

Rangeland Governance, Grazing Access and Livestock Management in Semi-arid Namibia: Evidence from Eiseb Communal Conservancy

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Background

- Many livelihoods in semi-arid Namibia rely on rangelands and livestock production
- Rangeland access is governed by customary institutions and state policies
- Private claims on rangelands altered community common-access pasture resources

Research Gap: The local impacts of these governance changes remain poorly understood

Aim: Examine how changes in rangeland governance have influenced livestock and rangeland management, grazing access, and communities' perceptions.

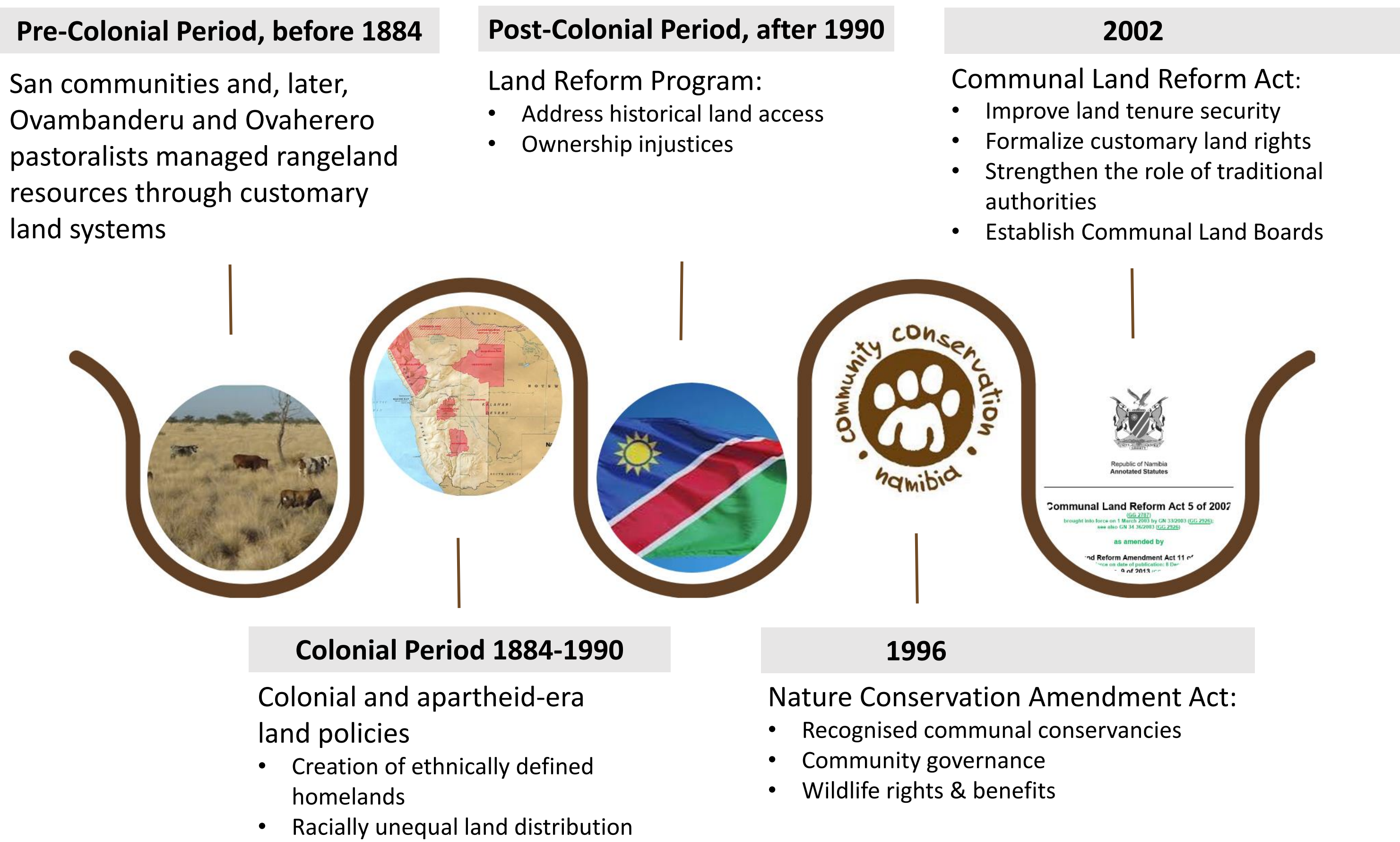
Conclusions

- Fragmented governance limits effective rangeland management
- Changes in rangeland access are reshaping local livestock management and livelihoods
- Fencing and fragmented grazing areas reduce livestock mobility and grazing access
- Stronger coordination and locally grounded governance are needed to safeguard equitable access and livestock mobility

