

Housing in the News, 2019-2026: Attention, Geography and Tone of Global Housing Coverage, and How It Compares with Research and Invention

Fliar BI · Prism Research Layer · Working paper, October 2026 · Dataset and code: github.com/fliarbi/prism-news-api · Licence CC BY-NC 4.0

Abstract

We measure how housing was covered in a global news index from January 2019 to July 2026, using 248,239 de-duplicated housing articles, and set that coverage beside 16,408 research papers and 8,075 patent families on housing. Six results stand out:

1. **Attention.** Housing took 18.32 of every 10,000 news articles in 2019, fell 24.6% to 13.82 in 2020, recovered to 18.58 in 2024 and stood at 15.86 in 2025. Raw counts doubled, but the index grew faster.
2. **Vocabulary.** "Affordable housing" is the most common phrase, in 16.98% of housing articles. Zoning and land use is the most housing-specific of the larger themes.
3. **Geography.** The United States holds 48.31% of located housing news, exactly its weight in the index (lift 1.0). Australia (3.17), New Zealand (2.5), Ireland (2.32) and Kenya (2.25) are the most over-represented countries, and Oceania leads by continent (3.15). Within India, Maharashtra (1.7) leads among the large states; within the United States, Rhode Island (3.18), Arizona (2.09) and Oregon (2.08).
4. **Shifting attention.** From 2023 to 2025, housing's share of Spain's news rose 3.65 times, while Ireland's fell to 0.31 times its 2023 level and those of Indonesia and China to 0.43 times.
5. **Tone and urgency.** 43.6% of housing articles are negative in tone (all news: 33.6%), and 59.8% are rated critical priority (all news: 42.6%). Housing news in China is far more negative than Chinese news overall (68.7% against 27.2%); in India it is less negative (23.1% against 41.2%).
6. **Research and invention.** Housing-economics papers rose from 0.96 per 10,000 papers in 2000 to 2.16 in 2015 and have stayed near that level since (2.42 in 2025). Patent families on prefabricated, modular and residential buildings peaked in 2021 at 4.35 times their 2015 level, and 74.9% were filed in China.

Findings stated for citation

- **F1.** Housing took a 24.6% smaller share of news in 2020 than in 2019 (13.82 vs 18.32 per 10,000 articles); April and May 2020 were the lowest months.
- **F2.** "Affordable housing" appeared in 16.98% of housing articles, more than any other phrase.
- **F3.** The United States held 48.31% of located housing news (lift 1.0); India 11.49% (0.87); the United Kingdom 10.27% (1.76).
- **F4.** Australia (3.17), New Zealand (2.5), Ireland (2.32) and Kenya (2.25) were the most over-represented countries.

- **F5.** Oceania (3.15) was the most over-represented continent; South America (0.29) and Asia (0.71) the least.
- **F6.** 43.6% of housing articles were negative in tone, 1.3 times the all-news share.
- **F7.** 59.8% of housing articles were rated critical priority, 1.4 times the all-news share.
- **F8.** Zoning and land use appeared in 1.44% of themed housing articles, 353.47 times its all-news rate.
- **F9.** The US Department of Housing and Urban Development was named in 5,252 articles (3.66%).
- **F10.** Housing-economics papers rose from 0.96 to 2.16 per 10,000 papers between 2000 and 2015, then held between 1.89 and 2.47 to 2025.
- **F11.** 74.9% of patent families on prefabricated and modular housing (2015–2024) were filed in China.
- **F12.** Within India, Maharashtra held 27.06% of located housing news (lift 1.7); Kerala (0.38) and Jammu and Kashmir (0.38) had the lowest lifts.
- **F13.** Within the United States, Rhode Island (3.18), Arizona (2.09), Oregon (2.08), New Hampshire (2.05) and Hawaii (2.01) had the most over-represented housing coverage; New Jersey (0.18) the least.
- **F14.** Housing's share of Spain's news rose 3.65 times from 2023 to 2025; Ireland's fell to 0.31 times.
- **F15.** Housing news in China was 68.7% negative, against 27.2% for Chinese news overall.

1. Introduction

Housing is one of the largest items in household budgets and one of the most contested subjects of local and national politics. Prices, rents, supply, social housing and mortgage finance are reported every day. News coverage is also the record through which most people learn whether their city has a housing problem. Yet coverage is rarely measured as data in its own right. Price indices record markets. Bibliometric studies record research. Few sources record attention, meaning how much of the news housing takes and when, where and in what tone.

This paper and its dataset do that. They combine three records for one topic: a global news index, research papers and patents. Each comparison uses a denominator, so that growth in the index or in publishing is not mistaken for growth in interest. The companion dataset publishes an article-level sample (62,300 rows) and full coverage tables, so every figure here can be re-derived. The [Prism News API](#) serves the full history.

2. Data and methods

News. The Prism news index holds articles from outlets worldwide; non-English articles are indexed in English translation. Each article carries its opening text (the first few sentences), a primary location, a graded tone label, an editorial priority rating (1–9), themes, keywords and named organisations. We count unique article identifiers; repeated rows for the same article are removed. When this release was built, 92.88% of the index was readable, so all counts are lower bounds.

