

**FINAL**

**ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION OF THE  
1990 DECENNIAL CENSUS REPORT SERIES**

**REPORT # 26**

**ALTERNATIVE ENUMERATION OF UNDOCUMENTED  
SALVADORANS ON LONG ISLAND**

**Final Report for Joint Statistical Agreement 89-46**

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DISCLAIMER

Attached is the final report for one of the 29 independent Joint Statistical Agreement projects which conducted an ethnographic evaluation of the behavioral causes of undercount. All 29 studies followed common methodological guidelines.

This report is based in analysis of the results of a match between the author(s)' Alternative Enumeration to data from the 1990 Decennial Census forms for the same site. Each ethnographic site contained about 100 housing units. Information was compiled from census forms that were recovered through October 10, 1990.

The data on which this report is based should be considered preliminary for several reasons.

- Between October 10, 1990 and December 31, 1990 additional census forms may have been added to or deleted from the official enumeration of the site as a result of coverage improvement operations, local review or other late census operations. Differences between October 10, 1990 and final census results as reported on the Unedited Detail File will be incorporated in later analyses of data from this site.
- The consistency of the author's coding of data has not been fully verified.
- Hypothesis tests and other analyses are original to the author.

Therefore, the quantitative results contained in this final JSA report may differ from later reports issued by Census Bureau Staff referring to the same site.

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## ALTERNATE ENUMERATION OF UNDOCUMENTED SALVADORANS ON LONG ISLAND

### A. SITE PROFILE

#### The Neighborhood

The area selected for an Alternate Enumeration (AE) of undocumented Salvadoran immigrants is located in a bedroom community on the North Shore of Long Island. The specific ethnographic sample area covers three census blocks containing a total of 93 housing units. It was selected in large part because of its long history as an immigrant settlement area. Originally the site was inhabited by Italian immigrants who arrived during the turn of the century; Puerto Ricans and Blacks arrived after World War II, and, most recently, Salvadorans and a smattering of new immigrants from other countries have been moving into the area. The vast majority of the Salvadorans are undocumented but are not the only undocumented people in the area. During the research I found undocumented individuals from such disparate places as Peru and Poland.

While primarily a residential area of low-rise houses and a few apartment buildings, there are also some commercial establishments which dot the site including one factory, an entertainment center, several social clubs and a couple of retail establishments. The area has a distinct "community" feel although there are no parks nor public spaces and most houses have little or no yard. The neighborhood is bounded by the town's principal thoroughfares, one on the east side and the other on the west side, making it quite self-contained. Thus, on summer evenings many people sit on their porches or doorsteps and socialize rather than walking or driving the half-mile into the town center. This high visibility and street socialization helps the residents get to know each other more quickly than in other parts of town.

#### Sample Area Demographics

The neighborhood is very mixed demographically with elderly original Italian settlers, new immigrants who tend to be men in their twenties and thirties, and younger families many of whose children attend the primary school only two blocks away. Most residents are either factory workers in the town or, for the Salvadoran men, landscape laborers. In the mornings from March to November, landscapers' trucks lumber through the streets at about 7:00 AM to pick up their workers. There are also two landscape companies located within the borders of the site. In sum, though the area is one of the poorest in the town, there are very few families who are on public assistance. Most work albeit in low-paying jobs.

In part due to its immigrant population and in part due to its relative poverty, the area is also characterized by high levels of mobility. Thirty-one individuals, for instance, moved into the sample area between Census Day and the start of the AE at the end of June, 1990. Several families and numerous Salvadoran men also moved out during this time giving the area a high degree of flux. Much of the transitory nature of the area, as I will describe

more fully later, is due to the immigrants' necessity to move to where jobs can be located.

