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Libertarian Perspectives on Social Change: The Overton Window and the Role of the State in Macedonian Society

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Abstract
This paper analyzes public opinion on the state's role in Macedonian society. The Ideological Carreau and the Overton Window of Political Possibilities frameworks visually represent the findings. The primary objective was to develop a reliable tool for measuring public attitudes and monitoring potential shifts in political culture. To gather the necessary data, an online political quiz was created. The responses were analyzed using arithmetic means to determine public opinion's central tendencies and position them within the Ideological Carreau. The analysis revealed that public attitudes toward the state's role predominantly align with the conceptual model of the liberal democratic state and the ideological orientation of modern liberalism.

Keywords
Libertarianism; Liberalism; State; Social Change; Overton Window; Ideological Carreau; Public Opinion; North Macedonia

INTRODUCTION

This paper analyzes public opinion regarding the state's role in Macedonian society, focusing on the ideological framework of libertarianism. By employing the Ideological Carreau and Overton Window of Political Possibilities models, this study visually presents the relationship between public opinion and political ideologies, offering a unique lens to understand the preferences and shifts within the Macedonian populace.

The paper is structured as follows: a literature review, an overview of the theoretical framework, an explanation of the research methodology, an interpretation of the results, an assessment of the applicability of the models, recommendations for future research, and an exploration of potential methods for social change. This study's core is a theoretical framework grounded in libertarianism, both as a political ideology and as an academic discourse that informs the study's central concepts.

This research focuses on a specific dimension of public opinion by examining the ideological preferences of individuals in North Macedonia, particularly their views on the state's role in society from a libertarian standpoint. Utilizing the Overton Window of Political Possibilities, the study provides a conceptual model to gauge the space in which socio-political ideas and policies are considered acceptable or outside the mainstream.

The primary objective of this research is to provide scholars, policymakers, and other stakeholders with a robust methodological framework for measuring public opinion and monitoring shifts in political thought over time. By applying the Overton Window, the study

aims to generate empirical insights to help anticipate the evolution of socio-political institutions and public policy in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The significance of this research lies in its capacity to identify the relative popularity of various ideas and policies by situating them within the Overton Window spectrum. By understanding the societal acceptability of these ideas, stakeholders can more effectively assess the potential for political and institutional change. Furthermore, the study provides critical insights into how public opinion on key socio-political issues can be systematically tracked and analyzed, establishing a foundation for future academic research and evidence-based policymaking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although a wide range of sources has informed the development of this paper, the literature is primarily grounded in five seminal works that are central to the analysis.

The first of these is Friedrich A. Hayek's "The Intellectuals and Socialism" (1949), an essay that examines the success of socialism in the 20th century and explores the intellectual foundations behind its rise. Hayek argues that intellectuals played a pivotal role in advancing socialism by influencing public opinion and promoting socialist policies indirectly, serving as intermediaries between ideas and the public (Hayek 1949, 1-3). A key insight from Hayek is that substantial social change is often preceded by shifts in public opinion rather than direct political advocacy.

The second work, "Ideology and the Individual" (2009) by Prof. Branislav Sarkanjac, examines ideology and its constituent elements, providing a critical framework for understanding how ideological movements shape societal dynamics.

Brian Doherty's "Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement" (2007) constitutes the third key text. This extensive volume chronicles the history and evolution of libertarianism in the United States, highlighting the movement's key figures and ideological foundations. Spanning over 700 pages, it is an essential reference for understanding the core principles of libertarian thought and their development over time (Doherty 2007).

The fourth work, "The State: Its History and Development Viewed Sociologically" by Franz Oppenheimer, traces the state's historical evolution from its origins to its contemporary form. Oppenheimer's pioneering theories on the state's emergence and its sociological implications provide a foundational perspective on state power and governance.

Finally, the article "Overton Window of Political Possibilities" (2019), published by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, offers an analysis of the Overton Window model, pivotal for understanding the shifting boundaries of acceptable political discourse.

Together, these works provide the theoretical underpinnings for this research, offering critical insights into the fundamental concepts explored. However, despite the extensive literature on these topics, empirical studies focusing on the potential for social change toward libertarianism remain scarce. While libertarianism is grounded in robust moral and economic foundations, there is a noticeable gap in research regarding strategic approaches for advancing such change and measuring the popularity and influence of libertarian ideas in the public sphere.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework comprises seven main concepts: ideology, libertarianism, the state, social change, Ideological Carreau, the Overton Window of Political Possibilities, and the Overton Window of the state's role in society.

Ideology

Ideology is "a set of ideas or perspectives through which people see and interpret the world" (Ilik 2012). Political ideology, more specifically, consists of beliefs, principles, and positions on how society should be structured and governed. It includes justifications for these beliefs, critiques of existing social conditions, a vision for a better future, and strategies for achieving change.

According to Prof. Branislav Sarkanjac (2009), ideology has three key components:

- Eidology – The foundation of an ideology, providing justifications for the alternative socio-political organization, fundamental principles, and a critique of the current system.
- Ideotely – The vision of an alternative reality that the ideology seeks to achieve by applying its core principles and moving beyond the *status quo*.
- Ideelogy – The strategies and methods for driving social change, guiding the transition from the current system to the envisioned alternative reality (pp. 25-31).

In this paper, ideology is understood as a set of beliefs, principles, and positions regarding the appropriate role of the state in society (Ilievski 2025a).

Libertarianism

Big-tent approach libertarianism is an ideological tradition covering various schools of thought, theories, and perspectives on individual liberty and related concepts such as minimal government, free markets, free expression, and the rule of law as fundamental principles of societal organization. Its interpretations span multiple disciplines, including economics, political theory, and philosophy. According to Doherty (2007):

> Libertarianism is based in economic theory, as economic science teaches how workable order can arise from the seeming chaos of free actions uncoordinated by a single outside intelligence, and how government intervention is apt to upset that balance. It is based in moral theory, positing what is or is not right when it comes to a human being, or group of human beings, using force or coercion on another. It is based in political theory, exploring the likely effects of granting human beings power over others. It is ultimately a delicate ecological balance of all these, with history in the mix as well, to further understand how the constant struggle of liberty versus power tends to play out in the real world (p. 15).

The fundamental theoretical foundations of libertarianism include Natural rights theory, the Austrian School of Economics, the Chicago School of Economics, public choice theory, Objectivist philosophy, Hayekian evolutionism, and Rothbardian anarcho-capitalism (Zwolinski

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and Tomasi 2023). Its five most influential figures are Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich A. Hayek, Ayn Rand, Murray Rothbard, and Milton Friedman (Doherty 2007, 8). Based on the nature of their arguments, these theoretical foundations can be divided into philosophical (moral) and economical (utilitarian).

When talking about "-isms," the open interpretation of liberty or big-tent approach libertarianism incorporates liberalism (classical or modern), capitalism (radical or conscious), objectivism, and (analytical) anarchism (Boettke 2007).