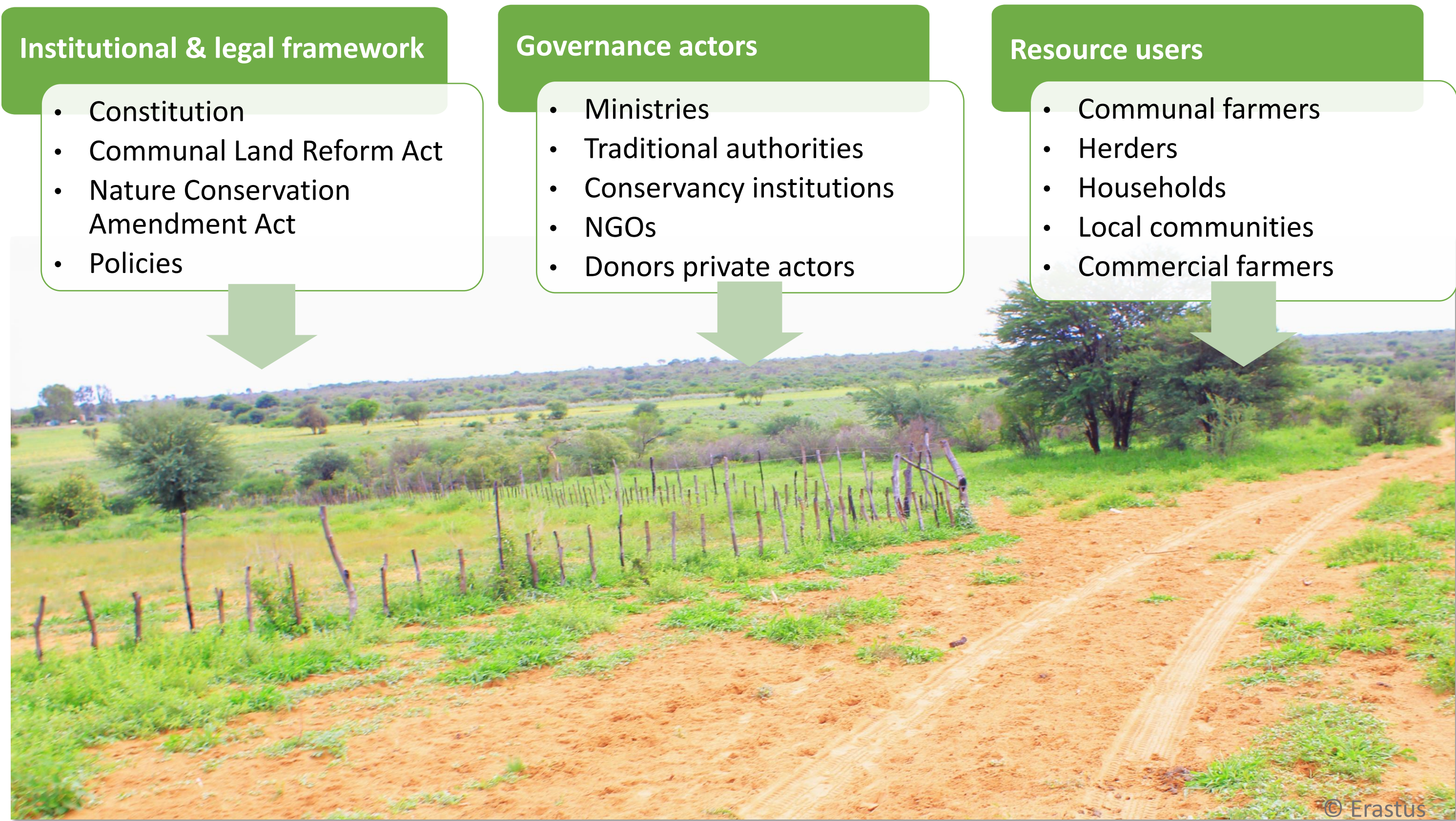
Results

1. Fragmented governance limits effective rangeland management

Evolution of rangeland governance