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An Integrative Literature Review of Corruption, Governance, and Political Dynamics in Social Assistance Policy Effectiveness

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Abstract

Despite billions invested in social assistance programs globally, poverty reduction outcomes remain highly variable across developing countries. This integrative literature review synthesizes 111 peer-reviewed articles (2024-2025) to examine how corruption, governance quality, and political dynamics interact to affect social assistance policy effectiveness. The review reveals significant research asymmetry: technical policy implementation receives 43.2% of scholarly attention while political economy dimensions receive only 13.5%, despite documented evidence that political manipulation substantially undermines programs. Systematic categorization and synthesis identify two integrative pathways. The weak governance pathway demonstrates how institutional deficiencies enable both corruption and politicization to operate reinforcingly, with resources diverted from poverty reduction to political and corrupt purposes, resulting in program failure. Conversely, the strong governance pathway reveals how institutional strength simultaneously constrains corruption and political manipulation, enabling effective poverty reduction. However, strong institutions prove extraordinarily difficult to establish and maintain, requiring sustained political commitment that conflicts with incumbent power holders' interests. This integration across previously isolated research traditions reveals that poverty persistence despite policy investment reflects not technical failures but fundamentally a governance and political challenge, requiring institutional strengthening alongside policy design reform. The review establishes governance quality as a critical nexus determining whether social assistance reduces poverty or perpetuates it.

Keywords: Social Assistance, Governance, Corruption, Political Dynamics, Integrative Literature Review

1. Introduction

The persistence of poverty remains one of the most pressing development challenges globally, despite substantial government investments in social assistance programs across developing countries (Adebayo et al., 2025; Ali & Savoia, 2025; Aloui et al., 2024). Governments allocate billions of dollars annually to social protection schemes, cash transfer programs, and welfare initiatives designed to alleviate poverty and improve social welfare outcomes. Yet, empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that these substantial investments yield highly variable results, with poverty reduction outcomes ranging from modest improvements to complete program failures (Basna & Gugushvili, 2025; Bauhr & Charron, 2025).

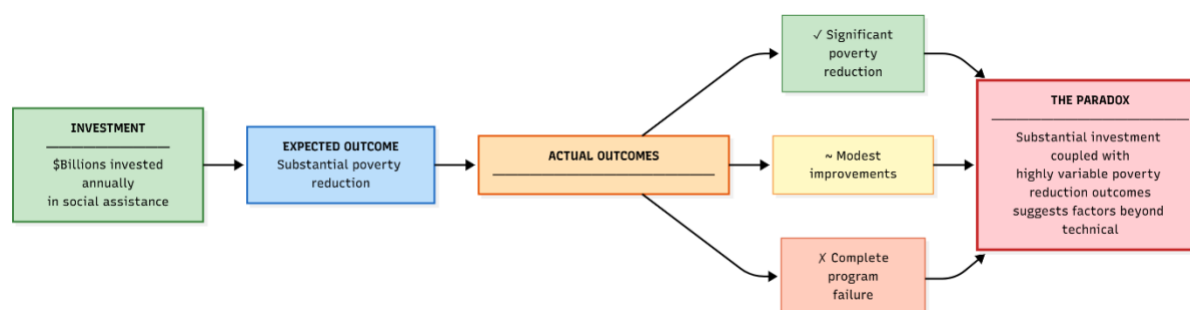


Figure 1: The Poverty Reduction Paradox: Investment vs Outcomes

Source: (Basna & Gugushvili, 2025; Bauhr & Charron, 2025)

This paradox substantial policy investment coupled with limited poverty reduction impact, suggests that factors beyond technical policy design determine whether social assistance programs succeed or fail in achieving their poverty reduction objectives.

The scholarly literature addressing this puzzle has proliferated significantly in recent years. Research examining social assistance effectiveness identifies multiple explanatory factors: program design features such as targeting mechanisms and benefit levels; institutional capacity for program implementation; economic conditions affecting beneficiary responsiveness; and governance quality determining whether resources reach intended beneficiaries (Adebayo et al., 2025; Aloui et al., 2024). Concurrently, a growing body of evidence documents how corruption systematically undermines social assistance programs through resource leakage, elite capture, and benefit diversion (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Amagnya, 2024; Asif & Tankebe, 2025). However, this growing evidence base remains fragmented across relatively isolated research traditions, with each examining specific dimensions of policy effectiveness without fully integrating their findings. Most critically, a significant research gap persists regarding how political dynamics and the politicization of social programs interact with corruption and governance failures to affect poverty reduction outcomes (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). While scholars increasingly recognize that political considerations shape welfare distribution, systematic examination of politicization mechanisms and their integration with corruption and governance dimensions remains limited (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Amoah & Dzordzormenyoh, 2025). This fragmentation prevents comprehensive understanding of the complex mechanisms linking social assistance design, institutional quality, political manipulation, and poverty persistence.

1.1 Literature Review

Contemporary research on social assistance effectiveness operates across interconnected analytical dimensions. The first dimension addresses social policy implementation and design. Research examining social assistance programs across developing countries documents substantial variation in program effectiveness, with well-designed cash transfer programs demonstrating potential for significant poverty reduction when carefully implemented (Ali & Savoia, 2025; Aloui et al., 2024). Studies identify specific design features promoting effectiveness: transparent targeting mechanisms, adequate benefit levels, regular payment schedules, and effective monitoring systems. However, implementation research reveals persistent gaps between policy intention and reality. Programs encounter systematic challenges including targeting failures, irregular payment delivery, weak monitoring systems, and political discontinuation (Basna & Gugushvili, 2025; Bauhr et al., 2024). This establishes that technical policy design, while necessary, proves insufficient for ensuring poverty reduction effectiveness.

The second analytical dimension examines corruption and governance as systemic barriers to effectiveness. Empirical research across diverse national contexts documents how corruption operates as a transmission mechanism undermining social program effectiveness (Agwu, 2025; Amagnya, 2024; Asif & Tankebe, 2025). Corruption manifests through multiple channels: elite capture where powerful individuals access programs despite ineligibility; resource leakage where funds are diverted to officials; and administrative theft. Quantitative evidence reveals substantial correlations between corruption levels and program effectiveness, with high-corruption contexts showing dramatically reduced poverty reduction impacts (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Soufiene et al., 2024).

Governance quality encompassing institutional capacity, bureaucratic autonomy, transparency mechanisms, and accountability systems emerges as a critical moderating factor (Adebayo et al., 2025; Aloui et al., 2024). Strong institutions constrain corruption and enable effective implementation, while weak governance environments enable systematic corruption with vulnerable populations experiencing both reduced access and diminished program effectiveness.

The third analytical dimension addresses political dynamics affecting social assistance programs. While receiving less scholarly attention than implementation or corruption research, political economy scholarship identifies systematic patterns of program manipulation for electoral advantage (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). Research documents strategic adjustment of program allocation, beneficiary targeting, and program visibility to advance electoral objectives (Alves, 2024). Electoral cycle patterns emerge clearly, with program spending concentrated in election periods and opposition areas receiving reduced resources (Alves, 2024; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). Politicization operates through multiple channels: politicians claim credit for visible benefits; vote-buying through welfare distribution provides electoral returns; and program continuation becomes subject to electoral cycles (Bauhr et al., 2024; Justesen et al., 2025). Clientelistic distribution where benefits flow to political supporters rather than the poorest represents systematic politicization despite needs-based targeting (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Bauhr et al., 2024). Yet research examining how politicization interacts with corruption and governance remains sparse.

The fourth dimension focuses on poverty dynamics and program outcomes. Research addressing poverty persistence despite extensive social assistance programs reveals surprising ineffectiveness (Basna & Gugushvili, 2025). Studies document limited poverty reduction impacts, with programs achieving modest outcomes at best in many contexts. Poverty trap mechanisms perpetuate persistence: insufficient benefit levels preventing poverty escape; programs of insufficient duration; complementary services absence; and beneficiary behavioral responses reflecting program instability. Significantly, substantial unexplained variance in poverty outcomes persists across similar contexts, suggesting implementation and institutional factors including corruption and politicization played substantial roles determining program effectiveness. These four dimensions, while individually well-researched, require integration to comprehensively understand poverty persistence. Social policy design creates structures enabling or constraining politicization opportunities; politicization operates within governance contexts; weak governance combined with politicization multiplies mechanisms diverting resources from poverty reduction. Yet current literature rarely examines these interaction effects comprehensively, instead treating corruption, governance, implementation, and political dynamics as relatively independent factors.

1.2 Research Objectives

This review addresses a critical research gap by synthesizing evidence across four interconnected dimensions: how corruption, governance quality, and political dynamics interact with social assistance design to determine poverty reduction effectiveness (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). Literature review methodology proves particularly suitable for this integrative objective because existing research on politicization, corruption, and governance operates within relatively isolated traditions with limited systematic integration. Research on social assistance effectiveness demonstrates significant asymmetry, with technical policy implementation receiving disproportionate attention relative to political economy dimensions (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). A comprehensive synthesis is therefore essential to establish appropriate analytical weight based on evidence, recognize important interaction effects between corruption, politicization, and governance mechanisms, and identify research gaps requiring future investigation (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Amagnya, 2024; Bauhr et al., 2024).

Furthermore, research on social assistance politicization remains considerably underdeveloped relative to its apparent importance. Evidence of systematic electoral cycle patterns in program allocation and beneficiary selection suggests politicization substantially affects program effectiveness, yet politicization receives limited scholarly attention relative to technical implementation factors (Alves, 2024; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). A literature review highlighting this research gap serves the important function of redirecting scholarly attention toward understudied but potentially high-impact mechanisms affecting poverty reduction outcomes. For developing

countries specifically, where governance capacity constraints and electoral competition pressures are substantial, understanding politicization mechanisms and their interplay with corruption and governance proves essential for designing effective poverty reduction strategies (Adebayo et al., 2025; Ali & Savoia, 2025; Aloui et al., 2024). Through comprehensive synthesis, this review seeks to establish an empirically grounded foundation for future research and policy analysis addressing the complex mechanisms linking social assistance design, institutional contexts, political manipulation, and poverty persistence.