Although the site is very mixed, particularly for Long Island, internally it is also quite racially divided. On the first street of the site mostly old Italian families can be found, with only one building containing Salvadorans. On the next street, however, African-Americans predominate. This street is a rarity for the town where Blacks are concentrated some distance away in public housing. This street, however, has had a Black presence for several decades. There is one known boarding house where a large number of Salvadorans live -- approximately thirty at the time of the study -- also located on this street. Another house owned by a Peruvian immigrant is also being used as a de facto boarding house. Finally, at the very end of the street there are a couple of Italian-owned housing units filled with illegal apartments.

The final street in the site is the most mixed of all. Although there are no Black families on this street, there are many Italians, Salvadorans and Puerto Ricans as well as a smattering of other ethnic groups.

### Housing

The median cost of a single-family house on Long Island is currently \$150,000 but there are few houses which can be purchased at this price in the town where the AE was conducted. That is, the North Shore housing market is significantly more expensive than other areas on the Island. And, because approximately 80 percent of Island housing is zoned for single family houses, the rental market is also very tight. For example, there were no vacant apartments in the sample area during the AE. The result of this tight market has been a flourishing underground housing market in which basements, attics and other areas of single family homes have been secretly converted into rentable apartments. Even within rented apartments, rooms are frequently rented out to non-family just to be able to make the rent payments.

The housing crisis is even more apparent in the sample area where nearly all of the units are rentals while the surrounding town is predominately owner-occupied single family homes. Several buildings in this area are "mother-daughter" houses where the "mother" house was built first and stands along the roadside. The "daughter" house was built later in the back of the first house and tends to have the same address as the "mother" house. Two buildings in the site are three-floor apartment tenements and one building is a multiple-story boarding house, but the predominant housing style is low-rise. According to town planning authorities, former residents of the area own the properties and in many cases have subdivided old single family homes (such as the mother-daughter houses) into several illegal apartments sharing one door and one mailbox. In other cases basements, attics and extra bedrooms are rented -- primarily to new immigrants.

Despite the relative poverty of the area studied, rents there are expensive. Rents in the area under study averaged \$750 for a two bedroom apartment but ran as high as \$900 for very substandard housing. Also the rents in this area generally do not cover any utilities, even heat. This

raises the average monthly cost to the renter from \$750 for a two bedroom apartment to \$900 or \$950 -- levels which are far out of the reach of the working class families who inhabit them. The prices force them to rent space out to nearly anyone who will live there. Unable to afford an apartment by themselves, many immigrants resort to renting a room or space in a room for \$150 to \$250 per person. Another technique used to offset housing costs that is widespread among immigrants involves individuals or family groups who rent an apartment, putting up the security and first month's rent. These people will occupy one room and then rent out the extra bedroom and/or living room to boarders. With skill, the boarders will not know the cost of the rent to the leaseholders and will be overcharged. Thus, leaseholders live free or very inexpensively. They see this as repayment for their investments; they must have an incentive since they have secured the apartment and fronted the rent money. This strategy almost always leads to overcrowding; it also fosters the growth of households containing unrelated individuals who often do not even know each other's names, ages and so on.

This neighborhood, then, is characterized not only by unusual housing but also by unusual household structures. Even identifying housing units is encumbered by the fact that many mother-daughter houses as well as converted units share one mailbox. Many of the apartments in the three-story tenements also have no numbers on their doors and outdated names on their mailboxes. Because of these confusions, the postman's assistance became invaluable. He has been delivering mail to this neighborhood for twenty-five years and knows the housing and population better than anyone else.

## B. METHODOLOGY

My initial understanding of the Request for Proposals for this project was that it would be an ethnographic investigation into causes of census undercounts for difficult to census populations. Once the format of the AE was explained, however, it became readily apparent that the six-week time allotment to collect the data on one hundred households would make the exclusive use of unobtrusive and other ethnographic methods largely impossible. A typical community study conducted by an anthropologist, for instance, would normally consume a minimum of one year's fieldwork and anthropologists normally schedule surveys to take place at the end of the year in order to maximize trust. I knew that the ethnic complexity of my field site would make the six-week task even more difficult so I decided to move into the sample site in February, one month before Census Day (April 1, 1990) and over three months before beginning the AE.

