

Description of Funded Research Projects

1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects
to support Post-Doctoral Researchers



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

Research Project Title:

**Consumerism in a period of
economic crisis: Consumption
practices and forms of
governance**

Principal Investigator:
Dimitris Lallas

Popular Title:

**Consumerism in a period of economic
crisis: Consumption practices and forms of
governance**

Scientific Field:
Social Sciences

Host Institution:
National Centre for Social Research



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This research proposal regards the study of the cultural significance of consumption in a period of economic recession and debt crisis. This research aims to investigate whether, and at which point is consumerism as a cultural tendency, undergoing a crisis or if it is reproduced in economic crisis conditions.

The central research question is whether and at which point the cultural tendency of consumerism is undergoing a crisis or if it is reproduced in a period of economic recession and debt. This question is specialized in two research targets: First, the concepts, view-points, mentalities, values and value judgements, as well as the social practices and relations of the social subjects in the current social context should be studied using qualitative methods. Second, we shall investigate whether, in a context of crisis and debt economy, the neoliberal governance logic problematizes individuals as consumers. Does the neoliberal form of governance develop techniques and discourses aiming at the shaping of the dispositions, the motives, the orientations and the meaning of individual action, so that this form of governance reproduces and reinforces the cultural tendency of consumerism?

This research shall focus, on the one hand, on the study of the consumer practices and the discourses of the subjects (visitors to a shopping mall) and on the other hand, on the discourses, practices and techniques of the institutions that aim at the governance of subjects as consumers. This research shall make use of qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as ethnographic observation, semi-structured qualitative interviews, semiotic analysis, (critical) discourse analysis and content analysis. Furthermore, we will attempt to analyze the phenomenon of consumerism both on the micro-level (practices, concepts, experience, relationships of the subjects) and the macro-level (political systems, consumer protection organizations, economic interests, representation institutions, bank institution, consumption institution: shopping mall).

The social impact of this research regards the possibility offered by the findings thereof for a deep and informed understanding of the relation between culture, society and economy. Apart from the public opinion, which refers to the crisis of consumption as a reduction of consumption expenditure, this research shall allow us to understand the depth and span of a cultural tendency, an overall lifestyle, such as consumerism as a way of living. Furthermore, by investigating the viewpoints and attitudes vis a vis consumerism, we shall be able to see the manner of reception and admission by the public of a widely disseminated by the Media idea, that the consumer lifestyle was the main cause of the economic crisis. In general, investigating the crisis of consumerism or the lack of it as a lifestyle in a period of economic recession and debt crisis shall offer useful conclusions for the degree of consolidation and eradication of specific cultural tendencies, as well as possible changes or the resilience of the reception and evaluation schemes.

To me, H.F.R.I. funding
would mean...

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The funding of this post-doctoral research is highly important, as it a) enables me to investigate in depth a crucial, from my point of view, social phenomenon, b) gives me the opportunity to acquire a more solid research experience, c) contributes crucially to my scientific evolution, and finally d) gives me the chance to advance my skills concerning the coordination of an extended research project.

*The Principal Investigator,
Dimitris Lallas*

Funding

Amount: **120,000 €**

Duration: **35 months**

Foundation: **H.F.R.I.**





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