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SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

Strategic Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Good Governance: A Comparative Analysis

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Extended Abstract

Problem Statement and Background

Since the success and effectiveness of social and economic policies depend on the capabilities and capacities of governments, improving governance and strategizing government effectiveness are crucial keys to sustainable development, poverty reduction, and increased welfare. The concept of good governance emerged at the end of the 1990s, emphasizing a facilitative government model focused on enhancing public administration and delivering efficient and effective public services as the cornerstone of development. This research aims to explore comparative monitoring and evaluation systems, focusing on the good governance approach that emphasizes efficiency, responsiveness, and participation. It seeks to investigate how these systems enhance the capacity of policies and public institutions in selected countries. Monitoring and evaluation systems encompass organizational structures, management processes, standards, strategies, programs, indicators, information systems, and accountability mechanisms, enabling organizations to effectively implement performance monitoring and evaluation. These systems serve as valuable tools for

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policymakers to provide detailed evidence of policy efficiency or inefficiency and its underlying reasons, thereby equipping policymakers with feedback mechanisms to support evidence-based decision-making.

Research Aim

This research aims to explore the political and economic context, institutional structures, and processes of establishing strategic monitoring and evaluation systems in countries with experience in creating and institutionalizing such systems, and those which are similar to Iran in terms of their welfare system. By studying the experiences of each country, the goal is to identify the underlying factors contributing to the growth and success of institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation systems in the governance of these countries.

Methodology

Using a qualitative approach and a comparative method, this research analyzes documents related to monitoring and evaluation systems in five countries: Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Vietnam, and Rwanda, including their indicators and characteristics. The research utilizes published documents related to monitoring and evaluation systems in different countries. The focus of the document analysis in this research is on countries that share more similarities with Iran in terms of their welfare typology. The data were analyzed using content analysis method.

Findings

The findings of the research indicate that since none of the systems have developed in a linear process and these systems are inherently complex and context-dependent, it is not possible to recommend a model for institutionalizing these systems in successful countries to other countries. Therefore, common factors contributing to the success of these systems in selected countries were extracted in five main themes: origin context, mission, legal framework, configuration, and application.

Origin: the origin itself includes two sub-themes: 1- historical, political, and economic background, 2- turning points (turning points refer to specific events or key milestones that can play a prominent role in shaping the path of transformations). By reviewing the political background of countries that have a history of establishing and implementing monitoring and evaluation systems, it can be understood that one of the most frequent factors has been the regime change to democracy and thus the tendency to implement a series of reform actions after this change. For example, the development root of monitoring and evaluation tools in Chile, Mexico, and Colombia was linked to the political transition of these countries to democracy. Additionally, issues related to political economy in countries such as Rwanda and Vietnam have shaped the formation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Furthermore, the turning point in establishing the monitoring and evaluation system in Colombia was the approval of a new constitution in 1991. Also, the first impact assessment related to the Oportunidades/Progresa Program was introduced as one of the most influential assessments in the world development and as a successful model, it has become an important turning point for the development of the Mexican system.

Mission: Countries focused on several prominent goals such as improving resource allocation and efficient budgeting, performance management (of programs and organizations), policy effectiveness, transparency and accountability, reporting to donors, and poverty reduction when establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in their public administration processes.

Legal framework

The establishment of some of these systems was based on specific laws or detailed legal frameworks. Colombia is a good example of such systems. On the other hand, some monitoring and evaluation systems were implemented based on relatively flexible legal documents such as agreements, inter-institutional protocols, or mechanisms prescribed by annual budget laws, as seen in Chile and Mexico.

System configuration: This research focuses on government-based systems (essentially aimed at improving program effectiveness and resource allocation). Document review indicates that in three countries - Chile, Mexico, and Rwanda - government monitoring and evaluation systems are centralized under the auspices of budgetary organizations (the Ministry of Finance of these countries). This theme encompasses five sub-themes: approach to monitoring and evaluation, organizational structure, leadership, stakeholders, and tools.

Application: The experience of these countries shows that monitoring and evaluation help decision-making in one or two areas: firstly, decision-making regarding performance-based budgeting, improvement of resource allocation or government priorities for national or sectoral development plans; secondly, for managing the performance of programs, activities, and organizations; thirdly, for transparency, accountability, and social control.

To extract a pattern from the monitoring and evaluation systems in the studied countries, six of the most fundamental success factors of these systems are summarized and presented in this research:

1. The first point is that the implementation and establishment of systems should gradually and over time become ingrained within the government and governmental organizations. Initially, the cultural persuasion of the value of evaluation is more important than creating executive and operational mechanisms.
2. The second point is that the path of creating, growing, and developing these systems has not been easy without challenges, and during that,

encountering numerous unavoidable obstacles and difficulties is inevitable. Therefore, a strong determination, strong motivation, and high goals of leaders and statesmen, as well as the demand of civil society and the people, play a significant and unparalleled role.

3. The third point is that the more diverse actors at different levels are involved in government monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the more legitimate the system becomes, and its results become more valuable, acceptable, and effective. In fact, the value of evaluation knowledge depends on the quality of engagement of actors.
4. The fourth point emphasizes that the effectiveness and sustainability of these systems depend on their ability to provide monitoring over the relationship between the allocated funds for each program and the results achieved from implementing that program through precise, comprehensive, and preventive performance indicators. Although this significantly depends on governments' approach to budgeting.
5. The fifth point is the existence of support organizations that continuously produce systematic data for monitoring and evaluation systems by providing social and economic statistical information for the system and organizations based on scientific and reputable methods. The presence of these organizations alongside the system leads to the creation of a unified national database of valuable social, economic, and archival statistical information on changes in data and statistics in the country.
6. Lastly, the sixth point emphasizes that if the findings of monitoring and evaluation systems create a field for governments to adopt evidence-based policymaking, provide effective public services, and allocate efficient resources, while promoting justice and social welfare, we will see a reduction in poverty rates and the population below the poverty line in countries. Because if we consider the fight against poverty as the most important political priority and ultimate goal of governments in policymaking, the presence of poverty in society is a sign of social policy failure and failure in achieving justice, and therefore reducing or increasing poverty can be considered as one of the most important indicators of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of government policies.

Therefore, considering the above six points, and also considering that in countries that are almost similar to the welfare regime of Iran and relied on monitoring and evaluation systems, firstly, the quality of governance indicators has improved, and secondly, the poverty headcount ratio in these countries has decreased, it can be concluded that establishing continuous and regular monitoring and evaluation systems is the key solution to overcoming policy inefficiency or failure, public budget wastage, and raising hope and social trust in the country.

Conclusion
The study concludes that strategic monitoring and evaluation systems are essential instruments for strengthening good governance and improving public sector performance. However, their effectiveness depends on context-specific institutional arrangements rather than the adoption of a universal model. Political commitment, sound legal frameworks, organizational coordination, and integration with planning and budgeting processes support successful systems.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that while countries differ in institutional design, effective M&E systems share common governance principles, including accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous organizational learning. These findings provide practical insights for policymakers seeking to strengthen national governance systems and contribute to the comparative literature on monitoring and evaluation in public administration.

Keywords: Monitoring and Evaluation System, Good Governance, Effectiveness, Accountability, and Participation.

Introduction

Following the adverse consequences experienced by governments adopting the minimal state paradigm and the occurrence of multiple financial crises during the 1980s and 1990s subsequent to the elimination of state interventions and privatization, a wave of disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the ostensibly promising prescriptions of minimal government intensified from the mid-1990s onward. During this period, achieving an optimal governance model that would ensure the formation of capable, meritocratic, and accountable states became a common concern among nations. With the introduction of the good governance approach in the late 1990s, a new paradigm regarding the role and function of the state and the mode of societal administration was presented in development discourse, and international organizations, including the World Bank and the United Nations, posited this approach as the key to the development puzzle (Meydari, 2006) and emphasized its significance for sustainable development. Notably, this paradigm shift in the state's role has been accompanied by a broader emphasis on improving the administration of state resources and the provision of efficient and effective public services (Wetzel, 2017: 62).

