

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



A MODEL TOWARDS SUCCESFUL SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF ADULT MALE EX OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF EPWORTH COMMUNITY.

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
HONOURS DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK.**

YEAR 2025

BINDURA

DECLARATION

I **B210552B** hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been previously submitted for a degree or other qualification at any other institution. All sources and materials used have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

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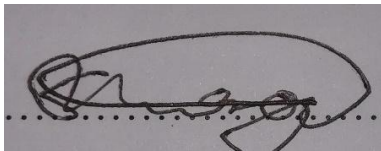
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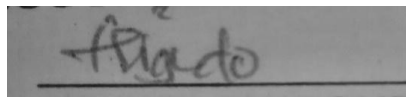
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Prior to proceeding, I express my gratitude to God for protection, guidance and provision of the means necessary for me to successfully complete my research project. I then express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their unwavering support and assistance, which included paying for my education. However, I would like to thank my supervisor for the guidance he provided during the course of this research. I am grateful to Prison Outreach Support for allowing me to conduct my research at their organisation using their facilities. I will be eternally grateful to the organisation.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to myself.

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	Possible Mark	Actual Mark
Abstract	10	
Background to the study- what is it that has made you choose this particular topic? Include objectives or purpose of the study	20	
Statement of the problem	10	
Research questions	15	
Assumptions	5	
Significance of the study	15	
Limitations of the study	5	
Delimitations of the study	5	
Definition of terms	10	
Summary	5	
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Weighted Mark	15	

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Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction- what do you want to write about in this chapter?	5	
Conceptual or theoretical framework	10	
Identification, interpretations and evaluation of relevant literature and citations	40	
Contextualisation of the literature to the problem	10	
Establishing gaps in knowledge and how the research will try to bridge these gaps	10	
Structuring and logical sequencing of ideas	10	
Discursive skills	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	20	

Comments.....

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Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction	5	
Research design	10	
What instruments are you using to collect data?	30	
Population, sample and sampling techniques to be used in the study	25	
Procedures for collecting data	15	
Data presentation and analysis procedures	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	25	

Comments.....

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Chapter 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction	5	
Data presentation	50	
Is there any attempt to link literature review with new findings	10	
How is the new knowledge trying to fill the gaps identified earlier	10	
Discursive and analytical skills	20	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	30	

Comments

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Chapter 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction- focus of the chapter	5	
Summary of the whole project including constraints	25	
Conclusions- have you come up with answers to the problem under study	30	
Recommendations (should be based on findings) Be precise	30	
References	5	
Appendices i.e. copies of instruments used and any other relevant material	5	
Total	100	
Weighted mark	10	

Comments

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<u>Chapter 1</u>	
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ABSTRACT

This study explores the social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Epworth, Zimbabwe, through a social justice lens, with the aim of developing a just and comprehensive model to facilitate their successful social reintegration. Anchored in a transformative research paradigm, the study employed a qualitative methodology and adopted a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven adult male ex-offenders each with at least one-year post-release experience and two key informants from Prison Outreach Support, selected through purposive sampling. Findings revealed that adult male ex-offenders face significant social reintegration challenges, including unemployment, housing unavailability and unaffordability, social rejection from families and communities, limited social support and marital breakdown. From a social justice perspective, these barriers reflect systemic marginalization and exclusion, which constitute an ongoing injustice against adult male ex-offenders. The study further found that various stakeholders such as correctional institutions, families, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs) and communities play important roles in the social reintegration process, although their efforts are often fragmented due to lack of coordination and understanding of the needs of this vulnerable population. Based on these findings, the study recommends that correctional institutions invest in vocational training programs to enhance the employability of incarcerated men. The study also advocates for the adoption of non-punitive correctional approaches to reduce the long-term social costs of incarceration. Furthermore, families and communities should be sensitized and encouraged to support returning ex-offenders. Social workers and policy makers should advocate for mainstreaming of ex-offender's needs into national social policies, particularly in areas of housing and social support. Finally, the study calls for the development of a standardized social reintegration framework that clearly outlines the roles of all stakeholders and fosters effective collaboration to ensure holistic and just reintegration of adult male ex-offenders. To this end, the study provides the Ex-offender Transformation and Reintegration Model.

ACRONYMS

FBO	Faith Based Organisation
ILO	International Labor Organisation
NDS1	National Development Strategy 1
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
POSt	Prison Outreach Support
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe Statistics Agency
ZPCS	Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Failed social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders has become a contemporary social problem globally affecting ex-offenders, communities, nations and the world at large, hence requiring the interventions of social work practitioners, communities, Non-Governmental Organisations, the state and other non-state actors. Failed social reintegration results in increased crime rate, community insecurity, overcrowding in prisons, increased rehabilitation costs and marginalizes ex-offenders and their families, creating a vicious cycle of crime and vulnerability. It is therefore in this reality that this research aims to promote successful social reintegration by delving into the lived experiences of ex-offenders during social reintegration and provide evidence-based measures to ensure transformative change to social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe from a social justice perspective. This chapter therefore, contains background of the study, statement of the problem, justification of the study, research objectives, limitations and delimitations of the study, definition of key terms and a summary chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

People are increasingly committing crime worldwide, some conscious and some unconscious of the consequences of their actions. Such criminal tendencies are highly motivated by a variety of complex factors such as poverty, substance abuse and communication breakdown within the family among other factors. When a person commits a crime he/she is apprehended by the law enforcement, tried by the magistrate court, convicted when found guilty, incarcerated, rehabilitated and reintegrated back into the society by the criminal justice system. According to Weider and Schultz (2019), in every country, imprisonment is used as a form of punishment that courts can impose. After undergoing that imprisonment, released offenders face hurdles during their social reintegration which when not timely and effectively attended to, may motivate them to reoffend resulting in failed social reintegration.

United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2018) reported that ex-offenders face insurmountable social, economic and personal challenges during their reintegration. According to LaCourse et al (2019) such challenges exist in the context of health care, education, housing, transportation and employment. Despite the interventions by governments, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Community and families to ensure successful social reintegration of ex-offenders, these challenges are still existing and negatively impacting the lives of ex-offenders and their families. Palgan (2022) argues that the global problem of ex offender was disregarded because rehabilitation was prioritized over punishment. This implies that failed social reintegration is resulting from ineffective rehabilitation because the purpose of rehabilitation is to prepare an offender for successful social reintegration. Furthermore, adult male ex-offenders seem to suffer more from the consequences of ineffective rehabilitation as they often face unique challenges among other groups of offenders due to society's expectations on men and economic provision making the reintegration of adult male ex-offenders a critical one. Hence the need to reconsider social reintegration from a social justice perspective to examine and fill gaps in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders to ensure their successful reintegration.

Ex-offenders constitute a significant fraction of world's most vulnerable and disenfranchised segment of society which is enduring gross injustice during their transition from prison to society. The global problem of failed social reintegration is reflected by high inmate population and recidivism rates. According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) (2024) prisons are overcrowded in more than 60% countries worldwide sparking concerns about health and human rights for those detained in these prisons. Also, as a result of overcrowding, prisons are failing to offer effective rehabilitation services to offenders based on individual needs, leaving offenders not fully transformed and not ready to face the society they have wronged and start crime free lives. This failure is indicated by high recidivism rates globally. According to United Nations Office on Drug Crime (UNODC) (2024), Russia has the highest recidivism rate standing at 63%, followed by United States of America with 36%, Germany 35% and Norway with lowest that is 18%. Ideally, the aim of the criminal justice system according to the United Nations General Assembly (2016) is to reduce recidivism and increase public safety. However, several countries around the world are failing to achieve this objective of criminal justice as recidivism rates confirm, hence the need to examine the challenges in social reintegration of adult male ex-

offenders from a social justice perspective in order to reduce recidivism by supporting ex-offender's social reintegration.

Continently, the problems of ex-offenders also exist in several countries. The problems of ex-offenders in Africa are confirmed by studies done by Chikadzi (2017); Murhula (2019) and Langa (2017). However, in Africa there is limited research on recidivism hence according to Fazel and Wolf (2015), recidivism research indicates that the majority of the studies on recidivism have been conducted in First World Nations. Meanwhile, African researchers believe it is high although there are no accurate recidivism figures. Langa (2017) reported that absence of meaningful interventions aimed at facilitating ex-offender reintegration result in many of them reoffending and returning to correctional institutions. Chikadzi (2017), attributed high recidivism rate in South Africa to lack of employment opportunities for ex-offenders this aligns with Lebel's (2012) observation that criminal record makes it difficult for ex-offenders to secure employment and avoid a relapse on criminal behavior. Unemployment in turn make it difficult for adult male ex-offenders to secure housing, buy clothes and support their families, motivating them to resort to crime as they feel that there is nothing for them in society and risk being reconvicted.

Research indicates that stakeholders within the criminal justice system such as correctional institutions, NGOs, FBOs, communities and families play pivotal role in the social reintegration of ex-offenders worldwide by providing invaluable social, economic, material, financial and spiritual support to this vulnerable population. However, the efforts of these stakeholders to ensure successful social reintegration are hindered by a multitude of factors such as legal, institutional, financial and staff constraints (Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, 2019). Although researchers such as Hunter et al (2016) recommended coordination among these stakeholders, lack of coordination and collaboration among them persist due to lack of sound collaboration framework resulting in fragmented support. Therefore, the need to examine the role of stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders to ensure comprehensive support to ex-offenders which will in turn enhance their successful social reintegration by providing them with adequate coping mechanisms to navigate the barriers to successful reintegration.

In Zimbabwe the problems of social reintegration are also present as in other countries. The problems of social reintegration in Zimbabwe are evidenced by overcrowding in prisons. According to Zimbabwe Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), (2024), as of 22 March 2024 prison

population in Zimbabwe was at 24 069 with men constituting 97.2% and women constituting 2.8% of the total prison population. These statistics clearly indicate that the majority of ex-offenders are male hence, more efforts to support adult male ex-offenders are needed. Due to limited literature on ex offender population in Zimbabwe, there is no accurate rate for recidivism, but however according to a case study of Marondera prison by Rupande and Ndoro (2014), 70% of prison officials said it is high. Absence of accurate recidivism rate in Zimbabwe makes it difficult to assess the progress that have made in improving reintegration and to compare with other countries in the region hence, the need for more research on ex-offender population in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the vulnerability of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe is further exacerbated by absence of social protection programs or reentry programs for ex-offenders. Developed countries such as United States of America (USA) have reentry programs for ex-offenders such as Friends of Returning Citizens (FORC) and Last Mile which empower ex-offenders and reduce recidivism. However, in Zimbabwe current social protection policies and programs such as Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTOs), Harmonized Social Cash Transfers (HSCT) only cater for other groups such as children, elderly and those with disabilities. This further compromise social reintegration of ex-offenders as they find it hard to cope with the social costs of crime without critical support they require to desist from crime. According to International Labor organisation (ILO) (2014), strong social protection policies and programs are key to reducing poverty and vulnerability, human capital development, redressing inequality and promoting inclusive growth. Thus, absence of social protection policies and programs put the lives of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe in jeopardy, creating Social Darwinism and putting them at high risk of reoffending as a negative way of coping with challenges of social reintegration causing overcrowding in prison and increasing rehabilitation costs.

Most Social Work researchers in Zimbabwe only focus on Juvenile Criminal Justice system while ignoring the entire criminal justice system and adult offenders. In social work education and training, students only learn juvenile justice system. It therefore seems to appear that in Zimbabwe it is only juvenile offenders who needs social justice. The vulnerability of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe is clearly evidenced by absence of literature on their welfare. This points out that the ex-prisoner population in Zimbabwe is under researched in social work and often ignored and not

yet recognized as vulnerable citizens who needs care and support just like other vulnerable groups such as elderly, children, women and those with disabilities.

Against this backdrop, the researcher found it worth to embrace the qualitative methodology to investigate the challenges in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders from Epworth, examine the role of different stakeholders in social reintegration and propose a model towards successful reintegration of ex-offenders into society in Zimbabwe from a social justice perspective.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Failed social reintegration of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe is a serious contemporary social problem just like as in several countries worldwide. Ideally, correctional institutions are mandated to incarcerate, rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders back into society. However, released offenders are failing to reintegrate successfully into the society after release from prison due to complex social, economic and physical factors. Upon release from prison, ex-offenders face challenges which includes but not limited to discrimination from family, society and potential employers, unaffordability and unavailability of shelter as well as lack of coping mechanisms such as counselling, follow up supervision and community support systems to withstand these hurdles. The problem of failed social reintegration does not only affect the offender but rather the offender's family, the community and the state a large. This is because the family loses its primary provider leaving it vulnerable, community's safety become threatened and development of a nation will slow down because some crucial funds instead of being diverted towards sectors of the economy such as mining, agriculture and trade will be channeled towards rehabilitation of offenders. Yet, crime is something that can be addressed by simply supporting ex-offender's reintegration into society. Although stakeholders in reintegration of ex-offenders such correctional institutions, NGOs, FBOs, communities and families play key roles in ensuring successful social reintegration, their efforts are hindered by institutional, legal, economic constraints and lack strong collaboration framework. Furthermore, their efficacy in enhancing social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe has not yet been fully explored. Against this backdrop, it is imperative to devise evidence based, just, corresponding, sustainable and cost-effective measures that promote successful reintegration of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. Hence, this study endeavors to examine the

challenges in reintegration of adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration, examine the role of different stakeholders in social reintegration and finally propose a model that promote successful reintegration of adult male ex- offenders into society. By so doing, this study will contribute to the development of policies, programs and interventions that promote seamless reintegration of adult male ex-offenders, reduce recidivism and contribute to empowerment of ex-offenders, ensure social justice to ex-offenders and promote development of a nation.

1.3 Aim of the study

This study endeavors to develop a model towards successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To examine the challenges faced by adult male ex-offenders from Epworth during social reintegration.
2. To examine the role of different stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.
3. To develop a model towards successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the challenges facing adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe during social reintegration?
2. What are the roles of stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe?
3. What measures can be implemented to promote successful reintegration in Zimbabwe of adult male ex-offenders?

