Why Westminster will prove 'hard-to-count' in the 2011 census

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About the research

This report addresses the issue of why Westminster has proven to be so 'difficult-to-count' during previous Censuses and why it is likely to prove to be difficult-to-count again in 2011. First hand research was conducted to reveal the challenges and realities of 'enumeration' in 5, 'hard to count areas' (HTC's). As far as was practically possible, researchers replicated the conditions that real 2011 Census enumerators will find themselves in on the ground, and recorded the experiences they had whilst trying to obtain an accurate population count. Methods closely replicated those that are likely to be used during the Census Coverage Survey that follows the Census itself.

Results were unequivocal. It is highly likely that in the 2011 Census, Westminster will again suffer from low initial response rates and that the population that ***is*** counted may well be quite different from that which ***is not*** counted. Those enumerators tasked with filling in the gaps left by the postal survey, are likely to find themselves confronted by a multitude of physical and cultural barriers, from oblique buzzer-entry systems, to diffident, suspicious or unwilling respondents. And in many cases, enumerators simply could not find entrances and doorways at all. Across the 5 areas looked at in the study, the average response rate was only 22%. If these kinds of rates were replicated in the Census, the majority of Westminster's population would have to be estimated using information gleaned from only 1 in 5 residents.

Why is Westminster's population 'hard to count'?

The research revealed a number of physical and cultural factors that make Westminster an especially difficult place to try and conduct a Census type of survey:

- Many addresses are 'hard to find': Some addresses in multiple-use buildings and blocks were difficult to access. In some cases, a property could be seen but no entrance could be found.
- Properties are 'hard to access': Westminster contains a great many buildings that have buzzer-entry systems and/or gatekeepers and porters that enumerators must negotiate.
- Many properties are 'hard to identify': Informal and/or dense commercial-use properties sometimes made it difficult for enumerators to identify whether or not properties were being used as homes or not.
- Enumerators reported that refusal to fill in forms or answer the door was more likely from 'BME' responders, especially veiled, Muslim women and Chinese. Westminster has a large number of BME residents.
- Awareness of the Census was especially low, especially amongst more recently arrived migrant populations.
- Language barriers: A large number of residents did not speak English.
- Lack of reward: On average only 10% of visits yielded a completed survey.

There is a noticeable feedback effect at work for the enumerators themselves. The relative difficulty of finding addresses and obtaining completed surveys meant that work, in turn, became demoralising. Bad weather and hours of time spent without success meant that enumerators expressed a willingness to give up the work and a desire for the work to come to and end quickly. Given that the difficulties required more effort rather than less, this feedback effect was unwelcome.

Many of these factors, from the difficulties caused by a high-density of commercial properties to those caused by having a large non-English speaking population, will be applicable in many places across the UK, especially in larger towns and cities. Others (like the high number of buzzer-entry systems, and the fast-changing nature of the population) have a special significance in Westminster.

Imputation

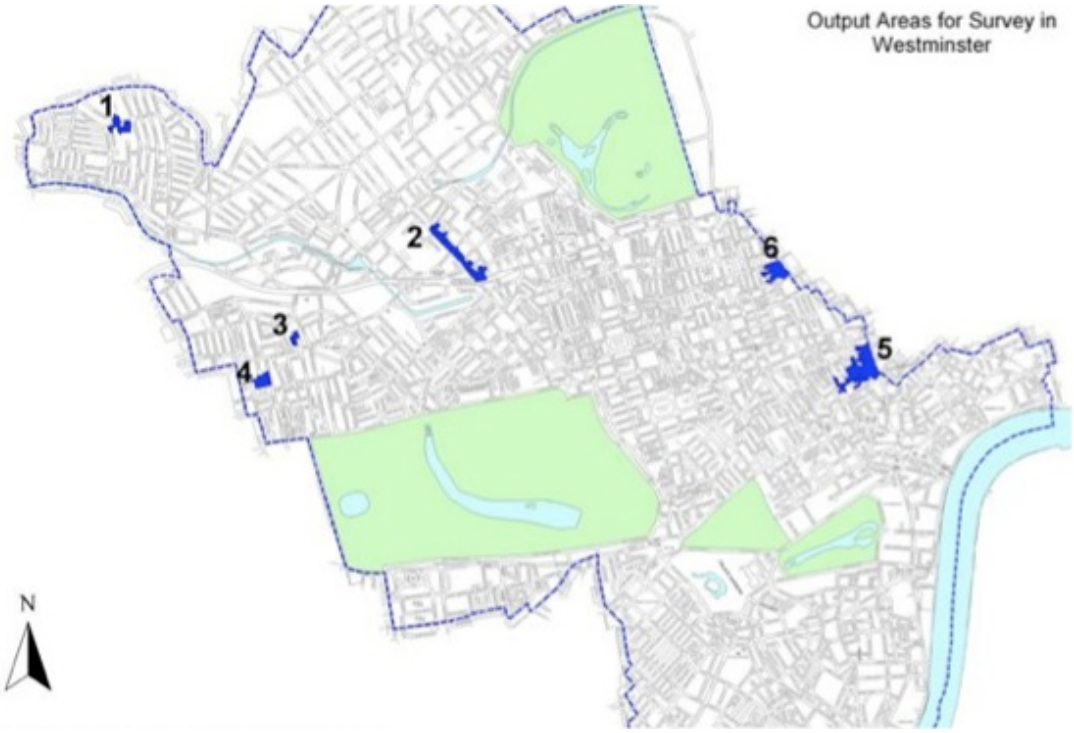
As in 2001, it is likely that Westminster's official population estimate will again be reliant upon 'imputation', the process whereby a population is estimated based on what is known of those who have been counted. The findings in this report suggest that imputation in Westminster is fraught with difficulty. Evidence suggests that imputation will likely give Westminster a lower population estimate than the true number. Those who do not return Census surveys are likely to be very different to those that do. And there is some evidence that average household sizes for those who do not return surveys is higher than those that do. Detailed local insight can give many clues about the kinds of populations residing in HTC areas, including evidence of informal HMOs, but getting accurate head-counts remains difficult.

Recommendations

The report authors have outlined a number of recommendations for both the ONS and for Westminster to improve the chances of obtaining a better population count in the 2011 Census.

- Tailored approaches to areas with known immigrant and/or settled BME populations should be developed, including: multi-lingual enumerators, culture specific communications strategies and detailed area-guides
- Enumerators need to be trained to 'sell' the Census to different respondents
- Enumerators should be trained to deal with multiple 'hard to count' scenarios
- Enumerators should be supported and/or incentivised to work harder in HTC e.g. financial rewards, days off in between thankless shifts etc.
- 'Expert' enumerators should be employed where possible e.g. those who have worked on the local electoral register, or with experience of going door-to-door in HTCs.
- Area-specific methods of imputation (that include **both** local intelligence and local data sources) should be considered
- An open database of examples of 'best-practice' enumeration in HTC areas should be created

Why Westminster will prove ‘hard-to-count’ in the 2011 census



1.0 Introduction

The 2011 Census is fast approaching. Local councils up and down the country have begun their preparations in earnest. Census Liaison Managers and Assistant Census Liaison Managers have been appointed and resources (financial and human) are being fought over and allocated.

This report presents the findings of a research project commissioned by Westminster City Council that aims to understand how Census enumeration in 2011 might work at a local level in Westminster. The research looks at the propensity of residents to respond to government surveys, the experience enumerators have of trying to collect population data on the ground and also shows the difficulties inherent in trying to collect an accurate picture of population sizes in what are considered to be 'hard to count' areas.

The research model used here mirrors the anticipated conditions for Census 2011 enumerators, after the initial post-out of Census forms. It is anticipated that in hard-to-count areas of Westminster there will be a significant number of households from which no return has been received. Follow-up enumerators who will go to these individual households and try to encourage householders to complete a Census return.

1.1 Background

For Westminster, the Census presents a particular challenge. Blessed and cursed with one of the most diverse and most constantly evolving populations in the UK, Westminster has a documented history of causing problems to demographers and specifically to the Census itself[1]. The longer-term residents of Westminster live in myriad types of properties; above, below and behind shops, bars and clubs; protected by multiple doormen and doorbells; and cheek-by-jowl with temporary visitors, students and just-arrived migrants. After the Census 2001, the Statistics Commission wrote a report dealing specifically with the problems of counting heads in Westminster. In his foreword, the chairman of the commission professor David Rhind, was candid:

"…detailed analysis concluded that [the population of] Westminster had been significantly underestimated."

Analysis of data and evidence for Westminster (ONS, 2004)

[1] See for example: *2001 Census: Manchester and Westminster Matching Studies Full Report* (ONS, 2004), *The 2001 Census in Westminster* (Statistics Commission, 2003), *Analysis of data and evidence for Westminster* (ONS, 2004) and *Westminster Population Research 2007* (SQW consulting, 2007).

"The 2001 Census was in many respects the most sophisticated ever conducted. Yet evidence we have examined […] indicates that, when the initial enumeration misses as much of the resident population as it did in Westminster, even sophisticated estimation techniques may not entirely compensate..."

The exact reasons behind the difficulties in counting Westminster's population are complex but they can be summarised according to two central themes: 1) Initial count and 2) imputation.

1.2 Initial count

The primary problem for the Census 2001 in Westminster was that the initial response was low. Many, if not most, residents simply did not fill the Census survey form in. Enumerators had troubles in finding properties and finding residents at all, let alone finding residents willing to fill in forms.

Subsequent research, by a number of different agencies (including ESRO[2]) has shown that there are inherent problems for Census takers in Westminster that derive mainly from the diversity of the population and of the housing stock. There are, for example, people with different languages, cultures and histories who bring different assumptions and in some cases fears, about how to interpret (and whether or not to complete) 'government' forms. And with an ever-changing population, due in no small part to the fact that Westminster is something of a transport hub for the whole of the UK, which encompasses migrants and visitors from all over the world, Westminster's properties change their function and their usage frequently. Westminster residents, perhaps more than anywhere else in the UK, know that they are as likely to be living next door to young people from the far east in one month, as they are to be next to a family from Latin America the next.

Research by a number of different agencies has shown that there are inherent problems for Census takers in Westminster.

This transient and evolving population is often made up of people who are unaware of, or unwilling to complete, Census surveys.

1.3 Imputation

'Imputation' refers to the process by which Census takers calculate populations, taking into account those who have not filled in Census survey. The process is complex but

[2] Behind the numbers: Migrant living patterns in Westminster (ESRO, 2007)

involves combining knowledge of the population that *has* been counted, with information about the number of residential *properties* from which no Census form has been received, and then using them to extrapolate the total number of people that are likely to live in the area.

After the Census 2001, the imputation of Westminster's population caused some controversy. The council challenged the final figure arrived at by the ONS and was at least partially successful in lobbying for the figure to be revisited (and raised) as well as in gaining official recognition that imputation methods employed elsewhere were not effective in Westminster. It was this challenge and the ONS's own subsequent investigation that led to the comment made by Professor David Rhind quoted above.

The research undertaken by the ONS draws many conclusions about the ways in which the process of imputation is made more difficult in Westminster. The most significant of these is the finding that Westminster's population is extremely heterogeneous. This means that extrapolations that are made about those who did not fill in Census forms derived from information about those who did, may be unreliable.

In the end, a final population estimate was arrived at using a method that relied on a 'weighted' average household size (1.98) and an estimate of the number of 'missed[3]' households. However, in a review of the method by Abbot and Brown[4] (2006) it was suggested that whilst the ONS's strategy was appropriate in most cases and the refinements made in Westminster admirable, the reliability of the method in extreme cases (and Westminster specifically) was still open to question.

In the decade since the 2001 Census, Westminster's population has changed beyond recognition.

1.4 Westminster 2011

In the decade since the 2001 Census, Westminster's population has changed beyond recognition. Waves of immigrants from EU accession countries, the Middle East and China in particular have changed the landscape significantly. The period has also seen periods of economic optimism and economic turmoil. If anything, the population of the borough could be even more heterogeneous; the usage of the property even more mixed; and the clandestine or

[3] This figure includes households that were on the initial address lists used by census takers, but from which no census form was received and households that were subsequently identified as not having been included in the census takers' address lists.

[4] A review of the 2001 One Number Census methodology and lessons learnt (Abbott and Brown, 2006)

hidden population even greater, than ever before. The fear, for Westminster City Council is that, as in 2001, the Census 2011 will see a very low initial response rate from Westminster residents.

If this fear is realised (and evidence presented in this report along with the results of the Census tests in areas like Newham suggests this is likely[5]) then Westminster will again have to rely on unreliable imputation methods to account for the bulk of its official population estimate.

Of particular concern to Westminster City Council is the fact that the Census 2011 is going to employ a different method than previous Censuses, namely a mass post-out of Census survey forms. Enumerators will then be used to try and collect forms from those addresses from which no survey form has been returned. The worry is that this post-out method will result in a particularly low initial response rate and that resources for enumeration will not be sufficient to cope with the sheer number of, and inherent difficulty in accessing, properties in Westminster.

Furthermore, Westminster are worried that a number of the concerns they have about the specific difficulties conducting enumeration in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods, in areas with multiple different property types or with multiple different entry systems, or in areas with transient and even clandestine populations have not been properly addressed by the ONS in their preparations for 2011.

There are lessons to be learned and implications to be taken seriously for both the ONS and for Westminster when thinking about how to achieve the best possible Census coverage in the area.

And finally, Westminster's worries extend to the inevitable reliance on imputation methods to calculate its final population estimate. In response to questioning on the subject of imputation and the specific problems with imputation in Westminster, ONS responded by saying that the same or similar imputation methods used in 2001 will be used in 2011 – thus leaving Westminster in the position of having an inadequate methodology being used to calculate its population estimate, again.

The research described in this report represents a specific attempt to highlight and address many of these issues. We

[5] The London Borough of Newham recorded only a 28% Census form return rate in the 2009 census rehearsal (2011 Census: Evaluation of the 2009 Rehearsal, ONS May 2010). The ONS is at pains to point out that the rehearsal did not make filling in forms compulsory and should therefore not be taken as an accurate guide to return rates. But neither do these rates look at the hardest to count areas in Newham and even with significant improvement in 2011 there are very likely to be an enormous number of households from which no return is received after the initial post-out.

look specifically at the experience that enumerators are likely to face when they go into hard-to-count areas of Westminster to follow-up the initial Census post-out. We look at response rates, the specific difficulties that face enumerators trying to find properties and achieve completed survey returns and finally the issue of imputation. Research like this is difficult, not least because the ideal outcome (an accurate population count) is unattainable, and therefore we do not have a benchmark against which to measure the achievements of the enumerators. What we *have* achieved however, is a detailed look at some of the ways in which the Census 2001 follow-up enumeration process is likely to pan out in Westminster. There are lessons to be learned and implications to be taken seriously for both the ONS and for Westminster when thinking about how to achieve the best possible Census coverage in the area.