Concurrently, approximately at the same juncture when good governance was formally articulated as the preferred strategy for development and economic policy efficiency (mid-1990s), the necessity of evaluating the effectiveness and impact of development programs and policies gained recognition in policy literature, and the first monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems emerged globally. It bears mentioning that the World Bank, with the objective of ensuring the realization of outcomes and impacts of development projects and programs in borrowing countries, was instrumental in supporting the establishment of these systems. Government monitoring and evaluation systems refer to frameworks that, while systematically and regularly measuring data related to outputs, outcomes, and impacts of governmental policies and programs, utilize monitoring and evaluation information at the organizational, sectoral, or whole-of-government level. Gradually, numerous countries began incorporating these concepts into their development strategies, and governments established institutional frameworks for policy implementation monitoring, performance progress measurement, and accountability assurance. Over time, the nexus between good governance and evaluation became increasingly integrated and mutually reinforcing. The principles of good governance provided the foundation for effective M&E systems, ensuring accountability, stakeholder participation, and the utilization of evaluation findings for policymaking. Moreover, M&E systems contributed to assessing effectiveness, improving reforms, and facilitating governmental learning processes. They have progressively evolved into indispensable components of international development programs, influencing policy formulation, aid effectiveness, and institutional reforms in numerous countries. Presently, an increasing number of developed countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and developing countries including Brazil, Mexico, Chile, and Colombia have successfully institutionalized government M&E systems and leveraged them in domains such as performance-based budgeting, public administration management and improvement, policy development, and accountability enhancement.

Despite nearly three decades of extensive international experience, no significant initiatives or efforts in this regard are observable in Iran. Although scattered attempts at policy evaluation have been undertaken since the inception of development programs, the evaluation methodology in Iran has encountered numerous challenges, never resulting in the establishment of a system or platform for generating continuous and systematic information. It should be noted that from the 2010s onward, academic research concerning public or sectoral policy evaluation systems has been conducted in Iran; regrettably, despite the generation of knowledge and the design of valuable models, these efforts have not garnered support from policymakers and government officials and have not transcended the confines of theoretical frameworks.

Accordingly, given that the application of M&E systems in evidence-based policymaking processes, performance-based budgeting, efficient and effective policy adoption and program delivery, and governmental accountability has received considerable attention, this study endeavors to undertake a comparative examination of M&E systems in countries that, first, possess experience in establishing and institutionalizing M&E systems and, second, exhibit welfare system characteristics proximate to those of Iran. The research examines the political and economic context, structures, and institutionalization processes of strategic M&E systems, with the aim of identifying, through the study of respective experiences, the enabling factors for the growth and successful institutionalization of M&E systems within these countries' governance frameworks. It is hoped that the findings of this research will not only stimulate motivation and political will among the country's officials and governing authorities but also, by elucidating the nature and methodology of this ambiguous trajectory, provide a foundation for establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in Iran's social policymaking arena.

Conceptual Framework

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Monitoring and evaluation constitute a mechanism that provides policymakers with awareness of policy and program outcomes among citizens (target populations), thereby facilitating the refinement of targeted interventions and the improvement of policymaking processes. Specifically, monitoring refers to the process of collecting and recording information (UNITAR, 2017: 5-6; UNISDR, 2012: 3) conducted to track inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of programs or policies (Rossi et al., 2004:187; Taylor-Powell & Aklilu, 2006: 3; South African Government, 2007: 1) to assist in achieving intended objectives. This process, which is operationalized regularly, continuously, and consistently throughout program implementation, furnishes managers, policymakers, and stakeholders with valuable data including explanations for project outcome occurrences, accountability to stakeholders, and decision-making regarding project continuation (continuation, revision, or termination) (Rossi et al., 2004: 187-188). Evaluation denotes the systematic and unbiased activity of examining the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of impact of an intervention within ongoing or completed programs, projects, or policies (Taylor-Powell, 2006: 3; Majola, 2014: 13), undertaken to ensure the correctness of the chosen path, appropriate selection of strategies and resources for goal attainment (UNISDR, 2012: 2), and to inform social actions for improving social conditions (Rossi et al., 2004: 14).

A critical consideration is that the constellation of monitoring and evaluation activities within an organization, institution, or government can only be sustainably institutionalized through the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system. A monitoring and evaluation system refers to a configuration of organizational structures, management processes, standards, strategies, programs, indicators, information systems, and accountability relationships that enables an organization to effectively execute its monitoring and evaluation functions (South African Government, 2007: 4).

Good Governance

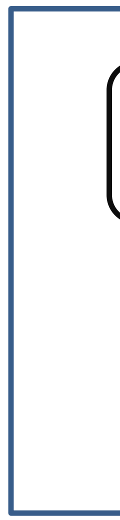
Good governance refers to the processes through which government, in interaction with civil society and the private sector, and while adhering to principles such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, and participatory engagement, directs national resources toward the public interest and the enhancement of living standards and welfare for all citizens (Heshmatzdeh et al., 2017). Within this framework, the state is neither inherently an impediment to development nor its sole driver; rather, a capable state, operating through good governance mechanisms, facilitates the development process (Hadavand, 2005: 71-72). Furthermore, this approach is conceptualized as a paradigm for coordinated development across political, social, and economic domains through the interaction among three institutional actors, government, civil society, and the private sector, with the objective of improving decision-making processes and monitoring the formulation and implementation of policies (Abtahi et al., 2018).

Consequently, it can be discerned that this approach, firstly, enhances the quality of governance at the level of bilateral relations between the state and civil society, and secondly, by establishing mechanisms such as citizen participation in decision-making processes and governmental transparency and accountability, creates a framework for public opinion to influence policymakers' decisions. In pursuing this trajectory, emphasis must be placed not only on establishing appropriate linkages and interactions among the three sectors, government, civil institutions, and the private sector,regarding optimal management of public affairs and public issues, but also on operationalizing the methodologies this approach envisions for achieving development, welfare, and effective state-society engagement. These methodologies encompass the six dimensions identified by the World Bank in defining good governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Kaufmann et al., 2008: 7-8). Additionally, another distinctive framework comprises seven competencies articulated by the International Development Sector perspective. These seven competencies include: maintaining participatory policy frameworks; poverty reduction and economic stability; implementing pro-poor policies; providing basic services effectively and equitably; ensuring personal security and safety; managing accountable national security strategies; and developing responsive and trustworthy government (Abtahi et al., 2018). As evidenced, effectiveness, accountability, and participation constitute three salient and recurrent indicators emphasized across these definitions of good governance.

Monitoring and Evaluation as a Strategic Instrument of Good Governance

Policy evaluation fundamentally contributes to sound and desirable public governance. When evaluation is equipped with accurate and high-quality performance data across multiple levels, it can illuminate the path for policymakers and decision-makers, analogous to a high-powered projector or spotlight, to facilitate evidence-based policy adoption, thereby enabling governments to enhance the design and implementation of public policies. This, in turn, can augment both national prosperity and citizen welfare (OECD, 2020: 147). At the macro level, monitoring and evaluation, in pursuit of good governance realization, engender tangible changes in governmental management practices and citizens' experiences of service delivery, as they advance three principal objectives: improving transparency, strengthening accountability, and promoting organizational learning. In essence, the cumulative effect of monitoring and evaluation is the cultivation of transparency and accountability attributes, which subsequently yield a higher-order outcome: good governance (Naidoo, 2011: 20).

Figure 1. The Relationship Between Good Governance and Monitoring and Evaluation

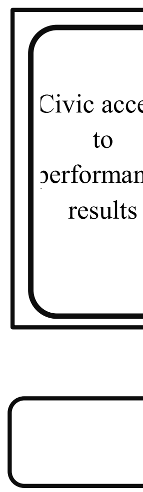


Source: Na

In explicating Figure 1, it is imperative to note that monitoring and evaluation, through the dissemination of credible results in the public domain, enhance transparency while simultaneously establishing conditions conducive to accountability. Consequently, given that monitoring and evaluation are intrinsically linked to decision-making structures, the implementation of evidence-based actions derived from these mechanisms and the application of resultant policy recommendations will lead to improved performance and, ultimately, more effective governance.

