

***Transparency in Local Government:  
Exploring the Citizens' Beliefs and Attitudes  
Toward Transparency through a Systematic  
Review of the Literature***

*Margarita Barer*

*Ph.D. Candidate*

*Ben - Gurion University of the Negev*

*Advisors:*

*Prof. Yotam Lurie*

Department of Management

Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

*Prof. Fany Yuval*

Department of Public Policy and Administration

Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

## Abstract

Democratic countries recognize transparency as an essential aspect of governmental accountability. Accordingly, members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have adopted regulations or legislation to promote transparency. However, though transparency is very popular in public discussions, research of transparency in the municipal area is limited and incomplete. This study qualitatively explores the citizens' beliefs and attitudes toward local government transparency through a Systematic Review of the Literature (SLR) methodology. The research focuses on identifying, analyzing, and categorizing citizens' beliefs toward transparency using data collected and thus determines the variables that influence the citizens' demands for transparency in local government based on previous studies.

The PRISMA method was employed for case selection in the SLR research process, and following this for the synthesis of results the Conventional Content Analysis methodology was applied. The PRISMA method yielded 49 records included in the systematic review. The records were published between 2005 and 2020. There are 43 journal articles, two book chapters, three proceedings papers, and one conference paper. The records were published in 30 peer-reviewed international journals. The majority of the records were found in more generic public administration journals and journals that combine informational science and public administration. Most of the research was conducted in the USA (24%), Spain (20%), China (14%), and South Korea (12%).

Through the conventional content analysis, ten core categories and 43 subcategories emerged. The first seven core categories relate to citizens' beliefs and attitudes toward local government transparency. The last three core categories are variables that influence citizens' demand for local government transparency.

The core categories that emerge are (1) Expectations of citizens from the local government and themselves; (2) Instrumental transparency; (3) Relationships with government; (4) Advantages and disadvantages in increasing transparency (Possible consequences of increasing transparency); (5) Digital age perception; (6) Transparency as a human right; (7) Dominant transparency domains; (8) Citizens' characteristics; (9) Citizens' behaviors, and (10) Citizens' environment.

Finally, the results and the discussion section are still in progress as these are preliminary results only.

## Introduction - The Structure and Purpose of the Study

Over the past few decades, a considerable number of scholars and practitioners have been discussing transparency and considering new forms (or types) of accountability as critical elements of good governance (Kosack and Fung 2014, 84; Piotrowski 2008; Roberts 2006). Governments often view transparency as a means for achieving objectives, such as, fostering greater trust in government, reducing corruption, and improving financial performance (Benito and Bastida 2009; Bertot, Jarger, and Grimes 2010; Welch, Hinnant, and Moon 2005; Worthy 2010). Other scholars have questioned the potential of transparency to fulfill these objectives (Etzioni 2010, 2014). Several empirical studies argue that transparency's effects are limited and differ according to several factors, such as areas of government, policy domain, and citizen's characters (de fine Licht, 2014, Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer, 2014). Despite all this research, the literature on transparency is still underdeveloped. Moreover, some scholars, such as Grumet (2014), have even argued that efforts to increase transparency may result in more harm than good.

Although the definition of the word "transparency" is not a controversial matter, the practical meaning of transparency changes over time, it is used in references to various aspects of transparency. Many definitions of transparency focus on the degree to which an entity reveals information about its decision processes, procedures, and performance (Curtin and Meijer 2006; Gerring and Thacker 2004; Grimmelikhuijsen 2012; Welch, Hinnant, and Moon 2005). I shall use a working definition of transparency, adopted from Florini's *The Right to Know: Transparency for an Open World* (2007). Florini defines transparency as "the degree to which information is available to outsiders that enables them to have an informed voice in decisions and/or to assess the decisions made by insiders" (Florini Ed., 2007, p.5). In the same vein, Piotrowski and Van Ryzin (2006) assert that "government transparency can be defined as the ability to find out what is going on inside a public sector organization through avenues such as open meetings, access to records, the proactive posting of information on Websites, whistleblower protections, and even illegally leaked information" (p. 308).

The goal of this research is to provide an understanding of the beliefs and attitudes of citizens towards transparency in local government authorities. This will be done through a systematic literature review (SLR). SLR is a research process that seeks to generate knowledge on a given topic by searching, appraising, and synthesizing previous studies on the topic (Okoli, C. (2015)). More specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Identify, analyze, and categorize citizens' beliefs toward transparency using data collected from previous studies.

2. Determine the various variables that influence the citizens' demand for transparency in local government based on previous studies.

Though this is still a work in progress and not all the data has been analyzed, nevertheless, there are interesting results and preliminary findings. In part 2 of this draft, I spell out the Methodology and Research Design. Following this, in Part 3 I present some of the results and discuss preliminary findings. Finally, in Part 4 I hone in and discuss more in depth on one of the most interesting results, Core Category #8: Citizens' Characteristics.

