

## George Adu, PhD. (1977-2019): The Social Planner goes home...

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Dr. George Adu, a pioneering and dynamic Associate Editor of the *African Review of Economics and Finance*, has died at the prime age of 42. His contributions to the economics of natural resources, much like W.S. Jevons, a towering figure in natural resource economics, will be missed by both admirers and critics.

Not only was Dr. Adu's support for this journal unwavering and long-standing, it was also *épatant*. Together with Imhotep Paul Alagidede and Franklin Obeng-Odoom, respectively the editor-in-chief and editor of this journal, Dr. George Adu announced the arrival of a new African economics by contributing to the maiden issue of this journal. At the time, the form and substance of frontier oil economies had become central points of contention in economics with a near consensus on entrusting Africa's resources into the invisible hands of the market to avoid what was understood to be state-based resource curse or a 'tragedy of the commons'.



*George defending his PhD thesis before the doctoral panel in 2012 at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.*

George Adu turned this conventional thinking on its head, instantly making him an intellectual rebel. He considered that the potential problems of oil were, in fact, to be found in the contradictions of the market and their inherent social costs such as pollution and the multi-scalar disruption of socio-ecological structures. What Dr. Adu advocated was for the firm to be socialised, not in terms of nationalisation, but by ‘imposing’ production quotas on oil firms. His approach, then, was to institute limits to drilling and mining markets.

Even within the socially optimal level for which the firm could be allowed to drill, Adu put the case for the regulation, indeed re-regulation, of technological activities, ecological footprint, and export which, for Dr. Adu, has to be delayed until world prices are favourable. Instead of selling oil by all means, the continent would be better off using its own resources domestically. This social planning of oil remains to-day neither left; nor right.

Thus, when I first got the opportunity in 2016 to meet this ‘Social Planner’ at another maiden event: the *African Review of Economics and Finance* Conference in Kumasi, I was curious to learn more about such an original thinker. Although

‘Mild mannered, he was respectful, acutely attentive, deeply reflective, and crystal clear in his exposition’.

*Franklin Obeng-Odoom*



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