Conversely, good governance necessitates, first, that citizens exercise oversight over power holders and, second, that power holders maintain awareness and assessment of the consequences of their policies and programs, as well as the efficacy of each intervention on citizens' lives. Therefore, the realization of an enabling and capable state model within the good governance framework is contingent upon the qualitative manifestation of components such as democracy, participation, accountability, equity-centeredness, and effectiveness. In this context, the monitoring and evaluation system, as an invaluable instrument, equips policymakers with a feedback mechanism to support evidence-informed and evidence-based decision-making by providing unique data regarding the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of policies and programs at both national and local levels, thereby furnishing robust evidence concerning their efficiency or inefficiency and the underlying rationale. The following figure, based on research findings, illustrates the conditions and elements through which good governance is supported and measured (Naidoo, 2011: 21):

Figure 1. Enabling conditions for good governance



Source: Naidoo,2011: 21

Good governance is not an abstract concept; rather, it constitutes an approach to conducting public affairs in the collective interest of citizens. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation contribute to the realization of good governance by providing instrumental mechanisms for results-based management and ensuring enhanced and more efficient government performance.

Methodology

The present study is exploratory in nature, conducted with the objective of identifying and comparatively describing the enabling factors contributing to the development and success of monitoring and evaluation systems. Accordingly, this research employs a qualitative approach and comparative method to conduct a comparative analysis of documents and literature pertaining to strategic monitoring and evaluation systems in selected countries, along with their indicators and characteristics. Therefore, a corpus of reports, books, articles, and documents published regarding monitoring and evaluation systems in various countries has been utilized. In selecting textual materials from these documents, efforts were made to consider Scott's four criteria for document quality assessment, authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (Flick, 2009: 278), in the selection of reports. Furthermore, data collection encompassed all publicly accessible documents addressing the topics of "monitoring and evaluation" and "monitoring and evaluation systems" published through June 2024. A substantial portion of these reports was compiled by the Independent Evaluation Group/Department of the World Bank with the aim of documenting the experiences of various countries regarding the mechanisms for establishing monitoring and evaluation systems during the first decade of the twenty-first century (2000-2012). Notably, the presence of numerous developed and developing countries with extensive and diverse characteristics in the registry of these reports indicates that concerns regarding evaluation and the propensity toward institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation systems exist across all welfare regime types worldwide, irrespective of developmental status. However, given that the mission of this research is to identify the nature, modalities, and groundwork for institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation instruments within Iran's social policy arena, the documentary studies focus on countries exhibiting greater typological affinity with Iran in terms of welfare regime classification. In accordance with Wood and Gough's (2006) welfare regime typology and classification at the global level (Taj Mazinani, 2010), this research selects countries possessing welfare configurations more closely aligned with Iran as the basis for selection (Table 1). Consequently, following the country classification presented in Table 1, five countries have been selected: Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Rwanda, and Vietnam.

Table 1. Classification of Countries with Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Based on Global Welfare Regime Typology

Australia, Canada, United States	Liberal	Esping-Andersen's Welfare Regimes
France	Conservative	
Norway	Social Democratic	
Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Argentina	Actual Welfare State Regimes	Welfare Regimes in Non-OECD Countries
Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Vietnam, Rwanda, Indonesia, Iran	More Effective Informal Security Regimes	
Nepal	Less Effective Informal Security Regimes	
Mali, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia	Externally Dependent Insecurity Regimes	

Specifically, the selection of Chile, Colombia, and Mexico from the group of countries with potential/actual welfare state regimes was predicated on the criterion that these nations, according to official World Bank declarations, are ranked among the most pioneering and successful countries globally in institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation systems over the past two decades. The selection of Rwanda and Vietnam from the group of countries with informal security provision regimes was determined, beyond their typological affinity and proximity to Iran's welfare classification, by two additional criteria. The examination of Rwanda illuminates the challenges of monitoring and evaluation capacity building in a fragile, conflict-affected country, while the study of Vietnam represents the experience of a country that, in addition to demonstrating notable historical performance in poverty reduction, has achieved relative success in developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for overseeing its national poverty reduction strategy. It should be noted that accessibility constituted a highly determinative criterion in this research; given the limitations of available reports and literature, priority was accorded to cases for which data were available and amenable to analysis.

Furthermore, the analysis of findings in this research was conducted using thematic analysis, governed by inductive logic, as themes and patterns were derived inductively from the collected texts and documents.

Findings

In accordance with the research objectives, following a comprehensive literature review and axial coding procedures, the monitoring and evaluation systems of five countries, Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Vietnam, and Rwanda, were categorized into five principal dimensions: genesis, mandate, legal framework, configuration, and implementation.

Origin

Undoubtedly, every social phenomenon is contingent upon the socioeconomic context of a given society and emerges from the concerns and demands of its principal actors. When governmental modes of governance or prevailing intellectual systems generate demands predicated on performance, effectiveness, and efficiency, policy impact evaluation may be formally recognized as a facilitative instrument. The genesis theme encompasses two subsidiary themes: historical, political, and economic context, and critical junctures.

- **Political and Economic Context**

Examination of the political backgrounds of countries that have established monitoring and evaluation systems reveals that regime transition to democracy constitutes one of the most frequent catalyzing factors, accompanied by subsequent implementation of comprehensive reform measures. For instance, in Chile, the development of monitoring and evaluation instruments is rooted in the country's democratic transition (Dussauge, 2011: 1). In the late 1980s, domestic and international pressure for democratization culminated in the overthrow of Pinochet's 17-year military dictatorship. Following Patricio Aylwin's election as president in 1989, the administration confronted significant administrative and managerial challenges, including ensuring policy coordination within central government, evaluating public program performance, assessing governmental policy effectiveness, and improving oversight of public resource utilization (Lopez-Acevedo et al., 2012: 184). Consequently, administrative modernization emerged as a priority among political elites and technocrats as part of broader public sector reform efforts (Dussauge, 2011: 1). These initiatives resulted in the implementation of first-generation instruments during the 1990s, ultimately culminating in the establishment of Chile's monitoring and evaluation system between 2000 and 2010.

In Mexico, although movement toward a results-based system can be traced to the early 1970s through sporadic and temporary program evaluations, the liberalization of the national political system in the late 1990s, coupled with increased demands for governmental transparency and accountability, facilitated the implementation of evaluation measures. Accountability mechanisms were progressively institutionalized through comprehensive legislative initiatives enacted by Congress. Colombia's monitoring and evaluation system was similarly established as an integral component of an extensive modernization process following democratic transition in 1991, encompassing a comprehensive array of economic and political reforms (May et al., 2006: 29). Furthermore, the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in Colombia represented a response to concerns arising from experiences with financial and political corruption, including money laundering, financial irregularities, bribery, financial market manipulation, and abuse of power positions for personal gain. These phenomena confronted the country with economic challenges during the 1990s, including high inflation, persistent fiscal deficits, and substantial external debt burdens. Thus, in Colombia, political transformations combined with economic reforms created conditions conducive to establishing mechanisms for rigorous and continuous oversight. In this regard, Fernando Castro identifies two factors validating political and legal support for Colombia's monitoring and evaluation system: erosion of public institutional credibility resulting from failure to deliver results for social priorities, and inefficiency and corruption in multiple investment projects (Castro & Manuel, 2009: 2-3).