Table 1: Libertarian Interpretations and Justifications (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

Libertarian Interpretations and Justifications	
Philosophy/Morality	**Economics/Utility**
Natural Rights Theory	Austrian School of Economics
Objectivism	Chicago School of Economics
Rothbardian Anarcho-Capitalism	Public Choice Theory
	Hayekian Evolutionism

Despite the variations among different types of libertarianism, they share a common goal: advancing toward a freer society. While there are at least three distinct interpretations of what a truly free society entails, there is broad agreement on the process to achieve it. This transformation involves reducing and liberalizing the role of the state (or government) in society while simultaneously expanding individual liberty and promoting the free market.

One of the main aspects of libertarianism is the role of the state (or government). In this framework, liberty is seen as the opposite of state power — meaning that less government equates to more freedom, whereas an omnipotent government inherently restricts individual freedoms (Mises 1998).

At least three different approaches to the nature and proper role of the state can be distinguished from a libertarian perspective:

- Minimal state (Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Matt Zwolinski).
- Night-watchman state (Ludvig von Mises, Ayn Rand, and Robert Nozick).
- Stateless society (Murray Rothbard, Hans Hermann Hoppe, and David Friedman).

The State

The second key concept examined in this paper is the state. Following Max Weber's (1949) definition, the state is understood as a human community that claims the legitimate use or threat of physical violence. By its nature, the state is a unique entity within society, allowing for various forms of analysis. According to the comprehensive description of Anthony de Jasay (1998), the state is:

> An instrument created to serve its user. It is generally perceived as benign, and helpful for achieving people's goals. The form, functions, and identity of its beneficiaries can vary, but the instrumental nature is accepted from different stances of contemporary political thought. Securing the peace for Hobbes,

> protecting the natural right of liberty and property, for Lock, realizing social will for Rousseau, and a generator for improving the social conditions for Bentham and Mill. For today's liberals, it exceeds the lack of capacity of private interests to cooperate socially. It coerces the production of collective units of public goods, such as order, defense, air quality, streets, and universal education. Public goods, in a broader sense, involve the achievement of distributional justice (p. 18).

The state's role, a central focus of this paper and De Jassay's definition is related to its services and functions in society (see Table 2).

Table 2: The Functions of the State (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

Right-Wing Functions	Left-Wing Functions
Spiritual and Identificational	Economic and Financial
Security and Judicial	Healthcare and Social
Morality and Nurture	Educational and Cultural
	Ecological

As one of the main subjects of interest in libertarianism, the state is primarily defined by its size within society and its attitude toward its citizens. Through the libertarian perspective, the state is described as a "hegemonic organization" (Mises 1998), "a negation of freedom" (Mises 2009), and the great fictitious entity by which everyone seeks to live at the expense of everyone else (Bastiat 1848).

Based on two key factors — state size and its attitude — ten conceptual types of states are identified and presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Typology of States and Ideologies (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

Ideology	Typology of State
Anarchism	Stateless Society
Voluntarism	Ultra-Minimal State
Libertarianism	Night-Watchman State
Classical Liberalism	Minimal State
Modern Liberalism	Liberal Democracy
Etatism	Centralized Bureaucratic State
Authoritarianism	Authoritarian State
Totalitarianism	Totalitarian State
National-Bolshevism	National-Bolshwik State
Totalism	Total State

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Social Change

The third key concept in this paper is social change, which, in this context, refers to various processes of transformations in a society's institutions and public policies. The processes that move society toward greater freedom are considered forms of libertarian social change (Blundel 2015). In contrast, ideological change pertains to individual shifts in beliefs, preferences, and attitudes (Stringham and Hummer 2010). According to the dominant libertarian approach to social change - "educationism" (Rothbard 1978), an ideological transformation of individuals plays a crucial role in driving broader social change.

One of the most important theories for social change in the libertarian discourse is the Hayekian one, based on his Austrian Capital Theory and the Structure of Production (of Goods). Building on this structure, Hayek also developed the Austrian Theory of the Production and Distribution of Ideas (Hart 2015). The process begins with the original creators of ideas — in the libertarian case, figures such as Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Ayn Rand, Murray Rothbard, Milton Friedman, and others.

However, new ideas are rarely embraced immediately upon their inception. Instead, the task of popularizing these concepts falls to what Hayek (1949) refers to as "intellectuals" or what Rothbard (1990) calls "cadres." Inspired by the work of the original thinkers, these intermediaries disseminate ideas, initiating ideological change and influencing public opinion. Once public opinion shifts — a complex and multifaceted process — the next stage involves exerting pressure on political elites to implement public policies or necessary institutional change (Ilievski 2025b).

The change in public opinion is expected to result in emerging pro-liberty political parties or strengthening the liberty components in the current political parties.

Table 4: The Structure of Production and Distribution of Ideas - an Austrian Analysis (Source: Hart 2015; Ilievski 2025b)

Highest Order	→	• Original Scholarly Works of Theory • Universities, Research Institutes
Third Order	→	• Universities, Colleges • Monographs, Journal Articles • Textbooks
Second Order	→	• Think Tanks • Public Policy Documents • Legislation
First Order	→	• Public Media - TV, Newspapers, Internet • Election Campaigns

The Ideological Carreau

The Ideological Carreau represents an ideological spectrum designed to visually depict the progression of ideologies based on their perspectives on the proper state's role in society. It covers 10 ideologies and 10 types of state (except the conceptual model of Stateless Society). Furthermore, the Ideological Carreau helps individuals identify their ideological position within the spectrum. Ideologies are directly shaped by political power and, more specifically, by the state's role in society. Figure 1 outlines a visual representation of the Ideological Carreau and/or the typology spectrum of the state.