For decades, scholars argued that higher levels of government transparency contribute to government quality. However, recent studies indicate that transparency's contribution is often limited and differs with respect to various variables, such as: areas of government, policy domain, and citizen characteristics (Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer, 2014, Cucciniello, Porumbescu, and Grimmelikhuijsen, 2017).

Piotrowski and Van Ryzin's (2007) identified several characteristics of citizens as those that are related to citizens' demand for governmental transparency. They included in their study demographic characteristics of citizens, socioeconomic status, political attitudes and orientations, motivation for demanding government transparency, and perceived amount of existing access to government. Citizens have different motivations and interests in governmental transparency, in this paper as described in Piotrowski and Van Ryzin's (2007) research, the demand for transparency captures the individual citizens' preferences and desire for governmental transparency.

There is a large body of literature that emphasizes the relationship between transparency and trust in government. On the one hand, it has been suggested that transparency stimulates openness within organizations, which positively influences trust (Hood, 2006). So too, transparency helps to bring citizens closer to the government (Nye, Zelikov, and King, 1997). On the other hand, questions arise regarding the effect of transparency on trust in government (Bannister and Connelly, 2011, O'Neill, 2002). For example, the Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) study focuses on the performance outcome of transparency and its link to trust in government. The results of this study provides mixed evidence regarding the relationship between transparency and trust in government. Therefore, Grimmelikhuijsen claims that the administrations' expectation of increasing citizens' trust in employing transparency is an exaggeration and that transparency can only maintain citizens' existing trust and not change the perspectives entirely. Furthermore, in Grimmelikhuijsen, Porumbescu, Hong, and Im (2013) study, the researchers observed that transparency has a small positive effect on citizens' trust in government.

Heald (2006) observes different varieties of transparency: (1) the decision-making process, (2) policy content, and (3) policy outcomes or effects. The decision-making transparency is about the openness of the steps taken to reach the decision; policy transparency includes disclosed information about the policy's content, implementation, and effects; Policy outcome transparency refers to the measurement of the policy outcomes and effects.

Along the same lines, Grimmelikhuijsen and Welch's (2012) study indicates that transparency is not a linear stream of the process but a set of events or activities. The following theoretical perspective on government transparency was developed in their study: organizational, political, and group influence. These perspectives were tested regarding three dimensions of transparency - decision making, policy information, and policy outcome.

## **Part 2 – Methodology and Research Design**

This research employs the methodology of a systematic literature review. Systematic literature reviews provide a comprehensive overview of a specific area. In "Mental Health Informatics" (Hanson and Lubotsky Levin, 2013), the authors describe this method:

*"According to the Cochrane Collaborative, a systematic review is a review of clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to (1) identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and (2) to collect and analyze data from the studies that are included in the review. Statistical methods (meta-analysis) may or may not analyze and summarize the included studies' results. Meta-analysis refers to using statistical techniques in a systematic review to integrate the results of included studies" (p.185).*

This research aims to qualitative examination citizens' beliefs and attitudes toward transparency in the local government, based on data collected from a systematic review of the literature in the field. To achieve this purpose, I employ the PRISMA method for case selection in the SLR research process. The PRISMA method is the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (Liberati et al., 2009). The steps of the PRISMA method are described below in the article selection strategy section. Following this I evaluated the data using the Conventional Content Analysis, a qualitative research method employed to analyze text data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

### **Article Selection Strategy**

For the SLR research, I have selected the period from 1980 to 2020. I picked this time period because this is the period in which the research field of government transparency exists in the literature. The topic of transparency is relatively new and has developed in the last 40 years.

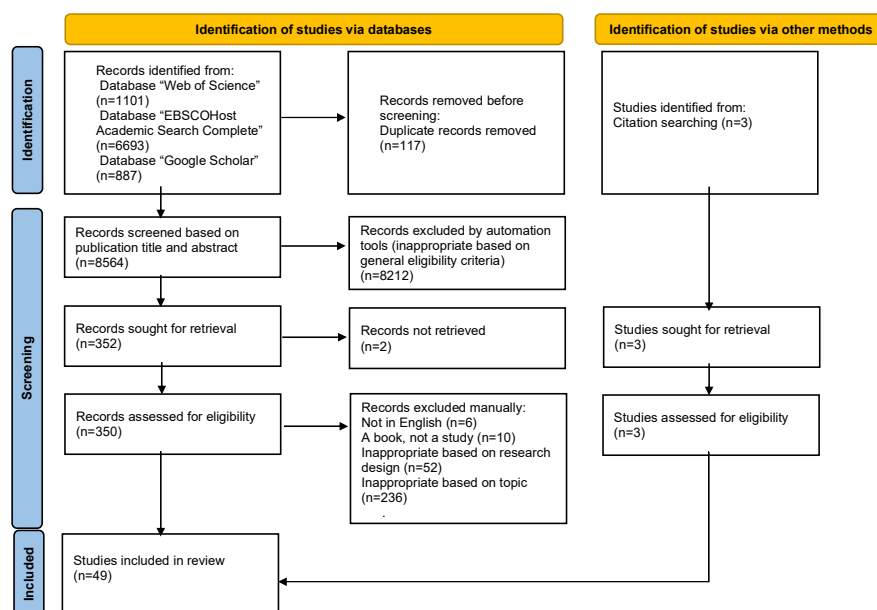
Three primary data sources used to identify the articles were: ISI Web of Science, EBSCO, google scholar, and the most cited three articles in the field, *Cucciniello, Belle, Nasi and Valotti, (2015), Grimmelikhuijsen (2012), Piotrowski and Van Ryzin (2007)*, all searches were conducted in March 2020.

