

Poverty in the News, 2019-2026: Attention, Geography and Tone of Global Poverty 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 poverty was covered in a global news index from January 2019 to July 2026, using 96,194 de-duplicated poverty articles, and set that coverage beside 37,823 research papers (2015-2025) and 406 patent families (2015-2024) with poverty in the title. Six results stand out:

1. **Falling attention.** Poverty's share of news fell from 8.41 articles per 10,000 in 2019 to 5.19 in 2025, a decline of 38.3%. Each complete year from 2023 onward was lower than the one before.
2. **Little seasonality.** October holds the largest share of a year's poverty coverage (9.4%) and February the smallest (7.6%), close to the 8.33% of an even spread. The peak month was October 2019, at 11.14 articles per 10,000.
3. **Geography.** Africa's share of located poverty news is 6.1 times its share of all news. North America, the largest source of located poverty articles (27.32%), is under-represented at 0.56. Uganda (9.56), Nigeria (9.4), Tanzania (6.39) and Argentina (5.29) are the most over-represented countries. Within India, Kerala (3.24), Andhra Pradesh (2.67) and Bihar (1.82) lead.
4. **Shifting attention.** Between 2023 and 2025, poverty's share of China's own news fell 66.5%, the steepest fall among the ten countries with the most located poverty articles. India's share was unchanged and the United Kingdom's rose slightly.
5. **Tone and urgency.** 54% of poverty articles are negative in tone (all news: 33.6%), and 76.2% are rated critical priority (all news: 42.6%).
6. **Research and invention.** Poverty papers held a steady share of the literature, 5.52 per 10,000 papers in 2015 and 5.83 in 2025. Patent families are few, and 97.9% of filing-office records are Chinese.

Findings stated for citation

- **F1.** Poverty's share of news fell 38.3% from 2019 (8.41 per 10,000) to 2025 (5.19 per 10,000).
- **F2.** October carried 9.4% of a typical year's poverty articles and February 7.6%, against 8.33% for an even spread.
- **F3.** October 2019 was the peak month for poverty news, at 11.14 articles per 10,000.
- **F4.** Africa's share of located poverty news was 6.1 times its share of all news; North America's was 0.56 times.
- **F5.** Uganda (9.56), Nigeria (9.4), Tanzania (6.39) and Argentina (5.29) were the most over-represented countries; the United States was at 0.54.

- **F6.** Nigeria held 12.88% of located poverty news; poverty took 67.61 of every 10,000 Nigerian articles in 2024.
- **F7.** 54% of poverty articles were negative in tone (1.61 times all news), and 76.2% were rated critical priority (1.79 times).
- **F8.** Intergenerational poverty and systemic barriers was the fifth most frequent theme, in 4.09% of themed poverty articles, and almost never appeared outside poverty coverage.
- **F9.** Poverty papers held a nearly constant share of all papers, 1.06 times as high in 2025 as in 2015.
- **F10.** 368 of 406 poverty patent families (2015–2024) were filed in China, 97.9% of office records.
- **F11.** Within India, Kerala (3.24), Andhra Pradesh (2.67) and Bihar (1.82) had the most over-represented poverty coverage.
- **F12.** Poverty's share of China's news fell 66.5% from 2023 to 2025, the steepest fall among the ten leading countries.
- **F13.** Against each country's own news, poverty coverage was most negative in Argentina, Switzerland and Canada, and less negative in Ghana.

1. Introduction

Poverty is one of the most studied subjects in economics and social policy. Governments and international bodies measure it through household surveys and poverty lines. News coverage is a different record. It shows how much public attention poverty receives, in which places, and in what tone. That attention is rarely measured as data in its own right.

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 (24,015 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. An article is about poverty when its opening text contains *poverty* as a whole word. Three families of matches are excluded:

- the name of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil-rights organisation;
- place and title names, such as Poverty Point, Poverty Bay and Poverty Row;
- figurative uses ("poverty of ambition", "moral poverty", "spiritual poverty").

Together these removed 2,082 of 98,276 raw matches (2.12%). Other candidate terms were tested and dropped. *Destitution* often translates the Spanish and French word for removal from office, and *impoverished* adds little beyond *poverty*. One reviewer read 40 randomly drawn matched openings, and a second reviewer re-judged 15 of them. In 34, poverty in its

economic sense was a substantive part of the opening (precision 85%), and in 21 (52.5%) poverty, its measurement or anti-poverty policy was the main subject. The six misses were biographies or fiction where poverty was an incidental detail, general pieces that named poverty in passing (one of them a feature on exhibitions), and one academic network description.

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 place's share of poverty articles divided by its share of all located articles. Place tags derived from ordinary words (714 words, such as "Congress", "Earth", "Winter", "Cloud", "Mobile" and "Hurricane") were treated as unlocated in every location field, which removed 15.3% of city-tagged articles.

Research and patents. Research papers are de-duplicated articles and reviews (2000–2025) with poverty in the title. Repository deposits and the place and organisation names above are excluded. Patent families (2005–2024) use the same title rule, with *poverty alleviation* as an added term, and are counted once per filing office.

