**JDSS** Journal of Development and Social Sciences
www.jdss.org.pk

# Discursive Representation of Hybrid Regimes and Defective Democracies: A Mixed Methods Meta-Analysis of Political Science Literature (2018-2022)

**¹Wajid Khan\*, ²Dr. Syed Raghab Ali and ³Abbas Rashid Butt**

1.  M. Phil. Scholar, FCCU, Punjab, Pakistan
2.  Executive Director, Lahore Institute for Research and Analysis (LIRA)-the University of Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3.  Research Fellow, Lahore Institute for Research and Analysis (LIRA)-the University of Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

| **\*Corresponding Author:** | abbas.rashid@lira.uol.edu.pk |

## ABSTRACT

The research study analyses types of political regime-defective democracies and hybrid regimes-are represented discursively in academic literature from 2018 to 2022. Hybrid Regimes and defective democracies blur democracy-authoritarianism lines, prompting scholars to refine frameworks capturing their complexities in modern political systems. It engages a mixed-method approach-using computational sentiment analysis connected with qualitative concept analysis for examining narratives on politics and institutional dynamics. In the first phase of the study, 79 Litmaps-retrieved articles were narrowed down to 16 peer-reviewed articles from Scopus-indexed journals for in-depth analysis. In all, these were processed through Atlas. ti 24 to extract conceptual themes and to categorize sentiment toward regime type. The findings from sentiment and thematic coding convey that the scholarly discourse treats Democratic Backsliding with criticisms and strong negative sentiments, with military overreach associated with weakened civilian governance and compromised institutional independence. The study recommends the demand for institutional reforms needed to reinforce civilian supremacy and the resilience of democracies in hybrid regimes.

| **KEYWORDS** | Hybrid Regime, Defective Democracy, Political Engineering, Democratic Backsliding, Sentiment Analysis, Qualitative Coding |

## Introduction

The study of hybrid regimes and defective democracies has gained significant traction in political science, particularly as political systems increasingly defy conventional classifications of democracy or Authoritarianism (Lyulyov et al., 2021). Hybrid regimes, positioned between democracy and authoritarianism, exhibit features of both but fail to consolidate into either. Defective democracies, on the other hand, maintain the institutional framework of democracy but suffer from fundamental deficiencies that prevent full democratic functioning (Bogaards, 2009). Theoretically, this study builds upon existing scholarship on hybrid regimes and defective democracies. Dongwon Lee and Sujin Min conceptualize defective democracies as a system where democratic institutions exist but fail to function due to deficiencies in electoral integrity, political participation, civil liberties, and the rule of law (Lee & Min, 2021). The notion of electoral authoritarianism is explained, where elections serve as a façade to legitimize authoritarian control (Bogaards, 2009). The military's historical role in shaping civilian politics has prevented democratic consolidation, it is argued that democratic breakdowns occur when non-democratic forces overshadow elected representatives (Carbone, 2007). This aligns with Dongwon Lee and Sujin Min's assertions that a hybrid regime can exist within a democratic constitutional framework while being controlled by non-democratic forces.

The classification of political regimes has been a central concern in political science, with scholars debating whether a hybrid regime presents a distinct category or transitional

phases of democracy and authoritarianism. While scholars emphasize the structural deficiencies of defective democracies, and how electoral authoritarianism allows regimes to maintain a democratic façade while consolidating authoritarian control. The classification of political system – whether as a hybrid regime or a defective democracy – holds profound implications for the study of democratization, civil-military relations, and governance in the world. This research contributes to the theoretical and empirical understanding of hybrid regimes and defective democracies. This study advances the academic discourse on political regimes by critically assessing the conceptual overlap between hybrid regimes and defective democracies.

**Literature Review**

**Defective Democracy vs Electoral Authoritarianism**

A foundational critique of the theoretical complexity is explained as surrounding hybrid regimes, analyzing two prominent classifications: Defective democracy and electoral authoritarianism (Bogaards, 2009). Scholars argue that hybrid regimes retain democratic institutions but suffer from functional deficiencies in the electoral process, political participation, civil liberties, and the rule of law (Caligiuri & De Luca, 2021). These deficiencies prevent full democratic consolidation, making hybrid regimes structurally different from both full democracies and outright autocracies. Conversely, electoral authoritarianism, as defined by scholars, suggests that hybrid regimes are fundamentally authoritarian, using elections as a tool for maintaining control rather than fostering genuine competition. These regimes conduct elections but systematically manipulate them through media control, judicial interference, and electoral fraud to ensure continued dominance. These perspectives, for being one-sided, defective democracy, focus excessively on democratic erosion, while electoral authoritarianism highlights authoritarian control (Bogaards, 2009). Bogaards proposes a "double root strategy", integrating both perspectives to capture the complexity of hybrid regimes.

