



**Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung**  
**Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology**

**MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT**  
**HALLE-WITTENBERG**



***Society and Morality in Eurasia: from Prehistory to the Present Day***

Final Conference of the International Max Planck Research School for the Anthropology, Archaeology  
and History of Eurasia (IMPRS ANARCHIE)

*MPI for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), 2–5 December, 2020*

The moral/ethical/normative dimension of human social life has generally been considered unique to our species. But how did it originate, how does it function, and how does morality change/adapt in history? The questions have been addressed in general terms by countless philosophers, and more recently by Darwinian evolutionists; they can also be illuminated by empirical projects in disciplines such as those that make up ANARCHIE. Indeed, many of the projects of the four doctoral cohorts of ANARCHIE have already addressed normative issues, at least implicitly. The civilizations/cultures/societies of Eurasia illustrate numerous forms of community social organization and belief, from prehistoric bands to postsocialist deindustrialization. This final conference of our School will address the normative dimensions of social life, reaching behind religious ideals of transcendence and secular notions of sympathy (Rousseau, Smith etc.) to explore concrete institutions such as those of cooperation, punishment, charity and philanthropy. If different norms are applied to the treatment of strangers, how are the boundaries of “our” society drawn? How are notions of “the good” expressed by citizens and subjects in everyday life? How are they reflected in political hierarchies and interethnic relations, in economic exchange and provisioning, in legal codes, and in the reciprocal obligations of kinship and friendship? In short: we invite papers that explore the big questions of normativity addressed by philosophers and sociobiologists, in the light of empirical data. Possible topics of enquiry might include:

- morality in prehistory (archaeobiology, archaeogenetics, etc)
- religion, salvation, legitimacy
- moral dimensions of economic life
- migration and transfer of ethical values
- moral dimensions of social movements and revolutions

Other possibilities concerning roots and forms of social cohesion across Eurasia in all epochs are welcome!

Proposals (circa 250 words) should be sent by email to Chris Hann ([hann@eth.mpg.de](mailto:hann@eth.mpg.de)) before 1st November 2019. Scholars whose proposals are accepted will have all reasonable costs reimbursed. More information concerning ANARCHIE can be found at:

<https://www.eth.mpg.de/anarchie>