

ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATORY RESEARCH
REPORT SERIES
(#2007-3)

**A Brief and Qualitative Anthropological Study
Exploring the Reasons for Census Coverage Error
Among Low Income Black Households**

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Citation: Peter C. Hainer. 1987. *A Brief and Qualitative Anthropological Study Exploring the Reasons for Census Coverage Error Among Low Income Black Households*. Report prepared under contract with the Census Bureau. April 8, 1987.

Report Issued: October 24, 2007

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A Brief and Qualitative Anthropological Study
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Among Low Income Black Households

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April 8, 1987

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INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this report is to explore the causes of census coverage error among low-income Black households and suggest possible approaches to lower, if not resolve, the sources of this error. This study was by design, brief and qualitative in nature, and did not set out to try to implement or evaluate specific approaches. In a sense this report tried to bridge a gap between quantitative and qualitative approaches.

For some time now (since Valentine and Valentine 1971), the Census Bureau has known that ethnographic participant observation study of small scale samples (small neighborhoods or family/household studies) yields an independent source of information about the numbers of people living in particular households and a good deal about the social organization that obtains among them. It is also well known that large numbers of these same people, and most notably young men, fail to appear when formal quantitative methods are used to elicit information about household composition and social organization. By returning to the small scale domain with informants, who were familiar with and trusted the ethnographer, I hoped to close this wide gulf between the demands of large scale documentation, and its problems with data validity, and the accuracy of small scale reporting, with its problems of data generalizability.

So as not to raise hopes beyond reason let me say, right at the beginning, that this report has tried to narrow this gap and solve this thorny problem, but it has by no means solved the problem. While there is much here that can enhance and advance the understanding of why underreporting is and probably will remain a chronic problem for the Bureau, there are only a few specific suggested solutions that might increase the numbers of people who are counted. This report will specifically address suggestions to help bridge the gap, but the degree of improvement may be marginal in large scale surveys, given the task the Bureau enumerators have to do.

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The challenge of this report was a bit like a combination of the search for the Holy Grail and an elaborate game of Hide and Seek. I did not find the grail, the attainment of this long sought after solution to a difficult problem, but I did find out a great deal about the game of hide and seek. What this report will principally contribute is a further clarification of the ways people in Black low-income neighborhoods systematically avoid the census taker and why. The rules of the game should be much clearer after reading this report, but, like the game itself, knowing the rules and finding the people are two quite separate issues.

The organization of this report is as follows. Part 1 presents a brief review of the problem and the specific research directions that were explored. Part 2 reviews the field results and the sources of underenumeration. Part 3 presents the analytic findings of this study, focused on three sources of error in reporting: respondent error (internal problems and inconsistencies); respondent-to-interviewer error (how and why informants mislead or withhold information when asked formally); and errors generated, willingly or unwillingly by interviewers as they follow Census Bureau procedures. In parts 1 and 2 particular attention will be paid to the discussion of the internal sources of error as they relate to the social organization of the household, the impact that organization has on how people arrange themselves in households, and how well that information is shared and agreed upon internally. This view is an extension of my own long-term research data that was augmented and confirmed anew in this research. Part 4 recommends some possible directions for improving data and reducing coverage error with this population.

The research revealed that there were three principal sources of error that lead to underenumeration:

1. Internal Sources of Error:

The poor Black family's internal social organization is in important ways different than the family form expected by most Americans and the Census Bureau. Consequently the internal categories appropriate to poor Black families do not easily translate to Census forms. There is also ambiguity and internal disagreement about how the family

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should be described. The family is also characterized by great internal transience which makes documenting respondents over time extremely difficult.

2. Systematic Non-reporting: Respondent to Interview Sources of Error that lead to underenumeration:

Most underenumerated people choose not to participate as Census respondents because they don't believe in the Census Bureau's claim that information given will be confidential. On the contrary, they feel the census information will immediately be available to everyone, particularly other government agencies like the welfare department or the police. Such information, it is felt, might jeopardize sources of income to families and therefore it is extremely risky, from their perspective, to speak candidly with a Census interviewer.

Change in questions and approach, particularly developing a more anonymous form, might have an impact here.

3. Enumeration Procedures as Sources of Error the lead to Underenumeration:

The Census Bureau does not provide adequate support and encouragement to local interviewers who are charged with generating Census data. Many census procedures in fact, make the pursuit of the underenumerated very difficult. Much more could be done at this level immediately.

It is important to note here, that while the Bureau can have an impact on some of these problems, many are not soluable without the trust and cooperation of the community of poor Blacks. It is important to understand that underenumeration reflects a reluctance on the part of the community more than any inadequate effort on the part of local interviewers to locate and document respondents.

PART 1: THE PROBLEM TO DATE AND THE CHALLENGE FOR THIS STUDY

Since 1980, when I began my relationship with the Bureau, I have had the opportunity to review various in-house documents. I have no idea to what extent my review has been thorough or comprehensive, but there is no question that the underenumeration problem has been the focus of many problem solving approaches and research directives for the last 20 years. Beginning (from copies of materials shown to me) with a "Memorandum to the Committee on Difficult-to-Enumerate Groups" from N.D. Rothwell in 1967 to the recent work of Gary Shapiro and the members of the Undercoverage Work Group, this issue has been talked about and researched. Most notable, of course, is the Valentine and Valentine study of the early 70's. The conclusions of this earlier work center primarily on the reluctance of respondents to provide information to census interviewers either because they do not understand questions and the uses of the information (issues of confidentiality, misunderstanding questions or the way questions were asked), or because they purposefully withhold information (fearing that such information, if found out by the welfare department or courts, might compromise income from AFDC, or be perceived as a risk to someone engaging in illegal activities.) The Valentines argued strongly for the latter position, especially for the undercount of Black men over 19 years old, which in their study amounted to nearly two-thirds of all men in that category (61%). Recently, Gary Shapiro, in outlining the objectives of the Undercoverage Work Group, has added other sources of nonreporting centering on people with no clear usual place of residence, either "homeless" or "street" people, or people with two or more places in which they may live and sleep, and further definitional problems related to how people define their living arrangements internally, in ways at odds with Census Bureau categories. This last problem focuses on what I have referred to as the cultural problem and relates to the patterns of social organization that are found working within households. I have remarked on these differences

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a number of times in the last 7 years and continue to argue, as this research study will support, that this area is not yet fully recognized as a major problem influencing what people are or are not willing to report.

The cultural problem is an area that is just beginning to be addressed and is part of the attention of this report. Recently, under the direction of the Undercoverage Working Group some small research work was carried on to try to elicit better information by asking questions related to where people ate food or slept the last 3 or 4 nights. Cathy Hines reports that for the most part these efforts were unproductive. In reading through some of the material and CPS questionnaire sheets I was struck with the lack of success of different question formats. It seems that there are undoubtedly better ways of asking questions, but that such revisions, using the CPS approach, are best elicited by accident rather than by discovering some untapped linguistic domain or cultural category. What did interest me however were scattered bits of field reports from interviewers in the questionnaire material. One particular encounter with a Black man and a woman, who was bedridden, was interesting because the questions elicited information about his presence, which the evidence suggests would have been missed by the usual approach. I point this example out because the change in the type of questions asked seems to have done more to make the interviewer sensitive to certain issues related to undercounting than in eliciting better information per se. Perhaps this increased sensitivity on the part of the interviewer was responsible for getting her to persist in asking questions that she otherwise might have not pursued, rather than any subject matter in the questions themselves. Her narrative suggests that a sensitive interviewer can and will get the relevant information if she persists. In essence, the interviewer became more an ethnographer than a Census taker. Her example reveals the difficulty of reconciling the qualitative and quantitative approaches, and is evidence of the vital role of the interviewer in this problem area. Her examples, and the ones that follow, suggest that noncompliance is related to issues other than what questions are asked.

It is this context and background that lead to the substance of my recent study.

PART 2: FIELD RESULTS AND THE SOURCES OF UNDERENUMERATION

The field research for this report was conducted over a 3 month period, beginning in December 1986 and continuing through late March 1987. The research consisted of contacting some of my informants and asking them to participate by talking with me about these issues in unstructured in-depth interviews. At the end of this 3 month period I had formally interviewed 23 informants, spending 80 hours in the field, and had accompanied a CPS interviewer for a day of interviewing during the on-going CPS for February. (Appendix A, Field Methods and Sample Characteristics provides more descriptive detail).

The goal of this research was to address 6 major topics in the interviews and then summarize the findings. The following topics were explored:

1. discover any "folk categories" relating to family or household membership;
2. discover factors related to the reporting of young males as family or household members;
3. evaluate the impact of self-protection on within-household reporting;
4. explore whether reporting consistency improves when the reference period is varied, particularly shortened;
5. review whether or not the presence of other people in interview situations inhibits reporting of some family or household members, particularly those in the household whose social membership might be disputed; and,
6. investigate where children are kept and how to elicit that information.

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The research on these 6 topical areas revealed three principal types of error:

1. internal, that is, within household error and relating to patterns of social organization;
2. respondent to interviewer error (systematic non-reporting); and,
3. error generated by interview procedures.

These conclusions form the analytic core of this report. First, however, I will review the field data generated addressing the six topical areas of research study.

GOAL 1: Folk categories and biculturalism

The first research goal was to address the issue of "folk" vocabulary or categories and the ways in which people decide how to present their social organization on various bureaucratic records. Central to understanding any folk categories is understanding that the Blacks in this study perceive themselves to be operating in two social systems simultaneously, one their own internal social system, and the other the largely white middle class world around them.

