

Innovations and challenges in the 2020 census round: the Latin American and Caribbean experience

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CELADE has observed at first hand many census processes while providing technical assistance to LAC countries



The pandemic greatly impacted the 2020 census round in LAC, but many innovations were introduced

- Round 2020 has been severely impacted by the **COVID-19 pandemic**: postponements
- Changes in the type of censuses: **from de facto to de jure** (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Panama)
- **Changes from PAPI to CAPI** (Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Rep., Ecuador, El Salvador, México, Nicaragua, Panama) **and CAWI** (Argentina and Uruguay captured more than 50% of the population from CAWI)
- Some innovations were implemented at great **speed**, without prior tests

Impact of the pandemic on census dates in LAC

Census dates as of March 2020			Census dates as of September 2024		
Year	N° of countries	Countries	Year	N° of countries	Countries
2020	6	Argentina, Aruba , Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and Panama	2020	2	Aruba and Mexico
2021	10	Bahamas, Barbados , Costa Rica, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis and Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	2021	2	Barbados and Cayman Islands
2022	14	Anguilla , Antigua and Barbuda, Belize , Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Cuba, Dominican Rep. , Guyana, Paraguay , St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia , Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands	2022	14	Anguilla , Argentina, Bahamas, Belize , Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Rep. , Ecuador, Grenada, Jamaica, Paraguay , Saint Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis
2023	3	El Salvador, Honduras and Uruguay	2023	6	British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Panama, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos Islands and Uruguay
2024	0		2024	6	Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Suriname
			2025	2	Cuba*, Honduras*

Note: Bermuda carried out its census in 2016; Peru in 2017; Colombia and Guatemala in 2018. No information available for Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of), which started computer assisted self-interviewing (CASI) in 2021. Haiti has not carried out a census in the 2020 round.

*To be confirmed.

LAC innovations in the 2020 census round (1)

- Development of **hybrid training**, using face-to-face and e-learning processes
- Implementation of **systems to monitor coverage and quality control during the operation**, allowing more efficient management of the operation
- Strong integration of **geospatial information**, especially in coverage control systems
- **New tests** to verify adequacy of integration of mixed data collection systems
- Increased **investment in technology infrastructure and information security**

LAC innovations in the 2020 census round (2)

- **Census themes** such as commuting, disability, ethnicity & personal access and use of ICTs have been **strengthened**, among others, and **new themes** have been included (gender identity, care, pets)
- NSOs made efforts to **deliver** partial or preliminary **results in a timely manner**, using **new external communication strategies**
- NSOs placed more emphasis on **transparency** and the **management of political and institutional challenges** (e.g. communication with authorities and international organizations, advisory and evaluative committees)