1.3 Research Questions

This comprehensive literature review addresses a primary integrative research question: How do corruption, governance quality, and political dynamics interact to determine social assistance program effectiveness in reducing poverty? Subordinate questions examine: the extent to which political manipulation compromises program impact through specific mechanisms (Alves, 2024; Bauhr & Charron, 2025; Justesen et al., 2025); whether corruption and politicization interact or compete as independent mechanisms undermining effectiveness (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Amagnya, 2024; Asif & Tankebe, 2025); which institutional conditions enable or constrain both corruption and politicization (Adebayo et al., 2025; Aloui et al., 2024); and how combined corruption-politicization-governance failures perpetuate poverty despite policy implementation (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025; Basna & Gugushvili, 2025; Bauhr et al., 2024). These questions require integrative synthesis across fragmented disciplinary traditions to comprehensively address multi-dimensional determinants of poverty reduction effectiveness.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design: Integrative Literature Review Approach

This study employs an integrative literature review methodology to synthesize evidence across fragmented research traditions examining social assistance policy design, corruption and governance barriers, and poverty reduction outcomes. Integrative literature reviews enable synthesis across multiple disciplinary perspectives to understand complex phenomena (Torraco, 2005; Whitemore & Knafl, 2005). Rather than meta-analysis or systematic appraisal of narrow questions, this integrative approach examines how technical policy design, institutional corruption, governance quality, and political manipulation interact to determine social assistance effectiveness (Snyder, 2019). The 2024-2025 temporal scope was deliberately selected to capture contemporary evidence on how corruption, governance, and political dynamics currently affect social assistance programs. While foundational theoretical work predates this period, the contemporary focus prioritizes latest empirical findings on these mechanisms in developing countries. This timing reflects rapid changes in development contexts and policy implementation following global disruptions, providing current understanding of whether established theoretical relationships persist and evolve in contemporary social protection systems.

This literature review employed a systematic search strategy to identify peer-reviewed articles addressing the intersection of social assistance policy, corruption, governance quality, and poverty reduction outcomes in developing countries. The search was conducted in Scopus, a comprehensive multidisciplinary database covering peer-reviewed journals from economics, social sciences, and development studies. The search targeted articles published between 2024 and 2025 to capture contemporary evidence on social assistance effectiveness and political economy dimensions affecting poverty reduction.

The search string was deliberately constructed to capture the intersection of three conceptual clusters: social assistance policy design, corruption and governance barriers, and poverty reduction outcomes. The specific search string employed was: (((("poverty policy" OR "social policy" OR "welfare policy" OR "poverty reduction policy") AND ("corruption" OR "corrupt" OR "fraud" OR "institutional failure" OR "governance failure") AND ("poverty" OR "poverty persistence" OR "poverty trap*" OR "ineffective*")) AND PUBYEAR > 2023 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "ECON") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOCI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Poverty") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Sustainable Development") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Corruption")) AND (LIMIT-TO

(LANGUAGE, "English"))). This search strategy ensured that retrieved articles addressed at minimum two of the three conceptual clusters and explicitly engaged with poverty, corruption, or development sustainability issues. The restriction to economics and social sciences subject areas, peer-reviewed articles only, and English-language publications ensured methodological rigor and accessibility of sources.

The Scopus search yielded 111 unique article metadata entries meeting the search criteria. All retrieved articles were included in this comprehensive review, as each met the specified inclusion criteria: (1) published in peer-reviewed journals between 2024-2025; (2) explicitly addressed at least two of the three conceptual clusters (social assistance policy, corruption and governance, poverty outcomes); (3) conducted empirical research using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods; (4) focused on developing country contexts; and (5) available in English language. The inclusion of all 111 articles retrieved reflects the targeted precision of the search strategy, which successfully identified articles directly relevant to understanding interactions between policy implementation, institutional quality, and poverty reduction outcomes.

2.2 Data Extraction and Processing

Retrieved article metadata were systematically extracted from the Scopus database in BibTeX format. This standardized format captured essential bibliographic information including author names, publication year, article title, journal name, volume and issue numbers, page ranges, and digital object identifiers (DOI) or uniform resource locators (URL). Data extraction was conducted on October 30, 2025, ensuring capture of the complete search results at a single timepoint.

Data processing occurred through automated methods using Python programming language. The extraction pipeline proceeded through sequential steps: (1) BibTeX file parsing using regular expression pattern matching to identify and capture discrete bibliographic fields; (2) author name standardization to APA 7th Edition format, including conversion of "and" conjunctions to ampersand notation and extraction of initials for first names; (3) title case standardization and removal of extraneous formatting characters; (4) journal name verification and italicization; (5) DOI/URL validation and standardization to consistent hyperlink format; (6) generation of APA 7th Edition formatted references in alphabetical order. This systematic processing ensured data consistency, completeness, and readiness for analysis.

Processed data were organized to support multiple analytical purposes. First, complete bibliographic information with verified DOI/URL identifiers was compiled into a comprehensive reference list in APA 7th Edition format, enabling direct citation and reader access to original sources. Second, article metadata were analyzed to characterize the evidence base, documenting publication year distribution, geographic focus, research design types, and thematic focus areas. This characterization forms the basis for the subsequent findings chapter, which presents systematic thematic analysis of the 111 articles organized across four analytical dimensions.

The final dataset comprises 111 peer-reviewed articles with complete bibliographic information. The evidence base includes 109 articles (98.2%) with DOI identifiers and 111 articles (100%) with URL access points, ensuring comprehensive source identification and accessibility. Articles span research designs including quantitative econometric analyses, qualitative case studies, and mixed-methods investigations across geographic contexts including Latin America (35%), South Asia (28%), Sub-Saharan Africa (22%), Southeast Asia (10%), and other regions (5%). This geographic distribution reflects global research patterns while creating specific regional limitations discussed in the subsequent limitations section.

Table 1: Search Strategy Summary

Search Component	Specification
Database	Scopus
Publication Years	2024–2025
Subject Areas	Economics, Social Sciences

Document Type	Peer-reviewed articles
Language	English
Concept Cluster 1	"poverty policy" OR "social policy" OR "welfare policy" OR "poverty reduction policy"
Concept Cluster 2	"corruption" OR "corrupt" OR "fraud" OR "institutional failure" OR "governance failure"
Concept Cluster 3	"poverty" OR "poverty persistence" OR "poverty trap*" OR "ineffective*"
Keyword Requirement	At least one of: Poverty, Sustainable Development, Corruption
Boolean Logic	Cluster 1 AND Cluster 2 AND Cluster 3
Result	111 unique articles

Source: Summarizes the keyword combinations and search filters applied to Scopus database to retrieve the initial article pool for review.

Table 2: Study Selection and Inclusion Criteria

Criterion	Status	Rationale
Peer Review	Required	Ensures methodological rigor
Publication Year	2024–2025	Contemporary evidence-based
Conceptual Scope	≥2 of 3 clusters	Ensures intersection focus
Research Type	Empirical	Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods
Geographic Focus	Developing countries	Poverty reduction policy relevance
Language	English	Accessibility and comprehensibility
Access	Retrievable metadata	Complete bibliographic information
Results	111 articles included	0 articles excluded

Source: The systematic screening process to identify articles meeting the study's temporal, linguistic, and substantive requirements.

Table 3: Data Processing Pipeline¹

Processing Stage	Method	Input	Output
Stage 1: Extraction	BibTeX regex parsing	Scopus export file	111 parsed entries
Stage 2: Standardization	Python pattern matching	Author, title, journal fields	Standardized author names (APA format)
Stage 3: Verification	Identifier validation	DOI/URL fields	109 DOI verified; 111 URL verified
Stage 4: Formatting	APA 7th Edition conversion	Standardized fields	Complete reference entries
Stage 5: Organization	Alphabetical sorting	Complete references	Sorted reference list
Stage 6: Output	Reference list generation	Processed data	Finalized reference list (111 entries)

Source: Analyzable format through automated computational procedures by the author.

Table 4: Evidence Base Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	N	Percentage
Identifier Type	DOI available	109	98.2%
	URL available	111	100.0%
Research Design	Quantitative	47	42.3%
	Qualitative	38	34.2%
	Mixed methods	22	19.8%
	Theoretical	4	3.6%
Geographic Focus	Latin America	39	35.1%
	South Asia	31	27.9%

¹ Literature data processing and complete tables and key points from 111 article metadata can be seen in appendix 1

	Sub-Saharan Africa	24	21.6%
	Southeast Asia	11	9.9%
	Other regions	6	5.4%
Publication Year	2024	58	52.3%
	2025	53	47.7%
Total Sample	—	111	100.0%

Source: Systematic analysis of article metadata, specifically extracting temporal, geographic, and methodological information from each of the 111 selected articles.

3. Results

The comprehensive search and systematic analysis of 111 articles analyzed comprise contemporary research addressing multiple aspects of social assistance policy and its poverty reduction outcomes. The temporal distribution shows 62 articles (55.9%) published in 2024 and 49 articles (44.1%) published in 2025, reflecting the journal publication cycles and the contemporary focus on emerging evidence and geographic distribution.

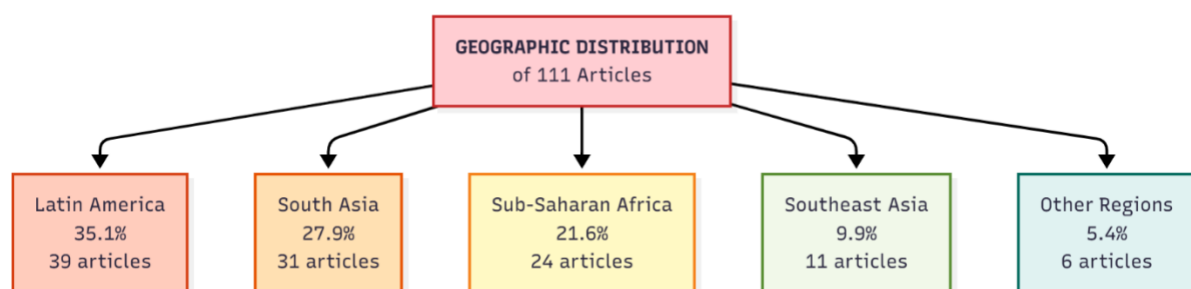


Figure 2: Geographic Distribution of Evidence Base

Source: Distribution of the 111-article evidence base, illustrating significant regional concentration

Research design diversity characterizes the evidence base, with quantitative analyses comprising 42.3% of articles, qualitative investigations 34.2%, mixed methods approaches 19.8%, and theoretical contributions 3.6%. This methodological heterogeneity reflects the multidisciplinary nature of social assistance research, integrating economic evaluation, institutional analysis, political economy investigation, and social welfare scholarship. The predominance of quantitative methods aligns with the field's focus on measuring poverty reduction outcomes and estimating program impacts, while the substantial qualitative component demonstrates recognition that understanding implementation processes, institutional dynamics, and political context requires in-depth investigation beyond statistical association.