Economic and political economy considerations in countries such as Rwanda and Vietnam have facilitated the emergence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms along two principal axes. The first axis concerns these countries' budgetary dependence on international organizational financial assistance. Given that donors finance the majority of governmental budgets (particularly in Rwanda) (Hwang, 2014: 10), officials' obligations to respond and report to donors constitute primary determinants of system development in Rwanda and Vietnam. The second axis relates to the formulation of poverty reduction strategy papers in these nations. These upstream documents, while representing significant measures toward governmental and economic modernization, establish foundations for developing monitoring and evaluation capacity through articulation of key performance indicators and identification of mechanisms for monitoring overall progress.

- **Turning Points**

Critical junctures or pivotal turning points can play a prominent and decisive role in shaping the trajectory of institutional development. These key events can exert enduring consequences on a society's trajectory, fundamentally shaping its identity, values, and institutions. In the Colombian experience, one of the most significant critical junctures in the widespread acceptance and formal recognition of monitoring and evaluation was the adoption of a new constitution in 1991, which possessed such paramount importance that it may be characterized as a watershed moment in the establishment of Colombia's monitoring and evaluation system (May et al., 2006: 29-30). Under this constitutional framework (enacted in 1991), Colombia's National Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System was established, subsequently delegating the design and organization of this system to the National Planning Council for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the management and outcomes of national public policies, programs, and projects (Perez, 2012: 11).

In the evolutionary trajectory of Chile's monitoring and evaluation system development, a pivotal event that indubitably served as an extraordinary catalyst was Law No. 19,896 of 2003, which mandated that the Chilean Ministry of Finance, commencing in 2004, evaluate programs receiving budgetary allocations from public service appropriations (Guzmán et al., 2014: 19). Examination of Mexico's historical precedents reveals that what opened a distinctive pathway for Mexican governmental authorities in monitoring and evaluation system development was the first systematic and rigorous evaluation conducted during that period in the late 1990s. This impact evaluation of an innovative conditional cash transfer program named Progresa/Oportunidades in 1997 proved innovative and effective, becoming a successful paradigm in Mexican public administration (Lopez-Acevedo et al., 2012: 167) and one of the most influential evaluations in the development sector worldwide (World Bank, 2008: 1). Additionally, the establishment of the Performance Evaluation System in 2006 may be considered another pivotal event in Mexico that exerted profound influence on the institutionalization of the evaluation process. The Federal Budget and Fiscal Responsibility Law of 2006 created a performance evaluation system across the entire government. This legislation, combined with subsequent amendments, generated renewed impetus for monitoring and evaluation system implementation (Castro et al., 2009: 4; Hwang, 2014: 9).

Furthermore, examination of the developmental phases of monitoring and evaluation systems in Rwanda and Vietnam reveals that a common critical juncture fundamentally transformed the prevailing systems in both countries. The establishment of the National Institute of Statistics in Rwanda (2006) and the promulgation of the Statistical Development Directive in Vietnam (2002) constitute two watershed moments that, beyond strengthening the foundation for enhancing statistical standards and data quality among governmental organizations, institutionalized a referential framework for continuous poverty measurement and monitoring of associated indicators in these countries.

Mission

The rationale underlying governmental authorities' inclination toward evaluation and the establishment of institutionalizing mechanisms emanates from a constellation of concerns, issues, and challenges encountered during the trajectory of national development and transformation. In this regard, countries have initiated the implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within their public management procedures through various approaches, focusing on several salient objectives. These objectives comprise: improvement of resource allocation and efficient budgeting, performance management (of programs and organizations) and enhancement of policy effectiveness, transparency and accountability, reporting to donors, and poverty reduction. The objectives underpinning system establishment in each country are delineated in Table 2.

Table 2. Objectives of Monitoring and Evaluation System Implementation in Selected Countries

Country	Reasons for Establishing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems
Chile	Enhancement of expenditure quality, resource allocation, and cost-effectiveness Achievement of transparency and improved dissemination of public information Support for efficient decision-making
Colombia	Improvement of policy and program effectiveness Enhancement of efficiency and transparency in planning and public resource allocation Social control
Mexico	Increased efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of social development policies poverty reduction strategies transparency and accountability
Rwanda	Decentralization aimed at improving local government Upward accountability Reporting to donors
Vietnam	Accountability and reporting to financial donors

Legal Framework

Examination of the historical trajectories of the countries under investigation demonstrates that monitoring and evaluation systems, their components, and instruments have been established or strengthened through legal frameworks. The implementation of certain systems has been founded upon robust legislative or legal frameworks. Colombia exemplifies this category of systems. In Colombia, the mandate to establish a national evaluation system was incorporated into the 1991 Constitution. Conversely, the implementation of certain monitoring and evaluation systems has been predicated on relatively more flexible legal instruments, such as agreements, inter-branch protocols, or mechanisms stipulated by annual budget laws. In such cases, it appears that these systems are progressively consolidated through more robust legal foundations and juridical frameworks once their methodologies and procedures attain a minimum level of maturity within the country. For instance, in Chile, various types of program evaluation were introduced based on annual agreements (1997, 2001, 2002) between the Ministry of Finance and Congress, with provisions stipulating that bilateral agreements would determine annually which programs and organizations would undergo evaluation (Zaltsman, 2006: iv-v). Following this introduction, Law 19,896 was enacted in 2003, which firstly mandated evaluations as obligatory and secondly required the Chilean Ministry of Finance to evaluate programs receiving budgetary allocations from public service appropriations (Guzmán et al., 2014: 19). Subsequently, in 2003, an amendment to the State Financial Management Law established regulations for the Ministry of Finance to conduct annual evaluations of programs and institutions, stipulating that specific standards must be observed in conducting evaluations (May et al., 2006: 14).

A similar trajectory is observable in Mexico. In 1999, the Mexican Congress mandated that all programs with operational rules must undergo annual evaluation by external evaluators. Subsequently, in 2004, the Social Development Law became enforceable. This legislation mandated systematic evaluation of social development policy to periodically examine alignment with social objectives of programs, goals, and social development policy measures (ILO, 2011: 295), establishing the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL). Furthermore, the Federal Budget and Fiscal Responsibility Law of 2006 created a performance evaluation system across the entire government. This legislation, combined with management reforms, resulted in strengthened impetus for monitoring and evaluation system implementation (Castro et al., 2009: 4).

Examination of the experience of evaluation system implementation in Rwanda and Vietnam indicates that legal documents and texts in these countries, given that their genesis differs from other countries under investigation, do not fall within either of the aforementioned categories. In Rwanda, two documents (Vision 2020 and the Poverty Reduction

Strategy) and in Vietnam, the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy and Decision 555 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, play significant roles in supporting and guiding monitoring and evaluation systems in these countries. These documents serve as theoretical underpinnings for governmental systems insofar as they formally recognize a framework aimed at tracking progress, measuring poverty reduction program impact, ensuring efficient resource allocation, and strengthening stakeholder accountability, while also providing a template for regular reporting on implementation status and policy outcomes to donors. In essence, in these countries, legal frameworks and documents emphasize the cultivation of results-based management culture in the public sector rather than focusing predominantly on the structure, components, and organization of these systems.

Configuration (Architecture)

Institutional arrangements for monitoring and evaluation may be manifested through external and independent organizations, centralized governmental systems under budgetary authorities, or decentralized governmental systems. This research focuses on the study of government-based systems (fundamentally established with the objectives of enhancing program effectiveness and improving resource allocation). Centralized governmental systems refer to systems positioned at the center of government as instruments for managing and controlling budgetary efficiency, while their entirely decentralized variant refers to systems in which monitoring and evaluation activities are conducted by the implementing organization (rather than reporting to a central authority). Examination of documentation from the countries under investigation reveals that in three countries (Chile, Mexico, and Rwanda) centralized governmental monitoring and evaluation systems are manifested under the supervision of budgetary organizations (ministries of finance). The configuration axis encompasses five subsidiary themes: approach to monitoring and evaluation, organizational structure, leadership, actors, and instruments.

