



H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

Description of the funded research project
1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty
Members & Researchers and Procure High-Value
Research Equipment

Title of the research project: The Greek Orthodox communities of the north-east Aegean: From the Ottoman Empire to the Greek state (1876-1923)

Principal Investigator: Spyridon Karavas

Reader-friendly title: GOCNEA

Scientific Area: SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institution and Country: GREECE

Host Institution: UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN

Collaborating Institution(s): UNIVERSITY OF CRETE

**Project webpage
(if applicable):**

Budget: € 159.500

Duration: 36 months

Research Project Synopsis

The research program focuses on how the leading groups of the Greek Orthodox communities of the north-east Aegean islands perceived the political changes of the period 1876–1923. Using a wide range of sources, the project examines the way that the communities of Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Limnos and Ikaria speak about their political present and past and envision their future. The main aim of the research is to reveal the complexity of the mechanisms that shaped the political and national aspirations of the island communities, which are directly related to their particular economic and social characteristics.

The present study is directly linked to the concept of insularity (*insularité*), a field initiated by the collaboration of French geography and history in the early 20th century. It explores the limits of 'isolation' and the inability to communicate of small island 'places', settlements and people. In this context, the present study aims to highlight the people and their relations, their political choices and mentalities, the economic mechanisms, the communication networks and the limits of 'isolation' of the island places. Locating the research in a comparative context, the insular communities are viewed in the framework of the dominant ideology of the era, namely the nationalism which was on the rise in the wider region of Southeastern Europe.

Project originality

This project can be considered original in terms of its historical documentation, as it seeks to highlight for the first time and through detailed comparisons, the distinct cases of the Greek Orthodox communities of the north-east Aegean islands (Samos, Lesbos, Chios, Limnos and Ikaria), regarding the perception by its leading members of the ever changing political situation of the period 1876–1923. This historical research is linked to the concept of insularity (insularité), as it developed by French historians and geographers in the early 20th century. Having their theoretical pursuits as a starting point, the specific study focuses on the people and their relations, the communication networks and the limits of ‘isolation’ of the insular places, settlements and people. The study of original, for the most part, archival material and the results of the research (articles, monograph, workshop/conference) seeks to enrich the Greek and foreign literature on issues related to insularity and the spread of nationalism, in its various and particular forms, in the area of southeastern Europe.

Expected results & Research Project Impact

The current research focuses for the first time, through a comparative approach, on the processes of transition of the northeastern Aegean islands from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek state. It examines the peculiarities, differentiations and similarities among the leading groups of the islands Samos, Lesbos, Chios, Ikaria and Limnos, as regards the perception by them of the ever-changing political situation during the period 1876-1923. For the dissemination of the research results, a monograph will be published and two articles will be published in peer-reviewed, Greek or foreign language, journals. In addition, a workshop/conference will be organized, since one of the main aims of the project is to diffuse the research results not only to the academic community, but also to the local communities of the islands. In this way, the present research intent to mobilize the public debate around island societies, their history and historiography.

lease describe in short (max. 300 words) the expected results (TRL included, if available) and the scientific, social and/or artistic impact of your research project.

The importance of this funding

In Greece, but also at European level, there is currently no systematic effort to form or assess strategies for the future of the humanities and social sciences, which have been in crisis for several years and are poorly funded. ELIDEK's initiative for the financing of research activities in the fields of social sciences and the humanities aims to redress to a significant extent this problem. Encouraging research, it supports the prestige of the humanities and social studies, which have repeatedly proven to be a building block for education and the democratization of society. Funding this research project, ELIDEK gives the opportunity for collaboration between scholars, creates a space for the development of new trends, enhances the conduct of public discussion and further dissemination of research results within the academic community and the local communities of the islands.



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