My relocation to the ethnographic sample area proved invaluable for several reasons. First, I was able to begin networking ethnographically among undocumented (UD) residents, taking advantage of my background as a counselor of immigration law to foster confidence and legitimacy with these people. My training in this area of law informed my determination of the immigrants' status. Furthermore, since I was often asked to aid immigrants with information and paperwork, I developed rapport with them and a good reputation quickly. Thus, I never had much difficulty in accessing nor in ascertaining this status. Secondly, I was able to observe mobility among individuals over a much longer period. Six people in my site moved precisely on Census Day.

Many others moved into the area between March 15 and April 15 in preparation for the beginning of the landscaping season. Some immigrants were not only seasonal migrants, but also moved from household to household as often as every night while they searched for housing and employment. Their movements in particular, began to raise questions in my mind about the census' notion of "usual residence."

Unlike Mexicans who often return home to Mexico during the winter, Salvadorans tend to stay in the U.S. yet may change their residence on a continual basis. Thus, I concluded, their homes in El Salvador could not be deemed their "usual" residence but they appeared to have no usual residence in the strict census sense. This ambiguity was exacerbated particularly around Census Day when many immigrants were just returning into the area after working in Florida and other areas for the winter. Though they had lived in the greater town during the previous year, they had given up these residences and were now seeking new ones, renting unusual housing in the field site while they looked for more "permanent" housing. Many ultimately stayed in the sample area but changed housing units several times. Almost all of these individuals were not censused.

Finally, the added time in the field prior to the AE proved useful toward developing a methodology for gaining access to the diverse sectors of the population. After a few months of observation including sharing beers on street corners and gathering in kitchens I had visited most of the undocumented in their homes and felt confident that I could census them properly. I was more concerned about entre to the Italian, Puerto Rican and Black households. Fortunately, I met a local Puerto Rican social work student who had grown up in the neighborhood and who agreed to become my research assistant.

Following the Anthropology's ethical standards, I was concerned about informing residents that the research was being performed. However, I was also worried that my work with the census might lead to suspicion of my motives and cripple other research I was performing in the community. Furthermore, the Census Bureau preferred that the work be done as unobtrusively as possible, informing residents of the study whenever necessary. As a compromise, my assistant and I worked out a complementary methodology wherein I continued my fieldwork through networking and he went door-to-door and solicited information formally. We would then compare notes and see if the undocumented were concealing information. Since my assistant already knew approximately half of all the residents in our sample site, he readily obtained much of the information. When he encountered resistance, he would emphasize his roots in the community and dispel fears that he might be obtaining information for false purposes.

Finally, the methodology was impacted by the necessity of adding another census block to the study very late on in the AE. As a consequence, it was impossible to dedicate the same energies to this block as to the others. However, the target population, namely undocumented Salvadoran immigrants, was carefully censused in this block; only the non-target groups could not be as carefully enumerated as in the other blocks.

## Problems Identifying Housing Units and Residents

The initial task of identifying all the housing units in the three census blocks of the sample area was complicated by the very unusual housing in the area. It became even more difficult to enumerate individuals in these units since access was often impossible due, in particular, to uncooperative landlords. To circumvent these problems, we utilized a variety of methods. We consulted telephone listings for the sample area and visited the local Department of Planning to obtain land and housing ownership records. Fortunately, my assistant was also quite knowledgeable of illegal and obscure housing units; we also guided ourselves by the number of electrical gauges emanating from structures. Whenever these methods proved insufficient or when we were denied access and/or information, we resorted to other more drastic strategies. In some cases where landlords concealed information, I was able to contact past residents of housing units through my networks and ask these people to identify the internal structure of the units as well as provide information on the residents for the AE. In one case I had to call the tenement owner because several residents had refused to speak with my assistant. I also consulted regularly with the mailman who was particularly useful for confirming our hypotheses about hidden housing units and possible residents.

