



simplifying lives

quality management and
satisfaction in public services

2018

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Prologue

***Simplifying Lives* is an initiative launched in 2014 that evaluates the levels of quality management (agency perspective) and citizen satisfaction (user perspective) with the most common procedures in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).** The initiative is part of the knowledge agenda developed by the Innovation in Citizen Services Division (ICS) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This agenda includes projects and publications focused on digital government, management of transactional public services delivery,¹ interactions between governments and citizens, and modernization of public management in general. All these components promote streamlining of government in the digital era which, in turn, makes life simpler for citizens and businesses.

Studies such as *Simplifying Lives* help to identify the causes of citizen discontent in recent times and rule out possible justifications in narratives that attempt to explain the situation. This type of study creates knowledge that contributes not only to ICS' objectives of achieving a more efficient, effective, and transparent public administration in LAC, but also to the necessary dialogue aimed at seeking solutions. The purpose of these studies is to generate evidence that promotes consensus-building on the nature of the problems and where they are found and to find the most appropriate solutions. Dialogues not based on evidence will most likely do more to polarize than to identify common ground.

***Simplifying Lives* analyzes both sides of administrative procedures: supply and demand.** In other words, the study looks at both the way in which provider institutions manage the quality of the administrative services and the various aspects of citizen experience with requesting and receiving these services. The first *Simplifying Lives* study was conducted in 2015. The second was conducted during 2018 on a regional scale, and includes an analysis of the changes in the results since the first study.

According to the results of this latest study, there is still ample room for improvement in the transactional aspects of public services. **Only 11 of the 42 services analyzed² obtained a satisfactory evaluation from users. Moreover, of the seven procedures analyzed, only five percent of transactions were conducted online,** which indicates very slow progress in digitalization, a

¹The terms "administrative procedure" and "transactional public service" are used interchangeably in this study.

²Seven procedures in six countries were analyzed (42 cases in total).

key factor both for management efficiency and citizen satisfaction. It is clear, therefore, that greater and more consistent efforts are needed to modernize management and improve the quality of services.

Simplifying Lives is an innovative initiative not only for its focus but also for its approach of using social media as a research tool. In a region where social media use is higher than the world average,³ and given the increasing difficulty and cost of conducting face-to-face or telephone surveys with representative samples, social media platforms are becoming an important tool for data collection.

We believe that the data and analyses presented in this report will benefit citizens, political authorities, and service managers in the ongoing task of reforming government and modernizing public administration. Our greatest hope is that this report will contribute to implementing the necessary changes and thus to improving lives.

Moisés J. Schwartz

*Manager, Institutions for Development Sector
Inter-American Development Bank*

³ In 2017, Facebook's penetration rate in LAC was 57 percent, while the global average was 26 percent. (<https://www.internetworldstats.com/facebook.htm>).

Introduction

The main mission of ministers of finance is to manage public resources efficiently and allocate them to various agencies according to policy priorities. Some of these resources are allocated to agency-specific areas and others to management processes common to all institutions (e.g., data processing and administrative procedures). The resources allocated to management processes are therefore well known. But do ministers know whether the resources allocated to information and procedures management in each agency yield the expected results?

Whether or not they are measured, differences in the performance of quality management do exist, and they sometimes contribute to inequalities. For example, *Simplifying Lives 2015*⁴ identified that for the six countries analyzed, the quality of services provided by agencies dedicated to people with disabilities was lower than those provided by other agencies. In the absence of data, one could have assumed the complete contrary, perhaps based on the assumption that governments would prioritize care for people with disabilities, not the other way around.

The lack of measurement and information affects administrators at all levels. Generally, the heads of agencies providing public services also lack the tools to evaluate how their organization performs and

measures up against its peers. Consequently, these managers do not know what citizens value about a procedure they need to carry out, how they expect to interact with the government, or how they feel about the way they are treated by the service provider. Yet without this knowledge, it is difficult for public service managers to optimize the way they use their ever-scarce resources to improve service delivery.

Citizens also lack the quantitative information to judge the quality of government's procedure management. They rely on only their personal experience, which they cannot compare against public services in other countries, so their frame of reference is limited to the experiences they have had with private service providers. In addition to this lack of data, **various studies indicate that citizens' overall perception of the performance of public agencies is more negative than reality would suggest.**

Simplifying Lives aims to fill this information gap so that policymakers, heads of government agencies, and users alike can make objective assessments and decisions about these services. To this end, this report intends to conduct evaluations of quality management and citizen satisfaction with LAC procedures on a regular basis,⁵ seeking ultimately to contribute to strengthening the social contract between citizens and the government.

⁴This study corresponds to the second *Simplifying Lives* study. The first one was conducted in 2015. See Pareja et al. (2016).

⁵The concepts of "quality management" and "citizen satisfaction" are described in detail in the Methodology section in the Annex.

To achieve the desired results, *Simplifying Lives* proposes that services be evaluated based on the principle of **actionability**, which means translating data collection and analysis into specific actions. In this regard, *Simplifying Lives* seeks to answer three basic questions:

1

**WHERE
TO BEGIN**

Identify the services with the greatest strengths and weaknesses in order to **prioritize actions**. For example, Are there management problems in education-related procedures? Are people dissatisfied with the procedures for qualifying for a disability allowance? This information is obtained by **comparing the performance (within the country or against other countries) of various services in terms of quality management and citizen satisfaction**.

2

**WHAT
TO DO**

Identify the areas of management in need of improvement in each specific case—in the **areas that citizens care about the most**—which could be the time a procedure takes, the treatment citizens receive, or issues with the service website, among others. Each area may require a different action plan. This information is obtained through **analyzing the importance of the attributes of satisfaction**.

3

**HOW
TO DO IT**

Identify investments, types of projects, or improvements that should be implemented to optimize citizen satisfaction. For example, is the main problem found in the information systems, the skillset of public servants, or the facilities of an agency? This information is obtained through **analyzing the relationship between the variables that measure management and those that measure citizen experience**.

In this study, the basic unit of analysis is the administrative procedure. Specifically, the study evaluates seven procedures associated with some key life events:⁶



DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT
(obtained through the public health system)



THEFT REPORT⁷



BIRTH REGISTRATION



(Public)
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT



(Renewal of an)
IDENTITY DOCUMENT



APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT



(Renewal of a)
DRIVER'S LICENSE

The study analyzes these procedures across six countries,⁸ which were selected to provide a representative sample of the diversity of situations (institutional, social, and economic) in the region:⁹



The main findings of this study are presented below, followed by the conclusions and an annex that clarifies conceptual matters and details on the methodology of the study. It is our hope that this document will serve as a basis for LAC countries to make progress in improving public administration (particularly in terms of digital government, administrative simplification, and service delivery) and as a starting point for further research.

⁶ The 2015 version of *Simplifying Lives* analyzed six procedures, which included the first five items on this list and “applying for a disability allowance,” which was not part of the 2018 study. The last two procedures on the list were analyzed for the first time in 2018. See the criteria and process for selecting the procedures in the Methodology section of the Annex.

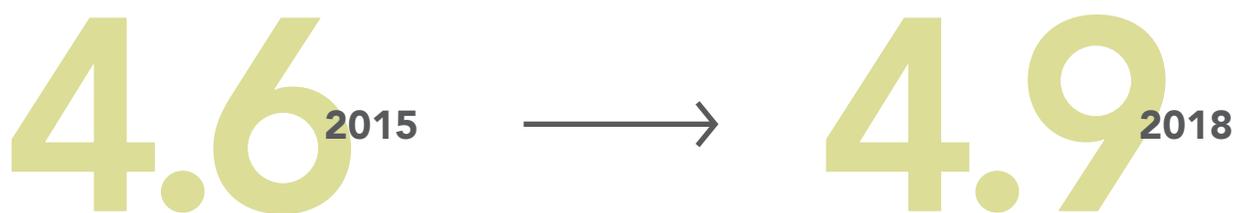
⁷ This refers mainly to burglary or larceny. Theft is committed without violence.

⁸ The 2015 version of *Simplifying Lives* also analyzed six countries, including Trinidad and Tobago, which was replaced in this study with Jamaica.

⁹ For the purposes of this report, “the region” refers to LAC or, more specifically, to borrowing member countries of the IDB.

Main Findings

Positive trend in citizen satisfaction:



This section lists the evaluation results for quality management and citizen satisfaction, noting the main differences between countries and services and analyzing variables that affect satisfaction, such as prior expectations, time spent, distance traveled, and costs involved in completing the procedures, as well as the contact channels used, among others. Unless otherwise specified, the results refer to regional data.¹⁰

- **The data from the study indicate a positive change in citizen satisfaction with transactional public services:** the regional average is up from 4.6¹¹ in 2015 to 4.9 in 2018¹² (on a scale of 1 to 10). This upward trend is recorded in all the countries reexamined except Panama, whose score did not change. Nevertheless, the improvement does not reverse the **dissatisfaction in absolute terms**

identified in 2015: the average satisfaction score of 4.9 is below the point of indifference in the scale (5.5). **Dissatisfaction** also persists in **relative terms**, as the gap with the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)—a citizen satisfaction index for US federal government services—remains unchanged. In 2018, the federal government scored 69 on a scale of 0 to 100, which is equivalent to 7.2 on a scale of 1 to 10.¹³ Table 1 details the results obtained in 2018, and Figure 1 details the changes by country compared to the 2015 study.

¹⁰ Average values are calculated by first obtaining the indicator for each service in each country and then averaging the 42 values.

¹¹ In the 2015 report, the value reported was 4.8. Given the adjustments made to the methodology in 2018, the results of the 2015 study were recalculated to ensure comparability. See the Methodology Adjustments in 2018 Compared to 2015 section in the Annex. Although there are changes in the groups of countries and services evaluated, the authors opted for comparing the 2015 and 2018 results based on the assumption that the sample of countries and services in each year is representative of the reality in LAC and administrative procedures in general. If we restrict the comparison to the same five countries and five services present in both studies, the findings are essentially the same. An indication is given in this report when this is not the case.

¹² For variables in the external view, given that they represent point estimates, which are obtained from relatively small samples and through quota sampling (i.e., non-probabilistic), the sampling error, which is only one of the sources of error affecting the measurement, cannot be determined precisely. As this is an exploratory study, all statements about the changes between 2015 and 2018, when the changes are relatively small, should be taken with a grain of salt. For more details, see the Technical Details of the External View section in the Annex.

¹³ *Simplifying Lives* and ACSI have different units of analysis. The former focuses on specific transactional services, while the latter looks at the agencies in charge of the services. However, both studies take a similar approach to determining satisfaction levels. In 2015, the ACSI score was 64, equivalent to 6.8 on a scale of 1 to 10. ACSI results are important because they show that a score of about 7 points means very good performance (ACSI, 2018).

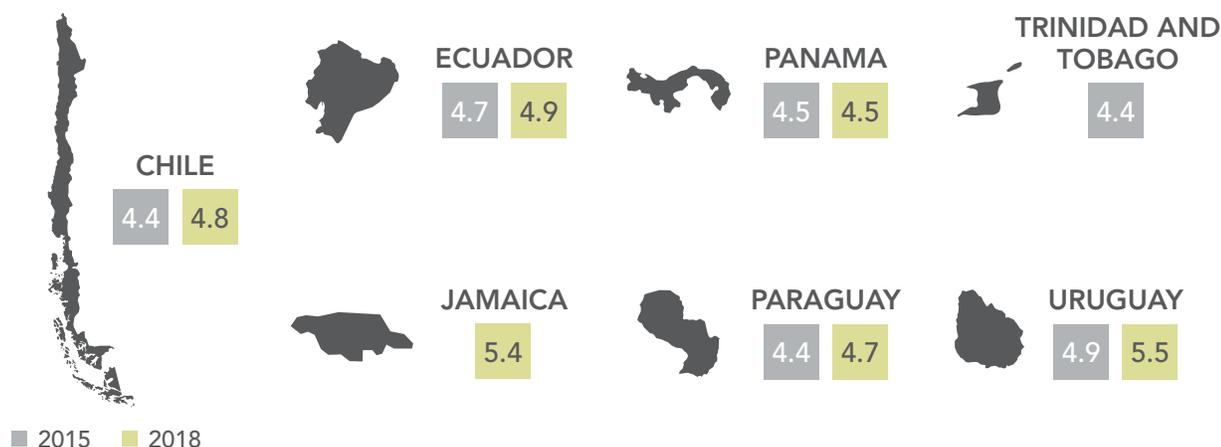
TABLE 1.
Citizen Satisfaction by Service and Country, 2018

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay	AVERAGE
Doctor's appointment	3.9	4.1	4.5	3.8	3.7	4.7	4.1
Theft report	3.1	3.8	3.9	3.0	3.6	3.7	3.5
Birth registration	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.9	5.6
School enrollment	5.3	4.7	6.1	4.4	5.0	5.8	5.2
Identity document	5.4	5.7	6.5	5.3	5.2	7.0	5.8
Application for retirement	4.7	5.0	-	4.2	4.8	5.8	4.9
Driver's license	5.4	5.2	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.9	5.5
AVERAGE	4.8	4.9	5.4	4.5	4.7	5.5	4.9

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: It was not possible to obtain data on *application for retirement* in Jamaica (the sample size was not large enough).