1.6 Justification of the study

The rationale of this study is informed by its objectives which are to examine the challenges in reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe, to examine the role of different stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders and to propose a model towards successful reintegration of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. Examining the challenges in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders provides a *verstehen* understanding of systemic and societal injustices endured by ex-offenders which in turn helps policy makers, NGOs, Correctional institutions and communities to develop just, sound and robust policies that promote successful reintegration and addresses the inequalities faced by ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. By examining the role of different stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders, this research can provide a useful comprehensive and collaborative guiding framework to social workers, correctional institutions, community and NGOs for developing holistic programs that breaks the cycle of crime, build resilience of ex-offenders and promote their self-reliance and crime desistence. Motivated by the desire to devise a model towards successful reintegration of adult male ex-offenders, this study provides evidence-based recommendations that are context and culture specific to Zimbabwe's realities, thereby ensuring their relevance. Addressing the challenges of social reintegration does not only benefit ex-offenders but the entire community in the very sense that when an offender successfully reintegrates, chances of reoffending become low and the safety of society is enhanced. Hence, according to UNODC (2018), supporting social reintegration of ex-offenders is arguably one of the best and cost-effective crime prevention strategy. The findings of this study also have far reaching impact to Bindura University of Science Education as they help to refine current understanding of ex offender population and some aspects may be incorporated into social work curriculum to equip students with contemporary knowledge of issues affecting ex-offenders in Zimbabwe so that they can come up with innovative solutions.

1.7 Assumptions

- The study assumes that adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe are facing significant challenges during their transition from prison to society.
- The study assumes that challenges facing adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe reflects deep systemic injustice to this vulnerable population.

1.8 Limitations of the study

1. Limited access to ex-offenders

Due to stigma and discrimination that ex-offenders endure from society, they are hesitant to participate in interviews and this affects the scope of the research as the sample is not a true representation of all ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.

2. Lack of reliable secondary data on ex-offenders

Since ex-offenders are an under researched population in Zimbabwe, there is limited availability of reliable secondary data on social reintegration of ex-offenders and this makes it difficult to contextualize the findings with those of previous researches hence the researcher heavily relied on primary data.

3. Rapport building and Ethical challenges

Researching people who have been in conflict with the law requires strong rapport building skills and high confidentiality to gain their trust and willingness to participate in the research. Exhibiting excellent rapport building skills and ethical standard of confidentiality is challenging since some issues of ex-offenders lived experiences are sensitive. Therefore, the desire to maintain confidentiality and ensure that rapport exist with the ex-offender compels the researcher to avoid some critical aspects of social reintegration hence limiting the depth of enquiry.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

This study only focuses on social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders from Epworth between the ages of 22 and 45 years with at least 1 year after release from prison.

1.10 Definition of key terms

Ex-offender is a person who has been officially released from prison and is back into society after completing sentence.

Offender reintegration- Maruna, Immergreen and LeBel (2004) defines offender reintegration as “A systematic and evidence-based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and reoffending is significantly reduced. It encompasses the totality of work with prisoners, their families, significant others and victims in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations.” Ex-offender reintegration can therefore be understood as transitioning of inmates from prison into society.

Rehabilitation- Murhula (2019), defines rehabilitation as essentially the process of helping and allowing offenders to separate themselves from factors that led them to offend in the first place. Therefore, rehabilitation can be understood as the process of supporting and enabling offenders to disengage from the underlying causes of their criminal behavior, with the aim of fostering their reintegration into society as law abiding individuals.

Incarceration- refers to the state of confining a person unwillingly in a correctional facility for breaking the law.

Social Work- African Journal of Social Work (2020) defines social work as an academic discipline and a profession that embraces and enhances long held methods of addressing life challenges in order to achieve development, cohesion, empowerment and liberation utilizing diverse African knowledge and values enshrined in family, community, environment and spirituality. Thus, social work is a profession that is concerned with liberation and empowerment of the most vulnerable segment of society in order to promote social justice.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced the problem under investigation which is failed social reintegration of ex-offenders focusing on adult male ex-offenders in Epworth community between the ages of 22 and 45 years with at least 2 year after release from prison. The study is based on the objectives of

identifying challenges faced by ex-offender during social reintegration, the coping mechanism they employ and to devise measures that promote successful reintegration of ex-offenders. The aim of the study is to come up with measures that ensure seamless reintegration of through learning from their experiences. The chapter has provided background of the study, a statement of the problem, the justification of the problem, aim of the study, research objectives, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study and definition of terms.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This study is premised on the idea that challenges facing adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration reflect social injustice in society, therefore, efforts should be made to promote social justice by advocating for the rights of ex-offenders in an endeavor to facilitate their successful social reintegration. In this section, the main sources of information that the researcher reviewed, critically examined and logically assessed before conducting this investigation are succinctly presented. Overview of social reintegration, challenges faced by adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration, the roles of different stakeholders such as correctional institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), Community and family in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders, as well as theoretical orientation of this study are four sections that make up this chapter. These four parts are guided by the objectives of this research which are to examine the challenges facing adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration in Zimbabwe, to examine the role of various stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders and ultimately to devise a model for successful reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. The challenges facing ex-offenders are examined in line with international, regional and national frameworks such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights , International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Offenders (The Nelson Mandela Rules), Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action for Accelerating Prisons and Penal Reforms in Africa , The Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa, Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services Act and the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe. These frameworks are used as instruments to illuminate the major injustices endured by ex-offenders which is in line with the Theory of Justice by Rawls that underpin this study.

2.1. Theoretical Framework: Theory of Justice by John Rawls (1971)

This research study is underpinned by Rawls's Theory of Justice (1971) which is primarily concerned with principles of equal rights and fair equality of opportunity within society. According to Rawls (1971), justice can be viewed as a fundamental social principle which guides the fair distribution of rights and duties among members of society. Rawls (1971) conceptualizes justice

as a core virtue of a social institutions, asserting that a just society is one in which every individual enjoys the basic liberties and equal opportunities. Accordingly, this study is premised on the belief that the challenges encountered by adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration in Zimbabwe are manifestations of systemic social injustice.

2.1.1 Relevance of Theory of Justice to the study

From a social justice perspective, a society cannot be considered just when certain groups are deprived of fundamental rights or denied equitable access to opportunities to opportunities. In the Zimbabwean context, ex-offenders are often systemically marginalized and excluded from meaningful participation in social and economic life due to their criminal records. Such marginalization contradicts Rawls's (1971) assertion that all individuals should have the same infeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of basic liberties.

Evidence from previous studies supports this injustice. For instance, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2019) reported that public sector recruitment processes often exclude individuals with criminal records, despite Article 64 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) which guarantees every citizen the freedom of profession, trade and occupation. This contradiction raises critical questions: Can there be truly freedom of occupation in Zimbabwe when ex-offenders are barred from employment opportunities based solely on their past? What rationale supports this ongoing discrimination when these individuals have already served their sentences? Once an individual has served and completed their sentence, continued discrimination becomes unjustifiable and counterproductive, effectively confining ex-offenders to a social prison which undermines their chances to successful reintegration.

Rawls (1971), reasoned that individuals with similar talents and skills should have similar life chances. Yet, adult ex-offenders are often unable to compete equally with other citizens due to persistent stigma and exclusion. This is particularly paradoxical considering that Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Services offers vocational training and education aimed at improving inmate's employability. Denying these individuals opportunity to apply these acquired skills post release renders such rehabilitation efforts futile and signals a serious violation of principles of justice. As Riley (2022) notes, employment serves not only as a means of economic empowerment but also

as a platform for ex-offenders to demonstrate personal reform and re-engage with society. Thus, denying ex-offenders the opportunity to apply the skills they have learnt during rehabilitation constitutes a profound injustice which needs to be dealt with.

Rawls (1971) also proposes that social and economic inequalities are justifiable only when they benefit the least advantaged members of society and must be open to all on conditions of equality of opportunities. In this regard, it is important to question whether ex-offenders in Zimbabwe enjoy equal access to social welfare services such health care, agricultural inputs and social protection. While the legal framework guarantees these services for all citizens, in practice ex-offenders are often excluded, highlighting a gap between legal provisions and social realities. According to Garret (2005), Rawls framework demands that policies aimed at uplifting society must prioritize the wellbeing of its most disadvantaged members. In Zimbabwe, however, the absence of targeted social protection programmes for ex-offenders despite such provisions existing for children and other vulnerable groups in society indicates a significant justice deficit which requires attention.

Furthermore, access to housing is recognized as a basic human right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, studies by Raphael (2011), Zannella et al. (2020) and Kilic and Tuysuz (2024) reveal that ex-offenders frequently face severe housing challenges during their reintegration process. In line with Rawls emphasis on justice as fairness and the protection of inviolable rights, such housing insecurity reflects a broader failure of society to uphold the rights its members. Considering that shelter is indeed an inviolable right, denying ex-offenders their right to shelter solely due their criminal history become a stark indication of systemic injustice.

Rawl's Theory of Justice offers a robust theoretical framework for analyzing the exclusion and marginalization of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. The theory not only highlights the injustices faced by ex-offenders but also provides a moral and philosophical basis for advocating for inclusive policies and practices. Addressing these issues is essential for fostering a more just society in which every individual regardless of past actions, is offered the opportunity to participate fully and equally.

2.2 Overview of Social Reintegration

Social Reintegration is a systematic and evidence-based process by which actions are taken to work with offenders in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and reoffending is significantly reduced, (Maruma, Immarigeon and Lebel, 2004:4). Social reintegration therefore can be conceptualized as the process of offender's transitioning from prison to society. This transition process from prison to society is not a walk in the park but rather a problematic one as ex-offenders often face numerous challenges which hinder their social reintegration process. According to American Bar Association (2018), reentrants face 45 000 potential collateral consequences of crime and these negatively impact ex-offenders. National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction (2022) also reported that ex-offenders face 44 000 legal barriers during their transition from prison to society. LaCourse et al (2019) observed that such barriers appear in the context of housing, education, transportation, employment and education. These systemic barriers result in ex-offenders recommitting and reconvicted soon after release from prison as they find it hard to adapt in a discriminatory society.

Hunter et al (2019) reiterated that high global recidivism rate and overcrowding in prisons underscores the need for interventions that ensure successful social reintegration of ex-offenders. Although stakeholders such as NGOs, FBOs, correctional institutions, communities and families have made some efforts to support ex-offenders, their efforts are proving to be ineffective considering that global recidivism rate is currently high. High global recidivism is confirmed by studies done by United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2024). A study by United Kingdom's Ministry of Justice (2021) revealed that adults released for less than 12 months of sentence had a proven 59.7% chances of reoffending. Studies in United States of America shows that released offenders had 44.4% chances of reoffending within a year (World Population Review, 2021). In Nigeria the rate of recidivism is estimated to be at 52.4% (Abrifor et al 2019) and this indicates that the challenges to successful reintegration are present in Africa as they are in America and Europe. However, in other African countries such as South Africa there are few studies on recidivism and as a result there are no accurate recidivism figures but researchers believe it is high (Murhula, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, just like in South Africa, the rate of recidivism is estimated to be high although there are no actual figures (Samanyanga, 2016). In 2016, 3000 inmates were released through

Presidential Amnesty and more than 60% of them were reconvicted within 2 months of release (Newsday Zimbabwe, 26 May 2016). This can be attributed to lack of effective interventions that promote successful reintegration of ex-offenders. As a result, lack of familial and financial support, lack of housing, poor employment prospects, drug and alcohol misuse, mental and physical health problems, lack of education mark the social life of ex-offenders (Maguire, 2014). Failure to timely and effectively address these challenges result in the marginalization of ex-offenders, motivating them to reoffend and threatening public safety. Although interventions have been proposed by researchers, these challenges seem to exist requiring a paradigm shift. Hence, the need to approach social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe from a social justice perspective.

2.3 Challenges to successful reintegration of adult male ex-offenders

Adult male ex-offenders face significant social, economic and personal challenges during their transition from prison to society which undermines their successful reintegration into society. These challenges include difficulties in securing employment, housing, poor social support, lack of access to mental health care services. Through the lens of social justice, these challenges review deep systemic marginalization of ex-offenders and their families which is against the ideals of justice as explained by Rawls (1971) and also have negative implications on wider society as they potentially result in increased crime rate and overcrowding in prisons which is undesirable.

2.3.1 Employability challenges

Offenders during their incarceration they will be concerned about how they will get employment after release in order to live crime free lives and meet their human needs. Prisons world -wide are cognisant of this and as part of rehabilitation they provide education and vocational training to inmates to further their employability chances upon release. This is in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules (2015) rule number 104:1 which stipulates that education of prisoners shall be integrated with the education system of the country so that their release may continue their education without difficulty. In a Report by Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2019), Mashonaland East Provincial Rehabilitation Officer confirmed that correctional institutions in the

province were providing education to inmates in different trades such construction to improve their skills.

Despite of having acquiring skills during rehabilitation, inmates when they get released from prison struggle to get decent jobs or utilise the skills they would have acquired during rehabilitation due to their criminal records. According to LeBel (2012), having a criminal record and resulting stigma of being an offender can serve as a major barrier to employment. Studies have shown that stigma associated a criminal record can lead to widespread discrimination in the job market, making it hard for ex-offenders to find stable and meaningful employment (Muleya, 2021; Mashau, 2023). National Institute of Corrections (2019) reported that when employers notice credentials on ex-offender's application it sets them apart from other incumbents applying for the same job. Cromwell et al (2005) argues that legislation restricts offenders from obtaining licensure in occupations such as teaching, nursing and police force. This is in sharp contrast with the provisions of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 21 which stipulates that everyone has a right to work, free choice of employment, just and favorable conditions of work and to protection of unemployment. Section 64 of Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) also recognizes that every citizen has freedom of profession, trade or occupation. However, a study by Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2019), concurs that ex-offenders have limited employment opportunities as government vet candidates for criminal record, shutting the door for ex-offenders. According to International Labor Organization (2006), discrimination at work denies opportunities to individuals and deprives society of what those individuals can offer. Thus, wasting important talents and potentials in ex-offenders and leaving them with one feasible plan of reoffending to meet their unmet human needs.

