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Faculty of Communication and Information Science

Department of Journalism and Media Studies

An assessment of the role of media as a tool for dialogue and reconciliation in society

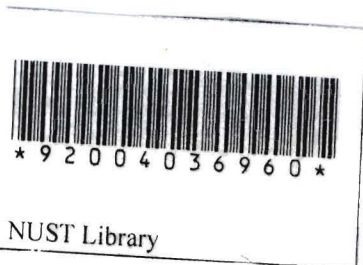
The case of ZTV's *Another Chance* programme.

BY

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Master of Science Degree in Journalism and Media Studies

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ABSTRACT

The research study sought to establish if the media in Zimbabwe is a platform to promote dialogue and reconciliation. The main objective of the research study was to assess the role played by the media and in particular the Zimbabwe Television through its programme *Another Chance* in promoting dialogue and reconciliation. The purpose of the research study was to provide information that could shape policies and strategies on conflict resolution in Zimbabwe. The research study was premised on the normative theories of the press, in particular the social responsibility theory and the facilitative role of the media. The normative theory of the public sphere gave insights into how the media is expected to engage with its audiences. The research went beyond the *Agenda Setting theory* to discuss the *Framing and Priming theories*. The contributions of the media in provoking conflict in Africa and beyond were discussed focussing on countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, the Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The research study was located in the interpretive paradigm, used the qualitative approach and the descriptive case study research design. Purposive sampling was used to select the episodes for analysis from the programme as well as participants for focus group interviews. The researcher used the triangulated data collection method and the research instruments included focus group interviews, discourse analysis and content analysis. From the findings of the study it was concluded that the media plays an effective role in promoting dialogue and reconciliation through facilitating a participatory engagement with the viewers. The programme under study offered a forum for public criticism and compromise as it thrived to encourage reconciliation within society. It was also noted that the media play its social responsibility role by offering programmes that are structured to benefit the public. It was recommended that all relevant stakeholders such as government departments, Non Governmental Organisations and Faith Based Organisations should have a more comprehensive and strategic approach in addressing conflict issues through the use of the media by developing a public policy on truth and reconciliation, licensing community radios and engaging in sensitisation and education programmes on dialogue and reconciliation at community and national level.