policies in Namibia



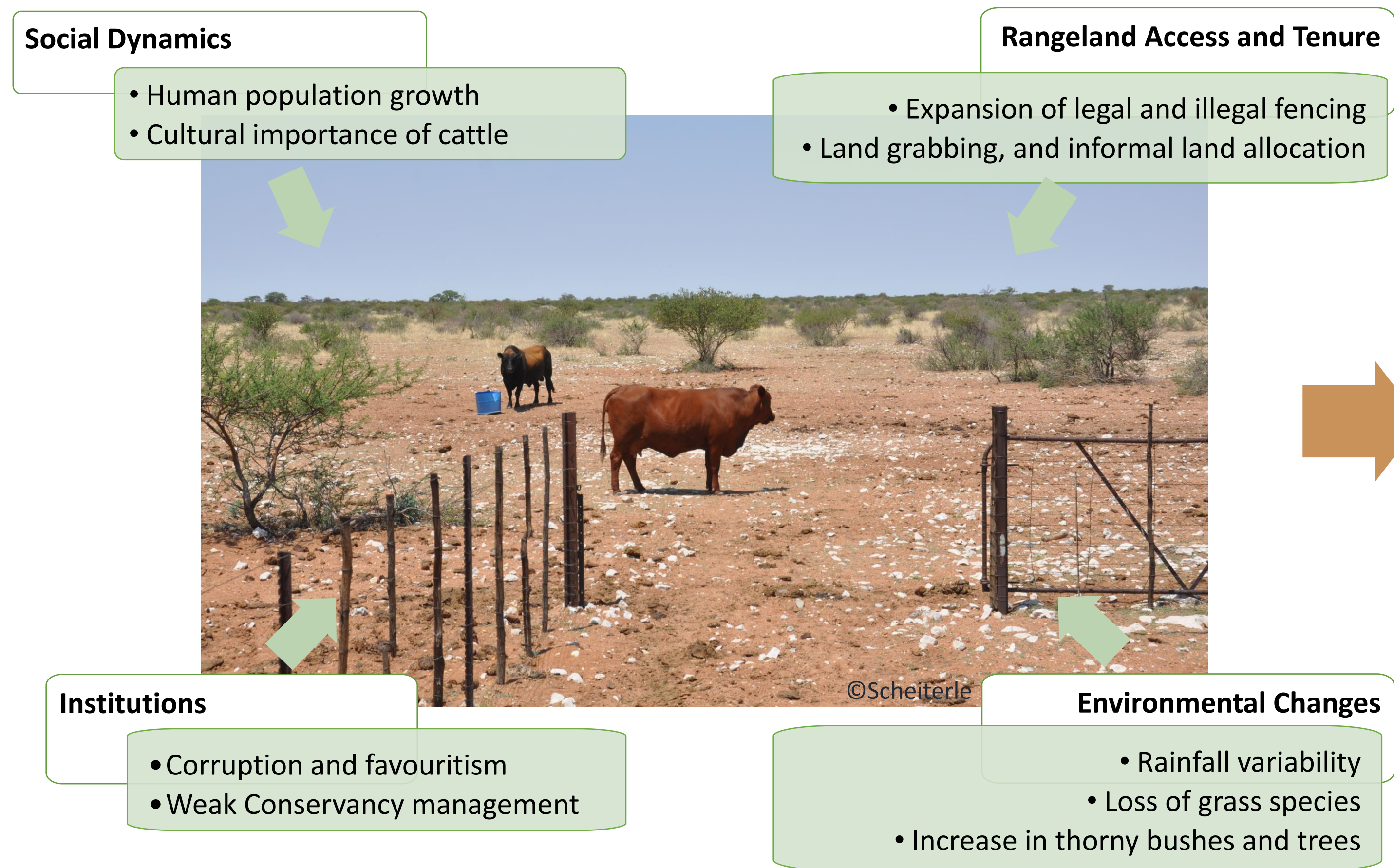
Key policy frameworks, Institutions and actors influencing rangeland use



