

## **Protesting corruption: Assessing protest songs in the fight against corruption in Ghana**

This paper analyses the deployment of popular (protest) songs as a political tool to fight corruption in Ghana since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1992. Recent reports from CSOs in Ghana have revealed that the country loses \$3billion every year through corruption – accounting for about 300% of Ghana's yearly aidflows. Corruption has, therefore, been described as endemic by both elite policymakers and the people. Governments have rhetorically committed to zero-tolerance of corruption and, in 2018, the African Union declared a year of anti-corruption themed "Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation". The reactions, blames and resolution approaches have been diverse – including how this has been perceived by the citizenry, evidence by data from the series of corruption perception surveys. Although policymakers in Ghana are consistently framing laws and policies such as the Office of the Special Prosecutor to deal with corruption, citizens have adopted nuanced ways of calling-out public officers and holding them to account. One of the most dominant ways this happens is through popular music – moreso because music is an essential component of African community life, permeating all sectors of society and plays a critical role in being used to speak against all ill-doings of holders of power. While music has historically been an expressive tool of communication in Ghana, its practical impacts on politics and addressing corruption-related issues has not been given enough systematic attention. Using a qualitative method involving in-depth interviews and textual analysis of selected songs on corruption, this paper argues that these songs have deepened the consciousness and demands of Ghanaians towards public officers. As a tool for political participation, it has made public officers more aware of these demands and contributed immensely to sustaining Ghana's democracy for three decades.

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