The two most difficult aspects of the AE to overcome were (1) resistance among long-term residents, particularly owners of illegal housing units and (2) censusing the boarding house. By using our door-to-door and ethnographic techniques to compare information my assistant and I found that the new undocumented immigrants provided accurate information with relatively little resistance. This ran counter to our predictions that undocumented immigrants might conceal information. On the other hand, Italian and Black residents were less cooperative as were older immigrants who shielded their illegal apartments and would deny access to them. The worst single case was that of the boarding house where many of the Salvadoran men lived. A Colombian woman, who also happened to be my landlady, owned the boarding house and strictly forbade outsiders from entering. She had her reasons: the conditions inside were abominable and illegal.

The boarding house has four occupied floors containing fourteen housing units but received only one census form which stood in the mailbox for several weeks after Census Day. Two of the units inside are apartments located on the first floor above ground. The basement and second and third floors are occupied by individuals and small family groups who pay \$45 per week for the privilege. Mail is communal and dumped in the hallway. When trying to census this address by visiting known Salvadorans inside, I was detected by the landlady and forbidden from reentering. While I came to know most of the inhabitants outside the boarding house through other means, the housing unit structure eluded me until I managed to hire a Salvadoran friend whose job involved cleaning the house. He drew a schematic of each floor which I compared to my notes; he also supplemented my information on the inhabitants. A similar technique had to be used to census the house of the Peruvian immigrant who rented to several boarders. Although I knew the man quite well he provided information only on his family who lived in the house; his son, however, confirmed others' reports that several boarders lived upstairs.

### C. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

It should be noted that the face of one of the three census blocks that comprised my sample area was switched with the face of an adjacent census block. As a result of this block face switch, or census misgeocoding, the persons who were enumerated in the AE did not match the persons listed by the census. Based on my fieldwork during the resolution phase, I listed these individuals as Census Day residents of the sample area who were missed by the census but enumerated by the AE.<sup>1</sup> As a result, an additional 31 individuals were listed as missed by the census. These individuals inflate the overall undercount rate for the ethnographic site but very few of them fall within the target population of undocumented Salvadoran immigrants.

#### Basic Undercount Information:

The resolved or "true" Census Day population of the sample area was 249. This figure is a sum of: (a) 118 persons missed (or misgeocoded) by the census but enumerated by the Alternative Enumeration, (b) 116 correctly censused individuals and (c) 15 persons that were residing in the sample area on Census Day and were enumerated by the census but missed by the Alternative Enumeration. The overall census omission rate is 47.3 percent.<sup>2</sup>

Of the 118 individuals who were missed by the census, 73 were males and 45 females. With respect to race, 25 of those missed were Whites (2 of these were Hispanics), 12 were Blacks (no Hispanics) and the remaining 81 were "other" race (25 Puerto Ricans, 49 Salvadorans, 3 Peruvians, 3 Hondurans and 1 Bolivian).

The 118 individuals who were missed by the census can be divided into those that were missed because the entire housing unit was missed (whole household misses) and those who were missed in households that were partially enumerated by the census (within household misses). Of the 118 individuals missed by the census, 22 or 19 percent were within household misses and 96 or 81 percent were whole household misses. Thus the bulk of the undercount in

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<sup>1</sup> The Census Bureau reviewed the Address Control File (ACF) for the surrounding blocks and found that 10 whole households enumerated by the AE (and situated in the sample area) have addresses that match the addresses of census households on the adjacent census block (this block is not within the sample area). Apparently these census households from the sample area were misgeocoded to an adjacent block outside the sample area in a "block face switch." These misgeocoded census households had very sketchy or non-existent demographic information for its occupants so it is not known if the individuals in these households are the same individuals as those enumerated by the AE.

