We use a systematic literature review to examine how the micro, meso, and macro perspectives inform the study of government transparency. This method is appropriate as our intention is to provide readers with a survey of published transparency research. The systematic literature review we conduct in this study expands upon an earlier systematic literature review and database on transparency research (Cucciniello, Porumbescu, and Grimmelikhuijsen 2017) (CPG hereafter). Specifically, whereas the database used by CPG ranged from 2000 to 2015, which update this database to include an additional 4 years of published research, such that the database used in this manuscript ranges from 2000 to 2019. Second, we use an alternative approach to coding the published articles, given our intention of assessing research according to micro, meso, and macro perspectives. Below, we provide additional information on how this database was created. Given that the database we use is an extension of CPG’s, our discussion of how the database was constructed models theirs.

ISI Web of Knowledge and Scopus were used to identify eligible articles. Terms that were used included: “transparency and government,” “public sector transparency,” “administrative transparency,” and “transparent government.” In addition, 13 journals that were identified with assistance of transparency experts were manually searched. In CPG’s article 3,678 articles were retrieved. For this book, our search focused on the years 2016 to 2019. Following the same process for these years, our search turned back 398 articles.

Following this, records were evaluated according to a list of eligibility criteria – articles that fell outside of the eligibility criteria were excluded from the database. Eligibility criteria include: topic (one of the search terms mentioned in the title or abstract); study design (included both theoretical and empirical studies); publication year (studies published between 1990 and 2019); language (English); and publication status (publications in international peer reviewed journal outlets).

Using these eligibility criteria, we identify studies for inclusion in the database following the PRISMA screening process. Evaluating titles, abstracts and full texts, 177 journal articles remained in the original database (from 3,678) and 55 remained from the 398 articles published between 2016 and 2019. This left us with a database that contains 232 published journal articles spanning 1995 to 2019.

Given that the goals of this manuscript differ from those of CPG, we adopted a different coding scheme for all 232 articles. The coding schema focused on the following categories:

* The perspective the article dealt with (micro, meso, macro or some combination of multiple perspectives);
* whether transparency was assessed as a dependent or independent variable, how transparency was measured;
* what the antecedents or outcomes of transparency were. Each coauthor took primary responsibility for one perspective.

Coding results were discussed at length during regular Skype calls to ensure that there was consistency in how the journal articles were coded and agreement in terms of how articles related to a particular perspective.