

GBADEBO ODULARU

Ph.D., FREcon

Applied Economist · Fellow of the Royal Economic Society · Sustainable Development Leader

A BIOGRAPHY

In the annals of modern development economics, few scholars have left as wide and enduring an imprint across as many continents, institutions, and disciplines as Gbadebo Odularu. A Fellow of the Royal Economic Society (FREcon), a two-time Oxford Visiting Scholar, a United Nations and World Trade Organization Fellow; and one of the most prolific African economists of his generation, Odularu has spent more than a quarter-century transforming ideas into policy, research into impact, and institutions into engines of change.

BY THE NUMBERS

190+ Publications **70+** Countries **15** Edited Books

12+ Journal Editorships **15+** Professional Organizations **25+** Years of
Global Experience

I. ROOTS OF EXCELLENCE: FORMATION OF A SCHOLAR

Gbadebo Odularu's intellectual journey began at one of Nigeria's most prestigious institutions, the University of Ibadan, where he earned his Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Economics between 1993 and 1999. It was there that his foundational curiosity — rooted in the intersection of trade, markets, and human development — first took shape. He went on to earn a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics from the same institution, with a thesis examining the impact of trade liberalization on national food security in Nigeria across four transformative decades (1960–2000).

His doctoral journey culminated at the University of Sunderland in the United Kingdom, where he earned his Ph.D. in Regional Economic Development in 2013. His thesis—An Economic Development Strategy for West Africa: Lessons and Policy Directions—foreshadowed a career defined by a singular commitment: using rigorous economic science to advance sustainable development across the African continent and beyond.

II. OXFORD, THE WTO & THE WORLD: A SCHOLAR WITHOUT BORDERS

In March 2008, he became a visiting researcher at the Economic Research and Statistical Division of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland. This distinction established him as one of Africa's foremost emerging voices on international trade.

He subsequently earned not one, but two visiting scholarships at the University of Oxford. From 2010 to 2011, he held a visiting scholar position under the prestigious JAE program at the Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE), and from 2012 to 2013 at the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment. He also became a Senior Associate Member of St Antony's College, Oxford — completing a remarkable dual Oxford fellowship that very few scholars anywhere in the world can claim.

In 2011, Odularu was named the inaugural recipient of the IDEP Abdul-Raheem Tajudeen Fellowship at the United Nations Institute for Development Economics Planning (UNIDEP) in Dakar, Senegal. He was also a Visiting Fellow at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) in Seoul in 2009, 2010, and 2013—building bridges across the global South with the same ease he built them between the academy and the policy arena. He was additionally a Scholar at the Centre for European Integration Studies (ZEI) at the University of Bonn, Germany, in 2007 and received a WTO Doctoral Support Programme Fellowship in 2008.

III. SHAPING TOMORROW'S ECONOMISTS: THE TEACHING LEGACY

Odularu is, at his core, an educator—one whose classroom reaches from Washington, D.C., to Lagos, from Stockholm to Seoul. Since 2023, he has served on the faculty of the Department of Economics at Howard University, Washington, D.C., one of the most storied Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States. There, he teaches courses spanning Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory, Econometrics, Labor Economics, International Economics, Development Economics in Africa, and Principles of Economics — shaping the next generation of economists with the same depth and breadth of global experience he has accumulated over three decades.

His professorial journey spans an extraordinary range of institutions: Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, Virginia (2021–2023); Bay Atlantic University, Washington, D.C. (2019–2021); Marymount University, Arlington, Virginia (2015–2016); American Heritage University in Southern California (2009–2016); and Covenant University in Nigeria, where he supervised 60 undergraduate theses and guided over 1,200 students annually between 2003 and 2008. He has

also lectured online for Covenant University and supervised MSc theses at Lund University, Sweden (2020–2024), in addition to serving as Guest Professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea (2009–2010).

