

## Yini Zhang

Assistant Professor  
University at Buffalo, State University of New York  
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- EDUCATION**
- School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
Ph.D. in Communication (2016-2020) GPA: 4.0/4.0  
Minor: Educational Psychology (quantitative methods)  
*Dissertation: A network approach to understanding public attention, public opinion and communication flows in the digital media system (Thomas E. Patterson Best Dissertation Award)*  
Advisors: Dhavan Shah & Chris Wells  
Dissertation Committee: Lewis Friedland, Karl Rohe & Zhongdang Pan
- School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
M.A. in Mass Communication (2013-2016) GPA: 4.0/4.0
- School of Journalism and Communication, Renmin University of China**  
M.A. in Journalism (2012-2014) GPA: 3.92/4.0
- School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Beijing Normal University**  
B.A. in English Language and Literature (2007-2011) Summa Cum Laude
- PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS**
- Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, University at Buffalo**  
2020/09-present
- Honorary Fellow, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
2021/01-present
- Lecturer, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
2020/01-2020/05
- Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Statistics, University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
2018/06-2019/01
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison**  
2013/09-2018/05
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, School of Journalism and Communication, Renmin University of China**  
2013/02-2013/06
- Program Assistant, Office of China Affairs, University of Maryland, College Park**  
2011/06-2012/08
- JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS**
1. Zhang, Y., Chen, F. & Lukito, J. (accepted for publication). Networked amplification: The role of networked elites in information diffusion surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic on Twitter. *Political Communication*.

2. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F. & Rohe, K. (2022). [Social Media Public Opinion as Flocks in a Murmuration: Conceptualizing and Measuring Opinion Expression on Social Media](#). *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. doi:10.1093/jcmc/zmab021.
3. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Valenzuela, S. & Pevehouse, J. (2022). [Reactive and Asymmetric Communication Flows: Social Media Discourse and Partisan News Framing in the Wake of Mass Shootings](#). *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. doi: 10.1177/19401612211072793.
4. **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito J., Su, M.H., Suk, J., Xia, Y., Kim, S.J., Doroshenko, L., & Wells, C. (2021). [Assembling the networks and audiences of disinformation: How successful Russian IRA Twitter accounts built their followings, 2015-2017](#). *Journal of Communication*, 71(2), 305-331. doi: 10.1093/joc/jqaa042
5. Pelled, A., Lukito, J., Foley, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Sun, Z., Pevehouse, J., & Shah, D. (2021). [Death across the news spectrum: A time series analysis of partisan coverage following mass shootings in the U.S.](#) *The International Journal of Communication*, 15, 20.
6. Wells, C., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J. & Pevehouse, J. (2020). [Modeling the formation of attentive publics in social media: The case of Donald Trump](#). *Mass Communication and Society*, 23(2), 181-205. doi:10.1080/15205436.2019.1690664
7. Chen, F., **Zhang, Y.** & Rohe, K. (2020). [Targeted sampling from massive block model graphs with personalized PageRank](#). *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Statistical Methodology)*, 82(1), 99-126.
8. Lukito J., Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Doroshenko, L., Kim, S. J., Su, M-H., Xia, Y., Freelon, D., & Wells C. (2020). [The Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: How Russia's Internet Research Agency Tweets Appeared in US News as Vox Populi](#). *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 25(2), 196-216.
9. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Foley, J., Abhishek, A., Lukito, J., Suk, J., Kim, S.J., Sun, Z., Pevehouse, J., & Garlough, C. (2019). [Whose Lives Matter? Mass Shootings and Social Media Discourses of Sympathy and Policy, 2012-2014](#). *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 24(4), 182-202. doi:10.1093/jcmc/zmz009.
10. Suk, J., Abhishek, A., **Zhang, Y.**, Ahn, S.Y., Correa, T., Garlough, C. & Shah, D. (2019). [#MeToo, Networked Acknowledgement, and Connective Action: How "Empowerment Through Empathy" Launched a Social Movement](#). *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(2), 276-294. doi:10.1177/0894439319864882.
11. Xia, Y., Lukito, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Wells, C., Kim, S., & Tong, C. (2019). [Disinformation, performed: Self-presentation of a Russian IRA account on Twitter](#). *Information, Communication and Society*, 22(11), 1646-1664. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2019.1621921.
12. **Zhang, Y.**, Wells, C., Wang, S. & Rohe, K. (2018). [Attention and amplification in the hybrid media system: The composition and activity of Donald Trump's Twitter following during the 2016 presidential election](#). *New Media & Society*, 20(9), 3161-3182. doi:10.1177/1461444817744390.