Hard to count case study 1

Hard-to-count factors:

- Non-English speaking
- Buzzer-entry system
- Lone female

Enumerator experience:

'A lady answered the buzzer in what sounded to me Chinese. I have already tried the same buzzer perhaps 10 times over my previous 4 shifts and not had a response. In this block all of the buzzer labels are written in Chinese script so I have not been able to differentiate and record whether they are business names or names of families/individuals resident in the building.

It is unclear whether she can see me, but it looks as though there is a camera entry phone so I assume she can. I tried to look into it and show her my badge by holding it up to the camera. She is asking me questions, I think, but I don't understand and therefore can't answer. It is also very loud in the street. I am speaking loudly and slowly but I don't think she can necessarily hear me, let alone understand me if her English is potentially poor. She then shouted something loudly in English that I couldn't fully understand (but sounded like 'Its just me and my son, no-one else') and hung up the phone. I waited in case she was indeed going to buzz me in. After a few minutes I gave up and buzzed the next buzzer, but received no response.'

2.0 Method

Below we outline the exact methods used to conduct the research. Our intention is to make clear exactly where the comparisons can be drawn between our study and the likely experience of Census enumerators and demographers working in Westminster in 2011.

It was not practical to replicate Census 2011 methodology exactly, but conditions for enumerators were designed to be as similar as possible to those that Census 2011 enumerators will face. The survey we were asking residents to fill in was not compulsory, of course, but it was presented to householders with the authority of Westminster City Council. Furthermore the survey was short and did not demand a lot of time. As such we do believe that our response rates do set a meaningful benchmark for Census enumerators.

2.1 The five 'Output Areas'

Five areas were identified by Westminster City Council as being exemplar 'hard to count' areas of the borough. They were chosen to represent different kinds of population and different kinds of property within the borough.

Each area was an ONS identified "Output Area" (OA) and contained between 100 and 900 addresses as identified by Westminster's "Local Land and Property Gazetteer" (LLPG). Each area covered only a very small geographical space and contained only 3 or 4 streets that would be walk-able in less than 15 minutes.

Leinster Square

A quiet, well-kept square that primarily consists of large houses divided into flats, some of which are used as student accommodation. Hotels and Bed and Breakfasts are the main commercial presence in this area.

Dart Street

Mixed housing types: privately-owned terraced houses (some divided) as well as blocks of flats and maisonettes belonging to local housing associations. The population is diverse with a high proportion of black and Asian residents.

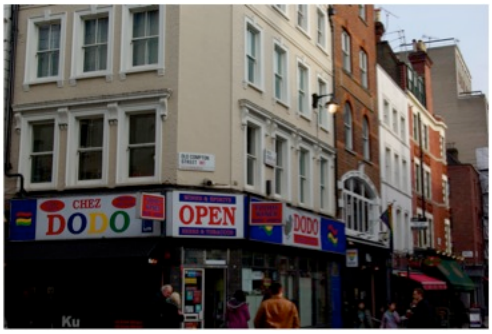
Ralph Court

An Output Area that consists of two, large apartment blocks containing mainly privately-owned flats. All households have external entry-phones. There is no direct street access. Some students occupy the flats.

Edgware Road

Many small family businesses with households situated above line this stretch of the Edgware road. It is known as an area that is home to a large Arab and middle-eastern population.

Soho



Soho is an extremely busy area in central London that is compact in layout, bringing together businesses and varying residential properties on compact streets. It is a demographically mixed area with a large itinerant population.

2.2 The 'enumerators'

Five 'enumerators' were employed to explore each of the five areas and try and obtain as accurate a population count as they could from each one. Each enumerator was given their own specific area and all of their work was conducted only in that one area.

In order to recruit 'Census Collectors' the ONS has appointed Capita. Capita will produce an 'attraction strategy', which will include working with Job Centre Plus and their partners, in addition to working with Local Authorities and local community organisations to identify individuals with appropriate skills and local knowledge.

We recruited our enumerators through local community organisations, personal networks and social networking sites. They were all recruited to be currently unemployed, or engaged in temporary work - and felt that they would have applied for census type of work if they were aware of it. All of them have good interpersonal skills - although had never done this sort of work before. One has some experience working as a market research recruiter (qualitative work).

They were three women and two men. Two of the women had experience working in field research. The other was a full-time post-graduate student. One of the men was a full-time musician, with a degree in maths from Cambridge University and the other worked in construction but had recently been made redundant due to the recession and had worked in a succession of temporary jobs since.

2.3 Training, support and pay

The Census Collector role requires working at various times, including up until 8pm in the evening (Monday – Saturday) and 10 am – 4pm (Sunday). Census collectors are likely to be employed in two batches – with some roles lasting 6-

weeks and others 4-weeks. They are likely to be paid £7.41 - £10.42 depending upon location.

We recruited enumerators to work similar shifts to those required by the Census Collectors, although their employment period was a maximum of 5-days. They also weren't required to work the shifts concurrently, and could choose to stagger their shifts. In this way, their working patterns may have been more similar to those of part-time Census Collectors. In feedback sessions, our census enumerators made it clear that they felt that being able to stagger their shifts and days of work increased their motivation (as they felt refreshed and reinvigorated after taking a break of 24 hours) and their psychological preparedness to return to 'un-answering households'.

Our enumerators were paid approximated £10.50 an hour for the training, enumeration shifts and the feedback sessions. We also paid for their travel and subsistence expenses.

Training: All Census Collectors in the 2011 Census will be required to complete e-learning and class room training. It is our understanding that the e-learning component will consist mainly of education around the accurate completion of the census form. The classroom training will involve practical training, health and safety briefings and 'door-step' interaction role-plays.

All of our enumerators completed a ½-day training workshop, held at the ESRO offices and led by Senior Researcher, Becky Rowe. The session included an introduction to the purpose and objective of the work, a health and safety briefing focussing on the safety precautions they needed to take as lone workers and a question and answer session surrounding potentially difficult or challenging situations or respondents. We did not consider it necessary to have an e-learning component to our training; however, all enumerators were recruited to be IT literate.

All of the training was backed with research materials that explained all of their responsibilities and also with a set of visually interesting templates to record data. The training and the materials were designed to reinforce each other.

During fieldwork, enumerators were given all of the materials they would need to complete their data collection in a fieldwork pack that included:

- Data collection books
- Clipboard
- ID card
- Questionnaires
- Maps of the area (broken down to individual properties)
- Health and safety guidelines for interviewers

- Address lists and visitation record
- Pens

Enumerators were also introduced to, and given contact details for, 3 different members of ESRO staff who were available at all times to provide support and feedback if they had questions or difficulties doing the work. This resource was utilised several times, though there were no major problems with the work itself. This phone support was backed by field visits that involved ESRO's experienced researchers spending time with each enumerators providing care (teas and coffees, for example), support and guidance.

2.4 Schedule

Each enumerator was asked to work 6 different 4-hour shifts in their area. These shifts were conducted in one of the following time slots:

- 8am – 12pm
- 12pm – 4pm
- 4pm – 8pm

The six shifts were all conducted within a two-week period. Enumerators could choose when to do each shift but they were asked to do at least one weekend shift and to do at least one shift in each of the three time slots.

2.5 Job role

The job role for enumerators who took part in our study was a combination of the 'Address Checker' role and the 'Census Distributor' or 'Census Collector' role in the census methodology. In the 2011 Census 'Address Checkers' will be required to verify addresses; checking the address exists, adding new addresses and checking communal establishments – noting changes or additional details about addresses. Census Distributors will be responsible for hand-delivering census forms for households, and Census Collectors are responsible for contacting householders, knocking on doors or ringing doorbells to follow-up the non-return of completed forms.

In the design of the methodology we had concerns that combining these different roles may have put additional pressure on our enumerators, as not only were they required to keep track of the addresses but also trying to ensure that questionnaires were filled in, at the same time. However, in feedback, enumerators felt that is was a good thing that they could do both things at once as it meant that they felt more in control of their address lists and felt they could better overcome address-related problems. They still found the address lists stressful, but this was mainly due to the poor

quality/ordering of the lists rather than the combination of the two roles.

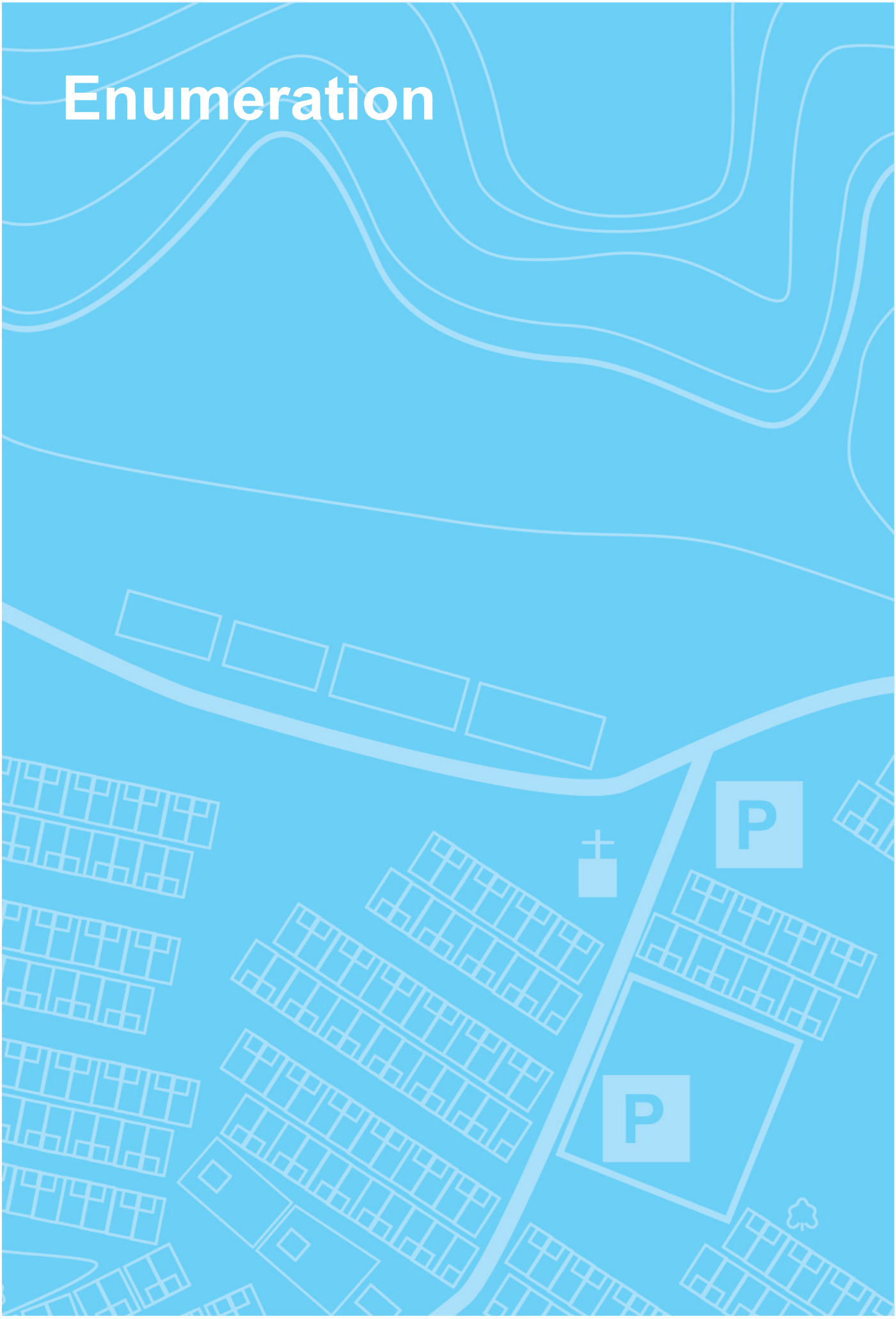
The enumerators were asked to record three types of data then: Addresses and visits, questionnaires and their own personal mood.

Addresses and visits: Each enumerator was asked to record the numbers of visits they made to each address, whether they had managed to complete a questionnaire for each address and also to make notes about anything significant that happened during each visit. They were also asked to record when they could not find an address or when they found an address on the ground that did not exist on the address lists given to them.

Questionnaires: The primary task, from the point of view of the enumerators themselves, was to visit every address on their address lists (which were matched to the OAs from the LLPG) and complete a short (10 question) survey with a householder from each one. The questionnaire contained questions about the number and ethnicity of people living and staying at the address, as well as some attitudinal questions about filling in surveys.

Moods: The enumerators were also given ‘mood books’ containing some simple sliding scales and charts on which to record their mood during the fieldwork. This allowed us to track those things that made the enumerators feel good and bad during their work, as well as record the moments at which they felt more or less motivated.

Enumeration



3.0 Addresses

Initially researchers were provided with 5 separate address lists, one for each of the different OAs. The LLPG address lists were not provided in any kind of logical order and did not provide, in any sense, a guide for walking around the areas. This situation is likely to be one that faces all of those involved in the follow-up 2011 enumeration exercise. It was also difficult to decipher the exact number of addresses in each area from these initial lists. We were aiming here to replicate as far as possible the likely presentation of address lists to enumerators and their managers.

With the needs of the enumerators in mind, ESRO rebuilt the address lists, providing a more logical, alphanumeric order for each of the enumerators. This took at least one half day to one whole day of work for each of the OA address lists, using an Excel spreadsheet. However, these revised lists still did not constitute a 'walking order' for the enumerators – merely an easier list for referencing.

The enumerators attempted to find each of the addresses and also made notes of where they found front doors and addresses that did not appear on these LLPG address lists. They also made a note of where addresses were in commercial usage.