Picture 1: Fenced-off area in Eiseb Conservancy

2. Local experiences reveal declining access and reduced mobility

Perceived drivers of rangeland access constraints



Perceived consequences of fencing in Eiseb Conservancy

>27% of the area is fenced off for private use

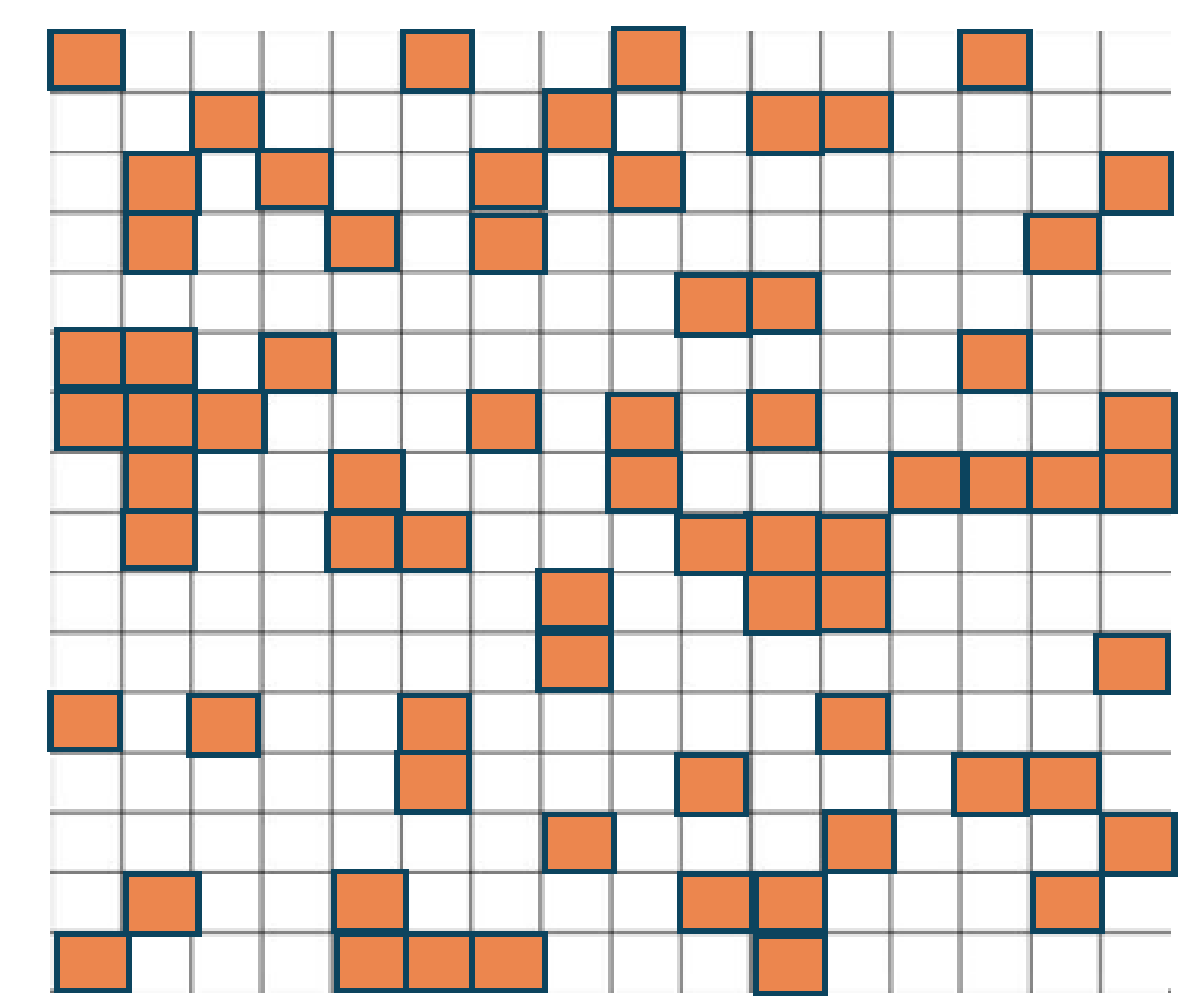
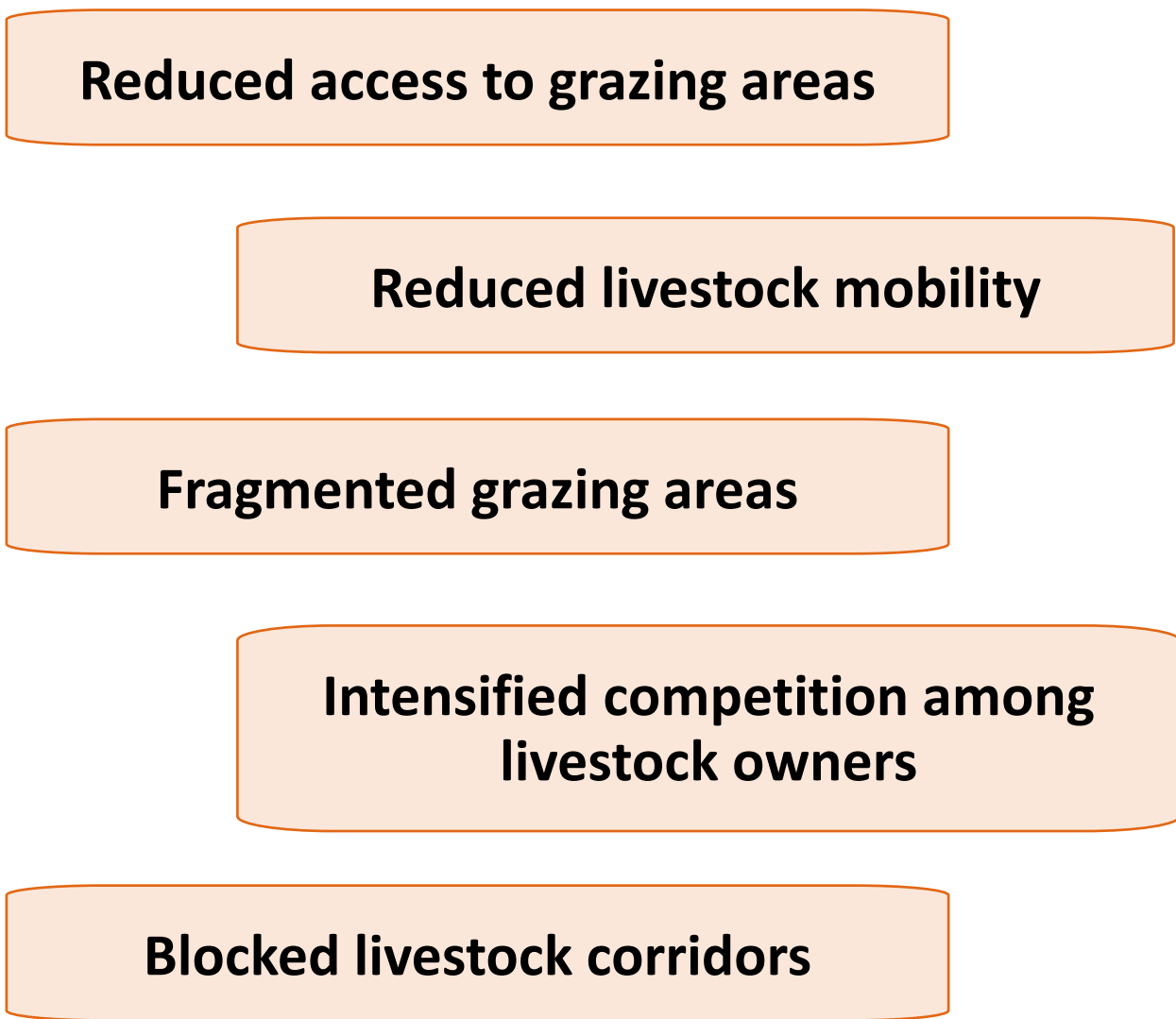


