

Deciphering Burkina Faso's Socio-Political Situation from 2015 to 2024 in Songs by Comedy Groups “*Les Séparables*” and “*Dabross Feat El Présidente BF*”

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How to cite this paper: Dieu-Donné, Z., & Issaka, S. (2025). Deciphering Burkina Faso's Socio-Political Situation from 2015 to 2024 in Songs by Comedy Groups “*Les Séparables*” and “*Dabross Feat El Présidente BF*”. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 15, 87-100. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2025.151007>

Received: December 8, 2024

Accepted: February 15, 2025

Published: February 18, 2025

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Abstract

Since January 15, 2016, the historical date of the terrorist attack on the Cappuccino café restaurant in the heart of the capital Ouagadougou, the socio-political and security situation in Burkina Faso has continued to exacerbate. In addition, a succession of coups d'état toppled the democratically-elected ex-president Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, who Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba replaced on January 24, 2022, who in turn was overthrown by Captain Ibrahim Traoré on September 30, 2022. In such a troubled socio-political context, it is customary to hear the voices of political players, civil society, the international community and certain cultural players, about the problems of the moment and their solutions. With this in mind, we take a look at the musical discourse of two comedy groups, “*Les séparables*” and “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*”, who perform musical parody while painting a picture of the country's socio-political realities. Told in a comic register, this speech depicts the socio-political and security reality and draws the attention of the actors to certain misbehaviors. The study aims to analyze the musical discourse of these cultural actors by describing: 1) The overall communication situation that characterizes their discourse on the one hand; 2) The positioning strategies of these humorists concerning the country's socio-political problems on the other. The study falls within the field of discourse analysis and draws on the works of Charaudeau, P. The study reveals that various socio-political and security problems characterize the global and specific communication situation of political actors and society.

Keywords

Discourse Analysis, Burkina Faso, Humour, Music, Socio-Political Situation

1. Introduction

Burkina Faso is experiencing a difficult socio-political situation characterised by persistent insecurity, to the extent that in July 2024, 31% of the territory was still beyond the control of the State, according to the Minister of State, Minister of Defence and Veterans, General Kassoum Coulibaly, who briefed the press after presenting the mid-term review of his Ministry's activities to the Prime Minister on 07 August 2024¹. Although the situation has been improving recently, thanks to the efforts of the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) and the Homeland Defence Volunteers (HDV), the security situation still gives cause for concern. The humanitarian situation has reached the threshold of precisely two million (2,060,000) internally displaced people recorded by the permanent secretariat of the national council for emergency and rehabilitation relief (CONASUR) as of 31 March 2023, living in urgent need of food, shelter and health care. According to a report by the African Development Bank Group on the economic outlook for Burkina Faso published in 2023: "... *the economy has suffered from the decline in public investment; the inflation rate accelerated to 14.4% in 2022 with the rise in food and oil imports...*" (African Economique Outlook (AEO), 2023) The country has seen two coups d'état in the space of eight (08) months. While terrorism is gaining ground, politico-military actors are vying for power.

This difficult socio-political and security situation has not left people of culture indifferent, particularly the comedy groups "*Les séparables*" and "*Dabross feat El présidente BF*". These two groups are constantly producing musical parodies depicting the situation. They use the comedy of their music to denounce the failings of politicians, civil society and all Burkinabè. Our work consists of a discursive analysis of the musical texts of these cultural actors by describing: 1) The overall communication situation that characterises their discourse on the one hand, and on the other hand by describing; 2) The positioning strategies of these comedians in relation to the socio-political problems of the country. The main question of the study is: what are the discursive and positioning strategies adopted by the comedy groups "*Les séparables*" and "*Dabross feat El présidente BF*" to describe the socio-political and security situation in Burkina Faso?

2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

In this section we define some of the concepts involved and then present the reference theory.

2.1. Conceptual Definitions

The concepts in the subject that are the subject of definitions are: humour, music, humorous music, musical parody.