Matching. The word *housing* alone is too broad. It also names enclosures of machines, the official residences of politicians and place names. An article is therefore about housing when

its opening text contains one of 33 reviewed phrases as whole words. They cover markets and prices (*housing market, house prices, home prices, housing affordability*), supply (*housing shortage, housing supply, housing starts, housebuilding, housing units, housing development*), social provision (*affordable housing, social housing, public housing, council housing, housing scheme*), policy and institutions (*housing policy, rent control, ministry of housing, department of housing, housing authority, housing minister*) and finance (*housing finance, first-time buyers*). Three families of matches are excluded:

- stock-market roundups and earnings notes that list housing-finance companies;
- place names, such as housing-development and housing-board colonies in India and the Defence Housing Authority districts in Pakistan;
- templated archive notices.

These removed 2,924 of 251,163 raw matches (1.16%). One reviewer read 40 randomly drawn matched openings. 33 were about housing (precision 82.5%), and in 27 (67.5%) housing was the main subject. The most common false match (3 of the 7) named a housing ministry or department in an unrelated story, such as a heritage or wildlife notice.

Measures. Coverage over time is expressed per 10,000 articles in the index that month or year, because the index grew from 11,807,177 articles in 2019 to 26,990,006 in 2025. Seasonality uses each year's within-year month shares, averaged over the complete years 2019–2025. Geography, tone, priority and themes use January 2023 – July 2026. Geography is expressed as lift: a country's share of housing articles divided by its share of all located articles. Place tags derived from ordinary words (such as "Congress", "Earth", "Winter", "Cloud", "Mobile" or "Hurricane"; 714 words in all) were treated as unlocated in every location field (15.3% of city-tagged articles).

Research and patents. Research papers are de-duplicated articles and reviews (2000–2025) with a housing-economics phrase in the title, such as *housing market, house prices, affordable housing, social housing, housing policy, homeownership* or *rent control*. Repository deposits and the animal-husbandry sense of housing are excluded. Patent families (2006–2024) match *prefabricated house, modular house, prefabricated* or *modular building, residential building* or *dwelling* in the title, are counted once per filing office, and exclude animal and catheter senses.

3. Results

3.1 How much and when

The index holds 248,239 housing articles from January 2019 to July 2026. Raw counts rose from 21,625 in 2019 to 42,809 in 2025 (1.98 times), but the share of all news did not (Table 1). It was 18.32 per 10,000 in 2019, fell to 13.82 in 2020, recovered to 18.58 in 2024 and stood at 15.86 in 2025, 13.4% below 2019. The lowest months were April and May 2020, at 11.15 and 11.13 per 10,000, the second and third months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest share in a complete year was September 2019, at 24.03 per 10,000 (Figure 1). June 2026 shows 31.98, but the index held only 457,172 articles that month, so the value is not compared.

Year	Housing articles	All articles in index	Per 10,000
2019	21,625	11,807,177	18.32
2020	22,425	16,230,014	13.82
2021	27,804	17,281,220	16.09
2022	33,052	19,115,515	17.29
2023	35,041	20,484,506	17.11
2024	43,314	23,311,896	18.58
2025	42,809	26,990,006	15.86

Table 1. Housing articles per year and as a share of the index. 2026 (January-July) is partial and omitted.

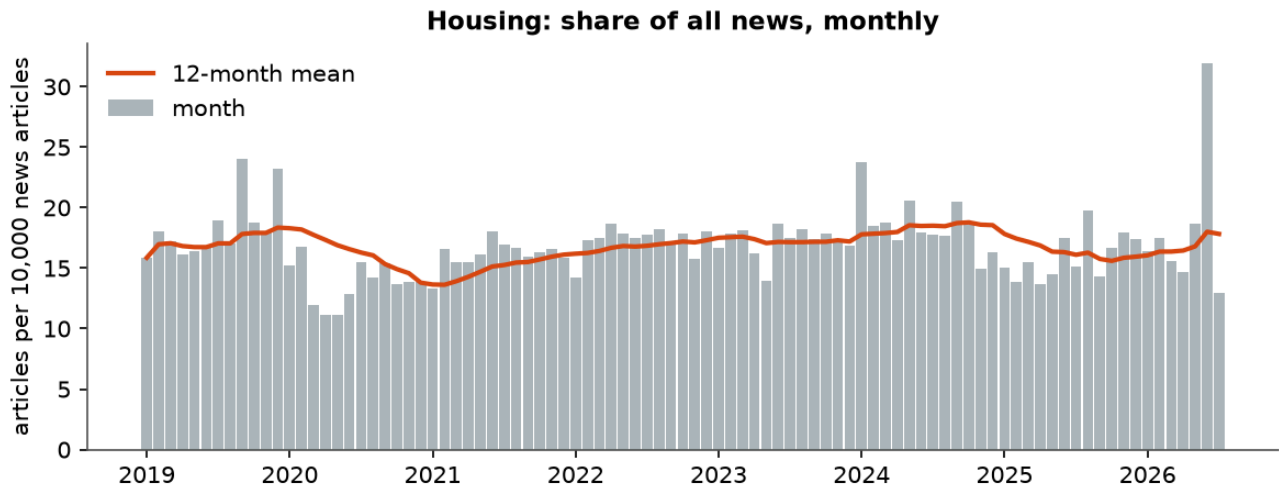


Figure 1. Housing coverage as articles per 10,000 news articles, monthly, January 2019 – July 2026. Bars are months; the line is the 12-month mean. The June 2026 bar rests on a thin month of the index.

Housing coverage is barely seasonal (Figure 2). September is the busiest month (9.31% of a year's articles) and April the quietest (7.47%), against 8.33% for an even spread. July, August and September together hold 26.74%, close to the 25% an even spread would give. Housing is reported through the year rather than in a season.