**Are Hybrid Regimes Transitional or Stable?**

Morlino (2009) challenged the conceptualization of hybrid regimes as stable governance models. He argues that such regimes may be temporary phases within broader democratization or autocratization processes rather than distinct categories. However, empirical study suggests that a Hybrid regime can persist over time, developing institutional mechanism that allows it to function without transitioning fully to democracy or authoritarianism (Lezra, 2022).

Lyulyov et al. conceptualize Hungry as a "Potemkin democracy", where formal democratic institution exists but are gradually hollowed out. They trace Hungary's shift into an: elected autocracy" by 2014, demonstrating how democratic erosion occurs through legal manipulations, executive dominance, and controlled media environments (Lyulyov et al., 2021). Bozoki and Hegedus expand on this, introducing the concept of an externally constrained hybrid regime, while Hungary's European Union (EU) membership imposes limitations on outright authoritarianism, paradoxically legitimizing the regime's undemocratic practices (Bozóki & Hegedus, 2021).

These studies highlight the role of institutional manipulation and external legitimacy in sustaining hybrid regimes. Scholars argue that a hybrid regime should not be classified as a diminished democracy or authoritarian state but as a distinct political model. They introduce a multidimensional continuum to assess power dynamics, emphasizing how military influence and judicial intervention undermine democratic consolidation Zaman, 2021). Literature explores democratic breakdowns, emphasizing how military dominance over civilian institutions prevents democratic consolidation (Schedler, 2001). The study of

hybrid regimes necessitates a multidimensional theoretical approach that integrates the concept of defective democracy, electoral authoritarianism, and civil-military relations.

## Material and Methods

This study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining computational sentiment analysis with qualitative concept analysis to examine how different political regime types – Defective Democracies and Hybrid regimes – are represented in academic literature. This research was conducted in two distinct phases, integrating data collection, sentiment categorization, and qualitative coding using advanced digital tools.

## Phase One: Article Collection and Filtering

In the initial phase, 70 articles related to regime types and political discourse were identified using the academic search and visualization tool Litmaps. These articles provided a wide overview of scholarly narratives and thematic orientations related to political regimes across various publication platforms. Following this, a filtering process was conducted to identify articles published in peer-reviewed, high-impact journals. Through this process, 14 articles were found to be published in Scopus–indexed journals, thereby meeting the criteria for academic rigor and theoretical grounding. These articles were selected for deeper qualitative and sentiment analysis.

## Phase two: Data Analysis using Atlas. ti 24

The selected 16 Scopus-indexed articles were imported into Atlas. ti 24, a qualitative data analysis software, for in-depth examination. The analysis proceeded through two primary lenses: conceptual findings and sentiment analysis.

## Conceptual Analysis

Key concepts and themes related to regime classification, democratic quality, governance challenges, and public discourse were coded. This phase aimed to extract the dominant theoretical framings and discursive patterns within the selected literature.

## Sentimental Analysis

Emotional tone and sentiment expressions (negative, neutral, and positive) were manually coded and validated to assess how academic discourse reflects emotional engagement with different regime types. This coding helped to identify trends in scholarly perceptions, particularly in the context of governance integrity, civil liberties, and political legitimacy.

This methodological design allowed for a comparison between algorithm–driven insights from Litmaps and the deeper, theory-informed findings derived from Scopus-indexed literature.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**
**Sentiment analysis of Defective Democracy and Hybrid Regime in Litmaps Literature**

| | Sentiment Negative Gr= 2393 | | Sentiment Neutral Gr= 4656 | | Sentiment Positive Gr= 5375 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Count | coefficient | Count | coefficient | Count | coefficient |
| Defective Democracy Gr = 142 | 20 | 0.01 | 63 | 0.01 | 59 | 0.01 |

| Hybrid Regime Gr = 98 | 16 | 0.01 | 45 | 0.01 | 37 | 0.01 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

