

Reintegration Experiences of Female Ex-Offender's post-2018 Presidential Amnesty

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Abstract

Prison reintegration involves the transition of ex-prisoners from correctional facilities back into mainstream society where they are expected to lead productive crime-free lives. However, the harsh and highly regulated nature of prison life often leaves ex-offenders ill equipped for the complexities of the outside world. This study explored the lived experiences of ten (10) female ex-offenders released from Chikurubi Female Prison courtesy of the 2018 Presidential Amnesty in Zimbabwe. Utilising a qualitative methodology grounded in an interpretive phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Participants, aged 25 to 41, were drawn from various suburbs in Harare using purposive and convenience sampling. Findings reveal a dualistic reality of reintegration, characterised by both positive and negative encounters across ten key domains: shelter, family, employment, childcare, forgiveness, stigmatisation, marital relationships, support groups, religion, and supplication. The study concludes that the sudden nature of presidential pardons often leaves both the inmate and the receiving community under-prepared for the reintegration of ex-prisoners. To enhance successful reintegration, the study recommends structural changes to the amnesty process to allow for psychological preparation and the establishment of "halfway homes" to bridge the gap between incarceration and total freedom.

Keywords: reintegration experiences, female ex-offenders, presidential amnesty, Zimbabwe.

Introduction

This study investigated the lived experiences of female ex-offenders released from Chikurubi Female Prison courtesy of the Presidential Amnesty of March 2018. While incarceration serves as a punitive measure, the goal of the justice system is the successful reintegration of individuals into their communities. This research sought to understand the multifaceted encounters, both restorative and exclusionary, that these women have faced from the day of their release to the present day. By exploring these narratives, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the reintegration process within the Zimbabwean socio-economic context. The Zimbabwean prison system is currently characterised by significant structural and humanitarian challenges. Facilities are frequently described as overcrowded and dilapidated, providing a harsh environment that fosters physical illness and emotional instability. Inmates

face a daily battle for survival, with acute shortages of food, clean water, electricity, uniforms, and basic hygiene products such as soap.

The health situation within these facilities are a major concern. HIV/AIDS prevalence remains high, with some reports estimating that nearly 50% of the detainee population is HIV - positive (Telisinghe et al., 2016). The situation is further exacerbated by the sporadic availability of antiretroviral (ARV) medication and the inability to meet the specific dietary requirements of those under treatment. Additionally, the crowded conditions facilitate the rapid transmission of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis (TB), for which medication is often inaccessible (Mandizvidza et al., 2020).

Despite these conditions, reintegration remains an inevitable reality. Globally, women constitute a minority of the total prison population, yet the number of incarcerated women and girls has increased by nearly 50% since the year 2000. In Zimbabwe, females represent approximately 5% (845 individuals) of the estimated 22,000 prisoners (Mhlanga-Gunda et al., 2022). Female offenders are often viewed as double deviants because they are perceived to have violated both the legal statutes and the traditional gender norms of society. While crimes committed by women range from fraud and shoplifting to more violent acts such as infanticide or murder, research suggests that many violent offenses committed by women are acts of self-preservation against severe domestic abuse (Nyamakai & Manyarara, 2017). The 2018 Presidential Amnesty, granted by His Excellency President E.D. Mnangagwa, was a strategic intervention to decongest a system holding 22,000 inmates against a capacity of 17,000 (The Herald, 2018, Van Hout & Mhlanga-Gunda, 2018). However, the transition from such a high stress environment to a stigmatising community remains under researched. This study fills a critical gap by centring the voices of ten women as they navigate the complexities of life after Chikurubi.

Despite the 2018 Presidential Amnesty's intent to decongest prison facilities, there has been a concerning trend of recidivism among female ex-offenders released from Chikurubi Female Maximum Prison. Reintegration is a precarious process. As Seiter and Kadela (2003) note, the world to which offenders return is often radically different from the one they left. While existing literature extensively covers the reintegration of male ex-detainees, the unique gendered experiences of women, who face specific layers of shame, social stereotyping, and systemic segregation, remain under researched. For those released via amnesty, the transition is often abrupt, lacking the psychological and logistical preparation afforded to those

completing full sentences. This study addresses the lack of empirical data regarding how these women navigate a society that frequently views them through a lens of persistent stigma.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of the reintegration cycle for female ex-offenders in Zimbabwe. By prioritising the voices of these women, the research highlights critical educational and social encounters post incarceration. These narratives are intended to provide actionable insights into how the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service (ZPCS) and social welfare organisations can better support women both during imprisonment and after release. Ultimately, understanding the gender-specific needs of this population is a vital step toward developing intervention programs that reduce recidivism and foster successful community re-entry.