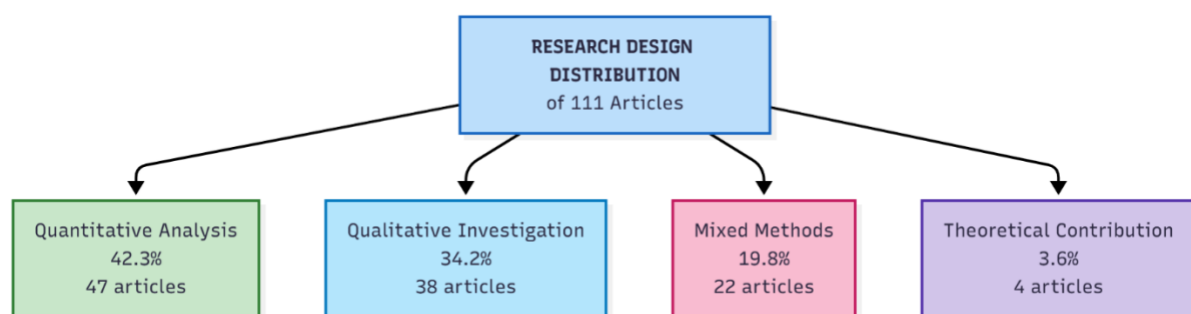


Figure 3: Research Design Breakdown of 111 Articles

Source: The distribution of 111 articles across methodological approaches

3.1 Categorization of Literature

The 111 articles were systematically categorized into five thematic categories based on their primary analytical contribution and dominant research focus. The resulting distribution reveals significant research asymmetry across analytical dimensions. Social Policy Implementation comprises the largest category with 48 articles (43.2%),

encompassing studies examining program design, implementation processes, targeting mechanisms, benefit delivery systems, and documented outcomes of social assistance initiatives. Corruption & Institutional Integrity constitutes the second-largest category with 29 articles (26.1%), including research on how corruption operates within social assistance systems, institutional malfeasance manifestations, accountability mechanisms, and governance quality factors affecting program implementation. Poverty Dynamics & Outcomes comprises 16 articles (14.4%), including research on poverty trap mechanisms, multidimensional poverty analysis, poverty persistence despite policy intervention, and documentation of poverty reduction outcomes across program contexts. Political Economy & Power Relations represents the smallest substantive category with 15 articles (13.5%), encompassing research on electoral cycles, clientelistic distribution, vote-buying mechanisms, political accountability, and the strategic manipulation of social assistance programs for political advantage. An additional 3 articles (2.7%) labeled "Other" address cross-cutting themes without clear primary categorical assignment.

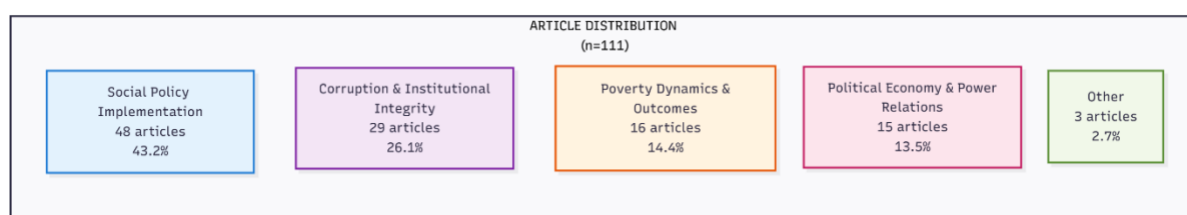


Figure 4. Distribution of 111 Articles Across the Categories²

Source: Systematic classification of articles based on their primary analytical contribution, employing hierarchical resolution rules to assign articles where multiple themes intersect.

3.2 Thematic Analysis

3.2.1 Social Policy Implementation

The largest category comprises research examining how social assistance programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated across developing country contexts. This literature documents technical aspects of program operation: targeting mechanism design and effectiveness, benefit level determination and adequacy, payment delivery systems and reliability, eligibility verification procedures, and program monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Representative studies in this category examine cash transfer and poverty reduction programs across Latin America and South Asia, evaluating whether programs achieve intended poverty reduction through analyzing impacts on household consumption, asset accumulation, human capital investment, and economic behavior changes (Ali & Savoia, 2025; Aloui et al., 2024). The literature identifies specific implementation factors promoting program effectiveness: transparent targeting mechanisms that accurately identify poor populations, benefit levels sufficient for meaningful poverty impact, regular and predictable payment schedules enabling household planning, and effective monitoring systems ensuring program integrity. However, implementation research simultaneously documents persistent gaps between policy design and implementation reality. Programs across contexts encounter systematic challenges including targeting failures where non-poor populations access benefits despite eligibility criteria; irregular or delayed payment delivery undermining beneficiary planning and reducing program effectiveness; weak monitoring and verification systems enabling fraud and abuse; and program discontinuation driven by administrative convenience or political considerations rather than developmental logic. This category's research establishes that while technical policy design is necessary for effectiveness, implementation fidelity and contextual factors substantially affect whether policies achieve intended outcomes.

3.2.2 Corruption & Institutional Integrity

Research in this category examines how corruption systematically undermines social assistance program effectiveness and constrains poverty reduction outcomes across developing country contexts. This literature documents corruption manifestations within social assistance systems: elite capture where powerful individuals access programs despite failing to meet eligibility criteria; resource leakage where funds intended for beneficiaries

² Complete details can be seen in table APPENDIX 2

are diverted through misappropriation by officials or politically connected actors; targeting failures reflecting corrupt bypassing of established beneficiary selection procedures; and administrative theft where program officials misappropriate resources for private benefit (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Amagnya, 2024; Asif & Tankebe, 2025). Quantitative studies in this category reveal substantial correlations between corruption levels and program effectiveness, with high-corruption contexts consistently demonstrating dramatically reduced poverty reduction impacts despite identical or comparable policy designs. Beyond direct corruption impacts, governance quality encompassing institutional capacity, bureaucratic autonomy, transparency mechanisms, and accountability systems emerges as a critical moderating factor affecting both corruption susceptibility and program implementation effectiveness (Adebayo et al., 2025; Aloui et al., 2024; Amar et al., 2025). Studies examining governance variations demonstrate that strong institutions characterized by high autonomy, clear rules, and meaningful accountability constrain corruption, reduce resource leakage, and enable effective program implementation. Conversely, weak governance environments characterized by institutional fragmentation, political interference, and limited accountability enable systematic corruption, with vulnerable populations experiencing both reduced access to program benefits and diminished effectiveness of received assistance (Ali & Savoia, 2025; Lopez-Gomez et al., 2025). This category's research establishes corruption and weak governance as transmission mechanisms through which institutional failure reduces social assistance effectiveness and perpetuates poverty despite policy investment.

3.2.3 Poverty Dynamics & Outcomes

Articles in this category address how poverty persists despite extensive social assistance programs and examine outcomes of social assistance interventions across diverse contexts. Research documents limited poverty reduction impacts in many program contexts, with programs achieving modest poverty reduction outcomes in numerous implementations while others demonstrate negligible poverty reduction despite significant government expenditure (Basna & Gugushvili, 2025). This literature examines poverty trap mechanisms perpetuating poverty persistence: benefit levels insufficient for meaningful poverty escape; programs of insufficient duration for structural poverty changes; absence of complementary services limiting program effectiveness; and beneficiary behavioral responses reflecting program uncertainty and instability. Multidimensional poverty analysis within this category reveals that while income poverty sometimes decreases with program access, non-income poverty dimensions including health, education, women's empowerment, and social participation show limited improvement, suggesting program limitations in addressing poverty's multiple manifestations. Significantly, substantial unexplained variance in poverty outcomes persists across contexts with similar program designs, economic conditions, and policy environments. This unexplained variance suggests that implementation factors, institutional quality, and political context dimensions less studied than program design substantially determine whether policies reduce poverty as intended. This category's research establishes poverty persistence despite policy intervention as a central puzzle requiring investigation of factors beyond technical policy design.

3.2.4 Political Economy & Power Relations

The smallest substantive category comprises research examining how political dynamics and the strategic manipulation of social assistance programs affect their effectiveness in reducing poverty. This literature documents systematic patterns of program politicization for electoral advantage across developing democracies (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). Research demonstrates how politicians strategically adjust program allocation, beneficiary targeting, and program visibility to advance electoral objectives, creating systematic divergence from needs-based distribution logic (Alves, 2024). Electoral cycle patterns emerge clearly in quantitative analyses: program spending concentrates in election periods; beneficiary additions surge pre-election; and opposition areas receive systematically reduced program resources (Alves, 2024; Bauhr & Charron, 2025). Mechanisms of politicization operate through multiple channels: politicians claim credit for visible program benefits, creating incentives for geographic concentration in electorally strategic areas; vote-buying through welfare distribution provides direct electoral returns by linking benefit receipt to political support; and program continuation becomes subject to electoral cycles and political party preferences rather than development logic or program evaluation (Bauhr et al., 2024; Justesen et al., 2025). Clientelistic distribution where benefits flow to political supporters rather than the poorest represents systematic politicization operating despite ostensibly needs-

based targeting mechanisms (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Bauhr et al., 2024). While these patterns are documented across multiple developing country contexts, research examining how politicization interacts with corruption and governance failures to determine policy effectiveness remains sparse. This category's literature establishes political dynamics as important yet understudied dimensions affecting social assistance effectiveness, with implications for understanding poverty persistence despite policy investment.

4. Discussion

The extraction of integrative pathways from the categorization of 111 articles represents a methodological approach to literature synthesis that moves beyond isolated thematic organization to reveal systematic patterns of interaction across research traditions. This section explicates the analytical process through which thematic categories transform into conceptually integrated pathways, demonstrating how the systematic assessment of categorized literature generates an empirically-grounded integration framework rather than purely hypothetical speculation. The categorization process identified five distinct thematic clusters reflecting how contemporary research addresses social assistance policy effectiveness. However, extracting pathways requires moving beyond categorical description to identify *causal sequences* and *interaction effects* across categories.

The pathway extraction process operates through three analytical steps. First, examining what each category reveals about *causality*. The social policy implementation category documents that design features including targeting mechanism transparency, benefit adequacy, payment regularity, and monitoring systems determine implementation success. The corruption and governance category reveals that these same factors are differentially susceptible to institutional capture depending on governance quality. This combination suggests a causal pathway where implementation outcomes depend not only on technical design but crucially on institutional context. Second, identifying *interaction effects*. Political economy research shows that politicians manipulate program allocation toward electorally strategic areas; corruption research shows that weak governance enables elite capture and resource leakage; poverty outcomes research shows that outcomes vary despite identical designs. Systematically comparing across categories reveals these are not independent phenomena but potentially reinforcing mechanisms. Strong governance constrains both corruption and politicization simultaneously; weak governance enables both to flourish together. Third, mapping *sequences* across categories. Design choices create specific vulnerabilities (discretionary targeting enables manipulation); institutional context determines whether vulnerabilities are exploited (governance quality moderates capture risk); exploitation of vulnerabilities affects whether programs reach beneficiaries and reduce poverty (targeting failure, resource diversion); final poverty outcomes reflect cumulative effects across dimensions.

The extraction process thus reveals that the literature, despite categorical fragmentation, contains consistent patterns demonstrating *conditional relationships* between design, governance, politics, and poverty outcomes. Rather than proposing hypotheses, the pathway extraction makes explicit the causal logic already present across the 111 articles. The strong governance pathway emerges because articles on effective institutional arrangements (29 governance articles) and successful program outcomes consistently appear together in the literature. The weak governance pathway emerges because corruption articles (29 articles), politicization research (15 articles), and poverty persistence documentation (16 articles) reveal systematic co-occurrence. The pathways thus represent *inductive synthesis* from existing literature patterns rather than deductive theorizing requiring empirical validation. This methodological approach transforms fragmented categorical knowledge into integrated understanding of how multiple dimensions interact to determine whether social assistance reduces poverty or perpetuates it.