- **Humour**

It is a "*form of pleasant irony, often satirical, consisting in highlighting with wit*

¹Le Faso.net, Published on 07 August 2024 on the website <https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article132149>, consulted on 22 November 2024.

the funny or unusual aspects of reality” (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, AUF, 2008: p. 615). It is also the mark of this comic, ridiculous, absurd or unusual spirit in a speech, text, drawing, etc.

- **Music**

Music is the “*art of combining sounds according to certain rules*” (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, AUF, 2008: p. 843). The main parameters of music are rhythm (how sounds are combined in time), pitch (how they are combined in frequency), nuance and timbre.

Music gives rise to creations (works of art created by composers) and performances. It generally uses certain rules or systems of composition, from the simplest to the most complex. It can use a variety of objects, the body and the voice, as well as specially designed modern and traditional musical instruments.

- **Humorous music**

Humorous music is music based on humour. It is comic or humorous by nature. Humourists develop several musical composition techniques, including the use of comic texts, musical parody and unexpected juxtapositions of syntactic elements.

- **Musical parody**

Parody is a “*burlesque imitation of a famous literary work... Grotesque, cynical imitation...*” (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, AUF, 2008: p. 925). Musical parody therefore involves taking existing, usually well-known, music or lyrics and developing them, or simply copying the particular style of a composer or performer, or of a musical genre in general.

2.2. Reference Theory

Our work is inspired by the theory of discourse analysis (DA) by (Charaudeau, 2001, 2006, 2007), which has two (02) essential components: the theory of the communication situation on the one hand and the theory of the action of the communicating individual on the other. In the communication situation, a distinction is made between the Global Communication Situation (GCS) and the Specific Communication Situation (SCS). The GCS is the place where the social actors of the practical domain are constructed into communicative instances, discursive purposes and a macro-thematic domain. The SCS is characterised by subjects participating in the communication, with a specific identity and communicative roles. The conceptual framework of SCS concerns the materiality of the semiological system (graphic, phonic, iconic, visual, gestural, etc.), the communicative situation (monolocative, interlocative), and the transmission medium (paper, audio, oral, audio-visual, electronic).

The other strand of P. Charaudeau’s theory of DA is the theory of action. It is based on the positioning or “individuation” strategies of the communicating subject. The theory of action starts from the principle that the language subject can only be conceived on the basis of a principle of otherness, which states that “I” can only become aware of its existence insofar as it recognises the existence of another

who is both similar to and different from it. And the subject, in order to “individuate”, puts in place strategies of legitimisation, credibility and capture through a certain discursive staging.

- **Data collection and analysis methodology**

The corpus of our study is essentially made up of music by the comedy groups “*Les séparables*” and “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*”. We collected fourteen (14) songs, thirteen (13) from the group “*Les séparables*” and one (01) from “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*”. The choice of songs was systematic. There was no sorting. All the songs of the two musical groups from the period March 2022 to September 2023 were taken into account. But we note that the group “*Les séparables*” is more prolific in terms of songs, with 13 songs than the group “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*”, which records just one song in the same period.

The songs from the group “*Les séparables*” exploited are:

- *Africa 20.20*. Available on the YouTube platform since 18 April 2022;
- *MPSR-Moussa petit sergent reste*. Available on YouTube since March 2022
- *Demande d'explication. Ask for an explanation*. Available on the YouTube platform since March 2022;
- *Burkina Façon*. Available on the YouTube platform since April 2022;
- *PPS...* Available on YouTube since May 2022;
- *Une lettre pour Laye. A letter to Laye*. Available on the YouTube platform since May 2022;
- *Meeting activé. Meeting activated*. Available on the YouTube platform since July 2022;
- *Le bilan. The review*. Available on YouTube since 6 September 2022;
- *7commandements*. Available on the YouTube platform since 04 October 2022;
- *Super 91*. Available on YouTube since 05 January 2023;
- *Voun-vouni*. Available on YouTube since 2 April 2023;
- *Dans ce pays. In this country...* Available on the YouTube platform since 28 July 2023;
- *Yaafa*. Available on YouTube since 17 September 2023.