FIGURE 1.
Changes in Citizen Satisfaction by Country, 2015-18



Source: Author's elaboration.

- **The average score for quality management of service delivery is 5.9, the same as in 2015.** This implies that the gap between actual performance and best management practices has remained unchanged on average.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the lack of change in the average score belies different developments among the countries

measured. **Paraguay** deserves recognition for its significant improvement (from 4.2 in 2015 to 5.7 in 2018), thanks mainly to **significant progress in school enrollment**.¹⁵ Table 2 details the 2018 results, and Figure 2 shows the changes compared to 2015 by country.

¹⁴ What holds true for changes in citizen satisfaction is equally valid for quality management: one must take into account the differences between the sets of countries and services analyzed. Having said that, if the 2018 study considers only the five countries and services the two studies have in common, it would yield the same average score as in 2015.

¹⁵ Some of the improvements are documented in the Best Management Practices section of the Annex.

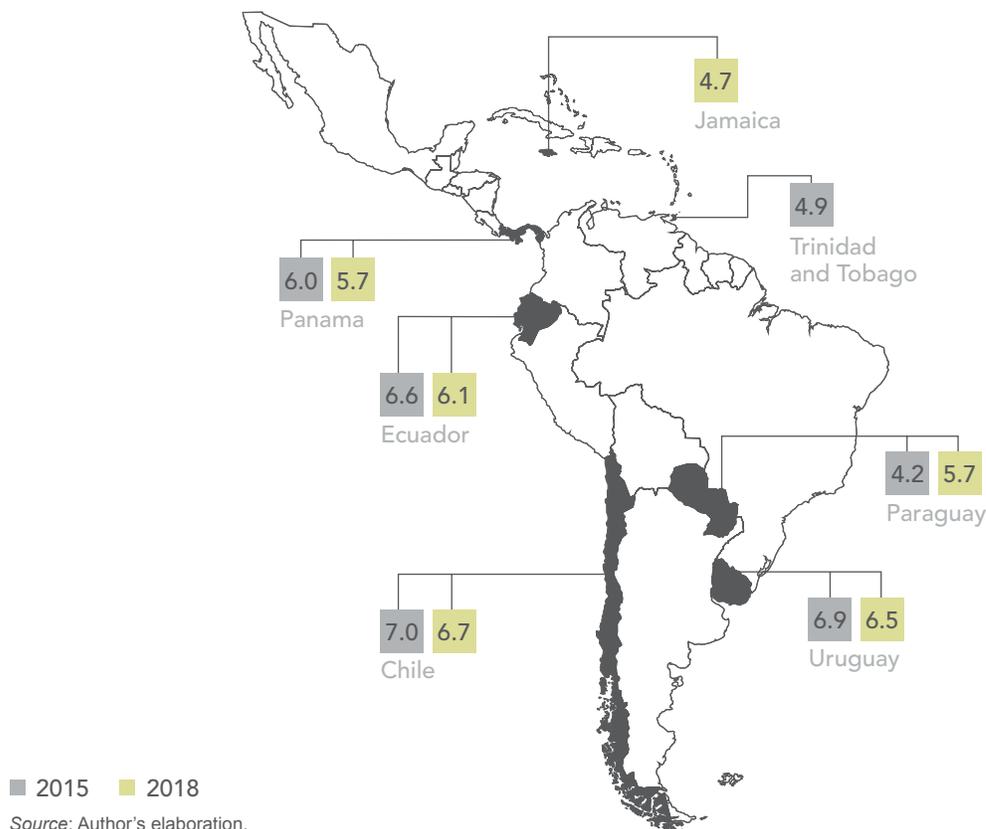
TABLE 2.
Quality Management by Service and Country, 2018

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay	AVERAGE
Doctor's appointment	4.8	6.1	-	5.8	-	6.3	5.8
Theft report	6.2	4.0	4.0	4.9	5.6	7.0	5.3
Birth registration	6.9	7.8	5.5	6.5	5.5	5.9	6.4
School enrollment	8.9	6.8	3.7	5.4	6.8	6.7	6.4
Identity document	8.0	6.3	5.6	5.7	6.2	7.7	6.6
Application for retirement	6.9	5.6	4.3	5.5	4.7	5.4	5.4
Driver's license	5.5	5.7	5.0	5.8	5.4	6.5	5.6
AVERAGE	6.7	6.1	4.7	5.7	5.7	6.5	5.9

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: It was not possible to obtain data on *doctor's appointment* for Jamaica and Paraguay because no responses were received from the provider institutions. In the case of *driver's license*, the values have been adjusted for the duration of the license. This implies, for example, that a service with a very good quality management score may receive a lower score if the license has to be renewed more frequently. The duration of licenses ranges from four years in Panama to 10 years in Uruguay.

FIGURE 2.
Changes in Management Quality by Country, 2015-18



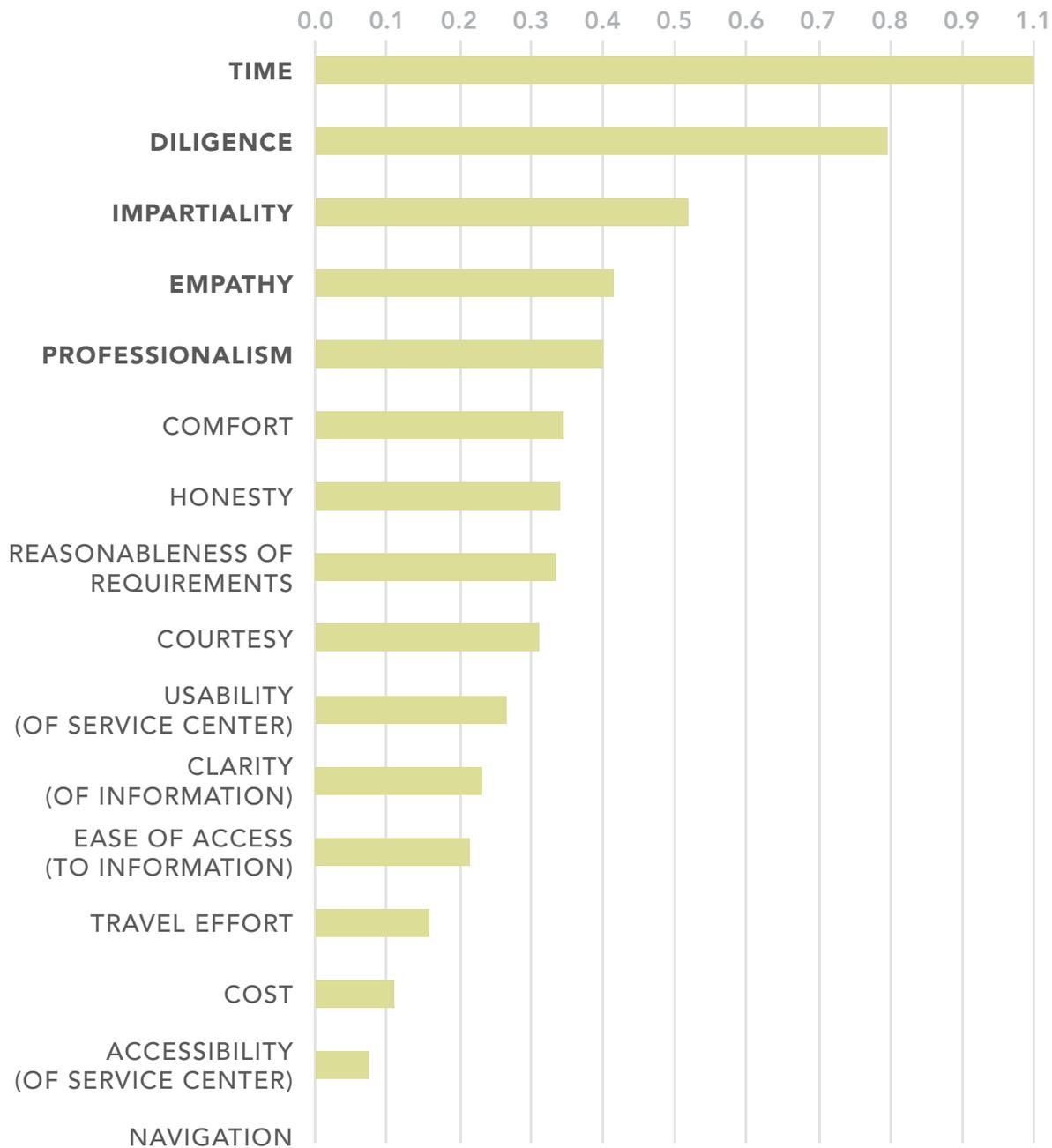
- **There are significant variations in the scores for different services and countries, both in citizen satisfaction and quality management.** Who gets the best scores?
 - The **average satisfaction score by country** varies between 5.5 (**Uruguay**) and 4.5 (Panama), a larger gap than in 2015. Uruguay is also the country where satisfaction has improved the most (by 0.6 points).
 - **Average quality management score by country** varies between 6.7 (**Chile**) and 4.7 (Jamaica), a slightly smaller gap than in 2015. Paraguay has made the greatest improvement in its performance (by 1.5 points).
 - **Identity document** received the **best scores on average** in both citizen satisfaction and quality management (5.8 and 6.6, respectively), while **theft report** received the lowest scores (3.5 and 5.3, respectively).
 - The service that received the best scores in **satisfaction** is **identity document in Uruguay** (7.0) and in **quality management** is **school enrollment in Chile** (8.9). At the other extreme, **theft report** in Panama scored 3.0 in satisfaction and **school enrollment** in Jamaica scored 3.7 in quality.
 - **School enrollment** showed the most improvement in quality management on average compared to 2015 (with very good performance in satisfaction as well), driven mainly by the significant progress made in Paraguay. It is worth pointing out that, on average, all services have seen improvements in terms of satisfaction. This is not the case for quality management, as there has been a decline in the scores for **doctor's appointment** and **theft report**. On the other hand, **birth registration** is the only service that has seen improvement in its satisfaction level across all the countries.
- **Citizens receive services of better quality than they expected.** This fact arises from the measurement of their expectations, i.e., the preconceived idea (conscious or unconscious) of the experience they will have with a service. Ideally, expectations should be in line with reality, because excessive expectations lead to frustration and low expectations affect satisfaction even when the service is good. The results show, in line with the 2015 results, that **the quality of public services (citizens' actual experience) is better than what is assumed** prior to completing the procedure. The regional average expectation score is 4.1,¹⁶ below the point of indifference on the scale (5.5), which is obtained when expectation coincides with reality. In 2015, the regional average score was 4.6. This means that citizen perception of the government's ability to provide good quality services could have deteriorated. Likewise, the data show that citizens had higher expectations for more emotionally taxing procedures (**theft report** and **doctor's appointment**).
- **The time it takes a citizen to complete a procedure is, on average, the attribute with the biggest impact on satisfaction.** This could mean that cutting down on time leads to substantial improvements in quality and satisfaction.¹⁷ The next four relevant attributes are **diligence** of civil servants, that is, efficient delivery that avoids unnecessary delays; **impartiality** that ensures equal treatment, which means without favoritism or discrimination; **empathy** with users under extraordinary circumstances, which together with the two previous attributes are attitudinal aspects; and **professionalism**, which is related to the level of training of civil servants. All these attributes can be strengthened through improving **human resource management** or increasing **disintermediation**. Figure 3 shows the regional average scores for the importance of all the attributes.¹⁸

¹⁶ Expectations are measured directly through this survey question: "How do you rate the quality of service received: on a scale of 'much worse than expected' (1) to 'much better' (10)?" Next, the reported figure (variable PG_4) is inverted to make sure that a score of 10 corresponds to the highest expectation. Expectations = 11 - PG_4.

