

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION THROUGH ACCESS TO LAND AND SECURITY OF TENURE IN NORTHERN NAMIBIA



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Research questions

-Explores differentiated mechanisms and arrangements of access to land and their resulting land rights. ---**customary land tenure systems.**

-Examines which of these mechanisms and arrangements allow land users or landholders to benefit from statutory security of land tenure and which do not.
Communal land reform –ACT.

- **Three basic empirical questions:**
 - how access to land is organised
 - how people relate to land or how people relate to each other over land
 - who benefit from statutory security of land tenure

Field Sites



□ Oshanaqwenana Region

- **Villages:** Ondobe, Omunyekadi, Efidi, Ohengobe, Etope
 - Land users, subsistence farmers/customary land rights holders, TAs

- **Villages/areas:** Okongo designated area.
 - **Okongo west (Onghalulu, Okambali and Onane):** Customary land rights holders/forthcoming group rights holders (rights of leaseholds)
 - **Okongo east (individual farming units):** holders of rights of leaseholds and the farmers they are farming with.

Methods and Avenues



Observation

Participant observation

Discussions and interviews with land users, landholders, TAs, Land Board members

Village, district, Land Board meetings

Land Board field visits

Events: efundula, Mandume day, MLR events

Entry Point



**What land means to people/
different actors – in other words
the meanings of land**

**---land like many other objects has no inherent
meanings beside those ascribed to it by
people/actors.**

Meanings of land



- differentiated meanings ascribed to land:
 - ▣ resource of political power
 - ▣ resource of material and economic values
 - ▣ resource of socio-cultural values

triangulation underscore three kinds of human ambitions
– **“power, wealth and meaning”**.

Meanings of land...

Meanings overlap. A parcel of land can carry more than one meaning. “bundles of meanings”.

Different people may hold different sticks in this bundle, each stick representing a meaning, thus a parcel of land has varied claims and claimants.

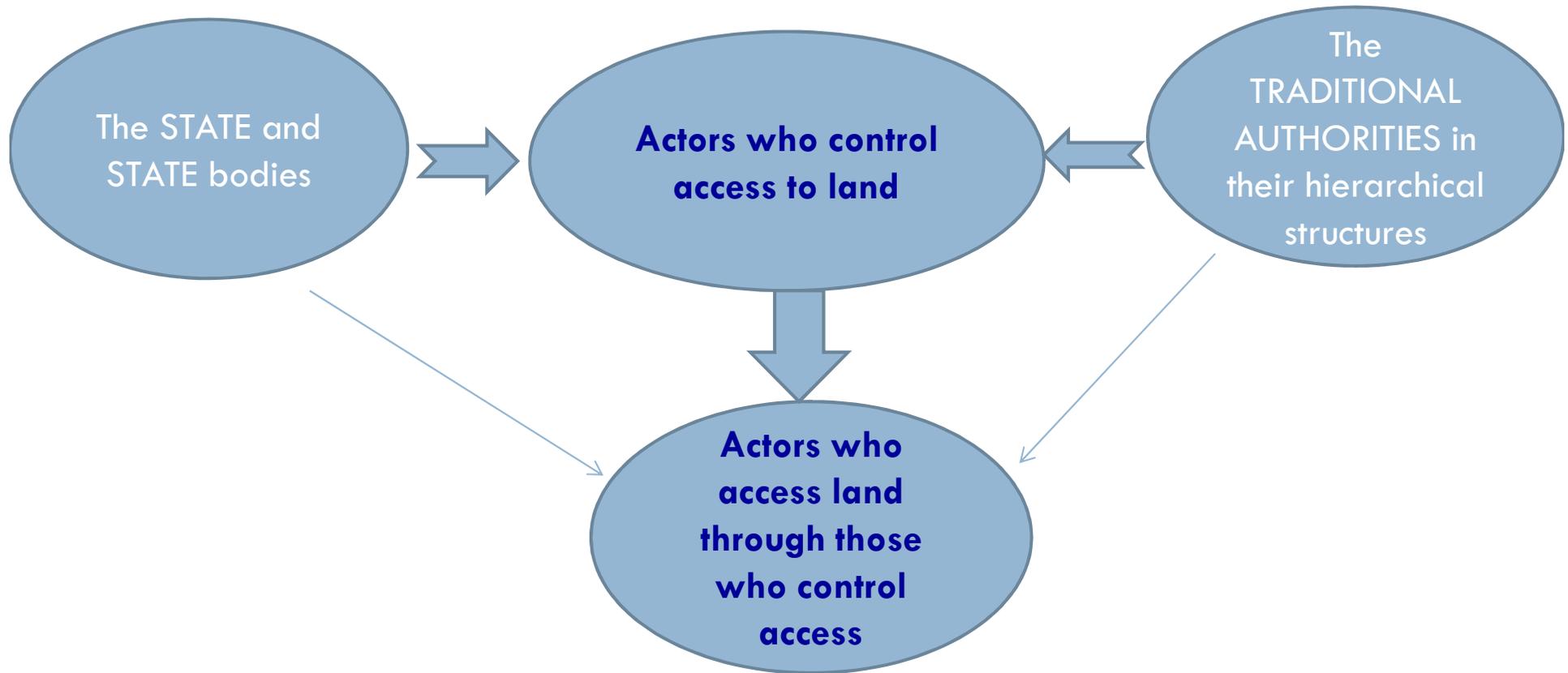
Omo ha tu
hupile/where
derive our
livelihoods