These three sources produced a total of 8,681 search results. These results were entered into a reference management program (RefWorks) to identify and eliminate duplicate records. After that, I screened the abstracts and titles of the remaining studies using general inclusion criteria: (a) studies should contain the words “transparency” and (“citizens” or “citizen” or “residents” or “resident” or “inhabitants” or “inhabitant”) in the article and/or abstract, (b) be written in the English language, (c) have been published between 1980 and 2020.

This process yielded 353 studies suitable for screening based on my specific inclusion criteria: studies should (d) focus on citizen beliefs and attitudes toward transparency in local government or local authorities, (e) include empirical studies. This screening of 353 studies resulted in 49 studies for systematic review (see the full list in Appendix A; see Figure 1).

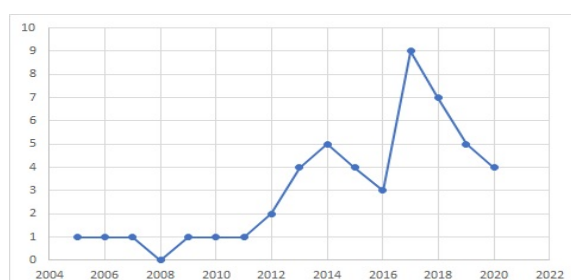
The focus was on citizen beliefs and attitudes toward transparency in local government or local authorities rather than in national government transparency since studies at the local level often rely on insights and studies based on the national level (Piotrowski and Van Ryzin’s (2007), Grimmelikhuijsen (2012)). Empirical studies were included in this work because I am interested in grasping the overall understanding of citizen beliefs and attitudes toward local government transparency.

*Figure 1 PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases and other sources*



The 49 studies included in the systematic review were published between 2005 and 2020 (see Figure 2). There are 43 journal articles, two book chapters, three proceedings papers, and one conference paper. The articles were published in 30 peer-reviewed international journals. Most of the studies can be found in more genetic public administration journals and journals that combine informational science and public administration. Figure 2 reveals that the research topic grew more rapidly from 2012 to the present. Before 2012 this topic was not popular among scholars as today (Cucciniello, Porumbescu, and Grimmeliikhuijsen, 2017).

*Figure 2: Research Year*



## Research Questions

This research focuses on the attitudes of citizens toward local governmental transparency based on the 49 records included in the review as explained above. Three main research questions are used to focus and direct the research:

1. Which variables influence the citizens' demand for local governmental transparency? Are variables such as citizens' characteristics, perceptions about government, and participation influencing the demand for local government transparency?
2. Is there a difference in citizens' demand for transparency within various transparency domains?
3. What are the citizens' beliefs and attitudes toward local governmental transparency?

Following this, using conventional content analysis methodology (via the program ATLAS.ti), I identified common variables influencing citizens' demand for transparency, dominant transparency domains, and various citizens' attitudes toward local government transparency.

## Conventional Content Analysis

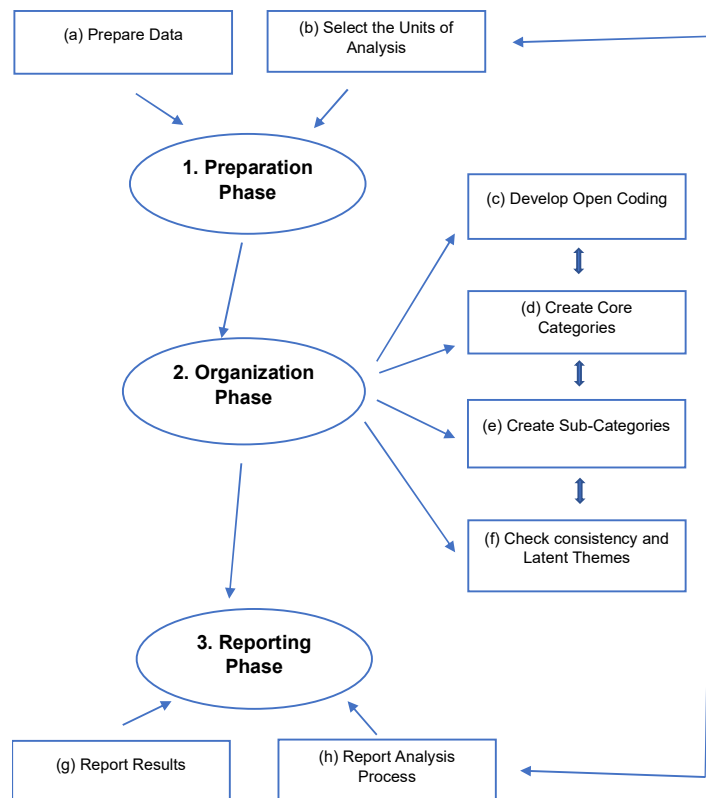
Conventional content analysis has been used for analyzing text data since the 1930s. Hsieh and Shannon (2015) state that the researcher can use a coding system to categorize, flesh out themes, and patterns to interpret data. Kohlbacher (2006) argues that qualitative content analysis is a step-by-step methodology, the steps of inductive category development were described. The