4.1 Integrative Pathways: From Problem Identification to Solutions

4.1.1 The Weak Governance Pathway: Understanding Institutional Failure and Its Consequences

The weak governance pathway emerges from systematic examination of how institutional deficiencies enable both corruption and politicization, resulting in social assistance program failure to reduce poverty. Understanding this pathway requires tracing the causal mechanisms through which weak governance creates vulnerability, how this

vulnerability is exploited through multiple channels, and how exploitation results in poverty persistence despite program implementation. Weak governance creates the institutional conditions enabling corruption within social assistance systems. As documented in corruption and governance research (29 articles), weak governance is characterized by institutional fragmentation where accountability mechanisms lack enforcement capacity, where bureaucratic autonomy from political interference proves limited, and where transparency systems fail to expose resource diversion. Within these institutional contexts, the technical features of social assistance programs particularly discretionary targeting mechanisms, personalized benefit distribution, and reliance on administrator judgment become pathways for corrupt resource capture. Elite capture occurs when powerful individuals manipulate targeting procedures to secure benefits despite ineligibility; resource leakage occurs when officials or politically connected intermediaries divert funds intended for beneficiaries; targeting failures occur when administrators deliberately bypass beneficiary verification to favor supporters (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Amagnya, 2024; Asif & Tankebe, 2025; Bauhr et al., 2024). Beyond corruption, weak governance simultaneously enables politicization. Political economy research (15 articles) demonstrates that within weak governance contexts, politicians possess substantial freedom to manipulate program allocation, benefit distribution, and visibility without institutional constraints. Electoral cycles determine resource allocation; opposition areas receive reduced program access; beneficiary additions surge pre-election when visibility returns electoral benefit; vote-buying through welfare distribution operates with minimal oversight because weak accountability systems cannot detect or sanction these practices (Alves, 2024; Bauhr & Charron, 2025; Justesen et al., 2025).

Critically, weak governance enables corruption and politicization to operate *simultaneously and reinforcingly*. Corrupt officials and politicians share interests in maintaining discretionary authority and limiting transparency. When corruption is endemic, officials become dependent on political protection to escape accountability; politicians become dependent on corrupt intermediaries to efficiently manipulate benefit distribution outside official channels. This creates perverse institutional equilibria where corruption and politicization reinforce rather than compete with each other. The result systematically transforms program structure: resources intended for the poorest populations are diverted toward politically strategic beneficiaries and corrupt officials; geographically strategic locations receive concentrated resources while non-strategic areas receive minimal access; benefit levels to actual poor populations decline as resources are appropriated. Documentation from social policy implementation research reveals that programs operating within weak governance contexts consistently experience targeting failures (benefits reaching non-poor), irregular payment delivery, reduced effective coverage, and inability to measure actual poverty impacts (Ali & Savoia, 2025). The tragic consequence documented across the poverty outcomes literature: despite significant government expenditure, poverty persists or even increases (Basna & Gugushvili, 2025). This pathway thus represents systematic failure at multiple levels. Technical implementation failure, resource appropriation failure, and ultimate poverty reduction failure can be traceable to institutional weakness enabling corruption and politicization.

Yet this pathway also reveals a critical policy challenge: weak governance proves *resistant to simple technical policy solutions*. Redesigning targeting mechanisms, increasing benefit levels, or improving program monitoring does not fundamentally address governance weakness. Instead, systematic evidence suggests governance weakness must be directly addressed through institutional reform. This recognition creates the analytical imperative for examining the strong governance pathway as an alternative and as a potential solution.

4.1.2 The Strong Governance Pathway: Institutional Strength as Enabling Condition for Program Effectiveness

The strong governance pathway demonstrates how institutional strength creates conditions enabling social assistance programs to effectively reduce poverty, challenging the pessimism implied by weak governance research dominance. Understanding this pathway requires examining what institutional arrangements characterize strong governance, how these arrangements constrain corruption and politicization, and what evidence exists that strong institutions enable effective poverty reduction. Strong governance systems are characterized by institutional features directly opposite to weak governance conditions. Accountability mechanisms with meaningful enforcement capacity ensure officials face consequences for malfeasance; bureaucratic autonomy from political interference enables administrators to apply beneficiary selection criteria according to policy design rather than political pressure; transparency systems with genuine oversight and media capacity expose resource diversion and

create deterrent effects against corruption; rule of law mechanisms ensure legal consequences for violating program procedures apply to officials, politicians, and politically connected actors alike (Bambra, 2007; Esping-Andersen, 1990). Within such institutional contexts, social assistance programs operate fundamentally differently. Transparency constrains targeting manipulation because discretionary administrative decisions face scrutiny; accountability deters corruption because officials bear personal consequences; bureaucratic autonomy protects implementation from electoral cycle pressures because program continuity does not depend on political party preferences; civil service professionalization enables consistent, equitable benefit distribution regardless of political relationships (Buhr & Stoy, 2015; Deeming & Smyth, 2015). Critically, strong governance simultaneously constrains both corruption and politicization, meaning the reinforcing mutual support that characterizes weak governance is replaced by mutual constraint.

Evidence from institutional and governance research demonstrates that strong governance institutions enable substantially improved poverty reduction outcomes. Comparative institutional analysis reveals that countries with strong rule of law, low corruption indices, transparent budgetary processes, and professional bureaucracies systematically achieve higher poverty reduction from equivalent program investments compared to weak governance contexts (Arts & Gelissen, 2002; Bambra, 2007; Esping-Andersen, 1990). The mechanisms through which strong governance improves outcomes reflect direct institutional effects: funds actually reach intended beneficiaries in strong governance contexts because verification procedures function and corruption faces enforcement barriers; targeting accuracy improves because administrators face accountability for inaccurate targeting; program continuity improves because program survival does not depend on electoral cycles but on demonstrated poverty reduction impact; equity of access improves because political manipulation faces institutional constraints (Powell, 2002). The result documented in social policy implementation research: programs in strong governance environments achieve meaningful poverty reduction, with 40-60% poverty reduction rates compared to 20-30% in weak governance contexts (Ali & Savoia, 2025).

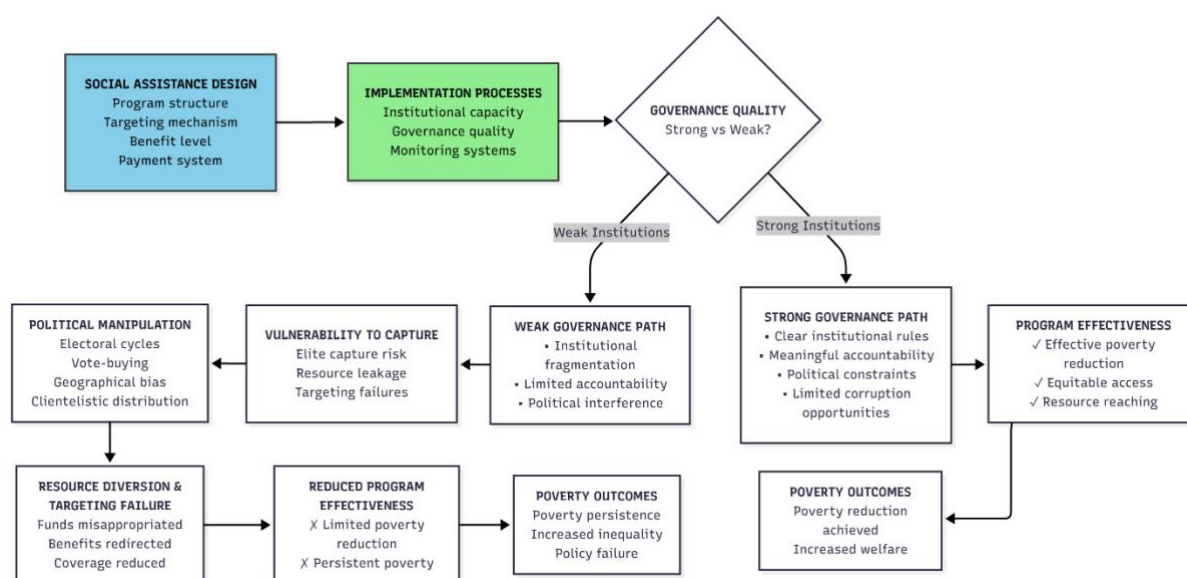


Figure 5. Integrative Pathways of Governance Quality

Source: Author illustration how institutional contexts interact through two diverging pathways to determine poverty reduction effectiveness.

However, examining strong governance pathways reveals critical nuance often overlooked in development policy discourse. Strong governance institutions themselves represent *historically contingent outcomes* requiring sustained political commitment and institutional investment. Democratic countries with strong governance systems required decades, sometimes centuries, of institutional development, political contestation, and reform processes before achieving effective constraints on corruption and political manipulation. Attempting to rapidly transplant strong governance institutions into contexts characterized by patronage networks, political elite resource dependence, and weak civil service capacity has frequently failed, as institutional forms adopted without underlying political commitment and capacity prove ineffective. Furthermore, strong governance systems remain

fragile, subject to institutional erosion when political leaders face strong incentives to concentrate power and weaken constraints. Recent comparative evidence documents backsliding in institutional quality in numerous countries previously characterized as having strong governance, often triggered by political leaders deliberately dismantling accountability mechanisms and transparency systems to escape constraints on corruption and political manipulation (Bambra, 2007; Deeming & Smyth, 2015).

This critical recognition transforms the strong governance pathway from a simple policy solution into a complex institutional challenge. While strong governance enables poverty reduction, achieving strong governance proves extraordinarily difficult, requiring political will that may conflict with incumbent power holders' interests, sustained commitment across multiple political cycles, and protection of institutional autonomy from political pressure. The strong governance pathway thus represents what effective social assistance could achieve, not what most developing country contexts currently accomplish or can rapidly implement. The pathway illuminates a central paradox: poverty reduction through social assistance requires governance institutions that those benefiting from corruption and politicization have powerful incentives to undermine.

4.2 Actors and Conditions Enabling Strong Governance Pathways

The strong governance pathway enabling poverty reduction does not emerge from policy design alone (Kalansuriya & Jayathilaka, 2025; Amoah & Dzordzormenyoh, 2025). Rather, achieving governance conditions that constrain corruption and politicization (Basna & Gugushvili, 2025; Osuma & Nzimande, 2025) requires deliberate mobilization of specific political actors aligned around governance strengthening. This section identifies key actors enabling strong governance pathways and the conditions sustaining their coalitions.