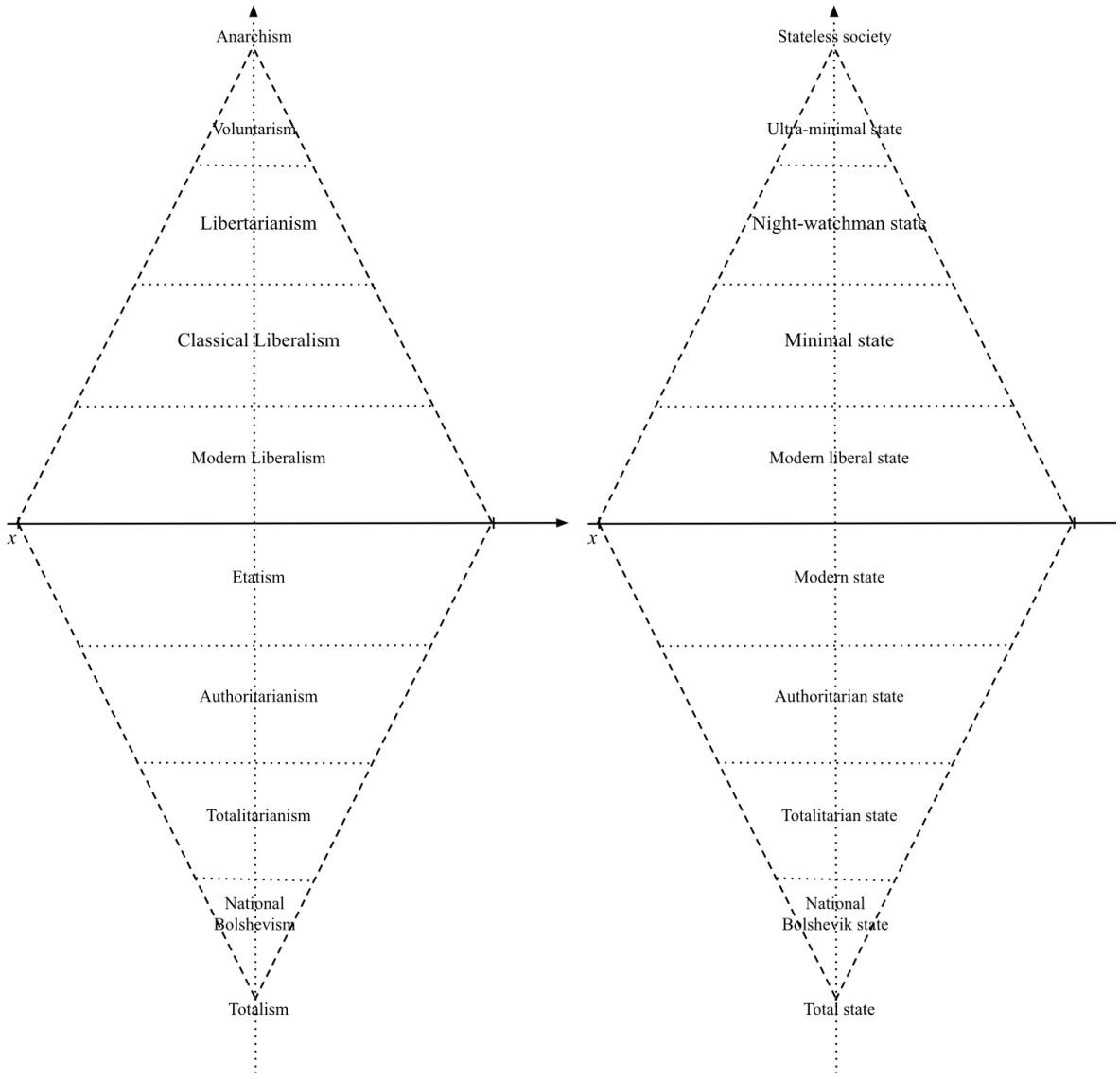


Figure 1: Ideological Carreau and/or State Typology Spectrum (Ilievski 2025a)

The Overton Window of Political Possibilities

The Overton Window of Political Possibilities is a conceptual model and visual framework (Ilievski 2025b) that illustrates the public's perception of ideas and possible public policies. Developed by Joseph P. Overton (1960-2003), former Vice President of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, the model is based on the idea that in democratic contexts, political elites and their proposed policies are largely shaped by public opinion. Politicians are unlikely to introduce policies based on radical or widely unacceptable ideas (Blundel 2015), whereas policies aligned with popular opinion are more easily accepted and implemented, as visualized in Table 5.

Table 5: Detailed Overton Window of Political Possibilities (Source: Ilievski 2025b)

UNTHINKABLE
RADICAL
ACCEPTABLE
SENSIBLE
POPULAR
POLICY
POPULAR
SENSIBLE
ACCEPTABLE
RADICAL
UNTHINKABLE

From the standpoint of public opinion, ideas and policies vary in acceptance. Some are widely embraced, while others are considered radical and unacceptable. The Overton Window serves as a framework to categorize and illustrate the extent to which certain ideas and policies are deemed acceptable by society. The specific Overton Window of political possibilities covers ideas and/or public policies popular in the public discourse.

A spectrum of public policies must exist for the model to be fully applied. A common example of such a spectrum can be seen in policies regarding the legal status of cannabis and related regulations, as visualized in Table 6.

Table 6: Spectrum of the Legal Status of Cannabis and Related Regulations (Source: Ilievski 2025b)

No public policies concerning cannabis - Total freedom
Public policy on legalizing recreational use of cannabis
Public policy on decriminalizing recreational use of cannabis
Legalizing the medical use of cannabis for a variety of conditions
Legalizing the medical use of cannabis for a limited number of conditions
Tolerating cannabis consumption and imprisonment for cannabis producers and sellers
Fines for cannabis consumption in public spaces
Fines for cannabis consumers
Harsh imprisonment for cannabis producers, sellers, and the ones enabling consumption
Mandatory testing and harsh imprisonment for cannabis producers, sellers and users
Death penalty for cannabis producers, sellers, and users

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The Overton Window applies to the entire spectrum of public policies based on their popularity. Depending on public opinion, it helps categorize and visualize where each policy falls — whether it is considered popular, sensible, radical, or unacceptable.

The Overton Window of the State's Role in Society

Although the Overton Window is typically applied to specific policies, this research aims to extend its application to the broader social and/or ideological organization topic, represented through the Ideological Carreau or the typology spectrum of the state. Additionally, it is tailored to a specific area — the state's role in society — and is simplified into five distinct windows.

The top and bottom windows represent the Radical windows covering radical and unthinkable ideas. The ones closer to the center are considered Sensible windows, which involve sensible and acceptable ideas. The central one represents the Overton Window of the state's role in society, which are the popular ideas. It is visually represented in Table 7.

Table 7: The Overton Window and the State's Role in Society (Source: Ilievski 2025b)

RADICAL WINDOW (Radical and Unthinkable Ideas)
SENSIBLE WINDOW (Sensible and Acceptable Ideas)
OVERTON WINDOW OF THE ROLE OF A STATE IN SOCIETY (Popular Ideas)
SENSIBLE WINDOW (Sensible and Acceptable Ideas)
RADICAL WINDOW (Radical and Unthinkable Ideas)

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The research is carried out in six distinct phases:

- Hypothesis Development – Formulating both a main and a specific hypothesis.
- Ideological Framework – Developing an Ideological Carreau and/or a typology spectrum of the state.
- Overton Window Analysis – Establishing an Overton Window for the state's role.
- Quiz Design – Developing a political quiz consisting of 28 evaluative statements.
- Data Collection – Publishing the quiz online and collecting participant responses.
- Results Analysis – Interpreting the quiz results, which constitute the core of this study.

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Formulation and Development of Hypotheses

Two hypotheses have been developed to advance the aims of the research.

Main Hypothesis: The Overton Window's central position on the state's role in Macedonian society is within liberal democracy.

