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"IDEOLOGICAL PREFERENCES FOR A SOCIAL POLICY MODEL IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA: PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFERENT INTEREST GROUPS"

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PRESENTATION CONTENT

- RESEARCH BACKGROUND
- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
- AIM & RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
- METHODOLOGY
- RESULTS
- DISCUSSION
- CONCLUSION
- [epilogue]

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

- ***This research investigates and analyzes whether ideology has influenced Social Policy in the context of North Macedonia and at what extent ideology can be influential in the 'Social Policy model' developed.***
- ***It particularly focuses on an analysis of reform processes on the development of ideas and policies in such domains: education, health, social protection, unemployment, pensions.***
- ***The research explores the relationship between ideology and welfare state and measures the perceptions of interest groups and political parties regarding ideological preferences for a Social Policy model in the country case study.***

***** The thesis argues that during the transition period, with particular focus in the last decade, social policies are developed as arbitrary interventions, with evident lack of expertise and primarily relying on the economic and political factors, and international financial assistance.***

***** In addition, it argues that the neoliberal ideology has influenced many of the reforms in the welfare policy.***

**** These ideological influences are mostly related with the ideological preferences of the political party in rule. Therefore, in the thesis is widely discussed the state ideology as the driving force in developing a specific Social Policy model.***

Aim and research objectives *(empirical research)*

- *Objective 1: Identify perceptions regarding the relationship between state – market – family.*
- *Objective 2: Identify perceptions/preferences in specific Social Policy domains (education, health care, social protection, unemployment, pensions).*
- *Objective 3: identify whether respondents from political parties have knowledge about the ideology of their political party and whether these ideological values influence their preferences in the field of Social Policy.*
- *Objective 4: Explore the role and significance of interest groups in Social Policy making processes.*
- *Objective 5: Identify overall perceptions of interest groups and political parties regarding policy priorities and implications for the future.*

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical model that guides this research draws on three main theoretical paradigms: welfare state theory; political theory; and family theory.

- *Explanatory / Analytical Theory* – which seeks to explain the nature of Social Policy and the rationale for policy decisions

- *Normative Theory* – model that provides a value framework for Social Policy that identifies the values, ideologies and political objectives, which underlie Social Policy approaches.

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* The focus is in the institutional approach of Social Policy

Methodology

❑ QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS

- Quantitative research method is used to collect information through numerical data. It is used to quantify respondents' perceptions regarding predefined variables. In specific, the quantitative research method used for the survey with two targeted groups.

- The qualitative method is used as well, with the aim to gather non-numerical data in the form of meanings, opinions, and/or the underlying reasons from each subject. It is conducted through conversational in-depth interviews.

❑ In addition, the research provides an assessment of current most relevant policy domains through document analysis.

Overall: It includes, *public policy documents, survey, in-depth interviews with experts*, political parties, trade unions, organization of employers, student/young people organizations, parent organization, young people/student association and/or similar). Additionally *a case study* is conducted as well through the comparative analysis.

Sampling & Research instruments

- ***Non-probability sampling – (snowball sampling technique).***

134 respondents from interest groups (trade unions, employers, organizations, think-tanks, NGOs and others).

226 respondents from political parties, participated in the survey.

- ***Non-probability sampling – (Purposive sampling)***

Expert opinions through in-depth interviews

Different stakeholders: (Governmental and NGOs, researchers and university professors, policy-makers, etc).

- ***Research instruments:***

Two questionaries made of closed-ended questions.

In depth interviews (personalized in many items depending on the affiliation of the stakeholder).

QUESTIONAIRES		
Questionnaire 1	***Interest groups***	***7-likert scale***
Questionnaire 2	***Political parties***	***5-likert scale***

Piloting, data collection & data analysis

Piloting

- 45 respondents
- Written Feedback

Data collection

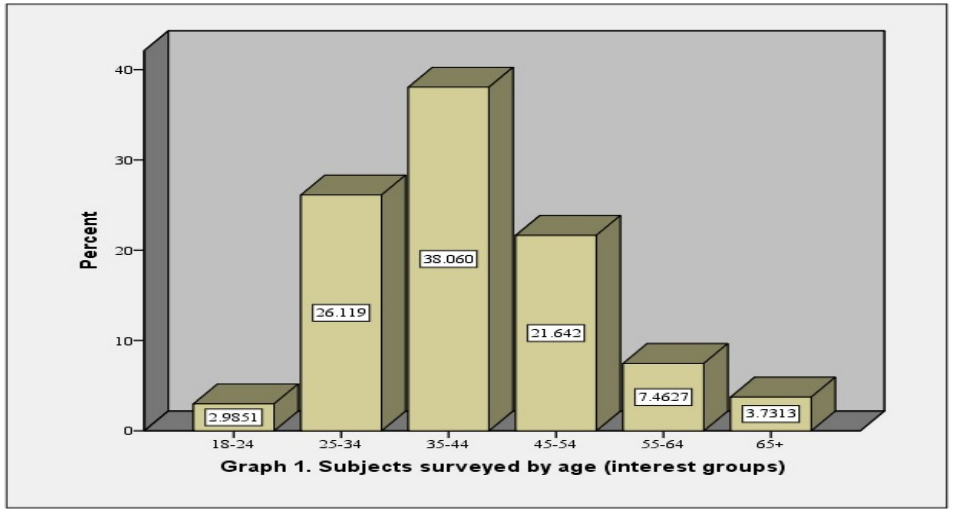
- Using the database provided through desk research
- Conducting the online survey through an online survey platform. [November 2020 – February 2021]
- In – depth interviews. [June 2020 – March 2021]

Data analysis

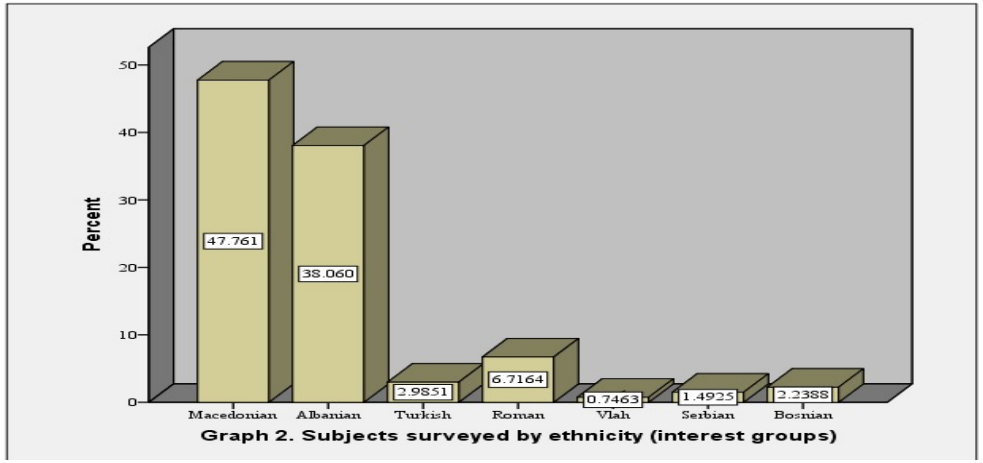
- The quantitative analysis is provided statistically by using **SPSS**
- The qualitative analysis is provided through **textual analysis** and more in specific through the **interview data transcription method**.