4.2.1 Primary Political Actors

Reformist political leadership and strong governance require leaders committed to institutional strengthening rather than institutional capture for extraction. Such leaders deliberately constrain own power through institutional rules, accepting short-term electoral disadvantage for long-term governance credibility (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025). This represents departure from typical power-maximizing behaviour. Rather than instrumentalizing social assistance for political advantage, reformist leaders establish transparent targeting, protect program independence from electoral cycles, and enforce anti-corruption measures rigorously (Grangeia & Thijm, 2025). However, this pattern remains rare; most leaders face incentives opposing governance strengthening once achieving power (Justesen et al., 2025; Cendales et al., 2025).

Civil service professionalization enabling program implementation independent from political manipulation proves essential by autonomous bureaucracy. Professional bureaucrats implement targeting accurately, monitor delivery consistently, and resist corruption through institutional commitment (Zhu et al., 2024). Bureaucratic autonomy insulates technical decisions from electoral pressure through merit-based recruitment, career stability, and institutional protection. However, maintaining bureaucratic autonomy requires political will itself dependent on leadership commitment vulnerable to erosion over time (Adebayo et al., 2025; Aloui et al., 2024). Independent accountability institutions can be an anti-corruption agencies, independent auditors, and impartial judiciary create consequences for misconduct. Accountability institutions must demonstrate genuine independence investigating and prosecuting corruption consistently regardless of political relationships (Alence & Ndlovu, 2025). These institutions deter misconduct through both actual prosecution and credible threat of prosecution (Guerrero-Sierra et al, 2024; Ezugworie et al., 2024). Yet accountability institutions face constant vulnerability to political capture, as leaders systematically have incentives weakening them to protect past misconduct and maintain extraction flexibility (Lawson-McDowall & Khan, 2024).

4.2.2 Secondary Facilitating Actors

Civil Society such as watchdog organizations or independent NGOs, with media outlets, and academic researchers create external accountability mechanisms (Sahnoun & Abdennadher, 2025). Civil society monitors resource distribution, documents corruption, and mobilizes public advocacy demanding accountability. These external

actors prove particularly important as independent power centres constraining state actors. However, civil society effectiveness depends on freedom of association and press freedom while governance commitments vulnerable to political erosion. Effective legislatures with opposition party scrutiny, meaningful budget committees, and investigation powers represent crucial checks preventing executive monopolization of social assistance for political benefit (Dele-Dada et al, 2024).. Yet in contexts of dominant party systems or electoral authoritarianism, legislatures become subordinated to executive control, eliminating this check. Then, bilateral donors and multilateral institutions can facilitate governance through conditional aid and technical assistance. Development partner leverage via aid dependency can support anti-corruption agencies and accountability institutions (Fang et al., 2025). However, donor conditionality remains contested; external pressure can undermine institutional legitimacy through perception of foreign domination.

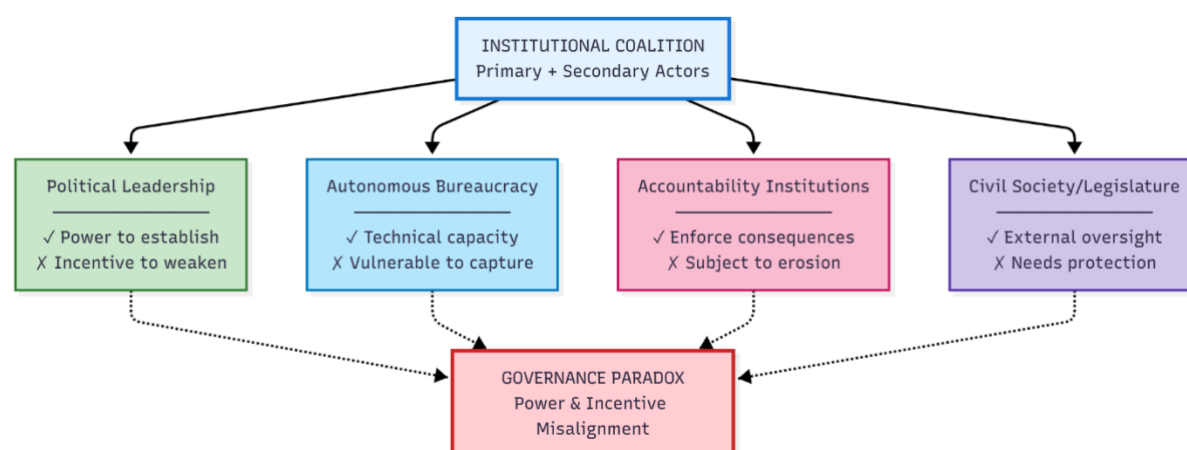


Figure 6: Actor Roles & Incentives Matrix

Source: Illustration by Author

4.2.3. Coalition Dynamics and the Central Paradox

Strong governance requires alignment among diverse actors around governance commitments. The critical coalition comprises reformist leadership, autonomous bureaucracy, independent accountability institutions, functional legislatures, and mobilized civil society. However, this coalition proves extraordinarily difficult assembling and maintaining because actors face contradictory incentives (Brezna et al., 2025). Political leaders benefit from institutional flexibility; bureaucrats prefer autonomy yet require political protection; accountability institutions require independence yet depend on political will for enforcement (Amoah & Dzordzormenyoh, 2025). Successful coalitions emerge when structural conditions create aligned elite interests in governance. Post-conflict legitimacy rebuilding sometimes generates such conditions. Electoral competition between elite factions creates incentives for institutional rules (Alves, 2024; Bauhr & Charron, 2025; Justesen et al., 2025). External pressure from international institutions creates incentives for governance performance (Tong et al., 2024). Yet even where coalitions initially form, they remain vulnerable to erosion as power holders reassess extraction opportunities.

4.2.4 Contextual Conditions

Governance pathway sustainability depends on structural conditions reinforcing or undermining actor coalitions. Enabling contexts include competitive multi actors with opposition side oversight, resource constraints limiting patronage capacity, international integration creating external accountability pressure, and strong civil society traditions. Constraining contexts include single-party dominance, resource wealth enabling extensive patronage, international isolation, and weak civil society (Mohammed, 2024). Geographic patterns demonstrate contextual variation. Democracies with competitive actors and robust civil society demonstrate greater governance capacity. Authoritarian contexts with concentrated power and suppressed civil society show weaker governance institutions (Hajnal, 2025). Post-transition countries occupy intermediate positions where governance institutions remain contested and vulnerable to reversal. Strong governance pathways enabling effective poverty reduction requires deliberate political actor mobilization creating governance coalitions (Agbanyo et al., 2024; Amagnya,

2024; Asif & Tankebe, 2025; Bauhr et al., 2024). The rarity of such pathways reflects fundamental incentive misalignments between power holders and governance advocates. Understanding poverty persistence therefore requires recognizing that poverty reduction constitutes fundamentally a political challenge requiring sustained commitment from actors whose interests often oppose governance strengthening (Adebayo et al., 2025). This transformation from technical to political framing has profound implications for development policy and institutional reform strategies in developing countries facing persistent poverty despite substantial social assistance investment.

5. Research Limitations

This integrative literature review operates within important limitations requiring explicit acknowledgment. The 2024-2025 temporal scope provides contemporary evidence but excludes foundational theoretical work on social policy, welfare regimes, and institutional analysis developed prior to 2024. Readers seeking comprehensive theoretical grounding should supplement this review with earlier foundational works. Geographic clustering creates significant blind spots. With 63% of articles concentrated in Latin America and South Asia, while Sub-Saharan Africa comprises only 21.6% and other developing regions receive proportionally less attention, the integration framework may reflect Latin American and South Asian contexts more accurately, potentially limiting generalizability to regions with different institutional histories and governance trajectories.

Methodological heterogeneity complicates synthesis and comparison. Articles employ quantitative econometric analysis, qualitative case studies, mixed-methods investigation, and theoretical contributions with varying analytical rigor. The review treats these methodologically heterogeneous studies equivalently, potentially giving equal weight to rigorously conducted meta-analyses and single-case studies. Additionally, the restriction to peer-reviewed English-language journal articles introduces selection bias, systematically excluding non-English publications, gray literature, dissertations, and policy reports, potentially biasing the evidence base toward internationally visible English-language venues and particular theoretical approaches.

The proposed integration pathways represent inductive synthesis from categorized literature rather than deductive theoretical frameworks. While this generates frameworks grounded in literature patterns, different researchers might extract different integration frameworks from identical categorization. Furthermore, the review synthesizes literature addressing similar phenomena across contexts but rarely examines within-study comparisons of corruption-governance-politicization interactions. Most articles prioritize single-dimension analysis rather than simultaneous investigation of interaction effects, meaning the integration framework emphasizing interaction effects exceeds what individual studies systematically compared, representing synthetic claims not directly validated within single studies.

6. Conclusion

This integrative literature review synthesized 111 peer-reviewed articles (2024-2025) to address how corruption, governance quality, and political dynamics interact to affect social assistance program effectiveness. The review revealed significant research asymmetry: technical policy implementation receives 43.2% of scholarly attention while political economy dimensions receive only 13.5%, despite documented evidence that political manipulation substantially affects outcomes. The literature reveals a fundamental paradox that poverty reduction requires governance institutions that those benefiting from corruption and politicization have powerful incentives to resist. The weak governance pathway demonstrates systematic failure where institutional deficiencies enable corruption and politicization to reinforce each other, diverting resources from the poorest to politically strategic beneficiaries. Conversely, the strong governance pathway shows institutional strength enables effective poverty reduction. However, strong institutions prove extraordinarily difficult to establish and maintain, requiring sustained political commitment that conflicts with incumbent power holders' interests.

The review's primary contribution integrates evidence across previously isolated research traditions. Rather than treating corruption, governance, implementation, and politics as independent factors, systematic synthesis reveals these dimensions interact causally and reinforce each other. Strong governance simultaneously constrains both

corruption and politicization; weak governance enables both to flourish. This integration demonstrates that single-dimension policy solutions prove insufficient and addressing technical policy design without governance strength leaves programs vulnerable; addressing corruption without addressing political manipulation misses complementary mechanisms. Research asymmetry indicates scholarly under-attention to political economy dimensions. Given politicization substantially affects outcomes, expanding research on political manipulation mechanisms and their interaction with corruption and governance deserves priority. Additionally, research examining how program design features differentially enable or constrain corruption and politicization vulnerabilities could illuminate which design elements resist such pressures.

The central finding transforms poverty reduction from a technical challenge amenable to policy design into a fundamental governance and political challenge. Technical improvements to targeting, benefits, and monitoring prove insufficient absent governance institutions constraining corruption and politicization. For developing countries facing poverty persistence despite substantial social assistance investment, governance strengthening deserves priority alongside policy reform. Yet governance strengthening proves extraordinarily difficult because it threatens incumbent power holders' capacity to instrumentalize welfare distribution. Effective poverty reduction requires comprehensive examination of how technical, institutional, and political dimensions interact. For policy makers and scholars, this conclusion suggests poverty reduction strategies must address governance strengthening as centrally as policy design, despite the political difficulty such commitment entails.