From a social justice standpoint, when we see ex-offenders directly discriminated by employers on the basis of criminal record, can we boldly say that justice is prevailing in society? There should be no reasonable grounds for employers to discriminate ex-offenders for their criminal records because it is the state that incarcerate, rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders through Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS). Sadly, when the offender is reintegrated into society, it is the very same state that rehabilitated the offender that is at the fore front of discriminating ex-offenders. Yet, according to Ontario Human Rights (2008) a person can only be discriminated when the job they are applying for is directly related to the crime they have committed. However,

in Zimbabwe ex-offenders seems to be discriminated without considering the crimes they have committed and this makes the lives of ex-offenders a misery and left them with no choice but to reoffend and go back to prison where they can live without discrimination hence threatening public safety, increasing rehabilitation costs and slowing economic development of a nation. Thus, the need to reconsider social reintegration of ex-offenders from a social justice perspective.

Moving on, researchers such as Bushway (2022) observed that job training that inmates receive in prison is trivial because it is not related to post prison situations. In this respect, the work that inmates undertake while in prison is labor intensive and it does not guarantee ex-offenders work when they get released. This is plausible in Zimbabwean context as our prisons mainly focus on agricultural projects where inmates provide labor in the farms. This is supported by a case study of Marondera Prison by Rupande and Ngoro (2014) which reported that inmates worked as laborers and not as learners in poultry and piggery projects. According to Muchena (2014), rehabilitation programs in Zimbabwean prisons such as maize production, poultry, vegetable gardening, are mostly agriculturally oriented. Considering recent climatic changes such as the El Niño Induced drought, where can an ex offender go and practice farming which he has undertaken while in prison? Against that backdrop, can we confidently say that the criminal justice is doing justice in terms of preparing offenders for reintegration? Hence, the need to shift focus and focus more on technical skills development for inmates which are related to post prison conditions to increase their employability chances and ensure smooth social reintegration of ex-inmates into society.

2.3.2 Housing challenges

Housing is both a human need and a fundamental right as enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2015) Article 25. Despite of housing being a fundamental right, ex-offenders are grossly suffering from unavailability and unaffordability of housing upon their release resulting in failed social reintegration. According to UNODC (2018), crime has social costs or collateral effects. One of the collateral effects of crime includes losing shelter due to long time spent in prison. Kilic and Tuysuz (2024) confirmed that ex-offenders face housing challenges due to discrimination. This become an impediment to offender's social reintegration as Berghuis (2018) reiterated that housing is a critical factor in the social reintegration of offenders and pivotal in

reducing recidivism and promoting social reintegration. However, according to Quaker Council for European Affairs (2011), offenders are usually homeless prior to their incarceration and majority return to society with no or substandard housing. This researcher while attached at Prison Outreach Support (POSt) (June 2023 - July 2024) observed that when an offender is about to be released, having arranged housing plans is what they will be anxious of in their endeavor to seamlessly reintegrate into society and avoid a relapse on criminal behavior. Raphael (2011), noted that vast majority of ex-offenders have no pre-arranged housing plans and those who do secure housing often do so in an impoverished neighborhood and community where they lived prior to their incarceration. Quaker Council for European Affairs (2011), reported that sometimes ex offender's imprisonment may be used as a spurious justification for their denied access to accommodation after release. This situation is further exacerbated by unemployment which make it hard for ex offender to get money to rent a house. In Zimbabwean context, this is plausible considering the fact that impoverished neighborhood communities such as Epworth which have limited employment opportunities is where one can find cheap and affordable housing for an unemployed ex-offender. Again, in such community's crime rate is high and this is confirmed with a study by Dube-Mawerewere and Chiborise (2017) at Harare Central Prison where they found that majority of offenders more than 50% come from impoverished urban areas.

Ex-offenders housing challenges in Zimbabwe are worsened by lack of half way homes. The Ouagadougou Declaration (2003), recognized housing challenges for ex-offenders in Africa and recommended member states to consider half way homes for ex-offender's housing challenges. In Zimbabwe, the National Development Strategy 1 (2021-2025) recognised housing as a human need and made it a priority which is commendable, however, it failed to consider housing challenges of ex-offenders by ignoring to consider half way homes construction for ex-offenders. This marginalizes ex-offenders and result in some residing in bridges and on verandas of public buildings when released which is detrimental to one's overall quality of life and potentially puts one at high risk of reoffending and get back to prison where they can live better. Failing to consider the needs of vulnerable ex-offenders in key national development plans clearly shows that housing challenges of ex-offenders are a sign of social injustice in society because according to Rawl's Theory of Justice, a well ordered or just society is that which advances the interests of its people. How then can these interests be advanced when other vulnerable members of society are side lined

in key national development plans? Is it just to sideline them? Hence, the need to reconsider social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe from a social justice perspective.

2.3.3 Lack of Access to Mental health services

As a result of long time spent in prison as well as prison conditions, inmates inevitably develop mental health problems. According to Stevens (2013) there is evidence on the relationship between crime and mental malfunctioning. Bebbington et al (2021) observed that ex-offenders suffer from negative mental health effects due to lack of a reliable support system and the resources required during social reintegration. Baffour et al. (2021) also confirmed that ex inmates suffer from psychological problems after release. Such problems include anxiety, depression and self-defeating behavior. UNoDC (2018) also recognised the impact of mental disabilities on social reintegration. However, although lack access of mental health services was identified by past researchers such as Mhishi (2022), ex-offenders still face same problem upon their release. Seita and Kadela (2003), observed that ex-offenders have inadequate access to health care services. Fegurson, Swain-Campbell and Horwood (2004), found out that inmates usually come from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds and the implication of this is that ex-offenders are unable to access health care services such as counselling and therapies due to poverty. According to Mhishi (2022), mental health for ex-offenders is out of reach either physically or financially, a situation that is not tenable. This is worsened by ex-offender's unemployment which make it hard for ex offender to pay for the services. Health care service despite being a right in Zimbabwe as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) ex-offenders still have limited access to mental health care services in Zimbabwe. Mental health care service providers are invisible in providing support to ex-offenders who need them the most. Hence, the need for a deeper examination into the challenges to ex-offender social reintegration and to devise more just interventions that ensure availability of mental health care services for ex inmates to ensure successful reintegration.

2.3.4 Family and relationship break down

Psychologically, according to Lahey (2013), humans have a psychological motive for affiliation. According to Anthropologists Schultz and Lavender (2017), men are gregarious animals implying that people have a tendency of living in groups. As a result, when offenders are released from prison they will be enthusiastic to reunite with their families. However, due to nature of crime committed and severity of punishment, most adult male ex-offenders come back to society only to find their marriages crumbled, wives already remarried and even rejected by family members. A study in South Africa by Chikadzi (2017) and another done in Zimbabwe by Dube-Mawerere and Chiborise (2017) concurs that ex-offenders experience difficulties in mending family and community relationships. Such a challenge may have significant impact on ex-offenders unsatisfied motive for affiliation. However, these study ignored how ex-offenders navigate such challenges. Considering that human relationships are an important source of support during difficult times, is it unjust to ignore social rejection of ex-offenders by family and community members? When ignored how will ex-offenders overcome their struggles without such potent support from family and community. In ability to manage such situations may result in unintended consequences such as reoffending. Hence, the need for more rigorous research on challenges to successful reintegration of ex-offenders to promote a seamless reintegration of adult male ex-offenders by devising effective strategies to mend relationships between ex-offenders and their families.

2.4 The role of stakeholders in social reintegration of ex- offenders

Stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders entails various people or organizations that directly or indirectly play different and varying roles in supporting ex-offenders during their transitioning from prison to society. They work independently but their roles complement each other and contribute to successful community reintegration of offenders. Stakeholders such as correctional institutions, NGOs, Faith Based Organizations, community and families provide ex-offenders with the coping mechanisms they require during their transition from prison to society and without these stake holders the lives of ex-offenders would be more complicated. Therefore,

specific roles of these stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders are examined below highlighting notable gaps that need improvements.

2.4.1 Correctional Institutions

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Offenders (Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015) provides that the aim of correctional institutions is to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders back into the community. Consistent with this, correctional institutions globally embrace rehabilitative and punitive models towards rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. Modern correctional institutions such as in United State of America embrace rehabilitative models emphasizing on restoratives justice, vocational training and cognitive behavioral therapy to foster societal acceptance and reduce recidivism (Cullen and Johnson, (2017). However, research have consistently shown that Norway's Normalization and Human Rights approach to rehabilitation is globally renowned as the best and this is indicated by its lowest recidivism worldwide (Andersen and Skardhamar, 2017). Its programs such as vocational training programs are reportedly in alignment with labor market demands ensuring their relevance to ex-offender's post release needs. Germany however, rehabilitates offenders through social therapy that is integrating psychological counselling, education and vocational training and this approach has successfully managed to keep recidivism rate in German low (Gortz and Rettenberger, 2022). Conversely, countries such as Philippines and Japan that embrace punitive models have high recidivism rate and overcrowding in prisons (Narag and Rodriguez, 2021; Suzuki and Otani, 2017) proving the ineffectiveness of the model. The differences in terms of the effectiveness of these models is often influenced by factors such as investment in rehabilitation, cultural relevance and political willingness (Aebi and Tiago, 2021; Ameh and Ugwuoke, 2014). These factors in turn affect the replicability of these models in Africa despite their positive outcomes in Europe requiring more effective model that is in line with Africa's social, economic, political and cultural realities to ensure effectiveness of correctional institutions in preparing offenders for life after release.

Correctional institutions in Africa embrace rehabilitative models towards rehabilitation of offenders as alluded in the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa (1996). A study in South Africa by Murhula (2019) found that South African correctional institutions embrace

rehabilitative model which provide psychological services, social work services, health care services, skills development and spiritual care as part of efforts to rehabilitate offenders. Research has shown that South Africa's White Paper on Corrections (2005), demonstrate the effectiveness of embracing restorative justice and collaborating with stakeholders such as NGOs in skills training and this has significantly reduced recidivism in South Africa. However, Ethiopia incorporates traditional restorative justice mechanisms such chief led reconciliation in facilitating reintegration of offenders and this has yielded positive results (Lijalem, 2014). These differences in approaches shows that each country's unique reintegration problems require its unique solutions that are context and culture specific, hence the need to examine the role correctional institutions in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe in order to improve their effectiveness in terms of rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders.

Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS) is an agency of the Government of Zimbabwe which is responsible for incarceration, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders back into the community. It embraces a rehabilitative model towards rehabilitation and reintegration of offender to ensure their successful reintegration into the community which emphasizes on providing education, vocational training and psychological support (Prisons and Correctional Services Act (2022)). For instance, it established vocational training schools to impart inmates with skills at prisons such Harare Central Prison, Hwahwa Prison and Khami Prison. However, Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs (2022) reported that prisons were facing shortage of learning materials and funding which negatively affected their efforts of rehabilitating offenders. Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2021) observed that overcrowding and limited funding were pervasive factors towards ZPC's efforts of rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders as they limited program scalability. This situation can be addressed by supporting ex-offender's social reintegration and by so doing overcrowding in prison will decrease. This therefore, highlights that Zimbabwe's situation requires unique solutions which are in line with cultural, economic, social and political realities. In this respect, this research delves into the role of correctional institutions in Zimbabwe in their pursuit of rehabilitation and reintegration work in and provide evidence-based recommendations that are context and culture specific to Zimbabwe's realities.

2.4.2 Family

The role of families in social reintegration of ex-offenders is a critical yet, under explored dimension in Social Work research. Families are a key stakeholder in social reintegration of ex-offenders in different and crucial ways globally as research confirm (Taylor, 2016; Ndaba, 2020 and Miller, 2021) Families facilitate social reintegration of offenders during their incarceration as well as on their return into society from prison. During incarceration, visits from family or friends provides offenders a chance to establish and enhance social support networks which can assist in the development of prosocial identity (Duwe and Clark, 2013). Furthermore, Roque et al. (2013) observed that family visits strengthens familial attachments, which in turn reduces the likelihood of offender to recidivate. Results of a study conducted in Britain on male inmates by Markson et al. (2018) showed that family relationships predict positive outcomes on accommodation, alcohol and drug use, coping with resettlement challenges and the quality of post release life. In Norway, family counselling is institutionalized in correctional programs to strengthen post-release support (Andersen and Skardhamar, (2017). However, although families play critical role in social reintegration of offenders, they are often confronted with challenges such as poverty especially African rural and low urban areas which compromise their ability to visit and support offenders due to limited resources and therefore this needs to be addressed by capacitating them.

In Africa, the role of family in social reintegration of offenders is enshrined in the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa (1996) which stipulates that inmates should be given the opportunity to maintain and develop links with their families and the outside world. The Ouagadougou Declaration on Accelerating Penal and Prison Reforms in Africa and Plan of Action (2002) recognized the critical role of families in social reintegration of offenders and recommended that contact between inmates and families and communities should be maintained. Studies in Ghana by Adu et al. (2019) and in South Africa by Muntingh and Ballard (2020) showed that extended families enhance social reintegration of ex-offenders by providing housing, job assistance and emotional sanctuary which is in conformity with the Ubuntu Philosophy which emphasize on communal responsibility. This shows that families support to offenders is deeply embedded in African cultural central value of Ubuntu which emphasis on togetherness. However, regional disparities exist which shape familial role in social reintegration of ex-offenders. For,

instance Clark (2010) reported that in Rwanda familial reintegration of ex-genocide offenders is fraught with trauma and mistrust, requiring reconciliation mechanisms. This indicate that although culture influence family's support to ex-offenders, the nature of crime committed by an ex-offender also play a great role in terms of determining family's willingness to render assistance due to scares of trauma left by their past actions. Therefore, mistrust and stigma towards ex-offenders by families in Africa needs to be addressed through mediators who mediate on behalf of ex-offenders to ensure that the ex-offender is accepted back into the family without suspicion and is given all the support he needs.

