



PhD scholarship: Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies

Research project: Digital Agrarian Futures

Digital Agrarian Futures is a joint project between the University of the Western Cape and University of Cologne in Germany. The project's purpose is to understand the current unfolding of digital agrarian futures and their politics among farmers in Kenya and Tanzania. PhD topics submitted will need to analyse and explain one or more of the following themes of the project's objectives:

- (1) Financialisation and data ownership
- (2) Labour and class, gender, and generational relations
- (3) Corporate power and food-system transformation

We invite applications for two doctoral research positions, one in Kenya and another in Tanzania. The PhD candidates will be selected based on their qualifications and their ability to draft compelling topics, and preference will be given to women applicants. The successful candidates will be registered in the field of Poverty, Land, and Agrarian Studies. They will be based at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa, and spend some time in Cologne, Germany.

The project forms part of the Collaborative Research Center CRC-TRR 228 "Future Rural Africa: Future-making and social-ecological transformation," which brings together several German and African universities to study newly emerging issues of social-ecological transformation and future-making in Africa.

REQUIREMENTS

- An excellent Master's or equivalent degree in Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Development Studies, or a related discipline
- Excellent knowledge of and experience with qualitative ethnographic research methods
- Unrestricted ability to travel and willingness to work independently, including extended independent field research stays in East Africa
- Excellent command of written and spoken English
- A valid driver's license
- Flexibility, team orientation, and interest in professional development in academia or related fields
- Motivation for empirical and conceptual work in an interdisciplinary research team

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Conception, preparation, and defence of a doctoral thesis on the above topic
- Conducting long-term (about 12 months long) ethnographic research
- Support the implementation of a field-based household survey from which they can use data
- Writing project-related scholarly publications and presenting research results at academic conferences
- Residence in Cape Town for a substantial period of the non-fieldwork period of the doctoral study
- Exchange periods at University of Cologne in Germany
- Participation in and contribution to team meetings

APPLY

<https://forms.gle/uRPanzJRKBVrWkd16>

DEADLINE

15 September 2026

FURTHER INQUIRIES

postgraduates@plaas.org.za

WHAT WE OFFER

- A collegial environment at PLAAS at the University of the Western Cape
- A diverse working environment with equal opportunities
- Scholarship funds for the project's duration
- Support in balancing work and family life
- Extensive advanced training opportunities
- Flexible working time models