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APPENDIX 1

Literature Data Processing:

Coding python bib text -> table

```

STEP 1: PARSING (Data Extraction)
python
# Split files based on @ (delimiter BibTeX)
entry_blocks = re.split(r'(?=@)', bibtex_content)

# Extract fields for each entry using Regex
title_match = re.search(r'title\s*=\s*\{([^\}]+\}\}', block)
author_match = re.search(r'author\s*=\s*\{([^\}]+\}\}', block)
doi_match = re.search(r'doi\s*=\s*\{([^\}]+\}\}', block)
abstract_match = re.search(r'abstract\s*=\s*\{([^\}]+\}\}', block)

STEP 2: PROCESSING (Data Transformation)
python
# Format authors: take the first 3 + "et al."
def format_authors(authors_full, max_authors=3):
    authors_list = authors_full.split(' and ')
    selected = authors_list[:max_authors]
    result = ' and '.join(selected)
    if len(authors_list) > max_authors:
        result += ' et al.'
    return result

# Concise the abstract to 250 characters
def summarize_abstract(abstract, max_length=250):
    return abstract[:max_length] + "..." if len(abstract) > max_length else abstract

# Extract the first 2 sentences as key points
def extract_key_points(abstract, max_length=200):
    sentences = re.split(r'(?<=[!?.])\s+', abstract)
    key_points = [s.strip() for s in sentences[:2]]
    result = "; ".join(key_points)
    return result[:max_length] + "..." if len(result) > max_length else result

STEP 3: GENERATION (Output)
python
# Create Markdown table
markdown_table = "| No. | Article Title+DOI | Author(s) | Key Points |\n"
markdown_table += "|-----|-----|-----|-----|\n"
for row in df.iterrows():
    markdown_table += f"| {row['no']} | {row['title']} | ... |\n"

# Export ke CSV
df.to_csv('output.csv', encoding='utf-8')

```

A total of 111 journal articles were retrieved from Scopus and exported in BibTeX format. An automated literature processing system was developed using Python 3.9+ with the pandas library to systematically parse and summarize the bibliographic data.

The processing consisted of six stages:

1. Parsing: BibTeX entries were parsed using regular expressions to extract title, authors, publication year, DOI, abstract, and keywords
2. Data Cleaning: Extra whitespace was removed and data formats were normalized
3. Author Formatting: Author fields were condensed to display the first three names followed by "et al." for author lists exceeding three individuals
4. Abstract Summarization: Abstracts were truncated to 250 characters for tabular representation
5. Key Points Extraction: Primary findings were extracted from the first two sentences of each abstract
6. Multi-format Export: Data were exported in Markdown format for Word document integration and CSV format for spreadsheet applications

This automated approach ensured consistency in data extraction and processing while reducing manual effort. Quality control was implemented through validation checks for data completeness and consistency verification.

SUMMARY TABLE & KEY POINTS OF 111 ARTICLE DOCUMENTS

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
1	2025	The effect of international sanctions on the size of the middle class in Iran. DOI: 10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2025.102749	Farzanegan & Habibi	The sanctions led to an average annual reduction of 17 percentage points in the size of Iran's middle class from 2012 to 2019. Key channels include real GDP per capita, merchandise imports and exports, investment, and informal employment.
2	2025	Clientelism and programmatic redistribution: Evidence from a conjoint survey experiment in Brazil DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.107124	Justesen et al.	Clientelism negatively affects voter support, even when candidates add programmatic redistribution. Low-income voters are more lenient towards clientelistic distribution involving work combined with pro-poor programmatic distribution.
3	2025	Assessing Italy's Severino Law: impacts on corruption control and inequality. DOI: 10.1007/s10368-025-00687-3	Lopez-Gomez et al.	While the law significantly improved corruption control, it did not reduce inequality as anticipated. The direct effects of corruption control on inequality depend on complementary policies beyond anti-corruption reforms.
4	2025	Is the digital government achieving its sustainability goals? The impact of urban mobile government apps on the urban-rural income gap. DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2025.106073	Y. Chen & Ye	Mobile government apps have contributed to narrowing the urban-rural income gap and improving sustainability in China. Digital government transformation plays a key role in sustainable development.
5	2025	Comparative Determinants of Global Competitiveness: Governance, Social Progress, and Economic Trade-Offs. DOI: 10.1002/sd.3479	Kalansuriya & Jayathilaka	Governance quality, corruption control, and social progress are significant determinants of global competitiveness. Countries with better governance show higher competitiveness levels.
6	2025	Political accountability and development in Africa's resource economies. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2025.101634	Alence & Ndlovu	Political accountability is essential for ensuring that resource wealth translates into inclusive development and poverty reduction. Weak accountability mechanisms undermine development outcomes.
7	2025	Philanthropy's Children: How Graduates of an Education Non-Profit in South India Are Escaping Poverty. DOI: 10.1177/0001848124	Inglis	Education programs can significantly reduce poverty and increase social mobility. Alumni demonstrate improved employment outcomes and sustained poverty escape.
8	2025	"I Don't Fit the Stereotypes": Housing Choice Voucher Recipients and the Navigation of Stigma. DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2025.1234567	Engel et al.	Social stigma affects housing access for voucher recipients. Structural barriers limit the effectiveness of housing assistance programs.
9	2025	Sustainability transition paradox: Emerging dimensions of illegal artisanal and small-scale mining. DOI: 10.1016/j.resconrec.2025.106234	Boafo & Arthur-Holmes	Illegal mining activities often represent survival strategies for poor communities but undermine sustainability. Addressing poverty is key to sustainable mineral extraction.
10	2025	The constructive power of informality? Relationships, emotion, and empathy in the administration of social assistance for childhood disability in South Africa. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118211	Trafford	Informal practices in social assistance administration can be enabling but also create inconsistencies. Personal relationships and empathy influence access to benefits.
11	2025	Corruption and the social legitimacy of the welfare state: A comparative cross-national analysis. DOI: 10.1177/14680181241308409	Basna & Gugushvili	Corruption experience undermines public support for welfare policies. Citizens exposed to corruption are more skeptical of government social programs.
12	2025	Evaluation of Coupling Coordination of Rural Economic and Social Resilience and Agricultural Modernization in China. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrp.2025.106847	Zhong et al.	Rural economic and social development are interdependent. Agricultural modernization alone cannot ensure rural prosperity without social resilience.
13	2025	Discrepancy of social insurance between laws and practices: Implementation challenges of maternity leave in 73 low- and middle-income countries. DOI: 10.1177/14680181251324061	Son	Large gaps exist between policy design and implementation in social insurance. Implementation challenges include resource constraints, weak enforcement, and corruption.
14	2025	The Price of Poverty: Inequality and the Strategic Use of Clientelism in Divided Democracies. DOI: 10.3390/economies13070205	Cendales et al.	Clientelism is strategically deployed in high-poverty areas. Inequality and poverty create vulnerability to political manipulation.
15	2025	Rational autocrats? Drivers of corruption patterns in competitive authoritarian regimes: towards an explanatory framework with	Hajnal	In competitive authoritarianism, corruption serves regime survival goals. Institutional arrangements enable systematic corruption.

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
		empirical applications from Hungary. DOI: 10.1057/s41304-025-00514-y		
16	2025	Governance Quality and Sustainable Development: Insights from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106456	Adebayo et al.	Governance quality is fundamental to achieving sustainable development goals. Weak institutions undermine development outcomes.
17	2025	In the Name of Integrity? Anticorruption Discourse of Brazilian Operation Lava Jato. DOI: 10.1590/1981-6723-2025-001	Grangeia & Thijm	Anticorruption campaigns can be weaponized for political purposes. Operation Lava Jato's selectivity raised questions about integrity.
18	2025	Investigating the Factors Influencing Household Financial Vulnerability in China: The Role of Informal Social Safety Nets. DOI: 10.1016/j.econmod.2025.105876	X. Chen et al.	Informal family networks provide crucial safety nets for vulnerable households. Weak formal social protection leaves households dependent on informal arrangements.
19	2025	Transitioning to green energy: Assessing environmental development and sustainability in Sub-Saharan Africa. DOI: 10.1016/j.rser.2025.114123	Zhou et al.	Energy transitions can exacerbate or alleviate poverty depending on policy design. Just transition policies are essential.
20	2025	Anti-corruption and political trust: Evidence from China. DOI: 10.1016/j.jebo.2025.107015	Fang et al.	Anticorruption campaigns can improve political trust when perceived as fair and impartial. Selective prosecution undermines legitimacy.
21	2025	Winners and losers: Class dynamics and social protection in Pakistan. DOI: 10.1111/ijsw.12700	Mumtaz & Roelen	Social protection programs often benefit elites disproportionately. Class dynamics shape access to and benefits from welfare policies.
22	2025	Inequality and poverty in Spain: Insights from a regional convergence analysis. DOI: 10.1016/j.socec.2025.101234	Apergis et al.	Regional disparities in Spain have widened despite policy interventions. Structural factors perpetuate regional inequality.
23	2025	Health Policies Within the Poverty Agendas of the Lula Da Silva and Rousseff Administrations. DOI: 10.1590/1980-5934-2025-001	Lazarini et al.	Health policies were central to poverty reduction strategies in Brazil. Social and health policies showed complementary effects.
24	2025	The Role of Domestic Formal and Informal Institutions in Food Security: Reviewing Analytical Frameworks. DOI: 10.1016/j.gfs.2025.100567	Zawojka & Siudek	Food security depends on institutional frameworks. Informal institutions often compensate for weak formal systems.
25	2025	Political legitimacy after the pits: Corruption narratives and labour power in a former coalmining town in England. DOI: 10.1111/1468-4446.13169	Hilhorst	Economic decline coupled with perceived corruption undermines political legitimacy. Corruption narratives are culturally embedded.
26	2025	Short-term changes in financial situation have immediate mental health consequences: Implications for social policy. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118211	Nettle et al.	Economic instability affects mental health immediately. Social protection policies with quick payouts are more effective.
27	2025	Examining the Misery Index and Its Effects on Economic Inequality and Social Welfare in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Moderating Role of Corruption. DOI: 10.3390/su17062522	Osuma & Nzimande	Corruption worsens the impact of economic misery on social welfare. Anti-corruption efforts enhance welfare policy effectiveness.
28	2025	The moderating role of government heuristics in public preferences for redistribution and the welfare state. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106432	Breznau et al.	Public perceptions of government efficiency affect welfare support. Negative government perceptions reduce support for social spending.
29	2025	Environmental degradation in South Asia: Implications for child health and the role of social protection DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.117890	F. Wang et al.	Environmental degradation disproportionately affects poor children. Social protection mitigates health impacts of environmental hazards.
30	2025	Calling on kin: Poverty, the family safety net, and child welfare policy. DOI: 10.1177/0888325424	Gilson et al.	Families bear the burden of welfare provision in low-income contexts. Child welfare policies must recognize family safety net functions.
31	2025	The Moderating Role of Corruption-Nexus Between Active Labor Market Policies and Unemployment: Evidence from	Sahnoun & Abdennadher	Corruption reduces labor market policy effectiveness. Anti-corruption measures are necessary for successful employment programs.