This problem, known as biculturalism, is a repeated problem. For example, when the Census interviewer asks about family, he or she is assuming that family and notions about family are the same for everyone. They are not. For poor Blacks, my research has shown, that performing the roles for family behavior, acting like a father, doing what fathers are supposed to do, for example, is more important than blood relationship in determining who or which person might perform that role. My data and the work of Stack (1974) and others suggests that Black families are best seen as large loosely structured networks of kin and non-kin alike, who share resources, time, and space together. This groups, called the "family," rarely conforms

to the standard American version as presented by the census form or interviewer. The result is that the person asked about family has to decide to present what they believe will be misunderstood by the interviewer or give the interviewer what they think he or she wants. This problem occurs repeatedly, often daily for Blacks, and they develop some very stylized and systematic ways of responding to such queries.

"Family," then, is that group of people that shares membership in a domestic group and is an exchange network. "Family" is a loosely organized kinship group that resides together with performance based criteria for family roles principal as determinants of membership, not consanguinity or affinity. Residence here, however, is not coterminous with "address" and people may live in the same apartment or house, but may also live close by (close enough for daily interaction). Family members share clothes, and store them in each of the various apartment "addresses" shared by the family, and generally eat at the address of the family household head, usually an older Black woman. Blood relationship, consanguinity, is not as important as the performance of a family role. For example, it does not matter that a man or woman is the "natural" (biological) parent of a child if he or she behaves in a manner consistent with the role expectations of that role. Likewise, a blood relative who does not perform the expected behavior judged appropriate for the role can lose his or her status in the family. One can be an ex-mother or ex-father here.

The problem here is that Blacks will not openly discuss their internal social system because that social system is different than the one assumed to obtain for most white middle class Americans. If it were simply a cultural difference, like "old country ways," for example, it probably would not be so consequential. But, it is not simply a cultural difference, it can effect the source of income to a family. Because so many people in the population are dependent on welfare and other benefits that are largely controlled by white bureaucrats and social workers, Blacks find that they have to present their social and family life in ways that are consistent with, or at least not contradictory to, rules for welfare eligibility. Con-

sequently, when people are asked to make decisions about how they report family membership or family composition to various formal organizations, such as the welfare department, the courts, the army, the schools, they do so in ways that are consistent with the expectations of the organization and in ways that do not jeopardize any monetary benefit they might receive from that source.

If the family income is derived from these latter sources then, the information the family will report about the structure and membership of their family will be directly linked to the "official" record held by the social service department responsible for payment. The key determinant here has to do with maximizing sources of steady and reliable income. This observation was repeatedly made during this study by informants, who were curious that anyone would believe that it would work any other way. This is, of course, the Valentine and Valentine (1971) argument, and the observation I made during the 1970 Census, when I watched local enumerators "counting" "addresses" in an apartment building and talking among themselves about the "official" version of the way the occupants of the "address" units "should" be recorded (Hainer 1985.)

Perhaps a recent example will make the point here. One of my informants, who I will call Ernestine (all proper names here are pseudonyms), was really surprised when I asked her why people would not cooperate in providing information about their family organization. She expressed shock and remarked, "Peter, you sure be askin' the dumbest-ass questions." She said everybody reports only what they have reported to the welfare department. The reason is to maximize the real or potential income derived from one or more men with whom they are exchanging (often an indication of, but not necessarily of involvement in some form of intimate relationship). Men and women exchange and share resources (money, food, clothes, for example), companionship (time together on an intimate and non-intimate basis--lovers or just good friends), and the various duties that are needed to maintain a household (chores, care for children, for example).

Ernestine continued with a relevant explanation. To prove the point to me, she recalled an incident that occurred when she was married for the first time, to a man, Jesse, who was not the biological father of her two daughters, but was acting the role of social father and Ernestine's husband. Jesse had a job, though low-paying, and resented never being included as Ernestine's husband whenever she filled out a form. To quote her:

"He forever be on my ass, Peter, about how he was never included nowhere, no place. We go to the hospital with one of the kids and he know all about the child and be telling the nurse this and that about the child, what she be eating, and how she be sick and then when the nurse asks for the information I just put my name down. He used to get real mad about it. He used to say you never put me down and I am your husband. He knew I couldn't afford to put his name down and screw up my welfare check. But, he was the same everywhere we went. One day we had a fight and he got so pissed off he took our marriage certificate and went to the social worker at the welfare and showed her we was married. Peter, that man fucked me up for 6 weeks! First they throwed me off welfare. No, first I throwed his ass out of the house, then they throwed me off welfare, then I reapplied as a deserted woman with kids, saying he'd abandoned us. I got put on again, but by the time the whole deal went down I'd lost 6 weeks (of benefits) and had to struggle, just because of the bullshit of that man. I wouldn't let his ass around after that. Can you imagine that shit. I really loved his ass too, but I wouldn't let him in my house again after that. I couldn't afford to have him around and not be able to trust his ass."

Ernestine's concern was not only maintaining a consistent "paper trail" (welfare should correspond with hospital, with school, etc.), but with maintaining a relationship with a family member, who could not maintain that same consistent and predictable presentation of himself. Membership in the family means playing the appropriate role, but also agreeing to share certain assumptions about how the family will be presented to the outside world. Failure to do so threatens the economic resources of the family as it does one's membership in the family itself.

In research for my thesis (Hainer 1984), with another group of informants, I once observed a young girl, Inez, receive an extremely harsh scolding simply for having answered some inconsequential questions about her school work from a visiting welfare worker. The child was rebuked for "acting like a man or woman" because she spoke on her own authority, a privilege reserved for responsible adults. The offense was presuming the responsibility of talking about one's "family" business when such talk must be strictly controlled in a consistent and reliable way. The child's grandmother, the critic in this case, was worried that the child would say something, reveal something, about the family that did not match the presentation of the family given to the social worker by the grandmother. Children are frequently taught to "act ignorant" and pretend they don't know anything when they talk to anyone outside of the family.

I observed similar presentations with Earvin (33 years old), who was just out of jail, who was talking on the phone to an army officer, who was trying to find Earvin's brother who was AWOL. Earvin "yes sirred" all over the place and answered a number of questions about the family that appeared to be a response to some kind of record keeping on the other end of the phone. Earvin had been in the "RA" (regular army) and took great pride in that fact. He also was on a disability payment himself from a shooting accident at an army rifle range. He boasted afterward about knowing how to handle all that "family" information when talking to the army officer.

Similarly Lessie's family included a young man, "on the lam," wanted by the police. When I was interviewing little Sam, 8 years old, I asked him who was staying at Lessie's house and he mentioned Leon, and quickly added, "but he ain't supposed to be here," but said that he'd been there for some time and would be staying there for the foreseeable future.

Blood relationship and formal affinity (legal marriage) continue to have secondary meaning to my informants. Role performance is primary as the family functions as a consensual group whose principal goal is maintaining an internal, but hidden, family social organization among themselves, while

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presenting a view to the outside world that best matches the expectations or eligibility requirements necessary for various forms of relief from the institutions of that world.

Consequently there are no "folk" categories here or ways of asking questions that will get people to reveal their internal organization, because people feel that such a revelation can threaten a reliable and often only source of steady income.

GOAL 2: Young men, where are they?

Goal #2 addressed the factors that relate to the reporting of young males as household or family members. The key to answering this question is to understand the developmental cycle within the family, from an internal perspective, as young girls and boys grow up. This is complex, for it has to do with how the family works to maintain itself in an environment where resources are limited, and how young girls and boys are asked to play increasingly different and in many ways difficult roles in contributing to that family maintenance. I will review these issues briefly to present an overall pattern that can help explain why so many young men appear to disappear from families as they grow older.

I will start with girls. Girls are an asset to the family for two reasons. First they generally are less aggressive and easier to have around the house than boys. Also they can be relied upon to provide childkeeping support and to do household chores, more so than boys. Secondly, girls generate assets for the family as they have children that increase the welfare subsidy for the family. As I will point out below, when a girl gets pregnant at 15 or 16 she often establishes "her independence," by claiming to welfare department to be homeless or thrown out of the house. She then gets significantly higher benefits which she shares with the family. All she usually does in terms of residence is to have a friend take her mail at a different "address." Eventually, women move out into their own apartments, but usually maintain family membership and contribute income to the family through the family sponsor/household head.

Boys, on the other hand, are a liability. They get aggressive and rowdy, "and wants to stay on the corner or out all night, and starts to get involved in drugs, and stealing, and all that shit," as Lessie put it. She lamented that that was the way with boys. She continued, "In fact, now that you mention it, I just threw my grandson's ass right on the street the other day. He just be gettin' too much to handle, just like Clarence. I put his ass out too. In fact (laughs) I put jus' about all their asses out, 'cept Willie (referring to the 6 sons she carried and raised)." Her grandson is 15 and when I asked her if she knew where he was, she said, "the street I guess, you know, he hang out with this one or that one and be staying someplace." She assumed this was the predictable if not natural order of things when it came to raising boys. She also affirmed that she was still counting him as a member of her household to the welfare department and would until his 18th birthday. Here is a case of a boy who would probably be counted, but would not actually be there. My data is quite consistent and long-term when it comes to the transient fortunes of teenage Black young men. This study once again confirmed this pattern.