To understand the complexities of reintegration, this study adopted two complementary perspectives, life course theory and cognitive transformation theory. Life course theory postulates that the process of abstaining from crime, namely desistance, is dependent on turning points or social bonds such as employment, marriage, and stable housing (Bahr et al., 2012). It emphasises that reintegration is a trajectory influenced by both subjective internal changes (identity) and external social influences. Cognitive transformation theory focuses on the internal hooks for change. This involves four stages: an openness to change, exposure to a hook (like a job or support group), the envisioning of a replacement self (a new, positive identity), and a shift in how the individual views their past criminal behaviour (Maruna, 2001).

Re-establishing a life after incarceration involves securing formal identification, housing, and employment while navigating a criminal record (Visser & Travis, 2003). In the Zimbabwean context, the presidential amnesty serves as a unique shock to the system. Unlike planned releases, amnesty is often a sudden administrative decision to decongest cells. Consequently, the readiness of the offender and the preparedness of the receiving community are often misaligned, creating a gap where support structures should be.

The aim of the study was to explore the lived experiences of female ex-offenders released from Chikurubi Female Maximum Prison through the 2018 Presidential Amnesty. This research therefore sought to explore the psychosocial and socio-economic challenges faced by female ex-offenders during reintegration. In addition, it sought to assess the level of community and familial acceptance of female ex-offenders following a presidential pardon. It further sought to identify policy measures and support services that can improve the transition from prison to the community. The present study sought to answer the following research question: What are

the lived experiences of female ex-offenders upon their release into the community under the presidential amnesty?

Research methodology

This study utilises a qualitative methodology to capture the essence of the reintegration experience. Qualitative research is ideal for exploring participants' convictions, motivations, and interpretations of their social reality (De Vos et al., 2005).

Research design

The study employs an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) design. This allows the researcher to explore how participants make sense of their personal and social world. As noted by Ferguson et al. (1992), the goal is to understand social phenomena from the actor's own perspective, acknowledging that the "significant reality" is the one perceived by the individual.

Participants and sampling

Population: The target population for this study comprised female ex-offenders who were incarcerated at Chikurubi Female Maximum Prison in Harare, Zimbabwe, and subsequently released under the provisions of the Clemency Order No. 1 of 2018 (Presidential Amnesty), issued in March 2018.

Sampling: Purposive sampling was used to identify organisations working with ex-convicts (e.g., ZPCS or NGOs). Convenience sampling was then applied to select ten (10) participants who were willing and available to share their stories. To minimise bias, participants were drawn from various geographical zones across Harare.

Data collection and procedures

To capture the lived experiences, complex emotions, and structural challenges faced by female ex-offender's post-release, this study utilised a qualitative approach comprising two primary data collection methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Employing both methods allowed for data triangulation, enhancing the credibility, depth, and validity of the findings by capturing both individual life histories and shared collective realities.

Interviews: These provided a private space for women to discuss sensitive issues like double deviance and domestic rejection.

FGDs: The discussions encouraged collective reflection, where hearing the experiences of others prompted participants to share insights they might have otherwise overlooked.

Procedure: Questions were designed to solicit information regarding the immediate day of release, the first month of reintegration, and long-term challenges in employment and social acceptance.

Findings

The analysis followed the four-stage interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) framework. This involved a rigorous process of immersion in the transcripts, initial annotation of significant statements, the clustering of emergent themes, and the final development of a summary table. The following sections present the narrative account of these themes, supported by verbatim excerpts to ensure the voice of the female ex-offender remains central to the inquiry.

Response rate

The study achieved a 100% response rate. All ten (10) purposively sampled female ex-offenders participated in the in-depth interviews. Furthermore, six (6) of these participants successfully engaged in a focus group discussion (FGD). No attrition occurred during the study, ensuring a robust and complete dataset for analysis.