approach in this research is inductive content analysis. The inductive approach identifies and analyzes concepts and themes arising from the data itself.

### Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the credibility of the research is referred to as trustworthiness (Pilot and Beck, 2014). In order to validate qualitative research, the researcher must demonstrate trustworthiness. According to Shenton (2004), there are several strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research. In this research, I made the following provisions: (1) Employment of the PRISMA method for case selection in the SLR research process; (2) Restricting the records included in the review to published in peer-reviewed international journals; (3) Performing step-by-step content analysis (Figure 3); (4) Reporting the three phases of the content analysis as stated by Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, and Kyngäs (2014); and (5) Demonstrating the formation of the categories as they emerge from the data as stated in the research of the preview (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004; Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

*Figure 3: Three Phases and Eight (a- h) Steps of the Conventional Content Analysis*







(d) I re-read the units of analysis that were coded and analyzed the occurrence of themes that flesh out from the data. I went over the data from a top-level view and in relation to research questions. The potential themes and keywords started to emerge; the core categories are the main themes in this research.

(e) I read the data again using memos that I wrote during the open code process. Again, I analyzed the occurrence of codes and groups of codes and established subcategories. These subcategories can provide a richer understanding of the core categories.

(f) In the organization phase, there was a consent repetition and re-reading of the data to fit the themes correctly and check for consistency and latent themes.

### Phase 3: Reporting

(g) Ten core categories were established in the conventional content analysis. By analyzing these core categories, 50 subcategories emerged. The results are presented in Tables 1 and 2. In Table 1, we can see the seven core categories related to citizens’ believes and attitudes toward local government transparency. Table 2 shows three core categories regarding variables that influence the citizens’ demand for local government transparency.

(h) I worked on generating themes and inferences based on the codes. The idea is to narrow down the main themes by comparing and clustering. There were interesting differences and similarities between the categories within the data.

## Part 3- Results and Interpterion (Preliminary)

The following section describes the results and their interpterion.

**Table 1: Core Categories and Categories, Section 1**

<b>Citizens’ Beliefs and Attitudes toward Transparency</b>		
<b>Core Categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>
<b>Expectations of citizens from the local government and themselves</b>	Accessible government * Responsive government * Effective government * Transparent government * Accountable government * Innovative government * Citizen-generated transparency * Service-oriented policy	Inclusiveness, accessible government, accessible websites* Responsive government, social responsibility, interactivity * Effective government, leadership, knowledge management * Effective transparency, implementing policy regarding transparency, supply and demand of e-government, supply transparency, transparency, perceived transparency, sharing information, completeness, quality information, relevance, demand transparency, demand for government information, interest in government information, comprehensiveness * Employees of local governments, reliable government, accountable government, fairness * Perceived capacity, perception of government, social innovation, capacity to innovate, sustainable development * Citizens control, citizens obligation, pressure on administration, citizen conflicts, citizen-generated transparency, expectations, opinions of citizens, citizen input, citizens obligation, citizens understand, citizens comply * Closer to citizens, different needs, needs and priorities of citizens, one-stop-