It was our great
grandmother's/
parents land



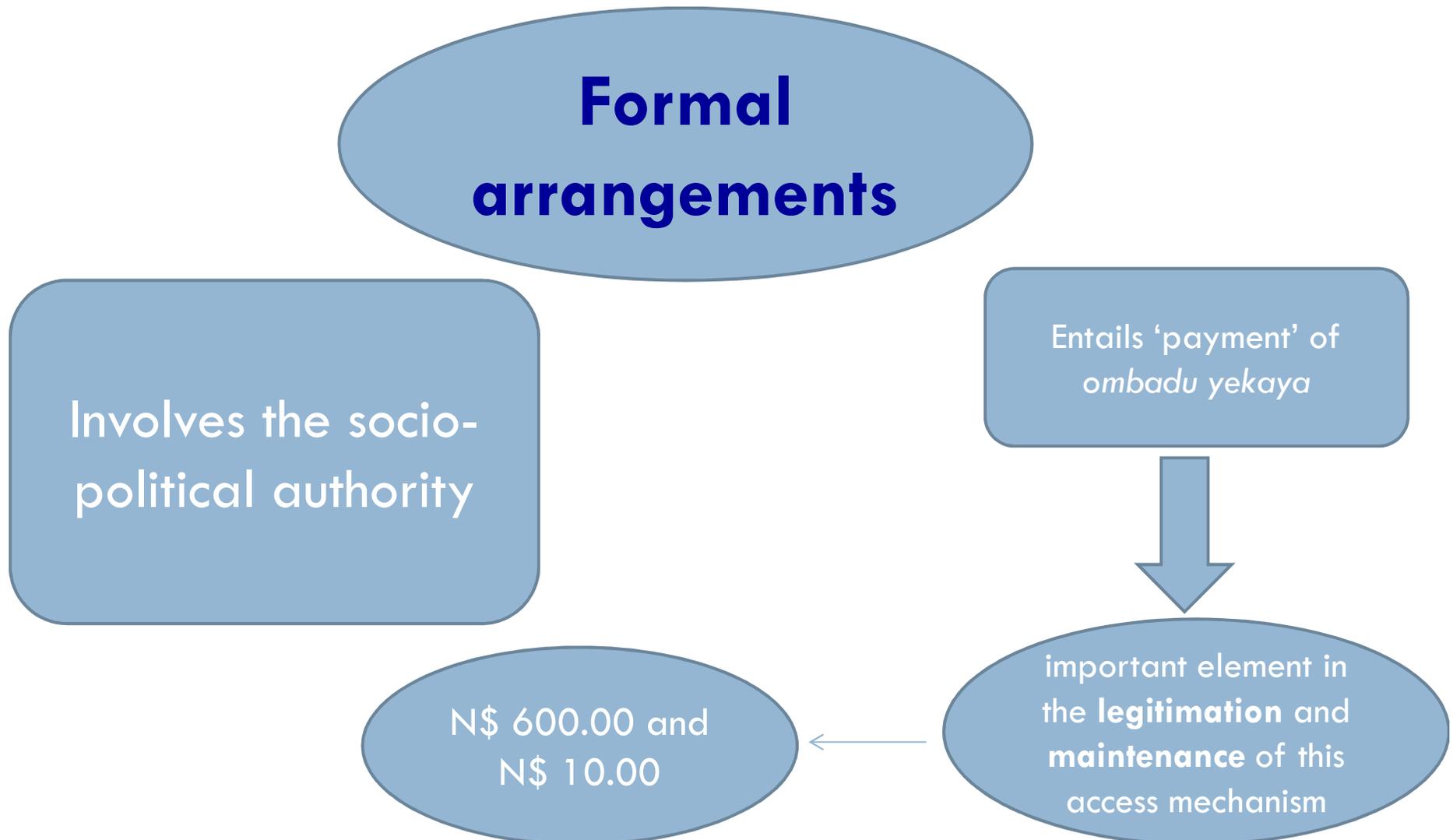
How do people access land?