The song by the group “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*”: *La refondation soamba*. Available on the YouTube platform since 16 October 2022.

The texts are written in the national language of Mooré and in French, and quite rarely in English (in the case of the group “*Les séparables*”). In the transcription of these texts, we present the extracts in Mooré and then translate them into English.

- **Analysis method**

We adopt the lexical-semantic analysis method “*analysing a discourse, (...) is to look for a certain number of indicators in the utterance*” Seignour (2011: p. 34). The aim is to transcribe songs in order to exploit the markers of enunciation and of the overall communication situation, in particular enunciative, referential and organisational indicators, figures of speech, etc. in relation to the protagonists of the discourse, the discursive space and the socio-political and security situation.

3. Analysis of Corpus Data

The results of our analysis are divided into two main parts. On the one hand, we examine the linguistic references in relation to the protagonists of the discourse and the discursive space. Secondly, we analyse the linguistic references in relation to the socio-political and security situation.

The artists' musical discourse involves a number of political actors, including successive heads of state, civil society organisations and the people. Each actor is described in terms of their attitudes and behaviour.

3.1. Identifying the Protagonists

- **Linguistic expressions referring to former president Blaise Compaoré**

He is referred to as a *Ablaase*, *ekolā fondatɛere* “Blaise; the founder of the school”. He is in Ivory Coast. He appreciated the seizure of power by Chef de classe who overthrew *Naaba* “the chief” (“*Les séparables*”, in *Une lettre pour Laye*, May 2022):

ɛf de klasā yeelame ti karasaambā suusdame, t'a ka tõe tvumdā sōama ye, t'a rig karasaambā n yiisi, la a na reeg tvumdā n tvme...ti karenbiisā wē nugpoaka. Ti ekolā fōdatɛr meng pa hal kodivoar n ye ti tvumdā yaa sōama...

“The class president said that the teacher was dozing, that he wasn't mastering his work, so he chased him out of the classroom and decided to take over...the pupils in the class applauded, even the founder of the school, all the way from Côte d'Ivoire approved this decision.”

- **Linguistic expressions referring to former President Roch Marc Christian KABORE**

He is referred to as: *Naaba* “the chief”, *Ruki-baaba* “Rouki's father”; these names recur in the songs of the group *Les séparables*.

Artists feel that he is running the country like an “association”. The constant reshuffling of ministers has unfortunately not produced any convincing results in the fight against terrorism. This scourge continues to plunge families and defence and security forces into mourning. And each time, the powerless government condemns it in the strongest terms and promises to take action... hence the question of *The Separables* (In Africa 2020; January 2022):

beog sē vēeg fāa, “that measures will be taken”, *yāmb wa n na zāa tēngā bi y wa n na sēe futu?* “Every day we are told that measures will be taken, have you come to govern the country or is it to sew outfits?”

- **Linguistic expressions referring to the former president, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba**

He is referred to as: *Class president*; *Damso*, *zenom a ye sēn be sakā puga* “a young person in the neighbourhood”, *Moses* from Burkina, the poet.

It was he who, as “class president”, decided to put an end to *Naaba's* duties because he felt that *Naaba* was dozing off; he wasn't doing his job properly. But in his progress report speech on 4 September 2022, i.e. eight months after taking power, when the security situation had hardly changed, *Class president* drew up

an accusatory assessment of his predecessor's regime: "...an uncompromising assessment of the serious situation in which our country found itself...several years of political compromise...incapable of initiating the slightest collective leap forward, we left our country to sink..." extract from Paul Henri Sandaogo Damiba's speech of 4 September 2022.

President Damiba was also known for using proverbs and quotations in many of his speeches and public addresses. An extract from the songs of "*Les séparables*" features some of these quotations the following poem:

"My heart, with a little of this and a little of that, I fought to get my thing,
Let's catch up and move forward together, Sala,
I'll do everything I can to keep you safe,
Because the love I have for you is a way of life!