3. Results

3.1 How much and when

The index holds 96,194 poverty articles from January 2019 to July 2026. Raw counts rose from 9,928 in 2019 to 15,080 in 2024, but the share of all news fell: 8.41 per 10,000 in 2019, 6.91 in 2023 and 5.19 in 2025 (Table 1). The 2025 share is 38.3% below 2019 and the lowest of the period. The highest monthly share was October 2019, at 11.14 per 10,000, the month in which the economics Nobel prize was announced for work on alleviating global poverty (Figure 1). The study does not test a link between the two. April 2019 (9.31) and October 2022 (8.85) follow.

Year	Poverty articles	All articles in index	Per 10,000
2019	9,928	11,807,177	8.41
2020	11,622	16,230,014	7.16
2021	12,995	17,281,220	7.52
2022	13,297	19,115,515	6.96
2023	14,161	20,484,506	6.91
2024	15,080	23,311,896	6.47
2025	14,005	26,990,006	5.19

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

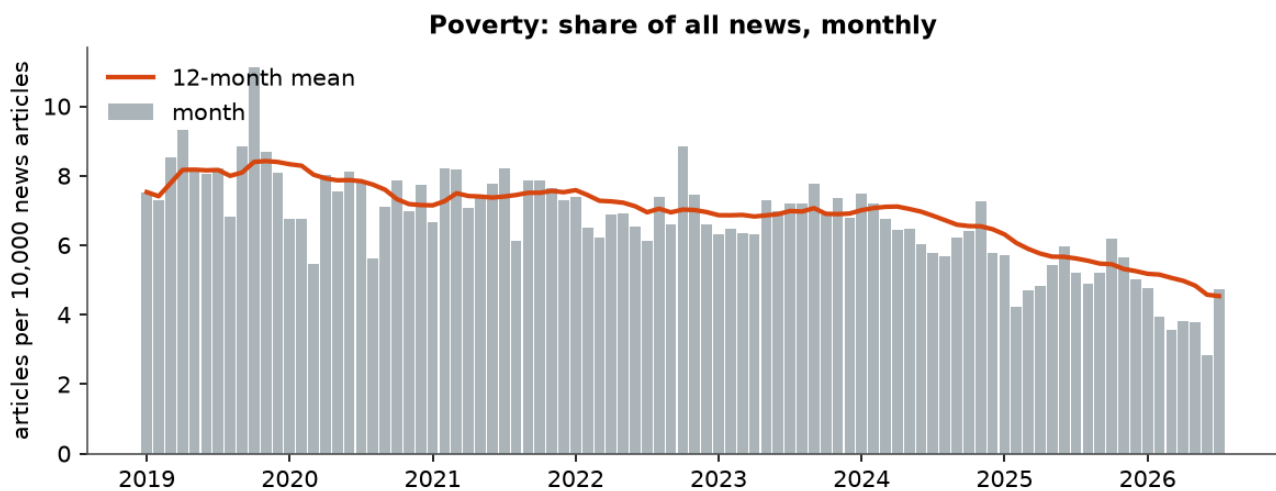


Figure 1. Poverty coverage as articles per 10,000 news articles, monthly, January 2019 – July 2026. Bars are months; the line is the 12-month mean.

Coverage is close to even across the year (Figure 2). October (9.4%) and January (9.07%) are the largest months, and February (7.6%) the smallest. The October share is 1.24 times the February share. Poverty is a standing issue rather than a seasonal event. October also contains the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October, but this study does not test a link.

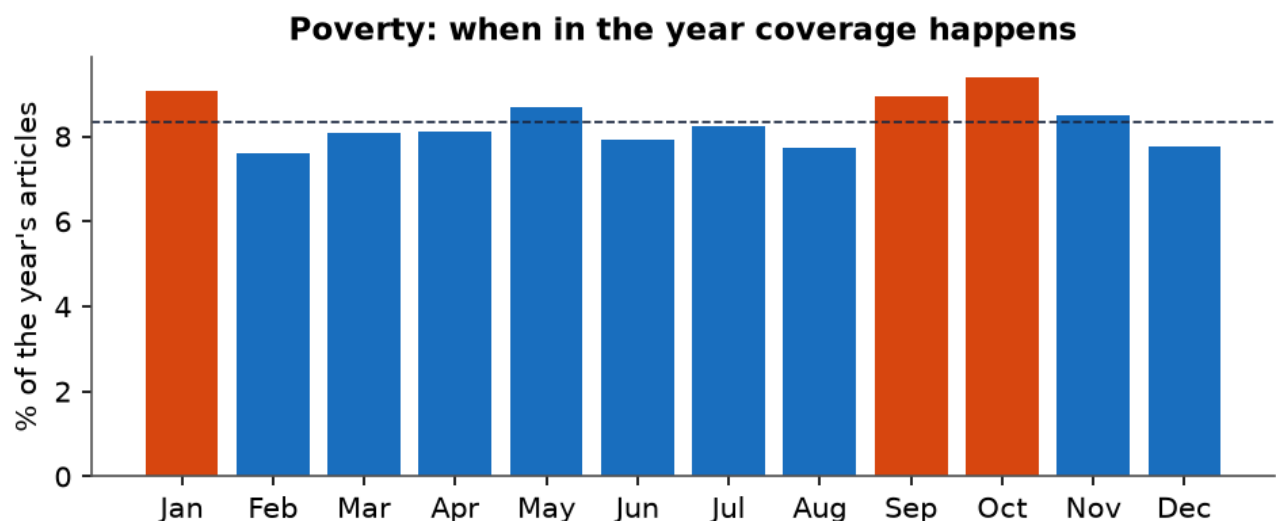


Figure 2. Share of each year's poverty articles published in each month, averaged over 2019–2025. Dashed line = an even spread (8.3% per month).

