

Tengda Gong

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Agricultural and Development Economics, University of California, Davis, 2024

Dissertation: Welfare implications of market imperfections in agrifood systems.

Committee: [Michael Carter](#) (Chair), [Stephen Boucher](#), [Bulat Gafarov](#), and [Dalia Ghanem](#).

M.A., Economics, Xiamen University (China), 2017

B.S., Finance, University of Science and Technology of China, 2014

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Research: Agricultural, Development, and Environmental Economics, Empirical IO

Teaching: Finance (UG), Macro (UG), Micro, Econometrics, Agricultural and Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

The countervailing investment and rental-supply effects of securing land ownership: Theory and evidence from Nicaragua. An early draft available on my website [here](#).

Securing land ownership has long been hypothesized to bring about significant gains in both agricultural output and poverty reduction for rural economies endowed with unequal land ownership distributions. However, these win-win economic gains largely hinge on the premise that security improvement will simultaneously boost land-attached investments and increase land rental supply to facilitate land access for the rural poor. This paper argues that non-security barriers to long-term land rental contracts could break this premise by causing a countervailing interaction between the investment and rental-supply effects of securing land ownership. I provide suggestive evidence from Nicaragua, one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Recent panel data of rural household surveys show that after a plausibly exogenous improvement in land ownership security, previously-credit-unconstrained households significantly increased land-attached investments but not rented-out land, while previously-credit-constrained households did the opposite. These findings hold even for matched households based on their initial likelihood of being credit-constrained.

Secular rise and pro-cyclical variation in markups: Evidence from US grocery stores. Coauthored with [Bulat Gafarov](#) and [Jens Hilscher](#). An early draft available at [SSRN](#).

This paper documents substantial time variations in price elasticities of demand and implied price-cost markups for the US food retail sector. First, we employ a Hausman-type IV to estimate store-level own-price elasticities at the market-good-year level, using scanner data of US grocery stores from 2001 to 2020. Then, we efficiently aggregate these estimates by year to extract a common trend and cyclical variation in price elasticities. Finally, we impute nationwide store-level price-cost markups from annual elasticities following a standard monopolistic pricing rule. We find (i) a long-run increase in US grocery store markups of 3.9% per year in the past two decades and (ii) a short-term decrease of 13.6% per year during aggregate demand contractions. We also show that the underlying elasticities are largely driven by economic and market factors such as real GDP per capita, housing prices, population, and product differentiation.

ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

- *The countervailing investment and rental-supply effects of securing land ownership: Numerical evidence on welfare implications.*
- *Do organic food products have higher markups? Coauthored with [Bulat Gafarov](#) and [Jens Hilscher](#).*
- *The unintended impact of Brazil's environment-oriented credit policy on the drought-induced deforestation in the Amazon Biome. Coauthored with [Nilesh Shinde](#).*

OUTREACH PUBLICATIONS

Gafarov, Bulat, Tengda Gong, and Jens Hilscher. 2022. "[What price is right? Cigarette demand has become more responsive to prices.](#)" *ARE Update* 25(4): 9-11. The University of California Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics.

Gong, Tengda. 2014. "[The mechanization of farming on tiliu tian boosts transfers of chengbao tian: economic analysis and descriptive evidence from Chizhou, Anhui Province, China.](#)" *Journal of Translation from Foreign Literature of Economics (Chinese)*. 2(2014): 71-84.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

American Economic Association 2025 Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, Jan 2025 (*scheduled*)
Southern Economic Association 2024 Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, Nov 2024 (*scheduled*)
American Economic Association 2024 Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, Jan 2024
Southern Economic Association 2023 Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, Nov 2023
Chinese Economists Society 2023 North America Conference, Norman, Oklahoma, Apr 2023
Development Workshop, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia, Feb 2023
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association 2022 Annual Meeting, Anaheim, California, Aug 2022
Western Economics Association International 2022 Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, Jul 2022
Midwest Economics Association 2022 Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Mar 2022

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Davis
Econometric Theory and Applications: undergraduate; Summer 2022; 35 students
Students' evaluations of overall teaching effectiveness: 4.8/5 (response rate 71%)

Teaching Assistant, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Davis
Undergraduate courses:

- *Econometric Theory and Applications*: Winter & Spring 2022, Summer 2023; 45 students (avg.)
Students' evaluations of overall teaching effectiveness: 4.0/5 → 4.4/5 → 4.5/5
- *Financial Management of Firm*: Winter 2018, Winter & Spring 2019; 45 students (avg.)
Students' evaluations of overall teaching effectiveness: 3.9 → 4.1/5 → 4.5/5
- *Intermediate Microeconomics*: Fall 2018; 60 students
Students' evaluations of overall teaching effectiveness: NA

Graduate course:

- *Time Series Econometrics*: Fall 2020 & Winter 2021; 13 students on average
Students' evaluations of overall teaching effectiveness: 4.6/5 → 4.9/5

HONORS AND AWARDS

Research grant, the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Hatch project S-1072: U.S. Agricultural Trade and Policy in a Dynamic Global Market Environment, 2023
Best Teaching Assistant, Xiamen University (China), 2017
Best Master Thesis, Xiamen University (China), 2017
Outstanding Undergraduate Student, University of Science and Technology of China, 2014

JOURNAL REFEREE

American Journal of Agricultural Economics
Agricultural Economics
China Economic Studies (Chinese)

VOLUNTEER WORK

Co-editor for an online blog posting literature briefs in Res, Ag, Env, and Dev economics, 2021-present
Departmental representative, Graduate Student Association at University of California, Davis, 2018-2022