Despite of the crucial role that families play in social reintegration of ex-offenders worldwide, ex-offenders in Zimbabwe often face negative treatment from their families upon their return from prison. A study by Dube-Mawerere and Chiborise (2017) found that 40% of their participants faced hostility from family and society upon release into the society. This hostility therefore, make it difficult for ex-offenders to reintegrate in a world where they felt unwanted and give them the impetus to reoffend a situation which is undesirable for the common good of the society. Responding to this issue, Hunter et al (2016) recommended the coordination of family and community resources to facilitate development of harmonious family relationships. However, in circumstances where ex-offenders receive support from the family, the support is usually inadequate due to economic difficulties facing families making it difficult for families to support ex-offenders. This is confirmed by Majachani (2024) who observed that families attempts to support ex-offenders during post release are hindered by poverty, leaving ex-offenders with fractured support. Simes (2017) also reported that factors such unemployment and brain drain have eroded traditional family nets creating miserable conditions for vulnerable adult male ex-offenders. Lack of effective family participation in social reintegration of ex-offenders is also compounded by lack of explicit legislation on family's role in reintegration of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe unlike in other countries such as Norway. This signals that the value of families in social reintegration of offenders in Zimbabwe in not fully recognized hence the need to examine the role of family in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in order to devise strategies for effective family participation in social reintegration as its involvement is of great relevance in enhancing successful social reintegration.

2.4.3 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs are an important stakeholder in ex-offender's transition from prison to society worldwide as they address barriers to successful social reintegration. During the transition from prison to society ex-offenders encounter discrimination in obtaining employment, securing housing, mental health problems and lack of reliable support systems which hinder their genuine efforts to reintegrate successfully. In response to these predicaments of ex-offenders, various NGOs role out different programs to assist ex-offenders and ensure that they reintegrate successfully and research in United States has proven that NGO-led programs are more effective than government efforts in offering trust and personalized support to ex-offenders (Durnescu, 2019). A meta-analysis by Lutze et al. (2014) reported that ex-offenders who received support from NGOs had 15-20% lower recidivism chances when compared to state owned parole system. This highlights that NGOs are indeed an undisputed stakeholder in the social reintegration of ex-offenders. Despite their successive efforts in ensuring smooth ex-offender reintegration, NGOs often face funding challenges as most of them are donor funded and this limits their scope (Mnisi and Schoeman, 2023). For instance, a case study of Recycle Force in India by Harding et. al (2019) revealed that inadequate funding disrupted job training programs despite initial success rate. Thus, the need to examine the role of NGOs in social reintegration of ex-offenders in order to ensure their effective operations in responding to ex-offenders needs.

In Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, the number of NGOs currently providing support to ex-offenders seem to be limited as compared to European countries. This is supported by Schoeman and Mnisi (2023) who reiterated that there is limited number of NGOs delivering services due to inadequate funding to provide sustainable services. In Zimbabwe some of those few NGOs who support ex-offenders such as Female Prisoner's Support Trust (FEMPRIST) only provide services to female ex-offenders leaving male ex-offenders more vulnerable in Zimbabwe. Lack of complementary efforts by NGOs in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders makes prisons and societies breeding grounds of criminals (Wakai, 2024). Against this back drop, it is imperative to examine the role of NGOs in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders from a social justice perspective and conscientize NGOs operating in Zimbabwe to divert some of their attention to

adult male ex-offender's vulnerability in an endeavor to ensure successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.

2.4.4 Faith Based Organizations (FBOs)

Faith Based Organisations play an instrumental role in social reintegration of ex-offenders worldwide. According to UNODC (2018), Faith Based Organisation's activities enhance social reintegration of ex-offenders by helping in engaging and motivating them to change and take responsibility of their lives and in mobilizing resources to support ex-offender's reintegration. This helps in reducing recidivism tendencies among ex-offenders as they are provided critical support which they cannot receive from family. Connolly and Grandfield (2017) observed that faith based organisations provide valuable social and emotional support thereby building recovery and allowing smooth adaptation into society. Faith Based Organisations such as Prison Fellowship International (PFI) role out different programs in over 120 countries worldwide aimed at providing chaplaincy and post release mentorship programs to help ex-offenders to reintegrate successfully (PFI,2021). These programs are yielding positive results as evidenced by a study on Prison Fellowship's Inner Change Program by Duwe and King (2013) where results showed that offenders who met with a mentor while in prison and in community had much lower rates of rearrests, reconviction and reincarceration as compared to those who did not meet a mentor.

Furthermore, a study by Wambunga (2014) in Kenya revealed that church's spiritual programs by Pastors determine the success of social reintegration. Also, Ngeno (2018) asserts that visiting and sharing gospel with ex-inmates play a major role in changing their behavior. However, FBOs in Kenya struggle to expand due to donor dependency hence limiting their effectiveness in enhancing social reintegration of ex-offenders (Ali, 2020). In Ghana a study by Osei-Assibey (2023) revealed that Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry programs reduced recidivism by 40% through Bible based counselling and microfinance initiatives. However, despite the successive efforts of FBOs in Africa to promote social reintegration, their operations in countries like Sudan are hindered by political distrust due to fear of foreign influence. Hence, the need to examine the role of FBOs in social reintegration of ex-offenders in Zimbabwean context in order to devise strategies for their effective operations to ensure a crime free society.

The work of FBOs and different churches in Zimbabwe is evident as in other countries in the region. That is, Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference (ZCBC) operates agriculture and carpentry programs targeting ex-offenders in Mutare. Such efforts enhance social reintegration of ex-offenders by empowering them to live crime free lives. However, few studies have been conducted to determine the extent to which adult male ex-offenders in urban areas are benefiting from such programs. According to Mukonyora (2021), Apostolic sects such as Johanne Masowe perform rituals to cleanse offenders of evil spirits thus, aiding social acceptance. However, participation in cleansing rituals by ex-offenders is dependent upon their religious affiliations and cultural beliefs. For example, an ex-offender who believes in African Traditional Religion might be reluctant to participate in such Apostolic rituals as they are inconsistent with his belief system. Also, few studies have been done to explore the efficacy of African Traditional Religion (ATR) FBOs in Zimbabwe, despite their influence (Mugeza, (2023). Therefore, the need to examine the role of faith-based organizations in social reintegration of ex-offenders from a Zimbabwean perspective to provide culture specific and participant-oriented recommendations that are in line with Zimbabwe's realities in an attempt to bring transformative change to social reintegration of adult male ex- offenders.

Apart from the above, the efforts of churches/faith-based organizations in reintegration of ex-offenders are hindered by factors such as lack of resources and funding, regulatory hurdles for example the 2021 Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Act restricts foreign funded NGOs including FBOs and lack of knowledge to effectively support ex-offenders (Moyo, 2023; Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, 2023). Thus, the need to examine the role of FBOs in ensuring crime desistance and provide evidence-based recommendations that enhance their efficacy in promoting social reintegration of ex-offenders.

2.4.5 Community

Social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders is less likely to be successful without crucial involvement of community given that communities provide strong social networks which widens ex-offender's avenues of support post prison release period. United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2012) emphasizes the reintegration efforts should be community oriented, focusing on restoring community ties, ensuring access to basic services and reducing recidivism

.Internationally, community social reintegration is informed by theories of social capital by Putnam (2000) and restorative justice by Braithwaite (2002) which maintains that inclusive communities reduce recidivism by fostering belonging and accountability. That is communities creates opportunities for ex-offenders to take part in community activities which stimulate their sense of belonging to the community and make them accountable of their actions, hence reducing recidivism and ensuring smooth reintegration of ex-offenders. For example, a study done in Canada by Wilson et al (2009) on the Circles of Support and Accountability revealed that the community initiative reduced sexual reoffending by 70%. Another study done in United States of America by Duwe (2018) on Community Reentry Centers an initiative that provide housing and job training to ex-offenders indicated that the initiative reduced recidivism by 30%. Thus, a notable contribution of community in the social reintegration of ex-offenders which needs to be maintained. However, these Western models of community social reintegration are incompatible in collectivistic cultures such as in Africa, hence, limiting their replicability in African context and the need for community social reintegration that align with Africa's culture and Ubuntu philosophy.

Social reintegration of ex-offenders in Africa is deeply rooted in Ubuntu Philosophy which maintains that communal healing takes precedence over punitive exclusion (Skelton and Batley, 2018). This implies that African models of community social reintegration emphasizes on collective justice unlike European models which emphasizes on strong institutional frameworks. For example, a study done in Ghana by Teye (2019) revealed that Ghana's Akan communities use family led mediation to reintegrate ex-offenders. However, despite the effectiveness of community led initiatives in ensuring smooth reintegration of offenders, studies done in Kenya by Mbai et al (2020) indicates that ex-offenders in Kenya are still ostracized highlighting community's negative attitudes towards ex-offenders which can potentially impede the process of reintegration as offenders felt unwanted in the community. A study in Nigeria by Ike et al (2022) reported that community resisted social reintegration of ex-Boko Haram offenders due to negative disposition towards Boko Haram group. This implies that crime committed play a key role in determining the extent to which an ex-offender is likely to be assisted by the community hence the need to examine community's role in social reintegration and devise strategies for community's effective involvement in ensuring successful social reintegration.

Zimbabwe's approach to community social reintegration of ex-offenders is an integration of traditional and modern approaches. Traditionally, rural communities utilize practices such as ritual cleansing and public apologies led by chiefs and village heads in reintegrating ex-offenders (Muzvidziwa, 2017). However, the practices in Zimbabwe today seems to be fading away considering the influence of factors such globalization and migration which are eroding as some are now using machines in farming and harvesting. Another researcher, Moyo (2016) discuss the role of restorative justice models in the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders emphasising the importance involving community structures in the reintegration process. Such an initiative can be more effective in terms of reintegrating offenders as it potentially reduces the effects of institutionalization by pursuing alternative forms of justice which enable the offender to compensate the society for the wrong they have done while in community. However, despite its potential impact, Chikodzi (2016) argues that communities in Zimbabwe often view often ex-offenders through a lens of suspicion and criminality regardless of whether rehabilitation has taken place. Hence, the need to examine the role of community in reintegration of adult male ex-offenders with an aim of producing an effective community social reintegration model for adult male ex-offenders.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter managed to examine and evaluate challenges faced by ex-offenders during social reintegration and roles of stakeholders by visiting previous researches highlighting notable gaps which needs to be addressed. These challenges are employment challenges, housing challenges, lack of access to mental health services, family and relationship break down. The theory of Justice by Rawls which underpin this study was well presented, exposing the injustices endured by ex-offenders during social reintegration.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher provides a succinct overview of the research methods used to investigate the social reintegration of adult ex-offenders Epworth, Zimbabwe with an aim of developing a comprehensive model towards successful reintegration of ex-offenders. The chapter includes the study's philosophy, research methodology, strategy, design, study setting, sampling processes, data collection methods, techniques, instruments, data analysis plan and ethical issues. These features of the research align with the research objectives, which are to examine the challenges experienced by adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration, examine the role of stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe and to devise measures that promote successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Consistent with the theory of justice by Rawls (1971) that underpins this study, the researcher embraced the transformative paradigm. According to Landi (2023), the goal of the transformative paradigm is to emancipate and empower participants. Leading proponents of this research paradigm, such as Chambers (1997), argue that dominant paradigms have led to the marginalization of certain groups in society, hence the need for a transformative approach to emancipate those marginalized groups. It aims to challenge discrimination, inequality and social injustice in society and promote a more just society. In this context, the marginalized group are adult male ex-offenders. Mertens (2014) opines that this paradigm allows for concentrating on the needs and opinions of oppressed groups to stimulate social change in communities. Therefore, adopting a transformative paradigm in this study helped to unearth unjust systemic and complex factors that shape the lives of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, this approach proved to be relevant in this study as it helped to examine the extent to which ex-offenders get support from different stakeholders due to its interactive epistemological stance. Thus, embracing a transformative paradigm in this study helped to illuminate the injustices endured by ex-offenders during social reintegration. This will ultimately provide a just and contextual understanding of

their lived experiences and contribute to the development of just and contextual interventions that transform and emancipate ex-offenders.

3.2 Research Approach

In keeping with the transformative paradigm that supports this study, it became necessary to embrace a qualitative methodology that allows for interactions between the researcher and participants. According to Coner et al. (2019), qualitative research is a sort of research that investigates and provides deeper insight into real-world topics and problems by collecting participant's perceptions, experiences and behaviors. The researcher preferred a qualitative approach to other approaches because according to Creswell (2014), qualitative takes place in a natural setting where participants explore the problem under investigation, allowing the researcher to collect invaluable data in answering research questions about ex-offender's experiences during social reintegration. Also, according to Coner et al. (2019), qualitative approach is crucial in responding to how and why questions which this research tries to answer.

3.3 The research strategy

The researcher obtained permission from Prison Outreach Support to conduct the study at their organisation using their facilities and interviewing its clients and staff. Open ended qualitative interviews were the best strategy to use in an attempt to understand the obstacles that adult male ex-offenders encounter during social integration, as well as the role of different stakeholders in social reintegration. On an individual basis, the researcher planned and organized semi-structured interviews with 7 adult male ex-offenders from Epworth who had been released from prison at least 1 year prior to this research and 2 key informants from Prison Outreach Support. The researcher used qualitative interviews since they are successful in getting people to discuss more about the problem under investigation.

3.4 Research design

To properly address the research questions about social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders, the researcher used a case study research design. Oranga and Matere (2023), define a case study as a thorough examination of the evolution of a particular event, individual, or circumstance throughout time in a real-world setting. According to Zamawe (2015), researchers employ case studies to investigate societal issues. In this context, the researcher used a case study research design to better understand the problems that ex-offenders confront during social reintegration, the role that various stakeholders play during social reintegration and to learn measures that can be implemented to ensure effective reintegration of ex-offenders into society. A case study method enabled the researcher to learn about the experiences of adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration from multiple cases, as their situations are unique, thus providing a multidimensional understanding of ex-offender social reintegration.

3.5 Study setting

A study on social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration was conducted on 7 adult male ex-offenders from Epworth community. Epworth is 12 km east of Harare Province in Zimbabwe. It is a highly populated suburb in Harare with an estimated population of 167,000 people. This researcher chose to focus on offenders from Epworth community because during his industrial attachment at Prison Outreach Support in Braeside, Harare, he facilitated the social reintegration of ex-offenders, whom most of them were from Epworth. Also, Epworth is located in Harare province where there is higher crime rate (Zimstat, 2024). Hence, conducted the research on offenders from Epworth community.