There was another pupil in the class who thought "Damso" was too much of a poet, and the fact that he spoke English meant he deserved to go to first form rather than stay in CMII. So, they arranged transport for him to continue his studies in Togo. This other pupil is called IB (short for Ibrahim Traoré).

- **Linguistic expressions referring to Captain Ibrahim Traoré**

He is referred to as: Piti a ye sēn da be kartiē n wā "a little one who was in the neighbourhood", IB, Bureem "Boureima".

His governance is characterised by the fact that from now on everyone must look in the same direction. Discordant voices are not allowed. In their songs "voun vouni (April 2023)" and "yaafa (September 2023)", the group "*Les séparables*" describe this situation of restricted freedoms.

I saw a gentleman asking coach Simon how to criticise the government without going to the front? He was told to be careful, join in and applaud, it's a one-way street, and anyone who goes against it will be punished.

The Russian embassy in Burkina Faso is on the Place de la Nation (reference is made to the young people who are mobilised, the "wayiyya" in this place to defend the current government).

Before in Burkina, if you talked a lot (on television) you were appointed minister. But nowadays, if you talk too much, you get drafted into a VDP (Volunteer for the Defence of the Fatherland).

Extract from Voun vouni; April 2023.

- **Linguistic references in relation to the population**

The linguistic expressions used at this level refer to categories of people. Sometimes we see the use of metaphorical words to refer to people living in the countryside and also the use of the plural personal pronouns tōndo "we".

owese rāmbā! etidiā rāmbā! artiis rāmbā! zugnaliis rāmbā! a roodwok (Ouagadougou's biggest market) komersāambā, sodaasā, vdp rāmbā, politiksiēmbā...

"The CSOs! the students! the artists! the journalists! the shopkeepers of Roodwoko! the Defence and Security Forces (DSF), the Volunteers for the

Defence of the Homeland (VDP)! the politicians...”

3.2. Linguistic Referents in Relation to Discourse Space

In their texts, artists use various toponyms to describe the discursive space, the city, the countryside, popular places, the names of several countries where the protagonists of the discourse move around, and so on. We thus have spatial referents such as: Weogē “bush”; Waogdgo “Ouagadougou, the capital city”; Doorī “chief town of the Sahel region”; Plaas de la nasō “the nation square”; Matata “a famous nightclub where you meet a lot of prostitutes”; Yirgu “Yirgou; infamous village where there was a large-scale terrorist attack”; Djibo “Martyred town in the North of Burkina constituting the epicentre of terrorist attacks, under terrorist blockade; everything started from this town”; Fada “chief-town of the eastern region of Burkina Faso, also hit by terrorist attacks”; Inata “a town in northern Burkina Faso that was the scene of a barbaric attack in which dozens of gendarmes were killed. It was one attack too many that led to the coup d’état against the MPP regime led by former president Rock Marc Christian Kaboré”; Lome “the Togolese capital city where former president P. M. S. Damiba is currently residing”. M. S. Damiba”; Kodivoaare “Côte d’Ivoire, the host country of ex-president Blaise Compaoré”; Farāase “France, Burkina’s colonising country, which is currently experiencing diplomatic difficulties with the transitional government of Captain Ibrahim Traoré”; etc. All these spatial referents characterise the places where the discursive events described by the artists take place.

From the above, we note that in their humorous speeches, the artists use various linguistic expressions to refer to the various political actors who played a crucial role in the development of the socio-political crisis in Burkina Faso. They describe their behaviour and attitudes, and the major political decisions that have characterised their governance, from ex-president Blaise Compaoré to Ibrahim Traoré, via ex-presidents Kabore and Damiba. Some linguistic expressions refer to the people, while others evoke the discursive spaces in which the events took place. In the remainder of this paper, we will look at discursive elements relating to the socio-political and security situation.