What emerges is a pattern of the developmental cycle where young men, boys, are part and parcel of the family until they become 15-17 years old and then become problematic to keep around. They leave or are thrown out. They appear sooner or later, as husbands or other male contributors to household/families, but not in a capacity that allows anyone to want to formally acknowledge their presence. Women and children adjust their spatial "address" arrangements according to the ways best suited to maximize subsidized income. I have discussed this phenomena before, to the Bureau, in my 1980 presentation. In "Appendix B: Charts" I have included a copy of my diagram "Same People--Some Different Definitions" (Chart #1) to graphically review these patterns.

Young men simply become a liability to their families and must either begin to provide support to the families or fend for themselves. One of the consequences of this is that young men look for jobs that often just are not there. All too often the price these men pay for failure to get some

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reliable source of income is eviction from their families. This reality is also one of the factors that motivates young men to get involved with hustling of one sort or another. Betty Lou Valetine (1978) has written extensively about this.

One other factor that may be important is the number of young Black men who are incarcerated in various penal institutions. Virtually every informant during this research mentioned jail when asked about where to find young Black men. The first few times I heard it I treated it as an aside, but the remarks were consistent and often repeated. "You wants to find all them Black mens, just tell the Census folks to go to Walpole (a maximum security prison) and they find 'em," was the kind of comment I repeatedly heard. All of Lessie's sons and most of her grandsons have done some kind of time. Cathy Hines also showed me a reference (from "American Demographics") that indicated that a Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report claimed that 15% of Black men born today can expect to go to prison. One would assume that the percentage of poor Black men in jail would make a far greater portion of that 15% total than any other cohort.

What I am calling the cultural component greatly affects the formal composition of the family and how they reside in particular "addresses." The culture here obtains with low-income Blacks, who derive primary income through welfare benefits. The pattern is well understood and recognized by other informants, who are not low-income. These informants readily affirmed the structural cycle for residence at specific "addresses" and acknowledged the cultural patterns of social organization that typify family organization for low-income Blacks. During my observations of the CPS, I discussed these issues with the local interviewer. She quickly nodded her head and agreed when I reviewed how I thought the family "worked" among low-income Blacks, particularly as it related to the aging of young men. Within a short period of time the interviewer was candidly talking to me about the consequences of this kind of social organization for

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her job as interviewer. She never once questioned how I'd come up with this view. She treated it as common knowledge, but knowledge not generally understood or shared by whites or officials of any formal institutions.

GOAL 3: Self-protection and within household reporting

Goal #3 focused on research questions that might suggest ways of increasing confidentiality, and thereby increase the likelihood that people would be willing to give more valid information about their actual living conditions, if protected from the possible appearance of compromising information about their personal lives and living arrangements.

This question received as much attention as any by my informants and generated the only nearly unanimous recommendation. Uniformly, virtually to an informant, virtually any question that was linked to anyone's name was seen as "too personal" and threatening. As Marva, a 21 year old woman said, "the Census is kinda personal. It makes me mad really, the questions they ask is personal. This sound kinda personal." I asked her what kind of questions do they ask that are too personal? "Your name," she responded. She went on to talk about a recent set of questions by two different census takers. "They come," she recalled, "come all the time asking for me and my kids. Do Kiona, Willy, Blenda, live here? That sort of thing. They always in my business."

This resistance points up a number of issues that relate to confidentiality that may or may not be understood by the Bureau. First and foremost, the Bureau is not the only formal institution that does a census. In this city, the police routinely, and annually, generate a "police list," that is used for a variety of purposes, especially to establish the residential validity of voting lists. The police rookies or cadets usually do the leg work, always in uniform, and to informants, police uniforms are threatening and indicate potential trouble. I have also included a mailer sent to my old address that threatens legal action and a veiled threat if the respondent does not quickly and accurately respond to the questions. (See Appendix B #2). In the case

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mentioned above with Marva, it took some doing for me to get her to separate the police woman from the "women in street clothes who carried a big book." I showed her copies of the CPS questionnaire that I had and she said, "Yeah, that's it." Trying to separate the Bureau interviewer from the policewoman was next to a hopeless task with Marva, not to mention the laughter that greeted my assurance that Bureau data are confidential. To a person, none of my informants thought that the information given to the Bureau would remain truly confidential.

This confidentiality issue brings up an interesting anecdote with Lessie. Lessie, while unwilling to cooperate with census interviewers other than superficially, ceded that the census really was important. She recounted that when her mother died she, and her sister went to bury her in her home town and discovered, by going through old census records, her sister's actual birthdate. Neither Lessie or her sister had known her sister's actual age until the old forms revealed the dates. Lessie repeated, "I knows this stuff you got here (pointing to the census questionnaires) is important. I know 'cause I used it. But if I used it what's to keep anyone else from using it. Now how they going to keep this information truly confidential?" To Lessie, the importance and utility of the data from what she thought was an old census record was proof that confidentiality was and is conditional. (Probably what she saw were old county records and not census ones, but the fact that she felt they were census forms points up the frequent confusion between census activity and other governmental agencies).

Part of the problem here is the confusion between the actual recording of individual information on a form and the use of the data from that form for meaningful aggregate analysis. Informants believe that the information about them from their forms is stored in "some computer" somewhere, where someone at sometime can get at it. The Bureau I think has to do more in explaining to people that confidentiality is real, that the police and the welfare department are barred by law from access to the forms and their information, and that it is the aggregate data that is useful. It would perhaps make sense to tell people, quite literally, what happens to actual forms and how confidentiality is assured.

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Without question, to the point of it being common knowledge, my informants assumed that any information given to one source was shared by all others. Numerous people mentioned social security numbers as typical and as proof of the systematic ability to track people by using the same number to register for work, welfare, and a driver's license. Social security numbers are routinely asked for during the CPS months of December, January, and February. Use of this number on a census form is proof positive to my informants that the information asked for is not confidential. I strongly recommend that the Bureau review the use of social security numbers and urged you to abandon the practice and experiment with making the identification of the people interviewed more anonymous.

There is not any doubt among my informants that census data is potentially dangerous. What may appear to the Bureau as "neutral data," like ones name, is threatening. Similarly threatening is asking someone where they live. Ernestine put it this way:

"They asking you your name and if you live here. Now that's personal. I wouldn't push the issue. Before you know it they be asking you 'do you have a boyfriend?' They always asking me at the welfare if I got a boyfriend. I always tell 'em I got three. Tom, Dick, and Harry. I got one for the gas, one for the electric, and one for the food 'cause the foodstamps is not enough! Shit, they asking me if I have a man? Shit, am I a woman or what?"

What is interesting here in Ernestine's response is that the question she was asked related to whether or not she would feel comfortable being asked to give her name. She, and others less articulate but nonetheless in agreement, made the link from name to questions about boyfriends and illegal support. This defensiveness was virtually universal, and while I expected some of this kind of attitude I was not prepared for the extent to which the most simple, and apparently benign sorts of questions, in informants' minds lead directly to domains of information they feel is important, potentially dangerous if missused, and "personal," meaning information that they feel leaves them vulnerable, and decidedly not neutral.

To a person, and there was agreement on this with virtually every informant, the only collection of household rosters that might be acceptable would be extremely crude categorical questions. Specifically, people said they might answer if they were asked only, "How many people live here, and what are their sexes and ages." Repeatedly I was told, almost like a refrain, "No names, tell them, no names."

I will discuss more about this approach in the recommendations section, but people did feel they would cooperate if they were asked only for the sex and age of people living within specific households. Additionally, informants felt that if community people could be used to do the actual enumerating that they might be willing to exercise some cooperation and give some trust in this type of census accounting for how many people actually can be said to reside at a particular "address." As I will mention below, this bare bones approach still will leave some people out who are counted as simultaneously belonging to two households, or to no household, or where informants are not sure how or where to count them.

Overall, the issue of community trust and confidentiality is a serious obstacle that will remain a difficult hurdle to overcome.

GOAL 4: Changing the reference period

Goal #4 research goal sought to evaluate whether or not a shorter reference period made any difference in reporting consistency and are any demographic categories counted better than others. In my thesis work (Hainer 1984) I argued that household/family membership is performance based and conditional and therefore household composition, as expressed at any given moment of time by residence at a particular address, is variable and subject to quick and abrupt change. I have pointed out above the effect of the developmental cycle for young men on the problem of transience. Consequently, as might be expected, men are likely to be missed once again. Young men also frequently move about and may sleep a few nights at one address, and a few nights at another address, as members of different families simultaneously, or perhaps, like Lessie's grandson, are without a permanent "address."

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While men are predictably hard to track, women can be transient as well. Some women, like Ernestine, routinely leave their children with the household head and "disappear" for stretches of time. Ernestine has been a heroin addict, who for long stretches of her life shifted from heroin dependence to methadone dependence, to time spent in drug treatment centers. I have observed this sort of pattern with her since 1970. Lessie and her children for that matter have come to expect that Ernestine just might not be around for a while. While Ernestine's circumstance as a heroin addict may be unusual the pattern is not for young women.

Sometimes developmental cycle considerations prompt household re-arrangement, if only officially. Magnolia was 17 when her mother realized that it would be economically beneficial were she to "move out. Her mother explained it to me this way: "Magnolia was just seventeen and had her one baby. I was getting \$50.00 every two weeks for them, 'cause they was livin' in my house and I was in subsidized housing. That ain't shit, \$50.00 every two weeks, so I tole her to get herself another address and go tell the social worker that I throwed her out. So she got a friend's apartment to take her check and told the welfare she been tossed out. So she started getting her checks at her friend's house, but she was still livin' with me, she never left. It was a good deal 'cause she started getting \$199.00 every two weeks. You don't have to be no Albert Einstein to figure that one out."

