



CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Call for Applications

Two Fully Funded PhD Fellowships
at Central European University, Budapest-Vienna
in the Thematic Area of:

**Social Mind Area Scholarships on
Prosociality and Trust
(SMASH PRO)**

Central European University (CEU) invites applications for two new and fully funded interdisciplinary Joint PhD Fellowships starting in the 2019/2020 academic year in the thematic area of Social Mind Area Scholarships on Prosociality and Trust (SMASH PRO).

The Joint PhD Fellowship Scheme

The CEU Joint PhD Fellowship Scheme entails co-supervision by faculty members from the [Department of Cognitive Science](#) and [Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology](#), who are already engaged in ongoing research in the designated thematic area. One Fellow will pursue a [PhD in Cognitive Science](#) and the other one a [PhD in Sociology and Social Anthropology](#). The PhD students will follow a curriculum that includes courses from both departments being geared towards their acquiring cross-disciplinary training and expertise.

Enrollment and Funding

Selected applicants will receive a fully funded standard CEU PhD Scholarship, see: <https://www.ceu.edu/node/13714>. In addition to these standard scholarships, the selected PhD students will be eligible for the additional funding CEU standardly provides for PhD students, see: <https://www.ceu.edu/funding-fees/grants-enrolled>.

Details about the Thematic Area

Prosociality and trust have been characterized across the disciplines as essential elements in the constitution of human society and culture. On its part, social anthropology has documented extensively the many forms prosocial practices—practices that are beneficial to others and costly to the self—take across cultures and the social conditions in which people trust others to act prosocially. In turn, cognitive psychology and behavioral economics have developed theories about the stable preferences, the desires and motivations that lead people to make prosocial choices and to trust others. While studies about prosociality and trust are thriving, they remain to a large extent constrained within the bounds of academic disciplines.

We seek candidates who are willing to undertake interdisciplinary research at the crossroads of the anthropology of morality and psychology of prosociality. Social anthropology has shown that prosocial practices can take very different forms, from gift exchange to alms giving, and from ritual to everyday life.

These practices are integrated in a web of cultural beliefs (moral, religious, economic, political) and shaped by their relation to other social phenomena. Anthropologists studying the socio-cultural factors that foster or sanction prosocial behavior and determine people's moral judgments would further benefit from understanding the underlying psychological processes. By contrast, psychologists have studied prosocial preferences such as 'inequity aversion', 'preference for fairness', 'aversion to disappointing', 'sense of commitment', 'norm abidance' as psychological factors that motivate prosocial choices. These preferences have been studied in controlled, experimental settings where choices are supposedly disconnected from the cultural environments in which they normally take place. However, understanding prosocial behavior as it occurs in social context involves specifying how social institutions and cultural environment influence the formation of the underlying preferences and trigger or inhibit prosocial choices.

Guiding research questions:

- How do **moral beliefs** influence prosocial behavior in specific cultural contexts? To what extent are moral beliefs culturally shaped and to what extent are they constrained by psychological factors?
- **Trust** strongly depends on the social institutions in which interactions occur. When and why do people believe that others will act in a fair way towards them? How does cultural context modulate trust?
- **Cooperation** involves both prosocial behavior and trust. How do they combine? Why does the level of cooperation vary across task domain and cultures?

Application Process

Interested candidates are invited to apply to one of the listed PhD programs ([PhD in Cognitive Science](#) or [PhD in Sociology and Social Anthropology](#)), clearly indicating in the application materials that they are applying for the Joint PhD Fellowship Social Mind Area Scholarships on Prosociality and Trust (SMASH PRO) funded by the Intellectual Themes Initiative.

Applicants should have a Master degree in psychology, social anthropology or related fields. They should include a research proposal in their application that addresses the project thematic through empirical investigation. The research proposal should be 3 pages long (1.5 spaced) excluding the list of references.

Application Deadline

January 31, 2019

Important Links and Contacts

- General CEU application page: <https://www.ceu.edu/article/2018-10-05/ceu-applications-now-open-2019-2020>
- FAQ page for those who want to find out more about the move to Vienna: <https://www.ceu.edu/admissions/legislation-faq>
- For the respective doctoral programs and application procedures, see departmental webpages: <https://cognitivescience.ceu.edu/> and <https://sociology.ceu.edu/>
- For more information on the SMASH PRO thematic area, contact the faculty members: Christophe Heintz (Cognitive Science) heintzc@ceu.edu
Vlad Naumescu (Sociology and Social Anthropology) naumescuv@ceu.edu
- For general inquiries about the Joint PhD Fellowship scheme, please contact us at iti@ceu.edu