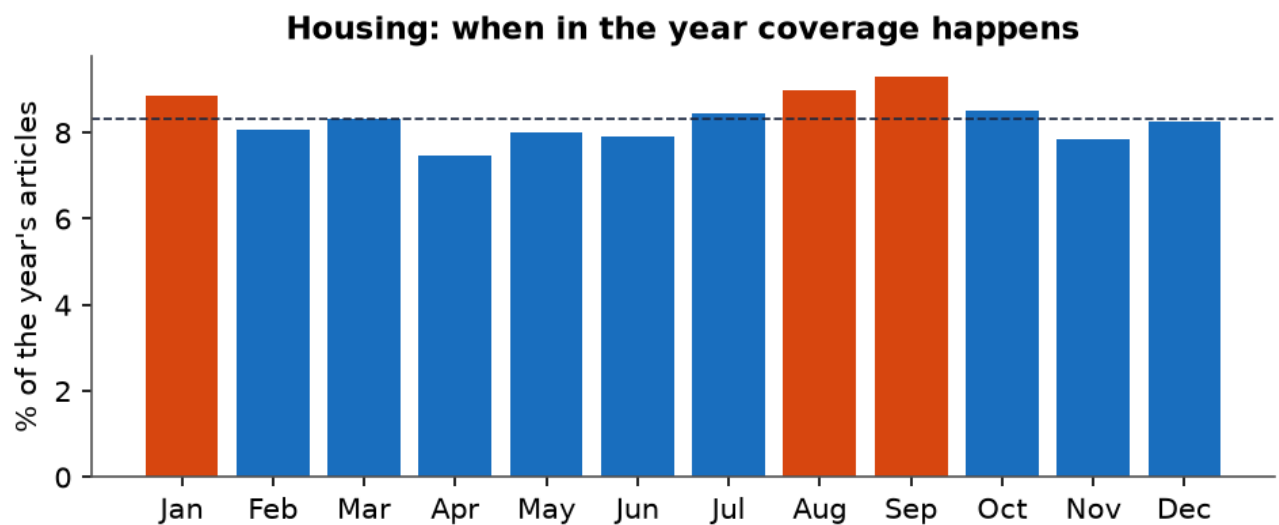


Figure 2. Share of each year's housing articles published in each month, averaged over 2019–2025. Dashed line = an even spread.

3.2 Where

Between January 2023 and July 2026, 80,060 housing articles carried a primary location. The United States holds nearly half of them (48.31%), with a lift of exactly 1.0: housing takes the same share of American news as of news overall. India is second by count (11.49%) but under-represented (lift 0.87). The United Kingdom (10.27%, lift 1.76), Australia (6.78%, 3.17), Canada (4.41%, 2.05), Ireland (1.68%, 2.32) and New Zealand (1.62%, 2.5) are over-represented. China (0.69), France (0.35), Germany (0.43) and most of continental Europe are under-represented (Table 2, Figure 3).

Country	Located housing articles	Share %	Lift vs all news
United States	38,680	48.31	1.0
India	9,201	11.49	0.87
United Kingdom	8,220	10.27	1.76
Australia	5,431	6.78	3.17
Canada	3,530	4.41	2.05
China	1,461	1.82	0.69
Ireland	1,342	1.68	2.32
New Zealand	1,294	1.62	2.5
Nigeria	1,088	1.36	0.99
Singapore	873	1.09	1.22
Spain	590	0.74	0.75
France	561	0.7	0.35
Ghana	422	0.53	1.09
Germany	401	0.5	0.43
Kenya	396	0.49	2.25

Table 2. Leading countries in located housing news, January 2023 – July 2026, with lift against all located news. Iceland (451 articles, lift 4.78) is left out: most of its sampled articles are US regional housing reports tagged with regions such as South and West.

