

LAND TENURE PATTERNS IN CASH CROP SETTLEMENT AREAS:

**Experiences from the Sugarcane growing zones of Nyanza Province,
Kenya.**

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Abstract

In many cash crop settlement areas in Africa, the system of land tenure and proprietary patterns play a crucial role in shaping the farming and agrarian structures in those communities - so that the rules by which land is allocated, held, controlled and used are in fact an important component of those agrarian and tenure systems. However, in some countries such as Kenya, state rhetoric, policy documents and development plans more often than not lay emphasis only on the cropping patterns and statutory interventions on land matters thus substantially ignoring the common and evolving tenurial practices and working proprietary rules on the ground.

This paper documents the outcome of a recent research in the Nyanza sugarcane growing zones in South West Kenya, an agricultural area – where after political independence in 1963, the Kenya Government settled thousands of farmers on individual registered holdings.

It examines, by a sample study of the sugarcane farmers, the emerging rights in land and the farmers' perception of those rights, causes and involvement in land disputes, tenure security and land rights of women in the wake of statutory intervention on land matters in Kenya.

The paper argues that even in cash crop settlement areas, the individually registered proprietors perceive land rights and tenure security as guaranteeing a future for their families and any transactions and dealings in land are meant to safeguard those rights and not supercede or negate them.