3.2 Where

Between January 2023 and July 2026, 24,308 poverty articles carried a primary country and 24,494 a primary continent. The United States holds the largest raw share of located poverty articles (26.04%), but its lift is 0.54: poverty takes a smaller share of American news than of news overall. India (13.77%, lift 1.04) is close to its weight in the index. Nigeria holds 12.88% with a lift of 9.4. The most over-represented countries are in Africa, South America and South and Southeast Asia (Table 2, Figure 3).

Country	Located poverty articles	Share %	Lift vs all news
United States	6,331	26.04	0.54
India	3,348	13.77	1.04
Nigeria	3,130	12.88	9.4
United Kingdom	1,944	8.0	1.37
China	465	1.91	0.73
Brazil	412	1.69	1.96
Ghana	404	1.66	3.45
Pakistan	380	1.56	3.45
Canada	378	1.56	0.72
South Africa	360	1.48	3.26
Indonesia	310	1.28	4.59
France	308	1.27	0.64
Australia	265	1.09	0.51
Argentina	252	1.04	5.29
Bangladesh	237	0.97	3.76
Uganda	137	0.56	9.56
Tanzania	102	0.42	6.39

Table 2. The 15 countries with the most located poverty news, January 2023 – July 2026, with lift against all located news, followed by Uganda and Tanzania, the other countries with a lift above 6 among those with at least 100 articles. Uruguay (lift 12.17) is left out: almost all of its sampled rows are copies of one recycling story from March 2025.

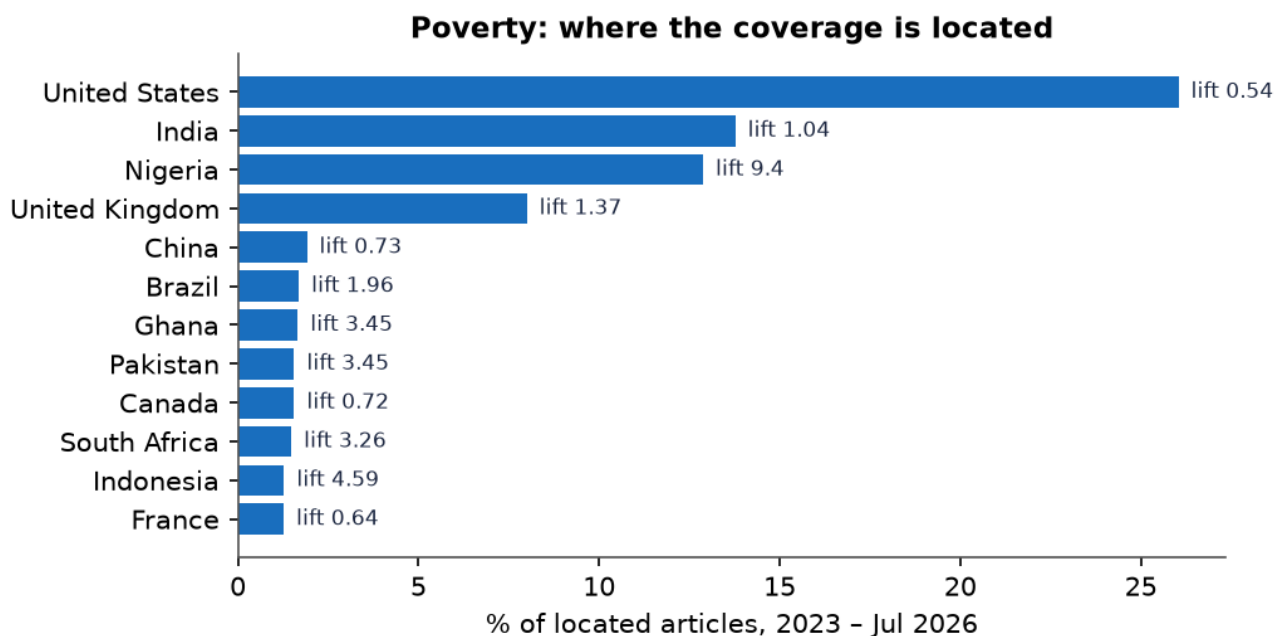


Figure 3. Leading countries by share of located poverty articles, 2023 – Jul 2026, labelled with lift against all located news.