Specific Hypothesis: The Overton Window's central position on the state's role in Macedonian society is within the left field of liberal democracy, or liberal welfare state.

Developing an Ideological Carreau and/or State Typology Spectrum

The Ideological Carreau has 17 key points, illustrating how ideologies develop and interpret the state's role in society. Each ideological field spans 0.5 units on the y-axis, while the x-axis ranges from 2 to 0 units, representing the spectrum from anarchism (no state control) to Totalism (absolute state control). The important points in the Carreau are presented in Figure 2 and Table 8. In contrast, the specific ideologies represented through conceptual types of states are presented in Table 9 (Specific Ideology in the Ideological Carreau).

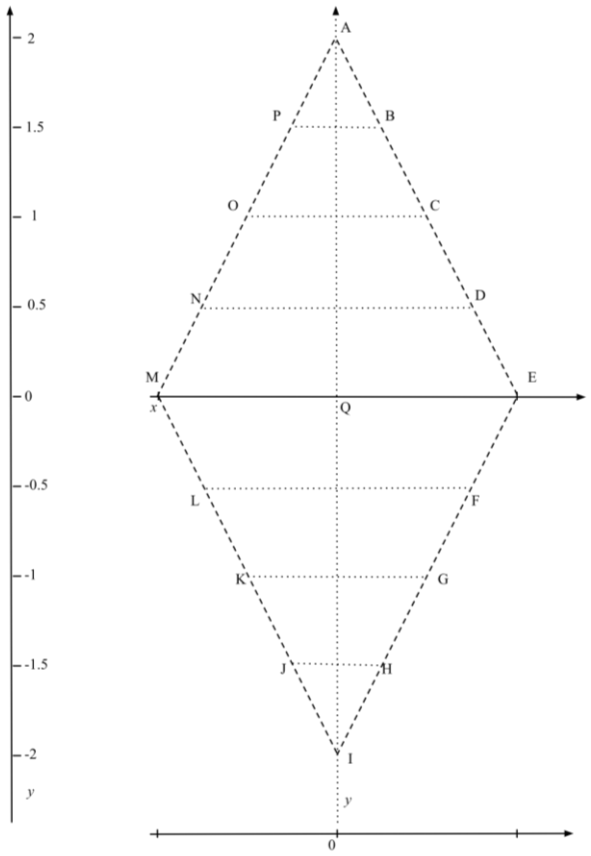


Figure 2: Points in the Ideological Carreau (Ilievski 2025a)

Table 8: Important Points in the Ideological Carreau (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

Important Points in the Ideological Carreau		
Point/Field	Ideology	Typology of State
A	Anarchism	Stateless Society
ABP	Voluntarism	Ultra-Minimal State
BCOP	Libertarianism	Night-Watchman State
CDNO	Classical Liberalism	Minimal State
DEMN	Modern Liberalism	Liberal Democracy
EFLM	Etatism	Centralized Bureaucratic State
FGKL	Authoritarianism	Authoritarian State
GHJK	Totalitarianism	Totalitarian State
HIJ	National-Bolshevism	National-Bolshwik State
I	Totalism	Total State
AEM	Liberal Triangle	
EIM	Authoritarian Triangle	
AEI	Paternalism	
AIM	Maternalism	

Table 9: Specific Ideology in the Ideological Carreau (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

Ideology/Type of State	Left Variant	Right Variant
Anarchism/Stateless Society	/	/
Voluntarism/Ultra Minimal State	/	/
Classical Liberalism/Minimal State	Bleeding Heart Libertarianism/ Minimal Welfare State	Conservative Liberalism/ Conservative Minimal State
Modern Liberalism/ Liberal Democracy	Welfare Liberalism/ Liberal Welfare State	National Liberalism/ National Liberal State
Etatism/Centralized Bureaucratic State	Welfarism/Welfare State	Nationalism/Nation-state
Authoritarianism/Authoritarian State	Socialism/Socialistic State	Fascism/Fascist State
Totalitarianism/Totalitarian State	Communism/Communist State	Nazism/Nazi State
National Bolshevism/National Bolshevik State	/	/
Totalism/Total State	/	/

Developing the Overton Window of the State's Role in Society

The overall Overton Window on the state's role in society consists of 5 distinct windows. Each window spans 0.8 units on the y-axis, totaling four units corresponding to the vertical length of the Ideological Carreau. The two extreme windows are labeled as Radical, covering ideas considered extreme, undesirable, and impractical for socio-political organizations.

All the windows are represented in Figure 3 and Table 10. The Sensible windows are closer to the center of the overall window, representing ideologies deemed sensible but still acceptable within public discourse.

Finally, the Overton Window of the state's role in society contains popular ideas in public opinion. It has the greatest potential to be transformed into public policies and/or to challenge social institutions. Ideological change involves shifting the overall window within the Carreau and pushing the sensible toward the Overton Window while increasing the likelihood of these ideas influencing social change and becoming policy.

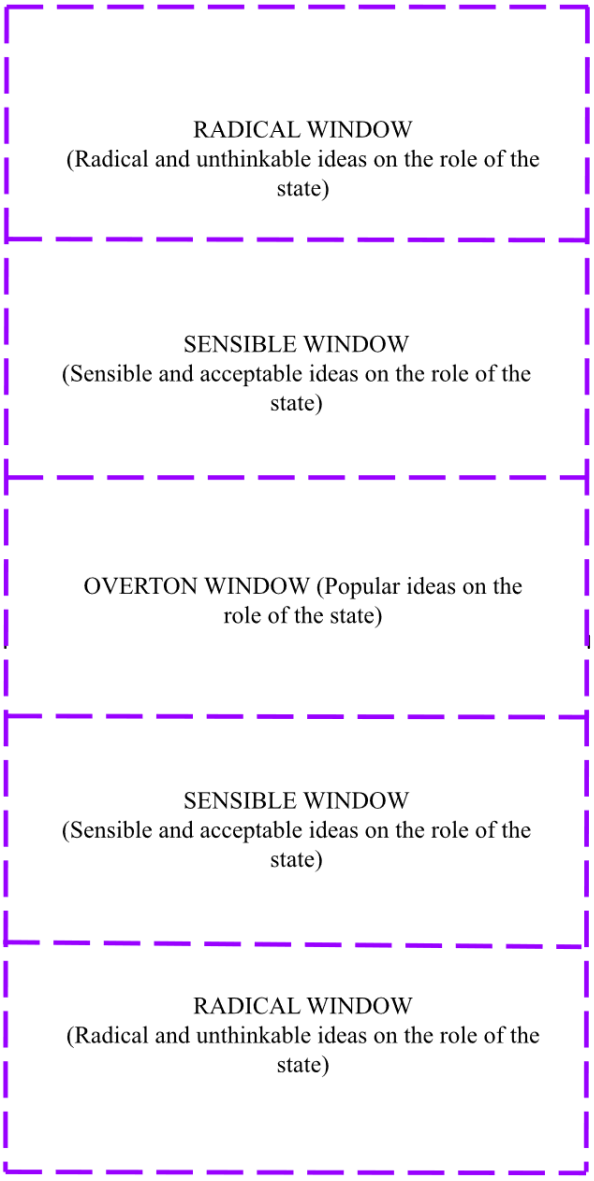


Figure 3: The Overton Window and the State's Role in Society (Ilievski 2025a)

