

Email: dgong005@ucr.edu

Phone: (951) 333-4255

Website: <https://dadasmash.github.io/dagong.github.io>

Research Interests

Political Economy, Development Economics, Culture and Institution,
Labor Economics, Applied Machine Learning

Education

Ph.D. Candidate, Economics UC Riverside	Sep. 2018 – Present Riverside, CA
M.A., History Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)	Sep. 2015 – Jun. 2018 Beijing, China
B.A., Business Administration Hunan University	Sep. 2011 – Jun. 2015 Changsha, China

Job Market Paper

Formation and Evolution of Beliefs: Famine Experience and Trust in Neighbors

with Zhian Hu and Chuanchuan Zhang

This paper examines how a traumatic experience across differential cultural configurations, can shed light on norms of risk sharing and community cultural persistence, in the context of Great Chinese Famine (1959-1961). We use cross mortality-clan-cohort variations and a difference-in-difference-in-differences method to study the evolution of clan culture values in the wake of the Famine. Our finding documents that the famine exposed cohort that live in a stronger clan county report higher level of trust in their clan members, relative to the people who didn't perceive a severe famine. Our findings are robust to a set of placebo tests and robustness check. The results remain stable for dynamic effects models. This paper contributes to literature on the effects on traumatic experience by focusing on a particular aspect, i.e., the formation and evolution of personal belief.

Working paper

A Systematic Evaluation of the Economic Impacts of China's Zero-COVID Policies

reviewed and resubmitted, China Economic Review
with Zhuocheng Shang, Yaqin Su, Andong Yan and Qi Zhang

This paper presents the first investigation into the economic consequences of the zero-COVID policy implemented by the Chinese government as a pilot experiment in using big data for country management from 2020 to 2022. Our study includes an original county-daily panel data set on the COVID risk level issued by the State Council of the PRC. To measure economic activities, we use satellite data on night lights and PM2.5, and geographical data on mobility index. Our findings indicate that the zero-COVID policy did not result in significant economic loss in 2021. However, in 2022, when the Omicron variant emerged, stricter zero-COVID policy led to a 30% decline in mobility, a 1.17% decrease in PM2.5 and a 7.7% reduction in night lights. Based on our calculations, China experienced a 3.9% loss in GDP as a consequence of the implementation of the zero-COVID policy in 2022.

The Impacts of the Zero-Covid Policy on Academic Performance: Evidence for Primary and Secondary Students in China *submitted*

with Yaqin Su, Anping Xia, and Andong Yan

The outbreaks of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and subsequent lockdowns and school closures have caused varying degrees of academic disruptions for children. This paper exploits variation in the duration that cities were classified as medium- or high-risk areas to identify the effects of China's zero-COVID policy on the academic outcomes of children aged 6 to 15. Employing a difference-in-differences methodology and focusing on within-student changes in academic performance between pre- and early stages of the pandemic, we uncover robust evidence that the stringency of the zero-COVID policy is associated with significantly better mathematics performance for boys, while having no effects on girls. Mechanism analyses show that parental discipline is crucial for children's academic performance during COVID-19. Boys benefit more from parental discipline than girls, especially those with weaker noncognitive skills. In particular, a conscientious mother, coupled with an amiable father, seems to bring the best outcomes for the child.

Cost of Zero-Covid: Effects of Anti-contagious Policy on Labor Market Outcomes in China *submitted*

[Nomination For The Best Paper Award, [1st International Workshop on the Chinese Development Mode](#), 2022]

with Andong Yan and Jialin Yu

We study the effect of China's anti-contagious policy on labor market outcomes in 2020. By exploiting variation in the duration of the zero-Covid policy in China, which is triggered by the outbreak of new cases of COVID-19 in a 14-day observation window, we find that a 10% increase (3.7 days in average) in the duration of the zero-Covid policy caused the probability of unemployment to increase by around 0.1. We show that the disruption on the labor market majorly comes from the zero-Covid containment measures, while health shocks are trivial on the labor market outcomes. Moreover, the zero-Covid policy decreases the labor income and hours worked for employed individuals, and the policy effect is heterogeneous across demographic groups. We also examined the policy effect during different phases of the pandemic, and the results imply that the stringent clearance during the first stage of the pandemic (ended by Feb 17, 2020) caused the negative impacts on the labor outcomes, while the subsequent dynamic clearance strategy did not generate significant disruption on the labor market outcomes in 2020.