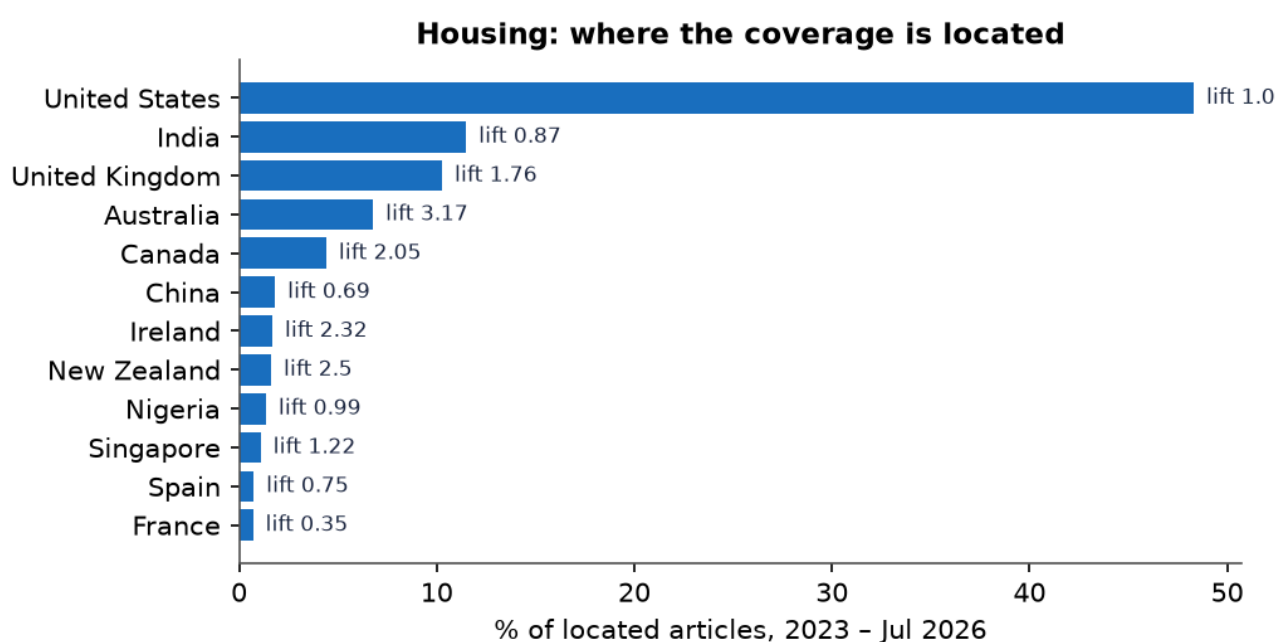


Figure 3. Leading countries by share of located housing articles, 2023 – Jul 2026, labelled with lift against all located news.

3.3 Geo intelligence: continents, states and shifting attention

The world map (Figure 4) shows the pattern at a glance. Housing is over-represented in the news of the English-speaking countries outside the United States (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom), and in Oman (3.05), Jamaica (2.77) and Kenya (2.25). Iceland's lift of 4.78 is not stated as a finding: most of its sampled articles are US regional housing reports tagged with regions such as South and West. Housing is under-represented in Russia (0.18), Brazil (0.25), Israel (0.26), Japan (0.28), Italy (0.28), France (0.35) and most of Asia. By continent, Oceania (3.15) is the only region far above its weight. North America (1.09) and Europe (0.94) are close to it, while Africa (0.84), Asia (0.71) and South America (0.29) are below (Figure 7, left).

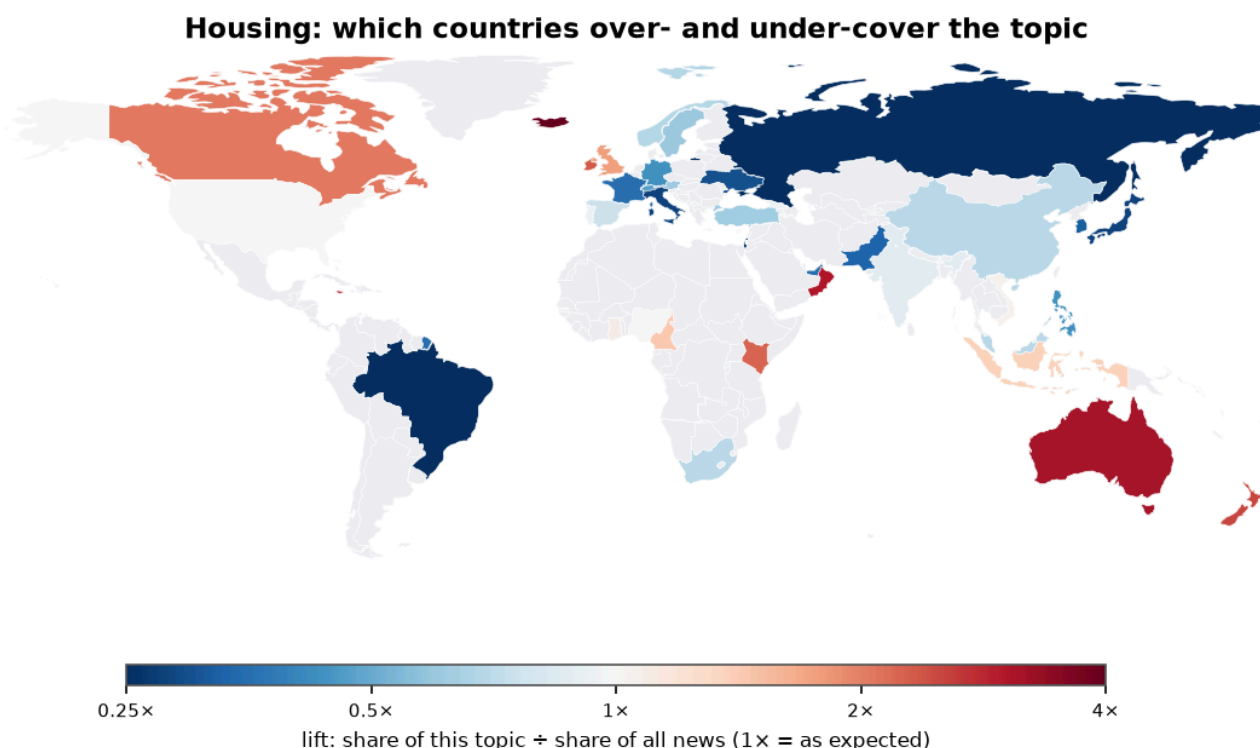


Figure 4. Lift of each country's share of located housing articles, January 2023 – July 2026 (red = over-represented, blue = under-represented, grey = fewer than 100 articles). India is drawn with its official outline. Iceland's shading rests on mis-tagged US regional reports (§3.3).