The observations during this study about the issue of a shorter reporting period suggest that what will be measured more accurately is transience itself, in and through particular "addresses," and not a more accurate accounting of household membership. It is hard to impress upon people, who live predictable stable residential lives, that this rapid and frequent movement of people at a particular address is not unusual, or terribly disrupting to the social order. Appendix B chart #3a diagrams Lessie's household (but not her entire "family" which includes many others who are staying in other apartments nearby) on one of the days I did formal interviewing. On that day there were 16 people who could be said to be "living"

GOAL #5: Does data change when different people are present?

Study Goal #5 again was drawn from my earlier data (Hainer 1984) that argued that respondents do not always "know" the correct answers about household composition, and that by interviewing adults individually and alone, there might be some reduction in the inhibition to report persons whose membership might be contested.

There are two issues here. The first has to do with contested members of households, and the second with what information is likely to be given to a census interviewer. To answer the second part first, it seems unlikely to me that any eliciting techniques will make any difference in the "official" version of any given household membership given by members of the household, family members, neighbors, or friends. Recall please, my 1970 observations of local enumerators constructing "valid" "official" households for the census (Hainer 1985.) They treated the "official" information as if it were common knowledge that anybody even remotely associated with the household could generate. My interviews with children, in this study and in my previous data, certainly suggest that even children are aware of how they are officially arranged. Internal household membership has to do with a number of variables like the allocation of resources, personal sentiment, and the like and little to do with who you ask and under what circumstances you ask them. Official household membership has to do with household income.

Internal household membership is a matter of sponsorship and role performance. To be a member of a "family" and share in the activities of the household a person must be accepted by the head of the household who is usually an older woman. To stay in a household a person must provide resources and services to the household and play a useful and appropriate role. Members who meet the two criteria from the standpoint of the household head do not always meet with the approval of others in the "family." Disputes over membership and whether someone is performing appropriately are constant subject for discussion and debate within the

"family." Contested membership however, while often hotly disputed, is not something that is of particularly great concern to other family members. Recently Edmond has joined Lessie as a confident, friend, and appears to be a lover. Lessie assures me that they are "brother and sister." Edmond assures me that they are like "husband and wife." Virtually all of Lessie's children, grandchildren, and family members assure me that Edmond is "funny" (homosexual) and both dislike him and wish him out of the family. Edmond knows of the feelings of the family, so does Lessie, yet Edmond stays, and most of the family will reluctantly agree that he is in the family because Lessie defines him so and he contributes resources and shares with Lessie. Some of Lessie's family would count him as a family member. Some would not, even if Edmond were to legally marry Lessie, which is how Earvin put it to me (Earvin is quite homophobic and perhaps the assertion of Edmond's alleged homosexuality is an influence here). In any event at no time was this dispute secret or clandestine. People openly argued the point, to the point of openly insulting Edmond, but that didn't matter much. I suspect that the fact that Edmond was bringing in resources and sharing and was not a burden on the family, but a contributor, and obviously had Lessie's blessing meant that the argument was essentially moot. If however any of these conditions changed then this debate about his membership in the family would become more serious. Nevertheless, the important issue here is that there can be internal disagreement as to who is and who is not a member of the household. From an internal perspective, assuming for the moment that people would report honestly and not respond with the official version, an interviewer might get different accountings of who is a household member by asking different members of the family.

For the record, for the most part in my formal interviewing, I talked people alone. In some instances sessions would run on for a while and another adult would come in and join the discussion. In these instances I found no change in the ways in which people would talk about others and their membership in the family. What was contested and argued about, especially privately, was what resources an individual might or might not

have, and whether family members were performing as they should or contributing as they should. These debates were animated, passionate, and often angry and accusatory. The former discussions, membership rights, were for the most part, inconsequential.

GOAL 6: Where are children kept?

Research Goal #6 concerned where adult respondents felt children ought to be or are kept for record keeping purposes, and whether any particular formats might elicit more complete counts, either of where children are kept, or to which adult are they thought to be related. Much of this has already been addressed. What matters most is the "official" designation, as shown in Appendix B Chart #1, not any eliciting language or question formats. The reasons are simple. The "official" version maximizes resources that come into the family from sources outside of the family itself, welfare being the most notable. Any deviation from this formal presentation would be perceived as a potential threat to these sources of income and the careful and systematic manipulation of information that is necessary to maintain these sources of income. It is highly unlikely that any quantitative eliciting techniques are going to get informants to vary their accounting. A summer report to Gary Shapiro's groups from a CPS interviewer suggest the likelihood that any detailed information about children and where they belong is very hard to elicit, even when the evidence is literally at one's feet. She recounted asking a woman if any children lived with here. The woman replied "no," as 5 kids ran around or clutched at her skirts. The kids, she said, were "just visiting."

PART 3: ANALYTIC FINDINGS & THREE MAIN SOURCES OF ERROR

Having reviewed the findings of the six focused areas of this small re-search study, I want to review what I believe to be the three main sources of error that each lead to underenumeration.

Internal Sources of Error that lead to Underenumeration:

As mentioned above the low-income Black family/household is by its very nature an adaptive changing network of people and places. The basic structure of this domestic group centers around an older woman, who, in effect, gathers young women and their children, and young men and older men around her, in one or more dwelling places. Within this unit, they call "the family," these people exchange goods and services for rights and roles. In many ways, the flexibility of the family to reject unproductive members (non-producing teenage boys, for example, or older men, who in the role of husbands/fathers are not supporting the family) and move itself physically quickly to better living arrangements is an adaptation that allows the family to remain a viable and effective social unit that cares for its members and provisions them. It is, however, precisely these features that make this unit hard to document and track over time. Recall if you will, my 1980 presentation documenting the six moves of Loretta Williams' family that occurred in nine months (Hainer 1980 and 1984.) It was difficult for an anthropologist to track this group, never mind a local enumerator. (As an instructive anecdote, during one of Loretta's moves, she had left one place so quickly that she had not yet called me to tell me where she was. I went to her now old apartment and found her gone, with none of the neighbors knowing anything. I sent a telegram to the old address, which got to her the next day, and prompted an apologetic phone call from Loretta to me). Now, this sort of moving often comes in spurts and at times reflects the family's momentary fortunes. There are times when residential stability is much more permanent. There is however, no change in the social volatility or transience within the family as a social group. My years of field work have taught me reflexively to always begin each new conversation with some inquiry about who is "in" or "out" of the family. It is not inappropriate to do this on a daily basis.

Similarly, it is not unusual for people within the family to disagree about who is a member and who is not, within one family, as it is possible to be

a member in more than one family simultaneously. In previous work (Hainer 1984), Henderson was just such a family member for Loretta and another family. He was simultaneously a member in both, and subject to debate within one, Loretta's, as to what role he was playing, or whether to count him as a member at all. In this field research such a description fit Edmond.

I have previously mentioned the situation where an older man will have partial residence with a woman and some children in one place, which he will mark by leaving some clothes, visiting, sharing resources, and occasionally eating, and have another partial residence with another woman and some children in another place, marked the same way. The only difference is usually that he is only having sex with one at any given point in time and it is at her house that he generally will eat. This pattern, and I have not discovered a folk category for this man or this pattern, is well documented in my previous research and my current work. It is so well understood that I can, as I did for this project, raise the example, to a stranger and not even so much as get an odd look. People know exactly what I am talking about. Even children know a great deal about this. Informants, when asked for this research, "how would you count such a man? Where does he reside?" never balked at the question, only the answer. Most informants, by the way, said he should be counted in both households since he is contributing resources to both and usually cares about both. Some informants said to count him in the house with the woman with whom he was having sex, and Ernestine said "I would count him in neither house 'cause I don't want anyone knowing about any man in any family cause that man could be gone tomorrow or if he be found out, it means the family is off welfare. Good bye check. It's too risky to count him." Similarly, when doing research previously on social organization, it was not an unusual or inappropriate question to ask a pregnant teenage girl if she was going to "keep" or "give" her baby. The question brought neither emotional anguish or moral debate. In fact, it prompted about as much notice as a question about what one was going to eat. (I do not mean to suggest that the answer was not taken very seriously by people, only that the question was not unfami-

lier, unusual, or at all inappropriate). I mention this example for I am convinced that these reactions reveal and indicate features of social organization that are easily recognized by low-income Blacks, but not generally understood or accepted by the wider society.

There is also the additional variable that people among themselves may not be truthful or reveal what role they are trying to play. This is not an insignificant problem for my informants, especially men, as they have to weigh the responsibilities that come with choosing roles, especially with the probability that they, in spite of best efforts and good intentions, might not be able to produce steady resources for the family. Ambiguity means, by definition, uncertainty, and it is this uncertainty that people often elect to manipulate within the role structure of the family.

More research needs to be done here to document the extent of these internal sources of error, but they are sources that lead to confusion, uncertainty, and ambiguity among informants themselves. Even if this population were entirely eager and willing to participate in census data recording there would remain the number of difficult problems that relate to internal validity. All are problems that have little or nothing to do with methodological stance or enumeration protocols.