3.3 Geo intelligence: continents, states and shifting attention

The world map (Figure 4) shows the pattern at a glance. Poverty is over-represented in the news of West and East Africa, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines. Uruguay is also coloured as over-represented, but almost all of its sampled rows are copies of one recycling story from March 2025, so it is not read as a

result. It is under-represented in North America, Australia, Russia, Spain, France and Germany. By continent, Africa (6.1) and South America (2.24) are strongly over-represented and Asia (1.06) is close to its weight. Europe (0.96), Oceania (0.76) and North America (0.56) are below their weight (Figure 7, left).

Poverty: which countries over- and under-cover the topic

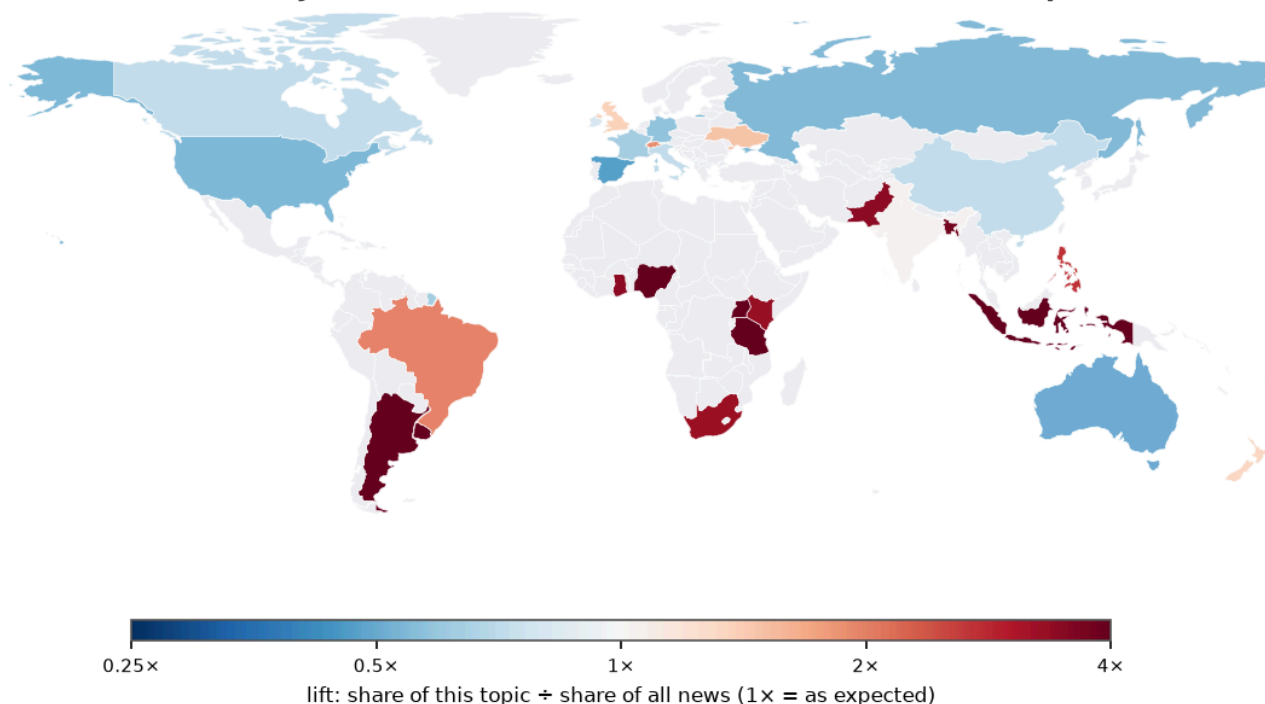


Figure 4. Lift of each country's share of located poverty articles, January 2023 – July 2026 (red = over-represented, blue = under-represented, grey = fewer than 100 articles). India is drawn with its official outline.

Within countries, the picture is more varied (Table 3). In India, 2,430 poverty articles carried a state. Measured against each state's share of Indian news, Kerala (3.24), Andhra Pradesh (2.67), Bihar (1.82), Madhya Pradesh (1.42) and Odisha (1.39) are the most over-represented among states with at least 50 articles. Delhi (0.58), Maharashtra (0.6) and West Bengal (0.61) are under-represented (Figure 5). Uttar Pradesh, the state with the most poverty articles (336), is close to its weight (1.09).

In the United States, 4,908 articles carried a state. New Mexico (4.65) and Washington (2.07) would rank high by lift, but both are inflated by tags that are not places in the state, so they are left out of Table 3: more than half of the New Mexico rows in the sample carry the city "Gallup", the polling firm read as the New Mexico town, and most Washington rows are datelines of lenders and agencies in Washington, D.C. Mississippi (2.31), Michigan (1.85) and Maryland (1.79) follow. New Jersey (0.11) and Pennsylvania (0.58) are far below their weight in American news (Figure 6). Several other US state tags come from personal names read as towns (Jackson, Ida, Taylor, Clinton), so no US state result is stated as a finding. Arizona, which ranked high before ordinary-word place tags were removed because "Congress" was read as an Arizona town, now has 36 articles and a lift of 1.22.