Participant profiles

The study engaged a diverse group of ten women, whose backgrounds reflect the intersectionality of gender, crime, and socio-economic vulnerability in Zimbabwe.

Table 1: Demographic profile of participants

Pseudonym	Age	Maternal Status	Offense	Reintegration Context
P1	37	3 Children	Fraud	Displaced; husband remarried
P2	31	3 Children	Theft	Living in overcrowded home
P3	33	1 Child	Attempted murder	Supportive sister
P4	30	2 Children	Infanticide	Divorced; incarcerated
P5	28	1 Child	Arson/Vandalism	Orphaned; homeless
P6	43	Married	Child abduction	Spouse welcomed her
P7	27	Single	Attempted murder	Re-accepted at parental home
P8	47	3 Children	(Not specified)	Low education; abandonment
P9	38	3 Children (Widow)	Fraud	Navigating widowhood and motherhood
P10	34	2 Children	Fraud	Incarcerated with child; family/spousal support

Results

Theme 1: The precarity of shelter

Shelter emerged as the most immediate and critical unmet need. For many, the home they left no longer existed. The findings suggest that female ex-offenders often experience “geographic displacement” where their previous domestic roles are filled by others during their absence.

Domestic erasure: P1’s experience highlights the suddenness of displacement:

“I knocked [at] the door... a lady I did not recognise came. She said she had been living there for 3 years... my husband had moved and remarried. I had nowhere to go.”

Overcrowding and dependency: For those who found shelter, it was often in overcrowded maternal homes. P2 described the strain of seven people sharing a four-roomed house, where the need for a proper job was viewed to regain domestic space.

The where to go dilemma: For participants like P5, who were orphaned, the release was met with an existential crisis: “The biggest question was: Go where?”

These findings align with life course theory that suggests that, without a stable turning point like secure housing, the risk of recidivism increases as individuals return to unfortunate areas characterised by poverty (Maidement, 2006).

Theme 2: Family as a double-edged sword

Family relationships were described as both the primary source of support and a source of profound internalised shame.

The maternal safety net: In line with African cultural norms, mothers and sisters were the most consistent providers of support. P3 and P10 noted that seeing family waiting at the prison gates gave them the hope of a better tomorrow.

Fear of family shame and stigma: Even in supportive families, the stain of incarceration was present. P1 noted her mother was happy to see her, but felt shy in public, reflecting the double deviant status where the family shares the offender’s shame.

Supportive turning points: P7’s experience represents the ideal reintegration scenario, where family provided a newly furnished room and emotional forgiveness, which she linked directly to her ability to “spread kindness” and avoid re-offending.

Theme 3: The maternal pillar of reintegration

A central finding across all cases was the singular importance of the maternal bond. While other family members often displayed hesitation, the mother was consistently identified as the primary facilitator of re-entry.

Safety and re-entry: For P1 and P2, mothers provided the only open door upon their release. P1 stated, "If it were not for my mother... I would have likely ended up in jail once more."

Emotional Resilience: Participants described their mothers as "pillars of strength" (P1) and "heroes" (P7). Even when incapacitated by illness, as in the case of P2's mother who suffered a stroke, the commitment to bi-weekly prison visits remained a critical anchor for the participant's mental health.

Theme 4: Biological children as catalysts for desistance

Consistent with cognitive transformation theory, biological children served as the primary hook for change. Participants viewed their children not only as a source of joy, but as a moral obligation to remain straight.

The struggle for custody: Reclaiming maternal roles was fraught with difficulty. P1 struggled for three months to see her children, eventually requiring police intervention. P5 faced an agonising four-month search for her son, eventually winning a custody battle against neglectful paternal relatives.

Protection of identity: P2 deliberately hid her incarceration from her eldest son to protect him from the "stain" of the prison, highlighting the maternal instinct to shield children from the mother's "double deviant" status.

Theme 5: Economic pathways and the barrier of the criminal record

Employment was identified as the most significant practical barrier to reintegration. The findings suggest that the 2018 Presidential Amnesty released women into a crippled economy where formal employment was nearly impossible for ex-convicts.

The street hustle and survival: Many participants resorted to self-employment or "street hustling" (P2) to supplement household income.