Table 10: Important Points in the Ideological Carreau (Source: Ilievski 2025)

The Overton Window of the State's Role in Society			
Overall Window	Ideas Through Public Opinion	Vol. x Units (5x0.8 = 4)	Location
Radical Window	Unacceptable, Radical	2 x 0.8 = 1.6	Extreme
Sensible Window	Sensible, Acceptable	2 x 0.8 = 1.6	Toward the Center
Overton Window	Popular	1 x 0.8 = 0.8	Central

ENGAGING CITIZENS: THE ONLINE QUIZ ON THE STATE'S ROLE IN MACEDONIAN SOCIETY

The research employed an online political quiz or evaluation form comprising 28 statements concerning the state's role in Macedonian society (as presented in Table 11). These statements are organized into seven groups, each corresponding to one of the seven functions of the state in society.

Table 11: Reassessing the State's Role in Contemporary Macedonian Society (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

STATEMENTS	
The Spiritual and Identificational Functions of the State	
1	The state is an expression of our identity.
2	I am indifferent toward the flag and the anthem.
3	I am always ready to give my life for my fatherland.
4	A stateless society is possible and would be more just and useful.
5	The state is above everything.
The Security and Judicial Functions of the State	
6	More police, less justice.
7	Military service should be compulsory.
8	National security is always more important than human rights.
9	Private courts for improved justice.
10	National borders should be eliminated.
11	I support the death penalty.

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The Moral and Nurturing Functions of the State	
12	Pornographic movies should be banned.
13	Prostitution should be legalized.
14	All drugs should be decriminalized.
The Economic and Financial Functions of the State	
15	We need the nationalization of businesses for a stronger economy.
16	Public companies are the backbone of the economy.
17	The free market may not be ideal, but no better alternative exists.
18	Taxation is theft, and politicians are no different from criminals.
The Healthcare and Social Functions of the State	
19	Every human has an inherent right to basic food.
20	The government is the most effective organizer of the healthcare system.
21	I prefer to have control over my gross salary and benefits.
22	Freedom is more important than equality.
The Educational and Cultural Functions of the State	
23	The government should oversee children's education from their early years.
24	Public education is better than private education.
25	Education should not be mandatory.
26	Culture should not be funded with public money.
The Ecological Function of the State	
27	There is a need for severe punishment for environmental violators.
28	There is a need for free-market solutions to address ecological problems.

The statements can be categorized as either Libertarian or Authoritarian. Statements numbered 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, and 28 are Libertarian, while statements numbered 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24, and 27 are Authoritarian.

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Each statement is rated on a scale from 1 to 5: (1) Fully disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Fully agree.

Evaluating the libertarian statements using this scale positions respondents at different points on the vertical axis of the Ideological Carreau. A rating of 1 places them at the bottom (more authoritarian), while a rating of 5 places them at the top (more libertarian). The horizontal axis (left to right) is determined by the nature of the function, indicating whether the respondent's views align more with left-wing or right-wing ideologies. This method provides a structured approach to assess public opinion regarding the state's role.

Each statement is assigned a position on the Ideological Carreau, and the participant's final position is calculated as the average of all individual statement positions, reflected on both the x- and y-axes. The overall position on the Carreau and within the Overton Window concerning the state's role in Macedonian society represents the average of all respondents' positions.

Online Quiz

The quiz was created in the Macedonian language and published online on 19 August 2023, accessible at https://ideoloshko-karo.firebaseapp.com/ (see Figure 4). Initially, the quiz was developed to collect data for the author's doctoral dissertation titled: "Libertarianism, State, and Change: The Overton Window of the State's Role in (Macedonian) Society."

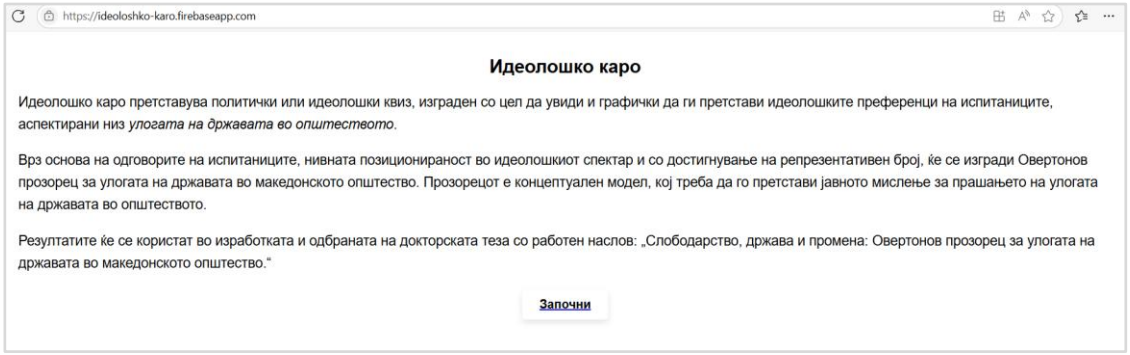


Figure 4: A Screenshot from the Online Quiz (Source: Author's creation)

The respondents were classified into seven categories based on the following criteria:

- **Age**: Below 17, 18 – 35, 36 – 55, 55 and above
- **Sex**: Female, Male, Other
- **Education**: High school, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, PhD
- **Profession**: Public administration, Political leadership, Education, Business, Judiciary, Culture, Media, Healthcare, Finances, Hospitality, Student, Unemployed, Retired, Other
- **Salary**: Budget or Non-budget
- **Ethnic community**: Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Roma, Aromanians, Other
- **Place of living**: Urban or Rural area

Over two months, the quiz collected responses from 300 participants. The outcomes are presented in Table 12.