Within countries, the picture is sharper (Table 3). In India, 7,329 housing articles carried a state. Maharashtra holds 27.06% of them, 1.7 times its share of Indian news. Karnataka (1.27), Haryana (1.25), Uttar Pradesh (1.2), Chhattisgarh (1.17) and Telangana (1.12) are also above their weight; Chandigarh (2.64) has the highest lift but only 60 articles. Kerala (0.38), Jammu and Kashmir (0.38), Bihar (0.49) and Rajasthan (0.5) are well below (Figure 5). In the United States, 34,006 articles carried a state. Rhode Island (3.18), Arizona (2.09), Oregon (2.08), New Hampshire (2.05) and Hawaii (2.01) lead by lift, followed by Maine (1.9), Massachusetts (1.86) and California (1.82); California also holds the largest raw share (18.17%). Arizona's place depends on the ordinary-word rule: words such as Mesa, Chandler and Surprise had tagged unrelated news as Arizona, which inflated its baseline. New Jersey (0.18), South Dakota (0.41) and Pennsylvania (0.44) are far below their weight in American news (Figure 6).

India: state	Articles	Lift	United States: state	Articles	Lift
Chandigarh	60	2.64	Rhode Island	167	3.18
Maharashtra	1,983	1.7	Arizona	427	2.09
Karnataka	518	1.27	Oregon	707	2.08
Haryana	235	1.25	New Hampshire	199	2.05
Uttar Pradesh	1,113	1.2	Hawaii	206	2.01
Chhattisgarh	116	1.17	Maine	278	1.9
Telangana	284	1.12	Massachusetts	1,500	1.86
<i>lowest: Jammu and Kashmir</i>	66	0.38	<i>lowest: South Dakota</i>	50	0.41
<i>lowest: Kerala</i>	68	0.38	<i>lowest: New Jersey</i>	1,134	0.18

Table 3. States with the most and least over-represented housing coverage, January 2023 – July 2026 (states with at least 50 articles). Lift = the state's share of the country's located housing articles ÷ its share of all located news from that country.

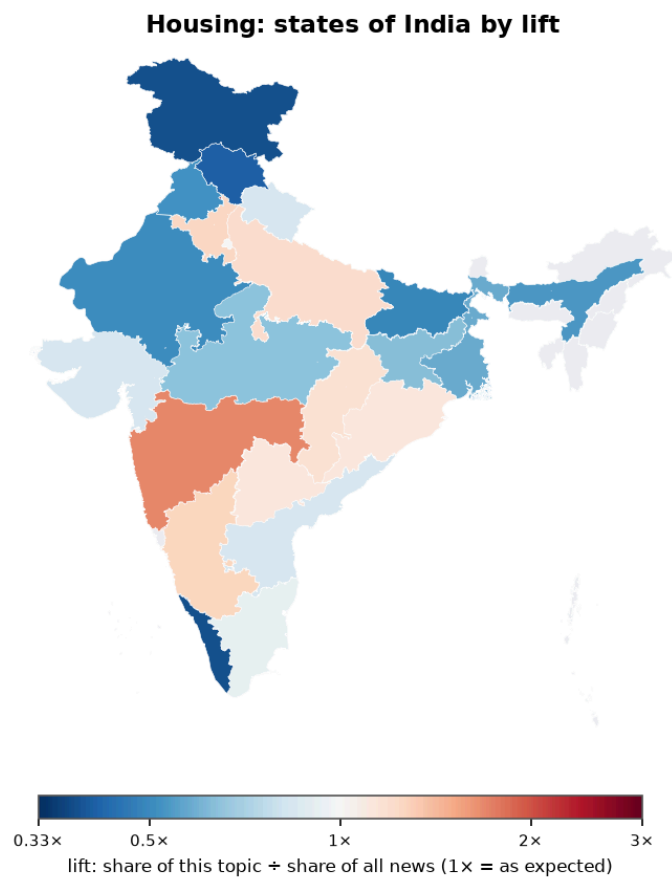


Figure 5. Lift of each Indian state's share of located housing articles against its share of all located Indian news, January 2023 – July 2026. Official outline; Ladakh is drawn within Jammu and Kashmir in the boundary file used.