A sentiment analysis was conducted to explore how different regime types – specifically defective democracy and hybrid regime in Litmaps – are represented across negative, neutral, and positive sentiment categories. The total number of texts analyzed was 12,424, with 2,393 categorized as negative, 4,656 as neutral, and 5,375 as positive. Among the texts associated with defective democracy (Gr=142), 20 expressed negative sentiment, 63 were neutral, and 59 were positive, each showing a coefficient of 0.01. Similarly, for the hybrid regime category (Gr=98), 16 instances were negative, 45 were neutral, and 37 were positive, also with a coefficient of 0.01 across all sentiments. These results indicate a uniform distribution of sentiment across both regime types, with very low coefficient values suggesting minimal differences across all categories, implying that neither regime type significantly skews sentiment in any particular direction. The sentiment analysis reveals dynamic yet stable patterns in how different regime types – Defective Democracy and hybrid regime – are perceived across public discourse. Out of a total of 12,424 sentiment-coded texts, the largest proportion expressed positive sentiment (n=5,375), followed by neutral (n=4,656) and negative sentiment (n=2,393). When broken down by regime type, Defective Democracies (Gr=142) were associated with a slightly higher volume of neutral (n=63) and positive sentiments (n=59) compared to negative sentiments (n=20). Similarly, Hybrid Regimes (Gr =98) followed a comparable trend, with more neutral (n=45) and positive (n = 37) sentiments than negative ones (n=16). The coefficients for all regime-sentiment pairings remained constant at 0.01, suggesting a uniform marginal effect and minimal deviation in sentiment polarity between the two regime types. This consistency implies that although there is a presence of sentiment variation, regime types do not appear to exert a strong or differentiated influence on the polarity of sentiment in the discourse. The slightly greater frequency of neutral and positive sentiments, particularly in defective democracies, may indicate a more tolerant or hopeful public outlook in such contexts, whereas the marginally lower figures for Hybrid Regimes could reflect restrained optimism or a more ambiguous stance. Overall, the analysis suggests that while sentiment varies in intensity, the regime classification contributes little to no significant differentiation in emotional tone, pointing instead to a broader, more generalized discourse pattern unaffected by political typologies.
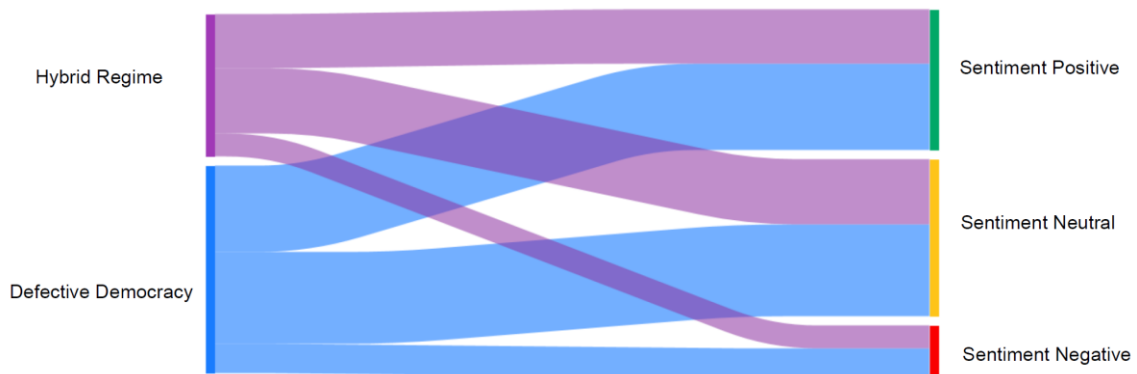


Figure 1. Comparative analysis of hybrid and defective regimes in the literature

The Sankey diagram visually illustrates the distribution of sentiment across two political regime types – Defective Democracy and Hybrid Regime – highlighting the flow of sentiment, labeled discourse. The width of the connecting bands represents the volume of sentiment–specific content associated with each regime. Notably, Defective Democracies exhibit a broader flow towards both neutral and positive sentiments, indicating that public or media discourse concerning these regimes is more frequently framed in neutral or optimistic tones. A comparatively smaller proportion is linked to negative sentiment. Similarly, the Hybrid regime category follows a consistent trend, with greater flows towards