3.3. A Description of the Socio-Political and Security Situation

We describe the linguistic elements relating to socio-political life, the satire of politics, the contrast between insecurity in the countryside and peaceful life in the city, the torment of the people in the countryside, the high cost of living, the restrictions on freedoms and the forced enlistment of civilian citizens as VDP (Homeland Defence Volunteers).

- **Description of socio-political life**

This paragraph is essentially about political satire.

Polōtik yaa pu-lik tuumde “politics is an activity of dishonest people”; “the same assholes agree to be voted for by the same fellow citizens, so the same consequences”.

It's a call to the public to be vigilant about the actions of politicians:

“Rënd yaa tōnd garde vizilāase, bala politiksiēebā ka zoet yānd ye. A ya! b ye lagma taab n na pil tōnd n pāb sōama, PPS. “We have to be vigilant, because politicians have no shame. Ha-ha! They’ve teamed up again to deceive us.”

“Trying to do politics without knowing politics is suicidal. Followers ‘de mil-de milā rāmba’ (voters who are bribed for XOF 1000).”

In *Les séparables*, PPS; May 2022

- **The contrast between *insecurity* in the countryside and *peaceful city life***

Some of the artists’ texts describe the contrast between the good life in the city and the difficult life in the countryside as a result of terrorism.

“...weoogē pas le te kē n wiis raado, n pa gom koobo;

Zag-bəd sē n lebg ra-boodo

kasm dā md sē n zoet n baood b yō ore (...)

...ti wōgdōg bēer ket n maasa; ti pōeg zē es be matata.”

In La refondation soamba by “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*”; October 2022.

This translates into:

“...It’s no longer possible to fetch wood from the bush, not to mention cultivation;

Large concessions have become ruins; Adults run for their lives;

...While in Ouagadougou there’s still cold beer;

And fair-complexioned women (prostitutes) in Matata (bar).”

- **The turmoil of the people in the countryside**

The group “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*” uses metaphorical language that likens the people to a “tormented leveret” caught in the bush by a raging fire. It’s a “stampede”. Heads of families take to their heels, leaving wives and children behind.

tōnd fāa yaa soomb-bi;

nin-wēens boba b zab-teedo, svus la bug-raado, yel beed sēn wēnem n ti wēnemse;

...We are all leverets;

The men of bad faith have carried their weapons, machetes and guns; A confusing and troubling situation;

...pagb la kom-pugli burkīnd sēn kāšge; kasm dāmd sēn zoet n baood b yōore (...); Women and girls have lost their dignity; Adults flee for their lives;

In La refondation soamba by “*Dabross feat El présidente BF*”; October 2022.

Some national newspapers have reported that many young girls and displaced women have turned to prostitution to support themselves and their children, having been abandoned by their husbands or fathers who have disappeared or been killed by the terrorists.

- **Linguistic references to the high cost of living, attacks on freedom of**

expression and the forced enlistment of citizens as VDFs

These subjects are addressed in the songs by the group “*Les séparables*” entitled “super91”, “voun-vouni” and “yafa”. In “super 91” they describe the petrol shortage and the ordeal of the population to get the green gold: Lebga tongr wakat (it’s the time of the long lines)... petrol belongs to those who get up early, you have to work hard to get fuel, 5 am to 2 pm! but you don’t know the Burkinabe very well, he sells a litre of petrol for XOF 3000...

The return of petrol to petrol stations has been accompanied by an increase in the price of super 91, with the price of a litre of petrol rising from XOF 750 to XOF 850, an increase of XOF 100 per litre, according to a government statement broadcast on RTB on Friday 10 February 2023. As a result, the cost of transport and basic foodstuffs has risen, making life more expensive...

In addition, there has been an all-out increase in taxes and levies in order to finance the peace effort, hence the refrain from the artists: “The people have become like a Coris Bank ATM (*automated teller machine*)! *They take our money quietly to buy planes quietly*”. (*Les séparables*; in “*dans ce pays...*”; July 2023).