In access to land

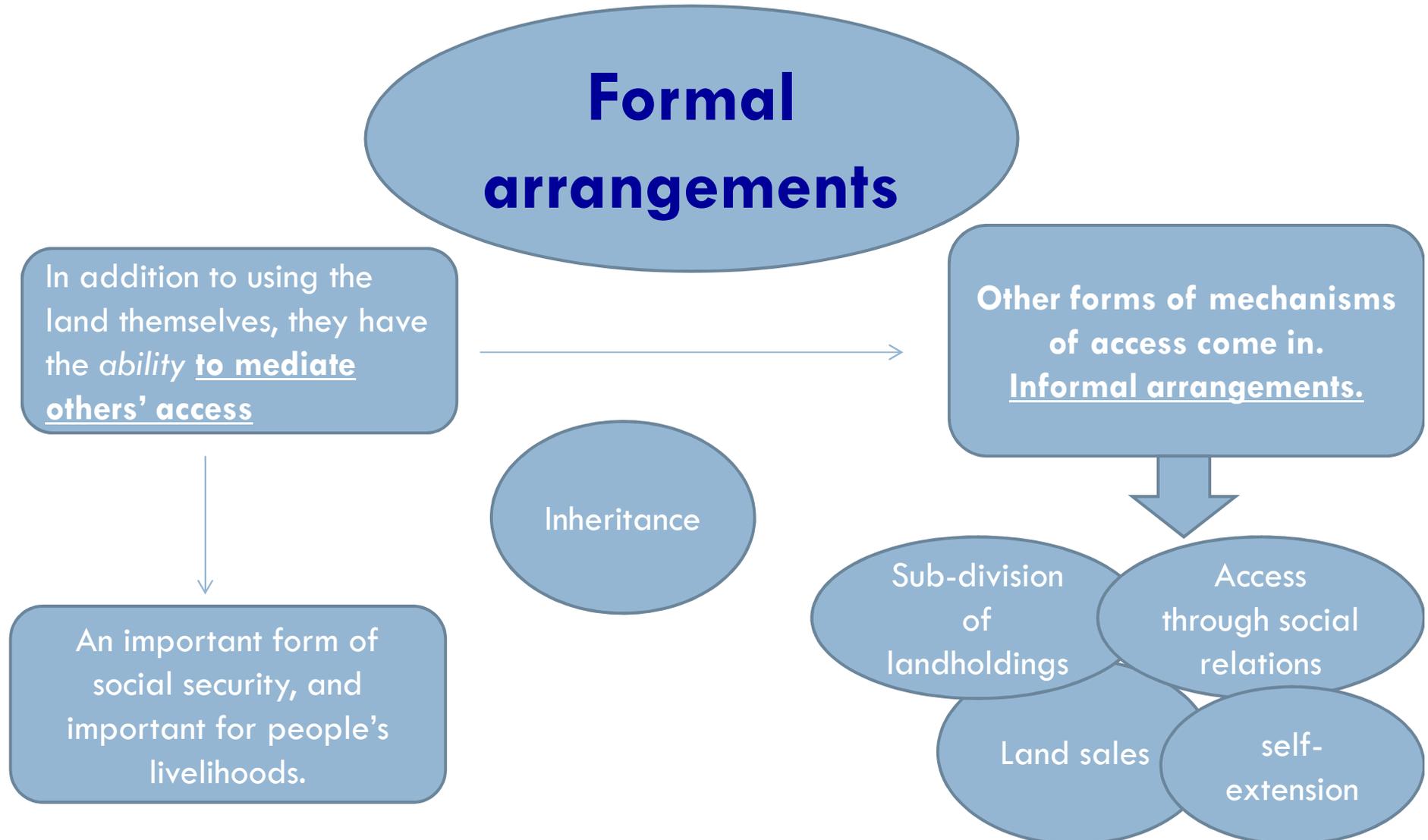


- **socio-political authority**
- **use and exploitation.**

Typifying mechanisms of access to land



Not everyone benefit or is able to derive benefits from land or access land through formal arrangements.



Informal arrangements and what they entail

- There are those which may be formalised.
- But there are those which remain just that, --informal arrangements – in which they have limited rights in regards the landholding
 - In some cases --- people are
 - not so sure whether to cultivate
 - not sure whether to establish a permanent structure on the part that was given to them
 - do not know whether this arrangement is permanent.
 - Uncertainty about the future – if main holder dies, what does the future holds.

----A gender dimension ----

Reluctance about assigning labels, have inhibited discussion of.....



- inequality
- exclusion

As signs of class formation in communal areas, as they relate to access to land and land rights.

To really answer the question who benefits and how do they benefit?

Conclusion from the empirical materials



- **Social differentiation** through access to land and as such the thesis is framed within the theoretical framework of **social differentiation**.
- It implies that social positions in a society **emerge** and become **stabilised and reproduced**.

Behind this theoretical frame, are important, yet difficult questions...

1. do access mechanisms produce social differentiation or do they simply react to existing social differentiations?
2. can statutory provision of security of land rights act as counterforce to social differentiation or does it reproduce it?

Statutory provision of security of land rights: as counterforce to social differentiation or produce it