¹⁷ This information is obtained through analyzing the importance of satisfaction attributes. Figure A.2 in the Annex features the 16 attributes analyzed in the *Simplifying Lives* study. Additionally, each of the attributes is given a performance (satisfaction) score by users. In other words, each attribute has a certain level of importance to overall satisfaction, and at the same time, citizens have a certain degree of satisfaction associated with the attribute in question. The high-importance, poor-performing attributes must be prioritized for improvement.

¹⁸ Each service in each country has a specific profile. The navigation attribute is shown to be unimportant to the regional average score, which is consistent with the low levels of use for the online channel.

FIGURE 3.
Regional Average Score for the Importance of Satisfaction Attributes, 2018

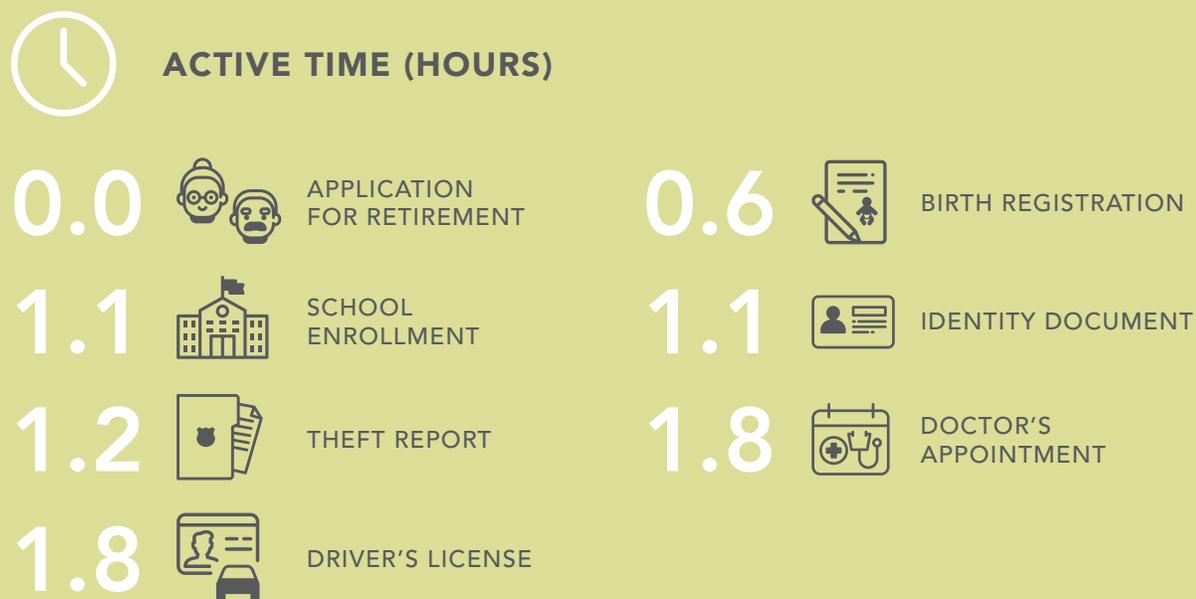


Source: Author's elaboration.

- Since time is the most important satisfaction attribute for a procedure, how does the region perform on it?
 - **Driver's license is the procedure that requires, on average, the shortest passive time¹⁹** (11 days), while *application for retirement* takes the longest (121 days). By country,²⁰ **Ecuador has the shortest processing time** (28 days), while Panama has the longest (82 days). It was possible to assess changes in three only services compared to 2015. For these three services, **passive** time decreased from 40 to 30 days on average.
 - **Birth registration is the fastest procedure** in terms of **active time²¹** (0.6 hours), while obtaining a *driver's license* and making a *doctor's appointment* are the most time-consuming procedures (1.8 hours in each case). By country, the **fastest service is found in Uruguay, and once again, in Ecuador** (0.8 hours) and the slowest in Jamaica (2.1 hours).²² Five services that were analyzed again in 2018 have seen changes in the active time required compared to 2015. The largest change on average is in *doctor's appointments*, which took 1.8 hours in 2018 and 1.0 hours in 2015.

Figure 4 shows the average scores by country and service for active and passive time.

FIGURE 4.
Average Active and Passive Time Spent by Country and Service, 2018



(continues in next page)

¹⁹ *Simplifying Lives* defines passive time as idle time. It could refer to the number of days before an appointment or waiting to hear from the service provider, and it is a time during which users can engage in other activities.

²⁰ This average score should be taken with a grain of salt, as each service may require different amounts of time by its nature. This is a country-level indicator, and does not imply, for example, that services with above-average time are worse than others in terms of quality management.

²¹ *Simplifying Lives* defines active time as the time users spend on completing a given procedure and doing nothing else. Completing a procedure may involve filling out forms or being assisted by a public servant, during which time no other activities can be conducted.

²² See details of these calculations in the Processing Data on Time Spent, Travel, and Cost Reported by Citizens section in the Annex.

(continuation)



PASSIVE TIME (DAYS)

0	BIRTH REGISTRATION	11	DRIVER'S LICENSE
12	IDENTITY DOCUMENT	25	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
40	THEFT REPORT	52	DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT
121	APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT		

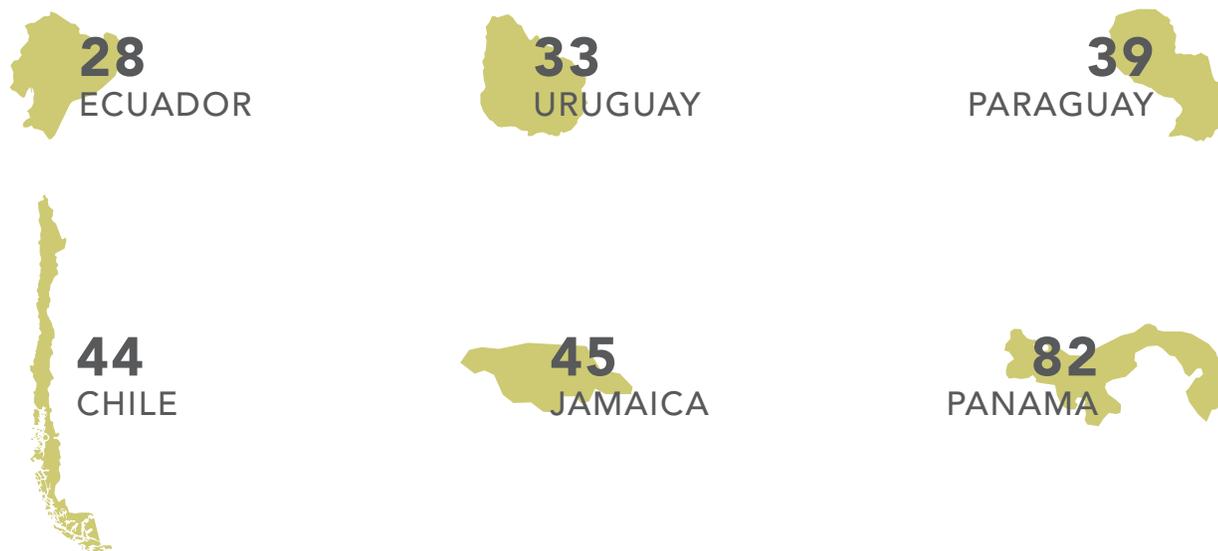
ACTIVE TIME (HOURS)



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(continuation)

PASSIVE TIME (DAYS)



Source: Author's elaboration.

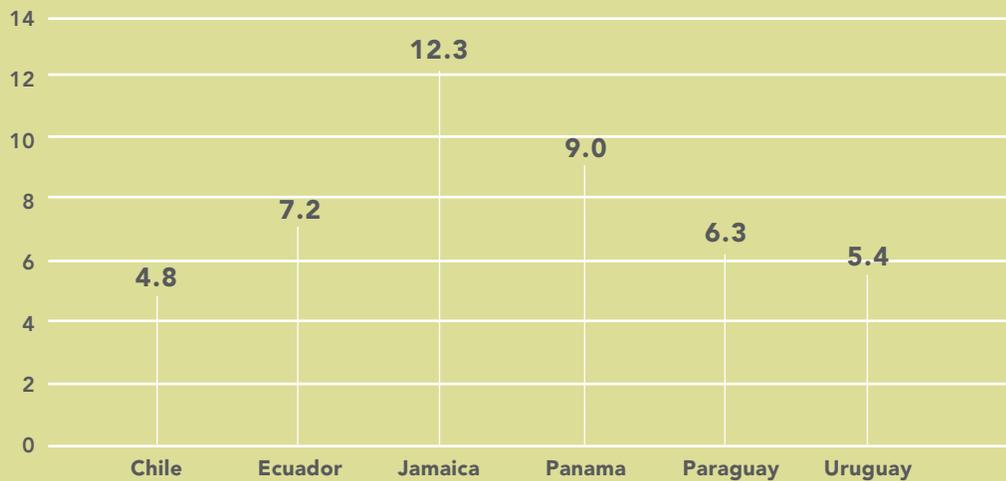
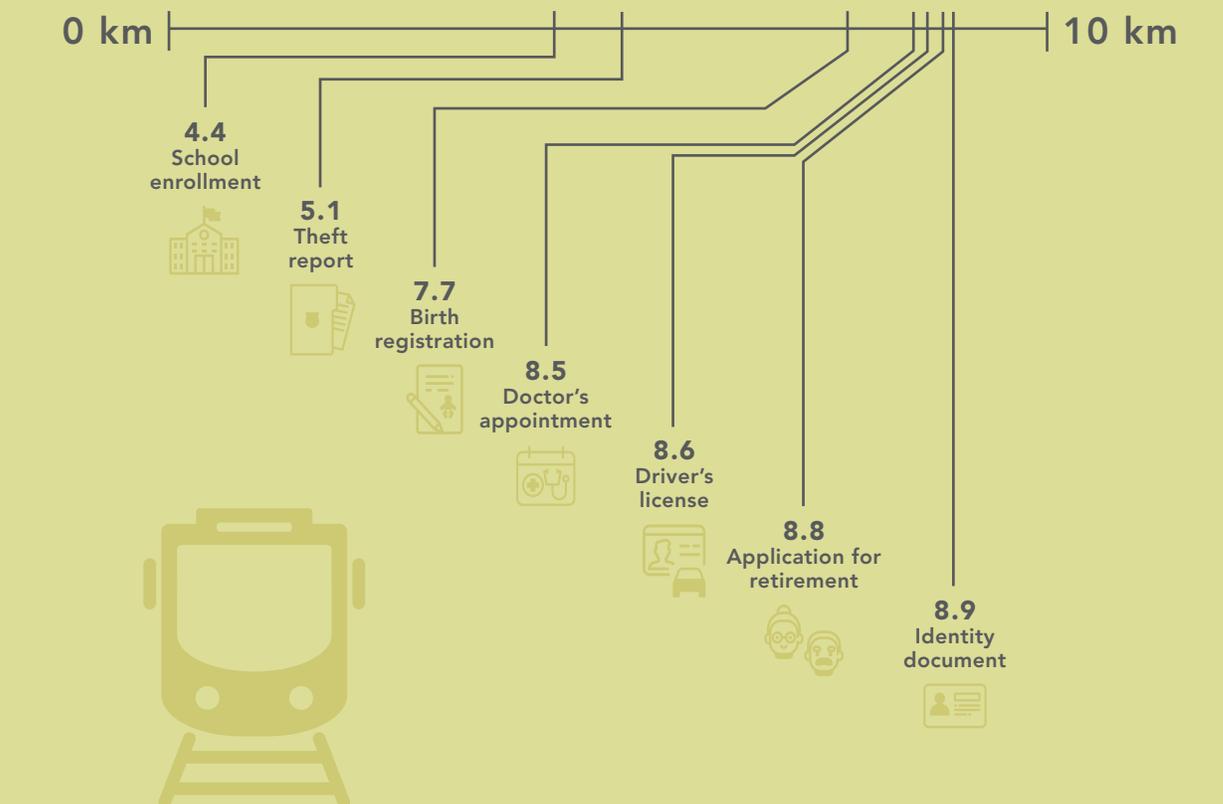
- Another attribute that affects citizen satisfaction is the effort required to travel to government offices to complete a given procedure. In this regard, **the shortest average distance required to travel is for school enrollment** (4.4 km), while the longest is for *identity document* (8.9 km). *Birth registration* is an interesting case as it entails a journey of 7.7 km on average, which could be reduced to zero if registration could be done by people attending the delivery when and where

the birth takes place. Notably, in the six countries analyzed, over 94 percent of births are attended by healthcare professionals.²³ By country, **Chile requires the least amount of travel on average** (4.8 km) and Jamaica the most (12.3 km). Compared to 2015, the **average distance traveled** to complete a procedure decreased from 7.6 km to 6.9 km. Figure 5 shows the average distances by country and service.