3.6 Study Population

The study focused on 7 adult male ex- offenders between the ages of 22 and 45 years with at least 1 year after release from correctional facilities who were residents of Epworth and 2 key informants from Prison Outreach Support who are senior staff and have more direct experience of

working with offenders and ex-offenders. The researcher focused on adult male ex-offenders because crime rate is high among male than female in Zimbabwe (Zimstat, 2024). Also, men seem to suffer more from the consequences of failed social reintegration as they have a more crucial role of providing for their families.

3.7 Sampling technique

A non-probability purposive sampling was done in this study because it enables the selection of individuals with reach data that are pertinent to the study of social reintegration of adult ex-offenders in order to improve social reintegration through evidence-based recommendations. Adult male ex-offenders from Epworth community were purposively identified through Prison Outreach Support's ex-prisoner database. Key informants were purposively selected again based on their experience of working with offenders and ex-offenders. Together, these participants provided reach data on social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.

3.7.1 Inclusion Criteria

This research study explicitly focused on adult male ex-offenders between the ages of 22 and 45 years from Epworth with at least 1 year after release from prison and on senior staff from Prison Outreach Support who have direct experience of working with offenders and ex-offenders.

3.7.2 Exclusion Criteria

Inmates, female ex-offenders and juvenile offenders and non-senior staff from Prison Outreach Support were excluded in this study.

3.8 Sample Size

The sample comprised of a total of 9 participants who were 7 were adult male ex-offenders from Epworth community and 2 were key informants from Prison Outreach Support. The researcher chose a small sample because it is manageable in terms of costs and time required. Also, considering limited availability of ex-offenders, the researcher found it rationale to focus on a small sample.

3.9 Data collection techniques

In-depth semi structured interviews with research participants were conducted at Prison Outreach Support in an office. Semi structured interviews enabled the participants to share as much data as they can giving the researcher reach data concerning the problem at hand. This technique also allows open ended questions, creating room for research participants to share their experiences on social reintegration in detail. Considering the sensitivity of cases of people who have been in conflict with law, semi structured interviews were most ideal because they can be conducted in a room giving participants confidential and safe environment to share their experiences regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher also employed secondary data collection technique relying on reports from ZPCS and government, newspaper articles and journals on social reintegration contextualise to gain deeper understanding of social reintegration of offenders.

3.10 Data collection tools

Semi structured interview guides were embraced by the researcher on a study on social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe the researcher utilized semi-structured interview guides because they enable participants to provide in depth data on the challenges they face during social reintegration, the support they get from different stakeholders and to learn from them measures that can be adopted to ensure successful social reintegration in Zimbabwe. They enable capturing of open-ended responses from participants which helps the researcher to fully understand the problem under investigation.

3.11 Trustworthiness and credibility of the study

In this study, validity was ensured through the use of in-depth, semi structured interviews, which enables to express their lived experiences of social reintegration in a detailed and authentic manner. Furthermore, the researcher developed interview guides in alignment with the research objectives and gathered data from different participants of different age groups. This helped to provide a more balanced understanding of the problem under investigation. Again, interviews were conducted in

a private, secure environment at Prison Outreach Support, which promoted openness and minimized social desirability bias. Additionally, secondary sources of data which include local and international journals on criminology were relied on to enhance credibility and comprehensiveness of the data. In terms of ensuring reliability of the study, the researcher used one standardized semi structured interview guide with all the participants at different times.

3.12 Data analysis

According to Kothari (2004), data analysis is the process of breaking complex information into smaller elements that can be easily clarified and understood. Therefore, in this study the technique of thematic analysis was employed to analyze data captured from interviews with participants. Data was edited, transcribed and coded manually and entered into a computer using Microsoft Word.

3.13 Ethical considerations

The researcher observed research ethics of voluntary consent of participants to participate in the research. Participants were informed that they can disengage from the study any time. Since cases of ex-offenders are sensitive, the researcher observed the research ethic of confidentiality by conducting interviews in a safe and secure environment and assuring participants that their identity was protected and used pseudonyms and the information obtained was to be used for the sake of the study only.

3.14 Chapter summary

Chapter 3 has provided the work outline of the researcher for conducting a study on social reintegration of adult male ex-offender in Zimbabwe. The study embraced a transformative paradigm, qualitative methodology, case study research design, purposive sampling and in-depth semi structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data captured during interviews. Ethics of informed consent, voluntary participation and confidentiality were observed by the researcher during the process of conducting research.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The objectives of this study were to examine challenges faced by adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration, to examine the roles of different stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders as well as to devise measures that promote successful reintegration in Zimbabwe. Therefore, in this chapter, data collected from interviews with ex-offenders and key informants are presented, analysed and discussed based on these objectives and Theory of Justice by Rawls is used to make inferences from the findings.

4.1 Data coding and analysis framework

The researcher employed a thematic coding approach to identify themes that emerged from data captured during interviews with participants. The codes were drawn from objectives of this study and they were on challenges faced by ex-offenders, the role of stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders and measures that can promote successful reintegration in Zimbabwe. Rawls Theory of Justice and other relevant literature were utilized to analyse and interpreted data and to make conclusions.

4.2 Demographic information of participants

Demographic information of participants who were interviewed during the course of this study is presented in tabular form below.

4.2.1 Demographic information of 7 participants

Participant	Age	Period after release	Marital status
Interviewee 1	38	1 year 2 months	Married
Interviewee 2	42	1 year 5 months	Married
Interviewee 3	27	1 year 8 months	Married
Interviewee 4	40	2 years	Married
Interviewee 5	36	1 year	Married
Interviewee 6	24	3 years	Not Married
Interviewee 7	30	2 years 3 months	Divorced

The table above shows demographic information of 7 adult male ex-offenders from Epworth community with at least 1 year after release from prison and between the ages of 22 and 45 years. The age of participants helped to provide a balanced understanding of adult male ex-offender population. Their period after release helped in examining the challenges they face during their early stage of post-release which in turn inform the development of tailored post release interventions. Marital status of ex-offenders helped in understanding the impact of challenges that confront adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration on their families.

4.2.2 Demographic information of key informants

Participant	Profession	Years of Experience
KI 1	Criminologist	10
KI 2	Social Worker	6

The table above shows demographic information of 2 key informants from Prison Outreach Support. One was a Social Worker and the other was Criminologist and both have over 5 years experience of working with offenders proving that the information they provided was in-depth.

4.3 Challenges faced by adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration

The results showed that reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe is indeed fraught with significant challenges which hinder successful reintegration into the mainstream society. The identified challenges are difficulties in securing employment and housing, poor social support, social rejection and relationship breakdown. These challenges through the lens of social justice reflect systemic injustice and marginalization of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.

4.3.1 Difficulties in securing employment

Results showed that adult male ex-offenders face significant challenges in securing employment which hinders their successful reintegration into society. Out of 7 participants interviewed, 6 explicitly reported unemployment as a major obstacle to rebuilding their lives post-incarceration. Interviewee 2 reflected,

“Kuwana basa semunhu akambosungwa akagara mujeri muZimbabwe kwakaoma nekuti maemployer vanonetseka kuvimba sesu nekuda kwekumbogara mujeri kwatakaita, vasingazivi kuti takachinja zvachose, hatichisiri macriminal. Nekuda kwekushaiwa basa, vana vangu havachachapinda chikoro nekuti handikwanisi kubhadhara mari yechikoro, uye izvi ndizvo zvinondirwadza kupfuura zvese.” (Securing employment as an ex-convict in Zimbabwe is challenging as employers are hesitant to hire us due to our criminal records not knowing that we are completely transformed, we are no longer criminals and due to unemployment, my children are not going to school as I am unable to pay their school fees and this hurts me the most.)

Similarly, Interviewee 5 said,

“Finding a job with a criminal record in Zimbabwe is really stressful as all employers say they don't hire a worker with a criminal record and I always question myself why ex-offenders are discriminated by employers because they have served the sentence for the crimes they committed. This affected me in a hard way because I have 3 children and they need a parent to take care of them and provide for them and I don't have any source of income to clothe and buy them food and make sure that they have my support and love as a father. As a result, I am unable to do all this when I am unemployed and the society still label me as not one of them or as a father that still belongs to prison.”

Interviewee 7 reflected,

“For me finding employment is difficult because I have no skills required to do jobs such as mechanics, building among others, I spent most of my time in prison, were I only provided labor.”

These narratives demonstrate that having a criminal record significantly reduces employment opportunities for ex-offenders due to societal stigma and discriminatory hiring practices by employers. This aligns with LeBel, (2012), who found that stigma attached to a criminal record can be a major barrier to employment. Additionally, The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2019) reported that ex-offenders face limited job opportunities, largely because employers and government institutions vet candidate for criminal histories. These structural obstacles closely reflect the findings of this study. Moreover, prison-based job training received by inmates is often insufficient for post release employment as reflected by Interviewee 7. This illustrates that rehabilitation programs offered in correctional institutions are not adequately aligned with the job market demands, leaving ex-offenders ill-equipped for sustainable employment. Consequently, both the vetting practices of employers and ineffective skills training contribute to limited job prospects for adult male ex-offenders and undermine successful reintegration.

The implications of unemployment extend beyond individual to affect the families of ex-offenders as reflected by cases of interviewee 2 and 5. This situation is consistent with Perry and Morison (2014), who observed that the incarceration of a father can strain family finances and potentially affect children’s mental health, emotional stability and academic performances. Thus, the challenge of securing employment adversely affects ex-offenders, their families and the broader community, which loses out on potentially valuable human capital ex-offenders poses.

Reasoning from a Theory of Justice by Rawls (1971), justice requires that social and economic inequalities be arranged so that they benefit the least advantaged and that all individuals have equal access to opportunities. However, ex-offenders are discriminated for certain job positions by employers due to criminal record. Yet, according to Ontario Human Rights (2008), a person can only be discriminated when the job they are applying for is directly related to the crime they committed. Thus, difficulties in securing employment faced by adult male ex-offenders during reintegration and the subsequent impact on family is a violation of Rawl’s principle of equality that economic inequalities should be arranged in a way that no individual is blocked from

occupying any position or office regardless of their ethnicity, sex and social background. This situation therefore requires social justice interventions aimed at improving employability of adult male ex-offenders by Social Workers, government and other stakeholders who work with the criminal justice system to ensure social justice to ex-offenders and promote their successful reentry into society

4.3.2 Housing unavailability and unaffordability

The social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe is significantly hindered by housing unavailability and unaffordability, as evidenced by findings from this study. Interviewees 3,4 and 6 described facing acute housing insecurity, largely due to familial rejection and inability to afford rentals as a consequence of unemployment. Interviewee 3 shared,

“Mhuri yangu yakaramba kundigamuchira pamba saka ndaigara pamba peshamwari yangu kwemwedzi minomwe yapfuura kusvikira vandidzinga vachindipomera mhosva yekuba yandainge ndisina kuita. Ndakaedza kutsvaga pekugara kubva kuvanhu vemunharaunda asi hapana aida kusangana kana kundibatsira nekuti ndakambosungwa ndakagara mujeri. Pari zvino ndinorara pavheranda pemashop. Ndinoshuwira dai hurumende yaiva nezvirongwa zvekubatsira vanhu vakambogara mujeri (ex-offenders) nepekugara”. (My family refused to accommodate me at home so I have been staying at a friend's house for the past 7 months until they chased me away on allegations of theft which I never did. I tried to seek accommodation from people in community but no one was willing to associate with an ex-offender. Now I sleep on verandas of shops. I wish there were plans by State to assist us (ex-offenders) with half way homes.)

Interviewee 6 said,

“I faced housing challenge because I was unable to rent a house since family rejected me and I ended up sleeping in bridge on cardboard boxes without blankets. The situation was very horrible and I nearly reoffended so that I get convicted and return to prison because prison life was much better than the life I am living here in society.”

These housing challenges of ex-offenders are not merely logistical but reveal underlying patterns of exclusion and structural inequality. This concurs with Raphael (2011) who observed that several ex-offenders often lack pre-release housing plans and those who manage to secure accommodation

tend to reside in impoverished communities. In Zimbabwean context, the lack of transitional housing facilities, such as half way homes as highlighted by Interviewee 3 aligns with the findings of a report by Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs (2022). Such a situation further marginalizes ex-offenders as they are forced to live under bridges as Interviewee 6 narrated, which is detrimental to one's wellbeing and undermines successful social reintegration by potentially motivating the ex-offender to reoffend and go back to prison, resulting in failed social reintegration.

When analysed through Rawls Theory of Justice (1971), which posits that a just society is one that ensures fair equality of opportunity and arranges social and economic inequalities to the greatest benefit of least advantaged, it become evident that Zimbabwe's current social reintegration framework falls short of this ideal. Rawl's difference principle argues that institutions should be organised in ways that uplift the most disadvantaged members of society, however, in this context adult male ex-offenders who are typically unemployed, socially stigmatized and deprived of housing constitute one of the most vulnerable populations.

Despite of housing being enshrined as a human right under Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 25 and acknowledged in Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) (2021-2025) as a developmental priority, adult male ex-offenders are excluded from targeted housing interventions. The failure to consider the housing needs of ex-offenders in key national development plans contravenes the Ouagadougou Declaration (2003) recommendation that states should consider the construction of halfway homes to mitigate housing needs of ex-offenders, reflecting a systemic failure to accommodate vulnerable adult male ex-offenders who require structured support to reintegrate successfully into society. For reintegration to be meaningful, policy interventions must be inclusive and explicitly designed to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged segment of society such as adult male ex-offenders and family's needs to be educated to unconditionally accept their relatives back from prison. Constructing halfway homes, educating families of offenders and providing access to affordable housing are not only practical necessities but moral imperatives in building a just and equitable society.

4.3.3 Social Rejection

Findings of this study showed that social rejection poses a significant barrier to successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders into society. Direct quotations from participants below offer compelling qualitative evidence of stigmatization and exclusion of adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration from their families and communities post-incarceration. For instance, Interviewee 2 shared,

“I faced challenges such as being neglected, negatively judged and stigmatized by family and the entire community and this made me feel like I am not a member of this family or community as they see me as their enemy. I felt depressed that the family and community still can’t accept me after undergoing rehabilitation and I arrived at the realization that community don’t have trust in rehabilitation that took place when I was in prison.”