- **Approach to Monitoring and Evaluation**

Review of the comparative study of the five countries under investigation demonstrates that governments employ either monitoring or evaluation activities, or both simultaneously, based on three factors: objectives, resources, and instruments. Among the five countries examined, the systems of Colombia, Mexico, and Chile are classified among those that rely on both monitoring and evaluation activities concurrently, whereas the type of performance evaluation in Rwanda and Vietnam constitutes indicator-based monitoring.

- **Organizational Structure (Degree of Actor and Stakeholder Participation)**

Organizational structure refers to the manner in which involved actors, their roles, responsibilities, power, and authority are determined and managed, and information is transmitted between different hierarchical levels within an organization. This structure reflects the system's institutionalization capacity, the degree of commitment and continuity in system implementation, and assurance of the application of its findings in budget allocation.

- **Leadership/Custodianship**

Review of extensive documentation demonstrates that in countries where monitoring and evaluation system leadership is vested in an organization related to budgetary affairs (such as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs), the probability that this system will possess substantial authority for implementation and application of its findings in decision-making and budgeting processes is greater, as this arrangement facilitates close integration between the monitoring and evaluation system and budget-based activities. The optimal and most successful exemplar is Chile's monitoring and evaluation system, which was formally introduced in 2000 under the central coordination of the Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance. In Rwanda, the Ministry of Economy and Finance performs the leadership and coordination role for the monitoring and evaluation system, with the distinction that whereas in Chile the roles and responsibilities of this system are concentrated in a single office, in Rwanda this leadership is exercised through three departments: Planning, Budget, and External Finance Unit. Furthermore, Mexico's monitoring and evaluation system is operationalized by the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit located in the Ministry of Finance, with technical consultation from CONEVAL and subordinate participation from the Secretariat of Public Administration of the Ministry of Public Management (Castro et al., 2009: 17-18).

Conversely, in certain countries, monitoring and evaluation system leadership is vested in governmental organizations that possess functions beyond policymaking regarding the country's budgetary distribution and allocation. For instance, in Colombia, the monitoring and evaluation mechanism is concentrated in a unified system titled the National System for the Evaluation of Public Sector Performance (SINERGIA). The custodian of this system is the Public Policy Evaluation Office, which is situated within the National Planning Organization. In addition to Colombia, in Vietnam, monitoring and evaluation leadership is vested in the Ministry of Planning and Investment, which is responsible for the country's planning system, including serving as the official manager of development assistance projects.

- **Actors and Responsibilities**

Beyond system leadership, which plays a prominent role in achieving success and objectives, the selection of key actors, proper design of roles and responsibilities, and delineation of efficient coordination among them provide the foundation for a system's success and sustainability. Subsequently, actors, their roles, and responsibilities within the system are organized in Tables 3 and 4, with consideration of countries' approaches to monitoring and evaluation.

Chile, Mexico, and Colombia share commonalities at three junctures: First, in these countries, governmental organizations and institutions themselves collect the requisite data for performance indicators and evaluation reports and submit them to upstream organizations. Second, evaluation implementation is delegated to external evaluators through contractual arrangements. This characteristic provides some possibility for independent evaluation. In this regard, a distinctive feature of Colombia's unique success is that the evaluation agenda is executed from bottom-up and participatorily between the National Planning Organization and ministries and organizations whose programs are being evaluated. This arrangement yields a high level of inter-organizational cooperation. Third, system stakeholders in all three countries comprise governmental organizations (toward policy or program elimination or reform), Congress, and civil society and citizens (toward transparency and accountability).

Table 3. Custodian, Actors, and Their Responsibilities in the Monitoring and Evaluation Systems of Chile, Colombia, and Mexico

	Mexico	Colombia	Chile
System Custodian	Joint working group of three organizations—Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Management, and CONEVAL—manages the entire monitoring and evaluation system CONEVAL serves as the	The Directorate for Evaluation of Public Policy (executive management) CONPES: National Council for Economic and Social Policy (system policymaking role)	Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance

	Mexico	Colombia	Chile
	focal point for the social sector monitoring and evaluation system		
Compilation and Reporting of Performance Indicators and Required Data	Governmental organizations or institutions for each program in the indicator matrix	Ministries, organizations, and local governments register in the SIGUOB database	Governmental organizations or institutions
Decision-making Regarding Evaluation Priorities, Types, and Criteria	In the annual National Evaluation Program formulated by the joint working group among the three entities: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Management, and CONEVAL	Inter-sectoral committee	Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance
Implementation of Evaluations	External evaluators	External evaluators (contracts with universities or consulting firms)	External evaluators
Evaluation Management	Conducted by the joint working group of three organizations: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Management, and CONEVAL	Implemented participatorily (ministries with participation of Evaluation Office)	Ex-ante evaluation: Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance (responsible for evaluating other programs) Ministry of Social Development (responsible for evaluating social programs) Ex-post evaluation: Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance
Reporting of System Results	Evaluation reports of social sector programs	The Directorate for Evaluation of Public Policy of the National Planning Organization in conjunction with the Presidential Office	Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance
Stakeholders and Beneficiaries of the Monitoring and Evaluation System	Congress Governmental organizations Civil society	Congress Governmental organizations Civil society	Congress Governmental organizations Civil society

Rwanda and Vietnam share commonalities at two junctures. First, one of the key and important actors in these two countries is the statistical office, which constitutes a governmental institution bearing the duties and authorities of governmental management in the statistical domain, executes statistical operations, and provides socioeconomic statistical information to agencies, organizations, and individuals based on national legislation. The second point of commonality between Vietnam and Rwanda is the substantial contribution of financial aid donors in creating monitoring and evaluation capacity. Indeed, accountability requirements to financial aid donors have constituted the primary driver for monitoring and evaluation system development in these two countries.

Custodian, Actors, and Their Responsibilities in the Monitoring .4 Table and Evaluation Systems of Vietnam and Rwanda

Countries	Vietnam	Rwanda
System Custodian	Ministry of Planning and Investment	MINECOFIN: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
Production of Socioeconomic Statistical Information	National Institute of Statistics	National Institute of Statistics
Compilation and Reporting of Performance Indicators and Matrix Completion	Organizations and ministries Within the framework of Decision 555	Facilitators stationed in ministries in matrix format
Stakeholders and Beneficiaries of the Monitoring and Evaluation System	Financial aid donors National Assembly of Vietnam	Presidential Office (President and Prime Minister Financial aid donors

- **System Instruments**

The experiences of the five countries under investigation demonstrate that performance indicators constitute one of the most critical components scrutinized under monitoring activities. Performance indicators are measures of inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of governmental activities, indicating whether performance is progressing in the appropriate direction. These indicators are systematically linked to their corresponding objectives through indicator matrices, and this instrument enables the capacity for tracking, following up, and measuring the degree of progress. Table 5 demonstrates that countries such as Chile and Colombia monitor and measure program objectives, results, outputs, activities, and inputs through performance indicators, whereas countries such as Mexico, Rwanda, and Vietnam employ indicator matrices for this purpose.