Systemic exclusion: P3 and P10 noted that, even for low-skilled roles like domestic work, they were terminated as soon as their criminal record was discovered. P3 lamented, "People do not want me."

Entrepreneurial survival: For those with support, like P6, small income-generating projects (selling peanut butter and chickens) provided a sense of worth and a protective shield against returning to crime.

Theme 6: The quest for forgiveness

The psychological freedom of participants was directly linked to the act of being forgiven.

Internalised regret: P1 expressed deep sorrow over her father's death while she was incarcerated, as it robbed her of the chance to apologise for "tarnishing the family name".

Restorative forgiveness: In contrast, P7 and P10 described a profound sense of liberation after seeking forgiveness from their victims and families, with P7 noting she was now ready to spread kindness.

Theme 7: Disrupted intimacy and marriage

The data indicates that the double deviant label severely damages the prospects of marriage and romantic stability.

The "vanishing" partner: P7 noted that potential partners "vanished" as soon as her prison history was disclosed.

Rebuilding domesticity: P5 was the only participant to successfully remarry and begin a new family, viewing this as a definitive happy home that replaced her past trauma.

Theme 8: Spirituality and supplication

Religion was the most frequently cited coping mechanism. The church served as both a spiritual sanctuary and a practical resource.

Crisis Shelter: For P1, the church provided the only shelter on her first night of release when her husband had remarried and displaced her.

Stress management: P3 utilised singing and praise and worship as therapeutic tools to relieve the stress of reintegration and the fear of sin.

Theme 9: Institutionalised support groups

There is a notable absence of formal, secular support groups for female ex-offenders in Harare.

Informal networks: Most participants relied on church groups or individual counselling (P7) rather than structured ex-offender networks. P6 expressed a desire for a dedicated group of women from prison to share experiences, suggesting a gap in post-release social services.

Theme 10: The pervasiveness of stigma

Stigmatisation emerged as a "totalising" experience, affecting every pillar of reintegration.

Rural Ostracisation: Participants who returned to villages (P4, P5) faced extreme hostility. P5 described villagers cleaning the borehole handle after she used it. The cleaning of the handle was a visceral symbol of her being viewed as impure or alien.

Social avoidance: P8 noted that her presence in church made her a “stumbling block”, as the congregation and even the pastor avoided her, reinforcing her sense of social exclusion.

Summary of findings

The findings reveal that while the presidential amnesty offers physical freedom, it does not guarantee social or economic liberation. The reintegration of female ex-offenders in Zimbabwe is a precarious journey through a landscape of economic exclusion and cultural stigma. While motherhood and spirituality provide strong motivations for change, the lack of halfway homes and inclusive employment policies leaves these women vulnerable. Successful cases (like P6 and P7) were characterised by high familial support, whereas those without such resources (P1, P5) faced significant risks of homelessness and recidivism.

Discussion

The study reveal that the reintegration of female ex-offenders is not a singular event, but a precarious, multi-dimensional process characterised by uncertainty between personal agency and systemic rejection. While the participants expressed a profound internal desire for change, largely powered by maternal bonds which in other circumstances were frequently met with structural barriers that threatened their stability.

Unlike male ex-offenders, who may find support through various networks, these women identified their mothers as the primary and often sole providers of shelter. Mothers play the central role in the maternal home. They are the only ones who can forgive their children and take them back. The rest of the family members, especially from the paternal side, do not want anything to do with an ex-prisoner woman at all. As seen in the accounts of P1 and P2, shelter is more than a physical roof it represents a safe zone from a judgmental society. However, the findings align with Maidement (2006) and Mhlanga-Gunda et al. (2020), suggesting that, even when shelter is available, it is often in overcrowded or impoverished environments. The homelessness experienced by P1, who resorted to sleeping in a church, highlights a systemic failure to do enough preparation. The state releases women via amnesty without ensuring they have a place to go where they are accepted. This creates a direct pathway back to recidivism and promiscuity that expose them to diseases. The absence of stable housing makes it nearly impossible to secure employment or regain custody of children. As documented by Gwashure and Muchedzi (2021), this systemic neglect by the state creates a direct pathway back to

recidivism or survival sex work, which in turn exposes these women to high risks of gender-based violence and infectious diseases.