- Broader level --- Land rights in communal areas receive STATE security. security for every land parcel.
- Gender issues, inheritance issues – at household level – **“my wife and children are safe”**
- Rights of leaseholds for agricultural purposes: All resource users benefit from rights of leaseholds. (differently)
- Some are **leaseholders**, while others ‘sub-lease’. For any particular farm unit, **all included in the leasehold agreements**.
- **Rights of use protected by the State.**

Security of tenure by the State counterforce the powers of the ‘owners’.

Statutory provision of security of land rights: as counterforce to social differentiation or produce it

- it **reproduces social differentiation** – which at the level of distribution is characterised by **inequalities**, but at the level of providing statutory security, it turns into **exclusion**.
- Exclusion from security of tenure: its only those that benefit from land through **formal arrangements** but not the **those through informal arrangements**.

Statutory provision of security of land rights: as counterforce to social differentiation or produce it

- new kinds of differentiation: types of rights granted in communal areas: **(the market oriented rights to land and the subsistence oriented rights land).**
- The kinds of **contestation, conflicts, competition** that emerge from these.
 - **The size of land??????**
 - **The type of use ---able to unlock people out of poverty?**
 - **The position and/or protection of commonage**



-a rethink of security of tenure – to move away from focusing on formal arrangements > informal arrangements of access to land. (question how?)

- land rights, ----resulting product of access mechanisms.

Landholders, land rightsholders --- land users and or/resources users (inclusive)????

**Thank
you**

