. (1981). Occupational Assimilation of Refugees. International Migration Review, Vol. 15 No. 1, 292-309.
- Gedney, W. G. (1979). Linguistic Diversity in Indochina. In J. K. Whitmore (Ed.), An Introduction to Indochinese History, Culture, Language and Life (pp. 37-46). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies.
- Gimbert, C. (1987). Afghan Refugees in America: Age as a Factor in Economic and Social Adjustment. Paper presented at the 86th Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Gold, S. J. (1987). Dealing with Frustration: A Study of Interactions Between Resettlement Staff and Refugees. In S. M. Morgan, & E. Colson (Ed.), People in Upheaval (pp. 108-128). New York: Center for Migration Studies.
- Goldstein, B. L. (1988). In Search of Survival: The Education and Integration of Hmong Refugee Girls. The Journal of Ethnic Studies, 16:2, 1-28.
- Gordon, L. W. (1987). Southeast Asian Refugee Migration to the United States. In J. T. Fawcett, & B. V. Carino (Ed.), Pacific Bridges: The New Immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands (pp. 153-173). Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies.
- Gordon, L. W. (1989). National Surveys of Southeast Asian Refugees: Methods, Findings, Issues. In D. W. Haines (Ed.), Refugees As Immigrants: Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese in America (pp. 24-39). New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Gordon, L. W. (1989). Personal communication, Oct. 25, 1989.
- Gozdziak, E. (1988). Older Refugees in the United States: From Dignity to Despair. Washington, D. C.: Refugee Policy Group.
- Gozdziak, E. (1989). New Branches...Distant Roots: Older Refugees in the United States. Aging, 359, 2-7.
- Green, K. R., & Reder, S. (1986). Factors in Individual Acquisition of English: A Longitudinal Study of Hmong Adults. In G. L. Hendricks, B. T. Downing, & A. S. Deinard (Ed.), The Hmong in Transition (pp. 299-329). Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies and the Southeast Asian Refugee Studies Project of the University of Minnesota.
- Grognet, A. G. (1989). Elderly Refugees and Language Learning. Aging, 359(8-11),

- Habarad, J. (1987). Refugees and the Structure of Opportunity: Transitional Adjustments to Aid among U. S. Resettled Lao Iu Mien, 1980-1985. In S. M. Morgan, & E. Colson (Ed.), People in Upheaval (pp. 66-87). Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies.
- Hackett, B. N. (1988). Relative and Relational Power for Ethnic Chinese Cambodian Refugees: Economics With a Twist. Paper presented at the 87th Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Phoenix, AR.
- Haines, D. W. (1985). Context and Overview. In D. W. Haines (Ed.), Refugees in the United States: A Reference Handbook (pp. 3-55). Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Halpern, J. M. (1964). Capital, Saving and Credit among Lao Peasants. In R. Firth, & B. S. Yamey (Ed.), Capital, Saving and Credit in Peasant Societies London: Allen and Unwin Press.
- Hanks, J. R. (1987). Laotians in a Vermont Town. Paper presented at the 86th Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Hanks, L. M. (1975). The Thai Social Order as Entourage and Circle. In G. W. Skinner, & T. A. Kirsch (Ed.), Change and Persistence in Thai Society (pp. 197-218). Ithaca: Cornell University.
- Ima, K., & Rumbaut, R. (1989). Southeast Asian Refugees in American Schools: A Comparison of Fluent-English-Proficient and Limited-English-Proficient Students. Topics in Language Disorders, June, 1989, 54-75.
- Ingersoll, J. (1975). Merit and Identity in Village Thailand. In G. W. Skinner, & A. T. Kirsch (Ed.), Change and Persistence in Thai Society (pp. 219-251). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jacobs, N. (1971). Modernization without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study. New York: Praeger.
- Keyes, C. F. (1975). Kin Groups in a Thai-Lao Community. In G. W. Skinner, & A. T. Kirsch (Ed.), Change and Persistence in Thai Society Essays in Honor of Lauriston Sharp (pp. 278-297). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Keyes, C. F. (1984). Mother or Mistress But Never a Monk: Buddhist Notions of Female Gender in Rural Thailand. American Ethnologist, 11(2), 223-241.
- Kim, Y. Y. (1989). Personal, Social and Economic Adaptation: 1975-1979 Arrivals in Illinois. In D. W. Haines (Ed.), Refugees As Immigrants Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese in America (pp. 86-104). New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Kirsch, T. A. (1975). Economy, Polity, and Religion in Thailand. In G. W. Skinner, & A. T. Kirsch (Ed.), Change and Persistence in Thai Society Essay in Honor of Lauriston Sharp (pp. 278-297). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kirsch, T. A. (1985). Text and Context: Buddhist Sex Roles/Culture of Gender Revisited. American Ethnologist, 12(2), 302-320.