Another participant, KI 1 said,

“Ex- offenders face rejection from family and society because the family don’t want to associate with someone who have been in prison. They are often labeled and ostracized by everyone and communities does not understand that when a sentence expires the perpetrator would have paid for the offence. It views the person as a potential perpetrator and thus always be on alert neglecting other duties while it focuses on the ex-offender.”

Interviewee 4 shared a particularly poignant narrative involving a serious criminal offense against a family member resulting in prolonged familial alienation. He said,

“Dambudziko guru randakasangana naro raiva rekudzokeranazve nemhuri yangu. Mhuri yangu yakanga isingadi kundigamuchira kudzoka kumba nekuti ndasungirwa mhosva yekubhinya ambuya vangu vakazvara mai, saka munhu wese ainge akatsamwa neni achiti handikodzeri kugara navo. Nekuda kwekurambwa nemhuri yangu, ndakatanga kufunga zvekuzviuraya nekuti kwandiri zvaioneka sekuti handikodzeri kurarama kana mhuri yangu ichindiramba. Zvisinei, kuburikidza nevanoyananisa, vakazozondigamuchira zvakare asi vanondibata vasingavimbi neni”. (The most serious challenge was reconnecting with my family. My family was hesitant to welcome me back home because I was convicted for raping my maternal grandmother so everyone was furious at me saying I don’t deserve to be with them. As a result of rejection by family I ended up thinking of taking my life

(suicide) because it seems to me that I am not worth to live when my own family rejects me. However, through mediators, they finally accepted me back but they treat me with suspicion.)

The findings from the study highlight how both familial and community rejection exacerbate the vulnerabilities of individuals transitioning from prison to society and undermines their successful reintegration. The data suggest that familial support, often presumed to be a foundation for social reintegration is not guaranteed which aligns with Chikadzi's (2017) and Dube-Mawarere and Chiborise's (2017) findings, which document similar hostility from both family and community. Reintegration literature emphasizes that family constitutes the first point of contact post-release, providing not only emotional support but also critical resources such as shelter, food and a sense of belonging (Kristal et al., (2023). However, the study confirms that when familial relationships are strained, ex-offenders struggle to meet their basic needs, which heightens their vulnerability and contribute to failed social reintegration. Rejection of ex-offenders in society despite completion of their sentences reinforces what Chingozha and Chingozha (2022) identify as societal failure to acknowledge the rehabilitative intent of correctional institutions. Resultantly, this leads to development of maladaptive behavior among ex-offenders, a phenomenon often perceived injustice and post release discrimination. Interviewee 4's contemplation of death underscores the extreme of emotional distress caused by familial rejection.

These findings challenge the theoretical framework of justice as articulated by Rawls (1971), who conceptualizes family and society as institutions that uphold justice and equality in society. Instead, data reveal that these institutions can act as agents of exclusion contradicting Rawlsian ideal and reinforcing systemic injustice. The findings therefore necessitate targeted social justice interventions aimed at reshaping societal and familial perceptions of ex-offenders. Also, reintegration programs must extend beyond the individual to address the collective mindset of families and communities. Community sensitization, family counselling and reconciliation processes could foster more inclusive attitudes, reducing stigma and supporting social reintegration of ex-offenders.

4.3.4 Inadequate Social Support

In this study, results showed that inadequate support is a challenge that confront adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration. Interviewee 1 and 6 highlighted lack of support as a challenge they faced during social reintegration. Interviewee 1 said,

“Rimwe dambudziko randakasangana naro raiva kushaiwa rudo nerutsigiro kubva kumhuri yakandikomberedza, uye izvi ndizvo zvakaita kuti hupenyu hwangu huve husina mufaro kupfuura hwemumwe munhu upi zvake pasi pano. Izvi zvakandibata zvakanyanya nekuti parizvino ndava munhu akanyanya hurombo munharaunda. Handina kana nzira yandinowana naro mari kuti ndikwanise kuzvichengeta.” (Another hinderance or challenge I faced was lack of love and support from surrounding family and this made my life the most miserable one in the world. These issues affected me the most because I am now the poorest person in community. I have no source on income to meet my needs.)

Interviewee 6 said,

“There was also lack of support from family, community and the state and to tell you the truth, these challenges affected me the most to such an extent that I ended up thinking of re offending and reconvicted so that I escape living in a ruthless society”.”

The finding that adult male ex-offenders experience inadequate social support during reintegration aligns with a study conducted by Denny, Tewksbury and Johns (2014), which hinted that ex-offenders have poor social support which make it difficult for them to overcome the effects of institutionalization in an unjust society. This lack of social support for ex-offenders marginalize them and traps them into a vicious cycle of poverty as reflected by interviewee 1 which they cannot escape on their own but through assistance from significant others. Apart from trapping ex-offenders into the vicious cycle of poverty, it also emerged that lack of support during reintegration can result in recidivism as reported by Interviewee 6, a situation which is undesirable.

The study’s findings that adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe experience inadequate social support from family, community and state illustrates a blatant disregard for the Rawl’s Difference Principle. Rawls asserts that inequalities are only justifiable if they work to the advantage of society’s least privileged. However, in the present context, adult male ex-offenders by virtue of their vulnerability, form part of this disadvantaged group and not benefiting from social and

economic inequalities. Furthermore, lack of structured support from state or social protection policies tailored to their needs as revealed by Interviewee 6 exacerbates their vulnerability and injustice treatment. Unlike South Africa, Zimbabwe does not integrate ex-offenders into national social protection frameworks, violating Rawl's principle of equal opportunity and ignoring Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides that everyone has right to social protection. Hence, from a Rawlsian standpoint, justice requires institutional reform to ensure ex-offenders are provided equal opportunities and support to reintegrate and benefit from societal goods to reduce vulnerability.

4.3.5 Marriage Breakdown

Findings showed that when offenders return to society they find their marriages ruined by some of the people whom they trust. This is the case with interviewee 2 who reported that marriage breakdown was a challenge he confronted during social reintegration. He said,

"I was surprised to see my wife sexually possessed by my elder brother when I returned home after serving 10 years in prison for stock theft and I became angry towards my brother and I planned to axe him and go back to prison. Truly I was disappointed to the last to such an extent that I end up plotting to axe my brother to death because he can't do that to me as I trusted him as my brother. Now everyone in society label me an ex-convict, no woman wants to marry me an ex-convict and when whenever I think of it, it pains me a lot."

Another participant Interview 3 shared,

"Kuputsika kwemuchato kwaiva chimwe chezvinhu zvakaoma zvandakasangana nazvo pandakabuda mujeri. Ndakanga ndagara ndiri mujeri kwemakore, uye ndaifunga kuti mudzimai wangu aizondimirira, asi zvinhu hazvina kufamba sezvindaifunga. Kupatsanurwa kwenguva refu, kusataurirana, uye kunyadziswa nezita rekuti ndiri munhu akambosungwa zvakazotitsemura. Pandakabuda, takanga tatova vatorwa chaivo. Takaedza kugadzirisa, asi kwanga kwanonoka. Zvakanga zvatozara. Handina kungonetseka nekudzorera mhuri yangu. Zvakanga zvakaoma kuwana basa, pekugara, asi kurasikirwa nevanhu vawaifanirwa kutsigirwa navo kwakaita kuti zvinyanye kuoma. Ndinoziva handisi ndega pane izvi. Vazhinji vanga vari mujeri vanosangana nematambudziko akadai. Tidoda rutsigiro, kunzwisisa, uye mukana wekudzokera

kuhupeyu, kwete kwatiri chete asiwo nemhuri dzedu.” (Marriage breakdown was one of the toughest challenges I faced when I came out of prison. Being incarcerated for years, I thought my wife would wait for me, but things fell apart. The distance, lack of communication and stigma took its toll. When I got out, we were strangers. We tried to make it work, but it was too late. The damage was done. I wasn't just fighting to rebuild my life; I was fighting to rebuild my family, too. It's hard enough trying to find a job and a place to stay, but losing the people you're supposed to rely on makes it even harder. I know I'm not alone in this struggle. Many ex-offenders face similar challenges. We need support, understanding and a chance to rebuild our lives, not just for ourselves, but for our families, too.)

Thus, as a result of long time spent in prison, some ex-offenders return to society where they find their marriages crumbled. This emotionally affects them as they find it hard to believe that their marriages have crumbled. The situation keeps on affecting them emotionally to such an extent that when not managed competently, the ex-offender will reoffend resulting in him being reconvicted. What pains ex-offenders is not only losing their wives but according to the findings, it is the subsequent labeling which make it hard for them to get another wife in the society who is an undisputed pillar of support to them post incarceration. The situation is often exacerbated by lack of counselling programs for wives of inmates by stakeholders to safeguard their marriages. This therefore, makes reintegration of adult male ex-offenders a complicated one as they find it difficult to adapt to life in society without their loved ones which will end up forcing them to reoffend.

From a theory of Justice by Rawls (1971), emotional trauma caused by breakdown of offender's marriage during incarceration speaks to a violation of the Liberty Principle. Rawls contended that basic liberties include integrity of a person and freedom of association which are the social basis of self-respect. Thus, betrayal by family members and subsequent social labelling deprive adult male ex-offenders of self-respect and meaningful social connections. Marriage breakdown of ex-offenders without institutional safeguards such as counselling programs for spouses and family reentry initiatives represents a failure of the institutional design to protect vulnerable relationships which reflects social injustice in Rawls terms. Against this backdrop, it is rationale for social workers to advocate for family centered justice programs such as counselling for spouses of

inmates to safeguard their marriages and maintain social fabric by ensuring that the transition from prison to society does not erode essential liberties and human dignity.

4.4 Roles of stakeholders in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders

Results showed that stakeholders such as correctional institutions, NGOs, Faith Based Organisations, communities and families play a number of commendable roles in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders. However, through document analysis, notable gaps were identified with requires attention to ensure effective operation of these stakeholders

4.4.1 Empowerment of ex-offenders through skills training by correctional institutions

The study revealed that correctional institutions empower offenders with skills while in prison which will help them to survive when they get released from prison. KI 1 said that,

“They empower inmates with skills that will help them earn an honest living, however, the efforts are effective to minds that are willing to accept change.

KI 2 said,

“Correctional institutions give them skills to redefine their future which will help them to resettle in society.”

Thus, correctional institutions impart inmates with skills in different trades which will enable to them to live crime free lives and this is commendable. However, numerous studies conducted in Zimbabwe by researchers such as Muchena (2014), Rupande and Ndoro (2014) and Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (2019) confirm that rehabilitation projects in Zimbabwe’s prisons are agriculturally oriented and blind to the labor market demands. Rawls emphasizes that justice must include fair equality of opportunity, which entails access to resources that realistically enable success in society. Thus, the provision of outdated, agriculturally oriented skills effectively denies adult male ex-offenders a fair chance to participate in the modern job market. This can be viewed as systemic injustice, where the institutional structure fails to fulfil its obligation to the least advantaged. Against this backdrop, it is imperative for correctional institutions to reform prison education to align labor market trends and ensure that such training genuinely expands the opportunities of inmates and helps close socio-economic disparities.

4.4.2 Visitation and Provision of information to offenders by families during incarceration

Results showed that families play a pivotal role in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders by visiting and providing offenders with critical information about what is happening back in the society while they are in prison. KI 1 said,

“Families are the ones who visit the incarcerated male adults to remind them of their family responsibilities during such events as family week.”

KI 2 said,

“Families also provide offenders with information about changes that might have taken place in society during their period of absence which helps reintegration.”

These roles of families in social reintegration of offenders are in line with the provisions of Kampala Declaration on Prison conditions and Penal Reforms in Africa (1996) which is commendable. In studies conducted by Roque et al (2013) they observed that visits from the family strengthens familial relationships which potentially reduces chances of reoffending when the offender is released from prison, hence contributing to successful social reintegration. During those visits that's when offenders are given information concerning technological, economic, political, environmental and social changes that will be happening in the society while they are serving their prison sentence and this contribute to successful reintegration as offenders when they get released they will be aware of what is taking place in the society.

Norway recognized this valuable role of families in rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and institutionalized family counselling in correctional institutions and this approach has been successful in reducing recidivism in Norway (Andersen and Skardhmar, 2017). However, this approach in Zimbabwe is not yet embraced although families are given the opportunity to visit their loved ones in prison during prison family week events.

Furthermore, research has consistently shown that most offenders often come from impoverished families and the implication of this on social reintegration is that some are unable to visit their relatives in prison due to financial constraints. Therefore, the need for measures to capacitate families of offenders to visit their loved ones in prisons and strengthen the role of family in rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.

4.4.3 Ensuring soft landing of ex-offenders by families

Results revealed that families enhance social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders by creating a welcoming environment for released offenders which will be key in ex-offender's reintegration process. KI 1 said that,

“Families provide soft landing for someone who would have been in prison when society would be completely rejecting them.”

KI 2 said,

“Families are crucial by providing that platform where social reintegration starts before someone moves to the broader society.”

This implies that family is the first social institution which come into contact with ex-offender soon after release and responsible for meeting his human needs. In this regard, families play a critical role in establishing a welcoming environment and atmosphere for adult male ex-offenders when they return home from prison. This soft landing of ex-offenders is enhanced by family visits to offenders in prison. During such visits that's when hostility between the offender and the family is addressed especially when the crime was committed among close family members. Dube-Mawerere and Chiborise (2017) observed that returning to a hostile family environment give ex-offender the impetus to recidivate. Hence, the need for social workers to act as mediators between offenders and their families to ensure nurturance of harmonious relationship among them and this will also lead to successful reintegration.

4.4.4 Provision of programs by NGOs

Results of the study showed that NGOs play a key in social reintegration of offenders by rolling out programs aimed at fostering a spirit of acceptance of ex-offenders by family and society. KI 1 said that,

“NGOs help reintegration of by providing programs that will help family and society accept the ex-offender”.

Interviewee 3 said,

“A local NGO, which I was referred to by the Chaplain assisted me in reconciling with my family through its ex-prisoner’s support program as my family was furious at me for my previous actions which landed me in prison”.