In recognition of his contributions to pedagogical innovation, Howard University awarded Odularu a Faculty Artificial Intelligence Grant (2024–2025), making him a co-investigator on cutting-edge research at the intersection of AI and academic life. He serves as Deputy Advisor of the Omicron Delta Epsilon (ODE) economics honor society at Howard and as Faculty Advisor to the Howard Model United Nations (HUMUN) program. In March 2026, he led Howard University students on a pioneering Study Abroad course in Development Economics in Geneva, Switzerland—taking the Howard University classroom to the very heart of global economic governance.

IV. THE POLICYMAKER: FROM ACCRA TO THE AMERICAS

If the academy is where Odularu thinks, Africa is where he acts. From 2008 to 2016, he served as Regional Policies and Markets Analyst at the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)—the continental body mandated to drive agricultural research across 54 nations. Based in Accra, Ghana, he co-managed a World Bank-funded program of approximately US\$2 million annually, coordinated high-level policy dialogues with the African Union, ECOWAS, NEPAD, IFPRI, and the WTO, and produced ministerial policy briefs delivered directly to Africa's Ministers of Agriculture, Science, and Technology. He briefly served as Acting Executive Director of FARA from July 16 to 26, 2010—a testament to the trust his peers and senior leadership placed in his judgment.

Between 2015 and 2020, he served as a Senior Regional Development Planning Consultant with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), working across Benin, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, and Zambia under the 10th Tranche Development Account Project to strengthen accountability and evidence-based policymaking. In 2017, he was a Senior Fellow and Researcher under the ACP-EU / Landell-Mills / REPOA project in Tanzania and Zanzibar, and in 2018, a Senior Researcher for the African Development Bank and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy on rice value chains and agro-industrialization in Senegal.

His policy footprint extends to the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the OECD/Sahel & West African Club (SWAC), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), and the ECOWAS Economic Policy Analysis Unit as principal or co-principal investigator on research grants driving continental development policy.

V. THE STATESMAN: LEADING THE AFRICAN FINANCE AND ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION

Among the many crowns Gbadebo Odularu wears, perhaps none is more consequential to the future of African economic thought than his presidency of the African Finance and Economics Association (AFEA). Serving as President-Elect from 2022 to 2023 and then as President from 2024 to 2025—before ascending to Board Chair in 2026—Odularu has steered AFEA to new levels of visibility and influence on the global economic stage.

Under his leadership, AFEA has convened landmark annual conferences at the University of Ghana in Accra (2024) and the University of Nairobi in Kenya (2025), attracting distinguished economists, central bank officials, policymakers, and development leaders from across the continent and the diaspora. He has presided over AFEA sessions at the American Economic Association (AEA) Annual Meetings—the world's most prestigious gathering of economists—in New Orleans (2023), San Antonio (2024), San Francisco (2025), and Philadelphia (2026), consistently positioning African economic voices at the very center of global academic discourse.

Since January 2020, Odularu has also served as Chief Editor and Curator of the AFEA and Journal of African Development (JAD) Research and Opportunity Bulletin (AJROB) — a platform disseminating cutting-edge African economic research to scholars and practitioners worldwide.

VI. THE SCHOLAR'S PEN: A LEGACY IN PRINT

With over 190 publications — including more than 60 peer-reviewed articles, 15 edited books, 15 policy briefs, 40 dialogue and consultancy reports, and more than 100 workshop reports — Gbadebo Odularu commands one of the most substantial bibliographies in contemporary African economic scholarship. His edited volumes bear the imprint of Springer, Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, and SAGE — the most respected houses in academic publishing.

Among his most noteworthy works are *Agricultural Transformation in Africa* (Springer, 2023); *Socioeconomic Shocks and Africa's Development Agenda* (Routledge, 2022); *Strategic Policy Options for Bracing Nigeria for the Future of Trade* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2020); *Scaling up SDGs Implementation* (Springer, 2020); and *Negotiating South-South Regional Trade Agreements* (Springer, 2017). A major new volume—*Behavioral Cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence Relational Dynamics in the African Context*—is forthcoming from Springer Nature in 2026, signaling his frontier engagement with AI security and digital economics.

