

Tengda Gong

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Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics
University of California, Davis
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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Agricultural & Development Economics, University of California, Davis, 2024 (*expected*)

Dissertation: Food demand dynamics in US grocery markets & agricultural production and poverty reduction effects of securing land ownership in Latin America.

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 Interests: Agricultural Economics, Development Economics, and Environmental Economics

Teaching Interests: Finance (undergraduate), Econometrics, Microeconomics, Agricultural & Development Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

Secular rise and pro-cyclical variation in markups: Evidence from US grocery stores. Available at [SSRN](#).

This paper documents substantial time variations in own-price elasticities of demand and implied markups. We develop a two-step procedure to identify time-varying markups. First, we employ Hausman's price IV to estimate price elasticities at the market-good-year level, using scanner data of US grocery stores from 2001 to 2020. Then, we efficiently aggregate these data by year to estimate a common trend and cyclical variation in elasticities and impute markups from them following a standard optimal pricing rule. We find (i) a long-run increase in U.S. 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. Our results imply that markups are pro-cyclical. Across markets, elasticities vary with socioeconomic factors that we expect to influence consumer preferences and market structure—real GDP, unemployment, and market concentration.

OTHER DISSERTATION CHAPTERS

The countervailing interaction between the investment and rental-supply effects of securing land ownership in unequal rural economies: Theory and evidence from Nicaragua. Available upon request.

Securing land ownership has been hypothesized to bring about significant gains in both agricultural output and poverty reduction for a rural economy endowed with unequal land ownership distribution. These win-win economic gains largely hinge on the following premise: Security improvement can simultaneously boost land-attached investments and increase land rental supply to facilitate land access for the poor. This paper, argues that, in theory, 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 also provide suggestive empirical evidence from Nicaragua, one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Recent household survey data in rural Nicaragua show: After an improvement in land ownership security, previously credit-unconstrained farmers are more likely to make land-attached investments but not rent out land, while previously credit-constrained farmers are more likely to do the opposite.

ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

- *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](#).
- *Climate change, supply chain, and trade: Evidence from California droughts.*

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 2024 Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, Jan 2024 (*scheduled*)
Southern Economic Association 93rd Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, Nov 2023 (*scheduled*)
Chinese Economists Society 2023 North America Conference, Norman, Oklahoma, April 2023
Development Workshop, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia, Remote, February 2023
Agricultural & Applied Economics Association 2022 Annual Meeting, Anaheim, California, August 2022
Western Economics Association International 97th Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, July 2022
Midwest Economics Association 86th Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 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
European Review of Agricultural Economics

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

REFERENCE CONTACTS

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Jens Hilscher (Coauthor)	jhilscher@ucdavis.edu	530-752-4081