Ghana's adjustment experience: The paradox of reform

Ghana has been widely quoted as an example of successful adjustment in Africa. This has been followed more recently by a successful transition to democracy. This book, co-published with James Currey/Heinemann/Woeli, constitutes an in-depth analysis of what factors have impelled these changes and how they can be interpreted.

Between 1983 and 1993 Ghana underwent two revolutions, each of which required the ruling regime to remake itself. The first was 'market opening'. The second was that of 'political liberalization' and originated not with the regime but with a reawakening of civil society, which had been repressed and depoliticized by the ruling regime in the process of economic restructuring. Ghana's case has come to focus many of the controversies about adjustment in Africa. Eboe Hutchful concludes that Ghana's adjustment strategy was flawed and unsustainable as well subject to frequent revision by the international financial institutions. What would have been the difference in performance if adjustment had not been initiated? What is the actual role of policy changes in determining economic outcomes? What is the effect of time-lag? What is the relationship between macroeconomic and microeconomic performance and between stabilization and adjustment?

Ghana has arguably been more successful with stabilization than with adjustment. In a nuanced and subtle analysis, full of sound-minded independent judgements, the author offers insights into the central questions: 'Success' in relation to what? 'Success' from whose point of view?

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Democracy is consolidating across Africa. Free and contested elections are increasingly the norm rather than the exception, and we are experiencing peaceful turnovers of power from incumbents to challengers. Notwithstanding the benefits of democracy, though, some aspects of the democratic process in Africa can insert inefficiencies in policy formulation and implementation. The example of Ghana during my time as the convener of the economic advisory council (2009-2012) and as the senior presidential economic adviser (2009-2016) provides an illustration. Author: Cadman Atta Mills. Former World B