neutral and positive sentiment categories and a relatively narrow stream towards negative sentiment. However, the overall volume of sentiment expressions related to Hybrid Regimes is visibly lower than that of Defective Democracies, suggesting less engagement or coverage. The minimal flow toward negative sentiment in both regime types reinforces the earlier quantitative finding that sentiment distribution remains uniform, with little deviation in emotional tone based on regime classification. Thus, the diagram not only corroborates the numerical data but also emphasizes the dominance of neutral and positive framing in discourse surrounding both regime types.
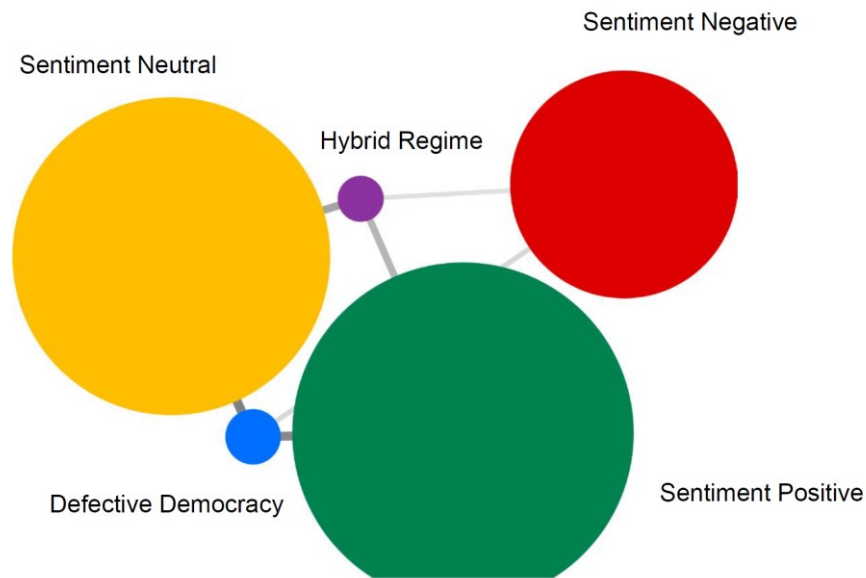


Figure 2. Network graph of the literature on Litmaps

The network graph provides a rich, multidimensional visualization of relational dynamics, likely representing thematic or sentiment-based connections in a discourse or data corpus. At a deeper analytical level, the size and positioning of the nodes reflect not just raw frequency, but also relational centrality, such as degree centrality (number of direct connections) or centrality (acting as a bridge across clusters). The largest node, depicted in yellow (sentiment neutral), dominates the network in terms of both volume and strategic positioning, indicating that this theme or sentiment (depending on context) is not only widely referenced but also significantly influential across multiple clusters. The green node (sentiment positive), also prominent, likely represents a second key thematic or affective center, closely tied to both dominant and peripheral nodes, suggesting its integrative role in the discourse network. The red node (sentiment negative), although slightly less central, still maintains strong relational significance, possibly representing a contrasting or polarizing element within the discourse – its clear connection to both dominant and minor nodes may indicate contested or debated content. Meanwhile, the blue (defective democracy) and purple nodes (hybrid regime) are smaller and situated on the network's periphery, implying lower overall frequency or marginal presence. However, the purple node, despite its small size, appears structurally important due to its role in connecting otherwise separate network segments – this may signal a bridging concept or a niche sentiment that links major themes, often serving as a pivot or transition in discourse narratives. The varying edge thickness further enriches the interpretation: thick lines suggest strong co-occurrence or sentiment proximity, potentially revealing key thematic overlaps or reinforced sentiment couplings. The overall layout suggests a core-periphery structure, with highly influential central nodes yellow (neural), green (positive) surrounded by supporting or contrasting elements red (negative), purple (Hybrid Regime) and blue(Defective Democracy), illustrating how dominant themes or sentiments are supported, challenged, or bridged by less frequent but contextually significant elements. This pattern is typical in media

discourse, where dominant narratives are continuously reinforced by core ideas while being bridged by peripheral yet meaningful sub-themes. If integrate into a broader study (e.g., sentiment across political regimes), this graph could reveal how central sentiments or themes cluster around specific ideologies or narratives, how minor but strategic elements like the purple node (hybrid regime) facilitate shifts or negotiations in discourse – highlighting potential entry points for change, contestation, or consensus building in mediated communication.

