



Universität  
Basel

## Research Project

### Space in Time: Landscape narratives and land management changes in a Southern African cross-border region

#### Third-party funded project

**Project title** Space in Time: Landscape narratives and land management changes in a Southern African cross-border region

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#### **Organisation / Research unit**

Departement Geschichte / Bereich Geschichte Afrikas

Departement Gesellschaftswissenschaften

Departement Umweltwissenschaften / Physiogeographie und Umweltwandel (Kuhn)

#### **Department**

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**Status** Completed

The areas on both sides of the Orange River (the present border between Namibia and South Africa) constitute the historical region of Namaqualand. The bi-national region's land and patterns of resource use have experienced profound changes over the last 200 years; amongst them is the region's inclusion into the global trade systems in the 19th century, and the South African apartheid and segregation politics in the 20th century. Today, large-scale nature conservation and agriculture projects are the driving forces behind a further restructuring of the region, in which large parts of the population are poor.

This project examines the history of these changes in land use and the land claims that are based on them. We aim to show how this history affected the landscape, and how the landscape has reflected these changes. We will develop and apply a multidisciplinary methodological approach that we call a "landscape archive". Such an archive should consist of representations of the landscape (e.g. written and oral descriptions) and of representations in the landscape (e.g. sediments or ruins). We aim to create a tool that provides for the complexity of the history of land uses and land claims, and that enables to scrutinize claims on land and resources presently formulated by powerful nature conservation organisations and global companies.

The project brings together researchers from the fields of social sciences, humanities, and natural science, which are based in South Africa, Namibia, and Switzerland. It contributes to on-going socio-political debates regarding land uses and land rights, and to a conceptual and methodological discussion of space, archives and digital humanities.

**Keywords** Southern Africa, land use and management, landscape, archives, historical geography, interdisciplinary, cross-border, land rights, conservation and preservation and wildlife

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**Add publication**

**Add documents**

**Specify cooperation partners**