These findings suggest that NGOs are an undisputed stakeholder in social reintegration of ex-offenders as they play a great role in addressing rejection of ex-offenders and this help ex-offenders to reintegrate successfully because they end up feel loved, valued and connected to the family and society they belong to. A study conducted in United States of America by Darnscu (2019) proved that programs initiated by NGOs are more effective than government efforts in terms of inculcating trust and personalized support to ex-offenders. In line with this, it is imperative to embrace NGO’s role in social reintegration of ex-offenders in order to challenge discrimination endured by ex-offenders and promote social justice in society and ensure that ex-offenders have strong support from NGOs through their programs. This is in conformity with the theory of Justice by Rawls which challenges inequality in society. However, although results showed that NGOs have a role to play in social reintegration of ex-offenders, a study by Schoeman and Mnisi (2023) observed that there is limited number of NGOs providing support to vulnerable adult male ex-offender leaving ex-offenders with limited support and resulting in failed social reintegration. Furthermore, NGO operations are hindered by legal constrains such as the Amended Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Act, 2025 (Act No. 1 of 2025) which gives government more control over NGOs hence undermining their independence and ability to serve the least advantaged members of society. Colgan et al (2020) reported that NGO operations are hindered by funding constraints which limit program scalability. In an endeavor to ensure effective NGO operations in social reintegration of ex-offenders it is imperative to adopt laws that promote independence of NGO and conscientise other NGOs to divert their attention to the needs of adult male ex-offenders.

4.4.5 Provision of support, motivation and guidance by Faith based organizations.

Results showed that Faith Based Organizations play a crucial role in reintegration of ex-offenders by providing support, motivation, guidance thereby building their resilience. This is because 4 out of 7 participants reported that they managed to cope with challenges of reintegration by deciding to join local churches of their choice where they received support, motivation and guidance. One of the participants, interviewee 2 said,

“Initially I used to take alcohol when I was depressed. Later on, I met someone whom I shared my case with and referred me to a local Pastor where I usually go for counselling sessions and the counselling is proving to be effective.”

Another participant, interviewee 3 said,

“I decided to go to a nearby church where I received motivation, emotional and material support to overcome my difficulties and I don’t know where I would be without that support.”

Another participant KI 1 said that, “

“FBOs provide second home the ex-offenders before they are wholly embraced by society and they use the Word in reintegration of adult male ex-offenders.”

These findings therefore highlight the crucial role being played by FBOs in supporting ex-offender’s reintegration in order to ensure their smooth adaptation in society. This is similar to the findings of a study conducted in Kenya by Ngeno (2018) which observed that a welcoming and nonjudgmental church environment can help ex-offenders cope with the emotional aftermath of prison experiences by offering hope through practical assistance, restoring trust through genuine friendship and healing of spiritual and emotional wounds. The responses from the interviewees informs us that if it was not the support from FBOs, ex-offenders would have been alcoholic, depressed and often hard for them to adapt to life in society which in the end will force them reoffend.

Religion also play a great role in ex-offender reintegration as during difficulty times like the transition from prison to society ex-offenders seek assistance and guidance from Christ. This is similar the findings of a study conducted by Obondi (2014) which reported that sharing word of God provides ex-offenders a nuanced understanding of the evil deeds that led them to prison. This bring in the concept of religion and spirituality in Social Work. However, although the nexus between the two have been studied by researchers such as Mabvurira (2016), there is need to reconsider it within the context of criminal justice system as a mechanism of ex-offenders to cope with challenges of reintegration.

4.4.6 Provision of opportunity to ex-offenders by community to apply skills learnt in prison

Results showed that communities are another key stakeholder in social reintegration. The results revealed that communities enhance social reintegration of ex-offenders by creating opportunities for ex-offenders to apply the skills they have learnt in prison. In this regard KI 2 said,

“Communities help male ex-offenders by giving them the platform that they can still be competent individuals in societies through establishing their own business or sharing their prison experiences.”

K1 said,

“Generally, communities remain hostile although at times they help the reintegration by providing space where ex-inmates can put the skills learnt in prison into use. They also provide platform for ex-inmates to campaign against crime or simply sharing their experiences.”

Interviewee 1 said,

“To be honest it’s actually a hard rock because the community is not providing me as per needed to because they foresee the old me which committed crime and unworthy, so community is not contributing much”.

Thus, the above findings indicate that community contributes to successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders by giving them opportunity to utilize their skills learnt while in prison although at times they are hostile. This role of community in social reintegration has not been unearthed by previous studies on social reintegration as they have focused on community led initiatives. For instance, a study by Duwe in UK (2018) reported that community led initiatives reduced recidivism by 30%. However, although communities are key actors in social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders, KI1 highlighted that communities are still hostile towards ex-offenders and this reflects a failure of the broader social system to internalize principles of justice. The absence of community engagement programs to deconstruct stigmatization and promote inclusivity reinforces structural marginalization and contradicts the ideal of justice as fairness. Thus, the need for community conscientization and engagement programs address systemic marginalization of ex-offenders in an endeavor to promote successful reintegration of adult male offenders.

4.7 Measures to promote successful reintegration in Zimbabwe

Results showed that a number of measures can be adopted in Zimbabwe to ensure successful reintegration of adult male ex-offenders. These measures include skills training of male inmates, utilization of inmate's skills during rehabilitation, use of non-punitive correctional measures, formulation of social policies aimed improving the welfare of ex-offenders, assisting ex-offenders with job placement and educating families and communities to address stigma and discrimination against ex-offenders. These measures are viewed as key in promoting social justice for ex-offenders in Zimbabwe

4.7.1 Skills training of adult male ex-offenders by government

Participants revealed that to ensure successful reintegration in Zimbabwe there is need for implementation of effective rehabilitation programs in prisons mainly focusing on skills training.

KI 1 said,

“There is need for government efforts in ensuring that all male inmates get skills training while in prison but however the efforts are fruitful to minds that are prepared to change for the better.”

Interviewee 1 said,

“For a successful reintegration of ex-offenders, I think that there should be the introduction of effective rehabilitation programs and these programs are able to help people like us to better ourselves and get training so that we are able to withstand the negativity that is thrown to us by the society itself and even from close friends and relatives”.

Interviewee 7 said,

“During rehabilitation, offenders must be taught more technical skills such as mechanics, engineering, plumbing and construction so that when we return to society we will not regret the time we spent in prison. Also, it will be easier to make an honest living through the skills learnt.”

The data demonstrated a strong consensus among participants on the importance of effective rehabilitation programs, particularly those focused on vocational and technical skills. Skills training is not only viewed as means of economic empowerment but also a crucial tool for economic independence post-incarceration. Although research has shown that correctional

institutions in Zimbabwe are providing skills training to inmates, the efforts are reportedly being hindered by factors such as funding constraints, overcrowding in prisons and shortage of learning materials limiting the effectiveness of the efforts (Portfolio Committee on Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, 2022; Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission 2021). To mitigate these factors it is necessary to consider collaboration of various stakeholders toward rehabilitation of inmates. This aligns with Rawls's Fair Equality of Opportunity, which emphasises that individual should not be disadvantaged due to discriminatory factors such as criminal history. Skills development helps level the playing field for ex-offenders, giving them a fair chance in the labor market thus uplifting the lives of vulnerable adult male ex-offenders and facilitating smooth reintegration. Against this backdrop, it is imperative to modernize vocational training schools to ensure that inmates acquire current and relevant skills like what Norway has done (Andersen and Skardmar, 2017). Also, there is need for tailored programs to skills training focusing on counselling and cognitive behavioral therapy to motivate and restore the social functioning of inmates so that they take part in vocational skills training with enthusiasm.

4.7.2 Inmate skill utilisation during incarceration

Results showed that giving inmates opportunities to utilize their skills they possess while in prison is essential in promoting social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders. In this respect one of the participants KI 1 said,

“There is need for correctional institutions to ensure that those already skilled would not have their skills rot in prison by giving them places to operate in during their time of servitude.”

The method of promoting successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders by giving them opportunities to utilize their skills while in prison is not new in the field of criminal justice but however not yet fully embraced in Zimbabwe's prisons. Local researchers such as Duri (2021) reported that Zimbabwe's prisons such as Chikurubi Farm operates large scale agricultural projects where inmates take part in these projects and gain farming skills which they will utilize when released. However, the effectiveness of this approach in Zimbabwe is questionable as other researchers such as Muchena (2014) reported that inmates only provided labor in these farms. Furthermore, considering factors such as climate change and availability of farming inputs to ex-offenders this approach seems to be ineffective in its current state in Zimbabwe. Despite its reduced

outcomes in Zimbabwe, this approach has been fully embraced by countries like Norway and Rwanda and has contributed to successful reintegration of ex-offenders. For instance, in Norway, Pratt and Erikson (2013) observed that Halden Prison embrace the normalization and skills development approach where inmates take part in wood working and metal working. According to them this approach has contributed to reduced recidivism in Norway as the Normalisation approach entails that prison life resembles life in society meaning inmates operate in professional workshops giving them the opportunity to further their skills and increase their chances of successful reintegration.

Furthermore, Norway's approach demonstrates the importance of aligning inmate labor with market demands. Conversely, in Rwanda inmate's skills are integrated into national reconstruction efforts and according to Clark (2018) this approach resulted in Rwanda's economic recovery and several ex-offenders transitioned to work in construction companies. This approach therefore shows how inmate labor and skills can be beneficial in terms of addressing national development needs such as in infrastructure development. Against this backdrop, it is expedient to embrace inmate skills and labor in key national development projects to give them the opportunity to utilize and improve their skills, market their skills and enhance their employability which will eventually lead to successful reintegration as shown by studies in Norway and Rwanda. To ensure proper implementation of this approach to yield desired outcomes like in Norway and Rwanda there is need for strong collaboration and coordination of stakeholders.

4.7.3 Use on Non-Punitive Correctional measures

Results showed that use of non-punitive measures can be useful in terms of promoting successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. In line with that, one of the participants KI 1 said,

“The government of Zimbabwe can also emphasize the use of non-punitive correctional measures such as community service to reduce the effects of incarceration.”

Non-punitive correctional measures entail alternatives to incarceration such as community service, counselling and restorative justice programs where the offender serves the sentence for offence committed in society rather than going to jail. Researchers such as Chikwati (2021) observed that the use of punitive measures result in increased failed social reintegration as prisons will be overcrowded rendering them insignificant to equip inmates with skills. This has adverse negative

effects on male ex-offenders due to societal expectation on men to provide for the family. Furthermore, the use of punitive measures cannot address the root cause of criminal behavior and the damage that would have been caused by the offender's actions on the society. Hence the need for non-punitive approaches which preserve the offender's place within the moral community and mitigate the harsh social consequences of incarceration. Again, the use of non-punitive measures of incarceration can reduce overcrowding in prisons, reduce rehabilitation cost, reduce stigma and the effects of institutionalization such as losing source livelihood.

4.7.4 Assisting ex-offenders with Job placement

Participants highlighted that in order to promote successful reintegration in Zimbabwe, there is need for assistance in job placement and removal of barriers to employment which they face. Interviewee 1 said,

“Employment, once we are employed and we are working there is absolutely no room for criminal minds because we will be occupied mostly and also earning money which means no need to rob or even steal from people.”

Interviewee 4 said,

“I believe they (government) should work towards removing the criminal record on hiring procedures so that it becomes easier for ex inmates to get jobs.”

These findings suggest that assisting ex-offenders with job placements and removal of criminal record on hiring procedures play an important role in deterring them from reoffending as they will be occupied and able to meet their needs through legitimate means. Therefore, there is need to act to ensure successful reintegration of ex-offender because according to Chikadzi et al (2022), employment reduces recidivism tendencies and facilitates ex-offender reintegration.

4.7.5 Formulation and implementation of social policies for ex-offender's needs

According to the participants, formulating and implementing social policies for ex-offenders help to address their reintegration needs. Interviewee 2 said,

“There is also need for formulation and implementation of social policies that respond to the needs of ex-offenders.”

Interviewee 4 then specifically said,

“The government of Zimbabwe needs to come up with policies that address the housing issue of ex-offenders”

Thus, from participant’s point of view, social policies tailored to the needs of ex-offenders can promote successful reintegration. This is because they have the capacity to effectively address their needs since they will be research based and participant oriented. Tailored social policies according to Rawls Theory of Justice promote a more just and equitable society by addressing the needs of least advantaged adult male ex-offenders. Hence, the need to put these social policies in place to ensure a seamless reintegration.

4.7.6 Educating families and communities

Results showed that educating families and communities to unconditionally accept their relatives and members back into society from prison promotes successful reintegration. This is because interviewee 3 said,

There is need to educate families and community members so that they can accept us.

Interviewee 5 also said,

“Families and community need to be educated so that they accept ex-offenders back”

Thus, from these findings, acceptance by family and community is a contributing factor towards successful reintegration of ex-offenders. Educating families and communities foster inclusion and promotes societal cohesion, thereby upholding the justice as equality by Rawls (1971) and supporting reintegration of ex-offenders. Therefore, there is need for social workers to come up with awareness programs to conscientise families and communities to accept their members when they return to society from prison to ensure successful reentry.

4.8 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 has presented findings from the interviews with adult male ex-offenders from Epworth community and key informants from Prison Outreach Support. The themes that emerge were presented based on the objectives of the study and analyzed from a Theory of Justice of Justice by Rawls. Findings showed that the challenges faced by ex-offenders during reintegration are difficulties in securing employment due to criminal record and lack of skills, housing unavailability and unaffordability, social rejection, inadequate social support and marriage break down. Reasoning from a theory of Justice by Rawls these challenges reflects social injustice and

inequality in society. The study also highlighted roles of stakeholders such as correctional institutions, NGOs, FBO, family and community in reintegration of offenders. Lastly, the results showed that effective rehabilitation, utilization of inmate's skills during incarceration, assistance with job placement, use of non-punitive correctional measures, implementation of social policies and educating families and communities to accept their members back into society from prison can promote successful reintegration.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study sought to improve social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe by devising evidence-based strategies. Its objectives were to examine the challenges faced by adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration, examine the roles of different stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders and to propose a model for successful reintegration of ex-offenders. Therefore, this chapter contains summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations to stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders, Ex-offender Transformation and Reintegration Model (ETRM), implications for social work practice and areas for future studies.

5.1 Summary of the findings

This section provides a concise overview of the findings that emerged from a study on social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. Summary of the findings is presented based on the objectives of the study which were to examine the challenges faced by adult male ex-offenders during their social reintegration, examine the role of stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders and to propose a model for successful social reintegration of ex-offenders.

