

This paper focuses on a specific type of female head of households, namely widows. Not only are widows devising coping mechanisms, but also in many ways they seek to escape from or avoid being trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty. The paper also shows that widows' coping strategies are multiple yet poorly understood. Masvingo widows are generally under stress: most of them are poor yet determined not only to cope with poverty but also to escape it. It is my intention in this paper that widow households, which have received little emphasis in socio-economic studies, are crucial units of analysis that deserve priority in urban research.