

# Zhuofan Li

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## Employment

2024- Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Virginia Tech  
Faculty Affiliate, Department of Science, Technology, and Society  
Faculty Affiliate, Center for Future Work Places and Practices

## Education

2018-2024 Ph.D. in Sociology, University of Arizona  
Graduate Certificate in Computational Social Science  
Committee: Ronald Breiger (Chair), Corey Abramson, Joseph Galaskiewicz, Erin Leahey  
Dissertation: *Corporate Open Science and Relational Infrastructure in Artificial Intelligence Research*  
\*American Sociological Association Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant

2014-2018 B.A. in Sociology, *magna cum laude*, Franklin & Marshall College

## Research Interests

Digital Sociology; Social Networks; Economic Sociology; Organizations and Work; Science and Technology; Cultural Sociology; Computational Social Science

## Publications

### Journal Articles

- 2026 **Li, Zhuofan**, Daniel Dohan, and Corey Abramson. "Temporal Misalignment and Unequal Agency: What Terminal Cancer Patients Teach Us about Time and Inequality." Forthcoming in *American Sociological Review*.
- 2026 Abramson, Corey, Tara Prendergast, **Zhuofan Li**, and Daniel Dohan. "Qualitative Research in an Era of AI: A Pragmatic Approach to Data Analysis, Workflow, and Computation." Forthcoming in *Annual Review of Sociology* 52.
- 2024 Abramson, Corey, **Zhuofan Li**, Tara Prendergast, and Martín Sánchez-Jankowski. "Inequality in the Origins and Experiences of Pain: What 'Big (Qualitative) Data' Reveal about Social Suffering in the U.S." *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 10(5): 34-65.
- 2024 **Li, Zhuofan**. "When Being a Data Annotator Was Not Yet a Job: The Laboratory Origins of Dispersible Labor in Computer Vision Research." *Socius* 10 (Special Issue: Sociology of Artificial Intelligence): 10.1177/23780231241259617.
- 2021 **Li, Zhuofan**, Daniel Dohan, and Corey Abramson. "Qualitative Coding in the Computational Era: A Hybrid Approach to Improve Reliability and Reduce Effort for Coding Ethnographic Interviews." *Socius* 7: 10.1177/23780231211062345.

### Book Chapters

- 2025 **Li, Zhuofan** and Corey Abramson. "Ethnography and Machine Learning: Synergies and New Directions." Pp.245-272 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Machine Learning*,

edited by Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra and Christian Borch. Oxford University Press.

## Working Papers

Yoon, Eunsung and **Zhuofan Li**. “Embedding-based Synthetic Control for Causal Inference in Dynamic Networks.” Revise & Resubmit .

Johnson, Jennifer, Deirdre Condit, and **Zhuofan Li**. “Gender, Networks, and Disciplinary Culture: Rethinking Inclusion in Academic Departments.” Under Review .

**Li, Zhuofan**. “Selling Big Data Surveillance: The Relational Structure of Moral Economy in the Commodification of Facial Recognition Technology.”

Galaskiewicz, Joseph, Eunsung Yoon, Kathryn Freeman-Anderson, **Zhuofan Li**, Zheng Fu, Kristen Pogreba-Brown, Caleb Moore, Leila Barraza, and Wanjun Chen. “Neighborhood Establishments and the Transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus.”

## Selected Work in Progress

Book Manuscript: *Open Science and the Transformation of Corporate Power Behind the Global AI Industry*.

**Li, Zhuofan**. “Hyperbrokerage.”

**Li, Zhuofan**, Zheng Fu, and Jeffrey Tzu-Yu Shen. “Stop Citing Granovetter?! The Strength of Absent Ties in the Diffusion of “The Strength of Weak Ties.””

**Li, Zhuofan**. “Categorical Resistance to AI-Generated Content: Evidence from 30 Million Digital Fan Artworks.”

## Presentations

### Invited Talks

2026 “AI and Digital Ethnography.” Rutgers Digital Ethnography Working Group.

### Internal Talks

2024 “Performative Labor and Tokenism in the Corporate Boardroom.” Department of Sociology Colloquium, Virginia Tech.

### Conference Papers

2025 Yoon, Eunsung and Zhuofan Li. “Embedding-based Synthetic Control for Causal Inference in Dynamic Networks.” Paper presented at the Workshop on Causal Network Analysis, Emory University.

Lin, Shih-Hao and Zhuofan Li. “Gender, Aging, and the Wage Gap: Industry Variations and Social Exclusion Among Female Board Members.” ASA 2025.

Galaskiewicz, Joseph, Eunsung Yoon, Kate Freeman-Anderson, Zhuofan Li, Zheng Fu, Caleb Moore, Thelma Ebisan Reis, Kristen Pogreba-Brown, Leila Barraza, and Wanjun Chen. “Did Mistrust of the Medical Establishment Lead Residents to Ignore Public Health Guidance During the Pandemic?” ASA 2025.

2024 Abramson, Corey, Zhuofan Li, and Tara Prendergast. “Qualitative Sociology in the Computational Era: Classic Issues, Emerging Trends, New Possibilities.” ASA 2024.