In the name of the general mobilisation law², freedom of expression, both individual and collective, is being oppressed and we are witnessing the forced enlistment of certain citizens who are too critical of Ibrahim Traoré’s transitional government:

Tõnd êtelizãasã meng paasame (even our intelligence has increased):

Perkizisiõ (search)

Rekizisiõ (requisition) Apatriid... (stateless)

“Henceforth, everybody will be looking in the same direction” ka le gõdged goabga, ka le gõdged rvtgo... (it’s no longer possible to turn left or right).

Fo sã n gõdeg goabga, ti fo loog frõ n wã (if you turn left, they send you to the front).

Fo sã n leb n gõdeg rvtgo, ti fo loog frõ n wã (if you turn right too, they send you to the front) (Extract from the song yaafa, *Les séparables*; September 2023).

For the artists, the hardship is unbearable, the contributions to the peace effort, taxes and the high price of petrol mean that the people are suffering.

A mun yeelame ti fo nee efor rãmbã la, êpo rãmba la esãasã ligd paasa taab ti ya wa galeerã meng kãe tãngã ne pawærbãanke, ka desarsed dæ....

“Moumouni has said that efforts, taxes and the high price of petrol have given us the impression that the hardship has entered the country with a power-bank, which can’t be discharged...” (Extract from the song yaafa; *Les séparables*; September 2023).

Faced with this situation of repression of individual and collective freedoms, the artists are calling on those in power:

²Decree No. 2023-0475/PRES-TRANS/PM/MDATDS/MJDHRI on general mobilisation and warning of 19 April 2023.

Ladies and Gentlemen!
 Efforts have been made, but mistakes abound!
 We must remain silent, but the future is uncertain;
 Mr Chairman, please listen to this heartfelt appeal!
 Free speech, reduce fear and barriers;
 Encourage a climate where the truth can be told;
 So together we can build a much fairer future (extract from *yaafa, Les séparables*, September 2023).

4. Discussing the Results

In this section, we analyse the elements of the communication situation of the artists' discourse by dealing with the identity of the partners in the discourse, the purpose of the exchanges, the content of the words and the material circumstances of the production of the message. On the other hand, we are interested in their positioning strategies, i.e. the strategies of legitimisation, credibility, capture and above all the discursive strategies used by artists to convince their audience. In various enunciative operations of engagement and disengagement, the artists refer to themselves using pronouns of the 1^{ere} person singular “mam, ‘maam (I, me, my)’ or the plural ‘d, tōndo (we, our, ours...)’ and the 2^e person singular ‘fo, foom (you, your)’ or the plural ‘y, ya, yā mba. (you, your)’”. According to (Bertrand, 2000: p. 58), clutching “installs discourse in the first person”, it is a “discourse with ‘I’”, while declutching is “the possibility of positing ‘they’, ‘then’ and ‘elsewhere’”.

Sometimes, in the songs of *Les séparables*, the two artists of the group address each other by name. For example, Moussa petit sergent, in an interlocutory speech, addresses Amidou le doux as follows: Amidou, fo miim bu...Amidou, did you know that... and vice versa. In engaged discursive constructions, the artists involve the listeners, their music lovers by using the plural personal pronouns “tōndo (we) and yāmba (you)”; both pronouns referring to the people of Burkina Faso. This is to say that they share the people's current concerns. In a disengaged enunciative construction, the artists use sobriquets to refer to the Burkinabe leaders who have been in charge of the state for the last ten (10) years; a period characterised by growing insecurity, terrorism and regime changes at the top of the state following an insurrection, an election and coups d'état. Thus, we have a Ablaase; ekōlā fondatɛɛre “Blaise; the founder of the school” to refer to ex-president Blaise Compaoré ousted from power following a popular uprising in 2014 after twenty-seven (27) years of undivided rule; Naaba “the chief”, Ruki-baaba “Rouki's father” to designate ex-president Rock Marc Christian KABORE who was elected in 2015 and re-elected in 2020 for a second term, but who was ousted from power by a coup d'état on 24 January 2022 which brought Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba to power. The latter is known by the sobriquets Chef de classe; Damso, zenɔm a ye sɛn be sakā puga “a young person who is in the neighbourhood”, Moise du Burkina, the poet. The latter lost power following the

coup of 30 September 2022, which brought the current President of Faso, Captain Ibrahim Traoré, to power.