RESULTS (content)

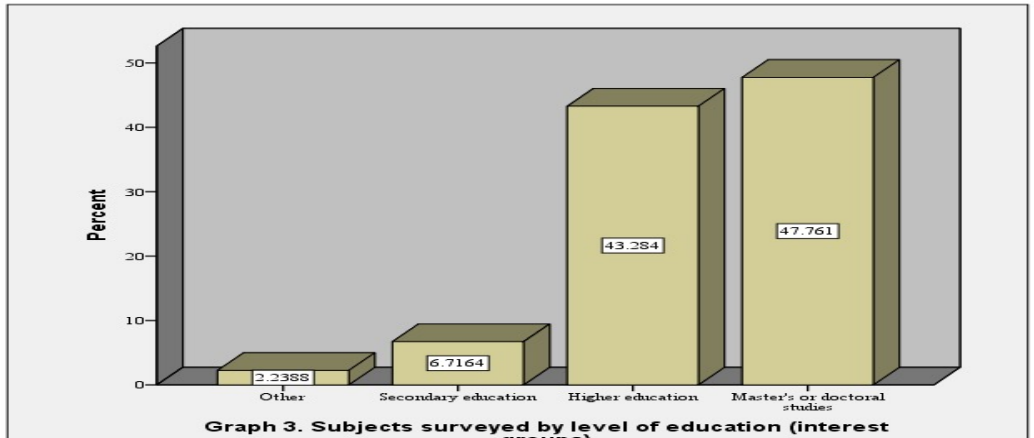
- Descriptive statistics
- Distribution of variables (general perceptions/preferences)
- Perceptions/ preferences regarding the role of state-market-family in welfare provision
- Perceptions/preferences in specific social policy domains.
- Perceptions / preferences of respondents from political parties regarding ideology and welfare
- Role and significance of interest groups in Social Policy making processes.
- Preferences and implication for future welfare policies



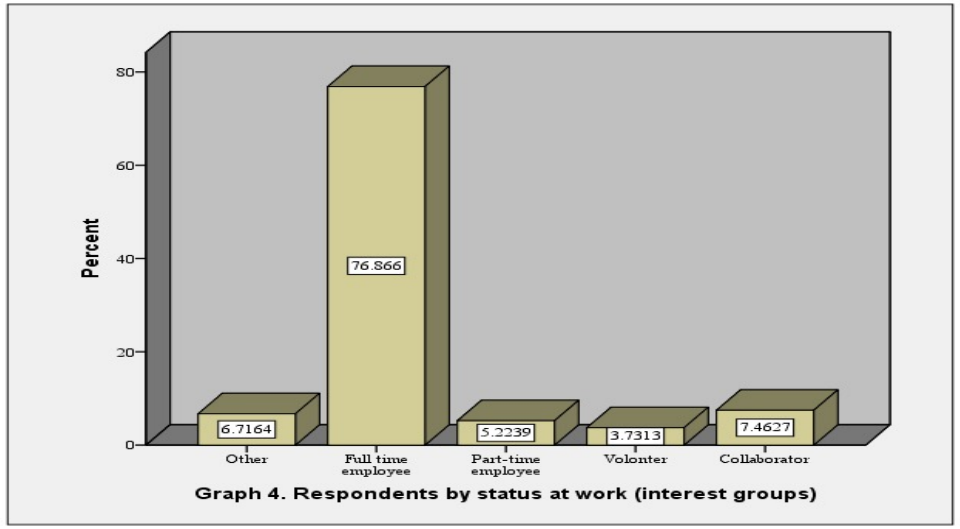
Graph 1. Subjects surveyed by age (interest groups)



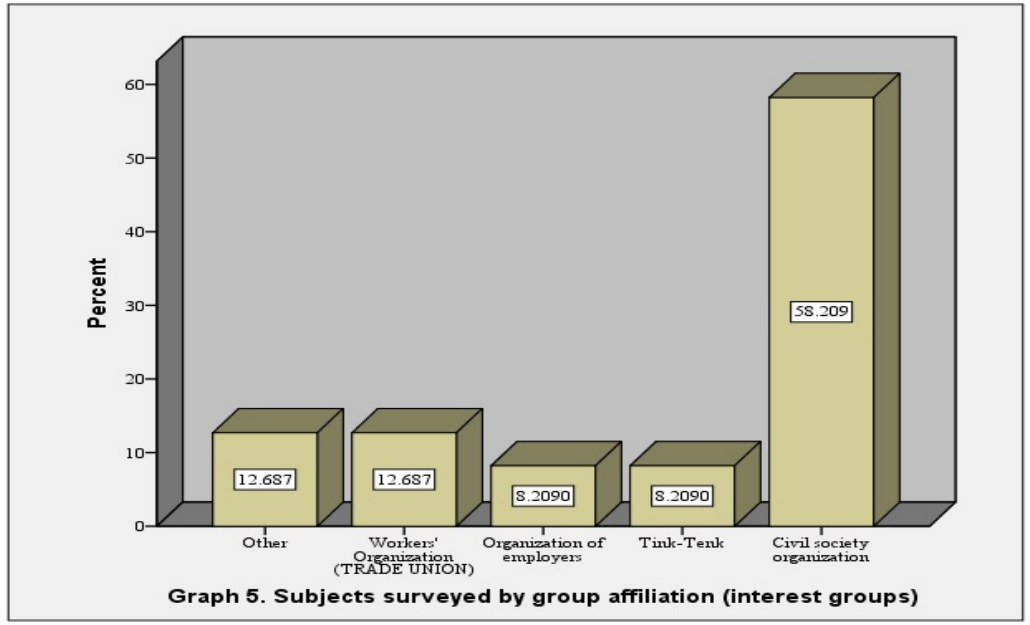
Graph 2. Subjects surveyed by ethnicity (interest groups)



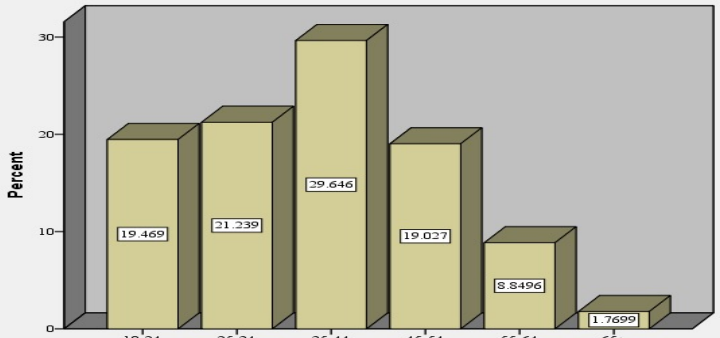
Graph 3. Subjects surveyed by level of education (interest



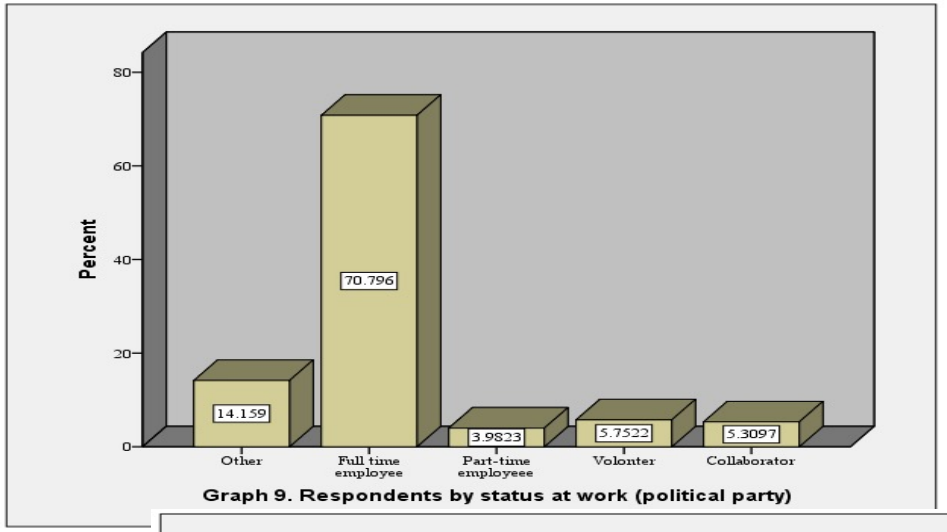
Graph 4. Respondents by status at work (interest groups)