India: state	Articles	Lift	United States: state	Articles	Lift
Kerala	192	3.24	Mississippi	74	2.31
Andhra Pradesh	148	2.67	Michigan	212	1.85
Bihar	211	1.82	Maryland	89	1.79
Madhya Pradesh	102	1.42	Wisconsin	107	1.63
Odisha	70	1.39	Iowa	64	1.54
Assam	53	1.33	Oregon	73	1.49
Jharkhand	76	1.29	Connecticut	50	1.45
Haryana	70	1.13	Georgia	132	1.44
Delhi (lowest)	183	0.58	New Jersey (lowest)	99	0.11
Maharashtra	231	0.6	Pennsylvania	171	0.58

Table 3. States with the most and least over-represented poverty coverage (at least 50 articles), January 2023 – July 2026. Lift = the state's share of the country's located poverty articles ÷ its share of all located news from that country. New Mexico (4.65) and Washington (2.07) are left out because their tags are inflated by non-place names ("Gallup"; Washington, D.C.); US state tags are noisier than Indian ones.

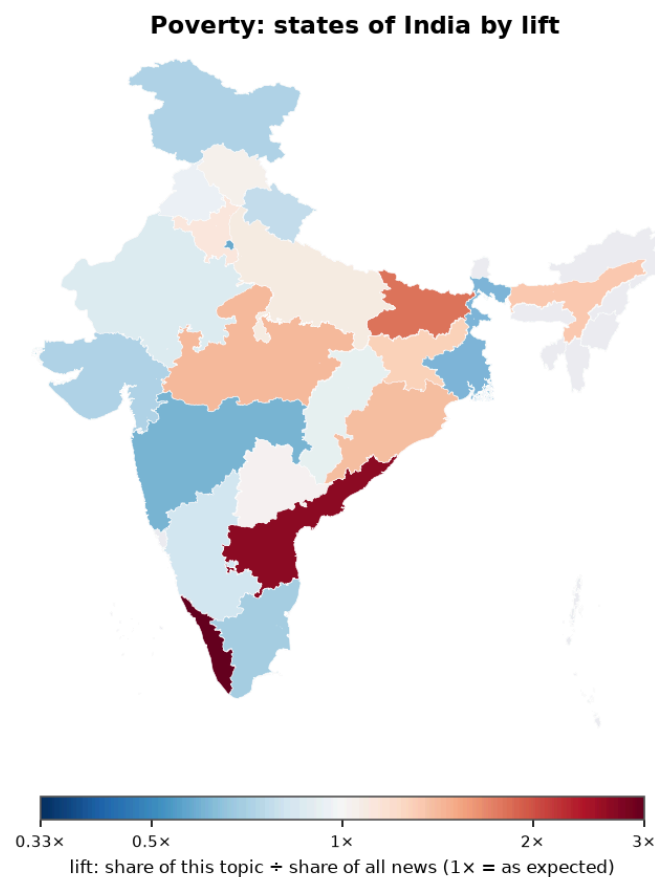


Figure 5. Lift of each Indian state's share of located poverty articles against its share of all located Indian news, January 2023 – July 2026. Official outline; Ladakh is drawn within Jammu and Kashmir in the boundary file used.