<sup>2</sup> The omission rate is calculated by dividing the total number of individuals missed by the census (n=118) by the total number of individuals missed by the census plus the total number of individuals correctly enumerated by the census (116 + 15 = 131). Thus  $118/118+131 = .473$  or 47.3 percent.

the sample area occurred because whole households were missed, or misgeocoded, by the census. Of the 22 individuals missed within households, 8 were boarders, 4 were "other" relatives, and 4 were unmarried partners and the remaining 6 individuals were primary relatives to the householder.

The target population of the Alternative Enumeration was undocumented Salvadoran immigrants. Of the 118 individuals missed by the census, 35 were non-Hispanics and the remaining 83 were Hispanics. Of the 83 Hispanics, 25 were Puerto Ricans, 50 Salvadorans, 3 Peruvians, 3 Hondurans, 1 Colombian and 1 Bolivian. Thus the bulk of Hispanics missed by the census were Salvadorans. Thirty-seven of the 50 Salvadorans were undocumented immigrants.

With respect to housing units, a total of 84 housing units were enumerated by the census. Of these only 57 were correctly censused as occupied units (n=54) or vacant (n=3). Of the remaining 27 units, 3 were duplicates and 24 were misgeocoded.

#### D. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

From the above discussion it is obvious that the vast majority of individuals who were not censused in my site were missed because their housing units were missed; the individuals missed from within households fall into known undercount patterns, viz., undeclared partners, adult children and boarders. In addition, approximately 50 percent of those people living in missed housing units were undocumented immigrants. This percentage far exceeds the proportion of the total population represented by the undocumented immigrants. Clearly, then, undocumented status appears to be related to the likelihood of being undercounted. In this section of the analysis, then, I will concentrate my discussion on this problem: Why are undocumented immigrants more likely to be undercounted by the census?

In my original proposal I hypothesized that undocumented immigrants, Salvadorans in particular, would be more likely to be missed by the census because they fear detection and deportation by government officials and, thus, would be likely to conceal their residence to any government authority. Furthermore, I recognized that these immigrants come from countries in which the census has been associated with (1) identifying youth of the appropriate age for military recruitment and (2) cataloging personal property in residences for taxation purposes. Both past associations, I believed, would be likely to dissuade Salvadorans and other undocumented (UD) immigrants from participating in the census. This hypothesis does not seem to be substantiated by my research. In general, individuals were more reticent about declaring boarders who might make them susceptible to eviction from their apartments than they were about discussing their legal status for fear of government officials. Still, undocumented immigrants are undercounted at very high rates and this propensity must be accounted for.

I have come to the conclusion that it is not UD status per se which is the cause of the undercount; rather, UD immigrants are undercounted because of their socioeconomic status, and to a lesser degree their legal status (although the two are inextricably linked), compels them to adopt behaviors

which the census already recognizes as likely to result in undercounts. That is, UD immigrants are mobile, frequently live in unorthodox housing and irregular households; they are not proficient in English and are often minimally literate in their own tongues; and they often try to conceal their presence or minimize their visibility at the same time that they fall prey to unscrupulous exploiters who take advantage of them and try to conceal them from the authorities. Each of these behavior patterns had already been hypothesized by the census as possible contributors to the undercount. I will now discuss each of these ideas as they relate to the population I studied in the sample area; I will also add one further category for analysis, viz., the newness of the immigrant group and its lack of enfranchisement in the U.S. political system as another likely cause of the undercount.

