A COMMUNITY-BASED STUDY OF THE CENSUS UNDERCOUNT

IN A RACIALLY MIXED AREA

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SITE PROFILE

The Alternative Enumeration (AE) which I conducted in Blocks 22, 51 and 52 in St. Louis was in a racially-mixed section (35 percent White, 63 percent Black, 2 percent other) of an otherwise predominantly Black neighborhood. These blocks lie north of a mainly White section of the district and intrude into a largely Black area. I attribute the racial mix partly to the fact that the blocks are in a ward that includes a predominantly White, independently incorporated city and are on the edge of a mostly Black ward in St. Louis.

The blocks include a social and economic mix of relatively affluent White and middle class Black families (primarily in Block 22) and working class and poor Black and White families. Occupationally, we found a mix of professional occupations (law, social services), small businesses (exterminators, construction, painters and carpenters), factory and service jobs, rental, welfare, pensions, and social security as sources of income. The literacy level is relatively high, some having college degrees and many being high school graduates. There is a nearby grade school and a parochial school in the neighborhood.

The housing stock ranges from large, solid brick construction (especially on the northern part of Block 22) through frame houses in varying degrees of repair to dilapidated and boarded-up property (eleven in all). There is quite a bit of "fixing up" of property, but as one owner of several buildings remarked, it is not worth spending a lot of money on rehabbing since property values are low. There is trash strewn in some areas; the neighborhood groups with which I was associated in the study were working with city agencies to provide trash barrels and were reporting large quantities of trash to be picked up. The city was also attempting to force absentee landlords to clean up properties: one of the latter accosted me on my first day, complaining about this policy. Apparently he thought I was a city inspector.

There is considerable mobility in the neighborhood and also high vacancy rates. While mobility was relatively low between the time of the Census and the AE, there has been a great deal more in subsequent months. During the follow-up, several of the households and individuals in households I visited had moved, in some instances individuals had moved out and back again. There were fourteen (14) vacant housing units in all on Census Day and there were three sale signs on properties during the AE; I noted several more during the follow-up. Ominously, most of the permanent movers were younger, upwardly mobile White families. In the 1970's and early 80's, this area of St. Louis was a model of rehabbing and the urban pioneer spirit; however, with economic recession and lack of funding it is losing ground and threatening to become an underclass ghetto.

As in the 1988 Dress Rehearsal Alternative Enumeration in Hyde Park, many of the working class and poor families and individuals who moved apparently relocated in nearby residences. There were several related households in the blocks, both Black and White (see e.g., A51-121, A52-205, A51-105, A52-204, A51-102, A51-103, A51-104); in addition, some had relatives in other neighborhoods in Hyde Park (see e.g., A22-001, A51-032, A22-030, A51-110).

In two households, relatives were looking after the property while the householders were away; in one of these the relatives in question had replaced the former residents at the time of the follow-up. In one other follow-up visit, previous residents had been replaced by relatives as well. In related households, there was apparently much moving back and forth between households.

Because there was considerable internal differentiation between Block 22 and Blocks 51 and 52 in terms of housing stock and social and economic status of residents, in subsequent paragraphs the two areas will be described separately in somewhat more detail. Block 22, the northern-most block, is anchored by a historical landmark. On the north end there are large, well-kept brick houses, where professional and middle-class Black and White families reside. As a large block, it contains about 45 percent of the population of the sample area. On the east side, across from the restaurant, reside primarily middle-class and professional Black families and elderly middle-class White families and individuals. There are also several boarded-up properties on the northeast side, however. On the east side of the block, approximately 50 percent of the population and 65 percent of the households are White, while on the west side, approximately 24 percent of the individuals and 38 percent of the households are White. On the west side are middle-class and working class White and Black families, with the latter predominating on both southeast and southwestern ends of the block. There are six (6) boarded-up properties and two (2) vacant units in Block 22.

Moving further southward, in Block 51 there is a somewhat comparable racial mix, with 42 percent of the population and 52 percent of the households White; in Block 52, however, 31 percent of the population and only 35 percent of the households are White. In these blocks, the White households are comparatively large, while in Block 22, Black households are generally larger and householders younger than in White households, which include a number of older residents. This situation also reflects the generally lower economic status of White families as well as Black families in blocks 51 and 52, with more families apparently on welfare. There were 11 vacancies and 5 boarded-up properties in these two blocks. There were also many vacant lots and areas with considerable trash. According to the Alternative Enumeration, the overall racial breakdown in the three blocks was as follows: of a total population of 257, 165 (64 percent) were Black, 88 (34 percent) were White, and approximately 2 percent were "other" (Hispanic and Creole). Seventy-six (76) households included 35 Black, 35 White and 3 mixed Black and White households, as well as 3 "other."