In any discourse, the speaker chooses to reach his target by setting himself a certain number of objectives or aims. These objectives or goals are expressed in terms of aims. In his theory of the communication situation (Charaudeau, 2001) identifies six types of aim: the aim of “prescription”, the aim of “solicitation”, the aim of “incitement”, the aim of “information”, the aim of “instruction” and the aim of “demonstration”. As a result, we find that artists’ speeches are marked by several aims or objectives, including the aim of “incitement”, “instruction”, “demonstration” and “prescription”. They encourage people to change their behaviour with regard to the security and socio-political situation. In terms of security, the aim is to draw the attention of city dwellers to the fact that terrorism is a reality. While city dwellers are living peacefully, in the countryside it’s a free-for-all. Farmers are evicted, stripped of all their possessions, their herds are stolen, food stores are emptied and burnt, and so on. In town, on the political front, small groups of individuals set up new political parties hoping to regain power when the time came. Underground negotiations to form military corporations to carry out new coups d’état are multiplying. The intelligence services and the military justice system are working hard to arrest any plotters who want to undermine state security. Life is getting more expensive, the price of fuel is rising, the price of basic necessities is going up, and taxes to support the “peace effort” are multiplying. Arrests and forced military conscription of many citizens are commonplace. Some media outlets with dissenting voices have been punished, suspended and eventually closed down, as in the case of the newspaper *L’Évènement*, whose editor is still languishing in prison on charges of plotting against state security. For artists, the “incitement” strategy consists of encouraging people to become more aware, to change their behaviour and face reality. “Instruction” consists of educating people on the basis of real-life situations. “Demonstration” is based on facts, reality and people’s daily lives, while “prescription” is an invitation to vigilance and solidarity to defeat terrorism and support the authorities by working with the forces of law and order and security, among others.

In terms of audience, we can say that the two comedy groups are much more listened to by the younger fringe of the population. Their songs are recorded and published on the YouTube platform, which is a digital platform followed mainly by Burkinabè youth. Each song registers between 10,000 and 90,000 kilos of views. For a bigger audience, the artists are sometimes invited to perform at official ceremonies attended by the country’s highest authorities. A case in point is the performance by the group “*Les séparables*” at the closing ceremony of the Ouagadougou Pan-African Film and Television Festival (FESPACO) on March 5, 2024, attended by the President of Faso, Captain Ibrahim Traoré. This shows that these artists’ discourse is of interest to the country’s highest authorities.

The content of the artists’ comments deals with several themes. We have grouped them together in **Table 1**:

Table 1. Table showing the corpus of songs from the separables chosen for the study.

N°	Song title	Topics covered	The languages used
I. Songs from <i>Les séparables</i>			
1.	<i>Africa 20.20</i> . Released on 18 April 2022	Insecurity, corruption, repression, imprisonment, reduced freedom of expression	The languages used are mainly Mooré, French and, to a lesser extent, English.
3.	<i>Demande d'explication</i> , released in March 2022	Untimely demonstrations by civil society against insecurity, many public conferences by civil society, debacle of the national football team at the African Cup of Nations, disagreements within the national football federation, etc.	
4.	<i>Burkina Façon</i> , released in April 2022	Insecurity, political instability, political nomadism	
5.	<i>PPS</i> , released in May 2022	The sterile multiparty system, political nomadism and demagoguery in politics in Burkina Faso	
6.	<i>Une lettre pour Laye</i> , released in May 2022	Bad governance, coups d'état, high living costs, acts of terrorism and large-scale killings, mass displacement of people in rural areas	
7.	<i>Meeting activated</i> , to be released in July 2022		
8.	<i>The balance sheet</i> , released on 6 September 2022	Insecurity, poor governance, financial mismanagement, corruption	
9.	<i>7commandements</i> , released on 04 October 2022	Political instability in Burkina Faso	
10.	<i>Super 91</i> , released on 05 January 2023	Fuel shortages, rising fuel prices and transport costs	
11.	<i>Voun vouni</i> , released on 2 April 2023	Forced enlistment of civilians as volunteers for the defence of the country, mass mobilisation of the population in the Place de la Révolution and around the roundabouts to defend the current government.	
12.	<i>In this country...</i> , released on 28 July 2023	Increased taxes to support the peace effort, higher cost of living	
13.	<i>Yaafa</i> , released on 17 September 2023	Repression of individual and collective freedoms, forced military conscription of civilians, high living costs	
II. The <i>Dabross</i> song feat El-Présidenté BF			
14	<i>The SOAMBA Refoundation - national conference</i> , released on 16 October 2022	Insecurity in the countryside, the good life in the city, political squabbles, coups d'état	Mooré and French