Systematic Non-reporting: Informant to Enumerator Sources of Error that lead to Underenumeration

This area of the data is probably the most thoroughly understood and certainly the most documented of the sources of error that lead to underenumeration. Valentine and Valentine (1971) and my own research have argued, for some time now, that people regard census questions as an intrusion in their personal lives that, to them, puts them at potential serious risk of jeopardizing sources of steady income. As I mentioned earlier, there are no "neutral" data here. Even, especially, asking someone his or her name is seen as a potential threat to his or her personal and financial security. I have discussed this above, but let me add a small

observation. During this study, when I began formal interviews by asking informants how they might count people in a census, especially Black men, they invariably would respond by telling me how to find people, where men are likely to be hiding. Counting meant fixing and placing, socially and spatially, and was not an enterprise that people regarded as inconsequential or neutral.

There is an additional comment that needs to be made here. As I will review briefly below, local interviewers are often forced to imply that respondents have no choice about cooperating with something like the CPS. Indeed, the experience with an extremely skilled interviewer demonstrated an assertive style that would shame a Fuller Brush salesman and rival the Marines. By the end of the day, I was convinced that the only way to get people to cooperate was to play on their fears that failure to do so would get them in some sort of trouble. The example of the election census (Appendix B, chart #2) suggests that if you don't cooperate something will happen with the force and sanction of the law. Policemen doing local police lists do little to reassure people that confidentiality issues are legitimate. Additionally, the attitude of local interviewers suggests that they themselves believe that the information generated by the forms is sometimes used punitively by other federal agencies. I was told by one interviewer, "They get us to ask all kind of questions. Sometimes Interior will have us asking people where they went hunting and what type of bait they used. Sometimes they have us looking for people. Last month we were looking for El Salvadorans and other illegals." One interviewer pointed out that she must routinely ask for peoples' social security numbers during the December, January, and February CPS when interviewing. She mentioned that people often reacted as if she were brow beating them into cooperating and participating in the study by asking for information that people felt was particularly threatening. Now whether this perceived coercion was indeed real or imagined, valid or not, the fact of the matter is that people felt it to be so, and felt their confidentiality was compromised. Similarly people are free to refuse to participate in the CPS, yet inter-

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viewers often push people to participate by implying that the choice is not so voluntary. In short given all of these factors, if my informants understood, with full knowledge of their rights and obligations, that they did not have to respond to the CPS, the majority would refuse.

In sum, lack of trust in formal procedures and officials, confusion between Bureau enumerators, police and other formal officials, who are seen in a punitive role, and a real fear that any information can be potentially compromising, all contribute to routine and systematic non-reporting of people, and mis-reporting of information. Many of my informants have indicated that they view any formal official as a member of an occupation army there to keep them down and to keep them powerless. This sentiment is wide-spread among my informants. In spite of this reality, there are some possible improvements and I will mention them in the recommendations section.

Enumeration Procedures as Sources of Error that lead to Under-enumeration.

Some of the most interesting data of this study was generated talking with local interviewers. As a group, I have found local interviewers (and I mean here local interviewers who elicit data for the CPS and not the quickly trained local folks, enumerators, who help with the decennial counting) to be hard working dedicated employees, who face enormous difficulties getting informants to participate in giving information. Additionally they face some procedural problems with the ways the Bureau attempts to exercise quality control over their work. I want to emphasize the dedication and courage it takes to walk into dark abandoned buildings, as I did, with one particularly outstanding local interviewer, or walk through corners with various groups of young men, many of whom are openly selling drugs. The Bureau should not underestimate what it takes to collect data within this population (I assume that other low-income areas present a similar challenge and this comment is not linked to ethnicity in any way).

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It took some time to establish a working rapport and relationship with the interviewer I accompanied. I don't know whether or not this day in the field would have been so productive had I not had the intimate knowledge of the neighborhoods and many of its people that I did have. In any event she was very quickly and extremely candid and frank with me about how she saw her job, as I was with her about what I was doing. The day was extremely productive and I got a chance to see how Bureau methods actually affect the elicitation of data, and might, unwittingly, contribute to the non-reporting of important data and people.

To begin with, the local interviewer is likely to understand the impediments to data collection posed by the cultural problem and the reluctance of informants to reveal much. In fact, the interviewer would often ask questions which elicited misinformation or answers which were clearly misleading. Above I mentioned the situation from the summer survey work about the interviewer who was told none of the assembled children really belonged there. It is quite possible that this was in fact the case, but I doubt it and I'm sure the local interviewer doubted it. I discussed such circumstances with the interviewer I accompanied. We often shared the perception that the person was lying for example, and there was no systematic way of dealing with this problem. There is, in short, no easy way, following the CPS format as one example, for the interviewer to stop and develop, elaborate, or draw out suggestive data or informational leads that might ultimately yield important data. In fact, as I discovered, the whole data collection method discourages pursuing data for two reasons.

First, there is no way of incorporating such answers on the standard forms. Secondly, the interviewers are evaluated on the basis of how well they fill out their forms and find and consistently generate data on specific named people at specific named addresses during specific time-frames. This focus on "address," as I have noted previously, creates serious problems in a population that is as transient as this one. When I asked the local interviewer, "What happens when people move" Do you follow them?" She

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replied, "No. Actually we don't study people really. We study addresses." This creates a real problem in trying to track people who are moving, but it also in its own way, contributes to non-reporting.

What happens is this. An interviewer follows the social arrangements of a particular address. Suppose during the recording of data about the household a new person appears. Suppose, for the sake of argument that this person is a young Black male, who is likely to be transient in a short period of time. The interviewer has an operational choice here. If she or he follows procedures, she fills in the correct space with the person's name and other information, with the result that next month she will receive a formal printed data sheet for that person. So far, standard operating procedure. But what happens if that person is hard to find, never home, or leaves? Two immediate problems present themselves to the interviewer. First he or she must spend a great deal of time trying to track the person down. This is often fruitless and annoying work. If the person is recorded and not found then the interviewer is penalized for failing to generate consistent data. The interviewer explained to me that she gets evaluated each month on the basis of the percentage of the successful interviews she gets with her named people and addresses. If she cannot find someone, her percentage drops. If it drops too much then she receives what my informant called a "scold sheet" or "chiding letter" from her supervisor. I saw such a sheet and it would be clear to me that the interviewer is placed in the position of having to choose just how to handle a situation like this. If she chooses to count, she clearly faces more work, and probably thankless work, that may end up penalizing her. If she chooses to ignore the person she has eliminated a potential problem, but has contributed to non-reporting.

Let me give one example of this. Please refer to Appendix B chart #4 "One Case of Non-Reporting." We recorded an "address" as part of the CPS. The census sheets listed two sets of names for this single family house, a retired couple, in one household, and a second household, on the second floor, where an elderly man lived. In interviewing the couple, the husband

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pointed out that the information about the elderly man was not known by the city, who has assessed the building as an owner occupied single family dwelling for tax purposes. When asked about others, the husband said, "Well there is so and so in the basement. He's a boarder, a tenant, but he's never here. Do we have to count him too?" The interviewer said yes, but did not seem to record the information with great vigor or interest. She asked more about when might she find him and was told again, "He works and goes out all the time. He's never home." When we left I asked her whether she had recorded him or not. She said no and explained that trying to track him down would be impossible and that she "didn't want no demerits" if she could not find him.

Rather than reward the interviewer for discovering or recording new people the procedures here tended to conspire against the interviewer and in fact discourage such an effort.

As might be expected, there are other situations, often with young men, that present the interviewer with a difficult problem. We were greeted at the door by a young man, who was holding a 3 year girl on his hip, mid-afternoon. This "address" was in the second stage of the CPS and therefore the second year. The "address" was supposed to house a woman and her three year old daughter. The interviewer asked for the woman and was told that her work schedule had changed and that she would be home around 7 p.m. instead of the usual 2 p.m. The man, who clearly knew the woman's schedule and knew who the interviewer was, though they had never met, carefully explained when to come back. After he finished the little girl grabbed his face and turning it toward her said, "Daddy, is mommy coming home late tonight?" He told her yes. We said good bye and left. I turned to the interviewer and said, "Every ethnographic bone in my body says that guy is living there as a husband to that woman and is probably the father of that child. What do you think?" She answered, "I'm sure you're right." "Why wouldn't you count him," I asked? "Because the woman don't count him," she replied. See Appendix B, chart #5 "A Second Possible Case of Non-Reporting."

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Again, the interviewer is faced with a dilemma. The CPS is almost over and the respondent has been friendly and cooperative, albeit misleading. Does the interviewer jeopardize her rapport and potentially leave her respondent feeling threatened by the newly revealed information, or does she stick to her format and not push for any information that the informant does not volunteer? It is, of course, not known, that this man was indeed living there. It is also conceivable that he might have been counted elsewhere. Both the interviewer and I felt that he belonged at this "address," but he was not reported.

The sort of problem here is a serious one. The Bureau cannot afford, however benignly, to create any barriers to recording a elusive part of a difficult population. If my experiences with interviewers is any indication they are a tough and savvy lot, who could probably, if encouraged, "find" a good number of missing men. In just a brief sample of 6 randomly selected "addresses" the interviewer and I concluded that we probably had 4 non-reported males. If this statistic is at all meaningful, even if it is just partially representative of the scope of the problem than much could be done at the level of field reporting. (My personal feeling is that we "got lucky" on this day, and that, coupled with an understanding of what was going on at the level of social organization on the part of both of us, we were able to see and "find" these men. It is tantalizing to remember Valentine and Valentine's 61% number and match that against 4/6, 66%). This "much that could be done," must be developed with a eye to supporting the interviewer in his or her "finding" of non-reported people, even if that means data quality control issues have to change or be re-evaluated at the Field Division level.