In areas immediately surrounding these blocks, considerable crime, especially drug-related and homelessness exists. There was a fire in a house across the street on the west side of Block 22 during the AE and also one in a house in Block 52 between the AE and the follow-up. On the whole, there seems to be less crime in the blocks in question than in others in the area and also less abject poverty, although there were some families who needed emergency assistance at the time of the AE. On the basis of the matching report, it appears that the census response was generally fairly high, which is probably a reflection of the relatively high social and economic status in some households of the blocks surveyed.

METHODS

The author’s interest in the St. Louis Hyde Park area of the 1990 Census research is based on a long-term association with neighborhood groups and community activists as well as projects led there for a class in urban anthropology, including a two-week workshop located in and focusing on the area. Other than participation in the 1988 Census Dress Rehearsal AE, I had no prior research involvement in the area. Since the 1990 AE, I have been involved in an effort to coordinate a program for older adults in a newly opened community center located near the ethnographic site.

The three blocks surveyed were chosen because of the unusual racial and social mix and the opportunity to compare information on households, mobility and census-reporting behavior with that in the primarily Black areas of the 1988 study. The 1990 AE took place between May 21 and July 21, 1990; the follow-up began February 6 and ended March 7, 1991.

Convinced of the need and desirability of neighborhood participation in the research, I negotiated a contract with the religiously-based interdenominational organization located in the area, which hired members of the neighborhood group to conduct the count; I functioned as principal investigator, for which I was paid one month’s salary. This complicated arrangement resulted in a complexity of motives and cross-purposes which frequently led to the need for more negotiations. It is my contention that such difficulties are inevitable when interests other than those of the researchers are recognized and need to be addressed as part of the research project.

An issue immediately confronting the principal investigator was that community interests were not unitary, but consisted of competing and often conflicting claims. Part of the purpose of the census research was to ascertain why households withheld information; in fact, one interviewer in particular also occasionally withheld or provided such information according to her own purposes. Since she has resided and been active in the neighborhood for years, it must be assumed that she was concerned with her status in the community--an issue that was far more important to her, and possibly of more potential benefit to the community--than was recording the information. My immediate interest was in getting as much data as possible; however, her needs had to be respected, since long-term goals beyond the project were at issue. Furthermore, in other instances, she was able to obtain names and other knowledge about residents that we might not have otherwise obtained, or obtained as easily. We negotiated on problem cases, with the result that she assisted me in getting the needed information in ways that were not threatening to her position.

In the researcher's view, the Alternative Enumeration can be seen as part of the political process that can result not only in a more accurate count, but also in more socially and politically involved residents; therefore, transactions with participants become an integral part of the research. Such ends are accomplished only by relating to participants as people and not merely as objects to be counted and manipulated. This meant the principal investigator had to adapt to the schedules and needs of community workers, who were in a real sense counterparts rather than merely employees. Thus, we began the surveying earlier than I had expected or prepared for because of the schedule of a key participant who had just gone on work release from prison with the condition that he have immediate employment. One of the reasons the agency had agreed to do the study was to provide employment and for this young man, in particular. He had participated to a limited extent in the 1988 Dress Rehearsal Alternative Enumeration, so I knew that he was reliable. At the outset, he informed me that he believed that we <u>all</u> would have to work as a team; he thought that people would not open their doors to a young Black man, and he would have problems working with the other interviewer alone. I was reluctant to spend so much time initially in the neighborhood; because of our early start, I still had a heavy teaching schedule and worried that the work could not be completed in the time allotted. However, agency's community organizer stated peremptorily that I needed to "listen to the people," and that the trouble with many people who wanted to do things in the community was that they would not listen. Chastened, I agreed to the plan; however, it slowed progress down considerably and later caused problems as we ran out of money before the project was completed. When I made clear that I did not care about hours worked, but only about the completion of the project, both interviewers agreed to work until the project was finished, since they had already been paid for the work; they also took pride in the accomplishment of the survey. Toward the completion of the project, however--before I had a chance to consult with the male interviewer on some questions about his interviews, he was suddenly taken off work release and sent back to prison for some rule infraction about which I could not get information.