		shops, private vs. public sector, citizens/customer orientation
<b>Instrumental transparency</b>	Reduced corruption * Reduced information asymmetry * Increased accountability of government * Increased trust in government * Increased integrity of government * Increased value of public service * Enhanced democracy	Corruption * Information asymmetry, information flow, information age, the process of information, marketing information * Accountability * Trust in government * Ethics, integrity, politics * Citizens value * Democracy
<b>Relationship with government</b>	Government image * Real openness * True transparency	The role of government, dialogue with citizens, satisfaction with government, relationship with society, government image, political strength, electoral turnout, election, political competition, demographic, local vs. central government * Modernization, empowering citizens, nepotism, communication, informed citizens, partners, voluntary action by municipalities * Passive transparency, proactive transparency, degree of transparency, approach to transparency
<b>Advantages and disadvantages of increasing transparency (Possible consequences of increasing transparency)</b>	Material resources * Human resources * Data Security * Privacy concerns * Time factor * Quality of government	Expenditure on technology, archives, cost of transparency, economic resources, public resources * Human resources * Ensuring information security, hazardous technologies national and domestic security * Personal privacy * Time factor, time reduction * Quality of government, good governance, advantages of information, e-government benefits, economic development, nature of information
<b>Digital age perception</b>	Online services * Use of information and communication technology (ICT) * Social media impact	Websites, digital economy, digital inclusion and exclusion, technological specialization, mobile government, smart city, sophisticated e-government, open data, open government * Data and information as a base to transparency, online transparency, e-government use * Social media, public media, multimedia, media manager/community manager
<b>Transparency as a human right</b>	The public right to know * Legal State	The public right to know, human rights, access to information * Legislation
<b>Dominant transparency domains</b>	Decision-making * Economic/Financial * Service-delivery * Political * Performance * Policy * Organization * Pollution * Safety * Strategy	Decision-making * Economic and financial transparency * Service-delivery, health, tourism, housing, sport, transport * Political transparency * Performance transparency * Policy transparency * Organization transparency * Pollution transparency * Safety transparency * Strategy transparency

**Table 2: Core Categories and Categories, Section 2**

<b>Variables that Influence the Citizens' Demand for Local Governmental Transparency</b>		
<b>Core Categories</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>
<b>Citizens' characteristics</b>	Personal characteristics * Socioeconomic characteristics * Political characteristics * Demographic characteristics	Age, gender, education, , sector of employment, technological skills, prior experience * Income, homeowners, socioeconomic status * Political ideology * Urban areas vs. rural areas, demographic variables, years of residence in a community, family, race
<b>Citizens' behaviors</b>	Contact with government * Participation * Political activity * Activity outside government	Contact with government, commenting on websites, the use of web forums, telephone, visit government, virtual discussion rooms, online consultation, complaints, e-mail * Participation, offline participation, collaboration, * Voting, protest, volunteering, political engagement * Awareness, newspapers, internet use, use the information
<b>Citizens' environment</b>	Social environment * Community and culture * Policy of the local government	Hierarchy with society, social environment, civic society, collective vs. individual, secrecy, access to technology, environmental, equality, content on websites, unemployment, size of local government * Community, type of society, culture, globalization, international organizations * Policymaking, decentralization, debureaucratization

These research results answer the research questions. The results can be divided into two sections. In the first section, the results answer the questions: what are the citizens' beliefs and attitudes toward local governmental transparency? Is there a difference in citizens' demand for transparency in various transparency domains? The seven core categories that emerge are (1) Expectations of citizens from the local government and themselves, (2) Instrumental transparency, (3) Relationship with government, (4) Advantages and disadvantages in increasing transparency (Possible consequences of increasing transparency), (5) Digital age perception, (6) Transparency as a human right, and (7) Dominant transparency domains. The second results section answers the question: which variables influence the citizens' demand for local governmental transparency? The three core categories that emerged are (1) Citizens' characteristics, (2) Citizens' behaviors, and (3) Citizens' environment.

We can see in table 3 the magnitude of the core categories as they emerge from the data across units of analysis groups.

**Table 3: Frequency of the Core Categories that Emerge Across Units Groups (Preliminary)**

Units Group/ Core-Category	America (N=8)	Asia (N=15)	Europe (N=26)
Expectations of citizens from the local government and themselves	791=25.15%	1121=35.66%	1232=39.19%
Instrumental transparency	841=36.79%	991=43.35%	454=19.86%
Relationship with government	229=23.03%	428=43.01%	338=33.96%
Advantages and disadvantages in increasing transparency (Possible consequences of increasing transparency)	225=34.55%	133=24.98%	264=40.47%
Digital age perception	1080=37.43%	830=28.75%	976=33.82%
Transparency as a human right	1051=48.50%	337=17.40%	739=34.10%
Dominant transparency domains	511=28.26%	581=32.14%	716=39.60%
Citizens' characteristics	371=32.02%	377=36.06%	282=27.38%
Citizens' behaviors	579=29.95%	729=37.73%	625=32.33%
Citizens' environment	387=29.90%	467=36.16%	439=33.95%

As seen in Table 3, the ten core categories were presented in different magnitudes across the three continents, America, Asia, and Europe. Therefore, the findings will be presented by core categories with respect to the unit groups.