²³ <https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/delivery-care/>

FIGURE 5.
Travel Effort by Country and Service, 2018

TRAVEL EFFORT (KM)



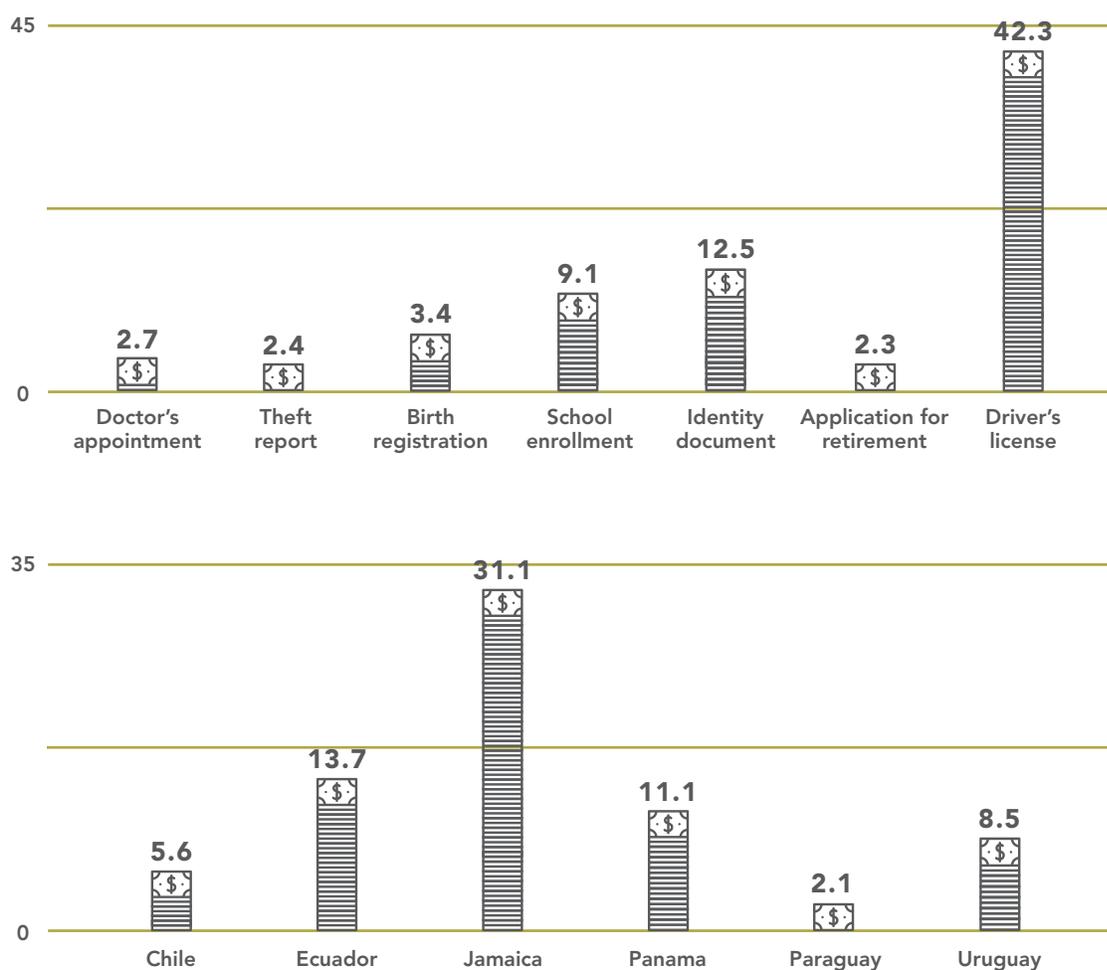
Source: Author's elaboration.

- The **cost** of a service also affects satisfaction. On average, *driver's license* is the most expensive (USD 42.3), while *application for retirement* is the cheapest (USD 2.3). By country, Paraguay has the lowest average cost of a procedure (USD 2.1) and Jamaica the highest (USD 31.1). However, when measured as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, **Chile has the lowest cost impact for the seven procedures**

analyzed (0.03 percent of GDP per capita) and Jamaica the highest (0.58 percent). Interestingly, five of the seven procedures analyzed are free (all except *identity document* and *driver's license*), yet a large number of respondents reported costs.²⁴ Citizens reported **rising costs** for the three services for which it was possible to analyze changes compared to 2015 (Figure 6).²⁵

FIGURE 6.
Average Cost in Absolute Terms and as a Share of GDP Per Capita by Service, 2018

COST (USD)

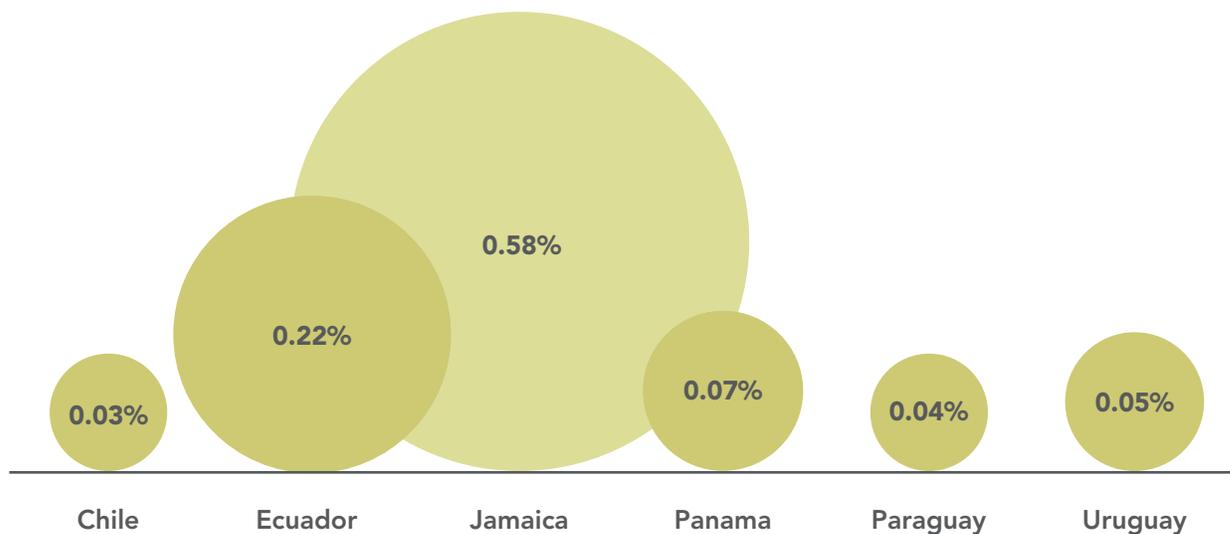


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²⁴ There are various reasons why costs were reported for free services, and a case-by-case analysis is needed. For details on these calculations, see the Processing Data on Time Spent, Travel, and Cost Reported by Citizens section in the Annex.

²⁵ These procedures are *birth registration*, *school enrollment*, and *identity document*.

(continuation)

COST / GDP PER CAPITA

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: The costs do not take into account how frequently each procedure must be done in each country.

- The findings for the two procedures for which a fee is generally charged are particularly interesting. First, **identity documents are free in Panama** but are most expensive in Jamaica (USD 52).²⁶ Second, the study found significant variation in the duration for **driver's license** in each country. Hence, to ensure comparability, a 10-year time frame was used for all countries in the analysis and found the time-adjusted **cost to be the cheapest in Chile and Paraguay** (USD 58), while in Ecuador it was three times higher (USD 176) (Table 3). When costs are measured as a share of GDP per capita, **driver's license** cost impact is the lowest in

Chile (0.37 percent of GDP per capita) and the highest in Ecuador (2.77 percent). This could mean that **the effort involved in the renewal of a driver's license is 7.6 times higher for an Ecuadoran than a Chilean**. This disparity in prices seems to indicate that either the fees charged are far above operating costs in some countries or the service is heavily subsidized in others, or some intermediate situation. While there may be valid policy reasons for each, it would be impossible to determine which is the case since the unit operating cost of renewal of a **driver's license** is not measured in any country except Panama.²⁷

²⁶ These data should be analyzed in context. Jamaica is beginning to implement a national *identity document* in 2020. It was the only country without national *identity documents* in 2018, which is why passports were analyzed instead.

²⁷ *Driver's license renewals* are outsourced in Panama.

TABLE 3.
Cost of Driver's License Renewal by Country, 2018

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay
FREQUENCY (number of renewals required every 10 years)	1.7	2	2	2.5	2	1
COST (for every 10 years, in USD)	58	176	114	100	58	76
COST IMPACT (as a share of GDP per capita)	0.37	2.77	2.13	0.64	0.99	0.44

Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: In Paraguay, the cost includes annual validations. In Uruguay, the cost includes a medical examination, which is outsourced. In Jamaica, no medical examination is required.

- The number of face-to-face interactions required is strongly related with the amount of time, travel, and costs reported. According to the information provided by the agencies, **1.25 face-to-face interactions are required per service** on average in the region in 2018, a substantial improvement compared to 2.17 in 2015. There is positive change in all countries, although much of

it is attributed to improvement in *school enrollment* in Paraguay.²⁸ By procedure, making a *doctor's appointment* requires the least amount of face-to-face interactions, as it can be done remotely in all countries. By country, **Chile requires the lowest average number of face-to-face interactions per service (1.0)**, while Paraguay requires the highest (1.7) (Table 4).

²⁸ Other factors explaining this progress are (i) disability allowance service, which was part of *Simplifying Lives* in 2015 but not in 2018 and required more face-to-face interactions than the new services considered in the 2018 study; (ii) Trinidad and Tobago, a country analyzed in the 2015 study, required more face-to-face interactions than the country that replaced it in the 2018 study (Jamaica); and (iii) there was also a significant reduction in the amount of interactions required for *doctor's appointment*.

TABLE 4.
Number of Face-to-Face Interactions Required by Service and Country, 2018

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay	AVERAGE
Doctor's appointment	0	0	-	0	-	0	0
Theft report	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.0
Birth registration	1	2	1	1	1	1	1.2
School enrollment	1	0	1	1	1	1	0.8
Identity document	2	1	2	2	2	1	1.7
Application for retirement	0	2	1	2	3	2	1.7
Driver's license	2	2	2	3	2	2	2.0
AVERAGE	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.1	1.3

Source: Author's elaboration.

- **Reliance on face-to-face interactions remains high despite the growing preference for online services:**
 - **90 percent of procedures are completed in person**, a ratio that hardly changed compared to 2015 (92 percent).
 - The use of a **telephone** to complete procedures remains at similar levels: **5 percent** in 2018 versus 7 percent in 2015. Making a *doctor's appointment* is the procedure with the highest telephone use, at 32 percent.²⁹
 - The use of **online services** increased from 1 percent in 2015 to **5 percent** in 2018, a figure similar to the result obtained in *Wait No More* (7 percent).³⁰ Despite this five-fold increase, the use of online services remains scarce, possibly because of the low overall digitization rate and the unique nature of the procedures analyzed in *Simplifying Lives*, some of which cannot completely do away with face-to-face interactions.
- In terms of preference, **45 percent of users prefer digital interactions** (44 percent in 2015).³¹ This indicates an unmet demand for digital services, as only 5 percent reported using this channel. The study also indicates that **preference for face-to-face interactions remains very high** (44 percent in 2015 and 47 percent in 2018).
- **Citizen trust in service provider agencies is growing.** Average trust score is 6.3 (always on a scale of 1 to 10 centered at 5.5). This implies a fairly positive assessment and **an improvement** over the 2015 score (5.9). By procedure, the best score is obtained in *identity document* (7.5 on average in 2018 versus 7.0 in 2015) and the worst in *theft report* (4.6 on average, practically unchanged from 2015). **By country, Chile has the highest trust score in its service provider institutions** (7.1) (Table 5).

²⁹ Since all countries reported that no face-to-face interactions are required to make a *doctor's appointment*, it is clear that few users actually take advantage of this possibility.

³⁰ See Roseth et al. (2018).

³¹ As this information is obtained through an online survey, the results may be biased toward a preference for digital channels.

INFOGRAPHIC 1.
Which Service Channels Do Citizens Use and Which Do They Prefer?