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Table 12: Analysis of Outcomes by Category and Group (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

Category	Category Group	Respondent's Number	Total Percentage
Age	Below 17	0	0
	18 - 35	212	70.66
	36 - 55	61	20.3
	55 and Above	27	9
Sex	Male	175	58.33
	Female	122	40.66
	Other	3	1
Education	High School	64	21.33
	Bachelor Degree	160	53.33
	Master Degree	64	21.33
	PhD Degree	9	3
	Other	3	1
Profession	Public Administration	18	6
	Political Leadership	3	1
	Education	17	5.66
	Business	59	19.66
	Judiciary	16	5.33
	Culture	24	8
	Media	7	2.33
	Healthcare	19	6.33
	Finances	7	2.33
	Hospitality	11	3.66
	Student	15	5



	Unemployed	14	4.66
	Retired	5	1.66
	Other	85	28.33
Salary	Public Budget	68	22.66
	Non-Public Budget	232	77.33
Ethnic Community	Macedonian	262	87.33
	Albanian	12	4
	Turkish	2	0.66
	Roma	3	1
	Aroma	7	2.33
	Other	14	4.66
Place of Living	Urban Area	277	92.33
	Rural Area	23	7.66
All Respondents		**300**	**100**

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Results

Over two months, the quiz gathered responses from 300 participants. The final position, Z, is located at coordinates x = 0.0113 and y = 0.1416, placing it within the ideological field of modern liberalism. The corresponding state type for this field is liberal democracy, as visually represented in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Since Z falls specifically within the right-wing liberalism section, identified as national liberalism, the associated state type is a national liberal state.

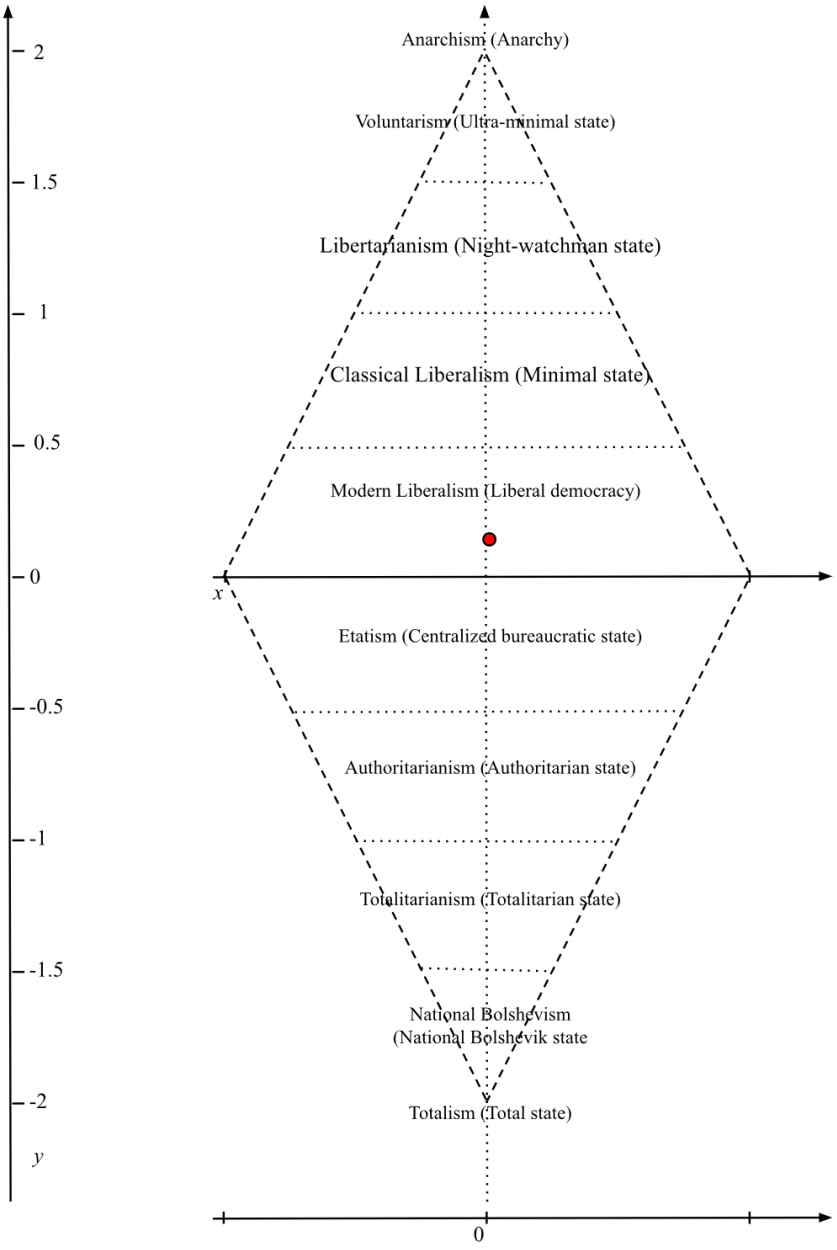


Figure 5: Final Position on the Ideological Carreau (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

The Overton Window spans 0.8 units, with each ideological field covering 0.5 units. This setup allows representing three ideologies and their corresponding state types within the window.

Alongside modern liberalism and its associated liberal democracy, two other ideologies are also present:

- Etatism, characterized by a centralized, bureaucratic state, holds a dominant position within the Overton Window, alongside modern liberalism.
- Classical liberalism, linked to the minimal state, plays a minor role in the window.

This configuration illustrates the range of ideological positions and the state types they correspond to within the Overton Window.

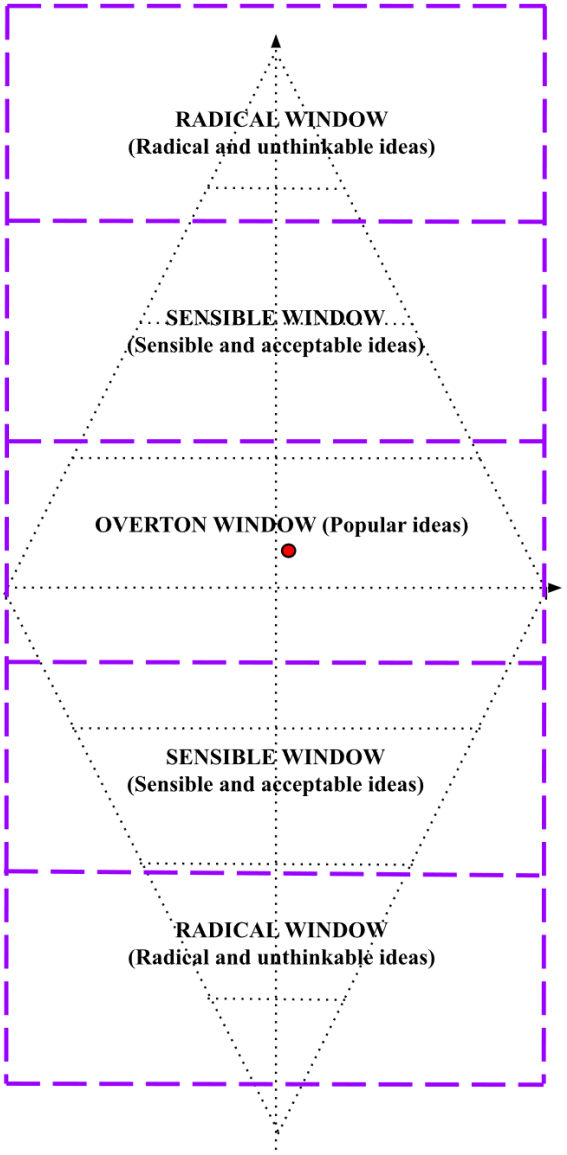


Figure 6: The Overton Window Applied to the Ideological Carreau (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

As part of the analysis, at least two relations between the Overton Window on the state's role in Macedonian society and the ideological/state fields can be distinguished.