Poverty: states of United States by lift

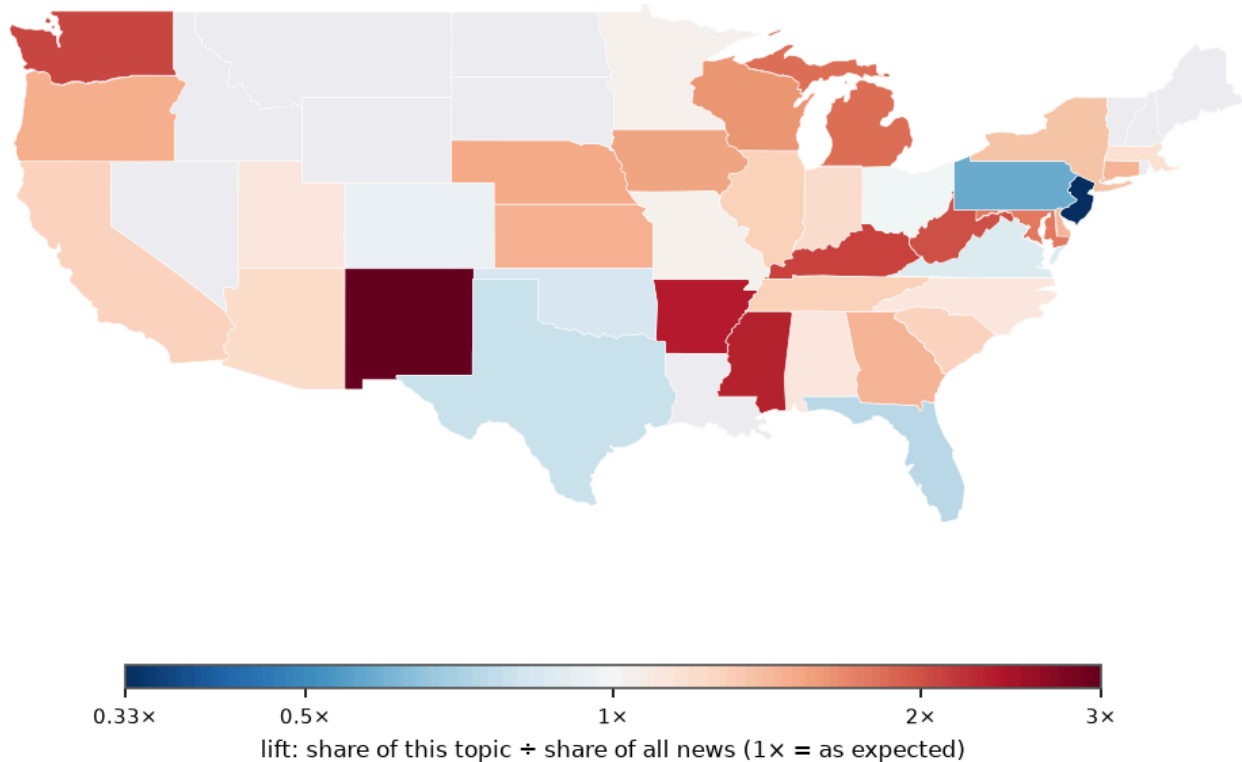


Figure 6. Lift of each US state's share of located poverty articles against its share of all located US news, January 2023 – July 2026.

Attention also moves between countries from year to year (Figure 7, right). Measured as poverty articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, China fell from 8.22 in 2023 to 2.75 in 2025 (66.5% lower), the steepest fall among the ten countries with the most located poverty articles. Pakistan fell from 30.81 to 16.46, Ghana from 26.54 to 16.99, Brazil from 11.11 to 8.98 and the United States from 3.88 to 2.99. Not every leading country fell: India was unchanged at 7.07, South Africa almost unchanged (20.59 and 20.56) and the United Kingdom rose slightly, from 8.55 to 8.63. Outside that group, Uganda rose from 48.58 to 79.95 and Kenya fell from 22.28 to 18.24. Nigeria has one of the highest shares, 64.04 in 2023 and 67.61 in 2024.

Tone varies more by country than the global average suggests. Measured against each country's news overall, poverty coverage is most negative in Argentina (84.4% negative against 40.0%), Switzerland (70.5% against 35.5%) and Canada (58.2% against 27.1%). In Ghana it is less negative (37.7%) than Ghanaian news overall (43.3%), and in India (45.2% against 41.2%) and Indonesia (33.6% against 32.8%) it is close to the baseline.

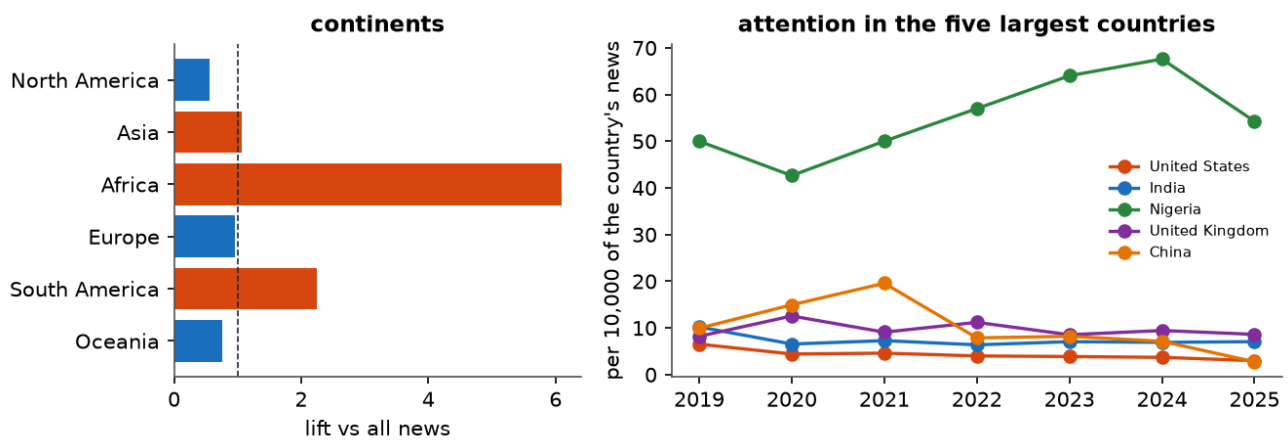


Figure 7. Left: lift by continent, January 2023 – July 2026. Right: poverty articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, 2019–2025, for the five countries with the most articles.

3.4 Tone, urgency and themes

Poverty coverage is more negative and more urgent than news in general (Figure 8). Among articles with a tone label, 54% are negative, against 33.6% across the index (1.61 times). A large minority, 44.4%, is positive, against 56.8% in all news. The machine priority rating puts 76.2% of poverty articles at critical level (7 or higher), against 42.6% of all news (1.79 times).