90%

OF THE PROCEDURES WERE COMPLETED IN PERSON.



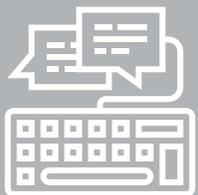
5%

OF THE PROCEDURES WERE COMPLETED ONLINE.



32%

OF DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENTS WERE MADE OVER THE PHONE.



45%

OF USERS PREFER TO INTERACT DIGITALLY.



47%

PREFER GOING IN PERSON.

TABLE 5.
Trust in Service Provider Institutions by Service and Country, 2018

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay	AVERAGE
Doctor's appointment	6.4	5.5	5.9	4.2	4.8	6.7	5.6
Theft report	5.1	4.8	5.1	4.2	3.6	4.7	4.6
Birth registration	8.0	7.7	6.7	6.9	6.1	6.9	7.1
School enrollment	8.1	6.7	7.0	5.7	5.7	6.8	6.7
Identity document	7.7	8.0	7.7	6.7	6.7	8.3	7.5
Application for retirement	6.6	6.2	-	5.2	6.3	7.5	6.4
Driver's license	7.5	7.1	6.8	6.4	5.1	6.1	6.5
AVERAGE	7.1	6.6	6.5	5.6	5.5	6.7	6.3

Source: Author's elaboration.

- **The regional average score for trust in the government has decreased:** the trust score in 2018 is 4.6, two-tenths lower than in the previous study. Jamaica is the country where citizens trust their government the most (5.7), and Panama, the least (3.2). In high-trust environments, citizens would be more willing to comply with regulations voluntarily, and government agencies could relax their requirements and controls. Hence, there is a direct relationship between trust and service quality and efficiency.
- Service quality management is highly correlated with urbanization rate (0.85), internet penetration (0.78), and GDP per capita (0.67).³² In 2015, it was low levels of perceived corruption and urbanization rate that had the highest correlation with quality. Citizen satisfaction, for its part, had a correlation coefficient of -0.88 with the GINI index of inequality (a value very similar to that of 2015). This means that **there may be a link between greater inequality and lower citizen satisfaction.**
- Satisfaction levels did not vary much by gender: in the 2018 study, male users' satisfaction level was slightly higher than female users', while in 2015 the reverse was true.

³² *Simplifying Lives* analyzes, on one hand, the correlation between service quality and citizen satisfaction and, on the other, the socioeconomic context. The sample size for correlation calculation (six countries) is too small to obtain conclusive results. Rather, the data should be considered as preliminary estimates.

BOX 1.***Driver's License: Cases with Unique Requirements***

Through analyzing this procedure, the study found two cases in which a requirement was found in only one country. This does not mean that they are inappropriate a priori, but it might be interesting to assess the need for these requirements and analyze why they do not exist elsewhere.

- In **Paraguay**, each renewal of the driver's license is valid for five years. However, a related procedure, known as *validation*, is required to be completed in person every year in a given month. In other words, in calculating the number of interactions required for renewal (two every 10 years), those related to validation must also be considered (four interactions every five years). Annual validation entails unnecessary operating costs (which could, in principle, be eliminated) for agencies and costs for citizens (eight additional interactions every 10 years), both in terms of time and transportation costs. Finally, a highly seasonal procedure (as all licenses are validated in the same month) usually leads to higher operating costs, since capacity has to match peak demand while remaining relatively idle for the rest of the year.
- **Ecuador** is the only country that requires a knowledge test as part of the renewal procedure.

Source: Author's elaboration.

Conclusions

***Simplifying Lives* assumes that governments and their agencies share two objectives in providing public services:** to optimize citizen satisfaction and provide efficient services (minimizing the expenses involved). To achieve these objectives, service managers must have objective and quantified knowledge of their performance and the citizens' experience with their agency. This requires evaluating their services and those of other agencies (both from their country and of their sector from other countries) through applying the same methodology at the same time. In this regard, *Simplifying Lives* provides data and analysis to inform decision-making.

Simplifying Lives 2018 obtained results for six countries and seven specific services. Nevertheless, these countries constitute a fairly representative sample, and the services are relevant enough to users that several of the conclusions reached can be extrapolated to the entire region:

- **In LAC, procedures have been simplified, but there is still a long way to go.** Average citizen satisfaction has improved slightly, although it failed to reach a satisfactory threshold (above 5.5). Nor is it on a par with the performance of the United States. Likewise, quality management by government agencies has stalled at barely acceptable levels.

★
Progress has been made in service quality and simplification. Yet, there is still a long way to go.

- In total, 42 services³³ were analyzed, with a **wide range of performances.** Only 11 of the 42 obtained a positive rating from citizens (in 2015, 5 out of 36 did), while 65 percent of the services received a positive rating in quality management (26 out of 42), a level largely unchanged from 2015. This variation in scores helps address

one of the three guiding questions of *Simplifying Lives*, which is: **Where to begin?**—that is, Where are the main weaknesses found?, Which agencies are in need of more support, and which ones are already on the excellence track?

SITUATIONS VARY SIGNIFICANTLY, WITH

65%

OF THE SERVICES HAVING A GOOD RATING IN QUALITY MANAGEMENT.

- Each service has a different profile in terms of importance of the satisfaction attributes (**aspects that citizens value most**), and each agency would have to analyze its own profile in order to identify which improvements would be most appreciated by citizens. On average, the three most important attributes are **time, diligence, and impartiality.** However, behind these average values, results vary from case to case. In Jamaica, for example, what citizens value most in *school enrollment* is courtesy, diligence, and empathy. Solutions to improve this procedure in Jamaica will probably differ from generic proposals based on regional average values. These are things to consider in answering the second *Simplifying Lives* question: **What to do**—that is, What aspects should be addressed?

ATTRIBUTES THAT LAC CITIZENS VALUE THE MOST ON AVERAGE:

- > TIME
- > DILIGENCE
- > IMPARTIALITY

³³ Seven procedures in six countries—or 42 cases in total—were analyzed.

- **The potential of digitalization is still under-tapped.** Leveraging digital capacities would enhance government efficiency, lower transaction costs for citizens, and increase satisfaction levels.³⁴ By reducing the need for travel and face-to-face interactions, digitalization has a direct impact on the aspects that citizens value the most. Although the data collected would indicate an increase in absolute terms of the use of digital channels (from 1 percent to 5 percent of transactions), 90 percent of transactions are still conducted in person. Therefore, there is significant room for improvement. In addition, digitalization efforts must consider the fact that almost half of the users still prefer face-to-face interactions. The bright side is that there is an unmet digital demand, as almost half of the population prefers digital interactions. In conclusion, digitalization is arguably a key part of addressing the third question of *Simplifying Lives*: **How to do it?**—that is, How to improve?



DRIVER'S LICENSE AND IDENTITY DOCUMENT

Significant variation in the fees charged to citizens.

The *Simplifying Lives* initiative envisages conducting periodic measurements. If future studies confirm the positive trends identified in 2018, we will know that the region has been moving toward simpler lives.



DIGITALIZATION

THE SECRET TO ENHANCING SERVICE EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY

- An unexpected but important finding of *Simplifying Lives 2018* is **the wide range of policies regarding the fees charged by agencies for a driver's license and identity document.** This is likely the case with other services not included in this study. It is important for service provider institutions to work with the respective ministries of finance to review these policies, their impact on the economy and eventually corroborate or adjust them. This review should be shared with their users.

³⁴ See Morgeson III (2014) on greater citizen satisfaction with the digital channel.

Annex

What Citizens Value Most

CHILE

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT	THEFT REPORT	BIRTH REGISTRATION	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	IDENTITY DOCUMENT	APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT	DRIVER'S LICENSE
Time	Diligence	Diligence	Time	Impartiality	Diligence	Diligence
Diligence	Time	Comfort	Clarity (of information)	Time	Time	Time
Professionalism	Impartiality	Time	Professionalism	Empathy	Empathy	Impartiality

ECUADOR

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT	THEFT REPORT	BIRTH REGISTRATION	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	IDENTITY DOCUMENT	APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT	DRIVER'S LICENSE
Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Diligence
Impartiality	Impartiality	Professionalism	Impartiality	Travel effort	Clarity (of information)	Time
Empathy	Reasonableness of requirements	Impartiality	Usability (of service center)	Diligence	Diligence	Comfort

JAMAICA

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT	THEFT REPORT	BIRTH REGISTRATION	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	IDENTITY DOCUMENT	APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT	DRIVER'S LICENSE
Time	Diligence	Diligence	Courtesy	Reasonableness of requirements	Reasonableness of requirements	Time
Diligence	Empathy	Honesty	Diligence	Usability (of service center)	Honesty	Diligence
Comfort	Honesty	Time	Empathy	Diligence	Comfort	Usability (of service center)

PANAMA

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT	THEFT REPORT	BIRTH REGISTRATION	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	IDENTITY DOCUMENT	APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT	DRIVER'S LICENSE
Empathy	Time	Diligence	Diligence	Diligence	Time	Time
Impartiality	Empathy	Impartiality	Time	Impartiality	Diligence	Courtesy
Diligence	Diligence	Time	Empathy	Courtesy	Impartiality	Impartiality

PARAGUAY

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT	THEFT REPORT	BIRTH REGISTRATION	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	IDENTITY DOCUMENT	APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT	DRIVER'S LICENSE
Empathy	Empathy	Diligence	Impartiality	Diligence	Diligence	Time
Diligence	Diligence	Time	Time	Time	Time	Comfort
Time	Impartiality	Impartiality	Empathy	Comfort	Professionalism	Impartiality

URUGUAY

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT	THEFT REPORT	BIRTH REGISTRATION	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	IDENTITY DOCUMENT	APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT	DRIVER'S LICENSE
Time	Time	Diligence	Diligence	Diligence	Impartiality	Diligence
Diligence	Impartiality	Impartiality	Time	Impartiality	Diligence	Time
Impartiality	Diligence	Courtesy	Impartiality	Cost	Time	Reasonableness of requirements

Best Management Practices

The following are some of the best practices currently in place.

CHILE

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

- It takes less time to make a *doctor's appointment* in 2018 than in 2015. There are incentives for public servants to improve the procedure, and the telephone platform Salud Responde has been put in place to answer health-related questions.

THEFT REPORT

- While a theft can be reported to three authorities (the Carabineros police, the investigation police, and the public prosecutor's office), interoperability has been established to allow for follow-up on cases through any of the agencies, regardless of where they were filed.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

- Online registration (application) is more widely used than in 2015. Registrations/applications are still approved in person.

IDENTITY DOCUMENT

- The *identity document* can be used as a travel document in other countries of the region (compliant with ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] rules). Payment by credit card is accepted.
- The Chilean civil registry exchanges information with 176 agencies, eliminating the need for citizens to be the carriers of that information.

APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT

- Retirement applications can be done online.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

- Citizens pay the lowest rate of all countries in the region (over a 10-year time frame).
- The ISO 9001:2015 standard has been adopted, with dedicated staff for ensuring compliance.

ECUADOR

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

- Excellent performance in quality management has been driven by improvements in measuring wait time and processing times, an enhanced centralized reservation system with a call center hub (using an interactive voice response [IVR] system that interacts via web services with the appointment reservation system), integration with civil registry systems and health insurance companies, satisfaction surveys, and a commitment to quality in call-response times.

BIRTH REGISTRATION

- Operating costs are measured.
- Ecuadoran civil registration offices have a shift system to manage lines and optimize wait times.
- The ISO 9001:2015-certified quality management system is used, with a five-person team dedicated to compliance to the standard.

IDENTITY DOCUMENT

- Payment by card is accepted.

APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT

- Standardized processes, monitoring, and a special control of pending procedures are used.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

- Appointments can be made and licenses can be paid for online. Additionally, a processing time of less than 40 minutes is guaranteed.
- The ISO 9001:2015 standard has been adopted, with dedicated staff for ensuring compliance.

JAMAICA

- While quality management performance is rather subpar, the level of satisfaction is relatively high, showing that the social context has a considerable influence on satisfaction.

BIRTH REGISTRATION

- The vast majority of births are registered at the hospital where they took place.

PANAMA

BIRTH REGISTRATION

- Smart pens are used to digitally capture holographic signatures.
- Citizen satisfaction is measured.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

- Panama uses the SIACE 2.0 school administration system, which makes it easier for principals to manage academic processes and teachers to record grades and attendance information.