Ideologies participating in the Overton Window is the first relation that shows the scale of ideology being part of the Overton Window of Political Possibilities. Alternatively, it simply shows the ideologies in the window. Modern liberalism participates with 62,5%, etatism with 32,3% and classical liberalism with 5,2% in the Overton Window of Political Possibilities.

$$\text{Ideologies Participating in the Overton Window (T)} = \frac{\textit{Ideology units being part of the window}}{\textit{Window}'\textit{s units}} \text{x}\mathbf{100}\%$$

Ideologies corresponding to the Overton Window is the second relation that shows how much each ideology corresponds to the window. It shows how much of the ideology is being part of the window. Modern liberalism corresponds with 100%, etatism with 51.68% and classical liberalism with 8,32 of the Overton Window of Political Possibilities.

$$\text{Ideologies Corresponding to the Overton Window (R)} = \frac{\textit{Ideology units participating in the window}}{\textit{Ideology}'\textit{s units}} \text{x}\mathbf{100}\%$$

The Overton Window covers a range of ideologies and their associated state types:

- Etatism, associated with the centralized bureaucratic state, occupies a portion of the window from y = -0.2584 to y = 0. This reflects the ideological support for a more centralized form of governance within the Overton Window.
- The largest portion of the Overton Window is occupied by modern liberalism and its corresponding liberal democracy state type, from y = 0 to y = 0.5. This indicates that the predominant ideology within the window is aligned with liberal democratic values and principles.
- The smallest portion of the Overton Window represents classical liberalism, which advocates for a minimal state, covering the area from y = 0.5 to y = 0.5416. This suggests limited support for the ideology of minimal state intervention within the window.

This distribution illustrates the relative prominence of different ideological fields in shaping the public perception of the state's role in Macedonian society.

The structure of the Overton Window primarily covers modern liberalism and liberal democracy, representing 62.5% of the window. This is followed by etatism and the centralized bureaucratic state, which account for 32.3%, and finally, classical liberalism and the minimal state, which contribute 5.2%.

On the other hand, when considering the contributions of each ideology to the Overton Window, modern liberalism accounts for 100% of the window, while etatism contributes 51.68%, and classical liberalism contributes 8.35%.

Both relations — ideological proximity and ideological conflict — are summarized in Table 13 and visually shown in Figure 7.

Table 13: The Overton Window: The State's Role and Ideological Fields (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

The Overton Window and the State's Role in Macedonian Society (-0,2584 to 0,5416)			
Ideology	Type of State	Ideology Percentage (%) Being Part of the Window (T)	Ideology Percentage (%) corresponding to the Window (R)
Modern Liberalism	Liberal Democracy	62.5	100
Etatism	Centralized Bureaucratic State	32.3	51.68
Classical Liberalism	Minimal State	5.2	8.32

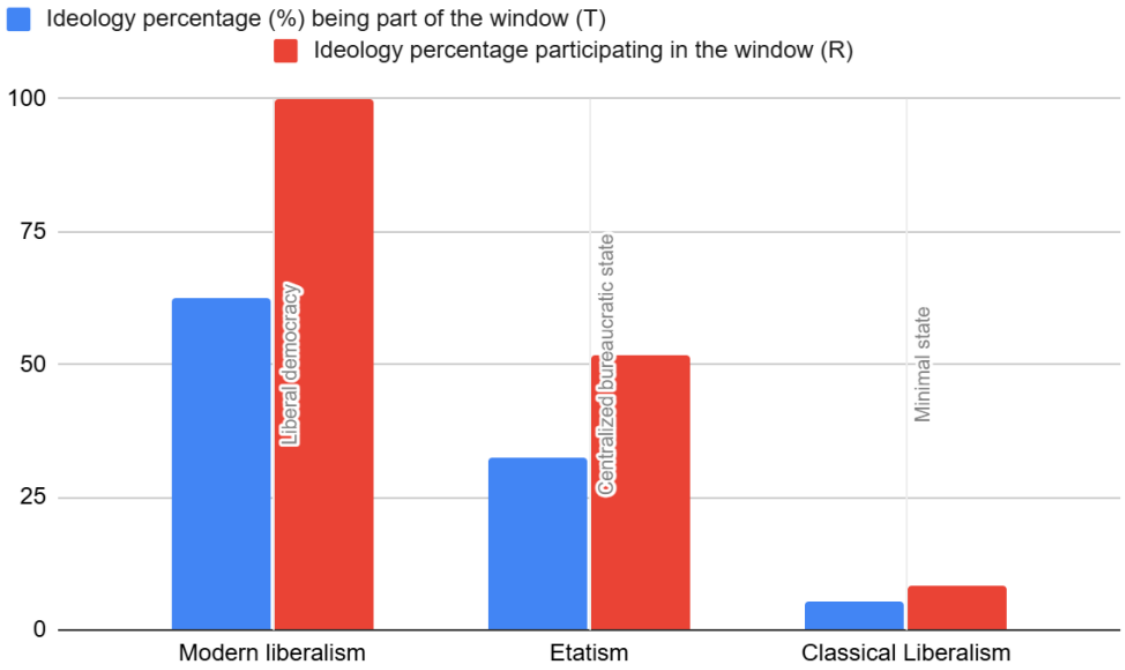


Figure 7: Ideology and the Overton Window (Source: Ilievski 2025a)

INTERPRETATION, APPLICABILITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final quiz results, located at the coordinates (x = 0.0113, y = 0.1416), place the Overton Window slightly upward, signaling a stronger influence of ideologies within the liberal triangle. This positioning aligns with the conceptual model of liberal democracy. It suggests modern liberalism enjoys broad public support, particularly concerning social organization and the state's role. These findings indicate that the concept of liberal democracy and the ideology of modern liberalism are the most prevalent among the Macedonian public.

Within the Overton Window framework, social institutions reflect the dominant ideas within a society. Therefore, the alignment between public opinion and the ideological foundations of liberal democracy further reinforces the legitimacy of Macedonia's constitutional identity as a liberal democratic state. This outcome provides empirical support for the Overton Window model as a valid tool for analyzing the relationship between public opinion and institutional structure.

Concepts of Liberalism, Liberal Democracy, and the Minimal or Night-Watchman State

Modern liberalism, positioned at the lower part of the liberal triangle, forms the foundation of liberal democracies. These states, in principle, uphold human freedom, individual rights, and economic liberty. However, they also justify government intervention in the economy, education, healthcare, welfare, culture, etc. While liberal democracies implement all seven key state functions, they do so to a lesser extent than centralized bureaucratic states, which advocate for stronger government control (linked to the ideology of etatism).