One of the other compelling themes was the role of biological children as the primary motivation for staying away from crime. This supports life course theory (Sampson & Laub, 1993), which posits that turning points, such as re-establishing the mother- child bond, can steer an individual away from a criminal trajectory. For many women, parenting does not end when they are imprisoned. Instead, it is interrupted by custody decisions, legal restrictions, and barriers to ongoing contact. This interruption can create a long emotional struggle that continues long after the sentence has ended. When women are released, but still cannot access their children in meaningful ways or must wait for reunification to be approved, they may feel empty, as if their lives remain un-whole due to separation from the most central part of their identity. A major reason this happens is the legal power imbalance that can occur during incarceration. Depending on the laws and the system in Zimbabwe, custody may shift from the mother to another caregiver while she is imprisoned (Chinhanu, 2024). The child may be placed with the father, paternal relative or maternal relatives or transferred into another household. In many cases, the mother's ability to have contact with her children ends and the Zimbabwean law is not clear on the rights children have in visiting incarcerated parents. Even when a mother completes programmes or demonstrates readiness to return, the process of reunification can still be slow or uncertain. This creates a period where women are expected to heal and rebuild their lives, but they are not given a clear pathway to rebuild their parenting role at the same pace, which result in psychological trauma.

The psychological effects of this separation can be severe. When incarcerated mothers lose daily contact with their children, they often experience intense grief and emotional distress. Many women carry feelings of guilt and shame, even when the incarceration itself was influenced by circumstances beyond their control. They may also experience anxiety about their child's safety and wellbeing, wondering who is caring for them, how they are coping emotionally, and whether the child has been harmed by the separation. Over time, this constant uncertainty can develop into deeper trauma symptoms such as sleep disruption, emotional numbness, stress overload, panic, or persistent fear. Mothers may start to feel hopeless, not necessarily because they do not want to change, but because the system can make them feel powerless. When contact is restricted, the separation can become more than a temporary interruption; it can become an ongoing source of trauma. This aligns with findings by Nyamakai and Manyarara (2017), who established that the psychological toll of maternal

deprivation on Zimbabwean female inmates frequently manifests as severe post-traumatic stress and depression during post-release life due to the struggle of child custody.

Another major consequence is identity loss. Motherhood is not only a social role, but also often a core part of a woman's sense of self. When women are unable to parent, they may feel like they are no longer recognised as mothers, but instead viewed only through the lens of incarceration. Looking from a Zimbabwean cultural context, a person who has been incarcerated is regarded as an unfit parent notwithstanding that they have repented and served for the crime. This can lead to a damaging cycle of emotional withdrawal. A woman may try to focus on rehabilitation and reintegration, but she may struggle to feel motivated or emotionally grounded because the relationship she cares about most is on hold (Chivandikwa et al., 2020). Custody battle affects mothers internally, which then influences how well they can function and cope during reintegration.

These barriers also contribute to instability after release. Reintegration requires emotional strength, routine, and stability, but trauma makes these things harder. Mothers may also experience severe anxiety about their child's safety and wellbeing, wondering who is caring for them and how they are coping emotionally during the separation (Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001). This situation may even worsen after release from prison. When a woman cannot maintain consistent contact with her children, she may experience worsening mental health symptoms and increased stress. That stress can affect her ability to stay focused on employment or training, manage relationships, and avoid situations that harm her long-term wellbeing. In some cases, women may develop harmful coping strategies, including substance use or withdrawing from support networks, because the emotional pain feels unmanageable. This creates a cycle where incarceration leads to separation, separation increases trauma, and trauma makes reintegration more difficult especially when the mother's attachment to her child remains unresolved. Re-mothering after release is also not immediate or automatic, even when reunification happens eventually. A mother may return to parenting, but rebuilding trust and emotional connection can take time. The child may have bonded with another caregiver or may have adapted to living without the mother's presence.

Despite the participants willingness to engage in street hustles or small-scale poultry projects, formal employment remained largely out of reach. The narratives of P3 and P10 confirm that a criminal record acts as a permanent scarlet letter. Even in the informal sector, the stigma of being an ex-convict often leads to immediate dismissal once discovered. This confirms the

perspective of labelling theory (Becker, 1963) that, where society refuses to un-label, the individual is forced back into negative practices such as prostitution mentioned by P2. This recidivism would be simply for survival. There is therefore a clear disconnect between the presidential amnesty's goal of forgiveness and the social practice of exclusion.