3.1 Numbers of addresses

The five areas broke down as follows:

OA area	A. Number of addresses on original LLPG address list	B. Number of addresses on LLPG list that were not found by enumerators	C. Number of addresses found by enumerators that were not on LLPG list
Leinster Square	141	17	12
Dart Street	153	13	0
Ralph Court	210	29	3
Edgware Road	481	197	11
Soho	863	343	55

Table 1. Addresses

The very high numbers of addresses that were on the original LLPG address lists but could not be found by our enumerators on the ground, suggests that matching address

lists to the physical realities of buildings and front-doors is not simple. Soho presented a particular challenge, with many addresses being simply inaccessible. In many cases, the enumerators could see where addresses *might be* from the outside of a building, but found that entrances were concealed, invisible or they simply could not find any way to get to them. At other times gaining access to buildings involved going through private shops or business, often blocked by staff who were not happy to let people through.

3.2 Commercial addresses

All of the enumerators were asked to record those addresses on their address lists that were ostensibly commercial addresses. These addresses were then compared with the best lists of commercial properties in each OA that Westminster could come up with. There are a number of problems inherent in comparing the two lists however.

- Enumerators could not always find every address, especially in those OAs that contained high numbers of commercial addresses.
- It was not always easy to tell from the outside if a property was being used commercially or not.

Furthermore, although interesting for Westminster City Council in terms of tracking the commercial uses of different properties, the kinds of anomalies thrown up on a door-to-door basis are not useful for calculating many of the numbers we present in this report:

- Census enumerators are likely to get the kinds of property lists that were provided by Westminster to our enumerators, not ones that have been checked and revised at a door-to-door level.
- We cannot be sure that the enumerators found every single anomaly, since so many doors were not answered and addresses not found.

For these reasons we have used the commercial address lists provided by Westminster, and subtracted them from the total number of addresses provided by the LLPG, in order to calculate a baseline figure for the number of properties from which we would expect a completed questionnaire. In the table below we have also included the number of commercial addresses that were identified by the enumerators in order to show again the scale of the discrepancies between local government data and the realities on the ground in hard-to-count, central London, OAs.

Given the experience on the ground of locating addresses from the address list, it is recommended that Westminster undertake further investigations to identify potential improvements.

In many cases, the enumerators could see where addresses *might be* from the outside of a building, but found that entrances were concealed, invisible or they simply could not find any way to get to them.

"There is total confusion. Addresses don't seem to exist. This is like re-writing the AtoZ."
Enumerator's mood diary

OA area	No. of Addresses from LLPG	Commercial (Westminster)	Commercial (Enumerators)
Leinster Square	141	8	12
Dart Street	153	2	2
Ralph Court	210	2	0
Edgware Road	481	58	85
Soho	863	291	253

Table 2. Commercial addresses

Hard to count case study 2

Hard-to-count factors:

- Multiple buzzers
- Informal HMO's
- Unwilling, suspicious respondents

Enumerator experience:

'I stood outside the block waiting for an answer from flat 5, having had no response from numbers 1 through 4. I had been waiting for about 2 minutes when someone finally answered. I had assumed it was number 5, but from the names on the bell realised that it had to be number 3. I hoped! They finally agreed to let me in, following a lengthy explanation, and I went up in the lift to their floor.

A young man of about 19 answered the door to number 5 after several knocks. He said that he had heard me buzz yesterday a few times too. I told him who I was and what I was doing and he agreed to participate, but I got the feeling it was because I was there already standing in the door. As we began going through the questions he became increasingly monosyllabic and was fairly obviously trying to get me to finish. I asked how many people lived in the flat as part of the flow of questions he said he 'not sure really.... 3 I guess, there are loads of us in this building'. Having already had a look into the room behind him that opened off from the hall it seemed fairly certain that there were several more than 3 students resident in the property.

He became increasingly wary as we continued and eventually said 'I've got to go now and almost slammed the door in my face.'

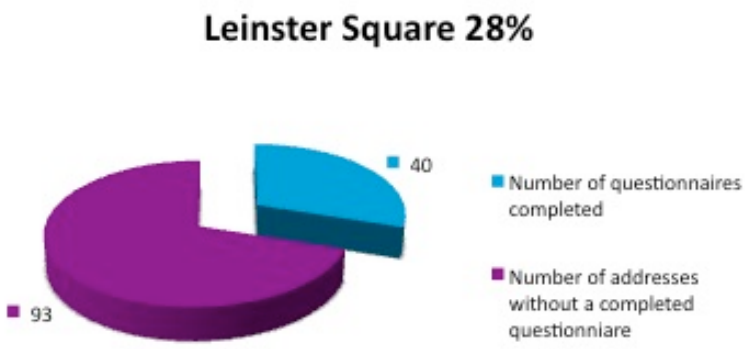
4.0 Enumeration efforts

This section looks at the success enumerators had in finding residents willing to complete our short questionnaire and the number of visits they made to the different front doors in order to achieve what the rates of return they did.

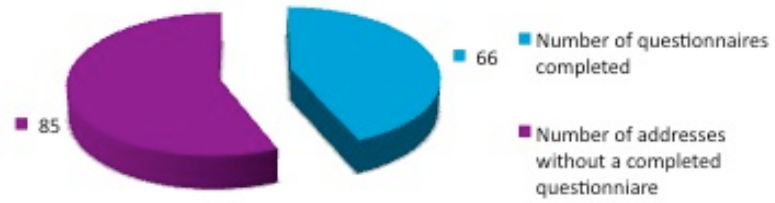
4.1 Achieving questionnaire returns

As a proportion of the number of addresses on the address lists, the number of questionnaires that were filled out was disappointingly small. This figure becomes even more disappointing in light of the number of visits that were made to each address. The greatest number of returns came from the Dart Street OA. Here 66 questionnaires were completed from a total of 151 addresses. This represented a return rate of 44%. The lowest number of returns came from the Soho OA where only 3% of the addresses yielded a questionnaire (19 questionnaires from 863 addresses).

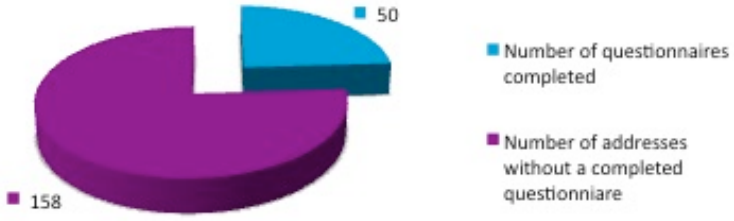
The pie charts below illustrate the number of completed questionnaires in relation to the overall address list (where a completed questionnaire also represents an address):



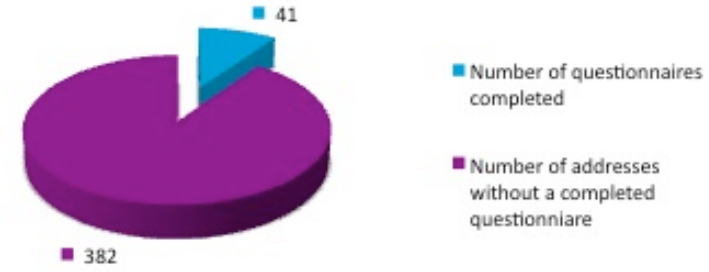
Dart Street 44%



Ralph Court 24%



Edgware Road 10%



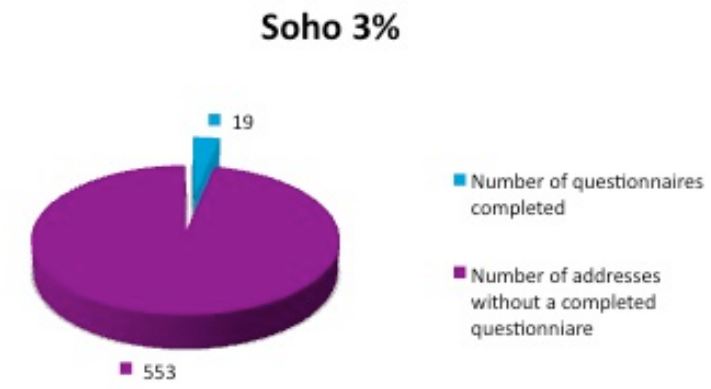


Figure 1. Proportion of addresses yielding a completed questionnaire by area

The range in response rates here reflects the differences between the different types of property in the different areas and the different types of people inside those properties. The enumerator in Dart Street for example, spent a great deal of time building a rapport with local residents. She became trusted by residents and may have been more successful as a result, as neighbours passed on information that our enumerator could be trusted to each other. Neighbours in Soho however did not seem to form a coherent social network or group that could be explored or exploited in this way.

Immersive methods like that used by the enumerator in Dart Street also rely on the enumerator being able to spend a significant amount of time in a relatively small area, an option that may not be open to Census enumerators.

The success rates are summarised in the table below:

Area	% of addresses associated with a completed questionnaire
Leinster Square	28%
Dart Street	44%
Ralph Court	24%
Edgware Road	10%
Soho	3%
Average	22%

Table 3. Success rates

With such a concentration of time and effort placed in such small areas, one might have expected to have achieved a

greater than 50% return rate in at least one of the areas. But this was not the case.

4.1 Attempts

In this section we look at the amount of work our enumerators had to put in, in order to achieve the number of questionnaire returns that they achieved. The standout finding is that an enormous amount of effort was required of the enumerators in order to complete quite meagre numbers of questionnaires. It raises the question of how much time and effort Census enumerators will have and what the likely 'return on investment' might be.

An enormous amount of effort was required of the enumerators to achieve what were, in many cases, meagre returns.

"She said she was coming…. I'm still waiting… I feel like giving up."
Enumerator's mood diary

Enumerators were asked to record the number of times they returned to each property and the number of times the door was answered (either physically or by an entry phone system). Every instance of a door being answered was recorded, even if the enumerator did not manage to successfully complete a questionnaire.

The table below illustrates the number of attempts made by each enumerator over their six shifts, the number of times their knock was answered and the number of questionnaires they were able to complete.

Area	No. of atttempts	No. of doors answered	No. of questionnaires completed	No. of questionnaires completed as a % of the number of attempts
Leinster Square	947	73	40	4%
Dart Street	443	109	66	15%
Ralph Court	240	66	50	21%
Edgware Road	327	181	41	13%
Soho	432	50	19	4%

Table 4. Numbers of attempts to raise responses

The dramatic nature of these results becomes more powerful when illustrated as a bar chart (see below). The average percentage of attempts that yielded a successful questionnaire across the different areas was only 11%. Essentially this means that for every 100 attempts to knock on a front door, only 11 resulted in a completed questionnaire; demoralising work indeed.

It is obvious that the amount of effort made by each of our enumerators was very large. Far from giving up quickly, they made literally hundreds of attempts to get in touch with householders, yet the highest success rate of all the enumerators was only 21%. To make their job even harder, it can clearly be seen that even when the enumerators had success in getting someone to answer the door to them, they were by no means guaranteed to be successful in getting a completed questionnaire.

This was especially true on the Edgware Road where there were clear indications of the effect of 'culture' on the likelihood to respond to questionnaires. Our enumerator in the Edgware Road OA frequently ran into women who did not want to complete the survey form. Given the obviously Arab demographic of the Edgware Road, it is safe to assume that this finding may be specific to this area and may be due to cultural factors, since none of the other enumerators reported this finding to such a large extent.

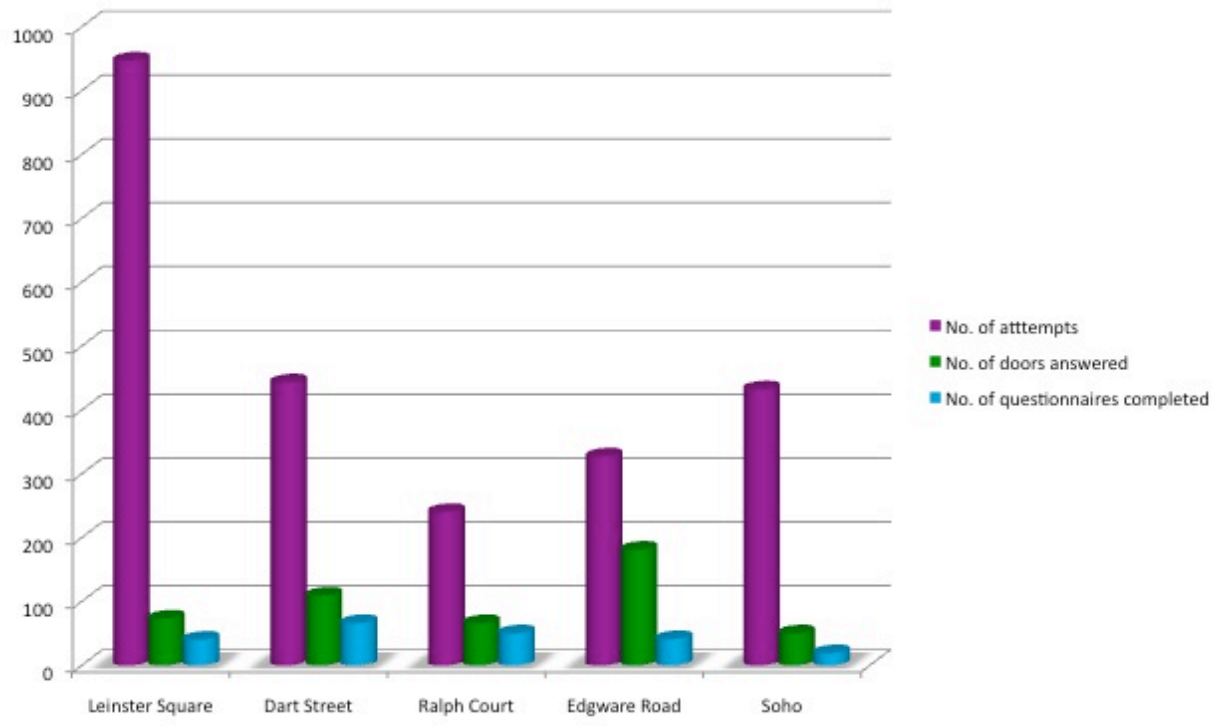


Figure 2. Numbers of attempts and successes

In some cases, householders simply did not want to be bothered by anyone, let alone fill in surveys, either at night or in the day. As we shall see, the low response rates does not mean that nobody was in.