Housing: states of United States by lift

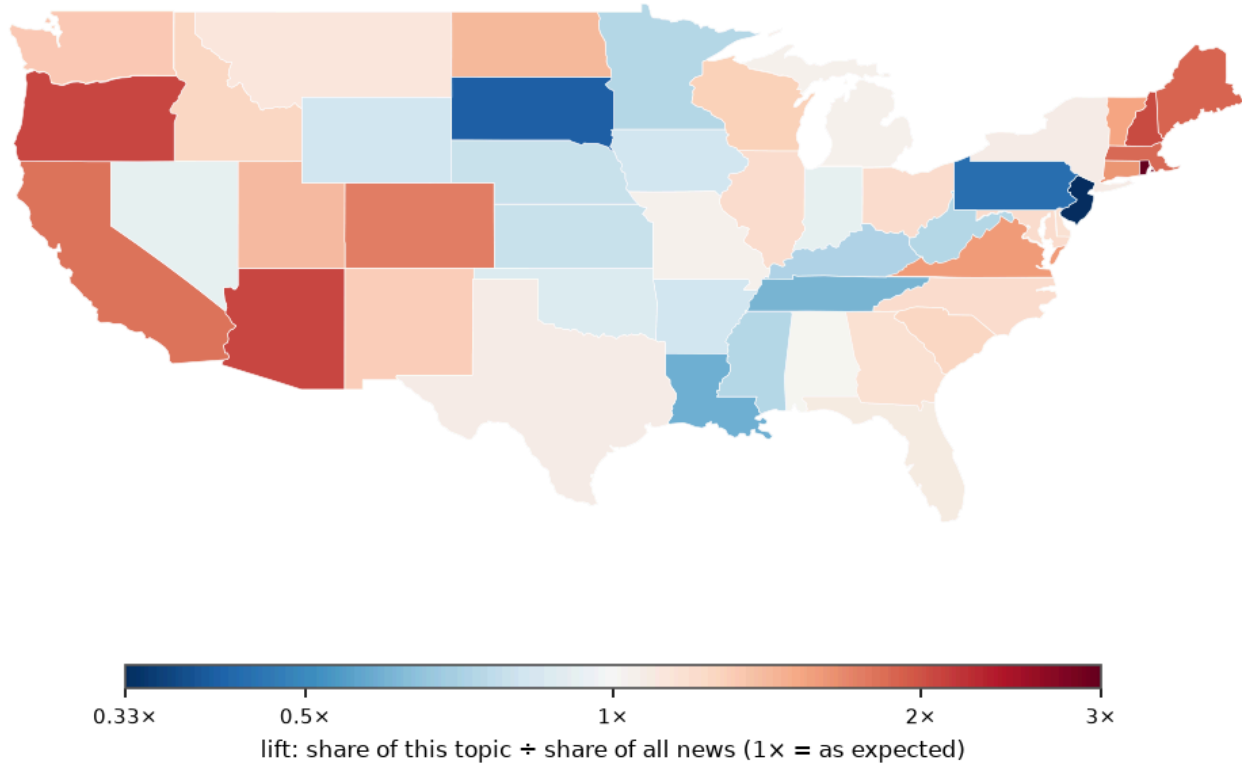


Figure 6. Lift of each US state's share of located housing articles against its share of all located US news, January 2023 – July 2026.

Attention also moves between countries from year to year (Figure 7, right). Measured as housing articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, Spain rose from 6.92 in 2023 to 25.23 in 2025 (3.65 times), South Africa 2.25 times, Scotland from 29.2 to 46.14 and Kenya 1.53 times. Ireland fell from 78.0 to 23.92 (0.31 times), Indonesia from 38.41 to 16.48 and China to 0.43 times, France and Singapore to 0.47 times, and Ghana from 23.94 to 13.14. Among the five countries with the most articles, Australia fell to 0.7 times, Canada to 0.72 times and the United Kingdom to 0.9 times, while the United States (0.98) and India (0.99) held steady. Tone differs by country even after allowing for each country's own news. Housing news located in China is 68.7% negative, against 27.2% for Chinese news overall, and Ireland's is 65.5% against 34.0%. India shows the widest gap the other way among the leading countries: its housing news is less negative (23.1%) than Indian news overall (41.2%), as is housing news in Nigeria (32.9% against 44.4%).

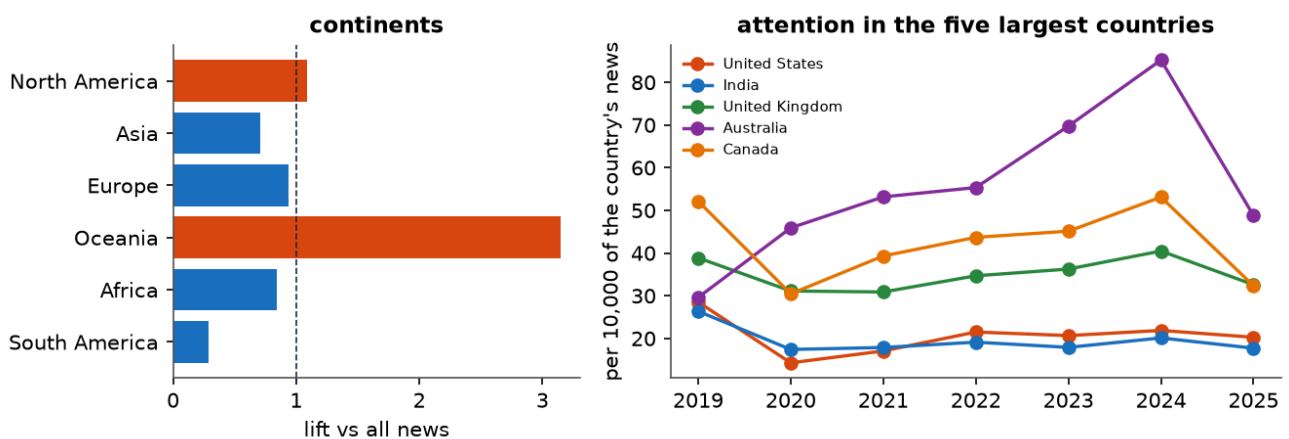


Figure 7. Left: lift by continent, January 2023 – July 2026. Right: housing articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, 2019–2025, for the five countries with the most articles.

3.4 Tone, urgency and themes

Housing coverage is more negative and more urgent than news in general (Figure 8). Among articles with a tone label, 43.6% are negative, against 33.6% across the index (1.3 times). It is also often positive (54.6%, close to the 56.8% of all news): housing news has few neutral articles (1.8%, against 9.5%). Editorial priority puts 59.8% of housing articles at critical level (7 or higher), against 42.6% of all news (1.4 times).

