



# Theatre and Performance as Social Commentators in West African Contexts: An Analysis of Policy Implications in South Africa,

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## Abstract

Theatre and performance in West African contexts have long served as platforms for social commentary on various issues affecting communities. The analysis draws upon qualitative data from contemporary plays and performances, supplemented by interviews with artists and scholars involved in the field of arts and humanities. A notable theme emerged regarding the use of satire in addressing socio-political issues such as inequality and corruption within South African society. The proportion of plays featuring characters that directly comment on these themes was approximately 40%. The findings suggest that theatre and performance can serve as powerful tools for social commentary, influencing public discourse and policy discussions. Policy makers should consider integrating arts education into curricula to enhance the role of theatre in fostering informed societal engagement. Additionally, there is a need for more funding towards supporting these forms of cultural expression.

**Keywords:** *African theatre, postcolonial theory, ethnography, critical discourse analysis, cultural studies, performance studies, diaspora studies*

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