I could give other examples from this experience and others I have witnessed, but the point would essentially be redundant. I do however, want to give an example about how difficult the data quality control issues really are. This problem, reconciling qualitative and quantitative approaches, remains thorny. In this case both the interviewer and I felt we had dis-

covered a case of non-reporting but we turned out to be wrong, or at least I discovered that I think we were wrong. This case, Appendix B, chart #6, "A Case of Suspected Underreporting: Observer Error," emerged at the end of our day. The "address" was a follow up to an earlier "no answer" (one of many "addresses we chased that day"). We found a young Hispanic girl, just 17, with an 18 month old baby. This was a new "address" and the interviewer filled out the control card. The woman indicated that her husband also lived there and that he was just 17 too. Since this CPS was asking employment related survey questions the interviewer asked some questions about the husband's working. He was a marginal physical laborer getting work when he could get someone to let him onto a job site. He had no trained trade skills. The woman got very nervous during these questions and asked if we could "drop" him from the sheet. Specifically, when asked if the husband was included on the AFDC budget she said, "yes, I mean no...Maybe I shouldn't have included his name 'cause me and the baby are on AFDC." The interviewer said no he couldn't be dropped and the woman dropped the issue. The interviewer asked for the AFDC income, and the woman gave a monthly amount when asked what her yearly income was. When we left both the interviewer and I were convinced that they had not reported him to the welfare department, and that is what lead to her uneasiness when asked employment related and income questions. We both felt that we were lucky to have "caught him" and that if the woman had been more aware she would not have reported him. The irony of this case is that the welfare appeared to know about him. I say appeared, because I obviously couldn't check the actual data at the welfare office, but the monthly figure corresponded exactly to the monthly amount due a family of three in subsidized housing. (It is possible to be married and receive AFDC under certain conditions.) The moral here is that lots of folks make all kinds of errors when dealing with these issues, no matter how sincere the belief or trained the eye. The two of us, who were sure the figures would show a woman with child only, were apparently wrong.

PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

I took on this project with the hope that the gap between the needs of quantitative survey methods and the detail and validity of qualitative data might be reduced if not bridged. As I said earlier, perhaps we have learned to play the game of Hide and Seek better from the standpoint of knowing the rules of the game, and even something about how it's played, what strategies are employed. But, knowing how to play and finding the people are different issues. The recommendations here are likely to be a bit disappointing if one is looking for the perfect questionnaire or eliciting technique. Here this study demonstrated that the issue of non-reporting goes a good bit deeper than the issue of properly asked questions.

There is a gap however between what is known by most interviewers in the field and what gets recorded. In part this can be attributed to not asking the right questions, not being able to pursue independent lines of questioning, and not assuring the respondent that his or her answers will be completely confidential. These problems are pragmatic ones and I believe soluable.

There are other more difficult issues however. When I asked my most loquacious informant Ernestine, how we might get a better count, she responded, "Shit, Peter, that's easy, just offer everybody a free chicken. Tell em they got to come down and answer the forms and they gets a free chicken. We tired of cheese and butter. Give us some chicken honey!" While Ernestine's comic relief is not possible or likely to be any kind of acceptable strategy it does touch an important theme that has come through these pages. That is that the Bureau, if at all possible, needs to try to meet the community half-way, and develop some kind of reciprocity with the community. The community has got to feel that they have some stake in the outcome of an accurate and successful census count. At this point they do not feel that they do. This sort of effort might involve community education (akin to voter registration efforts) where emphasis might be placed on issues of confidentiality and some attempt to differentiate the Bureau from the police surveys and the like at the local level.

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Part of this reciprocity is recognizing the cultural differences inherent between low-income Blacks in this population and the wider white society at large. Publicity campaigns perhaps, might point out that the acknowledgement of diversity in social organization or community experience is a part of American life and not always somehow a measure of difficiency or social pathology.

An effort also has to be made to convince people that accurate counting of people can effect the kind and type of social services and city services that could come to the community. The point is to try to get the community to invest in the process and develop some basis for trust. I think the Bureau has to acknowledge that the stance that their information is "neutral" is simply not an acceptable or credible position from the standpoint of people in the community, regardless as to whether this position is deserved or fairly applied.

One way of trying to reconcile community and Bureau needs would be some sort of pilot study that would attempt a "categorical" count, of the sort that the informants of this study suggested. (Just a body count, if you will, gender and age. Perhaps asking who stayed in the household last night, asking for how many males and females and what their ages were might generate some more accurate accounting of how many people are actually there.) This might help with much of the non-reporting, though clearly not the internal social organizational problems. It might however, go a long way to demonstrate to the community that their concerns for such things as abuse of confidentiality are legitimate and have some basis in the experiences people in this community have had, and should not be cast aside with arguments based on faith and good will alone.

Perhaps the Bureau would take another step further and sort the community's participation in the enumeration methods themselves. Rather uniformly informants said that they were more likely to give categorical information to a member of their own community. They meant this in two ways. First, use Blacks to count Blacks, something that is already being done. They went on to suggest that voluntary associations, tenants'

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groups, block associations, church groups, and the like, might receive some money in the form of a training grant to educate and develop a core of local enumerators, who would document their own neighborhoods. This model might follow the one used for the decennial count where scores of local people are quickly trained and paid to do short term counting. Obviously, there must be some careful planning here and issues of confidentiality, neighbor to neighbor kind, would clearly have to be resolved, as would other data quality control issues. Neighborhoods would have to be approached cautiously and with care, but I believe such an endeavor might work to get the people of the community invested in the enterprise. Whether categorical approaches might be supplemented later on, after the development of some trust, with more detailed information would remain to be seen.

I emphasize what I'm sure is probably a difficult suggestion because I am convinced that there is no simple way of asking questions or elaborating forms that will really have much impact on underreporting. To paraphrase a colleague, 'changing the forms or trying to trick the informants into giving up information is doomed. It won't work. If we really want to understand non-compliance we really have to understand that it is really related to issues other than the forms used or questions asked.' (There is one level however, on which form requirement can be improved and that is never to ask for a social security number, something that routinely happens in CPS data collection.)

Finally, I think the Bureau can do a great deal to better support the Field Division and its staff of local interviewers. If my exposure is any indication of their dedication and abilities, this is clearly an underutilized Bureau resource. Eliminate the "demerits." Encourage and reward efforts to elicit more valid data, even if it's problematic for the census form. Support the local interviewers and consider allowing them to follow and study people and not "addresses."

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Perhaps these small suggestions might help to move both a reluctant community and an established bureaucracy a little closer together and reduce the underenumeration problem. As difficult as these recommendations might seem, from the standpoint of design and implementation, they might make up for these problems with more valid data, and better good will on the part of a less reluctant community. Difficult though this may be, it might be worth noting that the game of Hide and Seek ends when those who have not been found reveal themselves.

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(1971) "Missing Men--A Comparative Methodological Study of Underenumeration and Related Problems." May 3, 1971, unpublished.

Appendix A: Field Methods and Sample Characteristics

The field research for this report was conducted over a 3 month period, beginning in December 1986 and continuing through late March 1987. The research consisted of contacting some of my informants, from my previous research, and asking them to participate by talking with me about some issues informally and formally. Some of these informants have known for 18 years and others were not known at all, but were referred to me by people in their networks for formal interviews. For formal interviews I spent an hour or more, alone with them, asking a number of open-ended type of questions. In informal discussions I would talk with individuals alone or together.

At the end of this 3 month period I had formally interviewed 23 informants. Included in this research was a day in February when I accompanied a CPS census interviewer on a round of interviews during the on-going CPS for February, which used a questionnaire that focused on questions of employment/unemployment. In total I spent 80 hours in the field, not counting the day with the local interviewer or roughly 8 ten hour days. I mention this to point out the limitations and conditions of this research, but also to make clear the circumstances of the research. I would visit my informants for a long day, during which time I would conduct a few formal interviews. However, we often continued to discuss the interview material and I participated in household events and discussions, as a field worker, in the manner they were used to in the past. When I interviewed strangers, they came to the "sponsoring household" where I conducted the interview after being introduced by a household member I have known. There were additionally 4 informants, people with whom I had kept up a relationship with from my fieldwork days, who now were working and no longer low-income.

While I made no formal attempt to systematically consider categories of informants or issues of representative sampling, I did try to interview different categories of people. Of the 23 interviewees, 9 were women and 14 were men. Of the 9 women, 3 were in the 40-60 year old age range,

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5 in the 17-40 year range, and 1 was 6 years old. For the men, 3 were in the 40-60 year range and 10 were in the 17-40 range, with 1 that was 8. Without question, the older the informant the more information and the more useful the information. As I had found in my field work, the young men and women, but particularly the women, were difficult to get to talk.

The formal interviews were open-ended and began with my posing the problem as directly as I could. I would explain that counting is important as it ultimately relates to community services and funding, something that all but the two youngsters had some vague understanding about. Everyone acknowledged that people systematically withhold information. We would discuss how this worked and why and then I would ask them how they might design a way of getting a more accurate count or what it would take to get such a count. Some of these suggestions have been mentioned above. The neighborhood is located in a large Northeast urban Black community. The housing stock is old and run-down and consists primarily of three unit wooden buildings, "three deckers," or three or four story brick attached apartment building. One irony of the research occurred when I out with the local interviewer. Our first interview (computer generated in the mid-west) turned out to be at the end of the same street where I had spent much of time studying the family of Loretta Williams, for my thesis research. The rest of the interviews were scattered all over the black community, and some in the poor white as well.