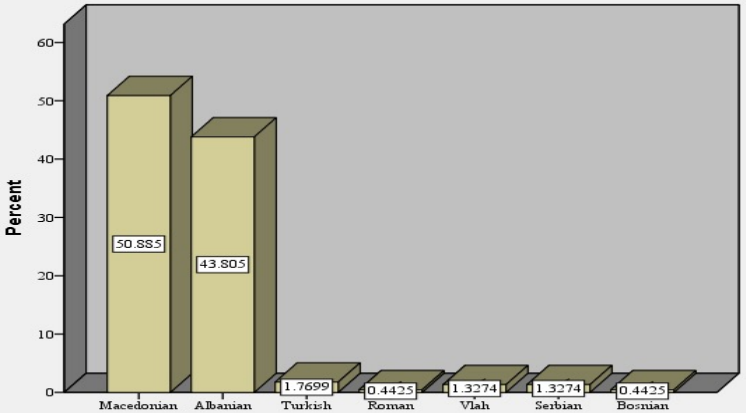
Graph 5. Subjects surveyed by group affiliation (interest groups)



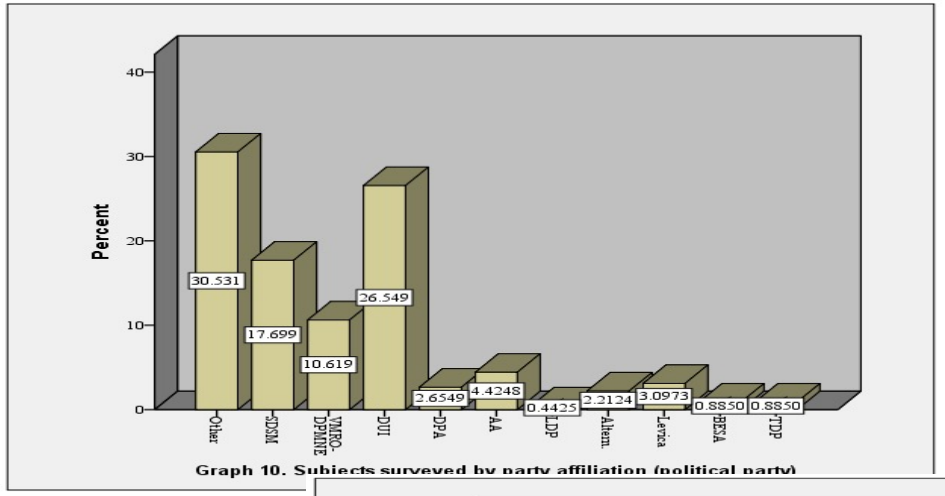
Graph 6. Subjects surveyed by age (political party)



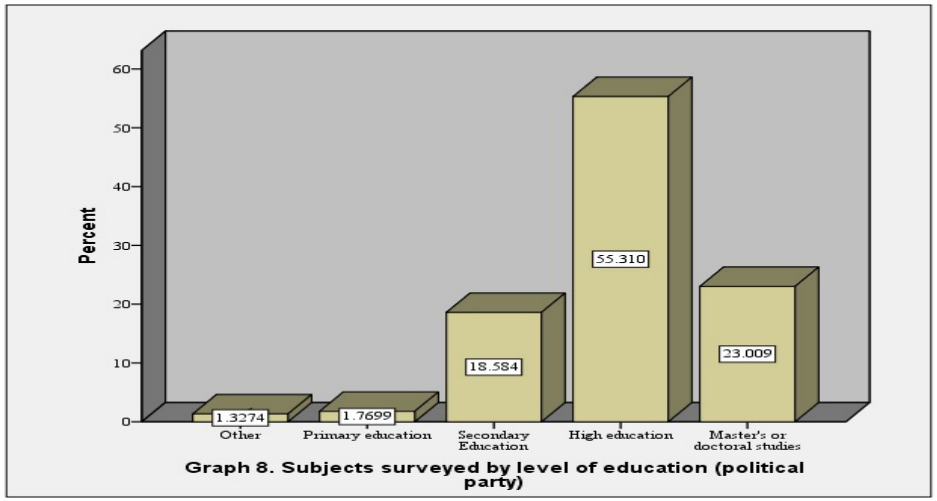
Graph 9. Respondents by status at work (political party)



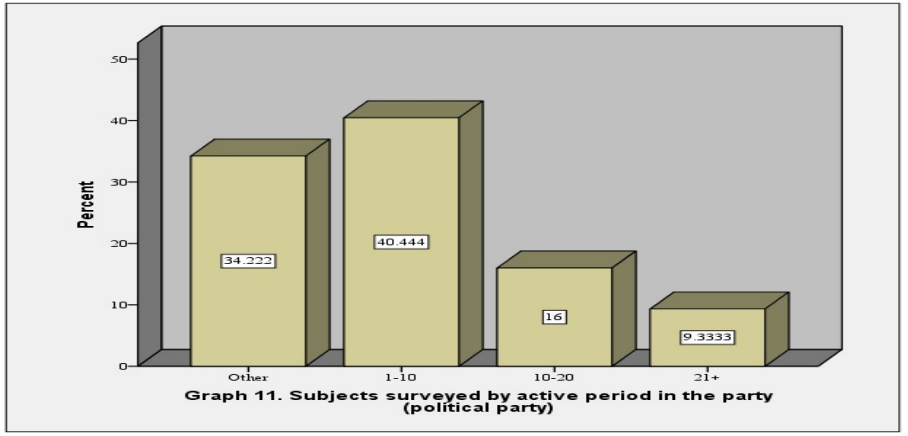
Graph 7. Subjects surveyed by ethnicity (political party)



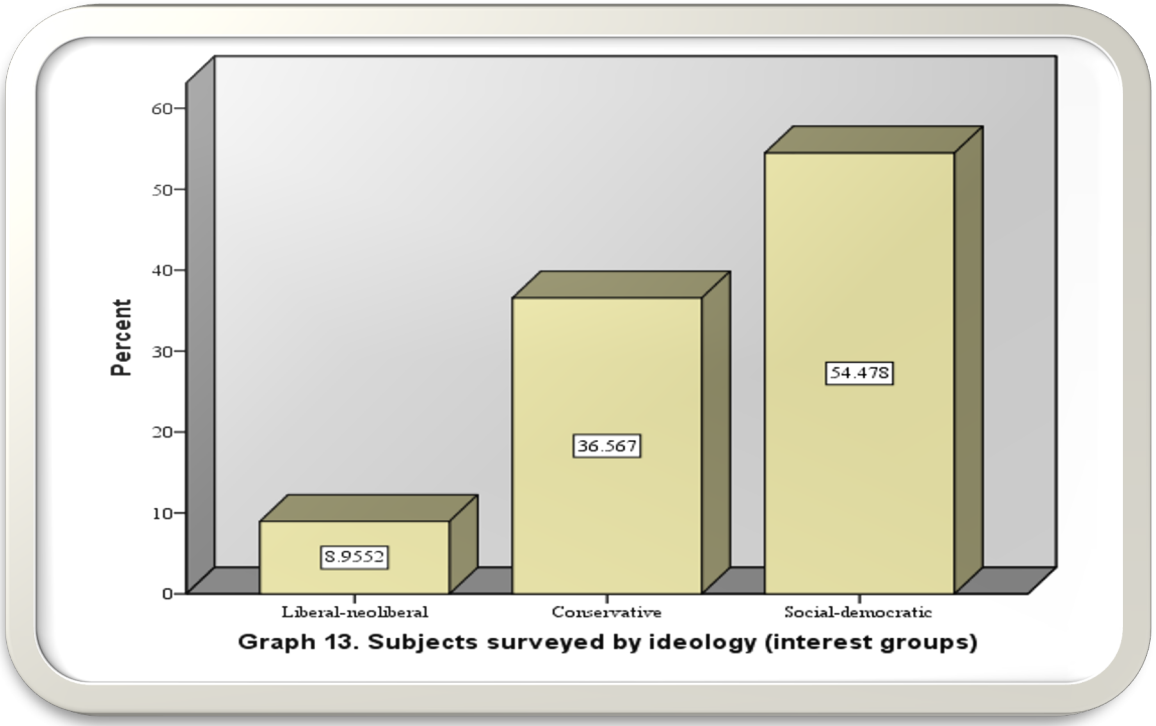
Graph 10. Subjects surveyed by party affiliation (political party)