Such personal vicissitudes are not unusual when one is employing people from troubled communities; however, I found that the inconveniences and anxieties I encountered were more than compensated for by the quality of the results. Both community workers had been active in the neighborhood group for some time; one was currently president of the group and the other interviewer had enjoyed his work in children's programs, for which there was currently no funding. Both took responsibility for informing the residents of services and activities at the Center. The president, in particular, felt that this was her primary role in the project. While I had mixed feelings about this, I was pleased that we were rendering the service. I had to be careful, however, about running into conflict with agency policies; we were cautioned about encouraging "just anybody" to request assistance, since supplies were limited and earmarked for emergency situations. I asked for specific information about the policies and we agreed to abide by them. However, at this time and later, I perceived a conflict between members of the neighborhood group and the agency on policies. This became more pronounced when the agency director with whom I had negotiated the contract and who had a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the neighborhood--resigned in the middle of our research. This also caused a temporary crisis in our project when the Acting Director questioned our continuing to work past the period of time allotted for the project. We were able to work out an agreement to complete the survey, which I would not have been able to negotiate without a firm understanding with the counterparts.

While such details may seem pedestrian, I believe they are at the heart of what made this study applied anthropological research. The ongoing, reciprocal relationships between the principal investigator, the members of the neighborhood group and the agency, as well as neighborhood residents, made possible an understanding of attitudes, interests, values, and neighborhood conditions which impinge upon cooperation with government representatives, including those of the Census Bureau.

We began by using documents such as city plat maps, which gave us information on addresses and names to check out. I also used a reverse telephone directory in problem cases. We were fortunate in that the neighborhood workers knew some of the families in the neighborhood, as well as people who had contacts with others. This sometimes gave us an "in" which provided information we could not have obtained easily or at all, although, as noted previously, this was not necessarily the case. We attended neighborhood meetings and found people who lived in or near the site who might assist. A student of mine from Namibia attended one of these meetings and caused quite a stir of interest. Another student did a participant-observation study in the neighborhood and interviewed my assistants and some of the workers at the team ministry. These activities helped me to become better acquainted with the people I was working with, to become integrated into neighborhood activities, and to gain more cooperation.

On the first day in the field, a fire in the neighborhood brought out a group of residents; we were able to talk to them while watching the progress of events (we were all amused when two competing insurance estimators arrived immediately after the fire engine and waited more than an hour for the resident to appear on the scene). We spent a lot of time in the neighborhood observing and used our contacts to the limit, but in the last resort, we had to do considerable door-to-door surveying. In some instances, we were able to contact people through children who were outside playing.

Those residents who were interested in getting assistance and in the activities of the agency were generally cooperative with us. One household which received emergency food, for example, gave us a more complete accounting of members than given in the census. Another woman who talked to the neighborhood group president about assistance in utility bills gave information on two children which she had omitted from the census. In other instances, we obtained information that was not different from that reported, but which we might otherwise not have received. For those with whom we had no special or prior contact, we were regarded as suspicious intruders, and would always remain so until we had some entree into personal networks. When I did follow up visits in instances where we had missed people, I became aware of doubts about our purposes. One woman said she thought we wanted to know "how many people in a house," that is, perhaps we were from a regulating body of some type. It is obvious that it would take intensive field work over considerable time to gain confidence in such cases.

Some of the questions to be considered in the current study were:
1) differences in responses to the census by Black and White residents,
2) differences in undercount among Black and White families, 3) differences in mobility in comparison to the prior block studies, 4) causes of undercount of young Black males as well as of other household members. These were investigated using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Qualitative techniques included discussions with neighborhood group and agency members, analysis and interpretation of comments by residents, and observations. Most of the quantitative data is unavailable for discussion, since it is currently being analyzed.

Perhaps the major outcome of the research in relation to community interests was the motivation of members of the neighborhood group to contact and learn more about neighborhood residents, as well as increasing consciousness of leadership roles in that group. The group president took the opportunity afforded by the interviewing to renew contacts with middle-class Black residents, as well as elderly White residents and to enlist their support for neighborhood improvement. Thus, the rather unique situation with regard to class and race that obtained in the neighborhood provided the opportunity to tap potential leadership.