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

1. Shah, D., **Zhang, Y.**, Pevehouse, J. & Valenzuela, S. (2021). Counter a Reactive Media System. In Hart, D. (Eds.), [Fixing American Politics: Solutions for the Media Age](#). Routledge.
2. Lukito, J., Wells, C., **Zhang, Y.**, Doroshenko, L., Kim, S.J., S, M.H., Suk, J., Xia, Y. & Freelon, D. (2018). [The Twitter Exploit: How Russian Propaganda Infiltrated U.S. News](#). [White paper]. Retrieved April 27, 2018, from University of Wisconsin-Madison.

3. **Zhang, Y.**, Wang, Y., Foley, J., Suk, J., & Conathan, D. (2017, July). [Tweeting Mass Shootings: The Dynamics of Issue Attention on Social Media](#). In *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Social Media & Society* (p. 59). ACM.

#### PAPERS UNDER REVIEW

1. Jiang, X., **Zhang, Y.**, Kim, J. & Shah, D. (R&R) Talking Past Each Other: Expression Polarization in Immigration Discourses on Twitter.
2. **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z., Yang, X., Chen, F. & Kwak, N. (R&R) How a Peripheral Ideology Becomes Mainstream: Strategic Performance, Audience Response, and Media Amplification in the Case of QAnon Twitter Accounts.
3. **Zhang, Y.**, Wong, J. C. S., An, Z., Brimmer, M.J., Joseph, K. & Yang, J. Z. (under review) Partisanship and Risk Talk on Twitter during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Republicans Discussed Risk More Frequently and Focused on Different Risk Targets than Democrats.
4. Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z., Wang, R., Dong, X., Yang, D., Lian, R. & Kwak, N. (under review) When the Personal Becomes Political: Unpacking the Dynamics of Sexual Violence and Gender Justice Discourses across Four Social Media Platforms.

#### WORK IN PROGRESS

1. **Zhang, Y.**, Suk, J., Yue, Z., An, Z., Yang, D., Wang, R., Dong, X. & Joseph, K. (in preparation) Mapping out Information Flow in the Social Media Ecosystem by Tracing Hyperlinks.
2. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F., Suk, J. & Yue, Z. (in preparation) WordPPR: A New Keyword Selection Method for Social Media Data Retrieval
3. **Zhang, Y.** & Jiang, X. (in preparation). Framing of Immigrants by the Right-wing Media Ecosystem: How Trump, Right-Wing Media, and Social Media Platforms Circulated Immigrants' General Negativity and Specific Threats.
4. Jiang, X., **Zhang, Y.**, Lian, X., Wang, Y. & Shah, D. (in preparation; Jiang & Zhang as equal first authors). Right-wing politician and media discourses outperform real-world indicators in driving expression of general negativity and specific threats about immigrants on Twitter and Facebook.
5. Fan, Y., **Zhang, Y.**, Zhang, S.F. & Shah, D. (in preparation) Who am I Connected with? Community Detection and Effects in an Online Peer-to-Peer Support Forum.
6. Yang, Y., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Kim, S.j., Foley, J. & Suk, J. (in preparation). The Chilling Effect of De-Platforming? Evidence from Trump Supporters Who Survived Twitter's Deplatforming post Jan. 6.