Figure 1: Graphic representation of the % spatial coverage of fenced-off areas in Eiseb Conservancy. Source: Own calculation based on digitised polygons of visible fencing on the hybrid google satellite.

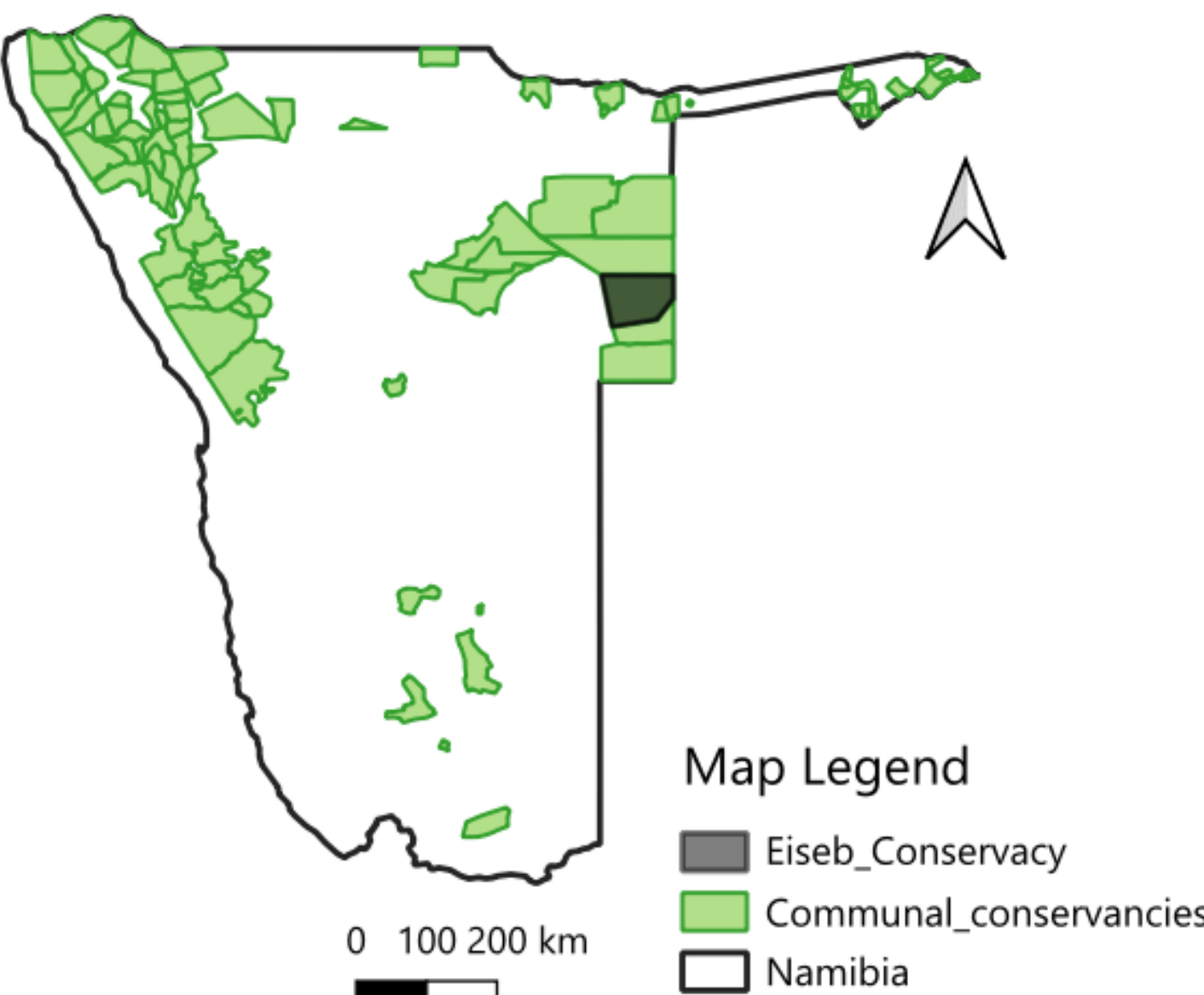


Study Area

Eiseb Communal Conservancy

- **Landscape:** Kalahari sandveld rangelands
- **Land tenure:** Communal land under common management
- **Communities:**
 - San: Hunter communities
 - Ovaherero and Ovambanderu: Livestock keepers, mainly cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys
- **Livestock:** >90% of ~600 households own cattle

Namibian Conservancies



Methodology

Qualitative case study design

- **Research** at the Namibia National Archives, to trace changes in land use, rangeland governance and conservancy development over time
- **Review and analysis** of national and regional policies, laws and governance frameworks to identify formal rules, institutional responsibilities and changes affecting rangeland access and management
- **Narrative interviews (n = 20)** with herders, elders and long-term residents who had lived in the community for ≥10 years before conservancy establishment



Picture 2: Narrative interview in Eiseb Conservancy



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