More immediate benefits to the neighborhood should also be mentioned. The team ministry received overhead funds, including some for salaries, at a time when there was a hiatus in their funding. In addition, as a result of contacts made and information given, two neighborhood children went to a summer camp and several families learned about services and about housing rehabilitation arrangements with the agency. We reported uncollected trash to the community organizer, who was working with a representative from the mayor’s office to clean up the neighborhood. Also, a physical fitness program was initiated. The interviewers received temporary employment, and one was led to begin her own cleaning business. Formerly on the board of a community redevelopment agency and active as a block leader, she had recently recovered from a serious illness and was trying to completely regain her social, mental and physical functioning, in which effort she was assisted through working on the project. The other participant is currently out of prison and has a full-time job in the neighborhood; however, the former agency director had confided to me that the man really needed to leave the area because of questionable associations. During the follow-up, the neighborhood group president remarked when we saw him standing on a corner that he should be working instead of standing there, ripe for getting into trouble. The future of this young man is uncertain, paralleling that of the neighborhood and of many young Black men residing there.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (see following chart)

In reviewing which individuals and households were missed by the census or by the AE, as well as those whose residence we could not determine, patterns appear which may be underlying causes of undercount. In several households the census and the AE each missed people, but different people were missed <u>within</u> the same households. It is my view that given the nature of these households, determination of residence at any point in time will inevitably result in missed individuals.

Household "A22-001" is an excellent example of problematic household composition. According to the Census, this household includes a mother, three sons and a daughter. We were never able to contact this female householder. We observed a woman there whom we judged to be about age 45 but she refused to be interviewed. I obtained a name from the reverse telephone book, which was later confirmed by a neighbor who belonged to the neighborhood group and who gave us information about the family. She said the woman's two sons, about age 7 and 8, and a brother in his teens lived in "001" and the woman's mother and other siblings lived across the street. The census enumeration indicates the female householder is 26 and lists an additional son, 12 years old. When discrepancies between the two versions were resolved in the follow-up, the neighbor who originally provided the proxy report revealed that the name listed in the phone book belongs to the same person as listed in the census, but that the occupant uses her nickname and married name, and on occasion, her real and maiden names. The woman we observed was not the occupant, rather it was her mother, about 45 years old, who was apparently taking care of the children.

I conclude that these households are very flexible, with members moving back and forth across the street. Since in follow-up, the neighbor maintained that the woman had only two sons living with her in 001, I would hazard a guess that the third male listed in the census, 12 years old, is her brother, unless she had a son when she was 14 and this older son usually lives elsewhere; otherwise my contact would have included him. Her daughter may also have been staying with the woman's mother during the AE.

These inferences about residential flexibility--as an extreme case of residential mobility--are reinforced by other instances described below and in prior research.

Household A22-008: Here, a young girl who was listed as staying here in the census had left by the time of the AE. During follow-up her hosts reported to me that she had been staying with them because her mother is "irresponsible." They had sheltered her until her mother became jealous and demanded her back.

Household A22-015: The male interviewer was acquainted with this family. By chance he met the nephew who was omitted from the census and received the information about the household from him. His information was on the whole accurate, although he characterized a foster daughter as a daughter. In the follow-up I could not reach the household members; however, the female interviewer recalled that the 015 family had a foster child staying with them around census time. She also explained that the householder’s brother had fathered many children by different mothers, so she wasn’t surprised that a nephew would be living there. Since the nephew was 16 years old, he may not have been considered a family member, but merely visiting, with a "usual" residence elsewhere. Whether he would be listed by his own mother or father is questionable. The placement of an "outside" child may be socially ambiguous for either parent.

Household A22-024: This case illustrates the misreporting of Black males, in particular, in the context of household composition. The matching report does not indicate whether the census information for this household was from a mail return or taken by an enumerator. It is interesting to note that in the "B" file 878-09 is listed by name, but the relationship is incorrect (grandson) and no age is given. The AE record refers to a 37 year-old unmarried partner of the householder. From past experience, we conclude that among reasons for omitting male partners are fears of losing Aide For Dependent Children (AFDC) or other benefits. We have discovered that when the men in question are interviewed directly they usually give their correct status in the household. This was the case in the AE, in which the man was interviewed by the male counterpart. In the AE, the man mentioned he had grandsons, but said they were no longer living with them. They were listed in the census as "grandchildren" by the female householder, but no relationship was mentioned for his stepson (878-10), who was not there during the AE but who had returned by the follow-up. This large household is obviously in flux!

Household A11-028: By the time of follow-up the family had moved away so we could not find out whether the woman’s son, missed in the AE, was there for the census. We had predicted that the male unmarried partner would be omitted and we were surprised that he was, instead, the respondent for the mail return and he listed the woman as his "housemate," himself as head of house, and the boy as a "boarder"; thus, the boy is not claimed as son or even as stepson.

Household A22-029: We first interviewed the son and he said his two (female) cousins lived there, but wouldn’t give their names or other information. His sister later said they did not live there, but they may have left by that time. We were unable to determine whether they were there at the time of the census.