5.2.0 Challenges faced adult male ex-offenders during social reintegration

The study revealed that adult male ex-offenders are confronted by limited employability chances due to discrimination by employers and lack of skills during their social reintegration. Furthermore, the study brought out that ex-offender's experience housing challenges during social reintegration due to unemployment, rejection by family and lack of housing schemes for ex-offenders. The study also shows that adult male ex-offenders face experience social rejections, family and relationship breakdown due to the nature of crimes committed and long time spent in prison. Again, the study brought out that adult male ex-offender's social reintegration is hindered by lack of social support. The study showed these challenges also have negative consequences not only on ex-offenders but their families also. From a social justice perspective by Rawls these challenges faced by adult male ex-offenders highlight a significant violation of right to equal opportunity, right to housing and right to social protection, thus, social injustice. As a result of these social injustices, ex-offenders find it hard to reintegrate successfully resulting in failed social reintegration.

5.2.1 Role of stakeholders in social reintegration of ex-offenders

The study brought out that correctional institutions provides skills training to inmates but however, the skills are not aligned with job market making them irrelevant and thus doing injustice to ex-offenders by giving them outdated skills. Reform is therefore needed to align inmate training with labor market demands to ensure meaningful empowerment of adult male ex-offenders hence promoting successful social reintegration. Families play a crucial role in providing that platform where social reintegration starts but however family rejection hinders social reintegration and thus the need for strengthening of family support and mediating family conflicts. Non-governmental organisations provide valuable support programs but are constrained by funding limitations and legal constraints and thus the need for increased support and policy changes to enhance their independence. Faith based organisations provide significant emotional, spiritual and material support, proving crucial in helping adult male ex-offenders cope and reintegrate successfully. Communities offer opportunities for ex-offenders to utilize their skills however, hostility and stigma remain major barriers and thus the need for community engagement are necessary to foster acceptance. Embracing the roles of these stakeholders and address the challenges they face result in coordinated support for ex-offenders and according to Rawls thus promoting justice this vulnerable population

5.2.2 Measures to promote successful reintegration of adult male ex-offenders

Based on the findings the study proposes several measures that can be adopted in Zimbabwe to ensure successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders. The study brought out that there is need for improved and relevant skills training of male inmates through implementation of effective rehabilitation programs in prisons focusing on skills relevant to the current job market. In addition to relevant skills training of male inmates, the study showed that there is need for inmate skill utilization that allowing inmates to utilize their existing skills during incarceration to maintain and develop their abilities thus increasing chances of successful reintegration. Furthermore, the study highlighted that to ensure the usefulness of skills that inmates learnt during rehabilitation, there is need for job placement assistance and advocacy towards removal of legal barriers to employment of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe and thus promoting justice to this vulnerable population. The study also demonstrated that use on non-punitive measures like community service and restorative justice can promote successful reintegration of adult male ex-offenders as they reduce the effects of institutionalization such as losing employment, house and

family detachment and also address root causes of crime. The study also indicated that there is need for social policy development specifically addressing the needs of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe, particularly concerning housing and social support. Again, the study revealed that community education and engagement through awareness programs to conscientise families and communities about the importance of accepting and supporting ex-offenders.

5.3 Conclusions

Adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe face significant challenges during social reintegration, including difficulties in securing employment, housing unaffordability and unavailability, social rejection, inadequate social support and marriage break down. These challenges facing adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe reflects social injustice and inequality in society, as ex-offenders are often discriminated against and marginalized, violating Rawl's principles of justice.

Although stakeholders such as correctional institutions, NGOs, FBOs, communities and families are making some efforts to support reintegration of adult male ex-offenders, their efforts are often inadequate due to legal, financial and institutional factors. Therefore, in endeavor to ensure successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders it stood out that it is rational to offer effective rehabilitation programs to inmates focusing of relevant skills training of male inmates to enhance their employability chances and economic empowerment. The use of non-punitive correctional measures can be effective in reducing overcrowding in prisons, reducing rehabilitation costs and promoting social justice. Acceptance from family and society enhance social reintegration of ex-offenders and thus the need to incorporate the two in reintegration frameworks to ensure that ex-offenders are accepted back home and reintegrate successfully. Based on the findings, one can drive home the point that successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe requires a multi-pronged social justice approach that addresses systemic social injustices, improves rehabilitation programs and fosters collaboration among all stakeholders.

5.4 Recommendations

The recommendations of this study are given per stakeholder below.

5.4.1 Correctional institution-based recommendations:

- Enhance rehabilitation programs through implementation of effective rehabilitation programs focusing on skills training, counselling and cognitive behavioral therapy to address the root cause of crime and prepare inmates for reintegration.
- Provide opportunities for skills utilization of inmates by creating opportunities for inmates to utilize their existing skills while in prison, such as participating in agricultural projects, construction projects, metal working and woods working as practiced in Norway.
- Incorporate family counselling by institutionalizing family counselling in correctional institutions to strengthen familial relationships and prepare families for the offender's release, drawing on the Norwegian model.

5.4.2 Family based recommendations:

- Provide unconditional acceptance and support to ex-offender, creating a welcoming and supportive home environment.
- Participate in counselling sessions with ex-offenders to address any conflicts or issues that may arise during reintegration process.
- Seek information and support from NGOs, FBOs and other organisations to better understand the challenges faced by ex-offenders and how to support their successful reintegration.

5.4.3 Community based recommendations:

- Challenge stigma and discrimination against ex-offenders, recognizing that they have served their sentences and deserve second chance.
- Create opportunities for ex-offenders to apply their skills and contribute to community, such as through employment or volunteer work.
- Participate in awareness programs aimed at educating communities about challenges faced by ex-offenders and promoting their successful social reintegration.

5.4.4 Faith based organisations recommendations:

- Continue to support, motivation and guidance to ex-offenders creating a welcoming environment for vulnerable ex-offenders.

- Offer counselling services to offenders to address the emotional and spiritual needs of ex-offenders, helping them cope with challenges of reintegration.

5.4.5 Non-Governmental Organisation based recommendations:

- Increase the number and scope of programs providing support to vulnerable adult male ex-offenders, addressing their specific needs.
- Develop and implement programs aimed fostering a spirit of acceptance of ex-offenders by family and communities.
- Advocate for policy changes that support social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders, such as removing barriers to employment and providing access to housing and social services.
- Work with communities to promote acceptance and understanding of ex-offenders, challenging discrimination and stigma.

5.4.6 Government of Zimbabwe based recommendations:

- Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare should develop and implement comprehensive social policies specifically addressing the needs of ex-offenders including housing, employment and social support.
- Ministry of Public Service Labor and Social Welfare should revise government vetting procedures to remove blanket bans on hiring ex-offenders, considering the relevance of the criminal record to the job as suggested by Ontario Human Rights (2008).
- Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should increase the use of non-punitive correctional measures such as community service and restorative justice programs, addressing the root causes of criminal behavior.
- Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should modernise vocational skills training programs in prisons to align with current labor demands, ensuring inmates acquire relevant and practical skills as done in Norway.
- Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Ministry of Public Service Labor and Social Welfare should review and amend laws that hinder the independence and operations of NGOs such as the Amended Private Voluntary Organisation Amendment Act.
- Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should foster inter-ministerial and stakeholder collaboration in responding to the needs of ex-offenders.

5.4.7 Employer based recommendations:

- Review hiring procedures to remove unnecessary barriers to employment for ex-offenders, considering the impact of criminal record on job requirements.
- Provide training and support to ex-offenders to help them succeed in the work place.
- Partner with organisations that support ex-offender reintegration to identify and recruit qualified candidates.

5.4.8 Bindura University of Science Education based recommendations:

- Consider the incorporation of Correctional Social Work module in social work curriculum so that students are introduced to current social problems facing offenders and come up with innovative solutions to ensure crime free societies and social justice to offenders.

5.5 Ex-offender Transformation and Reintegration Model (ETRM)



5.6 Explanation of Ex-offender and Transformation Reintegration Model (ETRM)

The Ex-offender Transformation and Reintegration Model (ETRM) offers a structured, justice-oriented framework for addressing the persistent challenges of reintegrating adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. It highlights contributing factors to failed reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe as well as the consequences. Grounded in Rawls's Theory of Justice, the model emphasizes the imperative of promoting fairness, equal opportunity and social equity for this vulnerable population. It advocates for a multi-stakeholder approach involving social workers, government ministries, correctional institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), communities and families. A key requirement for the model's success is the provision of adequate and sustained funding.

The ETRM organizes interventions across three critical stages: pre-conviction, incarceration and post-incarceration, recognizing that each phase presents unique needs and opportunities for effective reintegration. On pre-conviction stage emphasis is placed on the adoption of non-punitive correctional alternatives, such as diversion programs and community service. These measures aim to reduce the collateral consequences of incarceration, such as stigmatization and social exclusion.

During the incarceration stage focus shifts to rehabilitation and capacity-building initiatives. Aligning vocational training with current labor market demands equips inmates with relevant and marketable skills, enhancing their employability upon release. Additionally, institutionalizing family counseling services supports the maintenance of familial relationships, which are critical to emotional stability and long-term reintegration success.

On post-incarceration stage, reintegration efforts include job placement assistance, transitional housing and psychosocial support. These interventions aim to mitigate the social and economic vulnerabilities that ex-offenders often face upon release.

From the perspective of Rawls's Theory of Justice, these interventions serve to rectify systemic inequalities by promoting fair access to resources and opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals. The model ultimately seeks to empower ex-offenders to become productive, self-reliant members of society.

To ensure accountability and measure impact, the ETRM incorporates monitoring and evaluation mechanisms such as community feedback sessions and longitudinal tracking of reintegration

outcomes. These tools provide ongoing insight into the effectiveness of the model and allow for adaptive improvements over time.

5.7 Implications for social work practice

The findings of this study have several important implications for social work social work practice which are:

- Social workers have a crucial role in advocating for social justice for ex-offenders, challenging discrimination and promoting their rights to employment, housing and social support.
- Social workers should provide counselling and therapy to ex-offenders to address the emotional and psychological challenges they face during reintegration such as depression, anxiety and trauma.
- Social workers should provide counselling to wives of offenders to safeguard their marriages.
- Social workers should contribute to the development of social policies that address the needs of ex-offenders, advocating for their inclusion in social protection programs and other initiatives.
- Social workers should collaborate and coordinate with other stakeholders such as correctional institutions, NGOs, FBOs and government agencies to provide comprehensive support to ex-offenders.
- Social workers should empower ex-offenders by providing them with the skills, resources and support they need to overcome the challenges of reintegration.
- Social workers should work with families and communities to promote acceptance and understanding of ex-offenders, addressing stigma and discrimination.
- Social workers should promote restorative justice approaches that focus on repairing the harm caused by crime and promote reconciliation between offenders, victims and communities.
- Social workers should address systemic issues that contribute to crime and recidivism such as poverty, inequality and lack of access to education and employment.

5.8 Areas of future study

- There is need for research on reintegration of ex-offenders with disabilities as this group is likely to face unique challenges.
- There is need for research on the efficacy of NGOs a in enhancing social reintegration of ex-offenders.

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Appendix 1 Interview guide for participants

My name is Stuart Mushonga. I would like thank you for giving up much of your valuable to take part in my research. The aim of this research is to gather information about the challenges which are being faced by ex-offenders during social reintegration ostensibly to come up with well-tailored interventions.

This session will take less than 45 minutes. During the session I will be writing down your responses as they are essential in my research. I will be recording you as you will be responding because I cannot possibly write fast to capture all your responses.

Before you take part in this research I want to assure you that all the information you are going to review will be kept confidential. It will be used for the sake of this research only. Information pertaining to your identity will kept highly confidential.

Do you have any questions about what I have said?

Researcher..... Date.....

Interviewee.....Date.....

Interview Questions

1. What challenges have you faced during your transition from prison to society?
2. To what extent did these challenges affected you, your family and community?
3. How have you managed to cope with these challenges as an individual?
4. Did you receive any support from family, friends, community, Church, State or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and how beneficial was this support to you?
5. How effective and relevant is the current support provided to ex-offenders by community, Church, State and NGOs?
6. What needs to be done in Zimbabwe to ensure successful reintegration of ex-offenders?

Appendix 2 Interview guide for key informants

My name is Stuart Mushonga a final year undergraduate student at Bindura University of Science Education currently studying Bachelor of Science Honor’s Degree in Social Work. I would like thank you for giving up much of your valuable to take part in my research. The aim of this research is to develop a model for successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. This session will take less than 45 minutes. During the session I will be writing down your responses and audio recording simultaneously as your responses are essential in my research.

Before you take part in this research I want to assure you that all the information you are going to reveal will be kept confidential. It will be used for the sake of this research only. Information pertaining to your identity will be kept highly confidential.

Do you have any questions about what I have said?

Researcher..... Date.....

Interviewee Date.....

Demographic Information

Gender.....

Profession.....

Work experience.....

Interview Questions

1. What challenges do ex-offenders often face during their transition from prison to society?
2. To what extent do these challenges affect ex-offenders, their families and communities in general?
3. What are specific roles being played by stakeholders such as correctional institutions, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Communities and families in social reintegration of ex-offenders in Zimbabwe.
 - a. Correctional institutions
 - b. NGOs
 - c. FBOs
 - d. Communities
 - e. Families
4. How effective are the efforts of these stakeholders in terms of promoting successful social reintegration adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe?
5. What measures can be adopted in Zimbabwe to ensure successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders.
6. Do you have any reservations in regard to social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe?

Appendix 3 Approval Letter

Prison Outreach Support
(POST)
78 Leeroyd Braeside, Harare
Tel: +263 77 479 1083
Email address:
wilsonfemayi@rocketmail.com



MAY 5, 2025

Dear Stuart Mushonga B210552B

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA ON YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC AT PRISON OUTREACH SUPPORT (POST)

This letter serves to authorize Stuart Mushonga to collect data at our organisation pertaining to his research study, **A model towards successful social reintegration of adult male ex-offenders in Zimbabwe**. The organisation grants you this authorization on the basis that your research is for academic purposes.

May you submit a copy of your research to the organisation upon completion.

Warm regards,

PP [Signature]

Rev W. Femayi

(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