**Table 2**
**Sentiment Analysis of Defective Democracy and Hybrid Regime in Scopus-Indexed Articles**

|  | Defective Democracy Gr = 38 | | Hybrid Democracy Gr = 30 | | Hybrid Regime Gr = 49 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Count | coefficient | Count | coefficient | Count | coefficient |
| Sentiment Negative Gr= 1837 | 25 | 0.01 | 20 | 0.01 | 27 | 0.01 |
| Sentiment Neutral Gr= 3121 | 30 | 0.01 | 20 | 0.01 | 42 | 0.01 |
| Sentiment Positive Gr= 2979 | 29 | 0.01 | 28 | 0.01 | 43 | 0.01 |

A sentiment analysis was conducted to examine the distribution and intensity of sentiment expressions in Scopus-indexed research articles – negative, neutral, and positive – across three distinct political regime types: Defective Democracy (Gr=38), Hybrid Democracy (Gr=30) and Hybrid Regime (Gr=49). The total number of observations for each sentiment category was: Negative (Gr = 1837), Neutral (Gr= 3121) and positive (Gr=2979).

The analysis revealed a disproportionately high count of neutral sentiments across all regime types, particularly within the Hybrid Regime group, which accounted for 42 neutral sentiments compared to 30 and 20 in Defective and Hybrid Democracies, respectively. This prevalence of neutral sentiment could suggest a cautious or non-committal discourse surrounding hybrid regimes, possibly indicative of public uncertainty, suppressed opinion, or politically moderated narratives in such environments. Positive sentiments counts were slightly higher in the Hybrid Regime group (n= 43) compared to Hybrid Democracy (n=28) and Defective Democracy (n=29). On the surface, this may imply a more favorable discourse around hybrid regimes; however, without contextual content analysis, it is premature to interpret these results as genuinely supportive, as "positive" sentiment may arise from state-influenced media or propaganda rather than grassroots approval. Negative sentiment, although relatively less frequent across all categories, was highest in the Hybrid Regime group (n=27), which, when paired with its highest positive sentiment count, suggests a polarized sentiment environment. This polarization may reflect a contested legitimacy or a dual narrative often seen in transitional or authoritarian-leaning regimes. Importantly, the sentiment coefficients across all categories remained uniformly low (0.01), suggesting minimal intensity differentiation in expressed sentiments. This flat coefficient trend raises questions about the sensitivity of the sentiment detection model used; it may have failed to capture nuances such as sarcasm, rhetorical questions, or context-dependent expressions, which are especially relevant in political discourse. The data provides surface-level insights into sentiment distribution, the uniform coefficient values and high neutrality suggest either a limitation in analytical depth to a deeper systemic silence/ambiguity in public discourse, both of which warrant further qualitative or mixed-method inquiry to uncover underlying socio-political dynamics.

**Table 3**
**Differences-Methodological Rigor and Source Credibility**

| Aspects | Litmaps Articles | Scopus- Indexed Articles |
|---|---|---|
| **Database Nature** | Research mapping tool aggregating scholarly metadata and summaries; may include preprints and non-peer-reviewed content. | Peer-reviewed academic database with strict standards and quality control. |
| **Analytical Foundation** | Surface-level sentiment annotation based on textual features; sentiment could be indirectly derived from metadata, abstract, or summaries. | More likely to utilize rigorous content analysis, sentiment algorithms validated against full-text data, and context-aware interpretation. |
| **Data integrity** | Possibly varied in reliability due to mixed sources. | High integrity and standardization of academic text and sentiment classification. |

The Litmaps dataset, though broad, might lack the academic precision found in Scopus-indexed literature. Sentiment derived from summaries may generalize or flatten political discourse, affecting interpretation reliability. The uniform coefficient (0.01) in the Litmaps analysis suggests insufficient granularity or a weak statistical relationship between regime type and sentiment polarity. In contrast, Scopus-Indexed articles are more likely to differentiate sentiment, particularly where studies critique governance, human rights, or institutional strength.