Household A22-030: The woman who worked with me said that two grandsons (unreported in the census) lived here but she wouldn't pursue it; their mother lives in another part of the neighborhood. The interviewer's son knew one of the grandsons, who cut his hair; he gave us his name, but he did not know the other one. We saw one of the young men on two occasions, as well as sports equipment in the yard which would not have been used by the woman or her middle-aged son. We inferred that the family did not want the authorities to know they were staying there.

Household A22-031: I confirmed in the follow-up that two children and one grandchild missed by the AE were probably here on census day. I became better acquainted through locking my keys in the car and getting her help in calling for assistance. She became quite friendly and admitted that she had thought we were trying for some unfriendly reason to find out how many were in the house; she also asked me if people working with the census didn't have to live in the neighborhood. In general, she had apparently felt it wasn't any of our business who was living there. I recalled her telling us during the AE that she was babysitting and that the kids we saw didn't live there. We should perhaps have been less ready to accept this, but we had no way of determining it, and certainly such a situation is common enough in the experience of the interviewers. (It is also possible that they <u>were not</u> staying there at the time, given the household flexibility referred to previously.)

Household A22-032: The census missed a downstairs housing unit and the draft match report incorrectly linked an AE household upstairs at the same address (033) with 032. In 032 lives an elderly woman, correctly identified as to sex and approximate age in the census report (969-01), and also a young Black male who, according to a neighbor, takes care of her. Both were enumerated by the census at the same address. This woman has a winter home in Florida and only lives in 032 in the summer; her caretaker only stays there when she is residence. I resolved that he was incorrectly counted, since he has a usual residence elsewhere; on the other hand, since the elderly woman owns the house and has lived there for years, she should probably be considered a "usual" resident. During the AE, the woman did not include the young man as a member of her household, but she did provide information about her son and grandson who live in an upstairs missed unit (033).

Household A22-033: This housing unit is apparently not on the census record at all. We saw both the man and his son many times, but they refused to be interviewed. As noted above, our AE is based on the information the mother gave.

Household A22-034: In this case, the census lists two grown daughters who did not live there during the AE. The family has since moved, but in the follow-up, relatives said the daughters had not lived there, but the four people listed in the AE and missed by the census had. The four had claimed to have lived there for 9 months. Possibly the daughters listed by the census but not the AE were visiting at the time of the census enumeration.

Household A22-037: For this large family, the information for the AE was given by a son (not counted) on leave from the military. In the follow-up during the Gulf Crisis, there was a large American flag on the door and many cars around the house. The adult female occupant of 037 consistently refused to talk to us; however, the male interviewer got the information from her son and received what I believe is a complete accounting of the household. He initially left out some of the grandchildren, but I saw some there and we persisted in our observations and questions until we got them all. We counted four more people here than were listed on the census.

Household A22-038: We felt that the lone occupant of this household should be considered a resident, although we never saw him during the AE. Both local interviewers knew him as living there and the neighbors said he was there. However, his plants were dying and he hired someone to cut his lawn. He was probably staying elsewhere, but maintaining his property. Whether he would be counted anywhere else is questionable, or whether by census rules his "usual" residence should be elsewhere.

Household A 51-101: This is the only complete household that moved in between the census and the AE. These inmovers had lived here only one month, but were fixing up the property and looking for other property to rehab. They were correctly linked to a vacant house and indicated as not matched in the match report.

Household A51-105: An older White woman gave us information for the AE after her daughter had refused. She did not report a young man whom her daughter had listed in the census. In the follow-up, a granddaughter informed me that this young man had not lived in 105 for nearly two years. Apparently, there was some difference of opinion about who belonged in the household; but because of past experiences that indicate that those who refuse to be interviewed may have given incorrect information on census forms, I chose to accept the evidence of the grandmother and her granddaughter over that of the daughter who was uncooperative.

Household A51-110: This family had moved by the time of the follow-up. The family who lived there during resolution had been interviewed during the AE; they said they were watching the property while their relatives were away. In the follow-up, they said that a 17-year old son (010-04) listed in the census but not the AE had once lived in this household although he had not been mentioned as a resident in the AE, and there was no way of determining whether he was a resident of the household during the census. On the plat map, the surname of the occupant/owner was the same as that of the woman's older son and not the same as hers, so this son was apparently from a former marriage. As mentioned earlier, such young men are highly mobile in residence.