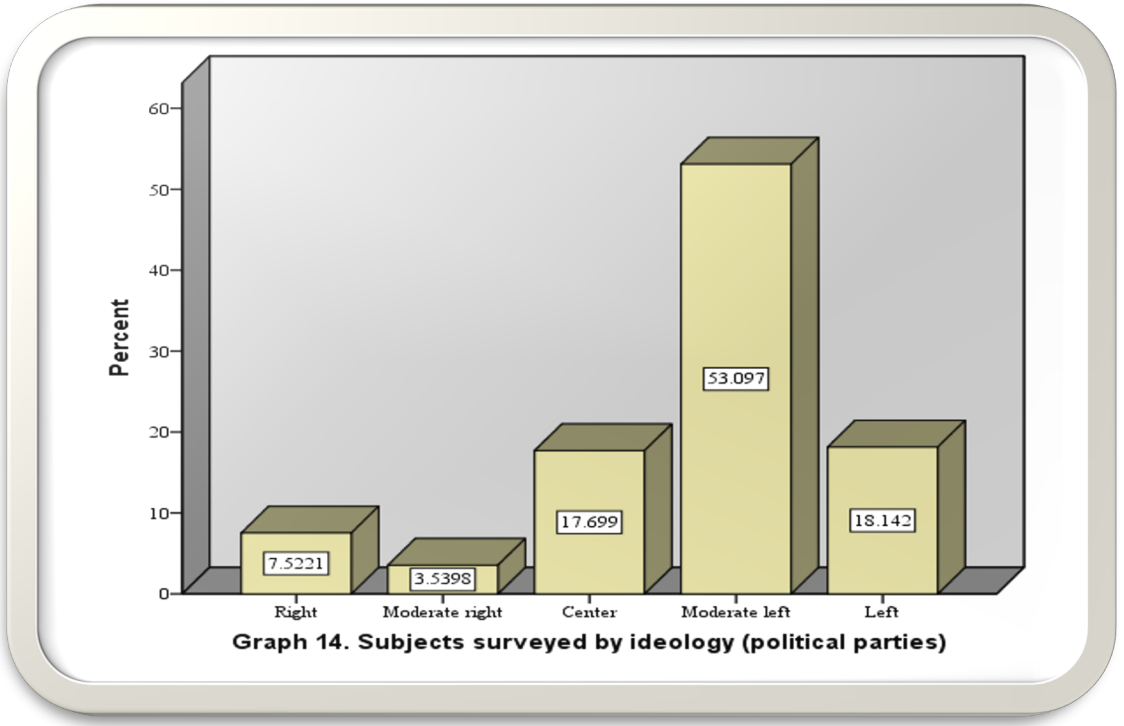
Graph 8. Subjects surveyed by level of education (political party)



Graph 11. Subjects surveyed by active period in the party (political party)



Graph 13. Subjects surveyed by ideology (interest groups)



Graph 14. Subjects surveyed by ideology (political parties)

H1 ➡ Members of interest groups have different perceptions in contrast to political parties regarding the overall role of state, market and family and they prefer the social-democratic model of Social Policy in terms of ideological values.

Table 24. T-test for perceptions regarding state, market and family

Subject		N	Mean	Std. Devia.	Std. Error M.
State	Interest Group	134	12.55	1.846	.159
	Politic party	226	14.82	3.214	.214
Market	Interest Group	134	11.95	2.219	.192
	Politic party	224	10.35	2.236	.149
Family	Interest Group	134	10.68	2.256	.195
	Politic party	221	15.90	3.075	.207

Table 25. Significance for T-test for perceptions regarding state, market and family - Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
State	-7.464	358	.000	-2.266	.304	-2.863	-1.669
	-8.498	357.69	.000	-2.266	.267	-2.791	-1.742
Market	6.570	356	.000	1.600	.243	1.121	2.078
	6.582	281.69	.000	1.600	.243	1.121	2.078
Family	-17.047	353	.000	-5.217	.306	-5.819	-4.615
	-18.354	340.31	.000	-5.217	.284	-5.776	-4.658

H1: partly ✅

Interest groups: more market-oriented
Political parties: state and family

H2 ⇒ Interest groups in contrast to political parties perceive state's role as predominant.

H4 ⇒ Left wing political parties perceive the role of state as primary compared to market and family.

Table 26. Correlation between perceptions for role of state, market and family

Subject			Social policy	State	Market	Family
Interest Group	Pearson Correlation	Social policy model	1.000	.684	.701	.677
		State	.684	1.000	.290	.214
		Market	.701	.290	1.000	.130
		Family	.677	.214	.130	1.000
	Sig. (1-tailed)	Social policy model	.	.000	.000	.000
		State	**.000**	.	.000	.006
		Market	**.000**	.000	.	.067
		Family	**.000**	.006	.067	.
	N	Social policy model	134	134	134	134
Politic party	Pearson Correlation	Social policy model	1.000	.841	.690	.807
		State	.841	1.000	.438	.486
		Market	.690	.438	1.000	.331
		Family	.807	.486	.331	1.000
	Sig. (1-tailed)	Social policy model	.	.000	.000	.000
		State	**.000**	.	.000	.000
		Market	**.000**	.000	.	.000
		Family	**.000**	.000	.000	.
	N	Social policy model	221	221	221	221

H2: ❌

H4: ✅

- Political parties embrace more social-democratic and conservative ideological values by recognizing the role of state intervention and family care in welfare provision
- For interest groups the market comes first, followed by family and the state,
- We found that **H4**: Left- wing political parties perceive the role of state as more relevant compared to market and family stands and is verified. Which means that they are mostly oriented in collectivist ideological values .

H3 ➡ Within interest groups, perceptions/preferences vary based on the typology.

Table 30. T-test for perceptions regarding state, market and family according to subjects' field operation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Other	17	234.35	13.309	3.228	227.51	241.20
Workers organization (T U)	17	238.59	11.684	2.834	232.58	244.60
Organization of employers	11	242.55	15.915	4.798	231.85	253.24
Think-Tank	11	232.91	19.649	5.924	219.71	246.11
Civil society organization	78	227.56	36.165	4.095	219.41	235.72
Total	134	231.49	29.493	2.548	226.45	236.53

Table 31. Significance for T-test for perceptions regarding state, market and family according to subjects' field operation – ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3564.677	4	891.169	1.025	.397
Within Groups	112122.816	129	869.169		
Total	115687.493	133			

H3: ❎

- There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the subjects of the first group (Interest group) depending on their field of operation (typology) in this research. Therefore, the perception of the subjects of the interest group for the ideology (state-market-family role and interconnection) does not depend on their field of operation (typology).