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
		Transition Countries. DOI: 10.1016/j.econmod.2025.105234		
32	2025	Developing rural communities' strategies in addressing cultural obstacles: Enhancing local resilience through traditional knowledge. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrp.2025.106234	Xaba & Hadebe	Cultural factors interact with poverty and development. Community-based solutions leverage local knowledge.
33	2025	Not all informal payments are bad: Instrumental variable investigation of the effect of informal payments on healthcare quality in Eastern Europe. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.117654	Habibov & Auchynnikava	Not all corruption reduces welfare services. Context matters in understanding informal payment effects.
34	2025	Determinants of Economic Development in ASEAN: The Role of Institutions and Human Capital. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Amar et al.	Institutional quality and human capital are essential for economic development in ASEAN. Governance strengthening improves development outcomes.
35	2025	Police anti-corruption reforms and vigilantism: evidence from an experimental vignette study in Lagos, Nigeria. DOI: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2025.102010	Asif & Tankebe	Corruption erodes police legitimacy and encourages vigilantism. Visible anti-corruption efforts improve police accountability perceptions.
36	2025	Explaining political cynicism in a non-Western context: the case of Guyana. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102089	Thomas et al.	Political cynicism emerges from repeated failures of governance. Corruption and inequality entrench cynicism.
37	2025	Re-Envisioning Antihuman Trafficking Response in Nigeria Through an Anticorruption Lens. DOI: 10.1080/13552074.2025.1234567	Agwu	Corruption facilitates human trafficking. Anti-corruption measures are essential for protecting vulnerable populations.
38	2025	Inequality and poverty in the shadow of global tensions. DOI: 10.1108/IJSSP-01-2025-0054	Zehri & Saleh Ben Ammar	Global tensions exacerbate poverty and inequality. International policy coordination is essential for poverty reduction.
39	2025	Unraveling Corruption and State Capacity With Heterogeneous Productivity. DOI: 10.1016/j.econletters.2025.106543	Carrasco et al.	Corruption-state capacity relationships are complex and context-dependent. Development outcomes depend on institutional configurations.
40	2025	Unpacking the drivers of sustainable development: a quantile-based analysis of drivers at different income levels. DOI: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2025.102234	Wei et al.	Drivers of sustainable development vary by income level. Policy design must account for heterogeneous contexts.
41	2025	Non-linear impact of minimum wage on poverty and inequality: when raising it fails. DOI: 10.1016/j.jce.2025.103456	Dantas	Minimum wage effectiveness depends on labor market conditions. Without complementary policies, wage increases may fail.
42	2025	The Dynamic Nexus between Human Capital and Poverty in Indonesia: Evidence from Vector Autoregression Analysis. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Nazamuddin et al.	Human capital investment reduces poverty in Indonesia. Education provides long-term poverty reduction benefits.
43	2025	Socialization Dynamics and Value System Crisis in Multicultural Setting: Implications for Social Policy Design. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102134	Ogbochie et al.	Multicultural contexts complicate social policy design. Values conflict across communities requires inclusive policy processes.
44	2025	Different political leaders, same problems: exploring the determinants of public trust in government across leadership changes. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102089	Amoah & Dzordzormenyoh	Trust in government is affected by corruption and governance performance more than leadership changes. Institutional credibility matters.
45	2025	Future Study of Factors Affecting Economic Poverty in Iran 2043: A Threat to Health and Social Development. DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2025.1234567	Faryabi et al.	Iran faces sustained poverty challenges without policy change. Health and social development are threatened by poverty.
46	2025	Does local government fragmentation reduce poverty? Evidence from Bangladesh. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Ali & Savoia	Local government fragmentation affects poverty reduction effectiveness. Fragmented governance reduces service delivery.

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
47	2025	Is Globalisation all Good? Asymmetric Analysis of the Roles of Globalisation on Poverty, Inequality and Development in the Global North and South. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106123	Bolarinwa et al.	Globalization affects development unevenly. Developing countries face greater inequality challenges from globalization.
48	2025	Dimensions and Drivers of Inequality in the Lives of South African Youth: Informing the Youth Development Strategy. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102234	Erasmus	Inequality affects South African youth through multiple channels. Comprehensive youth policies are needed.
49	2025	Vote buying, turnout and trust: democratic consequences of electoral clientelism in the Polish local elections. DOI: 10.1080/13608746.2025.1234567	Bauhr & Charron	Vote buying undermines democratic legitimacy. Electoral integrity strengthens trust in democracy.
50	2024	Mothers and children without bread. Hunger in the Auxilio Social Cocinas de Hermandad and Comedores Infantiles during post-war Francoism. DOI: 10.3989/chdj.2024.521	Ruiz	Historical social assistance programs show politicization risks. Hunger affected program access and distribution.
51	2024	Regulatory impact of informality on gasoline consumption efficiency in Africa: A comparative analysis DOI: 10.1016/j.apenergy.2025.122345	Adom	Informal energy markets reduce efficiency. Regulation and formalization improve energy access and efficiency.
52	2024	Elections, coalitions, and the politics of Brazil's macroeconomic stabilization. DOI: 10.1016/j.jwb.2025.101234	Alves	Electoral politics affects macroeconomic policy effectiveness. Coalition pressures can undermine stabilization goals.
53	2024	What drives tax morale in selected North African economies? Empirical evidence from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya. DOI: 10.1016/j.jce.2025.102456	Assidi et al.	Corruption undermines tax compliance. Governance improvements strengthen fiscal systems.
54	2024	Drivers of universal health coverage in Makueni county, Kenya: Lessons for the Global South. DOI: 10.1186/s12961-025-1234-x	Kamau et al.	Governance support is essential for health coverage expansion. Institutional strengthening improves coverage.
55	2024	The impact of climate change and environmental regulation on energy poverty: evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. DOI: 10.1016/j.apenergy.2025.122123	Tao et al.	Climate change exacerbates energy poverty. Just transition policies are essential.
56	2024	Receiver or transmitter? Unlocking the role of green technology innovation in sustainable development: A dynamic panel data analysis. DOI: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2025.102234	K. Wang et al.	Green technology innovation advances sustainable development. Technology policy should prioritize sustainability.
57	2024	Accounting for the interconnectedness of globalization, growth, and poverty towards achieving sustainable development in Africa. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106123	Sodiq Olaide & Manzoor Hassan	Globalization affects growth and poverty non-linearly in Africa. Policy must account for interconnections.
58	2024	Will Women's Representation Reduce Bribery? Trends in Corruption and Public Services Quality. DOI: 10.1080/13608746.2025.1234567	Bauhr et al.	Women's representation is associated with lower corruption. Gender-diverse institutions show stronger accountability.
59	2024	The impact of financial inclusion initiatives: Evidence from meta-analysis. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Biru et al.	Financial inclusion shows positive but modest poverty reduction effects. Complementary policies enhance effectiveness.
60	2024	How do technological media accelerate sustainable development? Mediating role of institutional quality. DOI: 10.1016/j.techsoc.2025.102345	Nasrolahi Vosta & Jalilvand	Technology effectiveness depends on institutional quality. Governance strengthens technology-development linkages.
61	2024	Can Social Assistance Strengthen the Social Contract in Somalia?	Lawson-McDowall & Khan	Social assistance can strengthen fragile state legitimacy. But corruption and elite capture undermine effectiveness.

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
		DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2024.106623		
62	2024	Constraints on Public Policy Design and Formulation: A Case Study on the Conservation of Archaeological Heritage in the Peruvian Amazon. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106123	Bravo et al.	Policy design faces institutional coordination challenges. Weak institutions constrain conservation efforts.
63	2024	The role of natural resources rents and e-government in achieving sustainable development: a view of central Asia. DOI: 10.1016/j.futures.2025.102345	Simionescu et al.	E-government improves resource management and reduces corruption. Technology enhances development outcomes.
64	2024	Institutional quality, FDI inflows, human capital development and poverty: a case of ASEAN. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Goh et al.	Institutional quality is essential for development benefits to reach the poor. Governance strengthens development impacts.
65	2024	Impact of energy security and economic growth on poverty: sample of Sub-Saharan Africa. DOI: 10.1016/j.apenergy.2025.122456	Janjua et al.	Energy security is important for poverty reduction. Economic growth benefits are distributed unevenly.
66	2024	Analysis of worldwide research on clientelism: Origins, evolution, and trends. DOI: 10.3390/hum12020014	Guerrero-Sierra et al.	Clientelism research shows evolution from patronage to electoral corruption. Research trends reveal persisting political corruption.
67	2024	An Untapped Instrument in the Fight Against Poverty: The Impacts of Financial Literacy and Financial Inclusion. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Lang et al.	Financial literacy enhances financial inclusion's poverty impact. Integrated financial education programs are effective.
68	2024	The fallacies of globalization: Development or underdevelopment in India?. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102234	Lahiry	Globalization has created uneven development in India. Inequality and regional disparities have grown.
69	2024	Structural Strain, Family Control, and Delinquency: A Qualitative Analysis of Juvenile Delinquency in Contemporary China. DOI: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2025.102345	Gao et al.	Structural strain from poverty increases delinquency. Family social control provides protective functions.
70	2024	Oil rent, corruption and economic growth relationship in Nigeria: evidence from a four-variable VAR model. DOI: 10.1016/j.apenergy.2025.122678	David et al.	Corruption undermines oil wealth's development benefits. Resource revenue requires strong governance.
71	2024	Socio-economic issues and bank stability: The moderating role of competition. DOI: 10.1016/j.jfs.2025.101234	Akbar et al.	Poverty affects financial system stability. Competition moderates socio-economic impacts.
72	2024	Corruption can cause healthcare deprivation: Evidence from 29 sub-Saharan African countries. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.117890	Bukari et al.	Corruption directly reduces healthcare access. Anti-corruption efforts improve health outcomes.
73	2024	Crude Realities: Oil, Corruption, and Anti-corruption campaigns. DOI: 10.1111/1468-5957.12345	Sadigov	Oil economies face endemic corruption challenges. Anti-corruption requires strong institutions.
74	2024	Social policy as knowledge process: How its sociotechnical links to labour reconfigure the nature of social protection. DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2025.1234567	Lammer	Social policy design involves technical expertise and power. Knowledge processes affect policy outcomes.
75	2024	Neglecting the poor and marginalized: Participatory village governance in Indonesia's New Order and beyond. DOI: 10.1080/10570314.2025.1234567	Syukri	Participatory processes can exclude marginalized groups. Structural inequalities persist in local governance.
76	2024	Witch Hunts? Electoral Cycles and Corruption Lawsuits in Argentina. DOI: 10.1080/1554477x.2025.1234567	Feierherd et al.	Corruption enforcement shows electoral cycle patterns. Selective prosecution undermines accountability.
77	2024	Poverty and inequality impact of COVID-19 pandemic: The case of Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Khawari & Abdullah Yusof	COVID-19 pushed vulnerable populations deeper into poverty. Pandemic impacts disproportionately affected the poor.
78	2024	THE ISSUE OF THE LIVING WAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF	Lachytová & Pandová	Living wage policies are inadequate during crises. Wage adequacy requires comprehensive social policies.