- Schein, L. (1987). Control of Contrast: Lao-Hmong Refugees. In S. M. Morgan, & E. Colson (Ed.), People in Upheaval (pp. 88-107). Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies.
- Stanton, T. (1968). The Village Point of View. Asian Survey, 8(11), 887-900.
- Starr, P. D., & Roberts, A. E. (1982). Attitudes Toward New Americans: Perceptions of Indo-Chinese in Nine Cities. Research in Race and Ethnic Relations, Vol. 3, 165-186.
- Strand, P. J. (1989). The Indochinese Refugee Experience: The Case of San Diego. In D. W. Haines (Ed.), Refugees As Immigrants: Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese in America (pp. 105-120). New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Stuart-Fox, M. (1982). Contemporary Laos: Studies in the Politics and Society of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. New York: St. Martin's Press,
- Tollefson, J. W. (1989). Alien Winds: The Reeducation of America's Indochinese Refugees. New York: Praeger.
- Tran, T. V. (1987). Ethnic Community Supports and Psychological Well-Being of Vietnamese Refugees. International Migration Review, Vol. xxi, No. 3, 833-844.
- Tran, T. V. (1988). Sex Differences in English Language Acculturation and Learning Strategies Among Vietnamese Adults Aged 40 and Over in the United States. Sex Roles, V19(11/12), 747-758.
- Tyler, J. E. (1987). The Khmer of Atlanta: A Community in Formation. M.A., Georgia State University,
- Valentine, C. A., & Valentine, B. L. (1971). Missing Men: A Comparative Methodological Study of Underenumeration and Related Problems. U.S. Bureau of the Census, unpublished manuscript.
- Van Arsdale, P. W. (1989). Mutual Assistance Associations: Bane or Boon to Refugee Cultural Adjustment? Annual Meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Santa Fe, NM.
- Van Esterik, J. L. (1985). Lao. In D. W. Haines (Ed.), Refugees in the United States (pp. 149-165). Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Weinstein-Shr, G., & Lewis, N. E. (1989). Language, Literacy and the Older Refugee in America: Research Agenda for the 90s. Paper presented at the 88th Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C.
- Whitaker, D. P. (1972). Area Handbook for Laos. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Yee, B. W. K. (1986). Markers of Successful Aging among Southeast Asian Refugees. The Gerontologist, 26, 82A-83A.
- Young, S. B. (1968). Northeastern Thai Village: A Non-Participatory Democracy. Asian Survey, 8(11), 873-886.

Appendix A
Tables

TABLE 1

Southeast Asian Refugee Arrivals in the United States
By Nationality, FY 1975-1989

FY	Cambodia	Laos	Vietnam	Total
1989	1,916	12,432	22,664	37,012
1988	2,805	14,556	17,654	35,015
1987	1,539	15,564	23,012	40,115
1986	9,789	12,869	22,796	45,454
1985	19,097	5,416	25,457	49,970
1984	19,851	7,291	24,818	51,960
1983	13,114	2,835	23,459	39,408
1982	20,234	9,437	43,656	73,327
1981	27,100	19,300	86,100	132,500
1980	16,000	55,500	95,200	166,700
1979	6,000	30,200	44,500	80,700
1978	1,300	8,000	11,100	20,400
1977	300	400	1,900	2,600
1976	1,100	10,200	3,200	14,500
1975	4,600	800	125,000	130,400
Total	144,745	204,800	570,516	920,061

Source: Refugee Reports, December 29, 1989, p. 10.