Governor Press Release Effects on Public Beliefs and Behaviors During a Pandemic

This research focuses on how politician's opinions, provided by local media, shape people's belief and behavior related to COVID. Specifically, how state governors' press release (analyzed by natural language processing), covered by local media, impact on people's social distancing response, belief in conspiracy theory and trust in COVID vaccines.

Other Publications & Technical Reports

Replication Report: A Comment on Gethin, Martínez- Toledano & Piketty (2022) *I4R Discussion Paper 19, 2023*
with Olle Hammar

Currency Usage in Huizhou Region Before and After Taiping Rebellion: Evidence from Account Books *Jianghai Academic Journal. 2023,(01), in Chinese*
with Weipeng Yuan

Work in progress

How does Air Pollution Affect Sleep? Survey and Social Media Evidence from the United States
with Jingyan Guo and Zhuocheng Shang

Awards & Honors

Dean's Distinguished Fellowship, UC Riverside 2018 - present
Travel Subsidy, Chinese Economists Society North American Conference 2023
Student Travel Grant, Graduate Student Association, UC Riverside 2022, 2023
Travel Grant, Department of Economics, UC Riverside 2022, 2023

Talks

2023

UCSD/UCLA/CIFAR Conference on Economic Development, Political Economy, and Culture; ACLEC at UCSB; UCSD Young Scholars Conference; MacRue; WEAI 98th; Data Science Pathways; CES North America Conference

2022

6th TextXD at UC Berkeley (cancelled); SEA 92th Annual Meeting; "The Impacts of Social Media on the Health of Individuals, Communities and Society" Workshop at UCR; 1st International Workshop on the Chinese Development Model; WEAI 97th Annual Conference; CES 2022 Annual Conference

2021

Applied Graduate Student Brownbag

2017

Seminar in China Economy at Harvard University

Research Assistant

China Gazetteer Project

Mentor: Richard B. Freeman, Harvard University Feb. 2017 – Dec. 2017
Collaborated with team members to digitize and clean data of Chinese county-level gazetteers and create a socio-economic database for post-1949 China.

Interviewed with gazetteer compilers and conducted qualitative research in the China's statistic criteria at county level.

Established a database of population and agriculture policies in China from 1949 to 2000.

Human Capital Transfers and Rural Enterprise Development

Mentor: Jie Bai, Harvard Kennedy School Oct. 2017 – Jan. 2018
Studied urban-rural migration shock during the Chinese sent-down movement between 1968 to 1976. A 2sls model is used to explore the impact on rural human capital and local firm performance.

**Teaching
Experience**

Lead Consultant
Graduate Quantitative Methods Center

Jan. 2023 – Present
UC Riverside

- Develop and present graduate level workshops on topics e.g. Staggered Difference-in-Difference, Testing for Parallel Trends, Bootstrapping, CLT, Natural Language Processing, Web-scraping, Stata, Python, R, Github, Latex and more.
- Conduct daily consultations in statistics and programming to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars from a variety of disciplines, including Economics, Public Policy, Political Sciences, Education, Psychology, Electrical Engineering, Biology, Ecology, and Humanities.

Instructor

Econ 143: Environmental Economics
Econ153: Labor Economics

UC Riverside
Summer B 2022
Summer A 2021

Teaching Assistant

Econ101: Statistics for Economics Fall 2020, Winter 2022, Spring 2022
Econ107: Introductory Econometrics Winter 2021, Fall 2021
Econ 104B: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory Spring 2021
Econ 105B: Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory Spring 2020
Econ103: Intermediate Macroeconomics for Business Fall 2019, Winter 2020
Econ135: The Stock Market Fall 2019, Fall 2022

Referee Service

SSM - Population Health

Skills & Personal

Programming Skills and Software

STATA, Python, R, ArcGIS, \LaTeX

Languages

English (fluent), Mandarin Chinese (native),

Citizenship

China, F-1 Visa