5.0 Questionnaire results

In this section we outline the key findings from the questionnaires that were filled in during our enumeration exercise. The questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

The results come with a significant health warning. First, the numbers of completed questionnaires in certain areas are so low that to draw any conclusions from them about the demographic or attitudinal nature of the population of certain of the OAs as a whole, would be purely conjecture. Second, the people who completed questionnaires were a self-selecting sample. They all fell within the category of people who were available and willing to complete a questionnaire at their door. As we know, this encompasses only a small minority of all the people that lived in the areas and therefore their answers should not be seen as representative of the majority.

In particular, only 19 questionnaires were returned from the Soho OA and any results for this area should be seen in this context. We include disaggregated data from these questionnaires only for the sake of completeness.

However 200 questionnaires were completed, and the number of people counted and the demographic data collected, do allow us to highlight certain trends and with them, certain difficulties, that are likely to face Census enumerators and Census statisticians alike. Of especial significance are the findings that suggest that to take survey responses from the minority of the population (in areas like these) as being representative of the majority of the population in that area, is likely to lead to imputation formulas that **underestimate** the true population size.

5.1 Average household sizes

The numbers of people counted in each area should not be seen as in any way complete of course, but they do provide a baseline for any future counts and a basic measure against which final Census imputation formulas can be compared.

The table below shows the number of people counted in each area and the average household size of those households that provided us with a completed questionnaire.

	No. of residents	No. of households	Average household size
Leinster Square	59	40	1.5
Dart Street	238	66	3.6
Ralph Court	129	50	2.6
Edgware Road	126	41	3.1
Soho	25	19	1.3
TOTAL	577	216	2.7

Table 5. Average household sizes by area

The different average household sizes again reflect the different types of properties and property uses in the different areas, as well as the different demographics. Obviously the Soho and Leinster Square OAs were home to a significant number of very small flats, given to single occupancy. Dart Street and Edgware Road were more likely to be home to families.

One interesting point of comparison with the 2001 Census figures here, is that the overall average household size across all 216 questionnaires was 2.7, whereas the average household size used to impute and estimate Westminster's overall population after the 2001 Census was 1.98[6]. This is a very large discrepancy that perhaps deserves further examination. In this report we suggest that 2.7 itself could still be an underestimate of the true average household size in these OAs, but there are also factors that could mean that the real average household size might be lower than 2.7 e.g. the relatively low proportion of households captured in Soho where the average household size might be smaller.

5.2 Ethnicity

The questionnaires administered by our enumerators contained a question about ethnicity that closely mirrored that used in the 2001 Census. The table below shows the broad ethnic break down of those households that completed the questionnaire[7].

[6] *2001 Census: Manchester and Westminster Matching Studies Full Report* (ONS, 2004: p.10)

[7] The householder who answered the questionnaire made a decision on ethnicity that represented the whole household.

Area	White[8]	Asian[9]	Mixed race[10]	Black[11]	Other[12]
Leinster Square	24	4	2	2	7
Dart Street	14	12	3	24	10
Ralph Court	33	9	0	2	7
Edgware Road	20	13	1	2	1
Soho	13	0	1	0	4
TOTAL	104	38	7	30	29

Table 6. Ethnicity

Overall, the ethnic breakdown across all of the 208 households that answered the question about ethnicity is illustrated in the pie chart below.

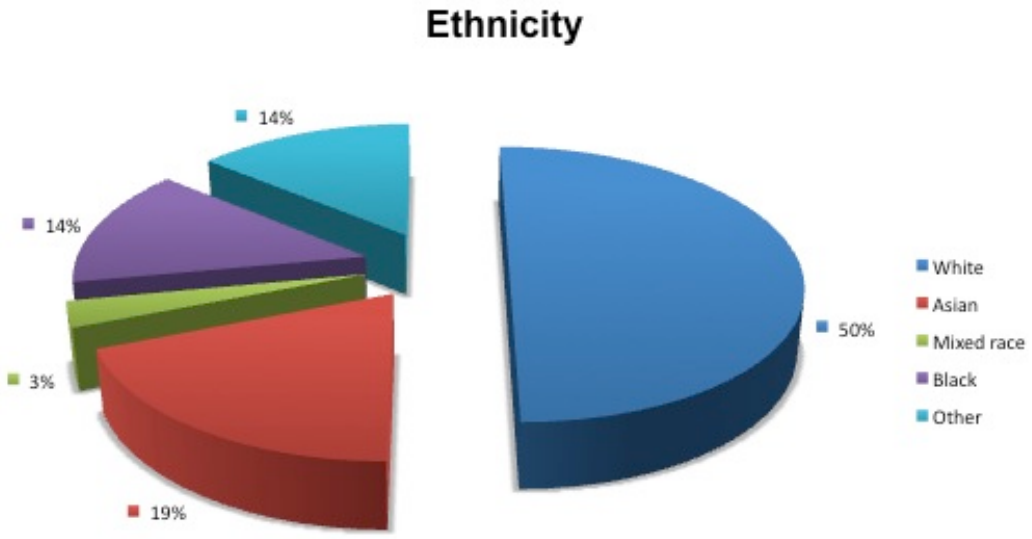


Figure 3. Ethnicity

The majority of our respondents were 'white'. At first glance this breakdown may not seem to be particularly surprising, but results from specific areas throw up some serious

[8] 'White' includes those who identify themselves as 'British', 'Irish', and 'Other White'
9 'Asian' includes 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi' and 'Other Asian'
10 'Mixed race' includes 'White and Black Carribean', 'White and Black African', 'White and Asian' and 'Other Mixed'
11 'Black' includes 'Carribean', 'African' and 'Other Black'
12 'Other' includes 'Chinese' and 'Other ethnic group'. We recognise that this category is very weak for a place like Westminster where there is such a large Chinese population.

questions about the data. For example, 54% of the Edgware Road respondents were white and only 35% identified themselves as Asian. This is surprising since the OA in question is in the heart of London's Arab community and Arabs run the vast majority of the local shops and businesses. The enumerator confirmed that almost all of the people who answered the door to her looked Middle Eastern and lived above Middle Eastern shops and restaurants. Many of them simply refused to fill in questionnaires. In other words, the response rates from Arab households may have been very low, skewing the ethnicity figure away from the 'Asian' category and towards the 'white'.

The same could be said for other areas to a greater or lesser extent. All of the enumerators said that those who refused to answer questionnaires were often BME. People that enumerators recognised as being Chinese or Muslim, they said, were especially likely to refuse to fill in forms or never to open the door. In Soho especially, the enumerator said that she encountered many doorbells with Chinese names but that very few of them ever answered the door.

One effect of this over-representation of white respondents from certain areas may be a reduction in the average household size. The table below shows the average household size broken down by ethnicity. It clearly shows that the average household sizes amongst Asian and Black households (the two largest groups in our study after 'white') are significantly higher than that of 'white' households. Furthermore, previous research by ESRO conducted in Westminster shows that the most difficult to count immigrant populations live in much larger households still, and it is possible that these very large immigrant households are not captured in this study and will not be captured in the Census[13].

	White	Asian	Black	Other
Average household size	2.4	3.2	3	2.7

Table 7. Average household size by ethnicity

What this means is that the average household size is an underestimate of the true average household size in these areas, due to the over representation of 'white' respondents in our survey. This problem may well be mirrored in the 2011 Census.

5.3 Residence

Another feature of those that we received questionnaires from was that they were far more likely to be permanent

[13] Behind the numbers: Migrant living patterns in Westminster (ESRO, 2007)

residents than not. Some 72% of the sample described themselves as 'permanent residents'. Amongst Black and Asian respondents this was also true with as many as 87% of Black respondents describing themselves as permanent residents.

It is difficult to know whether this high proportion of permanent residents (as opposed to temporary visitors, lodgers or short-term tenants) accurately reflects the local populations or not. We know from previous studies that there may be large numbers of short-term or temporary residents in Westminster, but we cannot be sure whether our enumerators went any way towards capturing them. One indicator that they are perhaps not being captured, is that many migrants live in very large households[14], whereas our enumerators found only 10 households with more than 6 people in.

Housing being sold in an area of high immigration

Some areas also yielded more temporary visitors than others. For example, 47% of respondents in Ralph Court said that they were temporary visitors whereas only 2% of respondents in Dart Street said the same. An area with higher numbers of temporary visitors is likely to have a very different mix of people using the properties than those areas without. Attention needs to be paid to whether, in population estimates, lessons from one OA are being inappropriately applied to another.

5.4 Population estimates

Any population estimates for the areas we studied should be understood with reference to all of the cautions outlined

[14] Behind the numbers: Migrant living patterns in Westminster (ESRO, 2007)

above. Table 8 shows the populations of the 5 OAs based on multiplying the number of households by the average household size in each area.

As we have shown, we think that these estimates are an underestimate of the actual population size due to the over-representation of 'white' and 'single' households in our sample (See also section "6.3 Motivations" below, which shows that single people were more likely to fill in the surveys). On this basis, our population estimates could be seen as a minimum benchmark for each of the areas. The table also includes benchmark population estimates if the average household size was 5%, 10% and 20% higher, showing the theoretical impact on population estimates if households missing from the Census coverage contained a larger number of people than those that were covered (as we suspect may be the case).

	Population benchmark (no. of households x avg. households size)	**+5%**	**+10%**	**+20%**
Leinster Square	200	210	220	240
Dart Street	544	571	598	653
Ralph Court	541	568	595	649
Edgware Road	1311	1377	1442	1573
Soho	744	781	818	893

Table 8. Population estimates

6.0 Attitudes

As would be expected, given the self-selecting nature of the sample, most of the respondents were positive or open towards the idea of filling in surveys and forms. This was true across different ethnic groups and different sizes and types of households.

This section gives a brief overview of the kinds of attitudes that emerged from the completed questionnaires. Given the self-selecting nature of our sample, results should not be seen as representative of the general population of these areas.

6.1 Government surveys and the Census

Local or central government surveys in general were met with ambivalence across the sample. Whilst only 22% of respondents said that they would always answer this kind of survey, 66% of respondents indicated that they '*sometimes answered these surveys*' or that *'it would depend on the topic*'. Only 12% of respondents said that they would 'never fill in' a government survey of any kind.

Encouragingly, 70% of respondents thought that they would fill in the Census if someone came to their door, whether or not they had wanted to fill it in when they received it in the post. This figure is perhaps unsurprising, given that all of our respondents were filling in a survey at their front door. But it should also be seen in the context that only 20% of our respondents preferred someone to come to their door rather than for forms to be posted out by email or letter. In other words, our respondents do think they would fill in a survey at the door, but may not thank anyone for having to do so.

Local or central government surveys were met with ambivalence across the sample.

The presentation and purpose of a survey influences peoples' decisions about whether or not to fill it in.

The lesson here is that the presentation and presented purpose of a survey is likely to make a difference to whether or not people choose to fill it in. Two further results suggest trends that might be explored further:

- 'White' respondents were more likely to say that they 'always respond to surveys' (29%) than were Black (20%) or Asian (11%) respondents.
- Respondents living alone were more likely to say that they always answered surveys (31%) and less likely to say that they 'never answered surveys' (4%) than households with more than one person.

Our survey also found that 80% of respondents *said* that they would prefer a survey to come in the form of a personally addressed letter. However, this kind of response should be taken with a grain of salt as it often reflects a respondent's irritation at having to fill in a face-to-face survey. In practice, a proliferation of junk mail means that letters are often ignored. For example, the Westminster Place Survey in 2008[15] had a response rate of only 23% after an initial mail-out. Similarly NHS Westminster have just carried out a large-scale survey on health behaviours and received a response rate of only 17% in Westminster[16]. Both of these surveys used mail-out methods that will be similar to those that will be used in the 2011 census.

This suggests, as we saw earlier, that 'White' residents are more likely to respond than Black or Asian residents, which may make average household size estimates lower than they really are. Second, there is an indication that the number of single residents may be over-represented in the sample, again pulling the average household size down. These findings have important implications for developing an imputation model for calculating population sizes in a 'hard to count' area like Westminster.

6.2 Awareness of the Census 2011

This research project took place before marketing and awareness campaigns for the Census had begun in earnest. It is probably unsurprising then that only 25% of respondents were aware that the Census would be taking place in the next year. Asian respondents were even less likely to be aware of the Census 2011 (16%) but, again, single residents seemed to be much more aware of the Census (39%). This may reflect the priorities of family households as opposed to single people. These figures suggest that more attention may need to be devoted to marketing the Census among certain ethnic minority groups and perhaps towards family households.

6.3 Motivations

The table below illustrates the differing motivations among our respondents for filling in the Census 2011 when asked "What would be the reason that would motivate you most to fill in the Census 2011?". The findings initially seem encouraging, largely in line with the way that the ONS proposes to sell the Census. The problem of course, is that our sample represents only that small number of people who chose to fill in our short survey.

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15 http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/placesurvey2008

16 "Major Health Campaign Survey": results forthcoming

	"I don't need a reason to fill it in."	"It's an important part of being a UK citizen."	"I would be fined if I didn't."
All respondents	20%	51%	16%
Asian respondents	18%	37%	24%
Black respondents	27%	57%	7%
Single people	14%	71%	8%

Table 9. Motivations

These results are interesting. They suggest that single residents, being more aware of the Census, are also more likely to have bought into the language that ONS itself uses around the Census. As before, this could mean that there is an underestimate of the average household size as there is an over-representation of single person households in our sample. It also suggests that this problem could repeat in the Census. Also, there seems to be a suggestion that Asian residents are more likely to see the Census as a government imposition, with penalties for non-compliance, rather than something that benefits them.