TABLE 4

Refugees And Asylees Granted Lawful Permanent Resident Status
By Selected Country of Birth and Selected Metropolitan
Statistical Area of Residence
FY 1987 (Not Cumulative)

<u>SMSA</u>	<u>All Cntries</u>	<u>Cambodia</u>	<u>Laos</u>	<u>Vietnam</u>	<u>All SEA</u>
Total	96,474	12,206	6,560	20,617	39,383
Miami, Fl	24,281	1	-	8	9
Los Angeles, CA	6,343	729	61	1,522	2,312
New York, NY	5,708	353	11	535	899
Anaheim-SA, CA	3,341	342	180	1,895	2,417
Chicago, ILL	2,513	321	107	353	781
Washington, DC-MD	2,384	274	157	781	1,212
Stockton, CA	2,370	1,135	262	588	2,835
San Jose, CA	2,354	275	33	1,465	1,773
Boston, MA	2,142	655	42	660	1,357
Oakland, CA	2,080	274	100	642	1,016
San Diego, CA	1,939	325	308	614	1,247
Seattle, WA	1,906	551	178	554	1,283
Minneapolis-SP, MN	1,900	354	801	313	1,468
Dallas, TX	1,618	385	219	481	1,085
Philadelphia, PA	1,491	515	44	435	994
Tampa, Fl	1,490	75	97	277	449
Houston, TX	1,431	121	35	771	927
Atlanta, GA	1,403	418	115	366	899
San Francisco, CA	1,362	108	29	633	770
Sacramento, CA	1,111	67	267	459	793
Fresno, CA	784	117	417	83	617
Portland, OR	765	111	75	344	530
Denver, CO	683	92	85	260	437
Detroit, MI	644	7	36	35	78
Fort Laud., Fl	623	-	3	6	9
New Orleans, LA	623	38	18	334	390
Fort-Worth, TX	587	81	148	224	453
Lowell, MA-NH	561	355	73	50	478
Modesto, CA	547	264	43	74	381
Tacoma, WA	535	334	13	80	427
Riverside-SB, CA	526	81	25	201	307
Providence, RI	500	342	31	14	387
St. Louis, MO-Ill	441	34	31	152	217
Newark, NJ	439	-	-	40	40
Rochester, NY	438	77	53	199	329

Table 4, Continued:

<u>SMSA</u>	<u>All Countries</u>	<u>Cambodia</u>	<u>Laos</u>	<u>Vietnam</u>	<u>All SEA</u>
Rochester, MN	430	268	13	39	320
Orlando, Fl	424	3	16	118	137
Phoenix, AZ	403	25	11	191	238
Salt Lake, UT	363	117	29	103	249
Hartford, CT	354	18	68	73	159
Nashville, TN	354	86	126	17	229
Jersey City, NJ	344	4	-	40	44
Nassau-Suffolk, NY	335	3	0	51	54
W. Palm Beach, Fl	326	-	-	29	29
Des Moines, IA	274	89	91	57	237
Grand Rapids, MI	246	7	11	131	149
Merced, CA	244	3	203	4	210
Cleveland, OH	234	50	5	27	82
Baltimore, MD	225	6	1	51	58
Milwaukee, WI	219	8	143	15	166
Other MSA's	11,169	1,970	1,333	3,515	6,818
Non-MSA	2,667	338	413	708	1,459

Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, Immigration Statistics: FY 1987.

TABLE 5

Refugees And Asylees Granted Lawful Permanent Resident Status
By Selected Country of Birth and Selected Metropolitan
Statistical Area of Residence FY 1988

SMSA	All Countries	Cambodia	Laos	Vietnam	All SEA
Total	110,721	9,255	10,349	21,407	41,011
Miami, Fl	22,989	2	11	22	35
Los Angeles, CA	10,145	1,129	113	2,774	4,016
New York, NY	6,479	347	29	713	1,089
W.Palm Beach, Fl	4,543	-	2	37	39
Anaheim-SA, CA	3,215	258	152	1,963	2,373
Fort Laud.,Fl	2,970	-	-	18	18
Boston, MA	2,737	622	52	810	1,484
Washington, DC-MD	2,518	178	200	725	1,103
San Jose, CA	2,491	146	46	1,582	1,774
San Diego, CA	2,419	156	775	704	1,635
Philadelphia, PA	2,020	545	64	591	1,200
Oakland, CA	1,988	166	334	514	1,014
Chicago, ILL	1,979	180	57	285	522
Seattle, WA	1,715	366	243	524	1,133
Minneapolis-SP, MN	1,373	104	749	162	1,015
Fresno, CA	1,302	206	752	57	1,015
Dallas, TX	1,213	160	239	425	824
Houston, TX	1,205	127	104	630	861
San Francisco, CA	1,195	59	44	524	627
Stockton, CA	1,146	542	147	190	879
Newark, NJ	1,016	10	23	60	93
Tampa, Fl	1,009	41	93	119	253
Orlando, Fl	991	2	27	97	126
Atlanta, GA	978	104	200	261	565
Lowell, MA-NH	909	562	69	77	708
Naples, Fl	861	-	-	-	-
Portland, OR	721	24	185	279	488
Modesto, CA	648	239	140	47	426
Detroit, MI	631	3	61	31	95
Riverside-SB, CA	631	66	80	215	361
Tacoma, WA	601	394	38	56	488
Sacramento, CA	592	34	188	166	388
New Orleans, LA	531	16	44	308	368
Denver, CO	510	46	55	209	310
Phoenix, AZ	501	53	31	206	290