#### CONFERENCE PAPERS

1. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F., Suk, J. & Yue, Z. (2022) WordPPR: A New Keyword Selection Method for Social Media Data Retrieval. Paper presented at the fifth annual Politics and Computational Social Science (PaCSS), Boston, MA.
2. Yang, Y., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Kim, S.j., Foley, J. & Suk, J. (2022). The Chilling Effect of DePlatforming? Evidence from Trump Supporters Who Survived Twitter's Deplatforming post Jan. 6. Paper accepted for the 2022 Annual Conference of AEJMC, Detroit, MI.
3. **Zhang, Y.** (2022). Signaling Power: Attention Patterns of Heterogenous Networks in the #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #StopAsianHate Movements on Twitter. Paper presented at the 2022 Annual Conference of ICA, Hybrid.

4. **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z., Yang, X., Chen, F. & Kwak, N. (2022). Strategic Performance, Audience Feedback, and Media Amplification: An Analysis of the Behaviors and Influence of QAnon Twitter Accounts. Paper presented at the 2022 Annual Conference of ICA, Hybrid.
5. **Zhang, Y.**, Wong, J. C. S., An, Z., Brimmer, M.J., Joseph, K. & Yang, J. Z. (2022) Conservatives Talked about Risks in the COVID-19 Pandemic More Than Liberals Did: How Partisan Identities Shaped Risk Expression on Twitter. Paper presented at the 2022 Annual Conference of ICA, Hybrid.
6. Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z., Wang, R., Dong, X., Yang, D., Lian, R. & Kwak, N. (2022). "The personal is political": A cross-platform approach to how networked acknowledgment before and after MeToo transforms into politicization. Paper presented at the 2022 Annual Conference of ICA, Hybrid.
7. Kim, J. & **Zhang, Y.** (2022). Rhetoric of Polarization: Partisan Language in the Immigration Discourse on Twitter, 2014-2017. Paper presented at the 2022 Annual Conference of ICA, Hybrid.
8. Gupta, S. & **Zhang, Y.** (2022). Brand Polarization on Social Media: A Cross-Cultural Study Using Computational Approaches. Paper presented at the 2022 Annual Conference of ICA, Hybrid.
9. Jiang, X., **Zhang, Y.**, Lian, X., Dounane, A., Hando, L, Wang, Y. & Shah, D. (2022). Real or symbolic threat: How real-world indicators and symbolic discourses shape negative expression about immigration on social media. Paper presented at the 2022 Annual Conference of ICA, Hybrid.
10. **Zhang, Y.** (2021). Signaling Power: Attention Patterns of Heterogeneous Networks in the #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #StopAsianHate Movements on Twitter. Paper presented at the fourth annual Politics and Computational Social Science (PaCSS) conference, Virtual.
11. Fan, Y, **Zhang, Y.** & Zhang, S.F. (2021) Who am I Connected with? Community Detection and Effects in an Online Peer-to-Peer Support Forum. Paper presented at the Communicating Science, Health, Environment, and Risk Division of Annual Conference of AEJMC, Virtual.
12. Lukito, J., Wagner, M., **Zhang, Y.** & McGregor, S. (2021) Mixed Methods Public Scholarship in Political Communication. Research Panel Session at the Annual Conference of AEJMC, Virtual.
13. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F., Lukito, J., & Rohe, K. (2021) Networked amplification: The role of networked elites in information diffusion surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic on Twitter. Paper presented at the 2021 Annual Conference of ICA, Virtual.
14. Jiang, X., **Zhang, Y.**, Kim, J. & Shah, D. (2021) Talking Past Each Other: Expression Polarization in Immigration Discourses on Twitter. Paper presented at the 2021 Annual Conference of ICA, Virtual.
15. **Zhang, Y.** (2021) An actor-centered network approach to tracing communication flows in the hybrid and hyperpartisan media system. Paper presented at the 2021 AEJMC Winter Conference, Virtual.
16. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Valenzuela, S. & Pevehouse, J. (2020) A Reactive Media System: Mass Shootings in a Polarized Communication Ecology. Paper presented at the 2020 Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Virtual.