I mention this for two reasons. First the fact that I knew the interviewer's neighborhood. This was very important for it gave me a credibility with her from my previous work. I told her openly of my research interests and got her to be quite candid with me about her view of her job and how she did it, as well as to speculate on the nature of the underenumeration problem.

Secondly, my own research data while high valid internally, lacks demonstrable external validity. This recent research however, lead me to feel the patterns revealed initially in my research data are generalizable to

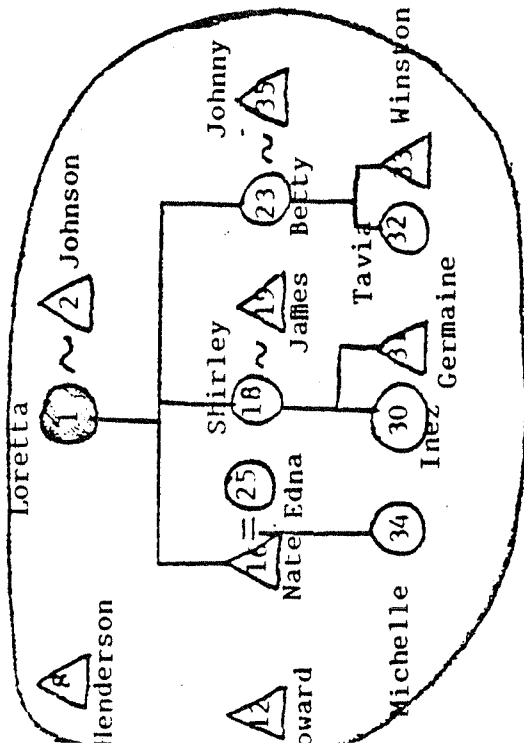
page 43

a much larger and randomly chosen population. I don't, of course, make this claim in any statistically valid way, but do believe I can defend the validity of the arguments here against the claim that my sample size is small, limited, and to a large extent, self-selected. I should like to further point out that I specifically avoided approaching Loretta Williams with this research project and instead used informants that were a part of my previous research, but not anywhere to the extent of Loretta and her "family." I did this so as not to "self reinforce" any of the views of the family developed in one context and impose them on another.

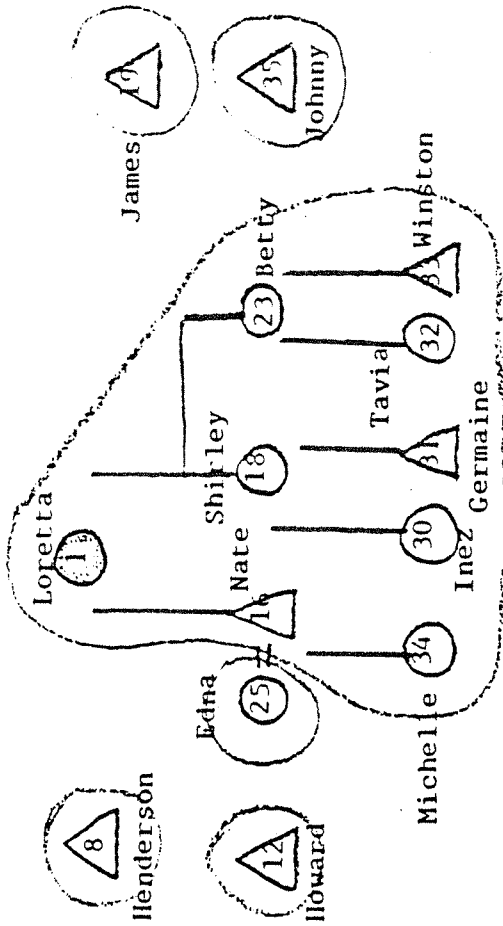
SAME PEOPLE--SOME DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS

[N.B.: Composition of Charts A, C, & D change over time]

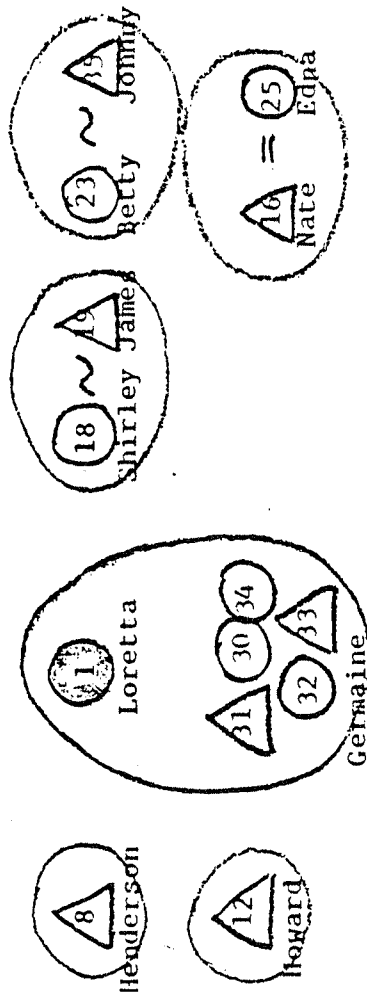
A. Social Family Relationships: Everyone here included. This is an exchange network. People here interact daily and share resources (mostly money, food and clothes).



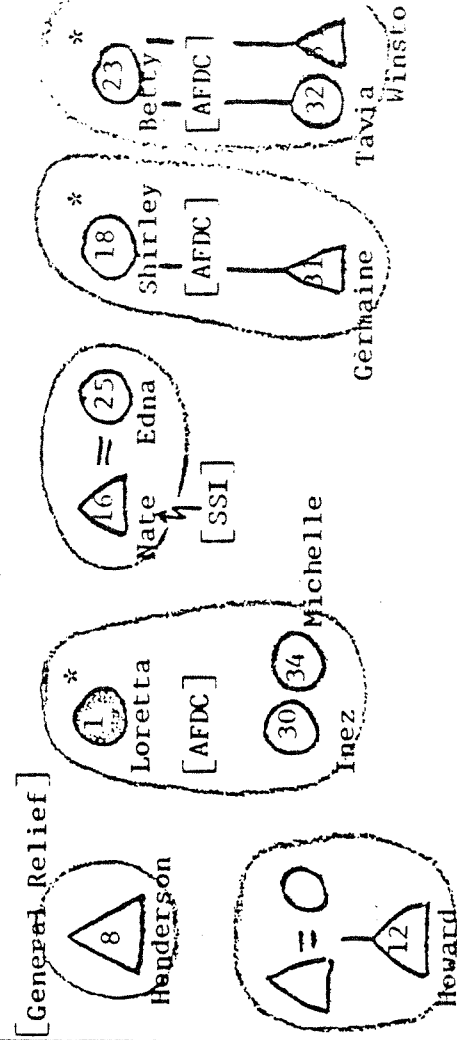
B. Biological Relationships: (Those within circles are biologically related).



C. Where People Sleep/Where Children Are Kept. (Circles here indicate separate addresses. N.B.: All these people "live" within a few blocks of each other, often in the same building, and move together as a unit).



D. "Official" Relationships: Welfare, Schools, Courts, Census; Source of Income.



[No Aid, Work Income]

*Additional Income from undocumented men, usually social husbands.

IMPORTANTE: Favor de seguir instrucciones en este lado del formulario que corresponde a las letras **A** en el formulario del censo a la izquierda.

Instrucciones continuan a la parte atras.



Remueva instrucciones para facilitar uso. No Devuelva instrucciones con el formulario.

LA RECOPIACIÓN DE ESTA INFORMACIÓN ES REQUERIDA POR LEY. Negarse a responder a este documento resultara en una visita a su domicilio por un policia o un oficial de la ciudad y puede RESULTAR EN QUE SU NOMBRE SEA REMOVIDO de las listas de votantes. LEYES GENERALES DE MASSACHUSETTS CAPITULO 51 SECCIÓN 4.

* En el evento que ud. reciba mas de un formulario, favor de enviarnos el formulario sobrante inmediatamente en el sobre adjunto. Favor de revisar el duplicado en la parte afuera del sobre pre-dirigido incluyendo el numero de control del formulario que ud. vaya a completar (el numero de control en su formulario esta localizado a la parte arriba mano izquierada) bajo este simbolo * en la parte afuera del sobre que ud. vaya a devolver.

INSTRUCCIONES

A la mano izquierda encontrara una lista de los miembros de su hogar según aparece en el ultimo censo de la ciudad. Favor de poner al dia, esta información eliminado, añadiendo o corrijiendo. --INCLUYA TODAS LAS PERSONAS DE SU HOGAR.

A RESIDENCIA. El nombre mas reciente (de acuerdo al registro oficial de la ciudad de Boston si disponible) del residente en esta dirección incluyendo numero y nombre de la calle, ciudad, estado y zip code.

B Si alguna parte de esta correspondencia (no el nombre) es incorrecto o incompleto, añada informacion correcta en las lineas.

C Revise la información (lineas 1 al 10) para el nombre de persona(s) (incluyendo su nombre) escrita en la linea amarilla como lo indica: Si la información es correcta, haga una marca (✓) y complete columnas D, E y F. Si el nombre de alguna persona en la lista esta incorrecto o no reside en el hogar. Siga la instrucciones mas adelante:

D RAZA. (✓) Marque el espacio apropiado para raza. W = Blanco, B = Negro, AP = Asiatico, O = pacificoisleña, AI = indioamericano, O = Otro indique la raza.