Hard to count case study 3

Hard-to-count factors:

- Muslim woman
- Property above or behind a shop or other commercial unit

Enumerator experience:

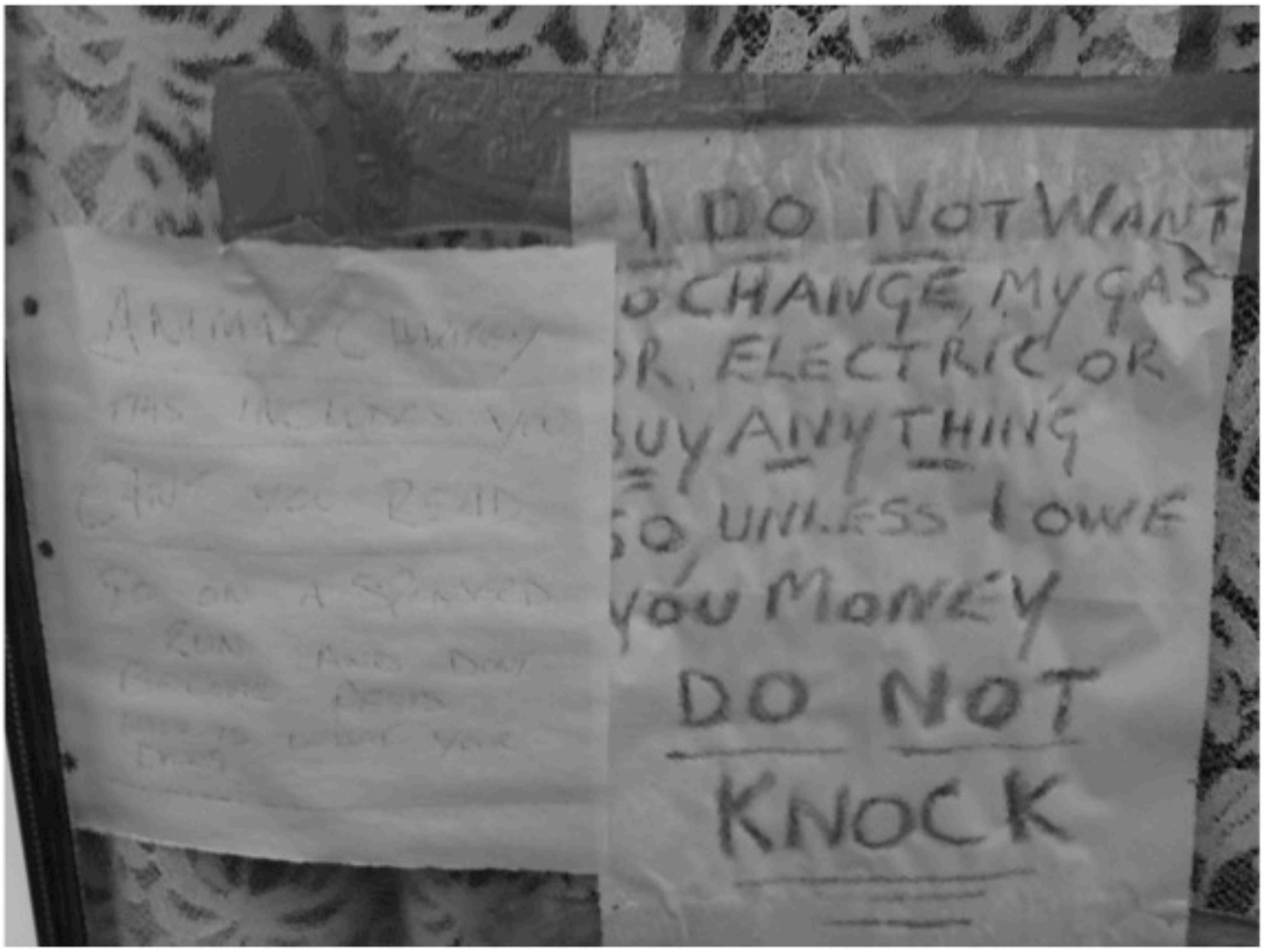
'Approaching my first row of shop with flats above them, I'm relieved to find obvious doors with labelled buzzers. At the first I try several buzzers with no luck and move to the next door over. The owner of the salwar kameez shop in between the two doors comes out (noticing that I have a clipboard) and asks where I am from. He is aggressive and suspicious. I show him my ID and stress that I am a researcher. He backs off a little but keeps watching me.

I try the next doorway along and someone buzzes me in. I enter a dark corridor with some stairs at the end of it. When I get to the top of the stairs there is a door on my right being held just ajar by an Arab lady. She keeps the chain on. I can hear a small child in the background. I take out my ID and hold it out for her to see through the gap in the door. She says that she doesn't speak English well and "could I come back in the evening when her husband or her daughter are at home?" It feels like she is very uncomfortable and perhaps frightened so I quickly retreat.'

The enumerator's experience

7.0 On the ground

In this section we explore the experiences of the enumerator's themselves. We look at those things that motivated them to do their work, and those things that de-motivated them. We look at what challenges they faced and how they overcame them. Importantly, we also look at the ways they came to understand their task once the reality dawned that they were not going to be able to complete the task that they had been set, to count a large proportion of the people that lived in their designated OA.



"I do not want to change my gas or electric or buy anything so, unless I owe you money DO NOT KNOCK." – handmade sign in a window.

The enumerators were given a research tool that enabled them to easily record their moods and the events that gave rise to them. They were able to record the details of individual visits to individual doors, and capture the way that certain incidents affected their ability to do their job. When they had finished their shifts, the enumerators were invited

back and asked to recount their experiences in a joint analysis session at ESRO.

The enumerators expressed a number of conflicting emotions. It is clear that enumeration work, turning up un-announced at people's doors, can be challenging work. Those positive emotions that came-up seemed to be derived largely from achieving goals that were set by us at ESRO in terms of achieving numbers of questionnaires, rather than from the inherent pleasure of walking the streets and trying to get people to give them some of their time.

"All papers are soggy and it all starts to feel pointless"
Enumerator's mood diary

"The caretaker stops me and tells me to use the external buzzers… [later the same day] … I ring 2 buzzers and they won't let me in"
Enumerator's mood diary

Other prominent experiences included: The drastic revision of goals and expectations downward; the satisfaction in solving small geographical puzzles; the pleasure of working out how to gain entry to specific buildings etc. Perhaps the two most enduringly images for the enumerators were the presence of rainclouds that would signify an unpleasant shift ahead and a proliferation of doorbells from which only a small return was likely. The panel of buttons and the dark skies both seemed to serve as a metaphor for the difficulties and monotony of the work.

The 'mood maps' illustrated in Appendix B chart the different moods of the enumerators over the course of their six shifts. Each peak and trough is annotated with the relevant event that triggered the shift in mood. No clear trends emerge from these recordings of mood and the enumerators suggested that perhaps they had not had time for the job to become completely monotonous. However, there is a clear indication of the way in which the job is littered with small victories and persistent annoyances. It is also possible to discern recurring themes.

In the following sections we explore the different experiences and emotions of the enumerators in more detail.

7.1 Self-awareness and personal safety

During the course of their shifts, the enumerators began to feel more and more aware of the effect of their presence in the communities they were walking through every day. Holding a clipboard and knocking on front doors, they began to worry that people did not trust them or were threatened by them in some way.

"People are looking at me suspiciously"
Enumerator's mood diary

This feeling was heightened by the sometimes aggressive exchanges with the porters in larger buildings: "*There was quite a lot of aggro with the manager of the block who didn't really want me inside the building and wanted to check ID and check with his manager etc. He wanted me to just use*

the intercom each time and then exit the building and try the next one."

Sometimes the reception was less aggressive but just as unwelcoming. Enumerators commented on how they felt that they had become an annoyance what with ringing doorbells so many times and trudging up and down in front of doorways and windows: "*4 hours is a long time to be walking around… I feel like I am a nuisance*." Rejection was also sometimes more passive, though no less affecting. Enumerators reported that often they knew someone was in, they could hear noises and voices, but no one answered the door anyway, no matter how many times they tried.

"No more [questionnaires filled in]… but its badly let getting out from these blocks on to the main road."
Enumerator's mood diary

Notes on doors warning salesmen to stay, away and the unwillingness of some people to complete questionnaires even when they did answer, also added to the sense that uninvited researchers were not wanted. There was nothing to suggest any real danger in any of this, but enumerators benefitted from reassurance that they were doing something valuable, and were working in the interests of the communities they were going in to. It also helped for them to feel that there was a way in which they could be formally recognised. One even suggested that he ought to wear a bright yellow workman's jacket so that he looked less like a private detective.

"My biggest barrier was no one being in, and then not being able to get in or access the building at all if I couldn't find the porter etc. One building was designed so that no one apart from residents could access at all; all the postboxes etc being outside."
Enumerator

It is perhaps because of this feeling of not being wanted, that some of the enumerators (especially the female ones), were also conscious of staying safe. They were careful not to spend time in darker walkways and corridors and tried to arrange shifts so that they could stay in the light as long as possible. The feeling intimidated at night is an important consideration for those managing Census 2011 enumerators. Residents are more likely to be in the house after work hours, but the trade-off with personal safety may not be something that enumerators enjoy. This may stop them from making the most of these more productive hours.

7.2 Physical and material barriers to enumeration

There were a number of physical and material barriers that prevented the enumerators from achieving what they wanted to achieve.

In the first instance the address lists given to the enumerators were so inaccurate that some felt they were spending far too long trying to find places that did not exist: "*They need somebody to go out now and put together proper lists for the follow up enumerators...I think it would need 3 full days just to put together the checked address list for an area the size of the one I did*," (Soho enumerator). The address lists varied in quality from area to area as we have seen, but

even only one or two addresses being wrong could result in a lot of time being wasted and adding to the sense of hopelessness. One of our enumerators had addresses numbering in the high 100's for a street that apparently stopped at house number 70. Another found that street numbering was very haphazard, missing out blocks of ten numbers.

In some cases, the numbering of houses and properties was clear but how to reach them was not. Gates blocked entrances; buildings had buzzer entry systems that opened sporadically or only when a part-time porter was on hand and willing: "*On the morning shifts it was useful to be able to press the Trade buzzer as they let you in as that's when post etc is delivered but by the afternoon those buzzers didn't seem to be manned by porters anymore"*. Another enumerator pointed out that buzzer systems with many numbers that needed to be pressed in combination, often had no indication of what the highest number was. Since most households did not reply when buzzed, the enumerator had no idea how many numbers to try before giving up.

Intercom systems placed a physical barrier between the enumerator and the householder. They made it very hard for enumerators to convince householders to complete a questionnaire.

Intercom systems also placed a physical barrier between the enumerators and the people they were trying to collect questionnaires from. Time and again they were able to make contact but got no further than that. All of the enumerators said that they found it much harder to convince someone to fill in a questionnaire if they were not face-to-face with the householder. Another problem with intercoms was that after having pushed more than one number, enumerators weren't always exactly sure which number someone was from when there was a reply.

Buzzers

Gates

Flats above shops

At other times properties could be seen above shops and restaurants but access points were less obvious. Enumerators spent a long time walking round and round buildings, sometimes climbing fire-escapes and calling down corridors to try and find a front-door.

In many of the areas we explored, these kinds of difficult-to-access properties were the norm rather than the exception. Westminster of course has a very large number of streets in which properties are situated above shops (sometimes many stories high) and/or residential buildings with buzzer entry systems.

7.3 Social barriers

The physical barriers to enumeration were often terminal. If an enumerator could not find a way of accessing a property then they simply could not try to make contact with anyone living inside. Social barriers on the other hand, were perhaps more malleable, though no less of a challenge.

The table below highlights just some of the different types of people that the enumerators mentioned having encounters with and the different ways in which they presented a challenge to enumeration. The list is by no means exhaustive but it provides some insight into the number of different scenarios that can arise during enumeration.

Students	Students were unsure of how to answer questions. Were they temporary or permanent? How many of them did actually live there? What were the politics of answering surveys correctly.
Children	Enumerators reported that often children were sent to the door to say 'mummy is busy'. Children were also unable to understand what the enumerator was asking for, especially over intercoms.
Non-English speakers	Sometimes the language barrier was insurmountable. In many cases, enumerators suspected that non-English speakers simply did not answer the door or ignored the intercom.
Affluent home-owners	Enumerators complained that the more affluent householders they came across were often the most obviously displeased at having been interrupted.
Elderly	Elderly people took a much longer time to move. A great deal of patience was required. Sometimes enumerators felt they were being used for company and found it difficult to get away.
Immigrants	It was clear that in some cases householders from houses that were full of people, including children, only wanted to fill out information about themselves on the questionnaire. Immigrants also had language problems.
Disabled	Disabled residents needed more time and patience. It is also possible that disabled residents are being missed if they take longer to answer doorbells and buzzers.
Muslim women	Several enumerators reported having doors answered by muslim women who were not willing to fill in forms on their own.
Household staff	Some questionnaires were completed by household staff who would not bother anyone else in the house. They insisted that they were in a position to do so. On other occasions household staff would refuse to fill in questionnaires and refuse to find anyone who would.
Gatekeepers	Porters and shop staff often presented a barrier to gaining access to front doors of certain properties. Their attitude to the enumerators largely determined the enumerators' successes in reaching some properties.
Suspicious people	Some people were very wary of filling in questionnaires, especially when they found out that the client was Westminster City Council. They wanted to know why information was being collected and for what purpose. Some of these people could be persuaded – others not.
Different ethnic groups	Enumerators and local experts reported different traist of different groups. Bangladeshi residents, it was felt, may be reluctant to reveal larger houshold sizes. Chinese residents were unlikely to engage at all and Arab communities were difficult to locate and to engage, especially women.

Of all the social barriers however, the enumerators were unanimous in their conclusion that the most significant barrier to their work was the fact that so many people simply did not answer the door or the doorbell. Even when they could hear that people were inside the property, there was nothing they could do when people would not answer the door. Interestingly, some people were willing to put up with many return visits to the door by the enumerators rather than answer. This was brought to life by one woman who finally answered her door after several attempts with the following comment: "*'Every time you ring my doorbell my Chihuahua goes crazy. Let's just get this over with!"*

7.4 Tactics and Strategies

Most of the enumerators developed a set of strategies to overcome the various barriers that were placed in their way.

In order to access communal buildings and blocks, they would hide from porters after being let in by one resident, and try to stay hidden whilst they knocked on other front doors. They would loiter as discreetly as possible near the entrances of buildings and try and follow people as they entered. They tried to get people to fill in questionnaires as they came out of the building and they tried to pick up clues as to whether someone was in or not.

Residents themselves also sometimes helped the enumerators. For example, non-English speakers would find children who could speak English or make a phone call to someone else who was able to help them translate.

Best of all was if the enumerators could strike up a rapport with local porters. This way they would be more likely to gain access to the buildings and be able to make repeat visits to certain properties. Beyond this, becoming friends with one or two respondents, in one or two cases, did lead to some trust being developed in the area and a potentially wider pool of people willing to fill in questionnaires.