17. Suk, J., Abhishek, A., **Zhang, Y.** & Ahn, S.Y.. (2019). A Temporal Analysis of the #MeToo Movement Discourses. Paper presented at the 2019 Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Washington D.C, USA.
18. Lukito J., Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Doroshenko, L., Kim, S. J., Su, M-H., Xia, Y. & Wells C. (2018). Hero Day Twitter: How Russian Propaganda Infiltrated the U.S. Hybrid Media System. Paper presented at the 2018 Annual Conference of AEJMC. Washington, DC.  
**\*Top paper in Political Communication Interest Group paper competition and third place in the inaugural AEJMC Research Prize for Professional Relevance competition.**
19. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Foley, J., Abhishek, A., Pevehouse, J., Lukito, J., Kim, S., Suk, J., Yang, F. & Garlough C. (2018). The Features of Tragedy, Expressions of Sympathy, and Debates over Policy: A Time Series Analysis of Mass Shootings and Social Media Discourses. Paper presented at the 2018 Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Prague, Czech.
20. Wells, C., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J. & Pevehouse, J. (2018). The formation of attentive publics in the hybrid media system: How Donald Trump assembled his amplification machine. Paper presented at the 2018 Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Prague, Czech.
21. Suk, J, **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Su, M. & Foley, J. (2018). Tracing Twitter Buzz: Clustering Hashtags and Handles About Mass Shootings and Gun Control. Paper presented at the 2018 Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Prague, Czech.
22. Graves, L., Gunther, A., Pelled, A., Su, M., Wang, Y., & **Zhang, Y.** (2018). Effects of Fact Checks on Partisan Beliefs and Perceptions of Bias. Paper presented at the 2018 Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Prague, Czech.
23. Gunther, A., Graves, L., **Zhang, Y.**, Pelled, A., & Wang, Y. (2017). Effects of Fact Checks on Partisan Beliefs and Perceptions of Bias. Paper presented at the 2017 Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research Conference, Chicago, IL.
24. Yang, J., Sangari, A., Duncan, M., **Zhang, Y.**, ... & Wu, Y. (2017). Obamacare and political polarization on Twitter: An application of machine learning and social network analysis. Paper presented at the 2017 Annual International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, San Diego, CA.
25. **Zhang, Y.**, Wang, Y., Foley, J., Suk, J., & Conathan, D. (2017). Tweeting Mass Shootings —The Dynamics of Issue Attention on Social Media. Paper presented at the 2017 International Conference on Social Media and Society, Toronto, Canada.
26. **Zhang, Y.** & Wang, Y. (2016). When Others ‘like’ it: Hostile Media Effect in the Era of Social Media. Paper presented at the 2016 Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research Conference, Chicago, IL.
27. **Zhang, Y.** (2016). The power of commenting? Analyzing modes of Weibo users’ news comments in China. Paper presented at the 2016 Big Ten Mini-Conference, Iowa City, IA.

**GRANT  
ACTIVITIES**

**Collaborative Research: SAI-R: Integrative Cyberinfrastructure for Enhancing and Accelerating Online Abuse Research (2228616 and 2228617) (2022)**  
**National Science Foundation**  
 Co-PI \$750,000

**Proposal: Collaborative Research: Elements: Integrative Cyberinfrastructure for Enhancing and Accelerating Online Abuse Research (2021)**  
National Science Foundation  
Co-PI (not funded)

**Proposal: Countering New Waves of Online Hate in a Divisive and Rapidly Transitioning World (2021)**  
National Science Foundation  
PI (not funded)

**Proposal: Audiences, challengers, amplifiers and sources of misinformation (2021)**  
Institute for Data, Democracy & Politics, GWU  
PI \$10,000 (not funded)

**Proposal: (PIER) Hub for Reducing Drownings in the Great Lakes Region (2020)**  
National Science Foundation  
Co-PI \$5,000,000 (not funded)

**Project: Examining multi-platform communication flows (2018)**  
Northwestern University  
Team Lead \$2,000

#### AWARDS

**Thomas E. Patterson Best Dissertation Award.** American Political Science Association. (2021/07)

**Louise Elizabeth George Scholarship Fund.** University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2019/01 - 2019/12)

**Top paper in Political Communication Interest Group paper competition.** The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. (2018/08)

**Third place in the inaugural AEJMC Research Prize for Professional Relevance competition.** The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. (2018/08)

**Excellence in Teaching Award.** University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2017/03)

**Top Research Paper at Communication Crossroads.** University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2016/03)

#### MEDIA

**APPEARANCES** [What's the prevailing opinion on social media? Look at the flocks, UB researcher says](#) (March 21, 2022). *UBNow*.