Source: (Sawadogo & Ouedraogo, 2022), modified and adapted by Zagre and Sawadogo.

These themes are inspired by current socio-political events in the country. The content of the messages is rooted in reality, and they are broadcast in the country's most important languages, Mooré and French, which means they reach a much

wider audience.

In their positioning strategies, i.e. strategies for legitimisation, credibility and capture, the artists use a number of means and techniques. The humourists who form the groups “*Les séparables*” and “*Dabross feat El-Présidenté BF*” are artists registered with the Bureau Burkinabè des Droits d’Auteurs (BBDA). Moussa petit sergent, whose real name is Moussa Ouédraogo, is a comedian and humourist from Burkina Faso working in the field of humour and theatre. In 2016, he was awarded the RFI Talent for Laughter Discovery prize. He is using this media exposure to perform musical parody with his all-time sidekick Amidou le doux. Amidou is a musician, pianist and drummer who plays for many of Burkina Faso’s musical artists, including Floby. As for *Dabross*, he is a singer-songwriter in the national language. *El présidente BF* is a Burkinabè comedian who does impersonations and jokes. So their status as well-known artists registered with the BBDA gives them the legitimacy and credibility they need to perform and tell the truth and current affairs in a comic way without necessarily being worried by the law. As we mentioned in the previous table, their languages of communication are mainly Mooré and French, which are the country’s most important vehicular languages. Their discourse is based on the country’s socio-political reality and current affairs. The discursive strategy they use is comedy and musical parody, which consists of telling the truth, raising awareness and encouraging a change in behaviour while having fun.

There is no difference in register or content between the two comedy groups. They use the same languages, French and Mooré, and deal with the same themes: insecurity, bad governance, the high cost of living, restrictions on freedom, and so on. However, the group “*Les séparables*” are much more present on the music scene through the various songs they produce and the different performances they organize.

5. Conclusion

At the end of our reflection, we note that the artists who form the groups “*Les séparables*” and “*Dabross feat El Présidente BF*” depict the socio-political situation in Burkina Faso, characterised by insecurity, a large number of internally displaced persons, high living costs, restrictions on freedoms and the forced enlistment of civilians as VDP. They describe the lives and actions of successive heads of state, while exposing the shortcomings of their political decisions and the unpopular political measures that led to their downfall. They call on the authorities to engage in dialogue, to strengthen the rule of law through freedom of expression, and to encourage citizens to enlist voluntarily in the defence of their country, among other things. For our part, the artists, reflections of society and spokespersons for the voiceless, have succeeded in subtly describing the socio-political situation in the country over the last ten years. However, to fight terrorism, we need to mobilise our forces. War has a price, and the sovereignty that the people want and advocate so much requires financial, material and human sacrifices, hence the

many taxes and levies that have to be paid. However, we must be wary of suffocating the population, which is languishing under the weight of the high cost of living; we must give preference to the legal system for settling disputes, because extra-judicial arrests and forced conscription of citizens to be sent to the front can, in the long term, lead to the disintegration of the social fabric.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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