## Part 4 – Discussion: Core Category #8: Citizens’ Characteristics

Diving deeper into the results, even though these are still preliminary, I wish to hone in on the eighth core category, citizens’ characteristics. This core category consists of personal, socioeconomic, political, and demographic subcategories. Personal characteristics such as age, gender, education, prior government experience, and the employment sector influence citizens’ demand for transparency across continents. The distribution of citizens’ age in local government authorities influences the demand for transparency due to the difference between perceptions of the old generation and the young generation about their local government and trust. Some research asserts that older people demand less transparency and others that older people would value and, thus, demand more transparency from the government. As stated in the research in Asia:

*“Since older people become accustomed to receiving standardized services provided by work units and local governments during the planned economy period, they tend to be more collectivist and more trusting of government than the younger generations (Li, 2011). Thus, they are more likely to be satisfied with government transparency and have better perceptions of government capacity” (Kyu-Nahm Jun and ec., 2014).*

Also, the demand for online information of older people is different from the demand of younger people. Government website usage varied by age group. Young people are more active users of government websites. Therefore, this could relate to technological skills as stated in the research in America:

*“It is clear that there is an inverse relationship between age and the use of the internet” (Ruano De La Fuente, 2013).*

Gender influences positively specific transparency domains demands. For example, women are more interested in the safety and health transparency domain than men. As stated in the research in America:

*“In the model of desire for safety transparency, women were more likely to be concerned about access to such information than men. Indeed, being female was the strongest determinant of the desire for health and safety information (Piotrowski and Van Ryzin, 2007).*

In addition, previous researches found that men are more politically active than women; therefore, men are likely to demand more transparency. Consequently, the local government can direct resources to a specific transparency domain by analyzing the combination of the citizens’ population.

*Age and income also had significant positive effects on the desire for safety transparency. Individuals in the South were more likely to be concerned about access to safety*

*information and people in the West were less likely to be concerned about the same information (Piotrowski and Van Ryzin, 2007).*

Education, the number of years learned, influence positively the demand for transparency. More educated citizens will demand more transparency from their local governments. As stated in the research in America:

*“As citizens become more educated about their governments, they may require deeper levels of transparency that better support the government–citizen trust relationship” (Evans, Franks, and Chen (2018)).*

Citizens who have prior experience with government or worked for local government are more satisfied with local government service provision, therefore, are less demanding local government transparency.

Socioeconomic characteristics of citizens such as income, homeownership and socioeconomic status partly influence citizens' demand for transparency across continents. Citizens with higher income and socioeconomic status are more likely to demand transparency. Also, the level of income influences accesses to technology and the level of awareness. As described in the research in Europe:

*“For Pina et al. (2010), wealthier municipalities, with a more prosperous population, will be more aware of transparency and accountability issues” (Francisca Tejedo-Romero and Joaquim Filipe Ferraz Esteves Araujo (2020)).*

Homeownership related to obtaining local government documents, but there was no indication of influencing the demand for transparency. As described in the research in America:

*“Also, none of the models shows that homeownership or years of residence in a community matter with regard to a person's desire for open government at the local level, although homeownership and years of residence are related to the behavior of obtaining government documents” (Piotrowski and Van Ryzin, 2007).*

Political ideology strongly connects to the demand for transparency in America and Europe, but its definition varies across continents. For example, there is a difference between western democratic countries and authoritarian political systems in Asia (China). Also, the role of local government is not the same in each continent. In America, the political ideology is about citizens who self-identified as conservatives or liberals; liberals are more likely to appreciate transparency than conservatives. In Europe, political ideology is about identification with left-wing or right-wing parties. Therefore, citizens identified with the left-wing are likely to want more transparency than citizens identified with the right-wing. In this study, within the unit group of

Asia, there was no reference regarding citizens' political ideology; it may be due to the institutional differences mentioned above.

Demographic characteristics of citizens as the area of residence, years of residence in the community, and race partly influence citizens' demand for transparency across continents. For example, regarding the area of residents, some researches found no significant relationship with transparency demand. In contrast, other researchers found that citizens who live in urban cities request more service from the government and more information than the citizens in rural areas. Also, citizens in the south desire more safety transparency, as stated in the research in America:

*Individuals in the South were more likely to be concerned about access to safety information and people in the West were less likely to be concerned about the same information” (Piotrowski and Van Ryzin, 2007).*

Years of residence in the community were not related to transparency demand across continents. However, the type of community relates to citizens' demand for transparency, as will be described in the core category of citizens' environment.

The race was also not evident in the unit groups in relation to transparency; there were statements as to different trust levels in the government of black people that may indirectly influence demand for transparency.

## Discussion

This research aim was qualitative examine which variables influence the citizens' demand for local governmental transparency. Some of these variables were found within the citizens' characteristics. Given all the researches in the systematic review, the variables influencing local government transparency are age, gender, prior experience, sector of employment, income, socioeconomic status, political ideology, and area of residence.

The findings imply similarities and differences between America, Asia, and Europe regarding these variables. For example, political ideology, its definition, and influence vary between continents, while variables such as age, gender, and income have similar impacts on demands for transparency domains.