[Rumble Mixes Cat Videos With Covid Misinformation — and the Right Is Loving It](#) (January 4, 2022). *RollingStone*.

[ALUM YINI ZHANG \(PHD'20\) WINS THOMAS E. PATTERSON BEST DISSERTATION AWARD](#) (October 8, 2021). *UW-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication*.

[On the internet, nobody knows you're a dog – or a fake Russian Twitter account](#) (July 16, 2021). *UBNow*.

[Chinese-made vaccines are being subject to misleading narratives](#) (May 11, 2021). *First Draft*.

Post-Shooting Sentiments ‘As Intense As They Are Fleeting’ (August 9, 2019). *PBS HERE AND NOW*.

Most major outlets have used Russian tweets as sources for partisan opinion: study (March 8, 2018). *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Why social media appeals after mass shootings have done little to change gun laws (February 20, 2018). *Washington Post*.

## INVITED TALKS

**New and emerging data tools.** The 2022 Digital Data Conference (D2C). The Social Science Research Council. April 14, 2022.

**Rooted in community and toward a personalized SJMC experience.** Keynote speech at the 2021 Communication Crossroads Conference. University of Wisconsin–Madison. March 12, 2021.

**A network approach to mapping out communication actors and tracing communication flows and influence.** Cutting-edge Communication Research at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research. University of Amsterdam. January 28, 2021.

**Computational communication research.** Computational Methods Class. University of Texas-Austin. December 2, 2020.

**Whose Lives Matter? Mass Shootings and Social Media Discourses of Sympathy and Policy, 2012-2014.** Presented to School of Journalism and Mass Communication Board of Visitors. University of Wisconsin–Madison. April 12, 2019.

## TEACHING

COM240 Introduction to Mass Communication. (Summer22) University at Buffalo.

COM686 Social Media & Big Data. (F21, S21) University at Buffalo.

COM485 Communication in the Network Society. (F21) University at Buffalo.

COM337 Communication Theory. (S22, S21, F20) University at Buffalo.

COM205 Research Methods. (S22, Summer21) University at Buffalo.

J566 Communication & Public Opinion (S20). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

J561 Mass Communication & Society (S18, as TA). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

J614 Communication & Public Opinion (F17, S17, S16, as TA). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

J201 Introduction to Mass Communication (F16, F13-F15, as (lead) TA). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

## SERVICES

At UB:

2022 Graduate Admissions Committee

Doctoral Dissertation Committee: Anita Kuei-Chun Liu, Sneha Gupta

Master's Thesis Committee: Yuren Ji

Outside UB:

2022 Committee on Thomas E. Patterson Best Dissertation Award (APSA)

2022 Committee on Information Technology and Politics Best Paper award (APSA)

## **JOURNAL REVIEWS**

Journal of Communication

Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication

New Media & Society

Political Communication

International Journal of Press/Politics

Public Opinion Quarterly

Mass Communication & Society

Social Media and Society

International Journal of Communication

Policy & Internet

Journalism Studies

Social Science Computer Review

Environmental Communication

Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology

## **CONFERENCE REVIEWS**

International Communication Association

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

## **SKILLS**

network analysis, natural language processing, data visualization, survey design, experiment design, multilevel analysis, time series modeling, structural equation modeling.

**PROGRAMMING** **R** (advanced), **Hadoop** (intermediate), **Java** (intermediate), **Python** (beginner), **SPSS** (advanced), **LaTeX**(intermediate), **Microsoft Excel** (advanced).  
**LANGUAGES & SOFTWARE**

(LAST UPDATED in August 2022)