All of the enumerators said that it took at least 3 days in an area to become familiar with every aspect of it and be able to efficiently use time to follow up certain addresses, gain entry to buildings and persuade people to fill in questionnaires. This length of time may not be an option for Census 2011 enumerators. The only other way to combat the length of time needed to understand the idiosyncrasies of these diverse and complicated OAs is to have good local knowledge.

Hard to count case study 4

Hard-to-count factors:

- Building porters and gate-keepers
- Elderly

Enumerator experience:

Despite having been initially granted permission by the porter to access the building via the buzzer system, he is still being very protective of the property. I think this might be increasingly at the behest of the residents who are frustrated with my repetitive buzzing (though that makes me think they should just answer the door!).

He sees me again by the entrance and wants to check who it is specifically that I am trying to speak with today. I show him my list of those who haven't yet responded and he finally lets me continue. I try number 3 again from outside the building using the external buzzer (as agreed with the porter, who does not want me inside until I have been given permission by a resident, so I have to come outside in between each interview to try the next buzzer), This takes sooo much time! I have already tried this buzzer perhaps 14 times.

An elderly lady answers finally after a period of about 3-5 minutes. She sounded confused, and wondered if I was the porter at first, as she said she wasn't expecting anyone.

Eventually, with quite some difficulty, I managed to explain to her what we were doing and she said that I could come in for a minute. I went up to her floor and she was waiting in her door with a small dog. She said that she would finally speak to me, as every time the doorbell goes "her Chihuahua goes crazy". It was clear that she was very deaf and had poor eyesight. She seemed quite vulnerable. She invited me in and said that she wouldn't be able to do the form on her own as she "can't write very well any more due to my shaky hands and my eyes."

It took perhaps 45 minutes to go through the questions with her while writing down her answers, even then I felt that she didn't really understand some of the questions. I felt that I was wasting her time and mine, which was uncomfortable. '

Local knowledge

8.0 Using ethnographic techniques

The final stage of research involved the use of ESRO's own experienced ethnographic researchers going back into the 5 different OAs to try and explore the kinds of things that might tell us about the local populations. The study was not extensive but did involve the researchers spending time in each area looking for tell-tale signs of where properties might contain hidden residents or where populations might look different from that portrayed by the questionnaire data.

In general it was found that whilst the ethnographer's eye was certainly able to reveal a lot about the local area, the exact nature of who lived behind which closed doors remained a mystery. It would take a long time a great deal of resources to uncover the residents of specific properties. Ethnographers are often able to become immersed within local communities leading to invites inside buildings and into peoples' lives, which in turn reveal the realities of who lives in certain properties. But even then, the method is not systematic. It does not allow a researcher to gain access to every house and do a detailed analysis of the number of people inside. Instead we must rely on what the researchers could see and learn from the area in a relatively short time.

As a strategy, the researchers went into the 5 OAs with a notional list of activities that might yield some information about the buildings our enumerators had tried to enumerate. Our researchers spoke to local estate agents, housing managers, shopkeepers and bar tenders. They made contact with porters and spoke to locals where possible. They also took photographs (many of which are contained within this report) and made observations.

The goal was to try and elicit a level of 'local knowledge' that would have helped to support the enumerators and also contextualise the findings of the questionnaires, and indeed of any Census data.

8.1 The ethnographer's eye

Below we present a boxed case-study of how an ethnographer might approach an understanding of the Edgware road when they first arrive in the area. We do not do this to suggest that this kind of research is needed to conduct the Census merely to illustrate the different ways in which an area can come to life and have greater meaning than simply as a list of addresses with no information about who might lie behind them.

One interesting point to note about the account below is that this area describes the Edgware Road OA which yielded a majority of questionnaires from people who described themselves as 'white'.

Ethnographer's notes

"…Upon exiting the tube station, I discovered that despite my careful preparation and map reading, I was completely disoriented. Under a busy flyover and amid hectic 3 lane roads full of buses and lorries, I couldn't make sense of where I was. I looked around to see if there were any friendly faces to ask for help. There were not. People were too busy. I went back inside Edgware Road tube station to check the map again and somehow managed to find my way to Bell Street where I proceeded to get out my survey questionnaire and address list.

The first address on my sheet, 17 Bell Street, I soon discovered, was a closed music shop. The street entrance was through the music shop only and I could see no other doors. However, my address list told me that there were 3 separate flats (A, B, and C) above the music shop. I walked over the road to see if I could spot any activity above the building and sure enough, there were levels above the music shop, two with flowerpots outside the window. I circled the building and the block trying to determine how the people who lived there entered their flats. Seeing no entrance or doorway, I asked the estate agent next door if he knew anything about the flats. Somewhat alarmed at my interest in the building next door, Kapil told me to try the music shop and began to ask where I had come from. Sensing that this might not go well, I showed him my papers and ID card and told him that I was an independent researcher. After briefly explaining the project, Kapil opened up and told me that he thought that the tenants actually got in through a side gate, for which there were no buzzers. He had no idea why the music shop was closed but did tell me that most of residents of the neighbourhood were Arabic of Lebanese and Egyptian background. He explained that most of the people living nearby were large Arab families and that the women did not open the door unless their husbands were there because they do not speak English. His frustration at not speaking Arabic was evident when he told me that no one ever opened the door to him either, 'they only open the door to people they know'.

After trying a few more doors, hunting for even more, and getting suspicious looks from the men smoking and loitering in the cafes and on the street corners, I decided to get out my camera and found that posing as a tourist was quite helpful. As people began to approach me, one man, with no teeth, told me that I might win a prize for my photos. We spoke about the neighbourhood and how much it had changed. He had lived there for 40 years and told me that most of the people who lived there stuck to their own groups. They were nice enough but they didn't speak English and didn't really speak to him. With a camera in hand, I was able to ask more questions about the neighbourhood, who the residents were, what kind of people lived there without any risk of judgement. People were only too happy to answer my questions.

However, progressing up the road to Church Street, I was confronted by a very ethnically diverse market. The smell of cooking food and spices was thick in the air. There were stalls selling fruit and vegetables, rugs, designer imitation perfumes, jewellery, and accessories, and jumbled tables full of clothes. Almost all of the women that I could see were wearing burkhas or hijabs. Women called to each other in the street, stopping with their children in buggies to chat to one another after buying the evening meal's vegetables. I was told of travel companies (I had already spotted two) organizing all-inclusive trips to Mecca, and a number of other grocery shops and halal butchers…"

This kind of detailed examination of the area, speaking to locals and observing the shops and life of an area, allows for a far more nuanced understanding of who may live in the properties that we may find it hard to access. We know for example, that many of the properties that our enumerators were unable to access on the Edgware road are likely to contain migrants coming from the Middle East. Their legal status may vary and their willingness to fill in forms is also an open question. One thing is also clear, despite the high number of 'single' people in our sample, the area is clearly full of families. Children and mothers are very visible in the streets and shops, suggesting that the Arab community is at least in part a community of families.

From previous studies by ESRO on migrant populations living in Westminster we can also assume that many will be living in HMOs, formally or informally, while they live and work in the borough.

In contrast, it was Soho's marked *heterogeneity* that made it so difficult to enumerate. Chinese writing on doorways gave away the number of Chinese residents in the area, but researchers are given few other clues as to what lies behind endless doorways in difficult to find buildings. The Chinese residents rarely replied to repeated attempts to contact them but in many ways, they were easier to identify than many other residents. During the day-time and even early evening, many of the corridors and staircases were quite simply empty.

There were hints of some taboo and clandestine activity within Soho properties but little to give away the number of people who may reside behind closed doors.

Soho Mixed-use building - signs are for a business (left) and 'to let' (right)

Multiple doorbells sometimes suggested divided properties, as did the telltale sign of satellite TV dishes on the backs of certain buildings. But the primary problem in Soho was that it was impossible to distinguish between addresses that may have been used for commercial purposes and those that were residential. And of course, as we know is the case for the Chinese community, whether they are being used for both at once[17].

8.2 Local experts

One of the best sources of information about the different OAs were the people on the ground providing services to the local community. Housing managers and estate agents in particular had some insight into the people that lived in the different properties.

"*This is largely an ethnic area with 70% of it being Arabic – this is split roughly between Egyptian and Lebanese people who don't speak English. There are mostly families rather than single people. They don't answer the door if they don't know you. Even me, I'm the agent that got them the flat, when I go and knock on the door, if they see me and realize that they don't know me, they won't answer. It's a new face and they wouldn't open the door*." – Estate agent in Edgware Road OA

The estate agent's figures should not be taken as authoritative but the information she provides does give a clue as to why our enumerators' figures showed such a large proportion of 'white' people in such a Middle Eastern dominated area.

We were able to learn a different kind of information from a housing manager in Dart Street: *"It depends on the time of day really. A lot of people work really and even those who do not work are not always home. Some are on job-seekers and they have appointments, or they are dealing with kids' appointments, doctors' appointments. Even for us, we have to go around to get them to sign up to the Residents Association and we need to make appointments to try and see them and even then, they are not there but we see them in the park. They do not want to talk to us. We send out a survey and if we send 100 we only get 20-30 back. They never speak to us unless they have a problem – otherwise they ignore us."*

The housing officer also said in relation to the Bangladeshi residents: "*I think most of them have extra people living in the house but they won't say because they are claiming*

[17] Migration, Integration, Cohesion: New Chinese Migrants in London (ESRO, 2009)

benefits. I don't think it is a big problem but maybe at least 1 or 2 extra people living in each household that they don't want anyone to know about."

Again, we cannot confirm or deny this idea. But the source of information is certainly every bit as legitimate as an imputation formula. Our enumerator was also unable to take a large enough sample of Bangladeshi residents to be able to draw conclusions about the rest of the population.

Ralph Court and Leinster Square, were different again. They shared the same set of local amenities but both a porter in one of the large housing blocks and a local estate agent were emphatic: "*This place is expensive - I don't know how students afford to rent these flats if they're not living more than one in a room. We get a cheque from their dads and then that's it – we've got no reason to go into the flat again unless something goes wrong.*" – Estate agent. And the porter was similarly worked up over the issue: "*We have a big problem with overcrowding here. We try and check up every month but they just say 'oh, he's only here for a holiday' and then I see him three months later… I still see him coming out" and an Arthur Court porter noted: "These places are too expensive to match the type of people I see coming through the foyer."*

"*We have a big problem with overcrowding here. We try and check up every month but they just say 'oh, he's only here for a holiday' and then I see him three months later…"*
Housing block porter

All of this type of information is purely anecdotal but when there is agreement between two completely separate sources, we can begin to assume that there is some correlation with the truth. Interestingly, both the Ralph Court OA and the Leinster Square OA returned a very high proportion of single resident questionnaires thus concealing the hidden population living in informal HMOs within.

8.3 Property Types

By far the easiest area to enumerate was Dart Street. The main reason for this was that the self-contained housing association housing was more clearly laid out. For the most part, properties matched address lists, the number of commercial properties was low, and residents formed a coherent community (or rather communities) that the researcher could become a part of[18].

The private rental blocks in Leinster Square and Ralph Court were different. Easy to identify from the outside, they proved very difficult to understand from the inside. Porters did not allow access easily, doors were reluctantly answered and multiple buzzers and intercoms meant confusion and a grind for the enumerators. Both porters and estate agents thought that although flats were supposedly being occupied by single

[18] It worth noting however that even given these factors, local housing association staff felt that it was very difficult to make contact, especially with that part of the community that was Bangladeshi.

people, there was a much bigger population within most of them. The flats did not comprise a coherent community and did not yield many questionnaire returns.

The Edgware road was also very difficult to enumerate. The properties were not easy to identify. A lack of clear numbering and the multitude of properties that were above shops meant that enumerators had a great deal of trouble even locating front-doors, let alone receiving an answer. Trying to get shop staff to allow access to properties was more difficult even than persuading the porters in Leinster Square and Ralph Court, and there were many more shopkeepers and restaurant staff to have to negotiate with.

"The tiny alleyways and concealed entrances make negotiating Soho a challenge of orientation, ingenuity and perseverance for the enumerator.

But it was Soho's buildings that presented the most difficult challenge of all. It was difficult to identify from the outside what kind of use a building was serving. Small businesses (legitimate and illegitimate) vie with cramped flats and a transient population. Finding public entrances to buildings was nearly impossible. On one 4-hour shift, our enumerator was unable to complete even one questionnaire. The tiny alleyways and concealed entrances make negotiating Soho a challenge of orientation, ingenuity and perseverance for the enumerator.

Hard to count case study 5

Hard-to-count factors:

- Concealed or 'difficult-to-find' entrances
- Migrants who don't want to be counted

Enumerator experience:
'Arriving at the next section of shops it seemed very unclear as to how to access the residential properties above this row. On this row I couldn't see where anyone would gain access. Down the street-accessible sides of each building there were also no doorways or buzzer entry points. Eventually I asked the newsagents on the end of the row whether they lived above, to see if they would give me any more information. I was pointed to the off-licence in the centre of the row, I went in, pretending to browse for some red wine. There was indeed an open entrance 0n the left side of the shop to a kind of courtyard. At the rear of the courtyard there was a metal external staircase that led up to a set of buzzers relating to the flats above the shops.

I went up the staircase and tried the buzzers. No one answered any of the three. The postman said that he rarely saw anyone but he delivered post for lots of different names to one of the flats, he thought that they were "Russian names".'

Comparison and conclusions

9.0 Comparison with the ONS Evaluation of the 2009 Census rehearsal

In 2009, the ONS conducted a Census rehearsal in a number of different areas of the country. They looked at a different kinds of Output Areas with different characteristics. All of the Output Areas in our study were 'HTC 5' (Hard to Count – level 5) Output Areas. This means that the ONS rates them as being among the top 2% of most difficult to count areas in the country. Every one of the 100+ Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Westminster have been rated HTC 5. During the Census rehearsal, the only comparable areas that had both an ethnically diverse population and included HTC 5 areas were those in the London Borough of Newham.

Unfortunately, much of the information about non-respondents in these areas and the specific success rates of the different parts of the rehearsal in HTC 5 areas have not been disaggregated in the evaluation report. However we are able to draw some lessons from the ONS evaluation.

Perhaps most importantly, we are able to conclude that methods and findings were similar enough between our study and the rehearsal evaluation, for us to be confident about our deeper contextual analysis and the implications for the 2011 Census.