### Mobility

Immigrants, by definition, are uprooted and mobile. Since they are dislocated from their home society they can often remain mobile and unattached for quite some time, particularly if they are single men. Most of the Salvadorans and other UD immigrants I have studied over the last two years on Long Island move regularly, often 3 times per year or more. They must follow job opportunities and are also very concerned about minimizing their expenses so they move as a means of securing less expensive housing. If family members arrive, moves may be initiated in order to obtain larger spaces to live in. All of this movement increases the likelihood that immigrants will be undercounted. It also begs an examination of the census definition of "usual residence," the means by which the census determines if and where people should be counted. The census defines this as the place "where the person lives and sleeps most of the time." In a sense this definition is good since it does not ask people what place they consider their "home." Most of the people I interviewed, for instance, would answer this latter type of question by referring to their homeland, at least until they had established families in the U.S. On the other hand, "most of the time" gives no time referent. Is it 'most of the time during the past month?' or 'most of the time during the past year?' These types of specifications will elicit different responses from a highly mobile population. During the early landscaping season, for instance, a Salvadoran may sleep in no place "most of the time." Indeed the "usual residence" for these immigrants may itself change "most of the time." The outcome, of course, is an undercount. For instance, in my sample, two addresses which held some 40 individuals, most of whom were Salvadoran landscapers, were severely undercounted primarily because most of the housing units in them were not identified. However, it is not too difficult to speculate that many would have been missed anyway, even if their units had been identified. They would have been missed precisely because they are so mobile and difficult to find attached to a given housing unit. For instance, one of the six individuals moved on Census Day to live at the boarding house where 12 of 14 housing units were not detected. I suspect that he would not have been counted even if his housing unit had been discovered by the census because he would not have been considered as a resident.

## Irregular Housing

Undocumented immigrants on Long Island almost invariably reside in the poorest areas with the worst housing conditions. They occupy basements and overcrowded, often illegal, apartments because they are excluded from other areas and/or because they need to lower their housing costs. Due to their undocumented status, these individuals do not qualify for government-subsidized housing and other benefits to ease their burdens. They earn low wages, generally only \$5 per hour, and therefore cannot afford \$750 per month rents. Indeed, immigrants universally tell me that they were shocked upon arriving in the U.S. and finding out how much housing would cost them. Many Salvadorans were peasants accustomed to living in huts in their country but did not pay rent; similarly, city dwellers paid rent but only a small proportion of their salaries. Upon reaching Long Island they are stunned by housing expenses for which they had not been prepared. Thus, their need to economize, and lack of government aid, makes it no surprise that they end up occupying the worst housing. Additionally, they tend to be uninformed about their rights and complain infrequently. Both behaviors tend to prolong their residence in the poorest housing. But it is precisely this type of housing which is likely to be missed by the census, increasing the possibility of an undercount.

One specific case of unusual housing which was not detected by the census is that of 4 apartments located above an old factory which now serves as a small clothing store. The entrance to the apartments (one of which is an attic studio), is from the rear of the building and, as such, conceals their existence. The census housing list did not include these apartments which is why they were missed. In contrast, the boarding house contains two apartments which were listed and censused. But it also contains many rooms located off of common hallways which are rented separately. These units were not found by the census and because they were contained in a larger building containing two censused apartments, they would be very difficult to find.

The subdivision of single-family houses into subunits has also become commonplace on Long Island because of the high cost of living. Landowners can offset high taxes and other costs by renting out an illegal basement apartment to immigrants and immigrants can benefit from availability of rental housing in a tight rental market. The problem to the census arises because this illegal apartment or space(s) is not declared to the local authorities (precisely because it is illegal). This way the unit does not appear in the official address roster and the house will receive only one census form. Furthermore, homeowners want to conceal the apartment and its residents making detection even more difficult. Additionally, the homeowner may not construe these people to actually be in his or her household; just as likely the homeowner may not wish to have "illegal" immigrants counted in his or her town too. But the census office will receive a mailed-in form from the homeowner, check it against the address list and assume that the unit has been properly censused. Only insiders to the neighborhood might be privy to the concealed information, people such as the local postman or neighbors. Here the power over the census count is placed in the landowners hands and he or she determines who will be included. The residents of the illegal apartment will probably be too timid or too disinterested to find out if they are included.

Several examples of this occurred in my sample area. For instance, my landlady did not declare myself and occupants of her basement on her census form -- only one arrived to our address -- even though we lived in the same structure.

