

# Cultural Forces And The Construction of Widowhood

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By: Opportune Zongo



How do widowhood practices promote or undermine the way culture treats women? How does a culturally sanctioned formalization of hierarchies encourage women-on-women violence and abuse? How do customary laws and colonial legacies promote the marginalization of widows? Examining the customs of widowhood in the African country of Burkina Faso, this lecture will focus on a little-understood issue involving human rights violations for African women.

Opportune Zongo is an Associate Professor of Women's Studies and French at Bowling Green State University, where she has also served as Interim Director of the Women's Studies Program as well as On-site and On-Campus Director of the Academic Year Abroad Programs in French. She is the Publicity Secretary of the Association of African Women Scholars (AAWS) and a guest and regular manuscript and book reviewer for several scholarly journals, including the *Tulsa Journal of Women's Studies*, *College Literature*, *The Journal of Third World Studies*, and *Law and Policy*. She is currently a Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society at Bowling Green State University, and is working on a book on Women, Development, and Human Rights in Africa.

**PRESENTATION DATE:**  
Thursday, October 31, 2002  
11:30 a.m. -12:45 p.m.  
Student Union room 316

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