9.1 Response rates

Response rates for all HTC 5 areas in the rehearsal was 25%. This figure is close to our response rate of 22%, especially when taking into account the fact that our rate was significantly reduced by the inclusion of a Soho Output Area that may be one of the most especially difficult to count areas, even in comparison with other difficult areas.

9.2 Under-coverage

The Census rehearsal found that there was some under-coverage in terms of the delivery of Census forms. There were addresses missing from the address lists, but identified by enumerators on the ground. It was this discrepancy that accounted for most of this under-coverage. Our findings bear this out.

The ONS estimate that under-coverage in Newham reached 7% and this is very similar to our findings, though Leinster Square seemed to have an 8.5% discrepancy, which is slightly higher.

Where we strongly depart from the ONS, is in the recommendations made to solve this problem with under-coverage. ONS recommend a diligent process of address list matching and supplementing with '*a field check of around 15% of the country where we are most concerned about the complexity and quality of address lists*'[19].

These recommendations have two problems. First, diligent matching of different address lists (Postcode Address File (PAF), National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG), local address lists etc.) is unlikely to yield effective results. We found that the problems lie on the ground, and are often to do with very recent changes in property use (the bottom floor of one building being changed from flats to parking spaces for example). Only a forensic, on-the-streets, house-to-house survey is likely to significantly impact on the under-coverage at a local level. Second, it is difficult to identify the 15% of areas over which there is most address list concern, looking only at address lists, since again, the anomalies can only be found at ground level. For example, intuitively one would imagine that Edgware Road or Soho, with their mixed use buildings, would have the most troublesome address lists, but in fact Leinster Square, even with its immaculate layout, proved to have the most anomalies.

9.3 Census rehearsal follow-up enumeration

As outlined above, the follow-up enumeration process followed very similar patterns to that in our own study. As should be expected, the rehearsal return rates were lower than in our study. This is accounted for simply because they were not attempting to make contact with those households that had already completed a Census form, whereas our study attempted to make contact with everyone (including those most likely to fill in census forms). When taking into account both returned forms and success in follow-up enumeration, the rehearsal response rates for HTC 5 areas were very similar to ours.

However, it should be noted that our study included Output Areas that may have been a lot more difficult to count than those in the ONS rehearsal, and our method involved intense focus on very small areas. In practice, it may be difficult for follow-up enumerators in the Census 2011 to achieve the response rates achieved by our enumerators in these areas.

The ONS evaluation also highlights the fact that enumerators had more success when calling in the evening but that

[19] *2011 Census: Evaluation of the 2009 rehearsal* ONS May 2010

enumerators were less wiling to work in these hours. This finding is very similar to our own, that enumerators felt less safe at night and wanted to do most of their shifts during daylight hours.

9.4 Low return-rates

The ONS highlight a number of ways in which enumeration could be improved to enhance response rates that include:

- Ensuring more enumeration is done in evening hours
- Matching specific enumeration strategies to specific areas
- Changing recruitment practices to reflect the need for enumerators to be persuasive and to be willing to work specific hours
- Increasing the number of enumeration hours
- Reminder letters

To this list we would add the need for recruitment to take into account detailed local knowledge. A skilled enumerator will certainly be better equipped than someone who has never done any kind of cold-calling before, but without a detailed local knowledge of an area like the Edgware Road, its local population and the specific cultural and physical barriers to enumerating, they are not going to have much success.

It is also worth noting that some of these ONS recommendations were put into place during our own research, reported here. This further suggests that our coverage may already be at the higher end of what is possible for these very difficult to count areas. And it reinforces the fact that, even given the improved methods, the ONS are still likely to find that response rates are low in some OAs.

9.5 Communal establishments and HMOs

Here, the ONS takes an approach that specifically targets communal establishments in a different way to households. They find that this approach works well. However, there is a significant problem that they fail to address. Their method only looks at formal, communal establishments. During our research, and in previous ESRO work on hidden migrants living in Westminster[20], we established the fact that there are many informal HMOs that effectively work much like informal communal establishments. The problem of course is that informal communal establishments (dormitories for migrants for example) cannot be identified in advance and are

[20] *Behind the numbers: Migrant living patterns in Westminster,* ESRO 2007

therefore often completely ignored by official population counts.

It is very difficult to identify these kinds of establishments in any kind of formal process. Door-knocking systematically, as was explored during this research, simply does not reveal what is behind doors that are never answered and the alternative, going into a community and gaining trust to find out where such places might be is expensive and does not necessarily yield results that match with specific targeted areas. Again, local knowledge can go a long way towards finding these kinds of places, but it may have to be accepted that many simply will not ever be counted.

The big question that remains unanswered by the Census rehearsal of course, is how to identify when an area may be home to a particularly large number of informal communal establishments, as we have done in this report. We suspect, due to its unique position as a hub for new migrants and it being the cultural centre for many migrant populations, that Westminster may be home to a large number of them. This is backed up by evidence gained during a previous ESRO study of migrants in the area, but other London boroughs may also face this issue.

9.6 Population estimates

Whilst the evaluation report from the Census rehearsal highlights many of the areas of concern raised by our own research in relation to low response rates, it does not address the key issue of the ways in which these issues may affect population estimates. For example, whilst it is recognised that age and ethnicity do affect response rates for example, it is not clear from the evaluation which groups were least likely to respond to the Census and what impact this might have on population estimates.

Furthermore, the rehearsal still relies on past data sets to make comparisons with rehearsal responses e.g. comparing rehearsal ethnicity breakdowns in Newham with mid-year estimates. To some extent it is to be expected that these figures are mutually reinforcing, since the same types of people who responded to the various surveys that go into the mid-year estimates will be more likely to respond to the Census. But we are left none-the-wiser about what kinds of populations are NOT filling in the Census forms.

To some extent this is unavoidable, but it is critical that these matters are considered before the complex process of population imputation, since the rehearsal seems to confirm that a large proportion of HTC 5 populations are going to be imputed rather than counted.

10.0 Conclusions

The research that forms the basis of this report has thrown up a number of findings that are significant to many different parts of the Census process, both in terms of preparation, implications and in terms of the ongoing problems faced by data-collectors in places like Westminster. In sections 10.2, 10.2 and 10.3, we have summarised the main findings of each section of this report. In 10.4 we outline some simple steps that might be taken to improve population counts in Westminster and in 10.5 we draw all of these findings together.

10.1 Summary of findings: Enumeration

The first section deals with the actual task of trying to gain a picture of the population in the 5 Output Areas.

Address lists

- Large numbers of addresses listed on the council-provided address lists (very similar to the ones the ONS will provide) could not be found by enumerators
- Many buildings which may have contained addresses simply could not be accessed
- A smaller, though significant, number of addresses were found by enumerators that were not on existing address lists
- It was difficult for enumerators determine from the outside exactly what a building or address was being used for, especially when they received no reply
- There was some evidence that informal HMOs and informal businesses were operating in normal residential addresses (especially in Soho)

Effort and response

- Enumerators worked long hours and made great effort for very little reward or success
- Response rates varied from 44% in a Dart Street Output Area to only 3% in Soho
- Overall response rate was only 22%, despite going door-to-door on several different shifts
- Enumerators made many attempts to reach householders, returning to properties several times. On average, only 11% of visits to a front-door resulted in a completed questionnaire. In Leinster Square and Soho, this figure was as low as 4%.
- Even when doors were answered there was often refusal from householders (55% refusal rate). On the Edgware Road the refusal rate was 78%

Demographic data (from questionnaires)

- Overall average household size was 2.7 (The Census 2001 used an already enhanced figure of 1.98 to impute Westminster's population)
- The highest average household size was in Dart Street (3.6) the lowest in Soho (1.3)
- There were a large number of white residents in the sample (50%). This was surprising given the ethnic and cultural character of some of the neighbourhoods and communities being explored
- 'White' residents had an average household size of 2.4. 'BME' residents had an average household size of 3.1
- Enumerators reported that refusal was more likely from 'BME' responders, especially veiled, Muslim women and Chinese
- **Over-representation of white households will pull down the average household size**

Attitudinal data

- As was to be expected, most respondents were positive about filling in government surveys such as the Census, though only 22% said that they would 'always' fill in government surveys
- 80% of respondents said that they preferred surveys to come in the form of a personally-addressed letter or through email
- Only 25% of respondents were aware of the Census (the research was done before national Census marketing campaigns). However, single residents were much more aware (39%).
- 'White' respondents were more likely to say that they 'always respond to surveys' (29%) than were Black (20%) or Asian (11%) respondents
- Respondents living alone were more likely to say that they always answered surveys (31%) and less likely to say that they 'never answered surveys' (4%) than households with more than one person
- **Given that both 'white' and 'single' residents are more likely to respond to surveys and the Census, the average household size is likely to be lower in the counted population than in the uncounted population**

10.2 Enumerator experience

During research we asked our enumerators to record their personal experiences in the field. They recorded their moods at different times of the day and the ways in which different events affected these moods.

- The enumerators found the work challenging and often demoralising
- Expectations and hopes (in terms of achieving certain response rates) were revised lower during fieldwork
- Rain added to enumerators' woes forcing work to be abandoned on one or two occasions
- Success came to be measured in small victories ("one person answered the door and was friendly")
- Enumerators responded positively to support and encouragement from ESRO staff

Safety

- Enumerators felt like intruders in the communities they were entering. This made their identification cards and the authority of Westminster City Council very important to them
- Enumerators had to deal with some aggression from respondents, though there were no instances of physical danger
- Enumerators did not want to make cold-calls at night or in dark, unlit streets. Most opted to conduct the majority of their shifts in daylight hours

Barriers and frustrations

- Gaining access to buzzer-entry systems was difficult, and sometimes impossible
- Porters and gate-keepers often did not want to allow enumerators entry to buildings without prior consent of specific householders
- Intercom systems allowed people to ignore enumerators or to refuse to take part very easily
- Language problems presented a barrier to completing questionnaires
- Children were sometimes sent to front doors to decline to take part in the survey
- Cultural differences in terms of the interpretation of who had the authority to fill in forms and whether a form should/should not be filled in presented problems to enumerators
- Many people who were visibly inside properties, simply did not answer the door
- Elderly and disabled people sometimes took a very long time to answer the door
- It was very difficult to determine from outside properties whether an address was residential or not
- Addresses above or behind shops were very difficult to gain access to

10.3 Ethnographic insight

Deeper exploration of the different areas revealed that the demographic data obtained by the questionnaires only told part of the story. Local estate agents and shopkeepers, for example, were able to give far more insight into the kinds of people that lived in certain areas and in specific blocks of flats. Of course these people do not provide facts and figures but they do shed light on the kinds of people that may lie behind closed doors and tells us more about why certain types of people may not want to fill in Census forms.

Areas such as the Edgware Road were visibly made up of largely migrant populations. Previous research by ESRO has shown that these populations may be interwoven with recent and irregular migrant populations who may be trying to avoid being counted. There was also some evidence of irregular business arrangements and flat-sharing activities that again may have given rise to people not wanting to take part in survey exercises.

Detailed local knowledge was found to enhance the ability of enumerators to find and gain access to communities and therefore respondents. And this kind of knowledge also allowed us to contextualise and give meaning to the demographic data collected.

10.4 Recommendations

The report authors have outlined a number of recommendations for both the ONS and for Westminster to improve the chances of obtaining a better population count in the 2011 Census.

- Tailored approaches to areas with known immigrant and/or settled BME populations should be developed, including: multi-lingual enumerators, culture specific communications strategies and detailed area-guides
- Enumerators need to be trained to ‘sell’ the Census to different respondents
- Enumerators should be trained to deal with multiple ‘hard to count’ scenarios
- Enumerators should be supported and/or incentivised to work harder in HTC e.g. financial rewards, days off in between thankless shifts etc.
- ‘Expert’ enumerators should be employed where possible e.g. those who have worked on the local electoral register, or with experience of going door-to-door in HTCs.

- Area-specific methods of imputation (that include **both** local intelligence and local data sources) should be considered
- An open database of examples of 'best-practice' enumeration in HTC areas should be created

10.5 Conclusion

This report contains a number of findings that may make worrying reading for those hoping for an accurate and comprehensive set of data from the 2011 Census in Westminster.

If initial response rates to the posted Census forms are low, follow-up enumerators in Westminster are likely to have their work cut out trying to raise many more responders when they enter the streets.

Enumerators are likely to find themselves working long hours for little reward, they may find that they can't find properties and can't gain access to others. They may not have enough time to learn the local areas enough to ever gain a foothold in the local population. There will be great value in generating some detailed local knowledge about the types of properties they are likely to face and the struggles they may have to endure in dealing with such a diverse range of people and places.

But even then, and with the best will in the world, the ONS and Westminster may have to make preparations for what will happen in the event of a low response rate.

Imputation implications: The information collected from local experts, about local residents in certain areas, suggests that not only are some residents hard to find and engage, but they are also likely to be living in larger households. Indeed, it is this very fact that may make them even less likely to fill in forms.

The data from our questionnaires combined with the 'on the ground' knowledge collected during our study seems to point to one inevitable conclusion. Those who are likely to fill in survey forms are also those who are most likely to under-represent the true population size in the 5 OAs we looked at. The Chinese, the Arabs and the Bangladeshis were the hardest to count, the hardest to engage and yet, also the most likely to be living in family homes or HMOs. There are insinuations by housing association managers and building porters alike that there is overcrowding in buildings that are

supposed (according to local demographic data) to be full of mainly single residents.

All of this is backed up by ethnographic observation that often shows areas teeming with life: Families going to appointments with children, migrants living in small spaces, Chinese greetings on doorways that never open etc.

For those concerned with counting and understanding the population in Westminster, there is perhaps a larger task ahead that will involve some more intensive fieldwork and some sophisticated and perhaps unique work, like that we have already done in Westminster, into how to estimate the size and character of a population that in many cases cannot and will not be counted.

Appendix A

Questionnaire question list

Hello my name is ....and I'm doing a piece of research on behalf of Westminster City Council. I'm employed by an independent research company called ESRO. It's a very short survey and only includes 10 short questions- it should take no more thab 5 minutes and your feedback will be really useful and help us understand more about resident's views. Would this be okay?

1 How would you describe your role in the house?

Permanent resident

Temporary visitor (not staying in the property)

Lodger, tenant or visitor staying for more than one night

Paid staff (cleaner, au pair, gardener, window cleaner etc)

Other.....