## Limitations of the Study

The study limitation is inherent to the chosen methodology. Systematic reviews are based on previous studies and their methodologies and findings.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A - Articles for Systematic Review, Part 1

Title	Autor	Year	Publisher	Type	Country
E-government and citizen's engagement with local affairs through e-websites: The case of Spanish municipalities	Juan-Gabriel Cegarra-Navarro, José Rodrigo Córdoba Pachón, José Luis Moreno Cegarra	2012	International Journal of Information Management	j. article	Spain
Assessing Public Preferences and the Level of Transparency in Government Using an Exploratory Approach	Maria Cucciniello, Nicola Belle', Greta Nasil', and Giovanni Valotti	2015	Social Science Computer Review	j. article	Italy
Voices in the cloud: social media and trust in Canadian and US local governments	Lois Evans, Patricia Franks and Hsuanwei Michelle Chen	2017	Records Management Journal	j. article	Canada and US
Twitter information for contributing to the strategic digital city: Towards citizens as co-managers	Carla C. Flores, Denis A. Rezende	2018	Telematics and Informatics	j. article	Brazil
The Effect of Societal Values on Local Government Transparency: Applying Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions	Jose-Valeriano Frias-Acetiluno, Lazaro Rodrigues-Ariza & Maria-Isabel Gonzalez-Bravo	2013	Lex Locaus-Journal of Local Self-Government	j. article	Colombia, Portugal and Span
Using social media to enhance citizen engagement with local government: Twitter or Facebook?	Arturo Haro-de-Rosario, Alejandro Sáez-Martin and María del Carmen Caba-Pérez	2016	New Media & Society	j. article	Spain
Environmental risks of high-speed railway in China: Public participation, perception and trust	Guizhen He, Arthur P.J. Mol, Lei Zhang, Yonglong Lu	2015	Environmental Development	j. article	China
Black and Smelly Waters: how citizen-generated transparency is addressing gaps in China's environmental management	Angel Hsu, Amy Weinfurter, Jeffrey Tong & Yihao Xie	2019	Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning	j. article	China
E-government Use and Perceived Government Transparency and Service Capacity Evidence from a Chinese Local Government	Kyu-Nahm Jun Wayne State University Feng Wang Shanghai University of Finance and Economics Dapeng Wang Peking University	2014	Public Performance & Management Review	j. article	China
Facebook Content Strategies and Citizens' Online Engagement: The Case of Greek Local Governments	Georgios Lappas, Amalia Triantafyllidou, Anastasia Deligiouri, Alexandros Klefodimos	2018	The Review of Socionetwork Strategies	j. article	Greece
Open Innovative Governance, Municipalities' Transparency and Citizens' Quality of Life: Are They a Perfectly Matched Trilogy?	João Leitão, Helena Alves, and Dina Pereira	2016	Springer International Publishing Switzerland	Book Chapter	Portugal
E-Government Strategies in Spanish Local Governments	Jose Manuel Ruano De La Fuente	2013	Local Government Studies	j. article	Spain
How Chinese Officials Use the Internet to Construct their Public Image: Supplementary Online Appendix	Jennifer Pan	2019	Political Science Research and Methods	j. article	China
Citizen Attitudes Toward Transparency in Local Government	Suzanne J. Piotrowski Rutgers University-Newark, New Jersey Gregg G. Van Ryzin The City University of New York	2007	The American Review of Public Administration	j. article	USA
The Control Function of Social Services in Spanish Local Government: A Contribution to Transparency and Performance Improvement	Carolina Pontones Rosa and Rosario Pérez Morote	2013	Administration in Social Work	j. article	Spain
The good, the bad and the ugly: Three faces of social media usage by local governments	Patricia Silva, António F. Tavares, Tiago Silva, Mariana Lameiras	2019	Government Information Quarterly	j. article	Portugal
Citizens' Use of Social Media in Government, Perceived Transparency, and Trust in Government	Changsoo Song, Jooho Lee	2015	Public Performance & Management Review	j. article	USA
E-Governance Developments in European Union Cities: Reshaping Government's Relationship with Citizens	Lourdes Torres, Vicente Pina, and Basilio Acerete	2006	Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions	j. article	EU
E-government-enabled transparency: The effect of electoral aspects and citizen's access to Internet on information disclosure	Francisca Tejedo-Romero & Joaquim Filipe Ferraz Esteves Araujo	2020	Journal of Information Technology & Politics	j. article	Portugal
Social media adoption by Audit Institutions. A comparative analysis of Europe and the United States	Lourdes Torres, Sonia Royo, Jaime Garcia-Rayado	2020	Government Information Quarterly	j. article	EU US
Citizen Attitudes Towards E-Government Services: Comparison of Northern and Southern Nicosia Municipalities	Tuğberk Kaya, Mustafa Sağsan, Mete Yıldız	2020	International Journal of Public Administration in the Digital Age	j. article	Cyprus
E-government evolution in EU local governments: a comparative perspective	Vicente Pina, Lourdes Torres and Sonia Royo	2009	Online Information Review	j. article	EU