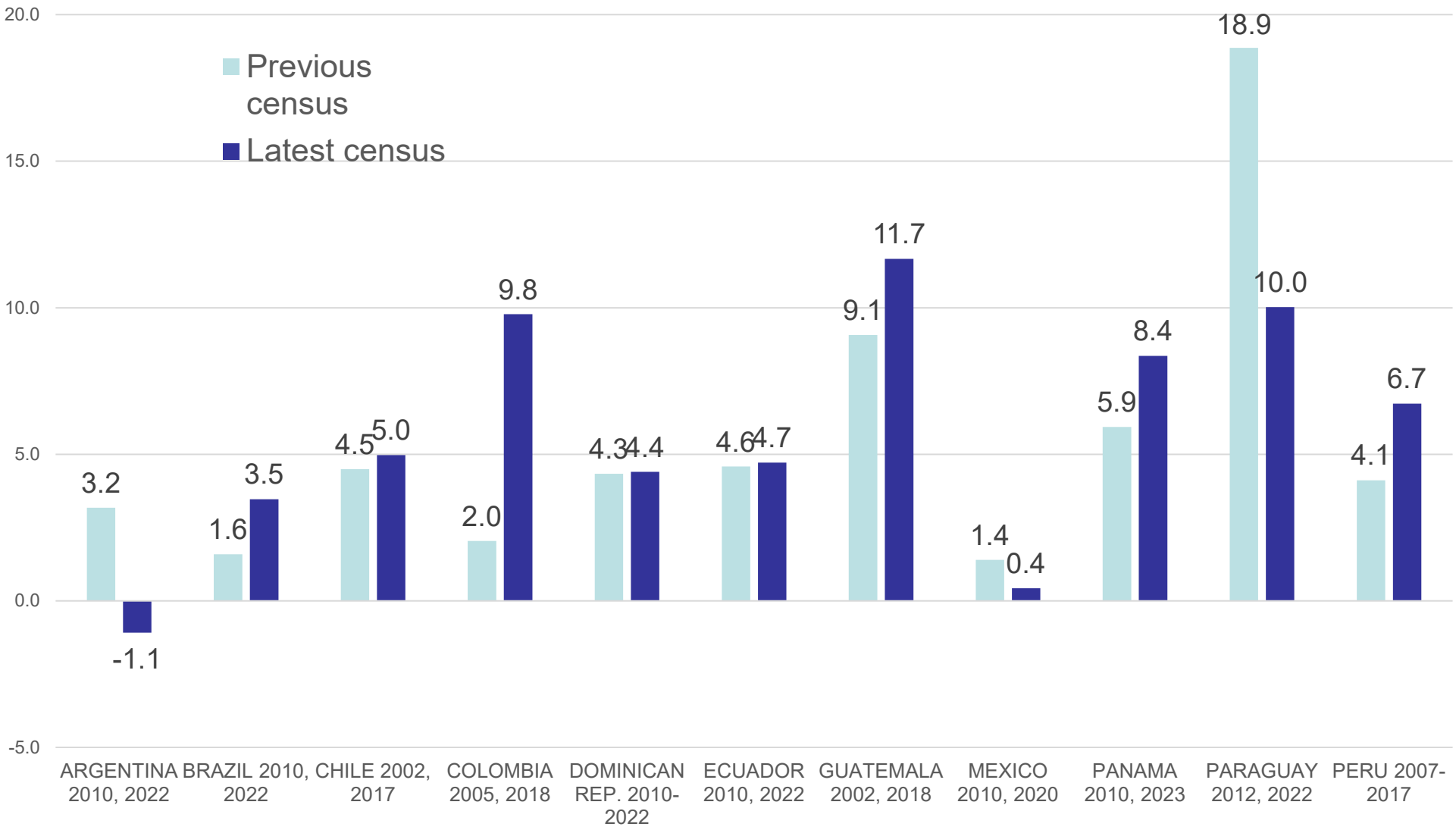
Challenges in the 2020 census round (1)

- **Problems with recruitment, retention of staff** (enumerators, supervisors and technical staff) and timely payment
- Inexperience in managing **complex service delivery contracts**
- **Shortcomings in technological tools** due to inadequate or non-existent testing
- **Interaction of mixed collection methods** or multiple instruments to restore coverage **without planning** for their integration

Challenges in the 2020 census round (2)