2 How do you feel about participating in questionnaires or surveys relating to the Local Authority or Government more widely?

Always answers surveys

Sometimes answers surveys

Occasionally answers surveys, but only if the topic interests me

Never answers surveys

3 If the Government were to do a survey, what would be your preferred method of completion?

Complete online

Sent by email

Post

Telephone

Face to face

4 Are you aware that the national Census will be happening next year?

Yes

No

Not sure

5 This time, everyone who participates in the Census will be sent a form in the post. How likely do you think you are to fill it in?

I would just fill it in without really thinking about it

I would definitely fill it in because its important that everyone is counted

I will do it because I have to

I wouldn't really think about it- I may fill it in, I may not (go to question 6)

I definitely won't be filling it in (go to question 6)

6 If you don't fill it in, someone may come to your house to ask you to fill it in. How would you react?

If someone came to my house, I'd fill it in

I still wouldn't fill it in

I wouldn't answer the door

7 What would be the reason that would motivate you most to fill it in?

I would do it without thinking about it- I don't need a reason

It's an important part of being a UK citizen and it helps inform national and local decision making

You have to- and could be fined if you don't

People will keep coming round and asking me to fill it in- I'd just do it to stop them coming

I wouldn't fill it in

8 Can I ask you about the age groups of anyone living in the house?

Target group index	Number in Household
Under 15	
15-24	
25-44	
45-64	
65 and upwards	

9 Which of the following would you say best describes you?

White

British

Irish

Other White

Asian or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Other Asian

Chinese or other Ethnic group

Chinese

Other ethnic group

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Other mixed

Black or Black British

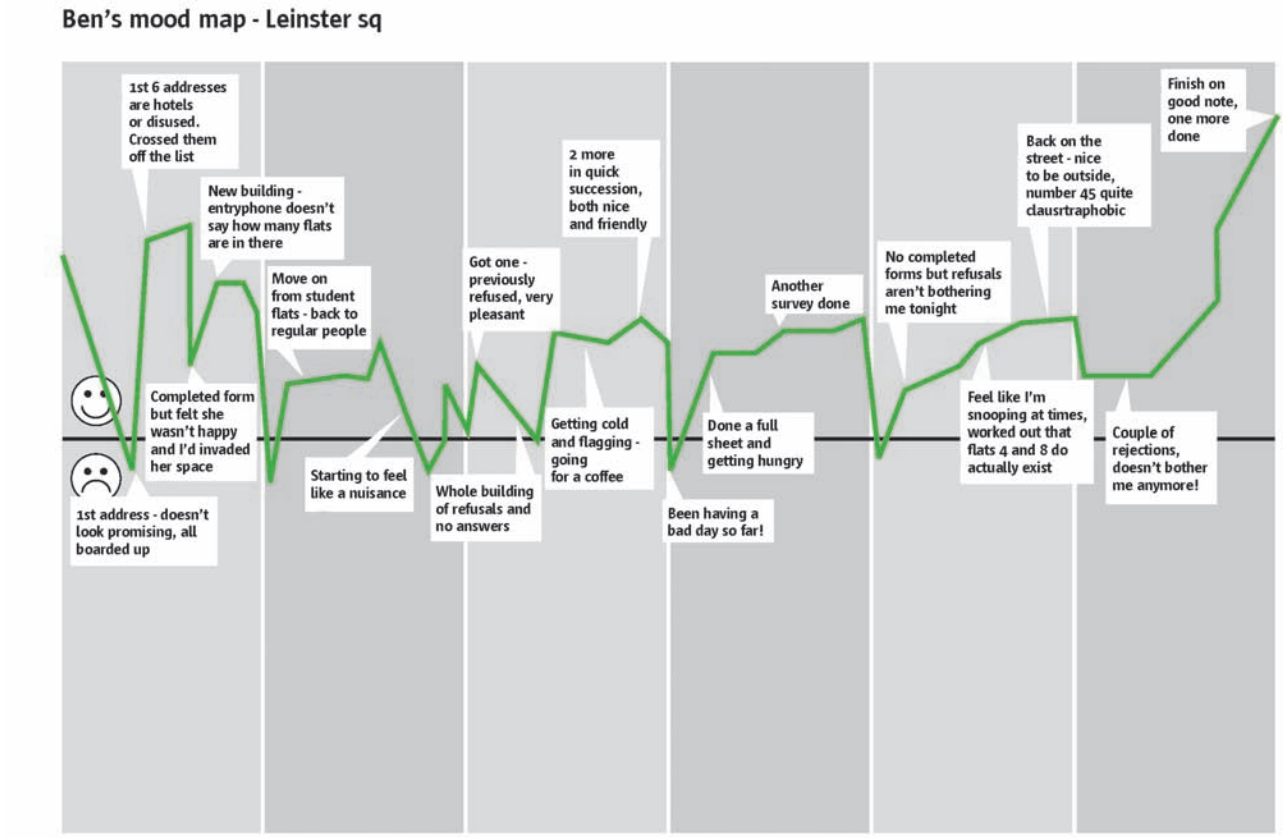
Caribbean

African

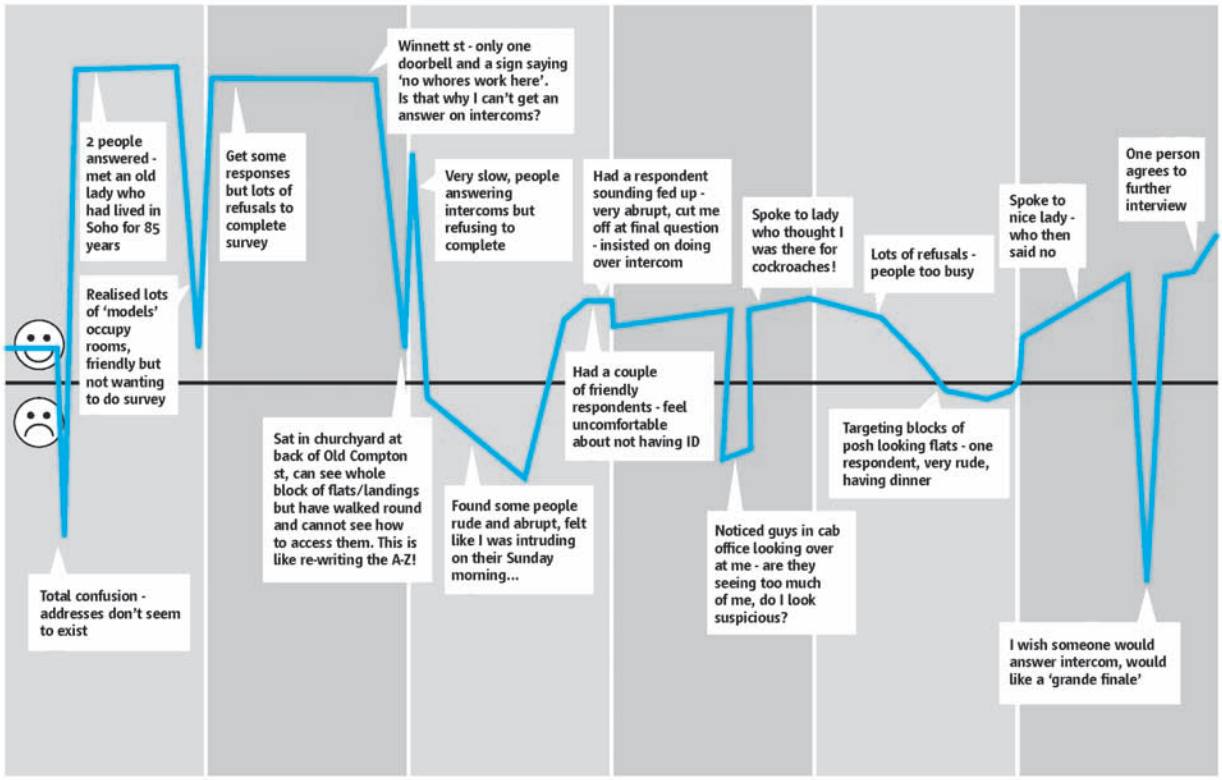
Other Black

Appendix B

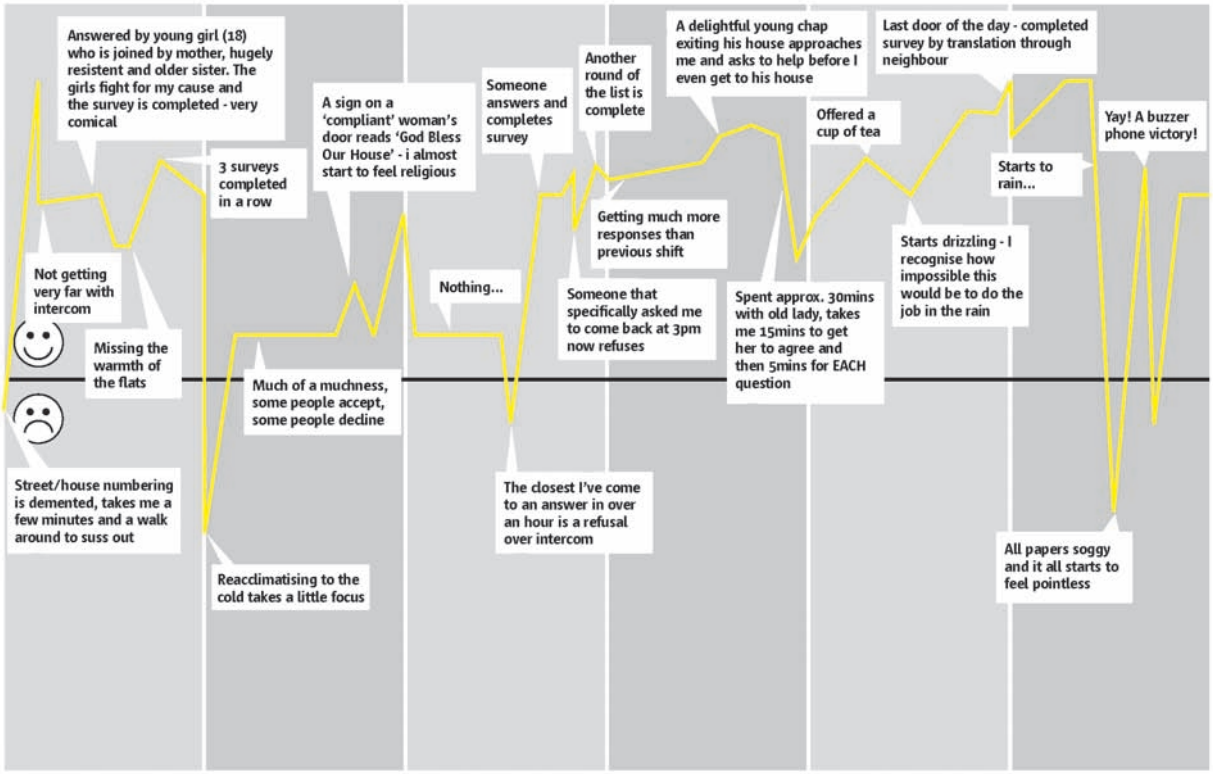
Mood maps



Mandy's mood map - Soho

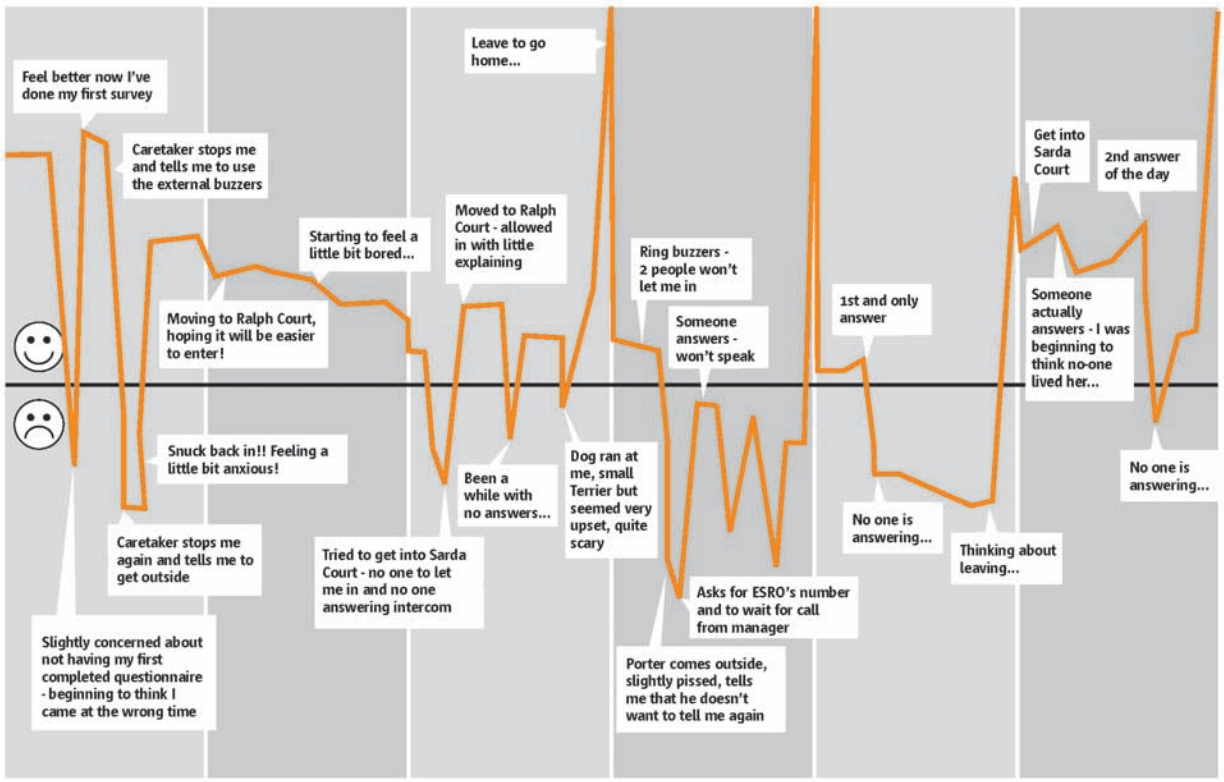


Aminah's mood map - Dart street



Carmella's mood map - Edgware road

Andy's mood map - Ralph Court



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