Unlike centralized bureaucratic states, such as Bismarck's Germany, liberal democracies aim to limit government power through institutions like constitutions, checks and balances, and free elections. While these governments are theoretically limited, their real-world limitations are often challenged by practices like high public spending, heavy taxation, business regulations, and government expansion. One weakness of contemporary liberal democracies is that they often prioritize democracy over liberalism. Increased government interference in social and economic matters is justified by greater public participation in political decision-making rather than being criticized for undermining individual liberty and related values. A key thinker in modern liberalism is John Rawls, known for his theory of justice.

From a classical liberal or libertarian perspective, liberal democracies are associated with big government, threatening core liberal values such as individual freedom, equality before the law, and the rule of law. In contrast, the minimal state model focuses primarily on security and judicial functions, with limited justification for involvement in economic, financial, healthcare, social, educational, and cultural affairs. Prominent advocates of this model include Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. A more restrictive version, the night-watchman state, is considered the ideal by libertarians. This model strictly limits the government's role to security and judicial functions, denouncing state interference in all other areas. Key proponents of this concept include Ludwig von Mises and Ayn Rand.

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Social Change in Macedonian Society: Trends, Challenges, and Perspectives

Over the past years, the Republic of North Macedonia has experienced profound social transformations. Following World War II, the country achieved partial independence and adopted a centrally planned economic system as part of the broader Yugoslav socialist framework. This marked a radical departure from its earlier socio-economic structure, which involved features of feudalism and early-stage capitalism. However, this transformation was not gradual or peaceful — it was revolutionary, catalyzed by the post-war context and the rise of Tito's authoritarian and paternalistic regime. Key mechanisms of this shift included nationalization, collectivization, political repression, and economic instability, such as inflation.

A second major turning point occurred in 1991 when the country declared full independence as the Republic of Macedonia and began transitioning from a planned economy to a market-based capitalist system.

While ideological change is typically considered a prerequisite for social transformation, the Macedonian case, particularly the post-World War II transition, challenges this assumption. The ideological shift toward socialism was not driven by grassroots support or democratic processes but was imposed by a centralized and revolutionary political regime from the top down. This indicates that for ideological change to serve as a legitimate driver of social transformation, minimal democratic principles and mechanisms of public participation must be in place. The model that positions ideological change as the engine of social transformation is most applicable to democratic contexts where reforms are pursued through persuasion, public discourse, and institutional processes. However, the change in 1991, with gaining independence, was assisted by an ideological change or the support of the public for independence and liberal-democratic orientation.

From a liberal perspective, the current positioning of public opinion within the liberal triangle of the Ideological Carreau is encouraging, especially given Macedonia's collectivist historical legacy and its peripheral status in regional decision-making processes. This suggests a growing openness to liberal democratic norms and institutions. However, from a libertarian standpoint, the results highlight an ongoing need to strengthen ideological and social change. Despite some historical progress, deeper and more widespread shifts in public approach and institutional structures are necessary to fully realize a society grounded in individual liberty and limited government.

Recommendations for Advancing Social Change in Macedonian Society

According to the results of the political quiz, the Ideological Carreau analysis, and the Overton Window projection on the state's role in Macedonian society, ideological change is crucial for initiating a social change toward greater freedom. Implementing classical liberal or libertarian public policies is nearly impossible without first shifting public opinion and moving the Overton Window upward, positioning these ideas at its center. A greater adoption of freedom and related values among citizens of North Macedonia will influence a change in political elites and their approaches toward social organization.

A potential political change is expected to occur in two ways. The first would involve adopting values of freedom and related principles among the representatives of the current

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political parties. This would mean shifting the party's leadership values and programs closer to classical liberal ideals. The second, though unlikely, would involve the establishment of a classical liberal or libertarian party that genuinely upholds the ideology's principles, attracts public support, and influences public policies toward greater freedom.

Assessing the Applicability of the Model

The empirical validation of the Overton Window of Political Possibilities conceptual model has significant practical implications. It allows for the positioning of public opinion on a particular idea or public policy and facilitates the assessment of these ideas based on public perception.

As key societal stakeholders, policymakers can leverage this empirical model to identify which ideas and corresponding public policies are widely supported by public opinion, helping them align their policy decisions with popular preferences.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) aiming to drive social change can also benefit from this model due to its ability to track shifts in public opinion. Specifically, liberty-oriented NGOs can use it to identify areas where ideological change is needed, shape public discourse, and assess where public support exists for social change, policy reforms, or institutional transformations.

CONCLUSION

The paper analyzes public opinion regarding the state's role in Macedonian society. The central research problem addresses ideological and social change dynamics, particularly in developing methodologies for tracking such shifts over time. The primary objective is to construct a reliable methodological tool for measuring public opinion and monitoring potential transformations. To collect the necessary data, an online political quiz is created. The responses are processed using arithmetic means to determine public opinion's central tendencies and position them within the Ideological Carreau.

The analysis reveals that public opinion toward the state's role is predominantly aligned with the conceptual model of liberal democracy and the ideology of modern liberalism. Within the Overton Window of Political Possibilities, social institutions reflect the dominant ideas within a given society. Therefore, the alignment between public opinion and the ideological foundations of liberal democracy reinforces the legitimacy of Macedonia's constitutional designation as a liberal democratic state. This outcome offers empirical support for the Overton Window model as a valid lens for analyzing the relationship between public opinion and social dynamics.

The study was based on two hypotheses: a main hypothesis and a specific hypothesis. According to the research, the Overton Window's central position on the state's role in Macedonian society lies within the left field of liberal democracy or the liberal welfare state. Both hypotheses were tested: the main hypothesis was fully supported, while the specific hypothesis was entirely rejected.

From a liberal perspective, the current positioning of public opinion within the liberal triangle of the Ideological Carreau is promising, especially considering Macedonia's collectivist

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historical legacy and its peripheral status in regional decision-making processes. This suggests an increasing openness to liberal democratic values, norms, and institutions. However, from a libertarian standpoint, the results underscore the ongoing need for ideological and social change. Despite some historical progress, deeper and more widespread shifts in public opinion regarding institutional structures are required to fully establish a society based on individual liberty and limited government.

The limitations of this study include the relatively small number of respondents, which does not constitute a representative sample. Another limitation is the lack of a defined timeframe for tracking shifts in public opinion. Nonetheless, this study is significant in identifying which ideas and public policies currently fall within the Overton Window, and it provides a valid empirical model for monitoring further ideological shifts. By offering a structured approach to measuring public opinion, this research presents policymakers, scholars, and civil society actors with a valuable tool for assessing a society's capacity for change.

CONTRIBUTOR

The author contributed solely to the intellectual discourse that forms the foundation of this article, as well as its writing and editing, and assumes full responsibility for its content and interpretation.

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Statement on the Welfare of Animals:
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