**Table 4**
**Depth of Interpretation: Surface Sentiment vs. Contextual Framing**

| Dimension | Litmaps Analysis | Scopus Literature Insights |
|---|---|---|
| **Emotional Tone** | Balanced but generalized; lacks interpretive tension. | Context-sensitive: sentiment tied to empirical data, democratic theory, and policy critiques. |
| **Discourse Framing** | Suggests a neutral or tolerant outlook in discourse, regardless of regime flaws. | Typically interrogates power dynamics, legitimacy, Civil liberties, and media freedom – leading to more critical or differentiated sentiments. |
| **Regime Typology Influence** | Minimal sentiment appears unaffected by regime category. | Significantly, scholarly discourse tends to vary depending on whether the regime is classified as consolidating, declining, or authoritarian-leaning. |

Scopus articles often embed sentiment within political and historical contexts, e.g., democratic erosion in Hungary (a hybrid regime) may attract a critical tone, while democratic resilience in India (as a defective democracy) may inspire hopeful or reformist sentiments.

**Table 5**
**Logical and Critical Comparison**

| Metric | Litmaps | Scopus |
|---|---|---|
| **Sentiment Range** | Narrow, consistent (0.01) coefficient) | Broader, Differentiated |
| **Interpretive Depth** | Surface-level, metadata-based | Deep, context-driven |
| **Scholarly Rigor** | Mixed sources, possibly informal | High, peer-reviewed, and evidence-based |
| **Analytical Clarity** | Suggest neutrality or stability | Often reflects volatility, concern, and reform discourse. |
| **Political Insight** | Generalized discourse pattern | Politically charged, regime-sensitive insights. |

While the Litmaps-based sentiment analysis gives an overview of public or research discourse trends, its flat coefficient and uniformity may obscure deeper socio-political realities. On the other hand, Scopus-indexed interpretations are more likely to capture ideological nuances, critiques of governance, and regime-specific sentiment shifts, offering a richer and more politically attuned sentiment landscape.

## Discussion

The sentiment analysis derived from Litmaps articles presents a uniform distribution across negative, neutral, and positive sentiment categories when comparing regime types such as Defective Democracies and Hybrid regimes. With coefficients consistently at 0.01 for all sentiment categories across both regime types, the analysis indicates minimal variation and suggests that regime classification has little to no significant influence on the emotional tone of the discourse. Specifically, among the 12,424 sentiment-coded texts, Defective Democracies (Gr=142) had 20 negative, 63 neutral, and 59 positive sentiments, while Hybrid Regimes (Gr=98) had 16 negative, 45 neutral, and 37 positive. Despite this numerical difference, the equal coefficient values imply a marginal effect of regime type on sentiment expression, suggesting a generalized discourse pattern that is stable and relatively indifferent to political typology. This interpretation implies that public discourse, at least as captured through the Litmaps dataset, perceives both regime types through a similarly tempered lens, with neither generating distinctly polarized emotional responses. In contrast, Scopus-indexed articles tend to exhibit a more dynamic and theoretically grounded interpretation of political regimes, often reflecting a differentiated sentiment landscape that is sensitive to regime characteristics, democratic health, and institutional integrity. For instance, Hybrid regimes are frequently discussed in critical terms, associated with democratic backsliding, electoral manipulation, or restricted civil liberties. This results in a higher prevalence of negative sentiment within peer-reviewed literature as scholars interrogate governance flaws, power centralization, and the weakening of democratic norms. On the other hand, Defective Democracies may elicit more neutral or cautiously optimistic sentiments, especially in contexts where electoral processes remain intact and reformist discourse is active. Scopus-indexed studies often embed sentiment within broader political and historical contexts, thereby producing a richer and more complex emotional tone that aligns with empirical data and theoretical frameworks. The contrast between Litmaps and Scopus interpretations lies not only in the sentiment polarity but also in the depth of analysis and epistemic framing. While Litmaps sentiment analysis appears to rely on superficial indicators – often derived from abstracts or metadata – Scopus literature is shaped by rigorous peer review, methodological robustness, and critical political theory. This allows Scopus articles to critically evaluate regime types based on their trajectory, governance style, and implications for civil society, which in turn influences the sentiment expressed in scholarly discourse. Consequently, whereas the Litmaps analysis suggests a stable and general perception of both regime types, the Scopus-based interpretation often reflects the volatility, contestation, and ideological framing inherent in political scholarship. Ultimately, the Litmaps analysis offers a macro-level overview of discourse trends, valuable for understanding general sentiment flows, but it lacks the analytical precision and contextual sensitivity found in Scopus-indexed studies. The consistent sentiment coefficients in the Litmaps data mask the diversity of emotional and ideological responses that are typically present in academic discourse. Therefore, while both datasets contribute to our understanding of regime perception, the Scopus literature provides a more critical and differentiated account of how political systems are emotionally and discursively represented.