Table 5, Continued:

<u>SMSA</u>	<u>All Countries</u>	<u>Cambodia</u>	<u>Laos</u>	<u>Vietnam</u>	<u>All SEA</u>
Jersey City, NJ	487	-	5	75	80
Fort-Worth, TX	477	31	171	201	403
Nassau-Suffolk, NY	456	2	1	82	85
Honolulu, HI	433	6	137	263	406
Salt Lake, UT	431	91	85	93	269
Merced, CA	397	2	316	5	323
Lakeland, FL	394	-	9	1	10
Providence, RI	388	155	133	8	296
St. Louis, MO-Ill	379	18	65	131	214
Milwaukee, WI	362	7	257	31	295
Kansas City, MO-KS	351	47	122	114	283
Nashville, TN	346	31	229	10	270
Charlotte, NC	334	57	49	140	246
Bergen, NJ	317	-	2	17	19
Springfield, MA	311	128	14	99	241
Other MSAs	13,946	1,566	2,804	4,002	8,372
Non-MSA	4,140	227	603	754	1,584

Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, Immigration Statistics: FY 1988 - Advance Report.

TABLE 6

Refugees And Asylees Granted Lawful Permanent Resident Status
By Selected Country of Birth FY 1961-1988.

<u>Country</u>	<u>1961-70</u>	<u>1971-80</u>	<u>1981-88</u>	<u>Total</u>
Cambodia	-	7,739	103,697	111,436
Laos	-	21,690	121,108	142,798
Vietnam	7	150,266	282,033	432,306

Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Report, 1988.

TABLE 7

Southeast Asian Population in the
United States: 1980 and 1970

United States Asian Population	Number		Percent	
	1980	1970	1980	1970
Total Asians	3,466,421	1,426,140	100	100
Cambodian	16,044	0	0.	0
Hmong	5,204	0	0.2	-0
Laotian	47,683	0	.4	0
Vietnamese	245,025	0	7.1	0

Source: Asian and Pacific Islander Population by State: 1980, 1980 Census of Population, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. p. 2.

TABLE 8

Patterns in the Adjustment of
Southeast Asian Refugees
Age 16 and Over*
1988

Length of Residence in Months

	<u>0-6</u>	<u>7-12</u>	<u>13-18</u>	<u>19-24</u>	<u>25-30</u>	<u>31-60</u>
Labor force participation	31.7%	33.1%	27.9%	47.1%	36.6%	34.2%
Unemployment	3.5%	11.4%	13.3%	8.8%	5.8%	8.1%
Weekly wages of employed persons	\$170.59	\$216.81	\$235.96	\$213.98	\$234.80	\$213.68
Percent in English training	7.7%	17.3%	14.4%	9.4%	7.6%	27.4%
Percent in other training or schooling	25.9%	22.6%	25.6%	30.0%	14.6%	20.3%
Percent speaking English well or fluently	44.3%	42.1%	37.0%	52.4%	43.1%	31.9%
Percent speaking no English	19.9%	15.0%	13.9%	6.5%	20.8%	18.8%

* "Nearly one third of the individuals covered were not in the same households one year earlier."

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement 1989: 146.

CENSUS 2 - FIRST Discussion Questions

Update 2/10/89

- | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|--|------------|------------------------|
| 1st Disc.: | 1. Life in Laos | | 2nd Disc.: | 1. Work |
| | 2. Housing/Neighbors | | | 2. Shopping |
| | 2a. Household Comp. | | | 3. Social Networks |
| | 3. Someone at Door | | | 4. Recreation |
| | 4. Go to Offices | | | 5. Lao Other US cities |
| | 5. Official mail | | | 6. St. Louis Lao Comm. |
| | 6. Census familiarity | | | |
| | 7. Media | | | |

INTRO:

- Not from Fam. Serv. or Int. Ins., working w/Anne research for Census 199
We want to learn about Lao people/customs, gov like Lao, serve Lao better
Everything say kept private. We won't tell anybody what you say
- Questions, No right or wrong answers, Some questions have short/long ans
Please don't say what you think I want to hear
Tell us as much as possible about these things
I won't be angry no matter what you say
- We really want to know what life is like for Lao in St. Louis

BIO-DATA:

Name & Age	How long in U.S.?
Married	How long St. Louis?
Children (How Many, Ages, Names)	

Life in Laos

- Where did you live in Laos? City or Country? (Small city/Big city?)
- Who lived with you in your house in Laos?
- What work did you do in Laos? Do Anything else for extra money?
- Did you go to school in Laos? How many years? Kind of school?
- Did you study English in Laos or Thailand? How long? What level?
- Have you studied English here in US? Where? How long? What level?
- When you first knew you were coming to the United States, what did you find surprising? What was fun? What was hard?
- Now that you've been here awhile what things about being here are easier? What things about being here are hard or difficult?
- What do you miss about Laos?

Housing/Neighbors

- Where have you lived in St. Louis? How many times have you moved?
 - Why did you move the last time?
How did you find out about this area or this house/apartment/neighborhood?
Who did you ask about it.?
 - When you moved last, how did you get your mail to your new address?
Who took care of this?
How about other times you moved, how did you get your mail to new place?
 - Do you keep your front door locked? All the time? Time of day its open?
Do you have a back door? Do you keep it locked? All the time?
Which do you use most, front or back door?
Which door do you children use most often?
Which door would a close friend or relative who was visiting use?
 - How do you get along with your neighbors? Are your neighbors friendly?
Are they fun? Do you talk to them? What do you talk about?
Have they been in your house/apartment? Have you been in their house?
Have you ever eaten food with them? At whose house?
 - What were your neighbors like in Laos? How is it different here?

Are your neighbors mostly American?
Are the Americans mostly white or black?
How do you get along with your white neighbors?
How do you get along with your black neighbors
 - Do you have neighbors who are from other countries? Which countries?
How do you get along with these neighbors?
Any other Asian neighbors? How do get along with them?
Any other Lao living in this area? Where, how far or near?
 - How do your children get along with your neighbors? Whites, Blacks?
Do your children ever play with your neighbors children? Whites, Blacks?
How do your children get along with the kids at school?
Do they make friends with Whites, Blacks, other countries, other Asians.
 - Have you had any problems with your neighbors here?
Have your children had any problems with your neighbors here?
What happened? Have you had any problems with them since?
 - Are any of your neighbors not nice? How, why?
(Are any of your neighbors just no good? How, why?)
 - How do you get along with your landlord? American?
How did you get along with landlords from other apartments? American?
Have you ever had any problems with a landlord? What happened?
-

Household Composition

- How many people live here now?
How are they related to you?
- Ever have someone come to visit and stay w/you while they look for a job?
How long did they stay with you? Did they find a job?
How long did that take? Did they stay with you after they found the job?
- Has anyone besides yourself, husband, and kids lived in house with you?
How were they related to you? What did you call them (kinship term)?
How long did they stay? Where had they lived before?
When did they leave? Why did they leave? Where did they go?
Seen them since they left? When last? How often do you see them?

Someone comes to the door

- Who here speaks English best? How old is that person? Work? Where?
Who else here speaks English? How old is that person? Work? Where?
- Everybody is home, and someone comes to the house, who would go to answer the door if they knock or ring the bell?
- What would happen if that person is a stranger who does not speak Lao, if he or she speaks only English, who would speak to them?
Would they be invited in?
- EXAMPLE: Can you tell me about an example of when a stranger came to door?
How did it go? Were there any problems?
- If this person was official looking, like they were from job service or family service, would that make a difference?
Who would try to talk to that person at the door? Who would translate?
Would you invite them in?
How would you tell person was official, like from one of those offices?
EXAMPLE: Has someone like this ever come over? How did it go?
- If a person came with a Lao interpreter would they be invited in?
What about this would make you more comfortable?
Would you let this person in with a Lao interpreter even if they didn't call on the phone ahead of time?
- Did you have a phone in your home in Laos? If no, where phone could use?
Were you suprised that most Americans have a phone in their home?
How long after here get phone? Where get it/ Who arranged service?
Did it take a while to get used to phone in your home?
What about it took getting used to? How long till really comfortable?
- Who answers phone if everyone here? What happens if that person is not Lao, and speaks only Eng.? What would that family member do?
Do kids get messages to you if you're not home and they answer the phone?
How do they do that, do they write it down? Where? Where leave for you?
Do they ever forget to give you your messages? Get Most? Some Few?

