

Ngo Van Long

Ngo Van Long passed away peacefully on 15 January 2022 at the age of 73 years, after a months-long serious illness. Until his very last moment he worked hard to finish various papers he was writing together with co-authors. During the past three years he had accelerated his already relentless output of scientific papers, publishing no less than 13 studies in 2020 alone and having another four papers forthcoming.

Long was born in the city of Quảng Bình, Vietnam and was raised by his mother and his grandparents in the beautiful former imperial city of Huế, located in the demilitarized zone south of the demarcation line between the two parts of the then-divided country. In Huế he attended the prestigious Quốc Học High School, specialising in philosophy and literature. He won two national high school competition prizes in philosophy and French.

He escaped the war, using the opportunity presented by a Colombo Plan scholarship offer, and went to Australia in 1967 to study at La Trobe University in Melbourne. There he met his beloved wife Kim, with whom he had two children.

Long was his given Vietnamese surname, but it also served as the family name in the English-speaking world, while the true family name was Ngo. Van is another given surname.

After completing his BA, Long attended Australian National University in Canberra for his MA. There he also received his Ph. D. and was appointed as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader and ultimately full Professor. After 17 years in Canberra, he moved to McGill University, where he taught for the last 33 years. He had numerous doctoral students and taught many courses in International Trade, Open Economy Macro, Resources and Environmental Economics, Micro, Dynamic Optimization and Differential Games as wells as other topics.

In Australia, Long captured the attention of Murry Kemp, Australia's most prominent economist in a generation, who at the time taught at the University of New South Wales in Sydney and who influenced Long significantly. Some 45 years ago, Murry Kemp once told me that Long was the best student he had ever had.

With Kemp, Long co-authored many beautiful papers on trade and resource economics. They belonged to the pioneers in this field in the 1970s and early 1980s. Their books "Essays in the Economics of Exhaustible Resources" (1984) and "Exhaustible Resources, Optimality and Trade" (1980) served as landmarks, encouraging many scholars to follow their footsteps including me. The two authors also published many joint papers in this field in leading international journals.

Long's specialization was intertemporal economics based on highly theoretical models, using sophisticated mathematical methods in static dynamic optimization as well as differential games. Long's expertise in this field was so great that he even wrote books about the techniques. His co-authored books "Differential Games in Economics and Management Science" (2000) and "Optimal Control Theory and Static Optimization in Economics" (1992) have been frequently cited and are considered as seminal contributions to the field.

Long applied his superior mathematical skills to a large number of diverse economic problems including endogenous growth and trade, the political economy of customs duties, lobbying, outsourcing, government procurement, infant industry protection, vertical integration and double marginalization, income distribution, inflation, foreign aid, the international debt crisis, the Vietnamese economy, fisheries, forestry, trade unions, unemployment, systems competition, rent seeking, foreclosure, R&D, drugs, true economic depreciation of natural resources, public goods, corruption, service outsourcing, voting, immigration, media and fake news. Scholars of a large variety of topics, who themselves may be more narrowly focused, are well advised to see what Long wrote on their topic before they take up their own pen.

Long described himself as an applied economist. This is true in a certain sense only, because he always built formal theoretical models to capture the economic essence of the real-life problems involved. He was not much interested in numerical data, but preferred to derive robust propositions and statements about economic mechanisms with general models that did not need many numbers to be validated. The truth is that Long was a first-rate economic theorist who also applied his results to the real world.

Practical skills were not Long's forte. He was a scientist throughout, and when he was helping his wife at home, his thoughts were usually drifting away to one of the many facets and corners of his complicated mind, envisioning yet more papers to write. Vacuum cleaning could take hours and would risk destroying the carpet.

Long was one of the eminent economic scholars of this world, a true cosmopolitan of his time. He published more than 200 papers in peer-reviewed journals, including *Econometrica*, *Journal of Economic Theory*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Economic Journal*, *International Economic Review*, *Journal of Public Economics*, *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, *European Journal of Political Economy* and *European Economic Review*. He wrote 68 book chapters and published 8 books, mostly in renowned publishing houses. Long's citation record is outstanding.

Long's most frequently cited applied paper, "Resource Extraction under the Uncertainty about Possible Nationalization", was published as early as 1975 in the *Journal of Economic Theory*. He showed elegantly that resource owners who fear a

nationalization of their resource stocks will speed up extraction to secure their wealth. Because important carbon dioxides like oil and natural gas are located in politically unstable countries, this is important since it implies that extraction is too quick not only because of the climate externality but also because of the uncertainty about the resource owners' property rights. Long at that time did not write about climate, but the implication is obvious.

That paper also has a certain relationship to the Green Paradox literature to which Long contributed seven papers later in his career (2012-2018), because the announced destruction of the market for fossil fuels that results from enforcing green substitute technologies comes close to an announced nationalization of resource fields, inducing similar anticipation reactions.

During his career, Long travelled a lot with his family around the world, visiting places such as Munich, Aix-en-Provence, Kobe and Kunitachi. In recent years Japanese universities were his favorite destinations. But Long also occasionally returned to his homeland, giving free invited lectures in various places and taking the opportunity to visit the family graves.

CESifo owes a particular tribute to Long who was one of its first and most active network members. From 1996, he visited CES five times for extended periods to give graduate lectures, participated in nearly 30 CESifo Area conferences and served as ifo Research Professor from 2010 on. During these contacts he always interacted intensely with the faculty and the students, providing valuable inspiration to their work.

I first met Long in the second half of the 1970s at Mannheim University, where he cooperated closely with Horst Siebert in the field of environmental and resource economics, which influenced my own research significantly. I will not forget this polite, reserved colleague who at the same time appeared very determined and knowledgeable. In the plaid light gray suit that was his trademark in those years, he looked much more mature and serene than his peers. He wanted to find the truth as an unbiased scientist and serious scholar.

His death is unfathomable to me. I saw him regularly over the years, if with interruptions, and always enjoyed the superior knowledge and deep insights he shared with me on long walks through the countryside. For me Long has been a good friend and a stable and constant beacon. Such a beacon will not disappear upon closing the eyes, but last forever.

Hans-Werner Sinn