Table 5. Instruments Employed for Monitoring and Evaluation of Programs in Selected Countries

Countries	Evaluation Instruments		Monitoring Instruments	
	Description	**Title**	**Description**	**Title**
Chile	Designed to determine the consistency and appropriateness of proposed social programs for implementation or reformulation	Ex-ante Evaluation		Performance Indicators
			Comprises a collection of monitoring forms containing information related to social programs	Integrated Social Programs Bank
	Consists of evaluations of government programs, impact evaluations, comprehensive expenditure reviews, and evaluations of new programs	Ex-post Evaluation	Focused on access to performance information related to budgets	Management Improvement Program
			Developed as the primary instrument for public disclosure	Comprehensive Management Report Based on Performance Indicators
Mexico	Introduction of technical criteria for regulating the evaluation of government programs and standard procedures for improving the formulation of performance indicators and strategic objectives	General Guidelines for Evaluation of Government Programs	Summary of program objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities, and inputs, accompanied by performance indicators	Matrix Indicators
	Standardized frameworks for evaluation	Matrix Indicators		

Countries	Evaluation Instruments		Monitoring Instruments	
	Description	**Title**	**Description**	**Title**
	Developed annually by the principal system actors	Annual Evaluation Program		
	Establishment of an evaluation menu including design evaluation, process evaluation, evaluation of program appropriateness and results, indicator evaluation, and impact evaluation			
Colombia	Impact Evaluation and Rapid Evaluation; Institutional Evaluation and Management Evaluation		Registration of indicators corresponding to presidential objectives in the SIGOB Bank	Performance Indicators
Rwanda			Summary of key poverty reduction strategy indicators from all matrices at national and sectoral levels	Results Matrix and Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy Policy
			A more concise subset of the results matrix at the national level	Joint Performance Assessment Framework
			Bilateral and multilateral performance assessment framework for donors and government	Donor Performance Assessment Framework
Vietnam			Framework providing a shared vision for development and a set of policy measures related to poverty reduction objectives	Policy Matrix for Poverty Reduction Support Credit
			Comprises an action plan for implementing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for official development assistance projects	Official Development Assistance Project Framework

Countries	Evaluation Instruments		Monitoring Instruments	
	Description	Title	Description	Title
			Framework for tracking the implementation and progress of the country's socioeconomic development program	Decision 555 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
			a medium-term budgeting approach based on a three- to five-year planning horizon	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework

Furthermore, Table 5 reveals that the most frequently employed evaluation methods based on country experiences include rapid assessments or appraisals, rapid evaluation, impact evaluation, and comprehensive expenditure reviews. Rapid assessments refer to expeditious and cost-effective methods for collecting stakeholder opinions and feedback to provide prompt information for management decision-making, particularly at the activity or program level. Rapid evaluation encompasses formal examination of a governmental activity or program. For instance, in Chile, rapid evaluations necessitate external evaluators' review of program objectives and preparation of a logical framework analysis (which delineates causal linkages between governmental activities and intended outcomes and impacts). All available data, including performance indicators, are analyzed to assess activity efficiency or effectiveness. While rapid evaluation methods can be employed for impact estimation, more sophisticated impact evaluation methods can yield considerably more reliable and valid findings. Impact evaluation focuses on the outcomes and impacts of governmental activities. Indeed, program effectiveness evaluation examines the causal relationship between programs and outcomes (OECD, 2020:25). Comprehensive expenditure reviews constitute holistic organizational assessments conducted primarily using existing information or background data, as well as interviews with key stakeholders.

Application

The experience of the countries under investigation demonstrates that monitoring and evaluation in each country contributes to decision-making in one or two of the following domains: first, regarding performance-based budgeting decisions, improving resource allocation in terms of governmental priorities for developing national or sectoral plans; second, for managing the performance of programs, activities, and organizations; and third, for accountability, transparency enhancement, responsibility cultivation, and social control. All these ultimately culminate in the overarching objective of decision-making for public sector performance improvement. Consequently, the central application theme is subdivided into three subsidiary themes: accountability, performance improvement, and performance-based budgeting.

Accountability

Irrespective of whether the accountability audience is upward (to superior authorities), downward (to local communities), lateral (to colleagues, partners, or peers), or outward (to international organizations), monitoring and evaluation contributes to enhanced governance transparency and responsibility through reporting mechanisms. In Colombia, President Uribe's strong commitment to utilizing monitoring and evaluation information for exercising political and social control constitutes a unique characteristic. This signifies that the President, first, employs the SIGUOB database in management control meetings with ministers and municipalities nationwide to examine performance indicator progress aligned with presidential objectives. Second, SIGUOB information is utilized in annual televised presentations to citizens, wherein governmental performance is discussed and citizen questions are addressed. Third, annual formal reports are submitted to Congress regarding the extent of achievement of national program goals and objectives. In Mexico, since 1999, primary report recipients include, in addition to system custodians, Congress, governmental ministries, and the general public. In Vietnam and Rwanda, the monitoring and evaluation system constitutes the principal accountability mechanism to financial donors, providing detailed explanations regarding the expenditure of financial support.

Performance Management Improvement

In Mexico, a follow-up mechanism for prioritizing and implementing evaluation recommendations (guidelines for utilizing evaluation results) was issued in October 2008, which may be considered a unique feature for this country. This feedback mechanism provides a framework for program managers and related organizations to be obligated to prepare a response document to the evaluation report. This document comprises an implementation roadmap for operationalizing corrective actions, involved actors, and timeline scheduling, which is published on the relevant ministry's website. In Chile, the Ministry of Finance has been equipped with a powerful instrument for improving organizational and ministerial performance through the monitoring and evaluation system. First, the Ministry of Finance, through performance indicators, negotiates performance objectives for the upcoming budget year with each organization and thereby monitors the degree of objective achievement. Second, through evaluation reports and submitted corrective recommendations, following negotiation with the related organization, formal agreement is reached regarding program modifications and reforms. Regarding Chile, it may be stated that such authority of the Ministry of Finance within government represents a unique Chilean characteristic, enabling regular implementation of this magnitude of managerial change across ministries and organizations.

Performance-Based Budgeting

The findings of this research indicate that one of the most successful exemplars in applying monitoring and evaluation information to the budgeting process is observable in Chile. It should be noted that this achievement represents the optimal model among Latin American countries, rooted in the system's close connection and interaction with the annual budget cycle. In fact, governmental program evaluations in Chile are not only utilized for management and efficiency improvement but are also employed by the Ministry of Finance for resource allocation decisions in the budget process. Conversely, the Ministry of Finance endeavors to anticipate future budget information needs when formulating the evaluation agenda. Furthermore, high levels of achievement in management performance indicators are associated with salary increases, which have in turn influenced budget levels for organizations.

Mexico's performance evaluation system employs the logical framework method of matrix indicators to provide an integrated model for program planning, monitoring, and evaluation aimed at standardizing results measurement, thereby aligning national development program and sectoral program objectives with budgeting. This system generates monitoring and evaluation information regarding the degree of governmental objective achievement for budgetary decision-making. In preparing the annual budget, based on the logical framework, analysts from the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit discuss with their counterparts in line ministries the progress achieved in previous year performance indicators and proposed indicators and objectives for the subsequent year. Through mutual collaboration during budgeting, expenditure priorities and resource allocation are determined. The Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit, based on system monitoring and evaluation information and results obtained from implementing organizations in the previous year, can propose improvements in programs, policies, or organizational configurations. Resource allocation may be increased contingent upon performance and implementation of evaluation recommendations for program improvement. Similarly, based on monitoring and evaluation information and governmental priorities, a program may be reduced or eliminated.

Regarding Colombia, it must be explicitly acknowledged that coordination does not exist among the planning, evaluation, and budgeting processes. In explanation, it should be noted that monitoring and evaluation system management is situated in the National Planning Organization, which in the best scenario is responsible for capital investment budgeting, whereas budgetary responsibility for the country is vested in the Ministry of Finance. In essence, monitoring and evaluation activity is fundamentally administered as an independent activity without direct and meaningful coordination with budgeting, even lacking close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance's budgetary work. The Ministry of Finance has no direct involvement in SIGUOB or evaluations and makes no direct use of them (World Bank, 2007: 19).

Conversely, in low-income countries such as Vietnam and Rwanda, the context for incorporating monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into the budgeting process is somewhat different. The fight against poverty and the shared pressure of governments and financial donors to achieve progress toward Millennium Development Goals presents a results-based orientation. For these countries, establishing linkages between poverty reduction objectives in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the annual budget cycle constitutes a serious challenge. In Rwanda, while extensive monitoring and reporting utilization exists in budget allocation decisions, capacity for analyzing results and evaluating planning or budgeting remains absent (Hwang, 2014: 34). In Vietnam, budget allocation is clearly not associated with any monitoring and evaluation information, and the Ministry of Finance lacks a system for evaluating public expenditure performance.