IDENTITY DOCUMENT

- Panama is the only country where *identity documents* are renewed free of charge. This is important since *identity documents* are not just a right, but also a requirement and a need.
- An ISO 9001 quality management system is used.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

- The ISO 9001:2015 standard has been adopted, with dedicated staff for ensuring compliance.
- A notification system is used that contacts people whose license is about to expire through text messages, emails, or automated calls.

PARAGUAY

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT³⁵

- Users are given an invoice that informs them of the cost to the government for their doctor visit, which is intended to educate people to use healthcare resources responsibly. As healthcare is free in Paraguay, no-shows cannot be punished, which leads to waste of planned resources.

BIRTH REGISTRATION

- Paraguay has begun to measure the processing time for *birth registrations*.
- Paraguay's birth registry is connected to the interoperability platform managed by the National Secretariat of Information and Communication Technologies [Secretaría Nacional de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación].

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

- Digitalization of *school enrollment* and other services was implemented as part of a comprehensive modernization program. Families can track their children's grades online. These functionalities connect with the single national student register, launched in 2014, which was already consolidated and based on a robust database that allows each student to be tracked throughout the school year. The system continuously updates changes to the number of enrolled students, which previously was updated with a time lag.

APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT

- The website of the Social Security Institute [Instituto de Previsión Social, or IPS] has a simulator for applicants to estimate the pension they will receive.
- Paraguay uses its Standard Model of Internal Control [Estándar de Control Interno de Paraguay, or MECIP] for these applications. A dedicated staff of two is working to ensure compliance.

³⁵ It was not possible to gather data on quality management for *doctor's appointment* in Paraguay in 2018. The best practice identified was in 2015.

URUGUAY

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

- The excellent result in quality management is driven by shorter wait times; a georeferenced appointment system, which allows users to easily find the nearest healthcare facility; appointment reminders (pilot project) to reduce no-shows; business-intelligence-based management information systems; and an appointment system that includes video consultations (for example, for inmates).

THEFT REPORT

- Thefts can be reported online.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

- *School enrollment* is still managed through the GURÍ IT system, which has highly automated procedures. GURÍ is integrated with the relevant systems of other agencies (healthcare, *identity document*, etc.).
- Up-to-date vaccinations are required. The ministry of health is informed of children with incomplete vaccination records.

IDENTITY DOCUMENT

- Applicants can obtain a new *identity document* through a single face-to-face interaction (an appointment is required and can be made remotely).
- The service delivery benefits from an ISO 9001 system for quality management, standardized and documented procedures, trained service staff, inclusive infrastructure, and proactive measures taken to serve remote areas and people with reduced mobility. Satisfaction surveys are conducted regularly.
- The Uruguayan *identity document* can be used as a regional travel document (ICAO compliant).

APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT

- Applying for retirement begins with a personalized consultation to clarify the applicant's calculation of retirement benefits, next steps, and other requirements.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

- The license is valid for 10 years.

Methodology

The *Simplifying Lives* initiative was launched in 2014 after recognizing an assumption was present across various forums that citizens of LAC were dissatisfied with the provision of **transactional public services (procedures)**, when in fact there was little or no evidence to support that widespread notion. Its methodology was specifically developed for the 2015 study.³⁶

The 2015 study marks the first time in history that quality management and citizens' satisfaction with administrative procedures were measured. These two analyses were conducted at the same time using the same methodology in various LAC countries. Until then, it had not been possible to compare, for example, the performance of a given procedure across different countries. The 2015 study analyzed six procedures in six countries (36 cases in total). At that time, there were no methodologies or studies at the global level that assessed both the supply and demand sides of procedures, or what *Simplifying Lives* called an “**internal view**” and an “**external view**”, respectively. There were studies that focused on one of the aspects, but not both. There were also projects focused on procedures for businesses, but not those for individuals.

As a result, there was no objective and solid basis for agreeing on the quality of transactional public services, and discussions essentially consisted of impressions and opinions. That lack of quantitative information hinders decision-making on improvement plans for service delivery and proper evaluation of both the implementation of service quality policies and the efficiency and effectiveness of expenditure in this regard. *Simplifying Lives* set out to explore this practically uncharted territory.

The basic unit of analysis in the methodology of *Simplifying Lives* is the procedure (unlike other approaches which, for example, evaluate the service provider agency). Each country has a vast number of procedures (several thousand in some cases),

even when we exclude those aimed at businesses. The *Simplifying Lives* project focuses on procedures considered to be the most representative and have the greatest impact, i.e., **those associated with key events in our lives**.³⁷ The methodology of the study is universal, in the sense that it can be used to analyze any procedure, regardless of its sector.

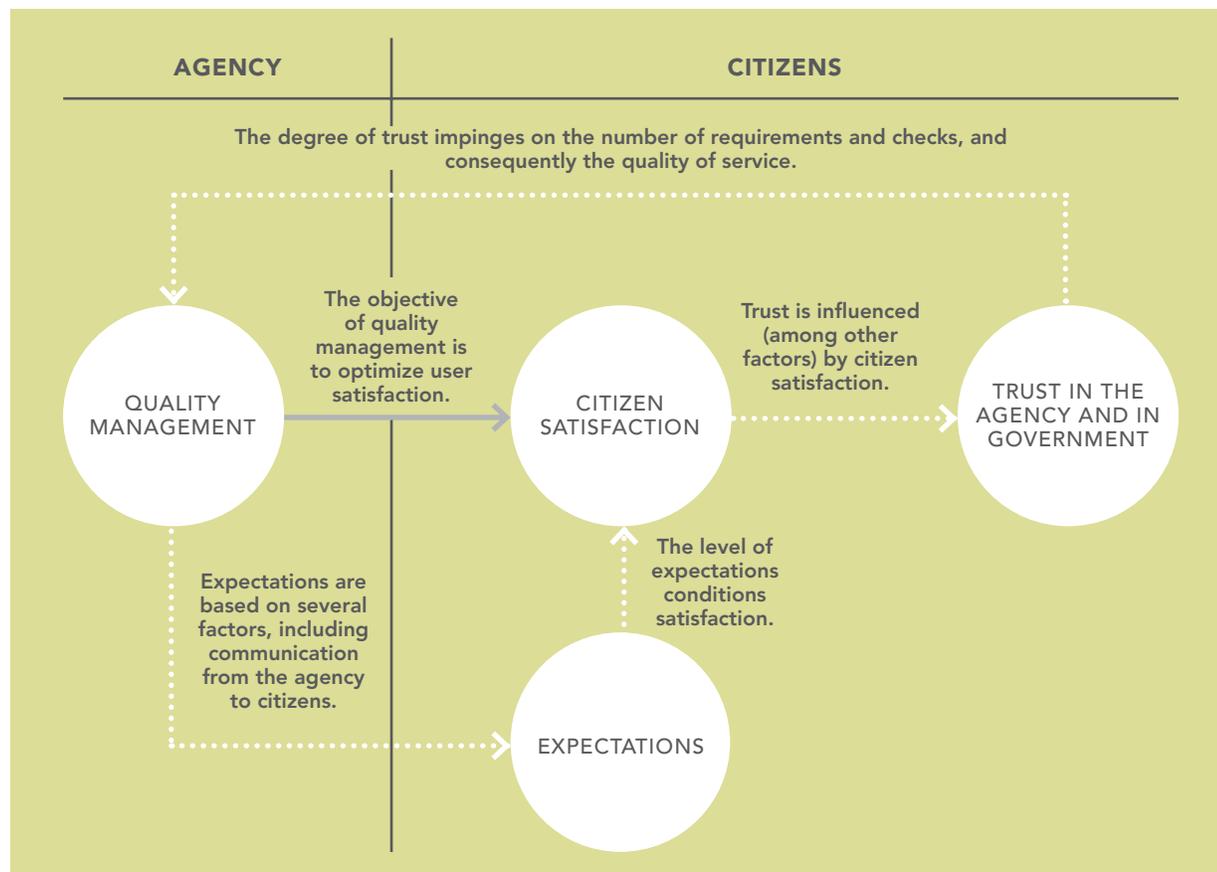
*** *Simplifying Lives* analyzes both sides of procedures: supply and demand.**

***Simplifying Lives* provides a comprehensive view.** It is a **quantitative** study that has **two components**, as mentioned before: **an internal view on quality management** (agency perspective) and an **external view on citizen experience** (user perspective). It also examines the link between these two components. In fact, the high-level theoretical model considers the relationships between quality management, citizen satisfaction, expectations, and trust (citizen trust in the agency and the government), which are shown in Figure A.1.

³⁶ This section presents a summary of the methodology. A more detailed description can be found in Pareja et al. (2016).

³⁷ The set of procedures ultimately selected was defined by consensus in conjunction with the project's focal points from each participating country.

FIGURE A.1.
Trust in Service Provider Institutions by Service and Country, 2018



Source: Author's elaboration.

Note: Solid lines indicate strong relationships, while dotted lines indicate weaker relationships that coexist with other factors.

Structure of the measurement model. Levels of expectations and confidence are determined through direct consultation with citizens. Analysis of quality and satisfaction, on the other hand, is based on quantifying a structure of **dimensions and variables**, for which the scheme is presented in Figure A.2.

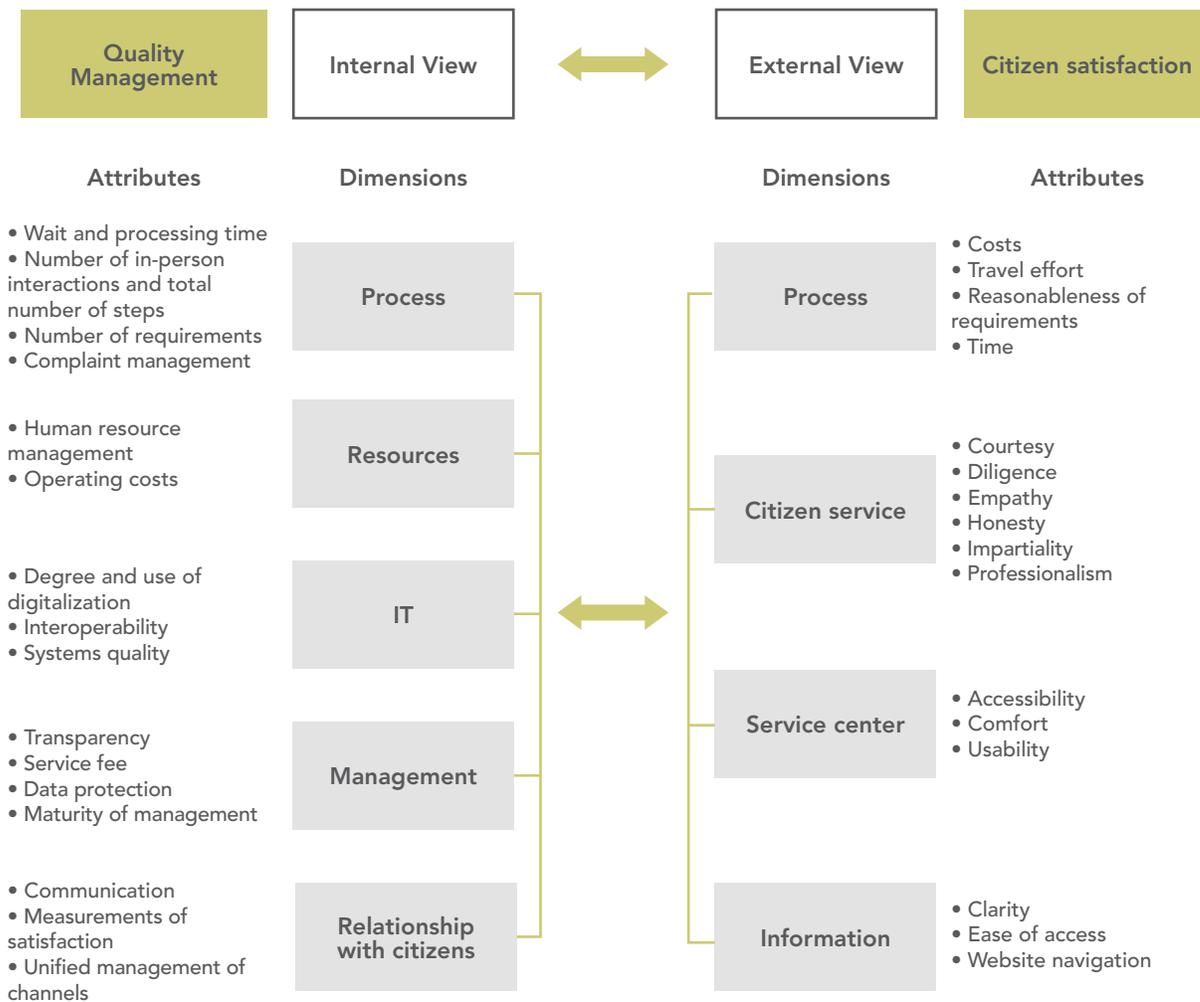
The **level of quality** is determined by analyzing the management systems (including the degree of maturity of structures, business processes, and policies, as well as the degree of efficiency in the management of resources and technologies applied to service delivery) adopted by each organization to provide services and products of quality, which is understood as a high degree of fitness to citizen needs. A composite quality management index

is constructed from the variables that make up the internal view. The user **satisfaction index**, on the other hand, is determined through direct consultation with users.³⁸ The external view variables are not used to construct this index. Rather, they are used to identify what citizens value most (consciously or unconsciously) and what factors determine their satisfaction.