Household A51-121: This is a very large family on welfare, who have received emergency assistance from the agency. The male householder failed to report two daughters and three grandchildren in the census. His stepdaughter lived across the street (A52-205) with other relatives and non-relatives. At the time of the follow-up, this daughter had moved away and a sister who had stayed with her was living here with her father and mother. This is another example of a very flexible household arrangement.

Household A51-125: The female interviewer was working with this woman who needed assistance with utilities. Apparently she did not give much information to the enumerator and did not mention her two children. They had lived there five months.

Household A51-131: Records for two members of this household matched, one correctly, one inaccurately. The AE recorded three additional members missed by the census. It was very difficult to enumerate this household. The elderly mother utterly refused interviewing, saying it led to "trouble." Apparently the census enumerator experienced similar problems, since she/he had no names and had to guess at ages. We were fortunate in that the female interviewer's cousin lived next door and introduced us to the absent owner of the house where his mother and brothers lived. He cooperated and gave us the information, very late in the AE period.

Household A51-136: I happened to meet an adult female of household 136 on the street; they had lived in one unit of a four-flat apartment house for three months prior to the AE. In this building there were one vacancy and two households missed in the census. This is the only four-plex in the three blocks.

Household A51-139: The woman upstairs in the four-plex would not be interviewed, although we talked to her and saw her several times. She was missed in the census.

Household A52-202: A woman had lived here eight months prior to the AE, but according to her daughter, she was away visiting around census. She was looking after the place for her mother, but said with a little hesitation that she lived in 202. She probably stays elsewhere at times, but likely should be counted here.

Household A52-205: The stepdaughter of A51-121-001 lived here at the time of the AE and on Census Day with a daughter, sister, son, and two friends. She had lived here two to three months at the time of the AE, but had moved again by the follow-up.

Household A52-208: Because of a vicious-sounding dog we could not get to the door here, and probably the census enumerator could not either. We saw the boy who lives here, as possibly he or she did, as well. I talked to the woman on the phone, who gave me information on herself, her husband and her son; it was listed under her former husband's name who no longer lived there, so possibly she had remarried. Since no age is given for B52-967-01, it is hard to determine whether this male with her former surname matches with her son in the AE, or whether it is her former husband.

Household A52-209: This unit and household was missed in the census because the woman in 209 rented out her basement and did not report the fact. We happened to see one brother fixing his car across the street and we asked him where he lived. He gave the information willingly.

Household A52-212: This is another family who asked for help. The information was given by a daughter who had her son with her; she said she lived in East St. Louis. She is listed with her son by the census enumerator. Since we interviewed here relatively late, she might have moved by the AE. She did include the male householder, who was not included in the census. There the female householder is listed as "separated." I am fairly certain they are on welfare. They could not be contacted during the follow-up.

Household A52-213: A man (01), matched to the census record by the principal investigator, refused to give the information. We saw in addition his mother, who also would give no information, and a young man and a girl who do not match the census information. The young man said they had been counted at the "other place" and had just come here. We saw no sign of 01’s wife and daughters listed in the census during the entire period of the AE. In the follow-up, the family had moved; I talked to two men who knew the man and who had moved in since the AE. They said that the former resident had a wife and family, but wouldn’t tell me more. This situation is very puzzling, but is another example of a highly mobile situation.

Household A52-222: Another male householder was missed in the census here. The male interviewer knew this family; he interviewed them at another house near the agency where relatives lived; this was fortunate since we never found them at home. It is another poor family, probably receiving welfare payments.

To summarize findings of the Alternative Enumeration Survey, we found there were six whole households missed by the census, including one White household, one "other," one mixed, and three Black households. The White household was missed because the household unit--an upstairs apartment with a back entrance and no regular address--was missed. The "other" household was missed because they lived in a basement with no regular address. One Black household did not return their form and the enumerator was unable to gain access; the other two were living in a four-flat apartment building.

In looking at individuals missed within households where some members were censused, many of the difficulties stemmed from high mobility, both of households and of individuals. In most instances, individuals moved between related households, which were often nearby.

Of the twenty Black households discussed in which either the census or the AE missed individuals, in seventeen, as well as in two mixed households, the most likely cause of these misses was mobility between households. In two other instances, male householders were not counted and in another, a male householder was counted but no relationship or age was indicated.