H5 ➡ Exist different perceptions in the overall relationship between state – market –family, based on ethnicity.

Table 32. T-test for perceptions regarding state, market and family based on ethnicity

Subject		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Interest Group	Macedonian	64	34.73	4.409	.551	33.63	35.84
	Albanian	51	35.25	4.664	.653	33.94	36.57
	Turkish	4	36.50	3.416	1.708	31.06	41.94
	Roma	9	37.22	1.787	.596	35.85	38.60
	Vlah	1	39.00	.	.	.	.
	Serbian	2	38.00	4.243	3.000	-.12	76.12
	Bosnian	3	32.33	2.082	1.202	27.16	37.50
	Total	134	35.18	4.346	.375	34.44	35.92
Politic party	Macedonian	114	40.55	7.565	.708	39.15	41.96
	Albanian	96	41.83	5.063	.517	40.81	42.86
	Turkish	4	46.50	3.697	1.848	40.62	52.38
	Roma	1	51.00	.	.	.	.
	Vlah	2	37.00	.000	.000	37.00	37.00
	Serbian	3	41.00	8.000	4.619	21.13	60.87
	Bosnian	1	42.00	.	.	.	.
	Total	221	41.24	6.537	.440	40.38	42.11

Table 33. Significance for T-test for perceptions regarding state, market and family based on ethnicity – ANOVA

Subject		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Interest Group	Between Groups	112.309	6	18.718	.991	.434
	Within Groups	2399.393	127	18.893		
	Total	2511.701	133			
Politic party	Between Groups	330.288	6	55.048	1.299	.259
	Within Groups	9070.518	214	42.386		
	Total	9400.805	220			

H4: ✅

- ❑ There is no significant difference.
- ❑ This was an unexpected result due the fact that previous studies and existing literature consider ethnicity as the main variable of political gathering and political action.
- ❑ Dominant political identities are founded on the alternative divide between liberalism and conservatism, based on values and in particular on the national identity.

H2.1 ➡ Interest groups and political parties share different ideological preferences in Social Policy domains (in education, health, social protection, employment, pensions).

Table 38. T-test for perceptions regarding preferences in each domain

Subject		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Education	Interest Group	134	42.47	5.044	.436
	Politic party	220	40.27	5.922	.399
Health care	Interest Group	134	10.28	2.185	.189
	Politic party	217	10.30	2.007	.136
Social protection	Interest Group	134	46.22	7.328	.633
	Politic party	217	42.46	6.832	.464
Unemployment	Interest Group	131	26.98	3.720	.325
	Politic party	216	25.06	4.448	.303
Pensions	Interest Group	130	10.98	1.741	.153
	Politic party	216	10.00	2.172	.148

Table 39. Significance for T-test for perceptions regarding preferences in ach domain

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Education	3.577	352	.000	2.197	.614	.989	3.406
	3.718	315.166	.000	2.197	.591	1.035	3.360
Health care	-.090	349	.928	-.021	.228	-.469	.428
	-.088	263.568	.930	-.021	.233	-.479	.438
Social protection	4.872	349	.000	3.760	.772	2.242	5.278
	4.791	266.756	.000	3.760	.785	2.215	5.305
Unemployment	4.133	345	.000	1.917	.464	1.005	2.829
	4.316	311.565	.000	1.917	.444	1.043	2.791
Pensions	4.355	344	.000	.977	.224	.536	1.418
	4.598	316.977	.000	.977	.212	.559	1.395

H2.1 ✅

- *Health care*: there isn't any statistical difference in the perceptions regarding the domain of Health Care. Both groups tend to agree similarly.
- *Education*: Interest groups tend to approach more social democratic values (42.47), compared to political parties (40.27), by considering education an universal social right that should be provided to everyone, despite their socio-economic status.
- *Social protection*: respondents from interest groups, again, approach social-democratic values (46.22) compared to political parties (46.46) but the difference is small. In that regard, in many items both groups prefer a social protection system that tends to be more universalistic and flexible to social risks.
- *Unemployment*: interest groups members again share an orientation to social democracy (26.98) compared to political groups (25.06) which as well prefer similarly but in the same time, the second also tend to be more center oriented – conservative model in terms of welfare state ideology.
- *Pensions*: both groups prefer a system designed as a partnership between state and private institutions

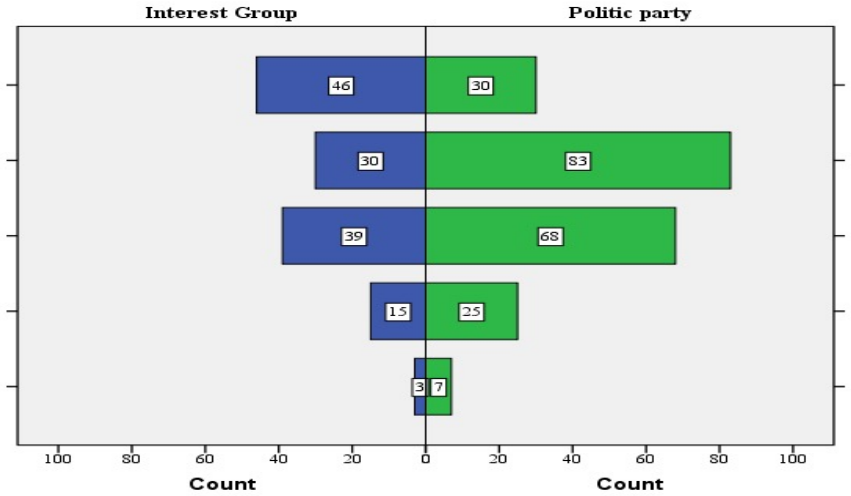
H2.2 ➡ A mixed system of public and private educational institutions is perceived as more efficient, instead of a fully public or fully private system by both groups (members of interest groups and political parties).

Table 40. Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		A mixed system of public and private educational institutions is more efficient
Subject	Chi-square	22.915
	Df	4
	Sig.	.000

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost sub table.

*. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level.



Graph 15. A mixed system of public and private educational institutions is more efficient

H2.2: ✅

- Both groups primarily see education as a public good and as a universal right. Moreover, they confirm in other items that reforms and support from governments should include both public and private institutions and partly believe that public education is often not flexible enough and bureaucratized.

H2.6 ➡ Both groups (interest groups and political parties) share same preferences regarding the mixed model of social protection financing and social services provision (shared responsibility between the state and other sectors).

Table 47. Crosstable between respondents' attitude and question: Combined financing and shared responsibility between actors

		Combined financing and shared responsibility				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I completely agree
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
	Interest Group	0	2	39	11	78
	Politic party	4	14	44	105	47

Table 48. Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		A mixed financing and provision regarding social protection is more adequate
Subject	Chi-square	81.510
	Df	4
	Sig.	.000*,b

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost sub table.

*. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level.

b. More than 20% of cells in this sub table have expected cell counts less than 5. Chi-square results may be invalid.

		Social protection services should be provided by public social service providers (state and municipalities)				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I completely agree
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
	Interest Group	1	10	39	17	64
	Politic party	3	32	69	77	29

Table 50. Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		Social protection services should be provided by public social service providers (state and municipalities)
Subject	Chi-square	57.089
	Df	4
	Sig.	.000*,b

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost sub table.

*. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level.

b. More than 20% of cells in this sub table have expected cell counts less than 5. Chi-square results may be invalid.

H2.6 ✅

- Frequencies reveal that members of political parties are inclined to agree in distinct value with this statement. Both surveyed groups prefer the combined financing model and shared responsibility between the state and the municipalities.
- Both surveyed groups prefer the combined financing model and shared responsibility between the state and the municipalities.
- Political parties are more inclined to agree.
- Pol. Parties prefer the public social services delivery, whilst interest groups prefer the mixed model.

H2.7 Full time – employed respondents from interest groups perceive the state as the main provider of employment opportunities and in case of unemployment, it should provide financial assistance for all unemployed categories.

Table 51. Crosstable between respondents' attitude and question: The state should create employment opportunities for all citizens

		The state should create employment opportunities for all citizens				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I completely agree
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Status at work	Other	0	3	7	9	22
	Full time employee	4	7	27	48	169
	Part-time employee	0	0	1	3	9
	Volunteer	0	0	2	2	13
	Collaborator	0	1	3	7	10

Table 52. Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		The state should create employment opportunities for all citizens
Status at work	Chi-square	11.526
	Df	16
	Sig.	.776[a,b]

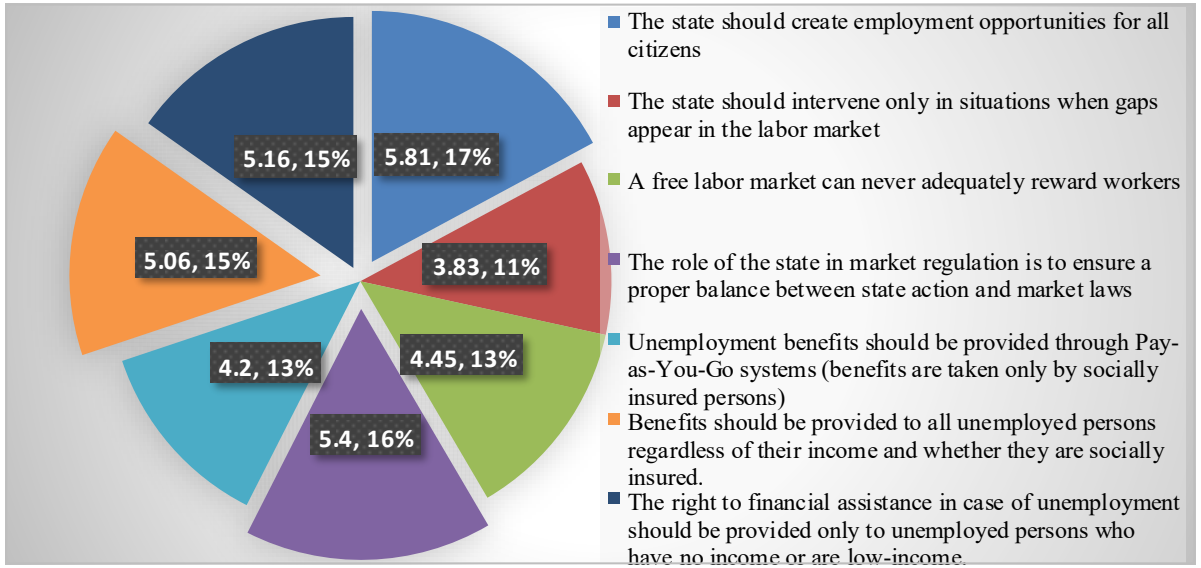
Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost sub table.

a. More than 20% of cells in this sub table have expected cell counts less than 5. Chi-square results may be invalid.

b. The minimum expected cell count in this sub table is less than one. Chi-square results may be invalid.

H2.7: verifies partly

- There is no statistically significant difference between the subjects surveyed according to their status at work for the question mentioned above. This means that everybody supports and agrees with this statement.



H2.9 ➡ Civil society organizations perceive financial social assistance as a mean that should be provided for a wider range of categories: all low-income households, people with disabilities, vulnerable families, unemployed, etc.

		Benefits should be provided to all unemployed people regardless of their income and whether they are socially insured.				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I completely agree
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Interest group	Other	0	1	5	3	8
	Workers organization (T.U)	1	0	7	1	8
	Organization of employers	0	0	1	3	7
	Think-Tank	0	1	2	1	7
	Civil society organization	0	5	25	5	39

Table 56. Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		Benefits should be provided to all unemployed people regardless of their income and whether they are socially insured.
Interest group	Chi-square	17.823
	Df	16
	Sig.	.334[a,b]

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost sub table.

a. More than 20% of cells in this sub table have expected cell counts less than 5. Chi-square results may be invalid.

b. The minimum expected cell count in this sub table is less than one. Chi-square results may be invalid.

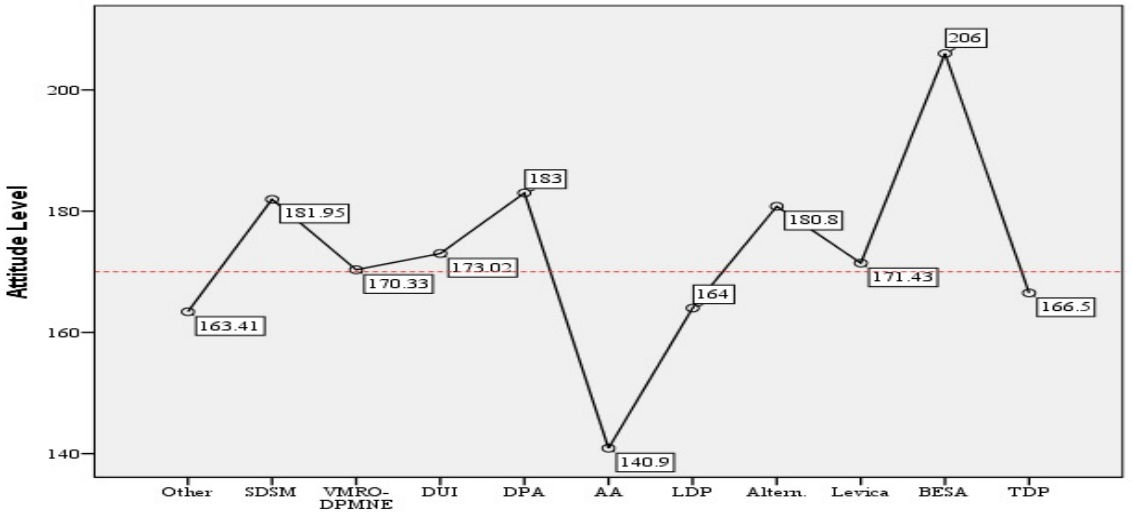
H2.9: ✅

- Even though there are differences in frequencies based on the value of Chi-square 17.823 with sig = .334 p> 0.05 there is no statistically significant difference between the surveyed subjects according to their group affiliation. Cash transfers in cases of unemployment should be provided to all regardless of their income and whether they are socially insured, therefore, all subjects of different group affiliations support and agree with this statement.

H3.1 ➡ There is no clear distinction of political parties on the left – right ideological spectrum even though in their platforms they are clearly defined upon the spectrum.