E GRUPO ÉTNICO. (✓) Marque si o no para cada persona de origen hispano/latino o descendencia (tal como puertorriqueño, cubano, dominicano, mejicano, mejico americano, centro o su americano).

F LENGUA PRIMARIA. ¿ Habla esta persona(s) otro idioma ademas de ingles en el hogar? ¿ Si? Indique idioma en el espacio disponible.

G Para uso de oficina unicamente.

IMPORTANT: Please follow INSTRUCTIONS on this side of form which correspond to the letters **A** on the census form at left.

Instructions continue ON BACK SIDE.

TEAR OFF Instructions along perforation for easy use. DO NOT return instruction portion with your completed form.

THE COLLECTION OF THIS INFORMATION IS REQUIRED BY LAW. Failure to complete the attached census form will require a personal visit from a city official or police officer and FAILURE TO RESPOND may result in REMOVAL OF YOUR NAME from the voting list.

MASS. GEN. LAWS CHAP. 51, SEC. 4.

* In the event you have received more than one census form, please forgive us and return the least appropriate form to us immediately in the envelope provided. Please check the DUPLICATE box on the outside of the return envelope and write the control number OF THE FORM YOU ARE KEEPING TO COMPLETE (the control number on your form is located on the top left of your form under the *) on the outside of the envelope YOU ARE RETURNING.

INSTRUCTIONS

LISTED AT LEFT are all the members of your household as reported in the last city census. Please update this information by writing in all deletions, additions and corrections. --LIST ALL PERSONS IN THIS HOUSEHOLD.

A RESIDENCE. The most current name (according to City of Boston records, if available) of the resident at this address and address includes street number, street name, city, state, and zip code.

B ADDRESS CORRECTION. If any part of the MAILING ADDRESS (not your name) is incorrect or incomplete, enter correct information on the lines provided.

C Check the information printed (LINES 1 THRU 10) for the person's name (including your name) printed on the yellow line as follows: If the information is correct, place a (✓) mark in the column AND COMPLETE COLUMNS D, E, and F. If the information is incorrect for any name listed, or the person no longer resides at your address, follow the instructions below:

D RACE. (✓) Check the appropriate block for race. W = WHITE, B = BLACK, AP = ASIAN or PACIFIC ISLANDER AI = AMERICAN INDIAN, O = OTHER and write in race.

E ETHNICITY. (✓) Check either YES or NO for each person of Hispanic/Latino origin or descent (such as Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Central American, South American).

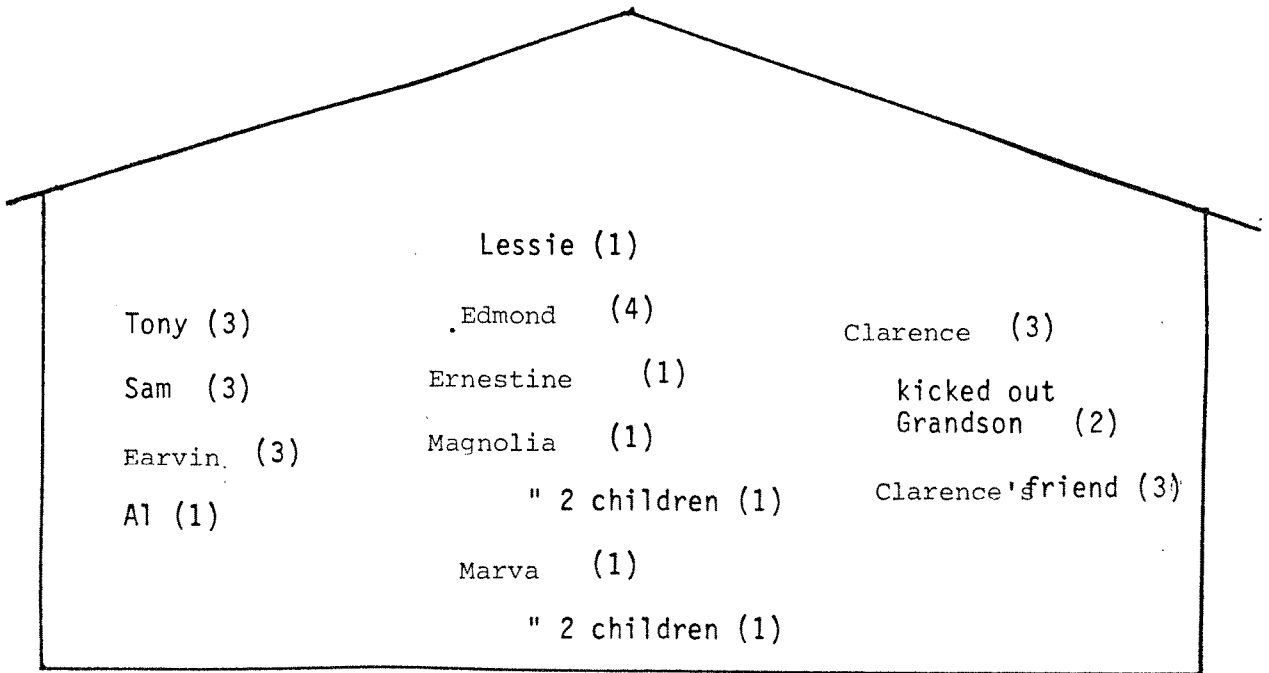
F PRIMARY LANGUAGE. Does the person listed on this line speak a language OTHER than english at home? If yes, write the language spoken in the space provided.

G For office use only.

ROMPA POR LA LINEA PERFORADA

DETACH INSTRUCTIONS ALONG PERFORATION

Appendix B: Chart # 3 a "Lessie's House"

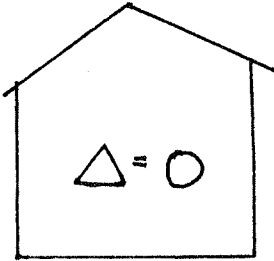


KEY

- (1) Permanent
- (2) Alleged Permanent, but not there
- (3) Semi-permanent
- (4) Dual Household Affiliation

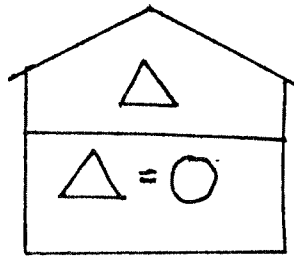
Appendix B: Chart # 4: "One Case of Non-Reporting"

City-view



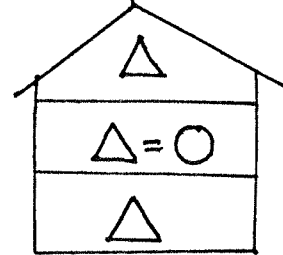
1 household
in single family

Census-view



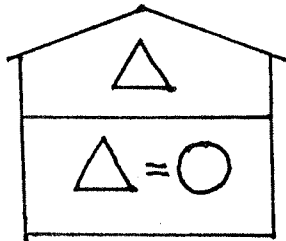
2 households in
1 address

Actual-view



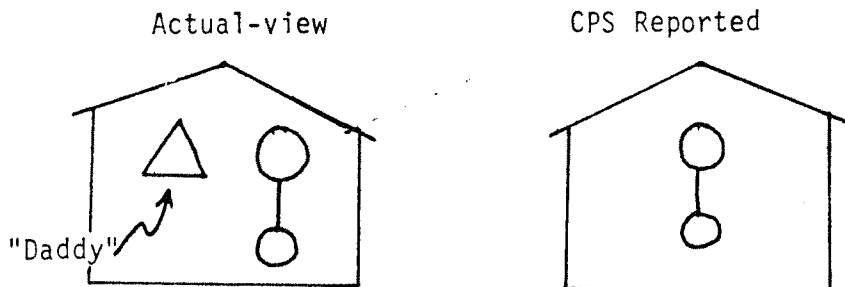
3 households in
1 address

As recorded for CPS

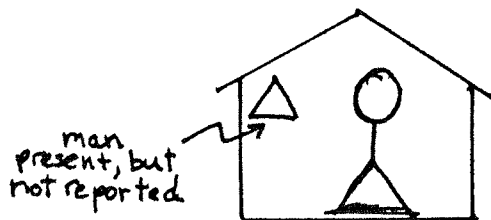
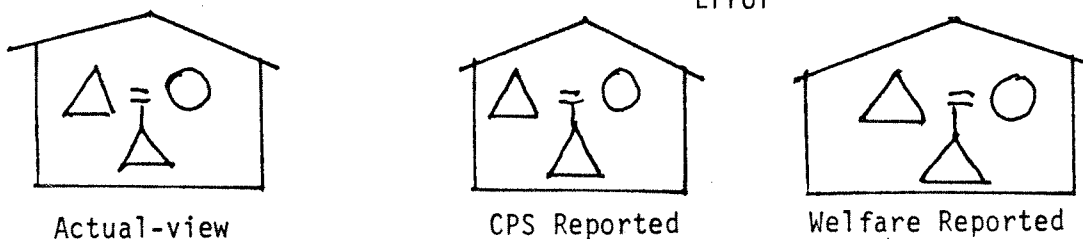


2 households in
1 address

Appendix B chart #5: Second Case of Possible Non-Reporting



Appendix B chart #6: "Case of Young Married Couple Suspected Underreporting: Observer Error



Census Enumerator/Anthropologist Assumption