### Irregular Households

The phenomenon of irregular households is associated with that of irregular housing since they tend to stem from the same need to economize on housing expenses. Individuals rent space in units rented by families or pieces of families and a complicated array of overcrowded households emerges. Since my assistant and I were fastidious in defining housing units based on the census guidelines, we found many more than the census itself actually did. The outcome of finding so many units, however, skews densities since, for instance, 11 of the 14 housing units in the boarding house were rooms occupied by one, two or three individuals. This would make the units appear to be uncrowded but since the tenants from many units share facilities (such as bathrooms and hallways) the actual density of the entire address is high -- some thirty individuals cohabiting under the same roof.

The subleasing system in which the leaseholder rents to a variety of individuals and family units is highly unstable. Since UD immigrants are very mobile and are always weighing other housing options, and since they do not have to pay security deposits, etc. for their subleased spaces, they can move swiftly and easily. Furthermore, the changeover tends to create housing units which do not generally function as households/families. That is, activities normally associated with households such as cooking and cleaning together, pooling income and sharing meals, for instance, are not exhibited in these households. Rather, individuals fend for themselves or perform these activities in small subgroups apart from the entire group of co-residents. Thus, co-residence is not a proxy here for household in the normal sense. If there is no household cohesion and people have minimal association with each other, then it is very likely that they will not even know basic information about how many people live in the unit, who they are and what their ages are. This means that the loose household structure exhibited by immigrants, over and above their mobility, makes gathering information on residents very difficult. In some places I have been, for instance, Salvadorans choose to avoid conversation with co-residents. This is the legacy of the civil war in their home country. They fear exposure as past members of guerrilla groups or the military and these households resemble mini-prisons of ideological opposites. How would an enumerator, let alone a mailed-in census form, fare in such an alienating environment where basic information is indeed unknown and feared?

Furthermore, interviews I performed with a variety of UD individuals living in these situations pointed to leaseholders as the critical links in the chain. He or she tends to control the mailbox and distribution of all mail. He or she would then be the most likely person to fill out the census form but if she/he naturally places his or herself as "Person #1" on the form, this may obscure actual family units within the housing unit. Just as with homeowners, too, this leaseholder may fear declaring the full gamut of people living at the address and will be the principal decision maker of who

qualifies as living in his he/her "usual residence." Perhaps a person moving in on Census Day is not deemed a full resident because he or she has not paid the month's rent, has not proven to be a stable resident, etc. One such case actually occurred in the sample population. The leaseholder did not list her boarders who had moved out temporarily around Census Day to accommodate space for the leaseholder's daughter and daughter's child. The latter two stayed for several months but the leaseholder included among her household members only herself and another grandchild. The boarders, meanwhile, were not enumerated at their new location and the daughter and her child were also not listed.

Thus, it can be seen that the leaseholder, like the homeowner, is a critical piece to the puzzle of the undercount. And, as with illegal apartments in single-family houses, the leaseholder can declare a certain number of persons living in the apartment which is smaller than the actual number. Meanwhile, the census office will receive a form and assume that the apartment has been properly censused. Although it is difficult to estimate the effect of this reason on the undercount in my site since most people were missed due to missed housing units, there is one such exemplary case. The Peruvian man who I know well listed only his immediate family members as residents to both the census enumerator and myself. His five boarders were not listed, the majority of whom were undocumented. I detected them through my networks. Obviously, the landlord's fear of having his boarders detected outweighed any friendship or civic sense of duty to declare the correct number of residents.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in my two years of fieldwork among UD immigrants on Long Island I have found subleasing to be so ubiquitous among UD immigrants (as well as among many legal immigrants) that I have encountered almost no families who are living alone in their own household. This fact in itself should emphasize the pivotal place that the housing crisis in the U.S. today places when understanding the undercount of many different populations. In sum, the census form is designed primarily for households containing families. It is not designed well for households of convenience wherein individuals may have little contact, relationship or interest in each other as is common among recently-arrived immigrants.