It is important to note that although the external view deals with the experience of each citizen, that is, subjective events, assigning a numerical value to each variable allows for aggregation and statistical analysis of the aggregate of citizen experiences to obtain **an objective measurement of the aggregate of subjective events**.

³⁸ In *Simplifying Lives*, satisfaction is calculated as the average of the answers to two questions: the level of explicitly stated satisfaction (question PG_3 of the external view questionnaire) and the degree of agreement with the statement "The quality of the service could be improved" (question PG_6).

FIGURE A.2.
Theoretical Model: Dimensions and Variables of Quality Management and User Satisfaction



Source: Author's elaboration.

Questionnaires. The questions in the two questionnaires (internal and external views) are about variables in the model and are closed-ended (except for a couple of open-ended questions). Respondents were asked to answer on a **scale of 1 (lowest score) to 10 (highest score)**. The scale has an even number of values (10), which prevents respondents from choosing a neutral score: scores between 1 and 5 are negative, while scores between 6 and 10 are positive. When calculating a statistical average of responses for a variable, values below **5.5 (midpoint on the scale)** are considered negative, while values above 5.5 are considered positive.

The combination of internal and external views generates objective input for service improvement plans aimed at optimizing citizen satisfaction. It is important to mention that, although there should be a correlation between the two, quality management and citizen satisfaction indices are not comparable. This is not only because the respondents are different (service provider institutions in one case and users in the other), but also because the former is benchmarked against best management practices, while the latter is a simple statistical average of citizen assessment scores. The questionnaires themselves are also different.

Some of the **best management practices that were considered in creating the quality index** are: use of well-defined and formally documented and controlled processes; reduction or elimination of face-to-face interactions and requirements for citizens; intensive use of information technology (IT);³⁹ use of interoperability frameworks for data and documents; citizens' empowerment with respect to their data and privacy protection; service provision through the channels of citizens' choice, with integrated management; existence of relationships with citizens as a key function of service providers; use of a system for quality management and performance measurements (including citizen satisfaction); and knowledge of the unit operating cost structure of each procedure, etc.

★
Simplifying Lives is an innovative initiative not only for its topic, but also for its use of social media as a research tool.

Data collection on the internet using Facebook and Instagram. The 2015 study evaluated several ways to collect data on the user's experience. After conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis,⁴⁰ Facebook was chosen as the channel to contact respondents. *Simplifying Lives 2018* also used Facebook, and, in addition, Instagram. This technique of collecting data through social media requires a significant volume of users per year for each assessed procedure. Otherwise, it is very challenging to find recent users.

1. Methodology Adjustments in 2018 Compared to 2015

Simplifying Lives 2018 has incorporated changes to improve the quality and usefulness of the data collected without compromising comparability with the 2015 study. These adjustments are based on lessons learned from the 2015 study and cover the questionnaires as well as the processes of data collection, processing, and analysis. The most important adjustments are as follows:

- **Calculation of the quality management index:** The 2018 study included the procedure of renewing a *driver's license*, which was not in the 2015 study. The 2018 study took into account the significant variation in the duration of *driver's licenses'* validity (anywhere from 4 to 10 years depending on the country). Therefore, standardization was required to enable comparability. For example, if the license in one country is valid for four years and the procedure to obtain it involves two face-to-face interactions, while in another country it is valid for 10 years and involves three interactions, the standardization involves calculating the number of interactions required in both cases over a 10-year period; hence, in the first case, the number of interactions required is five and in the second, three. The variables that have been standardized for a 10-year time frame are average wait time in the office for the procedure, average time until the license is received, number of steps in the process, number of face-to-face interactions required, number of information requirements, unit cost of the procedure, cost of human resources in relation to expenditure, and service fee.
- **Calculation of satisfaction scores:** Although the definition of satisfaction has essentially remained the same, a small correction was necessary for a more faithful reflection of reality. In both versions

³⁹ Intensive use of IT has many advantages: It allows information to be processed and procedures to be completed anywhere, any time. It eliminates lines, reduces administration costs (for example, costs of human and physical resources, facility maintenance, etc.; although this is partially offset by the operating costs of IT), minimizes distance traveled and time spent, enhances transparency and auditability of management and information security, and decreases the use of discretion in unwarranted cases, among others.

⁴⁰ The cost of implementation of the study is critical to its ability to be conducted on a regular basis.

of *Simplifying Lives*, satisfaction is calculated as the average of the answer to the question “In general, how satisfied are you with the procedure completed?” and the degree of agreement with the statement “The quality of the service could be improved.” This average in 2015 was rounded off. The 2018 study considers it more appropriate to not round it off. Consequently, results of the more recent study showed a slight downward shift. To maintain comparability, data from the 2015 study have been recalculated.

- **Preferred contact channel:** The 2015 study presented user-preference data in four categories: in person, telephone, online, and no preference. Strictly speaking, the last category did not mean indifference toward all channels, but rather the fact that the respondent did not prefer a different channel to the one used. Therefore, all responses in the last category should be assigned to the channel actually used, as it was the one preferred by the user. This correction has been made for *Simplifying Lives 2018*, and the data for the 2015 study have been recalculated.
- **Internal view questionnaire:** The 2018 questionnaire added one question on technological innovation and removed others on regulatory quality, such as whether the agency regularly reviews the regulation relevant to the procedure and conducts cost-benefit analysis of the procedure. The objective of the modification is to avoid prompting the idea that problems are a result of regulation; rather, regulation is only a reflection of the administrative process defined by the provider institution. Regulation provides the legal framework and is one of several tools available for solving service quality problems.
- **External view questionnaire:** With the objective of obtaining better information from the questions on trust (trust in the service provider institution and in the government), the 2018 study included the optional open-ended question “What does it mean for you to trust the government/agency? What makes you trust it more?”
- **Age cohorts:** For data analysis, the number of age cohorts has been reduced from six in 2015 to three in 2018.

- **Dimensions and variables of the measurement model:** The names and dimensions of some variables have been reordered and changed without affecting the model.
- **Measurement of time, travel, and costs (external view) and the number of face-to-face interactions (internal view):** The 2015 study collected data on the amount of time, travel, and costs involved in completing a given procedure, as well as information on user satisfaction with these variables. These data were not, however, included in the final report. The 2018 study processed and analyzed these data collected in 2015 and 2018. The same approach was taken with the number of face-to-face interactions. Unlike the data on time, travel, and costs, data on the number of interactions were provided by the agencies (and not the users). The following section provides details on this new approach.

It could be worthy to note an aspect that is not a methodology adjustment but is a possible source of error in the internal view. The respondents designated by the evaluated agencies were largely different in 2015 and 2018. There have been cases of rectification of data collected in 2015 by respondents in 2018 from the same agency. In addition, there are cases in which the service is provided by more than one agency, and a different agency responded to the questionnaire in 2018. This is the case, for example, with *theft report* in Ecuador.

2. Processing Data on Time Spent, Travel, and Cost Reported by Citizens

Data on the variables of time, travel, and cost is obtained by asking respondents direct questions: How long did the procedure take?, How much travel was involved?, and How much did it cost? As a first step, high outlier values were cleansed, applying an IQR (interquartile range)-based method, which could entail either an appropriate correction or skew the results toward lower average values.

Citizens report what they remember, and hence they provide estimates, not measurements, which is why the figures could have some level of inaccuracy. Nevertheless, the information citizens provide is what has remained in their minds about the time they spent or waited, the distance they had to travel, or the cost they had to pay.

When it comes to **time**, citizens could respond in minutes, hours, days, or months and were asked to consider the entire process from the initial contact to the completion of the procedure. Although there was only one question on time, the answers were classified into two groups based on the following analysis: responses of less than a day were assumed to correspond to **active time**, i.e., time spent exclusively on achieving the desired result without being able to do anything else; responses of more than a day were assumed to correspond to **passive time**, i.e., time spent waiting for the result, during which users can carry out other activities (all those not dependent on the result in question). Some services elicited a large number of responses of both types, while others received responses mostly of one type. This means that there are services for which both active and passive time are relevant attributes and others for which only one is relevant.

It is impossible to know for sure which assumptions respondents rely on to calculate the time spent: whether the counting starts with the initial contact or any of the subsequent ones, whether it is the sum of all the interactions or only the last or the most relevant interaction, whether it includes the time of travel to and from the service center, time spent making phone calls, searching for information, or conducting online interactions, etc. What we do know for sure is that the information provided is what respondents consider relevant.

Regarding passive time, the answers can be interpreted as follows: in cases where an appointment is required, passive time refers to the time between when the request is made and the date of the appointment assigned; in *theft report*, it is not easy to infer which event is the endpoint; in other cases, passive time would be the period between when the request is made and when the result is obtained or when the application is accepted (*birth certificate, confirmation of school assignment, identity document, driver's license, and approval for retirement application*).

The questions on **costs** asked respondents to take all related costs into account, from the first interaction to the last. However, many respondents considered only the fees charged by the agencies and failed to assess the opportunity cost or the costs involved in traveling or complying with requirements. A significant number of citizens were found to have reported costs for certain free services. For the procedure of *theft report*, some respondents may have considered the value of their stolen property as cost.

3. Technical Details of the External View

This section describes the technical aspects of data collection for the external view.

A. EXOGENOUS FACTORS

The satisfaction scores reported by citizens show that satisfaction depends on multiple factors, not just the level of quality management of the service provider institution. For example, the persistently low score for *theft report* is due to the fact that citizens include aspects of their experience in the evaluation, which is traumatic in some cases. In these cases, the evaluation has less to do with the quality of the service itself and more to do with whether respondents have been successful in recovering their property. There are also indications that highly polarized political environments can distort measurement. Lastly, cultural factors play a role in citizen-reported satisfaction levels. This means, for example, that a service with identical levels of quality management in two countries can have vastly different satisfaction scores. Consequently, it is necessary to analyze the results in their context, taking into account the situation of each country and each service.

B. SAMPLING DESIGN AND FIELDWORK

The study gathered information from citizens using a questionnaire designed on a specific platform and hosted in the cloud. Ads have been placed on social media platforms, namely Facebook and Instagram, to invite citizens to participate by clicking on the link that opens the questionnaire. Therefore, the sampling frame is the users of these two social media platforms.

The target was to have 270 respondents per service and per country except for Jamaica, where the target was 130 given its lower population and internet penetration. Minimum quotas were established for gender, age, and geographic location (grouping by zones and size of urban centers).⁴¹ Targeted ad placement based on these parameters is allowed on both Facebook and Instagram. In total, **10,485 valid responses** were collected for the 42 services analyzed.

Specific ads were designed for each procedure and each country to identify people who had completed the procedure in question. As the targets for some procedures were met, only ads for those that had not filled the quota were kept.

Previous studies using this data collection technique have shown that the algorithms used by Facebook and Instagram result in the ads being seen by an enormous number of people who meet the defined

parameters for age, gender, and geographic location, and that there is no significant bias in a sample thus obtained compared to a randomized sample, which would be impossible to achieve within a reasonable time frame and cost in any case.

Where official information was available on the demographic composition of users of each service in each country, in light of geographical area, gender, or age, quota sizes were based on that information. Nevertheless, this was not feasible in the vast majority of cases. For these cases, quota sizes were determined through consultation with service provider agencies and common sense. For example, in LAC, women are more likely to enroll a child in a public school. Hence, the gender ratio in the sample was skewed toward females.

Tables A.1 and A.2 show, by way of example, the quota targets by gender, age, and geographical location established for Chile.