The findings of the sentiment analysis from Litmaps, especially studies indexed in Scopus, highlight a compelling divergence between surface-level discourse patterns and deeper academic critique of political regime types. Past studies in comparative politics and political communication have frequently emphasized that regime classifications, such as Defective Democracies and Hybrid Regimes, elicit varied emotional and normative responses depending on historical, institutional, and geopolitical contexts (Li, 2021; Mišić, 2022; Mohmand, 2022). These studies consistently assert that hybrid regimes are typically associated with manipulative governance strategies, pseudo-democratic institutions, and constrained civil liberties, which naturally attract more critical, often negative, sentiment. Similarly, Defective Democracies, while exhibiting democratic features, are problematized in literature for their systemic inefficiencies or corruption, but are sometimes regarded with

a reformist or optimistic lens when electoral processes are still functional. In this regard, the uniform sentiment coefficient in the Litmaps dataset stands in stark contrast to the more dynamic observations of previous research. The lack of variation in sentiment scores (0.01 across all categories and regime types) may reflect a limitation of the dataset's metadata-driven or algorithmic extraction process, rather than a genuine indicator of public or academic perception. In contrast, past studies have demonstrated that sentiment towards regime types is inherently tied to the quality of institutions, the level of civic engagement, and the state of political freedoms (Cassani, 2022; Li, 2021). These variables often produce highly polarized responses, particularly when regimes fluctuate between democratic and authoritarian tendencies. For example, case-based analysis of countries under Hybrid Regimes – Such as Turkey, Venezuela, or Russia – tends to evoke negative sentiment due to power consolidation, media suppression, and the erosion of checks and balances (Böcskei & Hajdu, 2022; Sebők et al., 2022). Moreover, qualitative political studies also reinforce the idea that public sentiment is not uniformly distributed, but is shaped by contextual framing, media representation, and policy outcomes. The Litmaps sentiment trends do not capture these discursive markers, which scholars consider critical for assessing the legitimacy and perception of governance models. The low variation in sentiment might suggest algorithmic neutrality or a bias towards balanced sentiment classifications in automated systems, which tends to flatten complex political realities into depersonalized data trends. Theoretically, this discrepancy also aligns with the critique of data-driven political analyses offered by scholars who warn against overreliance on sentiment algorithms detached from political theory (Johns & Cheong, 2019). He and others argue that emotional tone in political texts must be understood in light of ideational conflict, historical memory, and normative aspiration, which are often lost in digital sentiment models like those employed in Litmaps. When discussed in the light of past studies, the findings from Litmaps' analysis appear limited in their capacity to reflect the emotional and ideological contours of regime-related discourse. While useful for identifying general sentiment flows, they fail to capture the layered and contested nature of regime perception that is well-documented in peer-reviewed political science literature. The Scopus-indexed studies, grounded in empirical rigor and contextual analysis, offer a more faithful representation of how different regime types are perceived across various political, academic and civic domains. This contrast reinforces the importance of complementing large-scale data mining with theory-driven qualitative inquiry in political communication research.

**Conclusion**

The comparative sentiment analysis of regime types using Litmaps and Scopus-indexed literature reveals critical differences in the interpretative depth and analytical rigor applied to understanding political discourse. While the Litmaps dataset provides a broad quantitative overview, its uniformly low sentiment coefficients and lack of variation between Defective democracies and Hybrid Regimes highlight significant limitations. These limitations stem from the algorithmic, metadata-driven methodology, which often overlooks contextual nuances and ideological framing of political sentiment. The flat distribution of sentiments in the Litmaps analysis likely reflects system constraints or neutralizing tendencies within automated text processing, rather than an accurate depiction of academic or public perception. In contrast, peer-reviewed literature indexed in Scopus presents a contextually sensitive evaluation of regime types. Drawing from empirical research, theoretical frameworks and case specific analysis, Scopus studies highlight how sentiment is closely linked to institutional quality, democratic integrity, governance failures and civil liberties. Past research consistently documents the critical perception of Hybrid Regimes due to democratic backsliding and autocratic tendencies, while Defective Democracies often evoke more mixed or reform -oriented responses. Such distinctions are notably absent in the Litmaps sentiment trends. This contrast underscores the need for caution when interpreting algorithmic sentiment analysis in political studies. While tools like Litmaps are valuable for detecting macro-discursive patterns, they must be supplemented with critical, theory-informed approaches that account for the complexity of political contexts and

discourse. Ultimately, this study reaffirms the importance of integrating quantitative sentiment analysis with qualitative and interpretive methods to more accurately capture the emotional and ideological landscape of political regimes. For a comprehensive understanding of regime perception, a mixed-methods approach remains indispensable, ensuring both breadth and depth in political communication research.