### Language and Literacy

The impact of low English and native tongue literacy and language skills is difficult to measure for my sample area since the great bulk of the undercount is directly related to missed units. In my original proposal, however, I did expect to find these factors would impinge on the accuracy of the count. In particular, I drew attention to the high level of Spanish-language illiteracy among the UD Salvadorans, most of whom are from humble peasant backgrounds. Indeed, my research has revealed a base level of illiteracy in Spanish of at least 50 percent among them. This certainly cannot help the proper enumeration of these individuals since they would be unable, for instance, to even read a census form in their native language. But I cannot be conclusive about this hypothesis other than to relate several observations from the AE that shed light on the issue:

First, I observed several census forms still in mailboxes two weeks past Census Day. The forms had obviously not been deemed important enough to be taken from the mailboxes. Through my general fieldwork I learned that this was a common response to mail that was not addressed to any specific person and had English written on the envelope. At one point a Salvadoran (from outside the sample area but from the same town) told me that he threw out the census form when he saw it was in English. I have noticed that this is a tendency among many non-English speakers. Either they throw out the material which arrives in English or they wait until an English-literate person arrives who can read the material for them. I often served as such a "culture broker." If the form is thrown out, the unit may still be enumerated by a census employee but this requires finding people at home. Since many UD immigrants work several shifts and often cannot supply information on other household members the information may not be readily attainable.

Illiteracy and language problems can also impinge on the count through the procurement of census forms in the native tongue. One Salvadoran family never received a form and called the 800 number for a Spanish form. None was ever sent and they and their boarders were not enumerated. Some of these problems could be alleviated by the judicious use of bilingual enumerators. I did observe one such bilingual enumerator in our sample area, but I cannot evaluate her work other than to say that she did not detect the many housing units found by the AE. Of course, I assume her job was to enumerate households from her housing list and was not explicitly looking for new units. However, everyone in the neighborhood knows about the boarding house and it seems unfortunate that this structure was not accorded sufficient attention, particularly from an enumerator who herself is an immigrant and had attended English as a Second Language (ESL) classes nearby.

Finally and hypothetically, an illiterate person might have observed enough fanfare about the census on television to recognize the envelope when it arrived in the mail. But how would this person fill it out? I have witnessed illiterate immigrants circumvent similar obstacles when they wish to write letters to their home countries by enjoining the help of literate co-immigrants. Thus, an illiterate person who was at least awaiting the census form might look for such help. This, however, puts the illiterate individuals in a chain of dependency, reliant on other household members to ensure that she/he is properly censused. But even leaseholders, who one would expect to be literate by necessity, are not always literate nor conscientious about tending to the mail delivery. Since the leaseholder would naturally be assumed to take Person #1's place on the census form, the illiteracy and lack of English on the part of the leaseholder would increase the likelihood that the household would not return its mail form.

#### Newness of Immigrant Group and Political Power

Another hypothesis I offered in my proposal was that the newness of the Salvadoran immigrant wave to Long Island has not allowed for the formation of a definite ethnic "community" and/or ethnic leadership and power base. This deficit, I believed, would lower local publicity and interest in the census. And it would probably mean that the accurate enumeration of Salvadorans would be left to other groups' efforts to identify and census this hard-to-census

2. Find Unusual Housing Better: Neighborhoods with unusual housing should be targeted long before Census Day. If housing is not accessible, then mail deliverers and long-term residents should be contacted to suggest where to find unusual housing. Enumerators should be specifically trained to look for units not listed on their print-outs and query local residents whenever it is possible without inviting suspicion.

3. Reexamine Residence Rules: "Usual residence" should be given a time qualifying question so that highly mobile residents are not missed. Suggestions include: "If you have moved in the past six months, where did you usually live in the past month?" and "If you have a home outside the U.S., did you live there for more than six of the last 12 months? If no, where have you been living in the past month?" If no time qualifier can be developed, then a better descriptive phrase for "usual residence" should be found.

4. Research Who is listed as Person One: This research should be performed to determine how individuals in complex households decide who to list as person one or as householder on the census form. It is also necessary to find a better way of determining whether sub-families are co-residing since the current form largely obscures this information.