Table 59. T-test for perceptions regarding ideological distinctions of political parties in the left – right ideological spectrum

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Other	69	163.41	35.277	4.247	154.93	171.88
SDSM	40	181.95	26.172	4.138	173.58	190.32
VMRO-DPMNE	24	170.33	18.452	3.767	162.54	178.13
DUI	60	173.02	33.452	4.319	164.37	181.66
DPA	6	183.00	13.038	5.323	169.32	196.68
AA	10	140.90	72.173	22.823	89.27	192.53
LDP	1	164.00	.	.	.	.
Alternativa	5	180.80	14.446	6.461	162.86	198.74
Levica	7	171.43	13.806	5.218	158.66	184.20
BESA	2	206.00	49.497	35.000	-238.72	650.72
TDP	2	166.50	3.536	2.500	134.73	198.27
Total	226	170.54	33.947	2.258	166.09	174.99



Graph 16. Distinction of political parties on the left – right ideological spectrum

Table 60.Significance for T-test – ideological differences between political parties– ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21927.373	10	2192.737	1.986	.036
Within Groups	237366.769	215	1104.031		
Total	259294.142	225			

H3.1: ✅

According to the standard set as a key for the surveys foreseen with the Likert scale, Graph 16 shows that the maximum points result towards leftist ideologies (left and moderate left) while the minimum points belong to the rightist ideologies (right and moderate right).
The red line on the graph shows the overall average on center ideologies.

Group I ranks right parties (right and moderate right) AA, LDP and TDP

Group II lists political parties with leftist ideologies (left and moderate left) also SDSM, DUI, DPA, Alternativa and BESA. The political parties VMRO-DPMNE and Levica gravitate to the center

3.2: Respondents from left – wing political parties recognize the role of state as central in welfare provision.

Table 61. Crosstable between respondents' attitude and question: The state should finance all social services

		The state should finance all social services (for all citizens)				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I completely agree
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Political party	Other	1	3	19	26	17
	SDSM	2	1	4	14	17
	VMRO-DPMNE	0	4	4	10	6
	DUI	0	2	8	28	19
	DPA	0	1	2	0	3
	AA	0	0	3	3	2
	LDP	0	0	0	0	0
	Alternativa	0	0	0	0	1
	Levica	0	1	0	2	2
	BESA	0	0	2	1	4
	TDP	0	1	0	0	1
	Other	0	0	0	0	1

Table 62. Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		The state should finance all social services (for all citizens)
Political party	Chi-square	45.539
	df	40
	Sig.	.253[a,b]

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost sub table.

a. More than 20% of cells in this sub table have expected cell counts less than 5. Chi-square results may be invalid.

b. The minimum expected cell count in this sub table is less than one. Chi-square results may be invalid.

H3.2: ✅

Thus, all subjects of different party affiliations support and agree with this statement. This means that they all embrace left-wing ideological values (despite of the political party they belong to)

3.3: ➡ Female respondents from all political parties are mostly oriented in embracing universal values (social democracy) in terms of welfare state ideology.

Table 63. T-test for perceptions regarding the gender

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gender					
Perception	Female	220	196.28	40.411	2.725
	Male	140	188.44	48.326	4.084

Table 64. Significance for T-test - perceptions regarding based on gender - Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Perception	1.661	358	.097	7.842	4.720	-1.440	17.123
	1.597	257.82	.111	7.842	4.910	-1.826	17.510

H3.3: ❎

So sig=.097 p>0.05. This means that does not exist any significant statistical difference on the perception level regarding welfare state ideology, based on their gender affiliation

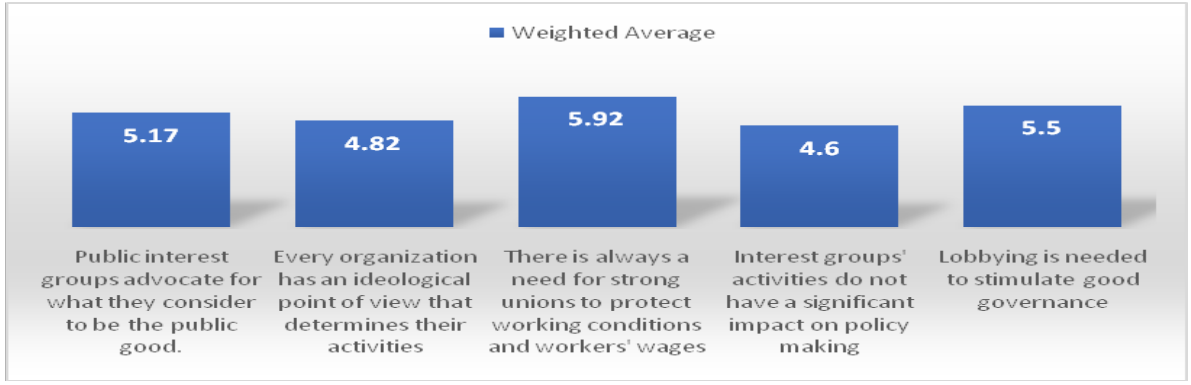
H4.1 : ➡ Interest groups recognize their significant contribution in pressuring governments or advocating - influencing the public opinion regarding social issues, since they protect public interest.

Table 65. Frequencies for: public interest groups advocate for what they consider to be the public good

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I do not agree at all	2	1.5	1.6	1.6
	I do not agree	4	3.0	3.1	4.7
	I neither agree nor disagree	35	26.1	27.1	31.8
	I agree	18	13.4	14.0	45.7
	I completely agree	70	52.2	54.3	100.0
	Total	129	96.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	3.7		
Total		134	100.0		

Table 66.Frequencies for: Stakeholder activities do not have a significant impact on policy making

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I do not agree at all	2	1.5	1.5	1.5
	I do not agree	21	15.7	16.2	17.7
	I neither agree nor disagree	34	25.4	26.2	43.8
	I agree	17	12.7	13.1	56.9
	I completely agree	56	41.8	43.1	100.0
	Total	130	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	4	3.0		
Total		134	100.0		



H4.1: ✅

Interest groups recognize their importance and in the same time their limitations. For instance, the majority recognize trade unions as more influential interest groups they affirm that there is always need to have strong unions to protect working conditions and workers' wages.

Additionally, they also stand for lobbying activities in order to boost good governance. In the same time, they recognize their limits since in part they recognize the fact that the real influence of interest groups in policymaking is not always significant.

H5.1 : ➡ There are differences between the two major groups (interest groups and political parties) regarding most emerging socio-economic problems/ priorities.

H5.2 ➡ Interest groups, in contrast to political parties, perceive unemployment and poverty as most emerging socio-economic problems in the country context.

Table 69. T-test for perceptions regarding most emerging socio-economic problems/ priorities

Subject		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Problem	Interest Group	130	40.90	4.707	.413
	Politic party	218	29.61	4.351	.295

		Poverty				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I completely agree
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Subject	Interest Group	0	0	18	7	104
	Politic party	18	59	51	76	13

Table 70. Significance for T-test for perceptions regarding most emerging socio-economic problems/ priorities - Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Problem	22.707	346	**.000**	11.290	.497	10.312	12.268
	22.260	254.659	**.000**	11.290	.507	10.291	12.289

H5.1 & H5.2 ✅

1. Poverty – most emerging socio-economic problem
2. Poverty & unemployment

		Unemployment is the most common socio-economic problem				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I completely agree
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Subject	Interest Group	0	1	23	6	100
	Politic party	39	106	31	21	18

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (RESULTS)

- **RQ1**: What are experts' opinions regarding the role of ideology in the development of welfare state in the country context?
- **RQ2**: Is there any evidence on the impact of ideology in reforming processes and development of main Social Policy domains chosen for the study, i.e. education, health care, social protection, employment, pensions?
- **RQ3**: At what extent ideology of a certain ruling party can influence the type of policy-making in the field of welfare. Is the welfare state designed depending on ideological preferences of ruling political parties?
- **RQ4**: What are the expert opinions regarding welfare mix in terms of financing, administering and delivering social services?
- **RQ5**: Have many of the reforms been a result of governmental priorities, market development, or other influences?
- **RQ6**: Is the institutional model of Social Policy – seeing government help as a normal occurrence in people's lives – as randomly applicable in the country context, or the government is seen involved as a last resort safety net (residual model)?
- **RQ7**: What is experts' opinion regarding the role, activities and contribution of interest groups in the context of North Macedonia.
- **RQ8**: What are experts' perceptions regarding future policy priorities and policy implication in the field of welfare?