TABLE A.1.
Example of Sample Composition Targets by Age and Gender for Chile (percentages)

	GENDER		AGE		
	Male	Female	18-29	30-49	50 or above
Doctor's appointment	35	65	20	30	50
Theft report	40	60	30	40	30
Identity document	50	50	30	40	30
School enrollment	20	80	50	50	
Birth registration	20	80	50	50	
Driver's license	70	30	20	60	20
Application for retirement	50	50	0		100

Source: Author's elaboration.

⁴¹ This is a differential aspect of *Simplifying Lives*: it draws from data on the whole country, as opposed to other indicators that, for example, focus on the largest cities.

TABLE A.2.
Example of Sample Composition Targets by Geographical Location for Chile (percentages)

LOCATION	
Santiago	35
Concepción	6
Valparaíso	6
Other cities with populations larger than 50,000	30
Cities with populations fewer than 50,000	23

Source: Author's elaboration.

Before the study, it was clear that reaching the required number of samples was going to be extremely difficult in some cases. The best example is the *application for retirement* procedure, not only because of the age of the respondents, but also because in some countries the labor market is highly informal, which severely limits the probability of a worker applying for retirement and receiving a pension.

The last step in the data collection was applying adjustments and quality filters. Throughout the fieldwork phase, progress toward each of the quotas was monitored every 48 hours. The target audience, the budget, and even each ad's wording were fine-tuned in light of the challenges encountered. The following quality controls were also performed:

- Reject incomplete questionnaires.
- Check IP addresses to see if they correspond to the country whose services are being evaluated.
- Eliminate responses with the same IP address (from people who responded more than once).
- Check response time: the start time of each questionnaire was analyzed to rule out those completed in less than five minutes.
- Check intra-questionnaire standard deviation: questionnaires in which citizens had given the same answer to all questions on attributes were discarded.

- Check demographic distribution: for services and countries with larger-than-required samples, some responses were eliminated at random, but in such a way as to achieve the best distribution according to the minimum quotas established for the demographic variables of gender, age, and geographical area.

Data collection took place in two stages: a pretest to check and adjust the design of the questionnaire and review other technical aspects, followed by the fieldwork itself. In 2018, countries that were participating in *Simplifying Lives* for the second time were administered pretests for only those services that had not been evaluated in the 2015 study, namely *application for retirement* and *driver's license*. On the other hand, the pretest in Jamaica was applied to all services. The fieldwork for the services evaluated both in 2015 and 2018 began at the same time as pretests to the other services.

Table A.3 indicates the start and end dates of the data collection work in each country.

TABLE A.3.
Timeline of Data Collection for External View

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay
START DATE	Sept 24, 2018	Oct 1, 2018	Oct 22, 2018	Oct 8, 2018	Oct 8, 2018	Sept 24, 2018
END DATE	Dec 7, 2018	Dec 7, 2018	Dec 14, 2018	Dec 14, 2018	Dec 14, 2018	Nov 23, 2018
DURATION (in weeks)	11	10	8	10	10	9

Source: Author's elaboration.

Table A.4 shows the total number of responses collected for each country and service.

TABLE A.4.
Number of Valid Samples Collected for Each Service

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay	TOTAL
DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT	279	273	116	290	300	275	1,533
THEFT REPORT	286	270	47	176	296	283	1,358
BIRTH REGISTRATION	273	275	186	291	296	272	1,593
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT	277	270	161	291	296	275	1,570
IDENTITY DOCUMENT	271	273	205	290	303	283	1,625
APPLICATION FOR RETIREMENT	273	271	12	272	119	270	1,217
DRIVER'S LICENSE	270	270	188	290	297	274	1,589
TOTAL	1,929	1,902	915	1,900	1,907	1,932	10,485

Source: Author's elaboration.

TABLE A.5.
Effectiveness of the Social Media Campaign

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay	TOTAL
IMPRESSIONS	911,797	837,386	496,378	563,830	900,646	519,329	4,229,366
LANDINGS	22,016	28,795	11,540	19,815	33,421	18,598	134,185
COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES	1,929	1,902	915	1,900	1,907	1,932	10,485
LANDINGS/ IMPRESSIONS (%)	2	3	2	4	4	4	1,3
COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES/ LANDINGS (%)	9	7	8	10	6	10	8
COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE/ IMPRESSIONS (%)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2

Source: Author's elaboration.

Through the social media campaign, 10,485 valid responses were obtained. The effectiveness of the campaign is shown in Table A.5. In this table, impressions are defined as the number of people shown the ads that invited them to answer the questionnaires, while landings refers to the number of people who clicked on the link to the questionnaire.

Respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire only if they had completed the procedure in question within the previous year. However, for the procedure of *application for retirement*, since it was particularly challenging to reach the quota targets in four countries (Ecuador, Jamaica, Panama, and Paraguay), respondents were allowed to participate if they had applied for retirement in the past two years. Other services also experienced specific problems that prevented them from obtaining the target number of samples (Table A.4). And even in some of the procedures that managed to reach the target, it was not possible to obtain the desired distribution by age, gender, and location (the survey prioritized reaching the numerical target of samples per service overreaching the quota targets by age, gender, and location).

C. SAMPLING ERROR

The margins of the sampling error are directly linked to the size of each sample and can be accurately calculated only when the sample is probabilistic. For surveys targeting mostly groups for which the entire population is unknown or for which there is no database from which to draw a completely randomized sample, it is not possible to calculate the margin of the sampling error. Even if we had an exhaustive database and obtained a completely randomized sample, it would still not be feasible (regardless of the survey technique chosen) to find these people within a reasonable time frame and get them to participate. This means that it is impossible to calculate the sampling error in this type of research.

Nevertheless, since this quota sampling follows certain logical parameters in terms of sample composition by gender, age cohort, and above all, geographical area, and in order to give the reader an idea of the degree of precision theoretically achievable were the samples probabilistic, the margins of error for each service and country are listed in Table A.6, considering infinite

populations, i.e., more than 10,000 in each case, with a 95 percent confidence interval and a ratio of $p=q=0.5$. The latter means that the margins of error listed are for the worst-case scenario. In other words, there is a 95 percent chance (confidence interval) that

the margin of error will take on the value shown in Table A.6 if 50 percent of the sample answers “A” and the other 50 percent answers “not A.” For any other breakdown (e.g., 80 percent/20 percent), the margin of error will be less than the value in Table A.6.

TABLE A.6.
Estimates of Sampling Error (percentages)

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay
Doctor’s appointment	5.9	5.9	9.1	5.8	5.7	5.9
Theft report	5.8	6.0	14.3	7.4	5.7	5.8
Birth registration	5.9	5.9	7.2	5.7	5.7	5.9
School enrollment	5.9	6.0	7.7	5.8	5.7	5.9
Identity document	6.0	5.9	6.8	5.8	5.6	5.8
Application for retirement	5.9	6.0	28.3	5.9	9.0	6.0
Driver’s license	6.0	6.0	7.1	5.8	5.7	5.9

Source: Author’s elaboration.

D. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE ACTUAL SAMPLE

Table A.7 shows the demographic profile of the actual sample, as self-reported by the respondents.

TABLE A.7.
Demographic Profile of the Actual Sample (percentages)

	Chile	Ecuador	Jamaica	Panama	Paraguay	Uruguay	Global
GENDER							
Male	39	42	28	37	39	42	39
Female	61	58	72	63	61	58	61
AGE COHORT							
18–29	29	30	35	30	35	28	31
30–49	39	39	52	41	44	39	41
50 or above	32	31	13	29	21	33	28
SOCIOECONOMIC LEVEL^a							
Low	18	14	17	15	10	10	14
Lower-middle	42	33	36	42	35	41	39
Middle	33	46	28	34	46	43	39
Higher-middle	4	4	3	3	5	3	4
High	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
Undisclosed	3	3	16	6	4	3	4
RURAL/URBAN AREA							
Rural	12	15	36	15	7	7	13
Urban	85	82	52	79	90	91	82
Undisclosed	3	3	12	6	3	2	5

Source: Author’s elaboration.

^a The sum for each country is not exactly 100 because of rounding.

4. Evolution of Methodologies and Measurements of Quality Management and Satisfaction on an International Scale

Despite *Simplifying Lives* being an unprecedented initiative, the 2015 study's methodology was designed and implemented by drawing lessons from existing projects in other regions. These include mainly the following: the work by Claes Fornell (2007), Forrest Morgeson (2014), and ACSI⁴² on citizen satisfaction; a study by the Institute for Citizen-Centered Service⁴³ and its Common Measurements Tool, also on citizen experience; the model of excellence EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) and the Baldrige Excellence Framework for quality evaluation; and Thomas I. Miller's work on citizen surveys (Miller and Miller Kobayashi, 2000).

***Simplifying Lives* was a pioneer in the region and an innovative initiative at the global level, especially because it combined internal and external views in a single study and because it used Facebook as a data collection tool.** New projects with a similar focus, both internationally and locally, have followed in the footsteps of *Simplifying Lives*. These studies have generated greater interest in the simplification, digitalization, and automation of administrative procedures for individuals (not for businesses). Below are some of the **initiatives launched after *Simplifying Lives* 2015:**

- The **World Bank** published *Living Life: Assessing Bureaucratic Complexity in Citizen-Government Interactions* (Perotti, Kayumova, and Martins, 2018). Conducted completely independently of *Simplifying Lives*, this study highlights several of the same core aspects: the importance of citizen-government transactions, the degree of simplicity of the transactions and how to quantify that, the fact that quality management can be quantified by benchmarking it against best practices, the need to analyze possible relationships between simplicity

and contextual issues such as corruption indices, and the importance of having an internal view (in this case obtained from experts identified by the project rather than the service provider institutions) and an external view. This study also agrees with *Simplifying Lives* on the most relevant services for citizens. The project analyzed civil registration and identification, access to healthcare, and access to education, and was conducted partially in four countries: Chile, Ghana, India, and Vietnam.

- Another excellent project by the **World Bank** on service quality and the importance of evaluating it by considering both the view of process owners (internal) and that of citizens (external) is Indicators of *Citizen-centric Public Service Delivery* (Pfeil et al., 2018). It is a purely methodological exercise that consists of a citizen survey and a checklist for public administrators and has many similarities to *Simplifying Lives*. The objective of the project is to contribute to improving the design of services based on the information gathered through analyzing the internal and external views and the gap identified between the two. In the future, it will be necessary to gauge the extent of the application of the tools proposed and the degree of actionability they can achieve.
- The IDB published *Wait No More* (Roseth et al., 2018). The report analyzes administrative procedures for individuals in 18 LAC countries based on the users' point of view. The main findings show that some of the most widely used procedures are those related to civil registration and identity, education, healthcare, and vehicles, and that 89 percent of procedures are conducted only in person.
- **Chile's** development of country-level initiatives has been remarkable. In 2017, the Chilean government launched the **Public Service Satisfaction Portal**,⁴⁴ where evaluations of citizen satisfaction with public services, carried out by the government, are published. The portal is part of a program that promotes the use of standardized satisfaction measurements in management decision-making. Currently, 12 government agencies are evaluated through citizen surveys.
- The work being done by civil society in **Ecuador** is also notable. As an example, the *Corporación Líderes para Gobernar*, which promotes excellence in public administration, has been developing a Public Service Quality Perception Index since 2017.⁴⁵

⁴³ <https://www.theacsi.org/>

⁴⁴ <https://iccs-isac.org/>

⁴⁵ <http://satisfaccion.gob.cl/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.lideresparagobernar.org/publicaciones/>

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Citizen	For the purpose of service provision, a citizen is an individual who conducts transactions with the government. This term includes citizens in the strict sense and any person (resident, tourist, etc.) who must interact with a government agency.
IT	Information technology.
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean.
Quality	The degree to which services and products meet citizens' needs and expectations.
Quality management system	A quality management system (QMS) is the organizational structure, policies, processes, procedures, resources, and technologies defined and implemented for an agency to manage the quality of the products or services it provides to achieve the level required by users.
Satisfaction	The extent to which a service meets user needs, expectations, or demands. Satisfaction is related to perceived quality (the higher the perceived quality, the higher the satisfaction) and to the difference between perceived quality and expectations prior to receiving the service.
Satisfaction attributes	A characteristic of service provision that can affect overall user satisfaction. The degree of importance of an attribute to satisfaction can be determined through a statistical process.
The region	LAC, or more specifically, IDB borrowing member countries
Transactional service	A procedure involving the exchange of information and possibly payments between citizens and businesses on one hand and the government on the other hand. A transactional service is usually implemented as a business process, using forms or other information collection tools. In this document, the terms "transactional service" and "procedure" are used interchangeably.

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