Galaskiewicz, Joseph, Eunsung Yoon, Kate Freeman-Anderson, Kristen Pogreba-Brown, Zhuofan Li, Zheng Fu, Wanjun Chen, and Caleb Moore. “Public Health Guidance, Neighborhood Effects, and SARS-CoV-2.” ASA 2024.

Li, Zhuofan. “The Embeddedness of Legitimacy in A Moral Economy of Big Data Surveillance

Technology.” Academy of Management Annual Meeting (AOM) 2024.

Li, Zhuofan. “The Rise of Corporate Open Science: Boundaries, Brokerage, and Power in Artificial Intelligence Research.” International Network for Social Network Analysis Sunbelt Conference (Sunbelt) 2024.

2023 Li, Zhuofan. “A Moral Economy of Big Data: Moral Attachment and Disembedding in the Facial Recognition Technology Market.” ASA 2024.

Li, Zhuofan. “Corporate Participation in Open Science: From Spillover to Brokerage.” International Conference on Science of Science and Innovation (ICSSI) 2023.

Abramson, Corey, Tara Prendergast, Zhuofan Li, Martín Sánchez-Jankowski. “Inequality in the Origins and Experiences of Pain.” International Sociological Association Research Committee 28 on Social Stratification and Mobility (RC-28) 2023.

2022 Abramson, Corey, Tara Prendergast, Zhuofan Li, Martín Sánchez-Jankowski. “How Americans Make Sense of Chronic Pain.” Russell Sage Foundation Conference: Building an Open Source Qualitative Social Science.

Li, Zhuofan, Corey Abramson, and Daniel Dohan. “The Temporal Structure of Capitals: Lessons from the End of Life.” ASA 2022.

2021 Li, Zhuofan. “Lexicons into Categories: A Semantic Network Approach to Category-Spanning Identities.” ASA 2021.

Li, Zhuofan. “A Semantic Network Approach to Category-Spanning Identities.” Networks 2021: A joint Sunbelt and NetSci Conference. Indiana University Network Science Institute.

### *Workshops*

2024 Robey, Derek J., Sebastian Karcher, Sondra Stegenga, Corey Abramson, Max Besbris, Sadie Dempsey, Sarah Hart, Tiffany Huang, Zhuofan Li, Tara Prendergast, Breda O’Keeffe, and Reuel Rogers. “Verification in Qualitative Social Sciences.” Center for Qualitative and Multi-Method Inquiry, Syracuse University.

2022 Abramson, Corey, Zhuofan Li, Daniel Dohan. “Introduction to Machine Learning for Qualitative Research.” ASA 2022.

## **Grants & Fellowships**

### *External*

2023-2024 National Science Foundation/American Sociological Association Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (ASA DDRIG), \$15,975.

### *Virginia Tech*

2025 New Faculty Mentoring Grant, \$1,500.

### *University of Arizona*

2023-2024 Social and Behavioral Sciences Graduate Fellowship

2023 Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) Travel Grant

2022 Social and Behavioral Sciences Summer Dissertation Fellowship

2019-2020 Federick & Margaret S. Conrad Graduate Scholarship

2018-2019 Social and Behavioral Sciences Graduate Fellowship

### *Franklin & Marshall College*

2017-2018 Nissley Grant

2017 Hackman Summer Research Scholarship

## Honors & Awards

2024 Sánchez-Jankowski Graduate Paper Award, University of Arizona  
 2024 Raymond V. Bowers Graduate Paper Award, University of Arizona  
 2021 Honors Pass, Comprehensive Exam in Social Networks, University of Arizona  
 2020 Honors Pass, Comprehensive Exam in Organizations and Work, University of Arizona  
 2018 William M. Kephart Prize in Sociology, Franklin & Marshall College  
 2018 Tourish Prize in Criminology, Franklin & Marshall College  
 2018 Phi Beta Kappa

## Other Research Affiliations

2022- Affiliated Researcher, Center for Ethnographic Research, Institute of the Study of Societal Issues, University of California, Berkeley

## Teaching

### Graduate

Digital Sociology

### Undergraduate

Digital Sociology

Introductory Sociology

## Service

### To the Profession

Ad hoc Reviewer for: Academy of Management, *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, National Science Foundation, *Social Currents*, *Sociological Methodology*, *Socius*

2023 Panelist, American Sociological Association Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (ASA DDRIG) Proposal Preparation Workshop, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia

2023 Volunteer, American Sociological Association Economic Sociology Section Awards Showcase Panel

### Virginia Tech

2025-2027 Department Executive Committee, Department of Sociology

2025- Data and Research Methods Working Group, Department of Sociology

2025- Data Visualization Working Group, Department of Sociology

2024-2025 Undergraduate Program and Curriculum Committee, Department of Sociology

### University of Arizona

2023 Graduate Student Representative, Graduate Studies Committee

2021-2023 Co-organizer, Social Organization Seminar

2021-2022 Graduate Student Representative, Faculty Recruitment Committee

2020-2021 Conception & Survey Design, Graduate Student Climate Survey

## **Advising**

### *Dissertation Committee*

Alexandra Quezada

Emalee Money

Shih-Hao Lin

Waris Ahmad Faizi

## **Skills**

Programming: Python, R, STATA, C++, SQL,  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , HTML, CSS

Languages: Chinese (native), French (reading)

Last updated: February 2026