The fact that more Black men (10) and children (12) than mature adult women (6) were missing in the census reflects the fact that women are the household mainstays and often determine who lives in a household. Teen-age males, in particular, as well as grandchildren and stepchildren in general, are quite mobile and hard to pin down in terms of residence. In this situation, the way residence is defined by the census rules is unrealistic and many individuals who may relocate several times in a year, or have more than one simultaneous residence, are bound to be missed. In addition, whole households moved to housing units occupied formerly by relatives. Thus, we are looking at a type of family organization in which a household is not an isolated unit, but a node in a social network of relatives and fictive or foster kin.

These comments hold to a much lesser degree for White families in the blocks. Of the problem cases described, only three were White families, one was mixed. Among the White families, one woman who did not respond had recently been divorced and remarried; another household was not counted because their unit was missed. In the third case, the information was listed on the census, but one son in his twenties was included on the census by his mother, who refused to be interviewed, but not included in the AE by his grandmother or in the follow-up by his sister. In the case of the related White families in the blocks, however, there seemed to be no question of who lived where. This may indicate a different attitude toward households as separate entities. For White families, the problem cases seem to stem from idiosyncracies, with no discernible pattern.

Only seven White individuals (including two in a missed household and three in mixed Black and White households) and one White household were missed in the census; 28 Black individuals (seven of them in missed households) were missed and three Black households. Thus, there were only two White individuals missed within White households to 21 missed within Black households. This difference seems significant; with more than 1/3 of the population White, one would expect a higher number of Whites missed if all things were equal. The fact that three of the White individuals missed by the census are found in mixed families with a household pattern similar to that of Black families further indicates differences with respect to White and Black households that may cause differential census undercount.

The instances in which male householders only were not counted, both Black, can be seen as a special case of the above analysis, that is, the postulate that high mobility and flexible householders arrangements account for undercount. The fact that only 2 of the 28 Black individuals missed were male householders may indicate that this situation accounts for less of the undercount than is sometimes assumed. In any case, decisions about who should be counted in a household are made on the basis of factors that may be independent of who happens to be staying there at the time; since people move in and out, it would be hard for authorities to check on accuracy for whatever reasons omission are made. Further, it is difficult to know who should be counted as "usually" residing in a household when they reside in several. The important consideration to a family is that a member always knows where to find other family members when necessary and that everyone has somewhere to go.

CONCLUSION

The questions I asked at the beginning of my study can be addressed with some assurance on the basis of the information gained in the AE and follow-up investigation. In the first place, I have found considerable differences in the census undercount among White and Black families, regardless of economic status, that is, individuals were missed in both middle and lower-income Black families in greater number than in White families. I attribute this to a different concept of ’household’ and ’family’ than in the case of White social organization, stemming from different historical and cultural backgrounds, in which a household functions in a social milieu of related households whose fortunes are tied together. In such an organization, the question of where one is actually sleeping and eating at the moment is not vitally important to one’s identity and well-being; what is important is that one is a part of a network in which one’s needs can be met from the time one is born until one dies. Because this is critical to everyone, reciprocity ensures that such needs are met whenever necessary. Under the circumstances, the attempt to characterize household makeup at a point in time is contrary to realities in Black family life. A recommendation I would make is that the census directions be changed to reflect these realities, that is, that alternatives can be offered that cover different household arrangements. The rule of "usual" residence can be modified to include those who may not be counted elsewhere, with respondents being directed to consider whether members in related households are being counted in <u>some</u> household, regardless of which they might be in at the time. If the assumptions on which census forms and techniques are based are made clear, they can be modified to adapt to social organization in ethnic groups other than Euro-American. Since in my study, results indicate that Blacks are more likely than Whites to be missed, those assumptions are apparently biased in favor of the family organization of White Americans; possibly, a recognition of this, accompanied with relatively minor changes in enumeration strategies can result in a more accurate count overall.

PROBLEM CASES IN CENSUS AND/OR AE

Census	Core Householders in Census and AE	In Census, not AE	Resolution	In AE, not Census
A22-001	Female Householder*	Son (12)	same	Bro (14)
Black	Son (7)	Dau (4)	multiple	----
	Son (8)		res.?	
A22-008	Male Householder	Fem NREL	sheltered	left by AE
Black	Female Householder	Black		
	Son (20)			
	Dau (12/16)			
	Son (7/9)			
A22-015	Male Householder	Fost. Dau (13)-	same as	-Dau (13)
Black	Female Householder	----	multiple res.?	Nephew (16)
A22-024	Female Householder	Grandson no age)	-same as -	UMPT (37)
Black	Son (17)	GSO (3)	multiple	left by
	Dau (14)	GDA (2)	res.	AE
	GDA (8)	GDA (1)	" "	" "
	GSO (7)	Son (24)	" "	" "
A22-028	Male Householder	Male NREL	multiple	----
Black	Female Householder	(9)	res.?	
A22-029	Female Householder	----	multiple	niece
Black	Son (21)	----	res.	niece
	Dau (18)			(20s)
A22-030	Female Householder	----	multiple	GSO (20)
Black	Son (39/40)	----	res.	GSO (20)