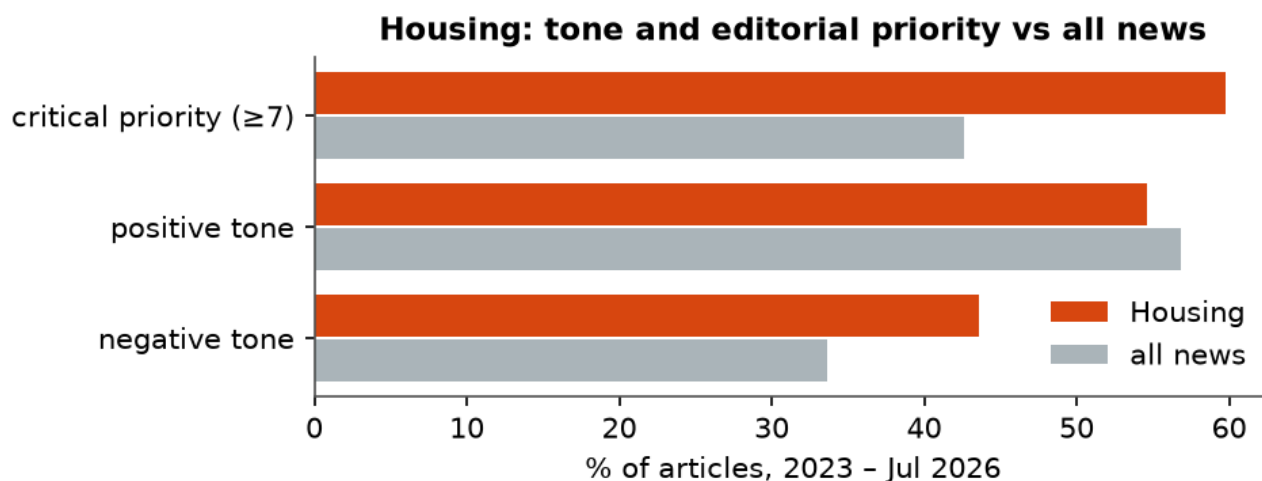


Figure 8. Tone and the share rated critical priority, housing articles vs all news, 2023 – Jul 2026.

Themes show what housing stories are about (Table 4). Housing-market trends (8.29% of themed articles) and affordable-housing initiatives (7.02%) are the most common. Zoning and land-use regulation is the most specific to the topic among the larger themes, at 353.47 times its rate in all news. Mortgage and financing themes are frequent too, which reflects how much housing news is written for buyers.

Theme	Articles	Share %	Lift
economy news: housing market trends	4,960	8.29	150.17
affordable housing initiatives	4,199	7.02	339.49
government urban and regional planning	3,603	6.02	28.42
real estate market forecasting tools	3,142	5.25	216.72
residential housing development projects	2,945	4.92	146.0
mortgage refinancing guidelines	2,726	4.56	82.46
mortgage and financing solutions for real estate	2,015	3.37	245.33
zoning regulations & land use	862	1.44	353.47

Table 4. Leading themes in housing coverage, with lift against all themed news, January 2023 – July 2026.

The organisations named most often are housing and finance agencies: the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (5,252 articles, 3.66% of the topic), the Federal Reserve (3,466), Freddie Mac (2,972), the National Association of Realtors (2,881) and Fannie Mae (1,796). Property portals also rank high, which reflects how market data enter the news.

3.5 Research attention and invention

Papers with a housing phrase in the title rose from 0.96 per 10,000 papers in 2000 to 2.16 in 2015. Since then the share has stayed between 1.89 and 2.47 per 10,000, ending at 2.42 in 2025 (1.12 times the 2015 share); most of the long-run rise came before 2015. Between 2015 and 2025, 16,408 such papers were published. The most-cited include work on the

geographic limits of housing supply [1], on house-price spillovers into the wider economy [3, 4] and on the financialisation of homeownership and rental housing [5, 7].

News attention does not track research attention (Figure 9). Research share moved within a narrow band, while news share fell in 2020 and has moved with market and policy cycles since.

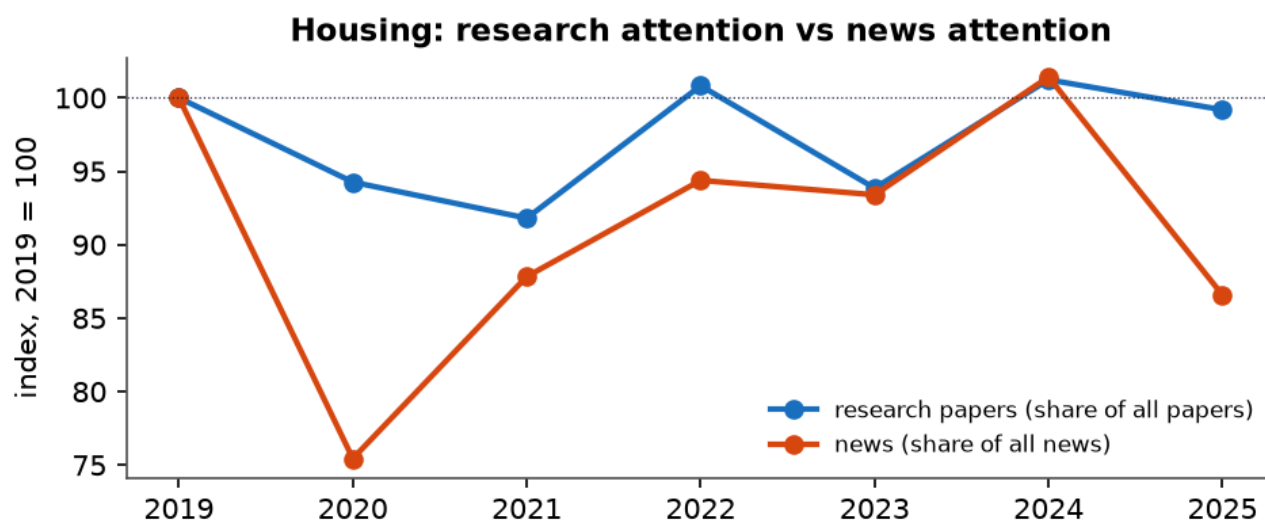


Figure 9. Research papers with a housing phrase in the title (share of all papers) and housing news (share of all news), each indexed to 2019 = 100.

