



## MACAUTH: Exploring the Macedonian Roots of the Balkan-wide Deep State

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### ABSTRACT

MACAUTH, a Starting Grant ERC project hosted by IMS-FORTH (2023-2028), aims to investigate a little-explored and usually neglected aspect of the Macedonian Question throughout the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth century: namely, the function of the Macedonian Question as a catalyst and a testing ground for the emergence, development and consolidation of authoritarian state policies on a nation-wide scale in all the Balkan nation-states involved. In other words, how the tools used by the rival nation states to extract national loyalty in late Ottoman Macedonia, where nation had been widely conceived first and foremost as a political party, were subsequently transformed into a far broader method of social and political control.

In order to attain this goal, the MACAUTH research team, composed by eleven senior or post-doctoral researchers (including the PI), one post-graduate student and two doctoral candidates from Greece, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia, Romania and France, is examining the transfer of particular administrative practices of surveillance, control and political indoctrination, as well as state-sponsored violence and its ideological justification in the name of national expediency, from the initial field of their application in Ottoman and post-Ottoman Macedonia to the mainstream political and social life of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia/Yugoslavia, as well as to the respective diasporic communities; the impact of the same heritage in Romania, Albania, the Ottoman Empire and its successor nation state, the Turkish Republic, is also assessed.

One and a half year after the project's launching, two workshop have been organized – a kick-off one in Rethymnon and a second, dedicated to the study of 'taxonomy', i.e. the bureaucratic systems that were entrusted with the monitoring, assessment and classification of the national-cum-social proclivities of the citizenry in the Balkan states and the respective Diasporas; the practical consequences of such practices on the everyday lives of ordinary (and not-so-ordinary) citizens and their various transactions with the state apparatus; as well as the degree of actual transfer of this *modus operandi* from Ottoman and post-Ottoman Macedonia to the whole national territories and communities. A third workshop, dedicated to the topic of paramilitarism and state-sponsored political violence will take place next year in Belgrade.