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------------   A22-031  Male Householder     GS0 (1)
multiple  ----
Black    Female Householder   Dau (19)          res.      ----
         Dau (21/22)          Son (18)          " "       ----
         GDA (3/4)
-----------------------------------------------------------------
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A22-032  Female Householder   NREL (17)         Incorrectly  ----
         (White)              (Black)           enumerated
-----------------------------------------------------------------
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PROBLEM CASES IN CENSUS AND/OR AE

	Core Householders in Census and AE	In Census, not AE	Resolution	In AE, not Census
A22-033		----	HU missed	Male (56)
White			(upstairs)	Son (33)
A22-034		----	HH missed	Male (63)
Black		----		Fem (35)

	SSO (13)			----
		SDA (7)		
	Fem (38)	Incorrectly		
		Sister (40)	enumerated	
A22-037	Female Householder	----	Missed in	GDA (10)
Black	Male Householder	----	census	GSO (8)
	Son (32/33)	----	" "	GSO (4)
	Dau (28)	----	" "	GSO (0)
	Son (23)			
	Son (18)			
	Son (16)			
	GDA (16)			
	GSO (11)			
A22-038		----	Multiple	Male (34)
Black			Res.	
A51-101		----	Inmovers	Male (58)
		----	since	Fem (53)
		----	Census	F NRL (4)
		----	Day	F NRL (5)

A51-105 White	Female Householder Dau (45) Dau (24/25) Male ORL (5) Male ORL (6)	Male ORL (27)	Incorrectly enumerated	----
A51-110 Black	Female Householder Son (12/8) Son (6)	Son (17)	uncertain residence	----

PROBLEM CASES IN CENSUS AND/OR AE

	Core Householders in Census and AE	In Census, not AE	Resolution	In AE, not Census
A51-121 Mixed	Male Householder Female Householder Son (14) Son (12) Dau (10)	---- ---- ---- ----	Missed in census " " " "	Dau (19) Dau (20) GDA (3) GDA (2) GSO (1)
A51-125 Black	Female Householder	---- ----	Missed in census	Dau (5) Dau (3)
A51-131 Black	Male Householder Female Householder	---- ---- ----	Missed in census	Sons/Bros (40, 40, 31)
A51-136 Black		---- ---- ----	HH missed in census	Fem (36) Dau (17) Dau (13)
A51-139 Black		----	HH missed in census	Fem (25)

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A52-202                        ----         HH missed     Fem
(51)
Black                          ----         in census     Dau
(21)
-----------------------------------------------------------------
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A52-205                        ----         HH missed     W Fem
(32)
Mixed                          ----         in census     B Dau
(4)
                               ----         "  "          B Sis
(20)                                             ----         "
"        B Neph (2)                                            -
---         "  "        W Fem NRLS
                               ----         "  "          (27, 3)
-----------------------------------------------------------------
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A52-208  Son (14)              ----         Missed in     Male
(50)
White                          ----         census        Fem
(37)
-----------------------------------------------------------------
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A52-210                        ----         HU missed     Male
(48)
Hispanic                       ----         in census     Bro
(38)
                                            (basement)
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PROBLEM CASES IN CENSUS AND/OR AE

	Core Householders in Census and AE	In Census, not AE	Resolution	In AE, not Census
A52-212	Female Householder	----	Missed in	Male (37)
Black	Dau (17)		census	
	Dau (15)	Dau (20)	Moved to	left by
		GSO (0)	E.St.Louis	AE
A52-213	Male Householder	Fem (35)	Family	left by
Black		Dau (20)	moving	AE
		Dau (19)		
		-----	Relatives	Mother (55)
		-----	visiting	Brother (18)
		-----	during AE	Sister (20)
A52-222	Female Householder	-----	Missed in	UMPT (37)
Black	Son (18)		census	
	Dau (17)			
	Son (13)			

*Some households have both female and male heads listed. This is to reflect my appraisal that the female may be listed as head in one record, the male in another, as well as the fact that an adult male present may not necessary be a head of household or a householder at all times. My designation of two household heads reflects household flexibility and role integration.

To request copies of this report, contact Statistical Research Division, Room 3133-4, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20033.

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