Patenting on building systems for housing rose fastest. 342 patent families on prefabricated, modular and residential buildings were published in 2015, rising to a peak of 1,488 in 2021 (4.35 times) before falling to 812 in 2024. China's office holds 74.9% of families from 2015 to 2024, followed by the United States (5.3%) and South Korea (3.5%) (Figure 10). The leading technology class is general building construction (E04B, 1,100 families).

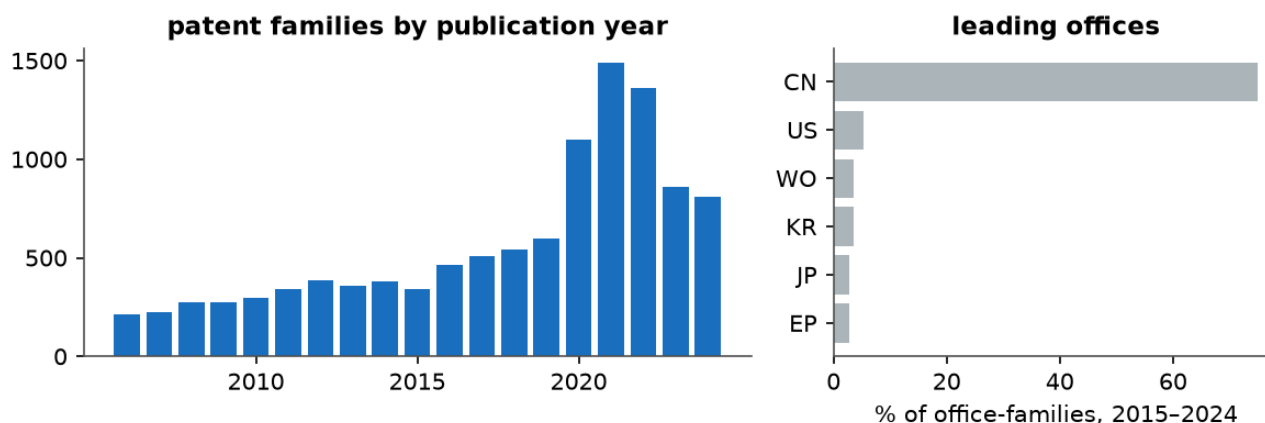


Figure 10. Patent families on prefabricated, modular and residential buildings by publication year (left) and the leading filing offices, 2015-2024 (right).

4. Discussion

Three points matter for anyone who uses news as a record of housing. First, coverage measures attention. The 2020 trough fell in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic; it records a smaller share of attention, not a pause in housing problems. Second, raw shares mislead. The United States supplies nearly half of located housing news, but only in proportion to its weight in the index. Measured by lift, housing is most over-represented in smaller English-speaking countries (Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Canada). Third,

attention moves quickly between countries. Spain's more than tripled in two years while Ireland's fell back, so a single year's map is a snapshot.

Research, invention and news run on different clocks. Research share grows slowly. Patent filings on prefabricated and modular housing rose and fell within six years and are concentrated in one office. News follows market data, budgets and planning decisions. The dataset lets researchers link the three, for example to test whether surges of housing coverage in a country precede policy change.

5. Limitations

- **Index availability.** 92.88% of the index was readable at build time, so counts are lower bounds. Shares and lifts are less affected, because the missing part is spread across topics.
- **Coverage after May 2026.** The index thins after May 2026, so 2026 (January-July) is partial and is excluded from year comparisons.
- **Matching.** Matching uses phrases in the article opening. Articles that use only the bare word *housing*, or mention housing only later, are missed, and 7 of the 40 checked matches were not about housing.
- **Machine labels.** Location, tone, priority and themes are machine-labelled. The city field is noisy and is not analysed.
- **Place tags.** Place tags derived from ordinary words were treated as unlocated in every location field (15.3% of city-tagged articles). This removes false places but also drops a few real ones that share a name with a common word, so state lifts for places such as Arizona and Rhode Island depend on the rule.
- **Mis-tagged countries.** Articles tagged as Iceland are mostly US regional housing reports (regions such as South and West), so Iceland's lift of 4.78 and its 2023-2025 rise are not reported as findings.
- **Outlet mix.** The index over-represents English-language outlets. This shapes the geography, and partly explains the high lifts of English-speaking countries.
- **Research and patent counts.** These match titles only. Office shares reflect filing practice; utility models are numerous in China.

Data availability

The dataset (article sample, monthly and country tables, research and patent tables, all metrics) is released under CC BY-NC 4.0 with this paper. The sample holds 62,300 of 248,128 matched articles to 31 July 2026. Full article text, headlines, publishers, later articles and other topics are served by the Prism News API: <https://github.com/fliarbi/prism-news-api> (base URL <https://radar-api.fliarbi.com/news>). A worked query: `prism-news trends "affordable housing" --since 2019-01-01 --until 2026-07-31 --granularity monthly`.

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