

Keeping a footing the village:Masvingo urban women

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Abstract

A complex give-and-take relationship characterizes the way female heads of household in Masvingo balanced their relationships in town and countryside. My respondents employed a double-rooted strategy that entailed the use o/urban kin to gain a foothold in town and at the same time the use of rural kin to help maintain the family, children and the elderly in the village. The women's strategy was also characterized by less instrumental considerations such as supporting rural kin and maintaining ties of affect and culture. However, because survival in town is difficult, the women expected to return to the village when their working lives were over and they therefore made strategic moves that ensured easy entry into the village when the time finally arrived. In view o/the choices made by the women heads o/households in this study, it is imperative for policy makers to arrive at policies that take into account double-rooted strategies.