



Theatre and Performance as Social Commentary in West Africa: An Action Research Study in Burkina Faso

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Abstract

Theatre and performance have long served as powerful vehicles for social commentary in West Africa, particularly in Burkina Faso where they often reflect and critique societal issues. The research employs an action research approach, involving workshops with local theatre practitioners, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data on current practices and perspectives. A significant theme emerging from the findings is the critique of government policies by local artists, with a proportion of over 70% of participants mentioning this as a common subject in their work. The study concludes that theatre and performance are integral to social commentary in Burkina Faso, serving as both a reflection of societal issues and a platform for advocacy. Local arts organizations should be encouraged to engage more directly with government bodies on key policy areas, leveraging the power of their work to influence change.

Keywords: *African geography, performance studies, social theory, cultural criticism, ethnography, participatory action research, postcolonial critique*

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