Discussion and Conclusion

Monitoring and evaluation systems constitute purpose-driven, results-based instruments for policymakers that guide them toward evidence-based policy formulation and the realization of their governance priorities and commitments. However, the institutional model employed by successful countries cannot be prescribed or recommended to other nations for two fundamental reasons. First, none of the systems that have successfully institutionalized monitoring and evaluation have developed through linear or predictable processes. Second, due to the inherently complex and context-dependent nature of these systems, no single, universally appropriate pathway exists for their development and growth, as this trajectory represents a flexible process contingent upon the capacity, comparative advantages, and contextual circumstances (including challenges, issues, and decision-makers' concerns) specific to each beneficiary country. Therefore, to extract a framework from the monitoring and evaluation systems examined in this study, six fundamental and critical factors are synthesized and presented.

The first consideration concerns the necessity for gradual implementation and establishment of these systems within the governmental apparatus and public organizations over time. Initially, cultivating a cultural appreciation for the value of evaluation takes precedence over establishing operational and executive mechanisms. Undoubtedly, if evaluation is relegated to the level of subjective judgments and opportunistic analyses characterized by politically motivated and unilateral orientations (Ashtarian & Emami Meybodi, 2014), even robust legal frameworks and operational infrastructure cannot guarantee the successful implementation of such systems within governmental organizations. One factor contributing to Chile's success in system institutionalization is attributed to its gradual implementation within the country's governance structure.

The second consideration acknowledges that the pathway to creating, developing, and expanding these systems has been neither straightforward, challenge-free, nor rapid, and encountering multiple obstacles and difficulties throughout this process is inevitable. Consequently, the unwavering commitment, strong motivation, and noble objectives of governing authorities and policymakers, alongside demands from civil society and citizens, play an indispensable and prominent role. The World Bank employs the term "system champions" to describe individuals who maintain the banner of monitoring and evaluation through faith in its achievements, despite opposition, resistance, and management and governance transitions. The strong commitment of Colombia's president to utilizing monitoring and evaluation system findings for social and political control and combating financial corruption emerged as one of the most critical factors in launching this system. The enactment of various binding legislation and the establishment of related methods, procedures, organizations, and tools over approximately 20 years in Chile and 10 years in Mexico attest to the strong resolve of these countries' governing authorities.

The third consideration recognizes that to the extent diverse actors at various levels engage and participate in dialogue and negotiation within governmental monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the system gains greater legitimacy and its results become more valuable and acceptable. Indeed, the value of evaluation knowledge depends upon the quality of stakeholder participation. The degree of cooperation and collaboration among actors at different levels, including system administrators, evaluators, government organizations, program managers, budget-related organizations, parliament, citizens, media, and others, ensures the credibility and effectiveness of evaluation outcomes. This participatory approach merits discussion at multiple levels:

- Implementation of a vertical participatory approach, from top to bottom, facilitates the formation of cross-sectoral councils comprising coalitions of significant and influential actors, which serve as intermediaries in determining agendas and evaluation criteria for government policies and programs. These councils provide opportunities for the presence and participation of most stakeholders and actors in the system policy-making domain. The Intersectoral Committee for Evaluation and Results Management under the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (CONPES) in Colombia, the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) in Mexico, and the Inter-ministerial Committee for Social Development in Chile represent prominent examples of this level of participation.
- A horizontal participatory approach fosters high levels of intra-organizational motivation, ownership, and acceptance regarding evaluation implementation and results among government organizations. Chilean experience demonstrated that leadership and management based on monopolistic centralization within the Ministry of Finance resulted in diminished acceptance of evaluation findings and reduced utilization by governmental organizations. Moreover, reliance on this approach establishes equilibrium between top-down governance and management and bottom-up transfer of technical and specialized knowledge. Colombia's strategy of creating self-evaluation mechanisms within government organizations alongside external evaluators exemplifies one of the most successful implementations of this principle. Furthermore, this participatory approach provides mechanisms for results-based management and operational

programming to facilitate feedback from relevant governmental organizations regarding evaluation reports and recommendations. The follow-up mechanism established in Mexico for prioritizing and implementing evaluation recommendations represents a successful example in this regard.

- Conversely, vertical participation, through public dissemination of reports and establishing grounds for accountability and transparency (top-down) of government, provides opportunities to receive public opinions, perspectives, perceptions, and assessments of efficacy and satisfaction regarding specific programs or particular policies (bottom-up participation). In Vietnam, poverty levels are measured through the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey conducted biennially under the supervision of statistical legislation.

The fourth consideration posits that the efficacy and sustainability of these systems are contingent upon their capacity to monitor the relationship between allocated resources for each program and the results obtained from its implementation through the definition of precise, comprehensive, and mutually exclusive performance indicators. However, this capability is substantially conditional upon governmental approaches to budgeting. When budgeting is employed as an instrument for establishing equilibrium between policy agendas and governmental priorities, and for regulating appropriate resource allocation through mechanisms linking allocated budgets to measurable results, it enables monitoring and measurement of outcomes as well as flexibility regarding outputs. Chile represents one of the most exemplary and successful cases, where evaluation results inform resource allocation decisions within the budgeting process. Experts in this domain identify the key factor as the close connection and interaction between the country's monitoring and evaluation system and its annual budget cycle. In Chile, monitoring and evaluation system administration has been entrusted, with exceptional and centralized authority, to an office operating directly on budgeting functions. The quasi-centralized leadership model of the Budget Office of Chile's Ministry of Finance encompasses responsibilities including planning, implementation, management, governance, and reporting within the monitoring and evaluation system. Although this arrangement has resulted in, first, the sustainability of Chile's system being dependent upon the Ministry of Finance's commitment rather than the performance culture of ministries, and second, the Ministry of Finance utilizing monitoring and evaluation system data and reports throughout the entire budgeting process from initiation to performance report receipt, it is also accompanied by weaknesses previously identified.

The fifth critical factor in successful systems concerns the existence of supporting organizations that generate continuous, periodic, and systematic data for monitoring and evaluation systems, whereby university faculty and academic specialists provide social and economic statistical information for the system and organizations based on scientifically valid methodologies. The presence of such organizations alongside the system results in the establishment of a unified national repository of social and economic statistical information and a valuable archive documenting trends in national data and statistics. Moreover, it can serve as a designated reference for technical guidance and consultation to governmental organization experts regarding monitoring and evaluation system-related data collection (independent of perspectives and preferences), thereby ensuring the quality, validity, and accuracy of generated data. The General Statistics Office in Vietnam and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda constitute prominent examples of this phenomenon.

Finally, the sixth consideration emphasizes that when the application of monitoring and evaluation system findings provides governments with opportunities for evidence-based policy-making, effective public service delivery, and efficient resource allocation, while promoting equity and social welfare, a reduction in poverty headcount and populations below the poverty line will be observed. This is because if poverty alleviation is regarded as the paramount policy priority and ultimate governmental objective in policy-making, the existence of poverty in society signifies social policy failure and unsuccessful realization of justice; consequently, poverty reduction or increase can be considered among the most significant indicators for measuring governmental policy efficiency or inefficiency. In Vietnam, poverty statistics collected biennially through the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey are utilized for target-setting and medium-term monitoring of socio-economic development program performance. In Mexico, given that the central premise holds that poverty reduction should constitute the primary and ultimate outcome of social policy, CONEVAL, as the technical leader of the Annual National Evaluation Program (CONEVAL, 2024), possesses a direct mandate to measure poverty reduction outcomes and social programs, with a dedicated Directorate for Poverty Measurement and Analysis operating specifically under this council. The critically important consideration is that this organization bears responsibility for the concurrent leadership of social program evaluation and poverty reduction.

This consolidation of authority explicitly emphasizes that poverty reduction represents a principal performance indicator of social development policy, and therefore all social interventions should contribute to this outcome. World Bank poverty headcount data substantiate that each of the five examined countries has succeeded in reducing poverty intensity during the years following monitoring and evaluation system implementation.