## Appendix A - Articles for Systematic Review, Part 2

Title	Autor	Year	Publisher	Type	Country
Exploring Online Structures on Chinese Government Portals: Citizen Political Participation and Government Legitimation	Jiang, Xu	2009	Social Science Computer Review	J. article	China
Citizen Participation and Transparency in Local Government: Do Participation Channels and Policy Making Phases Matter?	Kim, Lee	2017	Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences	Proceedings paper	South Korea
Citizen Participation, Process, and Transparency in Local Government: An Exploratory Study	Kim, Lee	2019	Policy Studies Journal	J. article	South Korea
Citizen Engagement as a Business Model for Smart Energy Communities	Massey, Verma, Khadem	2018	5th International Symposium on Environment-Friendly Energies and Applications (EFEA)	Book Chapter	Ireland
Dimensions of Public Meeting Participation: Evidence from Florida's Truth-in-Millage Act	R. Williamson, J. Scicchitano	2014	Urban Affairs Review	J. article	USA
Transparency, Policy Outcomes, and Incumbent Support	Aguiar-Corriera, C. Magalhães, J. Veiga	2019	KYKLOS	J. article	Portugal
Effective Transparency and Institutional Trust in Honduran Municipal Governments	Estrada, Bastida	2019	Administration & Society	J. article	Honduras
The Determinants of Local Government's Financial Transparency	M. D. Guillamo'n, B. Benito	2011	Local Government Studies	J. article	Spain
Achieving Administrative Transparency Through Information Systems: A Case Study in the Seoul Metropolitan Government	Kim, Cho	2005	Electronic Government, Proceedings	Proceedings paper	South Korea
Enhancing Sustainability Transparency in Local Governments — An Empirical Research in Europe	Navarro-Galera, José Alcaraz-Quiles, Ortiz-Rodríguez	2018	Sustainability	J. article	European Union (EU)
Problems and Challenges in the Transition Toward Local Governance in Turkey	Kemal Oktem	2014	Lexlocalis - Journal of Local Self-Government	J. article	Turkey
Transparency is in the Eye of the Beholder: the Effects of Identity and Negative Perceptions on Ratings of Transparency via Surveys	Park, Blenkinsopp	2016	International Review of Administrative Sciences	J. article	South Korea
The Effects of the Political Environment on Transparency: Evidence from Spanish Local Governments	Balaguer-Coll, Brun-Martos	2019	Policy Studies	J. article	Spain
Determinants of Voluntary Online Local Budget Transparency: a Case Study from Croatia	Ott, MaÅkijb, Bronjib, Stanjib	2019	Ekonomski pregled: mjesečnik Hrvatskog društva ekonomista Zagreb	J. article	Croatia
Transparency in Spanish Municipalities: Determinants of Information Disclosure	Tejedo-Romero, Esteves Araujo	2018	Convergencia	J. article	Spain
Internet as a Tool for Local Government Communication with the Local Community – Selected Aspects	Smalec	2019	Hradec Economic Days	Proceedings paper	Poland
Analyzing the Transparency Traditional Variables within the Spanish Municipalities	Navarro Heras, Mora Agudo, Delgado Jalon	2016	Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences	J. article	Spain
Urban Government Performance in the Eyes of Chinese Urban Residents	Zhong, Chen, Feng, Wang	2015	Asian Journal of Social Science	J. article	China
Determinants of Web Site Information by Spanish city Councils	Gandi'a	2007	Online Information Review	J. article	Spain
What Drives Transparency of Municipal Government: Push or Pull? Explaining the Degree of Internet Transparency of air Quality Information in the Netherlands	Grimmelikhuisen	2008	EGPA conference	Conference paper	Netherlands
Enhancing Public Value of Local Public Services Through Electronic Interaction	A.A.Golubeva, E.V.Gilenko, V.B.Dzhedzheya	2019	Russian Management Journal	J. article	Russia
Linking Transparency, Knowledge and Citizen Trust in Government: an Experiment	Grimmelikhuisen	2012	International Review of Administrative Sciences	J. article	Netherlands
Public Trust in Government in Japan and South Korea: Does the Rise of Critical Citizens Matter?	Akira Nakamura, Editor, Soonhee Kim	2010	International Research Innovations	J. article	Japan and South Korea
Linking Transparency to Trust in Government and Voice	Porumbescu	2017	American Review of Public Administration	J. article	South Korea
Can Transparency Foster More Understanding and Compliant Citizens?	Porumbescu, Lindeman, Ceka, Cucciniello	2017	Public Administration Review	J. article	USA
Determinants of Public Trust in Government: Empirical Evidence from Urban China	Zhao, Hu	2017	International Review of Administrative Sciences	J. article	China
Citizen-Government Interaction and the Internet: Expectations and Accomplishments in Contact, Quality, and Trust	McNeal, Hale, Dottenweich	2008	Journal of Information Technology & Politics	J. article	USA