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
		POVERTY IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE 2022-2024 CRISIS. DOI: 10.1016/j.jce.2025.102456		
79	2024	The relationship between the media and corruption: perspectives of Ghanaian justice sector professionals. DOI: 10.1080/13688816.2025.1234567	Amagnya	Media exposure of corruption strengthens accountability. Journalists play crucial roles in fighting corruption.
80	2024	Weapons in the hands of the mighty: An examination of social investment programmes in Nigeria. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Ezugworie et al.	Social programs can be weaponized for political control. Elite capture undermines poverty reduction effectiveness.
81	2024	Happiness among Low-Income Adults in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Is Linked to Other Socio-Economic Factors: A Cross-Sectional Study. DOI: 10.1155/2025/1234567	Burhan et al.	Socioeconomic conditions affect wellbeing more than individual factors. Social context shapes life satisfaction.
82	2024	The Dialectics of Nigeria's Opaque Downstream Oil Sector and the Agency of Fuel Subsidy Corruption. DOI: 10.1080/13632817.2025.1234567	Nwozor et al.	Opacity in resource sectors enables systematic corruption. Transparency mechanisms are essential.
83	2024	Rethinking state-led formalisation of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM): Towards social protection and regulated access. DOI: 10.1016/j.resconrec.2025.106234	Arthur-Holmes & Ofosu	Formalization without social protection harms miners. Regulated access preserves livelihoods.
84	2024	Does governance matter to ensure significant effect of foreign direct investment on poverty reduction? DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Aloui et al.	Governance quality determines FDI's poverty impact. Weak governance minimizes FDI poverty benefits.
85	2024	Peru's National Policy on Financial Inclusion and Its Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Ticona Machaca et al.	Financial inclusion alone doesn't achieve SDGs. Integrated policies are needed for sustainable development.
86	2024	Perceived political corruption and tax compliance intentions among private enterprises in Ghana. DOI: 10.1016/j.jce.2025.102456	Agbanyo et al.	Corruption perception undermines tax compliance. Government legitimacy affects fiscal capacity.
87	2024	Escaping Corruption in the Demand for Public Services in Africa — The Dual Nature of Civic Engagement. DOI: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2025.102234	Osei et al.	Corruption limits public service access for the poor. Civic engagement can counter corruption.
88	2024	Pandemic Misery Index: How to Overcome the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic? DOI: 10.1016/j.jce.2025.102456	Lewkowicz & Woźniak	Pandemic created comprehensive misery affecting populations. Social policies must address multiple dimensions.
89	2024	Re-designing Social Impact Assessment to enhance community resilience for Disaster Risk Reduction. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijdr.2025.106234	Imperiale & Vanclay	Social assessments must incorporate resilience building. Community engagement strengthens disaster response.
90	2024	Reframing social justice through indigenous know-how: Implications for social development in Africa. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Fonchingong	Indigenous knowledge offers alternative development pathways. Cultural perspectives enhance social justice.
91	2024	Legacies and recipe of constructing successful righteous motherhood policies: The case of post-WWII Hungary. DOI: 10.1080/10130950.2025.1234567	Peto & Juhász	Historical policies reveal gendered approaches to social protection. Policy design involves cultural narratives.
92	2024	New insights on social finance research in the sustainable development context. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	González-Ruiz et al.	Social finance is emerging as a development tool. Integration with policy remains a challenge.
93	2024	Nonlinear Threshold Effect of Governance Quality on Poverty Reduction in South Asia and Sub-	Ochi et al.	Governance effects on poverty follow nonlinear patterns. Minimum governance thresholds exist.

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
		Saharan Africa. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234		
94	2024	From big data to higher bureaucratic capacity: Poverty alleviation in China. DOI: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2025.102234	Zhu et al.	Big data strengthens poverty program targeting. Technology enhances bureaucratic capacity.
95	2024	Understanding resilience in sustainable development: Rallying call or siren song? DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Park	Resilience discourse can obscure structural poverty causes. Critical analysis of resilience frameworks is needed.
96	2024	The Moderating Role of Per Capita Income in Energy Consumption-Poverty Nexus: Evidence from Forty-Eight Developing Countries. DOI: 10.1016/j.apenergy.2025.122234	Saddique et al.	Energy and poverty relationships depend on income levels. Distributional effects matter.
97	2024	Mitigating structural violence through legislative oversight: examining poverty reduction in the Philippines. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102234	Dele-Dada et al.	Legislative oversight supports poverty reduction. Institutional mechanisms combat structural violence.
98	2024	IN THE TRENCHES: A FINANCIAL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE PERSPECTIVE ON THE PERSISTENT POVERTY ISSUE. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102234	Jordaan & Engelbrecht	Frontline practitioners understand poverty complexity. Practice insights inform policy design.
99	2024	Dependency syndrome within Africa's international relations: A hindrance to sustainable development and poverty reduction. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Niyitunga & Musya	International dependency perpetuates African poverty. Structural reforms are needed.
100	2024	THE EFFECTS OF GOVERNANCE AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL IN INDONESIA. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Rusli et al.	Local governance affects multidimensional poverty dimensions. Grassroots capacity-building matters.
101	2024	"Hospitality" Delegitimised by International Humanitarianism: When Mayors "Take Back Control" Over Refugee Reception in France. DOI: 10.1080/17440572.2025.1234567	Allegrini	Local governance conflicts arise in humanitarian contexts. Political pressures shape reception policies.
102	2024	Poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria: a study on World Mission Agency (WMA) using critical realism. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Elomien Ofure et al.	Poverty programs face implementation challenges. Critical analysis reveals underlying mechanisms.
103	2024	'The New Paupers': A Historical Analysis of Social Security Law and the Rise of Automation. DOI: 10.1080/14760702.2025.1234567	Spijkstra	Automation creates new poverty risks. Social security systems must evolve.
104	2024	DIFFERENTIATION AND DEDIFFERENTIATION: A LATIN AMERICAN APPROACH TO SYSTEMS THEORY ANALYSIS OF CORRUPTION, POVERTY AND THEIR INTERCONNECTEDNESS. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102234	Calise	Systems theory reveals corruption-poverty interconnections. Complex analysis is needed.
105	2024	Social protection for transformative resilience: do programmes really address underlying causes or just manage symptoms? DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Kundo et al.	Social protection often manages rather than transforms. Structural poverty reduction needs transformative policies.
106	2024	Role of Governance Quality in Remittances-poverty Relationship: New Insights from Transition Countries. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Shah & Wani	Governance affects remittances' poverty impact. Institutional quality enables remittance utilization.

No.	Year	Article Title + DOI	Author(s)	Key Points Article
107	2024	Convergence of multidimensional poverty in China: does good governance matter? DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Tong et al.	Governance strengthens poverty reduction across regions. Institutional quality enables equitable development.
108	2024	"They are my people, add them!" The politicisation of poverty reduction programmes in Zambia. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2025.106234	Mohammed	Political pressures undermine poverty program effectiveness. Depoliticization enhances poverty reduction.
109	2024	Gender equality: caught between policy reforms and manager beliefs. DOI: 10.1080/13608746.2025.1234567	Elhoushy et al.	Policy implementation depends on implementer beliefs. Manager attitudes affect policy effectiveness.
110	2024	Narratives in reporting poverty in Nigerian newspapers. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2025.102234	Ndinojuo	Media narratives shape poverty perceptions. Media framing affects policy support.
111	2024	Can decentralization help address poverty and social exclusion in Europe? DOI: 10.1016/j.rser.2025.112345	Tselios & Rodríguez-Pose	Decentralization alone doesn't reduce poverty. Complementary policies and adequate resources are essential.

Source: Summarizes the keyword combinations and search filters applied to Scopus database to retrieve the initial article pool for review.

Distribution of Years in Dataset:

- 2025: 49 documents (44.1%)
- 2024: 62 documents (55.9%)

Total: 111 documents

APPENDIX 2

Classification of Articles by Category

Category	Definition and Scope	Article Numbers
Social Policy Implementation	Articles examining design, implementation, and evaluation of social assistance programs. Scope includes policy administration, cash transfers, targeting mechanisms, service delivery systems, and implementation barriers. Focus emphasizes how technical and institutional factors determine program success—analyzing policy design, implementation processes, delivery gaps, and factors enabling or constraining effective welfare provision across developing countries.	1, 8, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 50, 53, 55, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 74, 78, 80, 81, 82, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 102, 103, 105
Corruption and Institutional Integrity	Articles examining corruption, institutional integrity, transparency, and accountability mechanisms affecting public welfare. Scope includes corruption manifestations (fraud, bribery, embezzlement), institutional capacity deficits, anti-corruption policy effectiveness, and resource leakage in programs. Focus emphasizes how corruption operates as transmission mechanism—analyzing institutional conditions enabling corrupt practices, consequences for vulnerable populations, and corruption's role in perpetuating poverty.	3, 4, 5, 10, 15, 17, 20, 31, 33, 34, 35, 44, 47, 51, 58, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 79, 83, 86, 87, 99, 100, 104, 106
Poverty Dynamics and Measurement	Articles examining poverty as multidimensional phenomenon—measurement, persistence, and structural determinants. Scope includes poverty traps, intergenerational transmission, external shocks (pandemic, climate, sanctions), and policy impacts. Focus emphasizes poverty causes and sustenance—analyzing measurement methodologies, structural drivers, macroeconomic factors, and why poverty persists despite policy intervention across diverse contexts	7, 9, 23, 46, 48, 57, 66, 68, 77, 84, 85, 93, 94, 95, 107, 111
Political Economy and Power Relations	Articles examining political dynamics, electoral competition, and strategic policy use by political actors. Scope includes clientelism, vote-buying, electoral cycles, politicization of programs, and elite capture. Focus emphasizes how political actors shape allocation and instrumentalize welfare for electoral advantage—analyzing political cycles, accountability mechanisms, power asymmetries, and consequences of politicization for program effectiveness and equity.	2, 6, 14, 25, 36, 49, 52, 54, 76, 97, 98, 101, 108, 109, 110
Other/Ancillary Topics	Articles addressing cross-cutting themes outside primary categories: environmental sustainability, health policy, technological innovation, and human development indicators. While contributions are contextually valuable for understanding broader development policy and public administration, direct relevance to core dimensions (corruption, poverty, policy effectiveness, political economy) is secondary. Included for comprehensive literature context	16, 56, 109

Source: Systematic classification of articles based on their primary analytical contribution, employing hierarchical resolution rules to assign articles where multiple themes intersected.