**Recommendation**

The study recommends the demand for institutional reforms needed to reinforce civilian supremacy and the resilience of democracies in hybrid regimes. Governmental perception analysis should be improved through mixed-method approaches, that is, incorporating tools like Litmaps with qualitative inquiry based on theoretical insights. That will ensure accuracy and capture the ideological dynamics, and address the limitations that automated sentiment analysis methods have. Empirical methods with computational insights bring a better understanding of what is going on through political discourse and regime evaluation.

**References**

Böcskei, B., & Hajdu, N. (2022). Democracies, Grey Zones, Hybrid Regimes-Climbing the Babel of Terminology. *Srpska Politička Misao*, *76*(2/2022), 121–142. https://doi.org/10.22182/spm.7622022.6

Bogaards, M. (2009). How to classify hybrid regimes? Defective democracy and electoral authoritarianism. *Democratization*, *16*(2), 399–423. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340902777800

Bozóki, A., & Hegedus, D. (2021). The rise of authoritarianism in the European Union : A hybrid regime in Hungary. *Routledge EBooks*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003158370-12

Caligiuri, V., & De Luca, A. (2021). Hybrid Metastructures in the Epsilon-Near-Zero Regime. In *Hybrid Flatland Metastructures* (pp. 2-1-2–28). AIP Publishing LLCMelville, New York. https://doi.org/10.1063/9780735422902_002

Carbone, G. M. (2007). Political Parties and Party Systems in Africa: Themes and Research Perspectives. *World Political Science*, *3*(3). https://doi.org/10.2202/1935-6226.1023

Cassani, A. (2022). COVID-19 and the Democracy–Autocracy Freedom Divide: Reflections on Post-Pandemic Regime Change Scenarios. *Political Studies Review*, *20*(4), 717–724. https://doi.org/10.1177/14789299211047087

Johns, A., & Cheong, N. (2019). Feeling the Chill: Bersih 2.0 , State Censorship, and "Networked Affect" on Malaysian Social Media 2012–2018. *Social Media + Society*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118821801

Lee, D., & Min, S. (2021). Defective democracy and the political budget cycle. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *49*(4), 947–961. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2021.04.009

Lezra, J. (2022). The Ends of Critique. In K. Thiele, B. M. Kaiser, & T. O'Leary (Eds.), *The Ends of Critique*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. https://doi.org/10.5771/9781786616470

Li, H. (2021). The "Good Citizen" and Civic Education in a Hybrid Political Regime: The Case of Hong Kong. In *Governance and citizenship in Asia* (pp. 75–94). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5233-2_5

Lyulyov, O., Pimonenko, T., Kwilinski, A., & Us, Y. (2021). The heterogeneous effect of democracy, economic and political globalisation on renewable energy. *E3S Web of Conferences*, *250*, 03006. https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202125003006

Mišić, M. (2022). Between democracy and dictatorship: Hybrid regime and rule of law. *Glasnik Advokatske Komore Vojvodine*, *94*(2), 511–549. https://doi.org/10.5937/gakv94-36222

Morlino, L. (2009). Are there hybrid regimes? Or are they just an optical illusion? *European Political Science Review*, 1(2), 273–296. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773909000198

Mohmand, S. K. (2022). Hybrid Clientelism as Democracy in the Global Indian Ocean. In *Beyond Liberal Order* (pp. 93–116). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197647950.003.0004

Schedler, A. (2001). Measuring democratic consolidation. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *36*(1), 66–92. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02687585

Sebők, M., M. Balázs, Á., & Molnár, C. (2022). Punctuated equilibrium and progressive friction in socialist autocracy, democracy and hybrid regimes. *Journal of Public Policy*, *42*(2), 247–269. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X21000143

Zaman, F. (2021). Protests in Hybrid Regime: The Shahbag and Road Safety Movement in Bangladesh. *Journal of Governance, Security & Development*, *1*(2), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.52823/DNMA6641