Figure 3. Poverty headcount ratio in Colombia and Mexico during the period 1990-2022

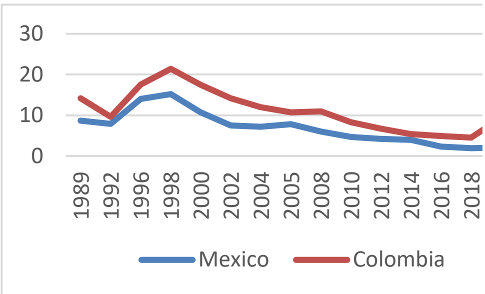


Figure 4. Poverty headcount ratio in Chile during the period 1990-2022

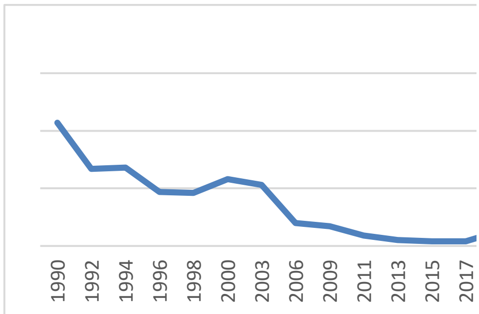


Figure 5. Poverty headcount ratio in Vietnam during the period 2000-2016

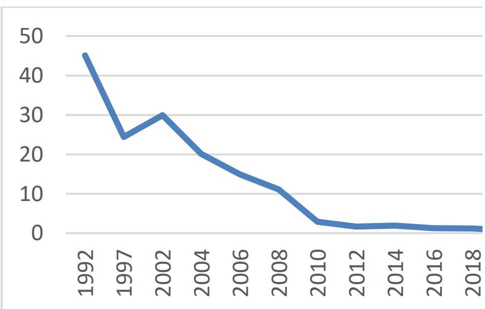
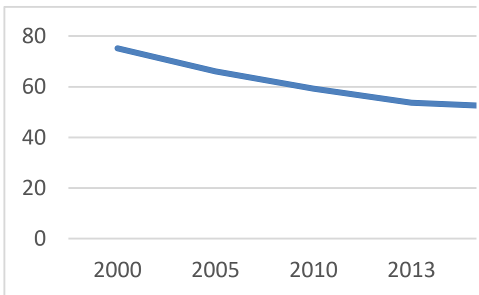


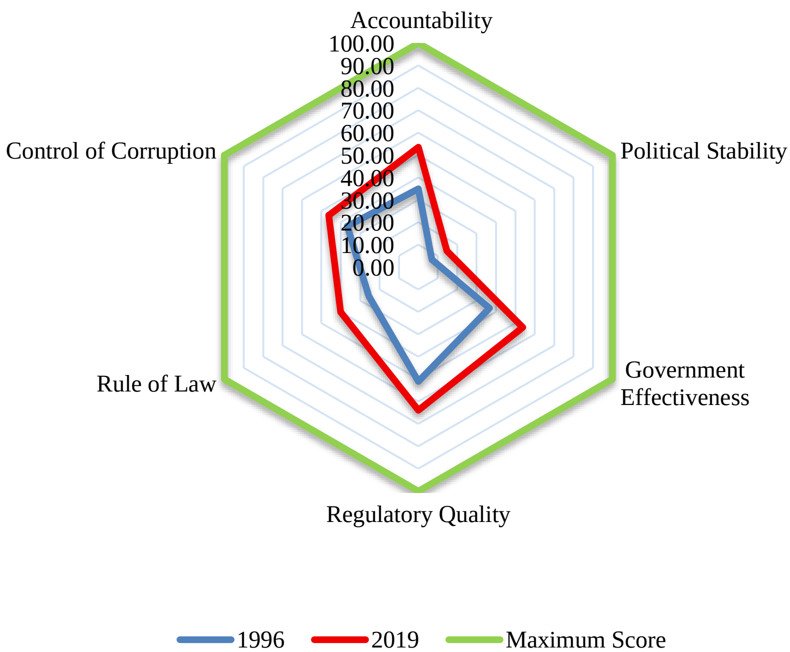
Figure 6. Poverty headcount ratio in Rwanda during the period 1992-2022



Source: World Bank (2024)

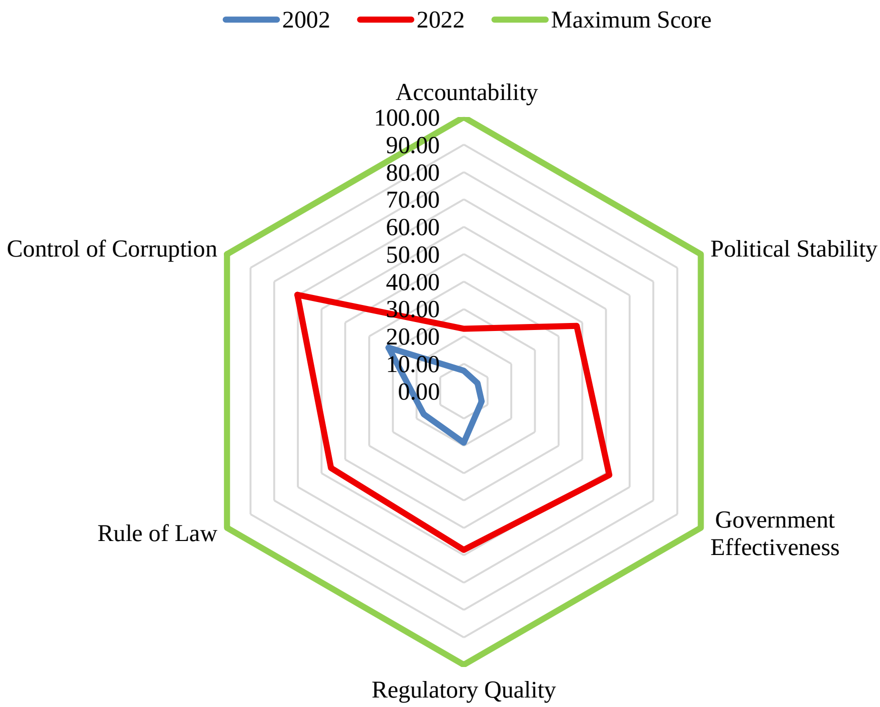
The aforementioned six considerations constitute the most critical characteristics for ensuring the success and efficacy of monitoring and evaluation systems. Indeed, each of these elements represents governmental efforts toward a paradigm shift in their role toward good governance, understood as enhanced governance quality with broader emphasis on elevating the bidirectional relationship between government and civil society, improved policy-making, efficient administration of governmental resources, planning, and effectiveness and efficiency of public services. Consequently, it can be asserted with confidence that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms constitute the most appropriate instruments for governments to realize the principles of this approach. The six indicators of good governance previously referenced, along with authoritative data published on the World Bank website, substantiate the assertion that countries that have relied upon and trusted monitoring and evaluation system instruments in the policy-making arena currently witness growth in their governance quality indices.

Figure 7. Radar Chart Comparing Colombia's Percentile Rankings across the Governance Indicators in 1996 and 2019



Source: World Bank (2024)

Figure 8.Radar Chart Comparing Rwanda's Governance Indicator Rankings in 2002 and 2022



Source: World Bank (2024)

Therefore, considering that in countries approximating Iran's welfare regime that have adopted monitoring and evaluation systems, first, governance indicator quality has improved, and second, poverty headcount, the most significant indicator of efficient policy-making, has decreased in these countries, it can be concluded that establishing continuous and systematic monitoring and evaluation systems or mechanisms represents the most critical strategy for transcending policy-making inefficiency or failure, preventing public budget waste, and elevating social hope and trust in the country.

It is hoped that the findings of this research can assist stakeholders in the country's policy-making domain to equip the government with a powerful instrument without considerable expenditure and without necessitating structural changes or establishing new governmental organizations or institutions, such that it can become capable and efficient in identifying, adopting policies, and resolving national issues and challenges, while simultaneously repairing and improving lost social capital, strengthening social hope, and consolidating popular support.

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