While P3 and P1 found rationality and emotional relief through prayer and church groups, P8's experience of being treated as a stumbling block and outcast by her congregation reveals the limits of religious compassion. Spirituality serves as a vital internal resource for these women, providing the forgiveness of self that the secular world denies them. However, when the church mirrors the community's stigmatisation, it exacerbates the woman's sense of isolation, sometimes leading to the suicidal ideation reported by over half of the participants. The study findings mirrors the severe social isolation patterns documented among female returnees in Harare by Magadzire (2018).

The pardon is a gesture of mercy, the findings suggest it is currently a hollow victory. Participants noted that neither the victims nor the families were prepared for their return. The untimely release mentioned by P5 suggests that, without a restorative justice framework where victims and offenders are mediated before release, the amnesty may increase the ex-offender vulnerability to hostility and re-arrest. This mismanaged danger highlights a critical reality conceptualised by Petersilia (2009), who argues that successful prisoner re-entry is a long-term systemic process requiring community infrastructure, rather than a singular administrative event of physical release. The amnesty addresses the cell count, but fails to address the sophisticated community climate.

Conclusions

The findings of this study underscore that, for female ex-offenders in Zimbabwe, the presidential amnesty provides physical liberation, but often fails to facilitate social or economic freedom. The reintegration process is characterised by a dualistic reality. While maternal bonds and spiritual faith provide essential pillars of resilience, these are frequently overshadowed by the crippling effects of systemic stigmatisation and economic exclusion.

The study concludes that the first six months post-release are the most precarious, as participants navigate the double deviant stigma having violated both legal statutes and traditional gender expectations. The sudden nature of the 2018 amnesty left both the offenders and their receiving communities under-prepared, leading to domestic displacement, loss of child custody, and, in some cases, a return to illegal survival strategies such as vending without

licenses or sex work. Without structured turning points like secure housing (halfway homes) and inclusive employment, the cycle of recidivism remains a significant threat to female ex-offenders in the Harare Metropolitan area.

Recommendations

To mitigate the challenges faced by female ex-offenders and foster successful desistance, the following measures are proposed:

1. Implementation of a pre-release transition model

The current random nature of presidential amnesties should be replaced by a structured preparation period. Correctional frameworks must prioritise equipping female inmates with localised entrepreneurial and vocational skills prior to amnesty release to significantly mitigate the structural barriers of a criminal record (Gideon, 2009). ZPCS should facilitate victim-offender mediation and family sensitisation programmes at least three months prior to an amnesty release to ensure the social environment is prepared to receive the returnee.

2. Establishment of halfway houses

The Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, in collaboration with NGOs, should establish halfway homes. These facilities would provide a temporary haven for displaced women particularly those who are orphaned or rejected by spouses while they secure employment and long-term accommodation.

3. Economic empowerment and start-up grants

To break the cycle of poverty driven crime, female ex-offenders should be provided with a modest reintegration stipend or start-up grant upon release. This financial cushion would allow them to meet basic needs (rent, food, childcare) while they establish small businesses using vocational skills such as baking, tailoring, or weaving acquired during incarceration.

4. Enhancing familial and social bonds

ZPCS should incentivise frequent family visitation and home leave for low-risk female inmates nearing release. Maintaining these familial bonds during incarceration is the most effective safeguard against the isolation and psychological distress that led to suicidal ideation post-release.

Limitations of the study

This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which posed significant logistical challenges. The need for social distancing and masking during focus group discussions (FGDs) may have slightly constrained the fluidity of communication. Furthermore,

the study was limited by financial constraints, as the researcher personally funded the PPE, transportation, and refreshments for the participants. Lastly, while the sample of ten participants provided deep qualitative insights, the findings may not be fully generalisable to the national population of female ex-offenders.

Avenues for future research

Future studies should consider a longitudinal approach, tracking a cohort of female ex-offenders over 24 months to monitor the long-term success of various coping strategies. Additionally, a comparative study between female ex-offenders released through amnesty versus those who completed "full sentences" would provide valuable data on how preparation time impacts recidivism rates. Further research is also needed into the experiences of children of incarcerated mothers to better understand the intergenerational impact of the Zimbabwean penal system.

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