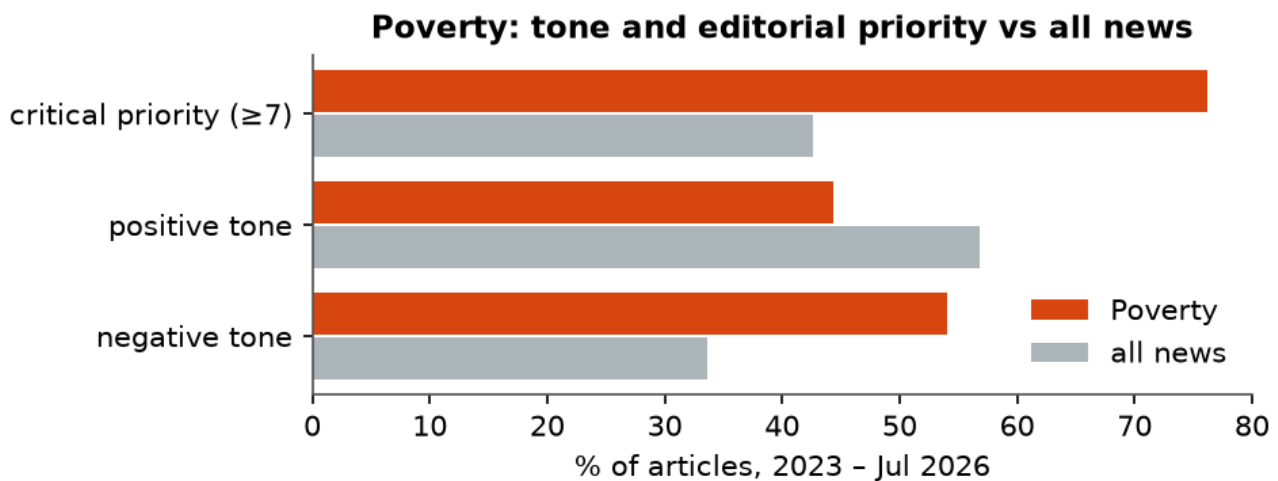


Figure 8. Tone and the share rated critical priority, poverty articles vs all news, 2023 – Jul 2026.

Themes show what poverty stories are about (Table 4). The most specific are intergenerational poverty and systemic barriers (4.09% of themed articles, lift 1,363.55; themes named after poverty are near-exclusive to it by construction), income inequality and poverty dynamics (5.89%) and racial and ethnic disparities in poverty (3.52%). Welfare programmes, microfinance, tax redistribution, the minimum wage and unemployment complete the list. The most common theme overall is studies of poverty rates and income inequality (6.37%).

Theme	Articles	Share %	Lift
intergenerational poverty and systemic barriers	911	4.09	1,363.55
income inequality and poverty dynamics	1,313	5.89	1,276.01
racial and ethnic disparities in poverty	785	3.52	1,148.73
government welfare programs and social safety nets	111	0.5	1,104.71
microfinance and poverty reduction strategies	239	1.07	962.53
tax policy reforms for wealth redistribution	143	0.64	891.24
minimum wage debates and living standards	279	1.25	814.67
unemployment and underemployment challenges	455	2.04	775.0

Table 4. Themes most specific to poverty coverage (lift against all themed news), January 2023 – July 2026.

The organisations named most often are international lenders and agencies: the World Bank (1,669 articles), the International Monetary Fund (677), the G20 (466), UNICEF (462) and the United Nations Development Programme (392). Nigeria's president (836) and India's planning body NITI Aayog (322) also rank high, which may reflect the weight of Nigerian and Indian outlets in the index.

3.5 Research attention and invention

Research on poverty kept pace with the scientific literature but did not outgrow it. Papers with poverty in the title made up 5.52 per 10,000 papers in 2015, fell to 4.76 in 2017 and rose to 5.83 in 2025, a 1.06-fold change over the decade. Between 2015 and 2025, 37,823 such papers were published, and 72,856 since 2000. The most-cited include work on the cognitive and psychological effects of poverty [1, 2], on predicting poverty from satellite imagery [3], on mobile money [4], on child poverty during school closures [5], and on poverty and mental disorders [6, 7].

News attention does not track research attention (Figure 9). Research share recovered after 2019, while news share fell almost every year.