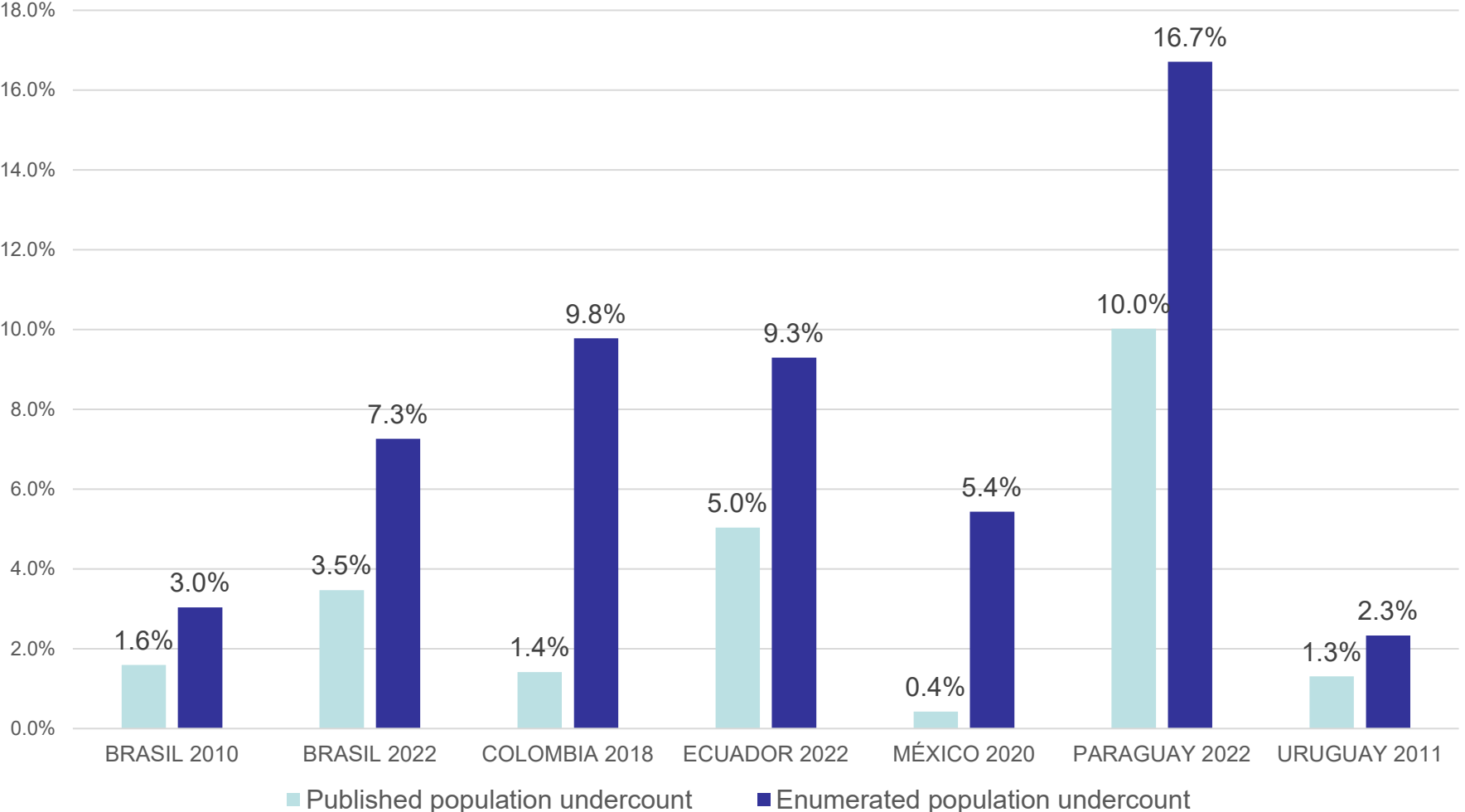
- Excessively **long fieldwork periods** (e.g. > 3 months), seriously affecting simultaneity
- Untimely census calendars due to election periods or **undue political pressure**
- **Lack of public interest** and in some cases ineffective communication campaigns towards citizens
- In some cases, the **transparency of census processes** and the **results** have been **questioned**
- Elevated rates of **undercounting** and **overuse of population imputation** in non-enumerated dwellings

Latin America (11 countries): census undercount of the population implicit in UN estimates, last two censuses



Note: in some countries data corresponds to population count and in others to population count plus imputation of persons in dwellings without interview.
 Source: official figures published by countries and [population estimates by CELADE – Population Division of the ECLAC](#), on the basis of WPP2024


Latin America (7 countries): census undercount implicit in UN estimates, published population (population count plus imputation of persons in dwellings without interview) and population count



Source: official figures published by countries and [population estimates by CELADE – Population Division of the ECLAC](#), on the basis of WPP2024

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