Qualitative results

- "The political party's ideology influences the concept of social policy applied by governments.
- "Ideology can influence the model of Social Policy but first of all policymakers must work more to create the "near to best" ideology which is the one that should lead the welfare state ideology".
- "The reforms are mainly based on political concepts from where the head of the department (minister) comes from"
- "The performance of governments not only in the last 10 years but also longer has not had a clear vision for the needs, demands and challenges of education, especially for the needs of the labor market".
- "Government in cooperation with many international organizations are implementing attractive programs as: irreversible credits for young people to start a business; support for companies who employ youth or people from groups in social risks (self-care-mothers, Roma, people who are more than one year unemployed etc.)".
- Instead of passive transfer the state should focus more on delivering educational-training programs.
- The influence of interest groups is limited and is not done in a systematic way. Because informal practices of representing interests play a significant role, under the influence of neo-liberal policies, post-independence social policy has moved away from socialist features, and the role of some of the central actors it represents, such as trade unions, has declined. Business organizations also have an impact in this area, business is well positioned and efficient in its relationship with government. This applies to the area of economic and employment policies, but also to other sectors, such as health".

Discussion

- The results showed that the perceptions/preferences between interest groups and political parties regarding the role of state, market and family vary between them. In that regard, unless the expectations were to see interest groups as more oriented to social democratic values in terms of welfare regime the results showed the opposite, a tendency of political parties (despite the ideology) as typically more oriented in such values.

- When measured separately, there is obvious preferences of political parties for state interventionism as a leading ideological value and extended role of governments, compared to interest groups, which put the market at a first place. This tendency of political parties as being typically left-oriented is related with their attitudes in preferring an increased role and responsibility of governments (state interventionism) in welfare provision.

- Anyhow, in items measured jointly, both groups seem to embracing universalism and the extended role of governments (in particular regarding social benefits, incentives, etc.) which was confirmed in many hypotheses. When measured jointly, both groups share the idea that a basic universal minimum of social protection should be provided through governmental institutional regulation (institutional approach) for all people.

- Other hypotheses showed that the role of market is widely accepted by interest groups and they see market forces as crucial to the development of welfare state. It is noteworthy to highlight that family (as an informal provider) is still perceived important as a contribution of charity character, in particular from political parties. This explains that the conservative ideological values are present as well, even though at a minor extent.

Limitations and Implications for future research

- "Under-explored" topic - necessity for further research in analyzing links between ideology and welfare state.
- A serious limitation when designing further research, at a methodological aspect, remains the lack of standardized instruments for measuring empirically the role and influence of ideology in Social Policy.
- There is a gap between the welfare state ideology at a theoretical level and policies implemented in practice.

This gap becomes bigger, due the lack of real ideological values of political parties when governing and designing public policies. Consequently, in the future, the analysis, discussion and recommendations' should be focused in the role of political parties directly and secondly in the influence of other interest groups.

To increase the objectivity of this typology of researches, it would be recommendable to focus narrowly (in the future) in only one of ideologies and welfare state. For instance, attitudes of populist right wing politics and Social Policy, or left wing political ideologies and failure of welfare state, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

❖ Theoretically : ‘the nanny state’ or the ‘night watchman state’?

Conservatiism? : (*corporatism* and *communitarism*,)

Liberals? (*anti-collectivist* ideological political view, characterized by *individualism).*

Social-democracy? (*universalism)*

✓In the light of the above ideological welfare state explanations, the empirical results of this dissertation showed typical preferences for a more universal (social democratic) welfare regime, in which every citizen has a basic right to receive welfare. Secondly, they prefer the pluralized social service system delivery.

✓In N.M biggest transition was the passage from the ‘universalistic’ Social Policy model (inherited from the former socialist system) into the ‘safety net model’.

✓*pluralization* of welfare providers, *marketization* of social services, and *deinstitutionalization* remain most significant trends in the overall reforming processes that have taken place.

✓Neoliberalism has been the new *modus operandi* in the Social Policy sphere, since it has influenced many of the reforms in the country context. It opposed the former universalistic Social Policy inherited from the former system. Social policy was developed primarily relying on the economic development and the tendency to liberalize the market and boost economic liberalism. Social Policy, very often could not calibrate the forces and neither became fully neoliberal, either a typical ideological other model. Therefore, we can deduce that it is an alternative Social Policy model, very often referred to as a hybrid model. Under combined ideological influences, primarily the neoliberal ones, has been definitely produced ‘an ad hoc Social Policy’, based on priorities defined by each government, which very often are characterized by high populism.

✓Austerity and retrenchment as neoliberal principles manifested through conditionality, threatens the universalistic principles. This has been evident in many reforms in the context of North Macedonia, which in essence have been market-oriented reform policies through many of the processes, extensively characterized by privatization, marketization, etc. Furthermore, Social Policy, through these influences, has been perceived as a burden to the emerging economy.

❖ **What Social Policy we have?** A hybrid model of Social Policy -→ characterized by a confluence of neoliberalism and selectivism, manifested through an increase of social protection measures but with increased marketization and conditionality, which in essence threatens the welfare state ideology — at least, in its universalistic driving principles.

❖ **What Social Policy we want? ↓**

[Epilogue]

Why neoliberalism threatens Social Policy in the context of North Macedonia?

Firstly, because it fails to address adequately various intersecting forms of inequality or social dislocation created or exacerbated among others by the multiethnic composition of the population that characterizes the country.

Secondly, the neoliberal Social Policy model characterized by a welfare mix provision, still generate social anger in between providers and beneficiaries, institutions and citizens and very often the incapacities of the institutions to provide qualitative social services.

Thirdly, the social protection system as a first front Social Policy domain, following the neoliberal trend, tends to increase the marketization of many social services, which at a certain point start being unaffordable for many. It deteriorates the situation of the vulnerable.

- **Do we stand for a market friendly Social Policy as neoliberal agenda imposes?**

The neoliberal agenda in Social Policy that favors the market or economic liberalism, fails to respond to vulnerable groups and very often increases more the weakness the poor, minorities, women, etc. Neoliberalism may boost the free market economy, but it definitely shrinks the welfare state.. The neoliberal agenda is extremely tied to elites, upper classes and power groups, whilst the welfare state is driven by very different principles. And yes, neoliberalism has favored friendly market social policies by down-sizing the welfare, extending privatization and change tax policies.

- **New Social Policy directions or a Social Policy 'quo Vadis'?**

A neoliberal Social Policy is definitely a *redux* political activity in terms of welfare state idea and philosophy. A tendency to focus more on needs and rights instead of risks would change the philosophy of Social policy and would start ending the neoliberal influences that in essence undermine the social solidarity concept.

Social Policy should be directed by more universal principles and at least adopt mechanisms that would correspond with the 'particular' context of North Macedonia and provide sustainable solutions through an increase of social spending. It is the welfare state as an ethical political project that can at least 'humanize' capitalism, despite of its state/phase of being.

THANK YOU!

Hvala vam!