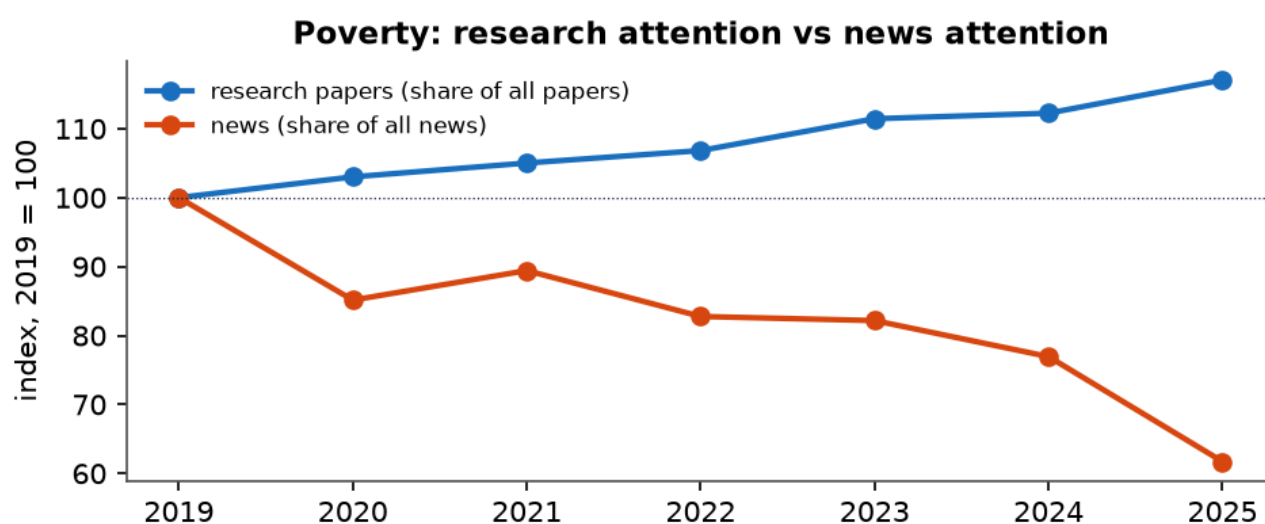


Figure 9. Research papers with poverty in the title (share of all papers) and poverty news (share of all news), each indexed to 2019 = 100.

Patents are a minor record for this topic. 406 patent families with poverty in the title were published between 2015 and 2024, rising from 26 in 2016 to 64 in 2024 (2.46 times). China's office holds 368 of them, 97.9% of filing-office records (Figure 10). The leading technology class is business-method data processing (G06Q, 51 families). Vehicle and tunnelling classes

also appear, which suggests that some titles carry the word through translation and concern unrelated technology.

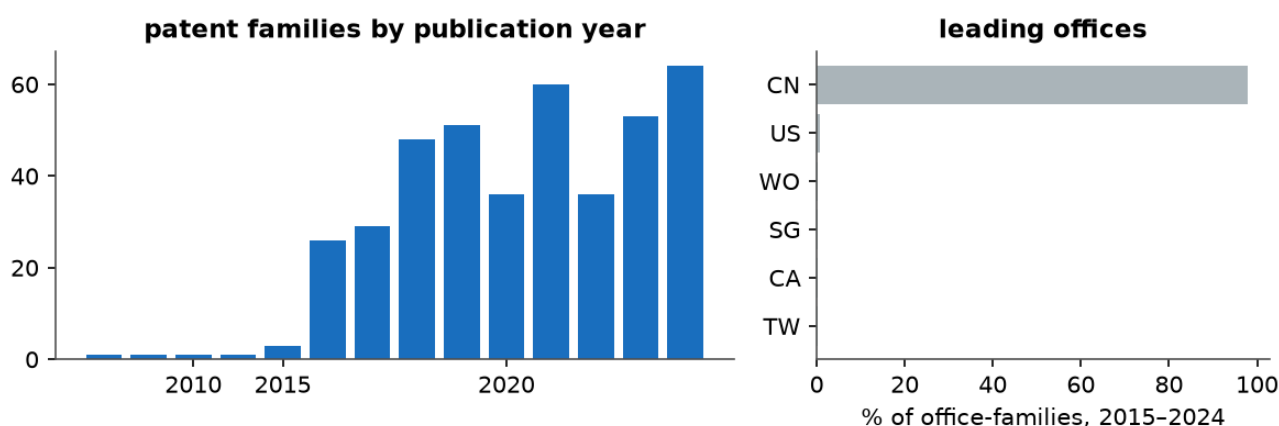


Figure 10. Patent families with poverty in the title by publication year (left) and the leading filing offices, 2015–2024 (right).

4. Discussion

Three points matter for anyone who uses news as a record of poverty. First, coverage measures attention. Poverty's share of the news fell by more than a third between 2019 and 2025. This says nothing direct about the number of poor people. It says that poverty competed less well for space in the news. Second, raw shares mislead. The United States leads poverty news in raw terms but is under-represented relative to its weight in the index. Poverty takes its largest share of attention in countries such as Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania. Third, poverty is a standing issue. Coverage shows almost no seasonality, and its tone is mixed: 44.4% of labelled articles are positive and 54% negative.

Research, invention and news run on different clocks. Research share is stable. Patents are few and come almost entirely from one office. News share has fallen. The dataset lets researchers link the three, for example to test whether national poverty statistics releases are followed by rises in coverage in the same country.

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 the article opening. Articles that mention poverty only later are missed, and 15% of sampled matches use the word only in passing.
- **Machine labels.** Location, tone, priority and themes are machine-labelled. The city field is noisy and is not analysed.
- **Place tags from ordinary words.** Place tags derived from ordinary words (714 words, such as "Congress", "Earth" and "Winter") were treated as unlocated, which removed 15.3% of city-tagged articles. Some firm and personal names still pass as places, notably in US states ("Gallup" for New Mexico), so no US state finding is stated.
- **Outlet mix.** The index over-represents English-language outlets. Nigeria's and India's large outlet presence shapes the geography and the organisation list.

- **Research and patent counts.** These match titles only. The patent record is small, almost all Chinese, and partly noisy.

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 24,015 of 96,171 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 "poverty" -since 2019-01-01 --until 2026-07-31 --granularity monthly`.

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