CENSUS 2 - FIRST Discussion Questions

Interacting with Government Offices

- Ever been to family serv. or job serv. or licence off. or city hall?
Did you go by yourself? If so -> How did you get along with people there?
If not -> Who went with you?
How did you get along with the people at the these offices?
Were they friendly? Helpful? Were you able to get what you needed?
How did you communicate with them?
- Tell me about the last time you went to one of these offices?
(Which one did you go to? What was it like? How did it go?)
- Tell me about the first time you went to one of these offices?
(Who went with you? Which one did you go to? How did it go?)
- Has anybody from government offices ever come to your home?
How did that go?
- When you knew you were coming to the U.S., before you actually arrived
here, did you think the American goverment would help you?
What did you think they would do? Did they do that? What else done?
- Who is your sponsor? Before you actually came here, did you think your
sponsor would help you?
What did you think they would do? Did they do that? What else done?
- Have you ever had any problems with job serv. or family serv. or licence
office or city hall? What happened?
Do you find anything particularly frustrating or confusing about dealing
with the people there?
- Have you ever had any contact with the police? What happened?
When you talked to them, did they write anything down?

Official Looking Mail

- Who here reads English? How well? Anybody else?
Are you learning to read English? How is that going?
If you got a piece of mail that seemed important, but was confusing, who
in this household would try to read it? Or translate to you or spouse?
- Who gets the mail here?
- Who sorts the mail, decides what is and what is not important?
Do they talk to you about the mail? What kind? For example what recently?
- What does important mail look like?
Do you have some important mail here that could show us as an
example of what it might look like?
- If mail that seemed important was confusing or you couldn't understand it,
what would you do with it? Who would you go to for an explanation?
- Where do you put important mail until you respond to it? Who responds?
Pay rent, heat and electric and phone bills by mail? Who does that?
- What do w/mail that doesn't have name of somebody who lives here on it?
Ever gotten mail addressed to occupant or resident? What do with it?

CENSUS 2 - FIRST Discussion Questions

Familiarity with Census

- Did you get the test-census in the mail last March? (SHOW SAMPLE)
Did you know about it before it came? Where had you heard about it?
What did you do with it?
- If filled it out ---> Who filled it out?
Did that person talk to you about it?
How long after it came in the mail did send it back?
- If not fill out ---> Anyone come to house to ask questions for the Census?
How did that go? What did they talk about?
- Did anything about it seem confusing to you or whoever filled it out?
Did you need any help with any of it? Where did you go for help?
- Do you remember any census in Laos, ever remember them counting everybody?
What did they use the census for in Laos, what think they did with it?
What do you think they use it for here in the U.S.?
- Earlier we talked about someone that lived w/you for a while (refer back)
if they were lived with you then, would you have included them on form
you filled it out, or told person at door about them? Why/why not?
(If lived there for 2 weeks, month, 2-3 months, longer??)

Contact with Media

- What sorts of American (Eng. Lang.) Newspapers do you look at or read?
Which ones? Do you read the Post-Dispatch?
What's interesting in the paper? Do you look at the ads? Which ones?
Do you look at the Help Wanted Pages at all? How often?
- What publications do you read in Lao? Where does this come from?
Do you get it in the mail? Did you have to pay for that to be
mailed to you? How did you find out about it?
Do you read the Lao Mutual Aid Association newsletter?
How often does it come out? Do you read it everytime?
- What sorts of American (Eng. Lang.) radio do you listen to?
What's interesting on the radio?
Do you listen to the commercials? Which ones do you remember?
Do you listen to the news? What's interesting about the news?
Do you listen to the weather report? How often? What's special about the
weather report? Why?
What station do you like to listen to? What do you like about station?
What type of music do you like to listen to?
- How soon after you arrived in St. Louis did you get a stereo radio and
tape deck?
What was so important about getting this so fast?
Where did you get it from?
- What sorts American (Eng Lang) TV do you watch? What's interesting on TV?
Do you watch the commercials? What's interesting about the commercials?
Do you watch the news? How often? What's interesting about the news?
Do you watch the weather report? How often? What's special about the
weather report? Why?
What channels do you like to watch most? What like about those channels?

