

EXERCISE CLASS #01: 2012 CENSUS IN CHILE

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

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Read the following news about the **failed census** that Chile taken on 2012:

"Chile may annul 'flawed' 2012 census

The Chilean government has been advised to annul the latest census, taken in 2012, because it failed to account for nearly 10% of the population.

An independent panel said census takers failed to count more than one million people because they were not at home or homes were wrongly labelled as empty. The panel recommends holding another census with fewer questions in 2015.

President Sebastián Piñera has been meeting government advisers to decide whether to accept their advice.

'The commission believes that the 2012 census suffers from serious problems,' the experts said in their report, commissioned by the National Statistics Institute.

The commission said the government surveyed 15.8 million people, when it should have been closer to 17.4 million.

The commission blamed the problems on President Piñera's government but also said that problems during the administration of former President Michelle Bachelet delayed the census.

The 2012 census cost about \$32m (£20m), according to Mariana Alcerreca, a former senior officer at the statistics institute".

Source: BBC News (August 08, 2013)

"Chilean President Apologizes for Census

President Sebastián Piñera's administration had promised the 'best census ever'.

Previous censuses were held in one day, with volunteers. But last year, his government allocated \$32 million to the task and introduced vast changes, like paying census takers to go door to door over a three-month span. New questions asked about gay couples who lived together, knowledge of other languages, the use of the Internet and recycling.

Yet this week, the president was forced to apologize to the country for serious mistakes in the nationwide census, which, despite the intense effort, failed to survey over 9 percent of the population.

‘I humbly apologize to Chileans for those mistakes’, Mr. Piñera said in a statement Thursday. ‘When I was informed of these errors, I felt as upset and outraged as millions of Chileans throughout the country’.

It is not clear, however, how many millions of Chileans there are.

The government had hoped to ensure coverage of 98 percent of the population. But after reports of methodological errors and the manipulation of figures were made public in April, the director of the National Statistics Institute, which is in charge of the census, was forced to resign. The institute then appointed an external review commission to examine the process and issue recommendations.

The commission report, released this week, found ‘serious methodological problems’, with at least 9.3 percent of the population not surveyed, more than double that of prior censuses. In a fifth of the municipalities in the country, the omission rate was above 20 percent. The census surveyed nearly 15.8 million people, while the institute projected the population at 17.4 million in 2012.

‘The percentage of omission is significantly higher among men between 40 and 59 years of age and among men and women aged 25-29’, the report said. ‘It distorts results on education, employment, religion and other variables related to gender and age’.

The review also found that the census effort lacked sufficient money and planning, and it detected deficiencies in the design and instructions of the questionnaire. These and other problems were aggravated by a ‘bad organizational climate’ within the institute, caused by ‘strong internal divisions and a vertical style of leadership’.

Its recommendations include holding a one-day census in 2015, not using the 2012 census data for developing public policies or any other official use, and beginning the preparations for the 2022 census, introducing information technologies that may replace the door-to-door method.

The census problems have affected the government’s credibility in the middle of a tight presidential race. Acknowledging that the institute’s troubles may reach back to her previous term as president from 2006 to 2010, Michelle Bachelet, who is running for office again, vowed to ‘do what I have to do, without blaming anyone’, if she wins the election in November.

‘What’s important now is to hold another census in 2015 and correct the methodology, if necessary, to count with data regarding how many of us there are, where we live and how we live, which is essential for designing any public policy’, she said”.

Source: New York Times (August 09, 2013)