

DOCTORATE AND MASTERS STUDENTS SCHOLARSHIPS
Institutional Canopy of Conservation Project
September 2015

Title: The Institutional Canopy of Conservation: Governance and Environmentality in East Africa.

Duration: August 2014 - July 2021 (7 years).

Implementing organizations: McGill University, Canada, and the African Conservation Centre, Kenya.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Institutional Canopy of Conservation (I-CAN) project holds an International Partnerships for Sustainable Societies (IPaSS) award. This program is a joint initiative of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), aimed at building safer, more prosperous societies. I-CAN represents a research partnership involving universities, research institutions and civil society organizations from Canada and East Africa in Canada and East Africa. It is implemented by McGill University, Canada, and the African Conservation Centre, Kenya, under the leadership of the Co-directors, Prof. John Galaty and Dr David Western.

The project addresses the challenge of combining protection of biodiversity with strengthened livelihoods, whether through recognizing local rights over resources, livelihood diversification, or tourism. The major goal in public policy is to identify the most effective designs for future Community-Based Conservation (CBC) programs by examining the impacts of ongoing conservancy experiments on community livelihoods and members' attitudes and practices towards natural resources. The project will focus on the rangelands, wetlands and forests of the East African savannah, especially in the borderlands between Kenya and Tanzania, where the world's most significant repository of wildlife lies. We ask how indigenous communities should engage as partners with protected areas and in conservation enterprises.

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The I-CAN project will support four (4) scholarships for Doctoral and Masters studies. Two (2) four-year Doctoral scholarships will start in September 2015 and/or 2016, and two (2) two-year Masters scholarships in September 2016 and 2018. Depending on the applications received, there may be some flexibility in the start dates.

Students will be based at McGill University, Canada or at one of the other I-CAN partner universities – i.e., Carleton University and University of Victoria, Canada, University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, and the Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology in Germany. The field work will be carried out in at least one of the eight (8) project study sites in Kenya and/or Tanzania.

POTENTIAL RESEARCH TOPICS

The work by graduate students will involve case-studies conducted in selected study areas, which will provide in-depth, qualitative and/or quantitative data on specific CBC initiatives and their impact on the evolution of conservation-positive attitudes and behaviors, the strengthening of community livelihoods, and the quality of human-environmental interactions. Doctoral studies may also involve comparative studies assessing co-variation across conservancies between institutions and conservation behavior.

The work of the graduate students will contribute to better understanding the diversity of CBC institutions with regard to:

- *The structure of organizations that manage resources* – how the structure of organizations - e.g. boundaries, membership, rules, leadership, sanctions, power – influence individual and collective forms of action;

- *Property rights in land and other resources* – effects of private, common and state property rights on actors’ strategic behavior in managing and utilizing natural resources;
- *Incentive systems and motivations* – effects of material incentives versus other types of non-material motivations (metaphysical or cultural aspirations, community solidarity, identification with nature) behind environmental behavior.

Through these PhD and MA studies, we will then examine how different CBC institutions shape social and economic practices, more specifically how institutional designs of conservation organizations affect conservation attitudes, environmental practices, and livelihood strategies. Institutional outcomes may be tracked by observing measures of:

- *Environmentality* - indigenous knowledge, attitudes, beliefs regarding the natural world;
- *Community well-being* - livelihood sustainability and diversification, nutrition and food security, employment, and conservation based revenues;
- *Human-environmental interactions* - especially regarding wildlife, forests and grazing resources, including potential human-wildlife conflicts.

The work of graduate students will be integrated within broader project research initiatives cutting across the whole study area, which include the inventory of the network of conservation organizations with presence in East Africa, and a study of conservation policies and policy processes, at regional, national and international levels. Finally, particular attention will be given throughout the ICAN project to issues related to designing new approaches to knowledge mobilization - the dissemination of most significant project outcomes to influence innovations in conservation policy at the community level and more broadly through state and global institutions.

SELECTION PROCESS

Interested candidates should send their Curriculum Vitae and a Letter expressing their interest in pursuing graduate studies with the I-CAN project to Professor John Galaty, the I-CAN Project Co-Director, at McGill University, at john.galaty@mcgill.ca. In some cases, candidates may have already established contact with a professor involved in the I-CAN project. If not, Professor Galaty can facilitate the identification of a potential supervisor and institution. Interested candidates should make first contact by November 15, 2015, or earlier, to facilitate formal graduate applications as early as December 15, 2015.

An I-CAN selection committee involving members of participating universities will evaluate applications. Selected candidates will then be invited to formally apply to the university/research institution. Candidates are invited to consult website information on universities of interest regarding specific requirements and timelines associated with their applications.