- How soon after you arrived in St. Louis did you get a TV?
What was so important about getting this so fast?
Where did you get it from?
 - How soon after you arrived in St. Louis did you get a VCR?
What was so important about getting this so fast?
Where did you get it from?
 - Do you rent movies? How often per week? How many at a time?
What kind of movies do you rent? Where do you rent those movies?
What's special about movies instead of regular TV?
 - Do you listen to Lao music? Thai music? Where do you get these tapes?
 - Did you listen to the radio in Laos? How often?
What on the radio did you listen to, news, music, weather?
Did you have your own radio? If not, whose radio did you listen to?
 - Did you watch tv in Laos? How often?
What kind of program on the tv did you watch?
Did you have your own tv? If not, whose tv did you watch?
-

END - Are there any questions you would like to ask me?

END - We would like to come back and talk to you again. I'm sure Ann will want me to talk more with you about your life in St. Louis. Would that be OK?

1st Disc.:	1. Life in Laos	1	2nd Disc.:	1. Work
	2. Housing/Neighbors	1		2. Shopping
	2a. Household Comp.	1		3. Social Networks
	3. Someone at Door	1		4. Recreation/Gatherings
	4. Go to Offices	1		5. St.L Lao Institutions
	5. Official mail	1		6. Lao in Other US citys
	6. Census familiarity	1		
	7. Media	1		

INTRO:

- Anne asked me to come back and ask some more questions
Again, Everything say Kept private. We won't tell anybody what you say
- Still, No right or wrong answers, some questions have short some long ans.
Tell us as much as possible about these things
- I'll be asking some new questions, and
I may ask a little more about some things we talked about last time.

Attitudes about Work/Relations at Work

- Where do you work? What do you do there, what does the work involve?
What hours? Who do you work with? (individuals, Lao, Americans)
How long have you worked there? Like the work? What like about it?
Is there anything about your job that is particularly hard or difficult?
- Have you worked any other places in St. Louis? How long worked there?
What did you do there, what did that work involve? What hours?
Do you work there at all anymore? If not why did you leave that work?

How do you get to work and then home again?
- Do you do anything else to earn extra money?
- When you first came here what kind of work did you expect to find?
What did you think your American co-workers would be like?
What did you think that American bosses would be like?
- How do you get along with Americans you work with? Are they friendly?
Do you have fun with them outside of work?
Have any of them been in your home? Have you been in their home?
Have you eaten food at their house? Have they eaten food at your house?
- Are there people of other nationalities at work? Which nationalities?
How do you get along with them? Do you see them outside of work?
Where do you go? What do you do with them?
- Are there other people from asian countries at work? From what countries?
How do you get along with them? Do you see them outside of work?
Where do you go? What do you do with them?
- Are there other Lao at work? How many? How do you get along with them?
Do you see them outside of work? Where do you go? What do you do w/them?
Did you know them before you started working there?
(Would you prefer to work in a place with alot of Lao or just a few? Why?)

Have you ever had any problems at work? What happened
Any problems with Americans at work? Which ones (white, black?) What hap.?

Recreation/Gatherings

- Have you been to any large gatherings of Lao in St. Louis?
What kind of events? How often per month/year?
How many people are usually there?
Where have they been held?
How do you find out about them?
Can you describe what usually happens at one of these gatherings?
How do you participate?
What do other people do there?

St. Louis Lao Institutions

- Have you heard about the Lao Association?
What do they do there? What have you gone there to talk to them about?
How often in the past year have you gone to see them?
How often in the first year you were here did you go to see them?
What did you need their help with the most?
Is there anything that the association does that is particularly helpful?
- Have you visited the South Side Baptist Church?
What did you go there to do/get?
Were they helpful? What are the people there like?
Did you attend services there? What is that like?
Have they ever given you anything written in Lao to read?
- [Somehow ask about leaders and followers in the Lao community?]
[Try to get some idea of how status has been structured here vs. there]

Lao in Other US cities

- What do you know about Lao in other parts of the country?
Calif, Milwaukee, Atlanta, Tennessee?
How do you think St. Louis compares with those places?
- Are you in contact with friends/relatives in those places?
How do you get in touch with them (phone, write)?
How often do you speak/write with them?
Have you gone to visit them? When? Will you go again? When?
What did you think of their life in that place?
What do they say about life in that place?
Anything particularly easy/hard about living there compared with here?

END - Are there any questions you would like to ask me?