His peer-reviewed articles have appeared in Taylor & Francis journals, the *Review of Development Economics*, the *Sage Review of the Black Political Economy*, and dozens of other international outlets. He serves on the editorial boards of more than 12 journals and has refereed

publications across the full spectrum of development, agricultural, trade, health, and labor economics.

VII. THE FUTURIST: AI, DIGITAL ECONOMICS & THE NEXT FRONTIER

Gbadebo Odularu has never been content to dwell only in established paradigms. As the world confronts the transformative—and disruptive—power of artificial intelligence, he stands at the vanguard of economists studying its implications for labor markets, health systems, digital sovereignty, and economic equity. In 2024, he served as an AI/ML Mentor for the NIH AIM-AHEAD and NCATS Health Data Science Training Program at the National Institutes of Health. He was named a co-investigator on Howard University's Faculty Artificial Intelligence Grant (2024–2025) and is a participant in the university's ongoing AI Curriculum Development Initiative.

His current research agenda includes studies on the economics of mobile applications, hidden inequalities in digital health markets, social media influence on dietary disparities, and — most strikingly — the losers and winners of artificial intelligence for labor market disparities in the United States. These are not merely academic inquiries; they are the questions that will define economic policy for the coming generation.

VIII. HONORS THAT DEFINE A CAREER

The honors Gbadebo Odularu has received read like a catalogue of the world's most distinguished institutions. In 2024, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Economic Society (FREcon) — one of the most venerable economics societies in the world, founded in 1890. He is also a Fellow of the Global Labor Organization (2023–present), a Fellow of the National Economic Association under its Diversity Initiative for Tenure in Economics (2016–2017), and a non-resident Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA-Africa) and a Research Fellow at the African Studies Centre Leiden (ASCL), Leiden University, The Netherlands.

He was named to the Nigeria Leadership Initiative (NLI) — a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network — in 2011. He chaired the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN) National Fruits and Vegetable Nutrition Council (2022–2023) and was recognized as the Most Popular Professional Staff by FARA in 2009/2010. In 2025, he was elected National Vice President of Omicron Delta Epsilon (ODE), the international honor society in economics.

IX. THE MENTOR: INVESTING IN AFRICA'S NEXT GENERATION

Odularu's commitment to the next generation of scholars is not peripheral — it is foundational to his identity as a leader. As the Pioneer Regional Coordinator of the Young Professionals for Agricultural Research and Development for Africa (YPARD-Africa), he grew the network from 5 national chapters to 18 countries and increased annual funding from zero to US\$80,000, while championing youth engagement in agro-entrepreneurship, climate adaptation, and agricultural innovation across the continent.

He has served as a Mentor in the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP) mentoring program, working to increase the completion of doctoral degrees by underrepresented minorities and diversify the economics profession. He has also mentored entrepreneurs through the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme (TEEP) and served as a dissertation reviewer and external assessor for universities in South Africa, Sweden, and Nigeria.

A LEGACY STILL BEING WRITTEN

What makes Gbadebo Odularu remarkable is not any single achievement—though each, taken alone, would distinguish a career. It is the totality of his contribution: the span of his intellectual ambition, the depth of his commitment to Africa's people, the relentlessness of his engagement across borders and disciplines, and the grace with which he has worn the weight of leadership.

From the lecture halls of Howard University to the corridors of the World Trade Organization; from the villages of West Africa where rice farmers await better policies to the boardrooms of Springer and Routledge, where transformative books are born, from Oxford's dreaming spires to the teeming ambition of YPARD's young African professionals—Gbadebo Odularu has been present, purposeful, and consequential.

He is a scholar who has turned knowledge into justice, a leader who has turned institutions into movements, and a mentor who has turned potential into power. His story is not yet finished — and therein lies the most exciting fact of all.
