Lehan Zhang

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Education

ETH Zürich, Switzerland Aug. 2024 - present
PhD in Economics and Data Science

- Chair of Law, Data Science, and Economics (Ash Group) at the AI & Economics Lab, D-GESS
- Advisor: Prof. Elliott Ash, Secondary Advisor: Prof. Karsten Donnay (UZH)
- Associated Researcher at the ETH AI Center
- Coursework and Summer Schools: Swiss Program for Beginning Doctoral Students in Economics (Study Center Gerzensee), AI & Economics Summer Institute (Chicago Booth), Zurich Summer School in AI & Applied Economics (ETHZ), Language Models for Law and Social Science (Elliott Ash, ETHZ), Causal Inference (Alberto Abadie, Gerzensee Advanced Courses in Economics), Labor Economics (David Dorn, UZH), Social Norms and Development (Eliana La Ferrara, Gerzensee Advanced Courses in Economics), Economic History: Migration, Networks, Religion (Sascha Becker, ISEG Summer School)

University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia Feb. 2022 - Apr. 2023
B. Economics (Honours) (Econometrics) | First Class Honours

- Recipient of the Gail Kelly Honours Award for Business, a $20,000 AUD scholarship awarded on the basis of all-round academic achievement and leadership
- Advisors: Prof. Gabriele Gratton and Prof. Pauline Grosjean

University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia Feb. 2018 - Dec. 2021
B. Data Science and Decisions (Quantitative Data Science) | with Distinction

Research

Research Interests: *culture and identity, media, political economics*
Methods: *causal inference, unstructured data, NLP/AI*

Adding Fuel to the (Gun)Fire: How Politicians Polarize the Public Debate *CEPR Discussion Paper* 2026

(with Gabriele Gratton, Pauline Grosjean, and Hasin Yousaf)

The Joe Rogan Effect: Politicized Podcasts and the Youth Gender Voting Gap *Working Paper* 2026

(with Elliott Ash, Sergio Galletta, and Federico Masera)

Socioeconomic Paths into Misogynistic Online Cultures: Evidence from Reddit

(with Elliott Ash and Alexander Hoyle)

Conferences and Seminar Presentations

- 2026: Natural Language in Economics seminar (March, Online), COMPTEXT (April, Birmingham), Workshop IdEP in Sustainable Economics (May, USI), Economics of Media Bias Workshop (May, Hertie School), Center for Law and Economics Brown Bag Seminar Series (May, ETHZ), CESifo Workshop on Digital Platforms (June, Warwick), 4th CEPR Workshop on Media, Technology, Politics, and Society (June, EIEF *coauthor presentation*), Women in Political Economics Workshop (September, WU Vienna), Zurich Political Economy Seminar Series (October, ETHZ/UZH), Digital Publics Conference (October, DSI UZH), OB Research Seminar (November, HEC Lausanne *invited talk*)
- 2025: TILEC Workshop on Economic Governance of Social Media (Tilburg University), 3rd CEPR Workshop on Media, Technology, Politics, and Society (Bocconi University), Applied Young Economists Workshop on Political Economics (Online), Zurich Political Economy Seminar Series, Meditation Chan & Future World Conference (Shaolin Temple)
- 2024: Center for Law and Economics Brown Bag Seminar Series (ETHZ), 2nd Resilient Democracy Lab Workshop (UNSW)
- 2023: Econometric Society Australasia Meeting (UNSW)

Teaching and professional activities

Teaching Assistant at ETH Zurich

- Methods IV: Statistical Learning (2025)

Teaching Assistant at University of New South Wales

- ECON5306/3106: Politics and Economics (tutor-in-charge, 2022, 2023, 2024)
- ECON2111: Developmental Economics (2022, 2023)
- ECON3124: Behavioural Economics (2022)
- ECON1401: Economic Perspectives (2022, 2023)
- ECON1202: Quantitative Analysis for Economics (2023)
- COMM5000: Data Literacy for Business (2023)

Organizer of Symposium in AI+Mindfulness 2025

Work Experience

UNSW Resilient Democracy Lab Apr. 2023 - Aug. 2024

Research Fellow, *full-time*

- Conducting independent economics research and joint research with senior Lab fellows for publication
- Prepare replication reports for Institute for Replication (I4R) meta-analysis on terrorism and politics papers
- Administrative tasks including maintaining the Lab website and organizing research workshops

UNSW School of Economics Oct. 2020 - Apr. 2024

Research Assistant

- Undergraduate Research Fellow of the UNSW Resilient Democracy Lab: building the lab website
- RA work for Prof. Pauline Grosjean on data visualization, textual analysis, and data cleaning for various projects, including *Grosjean, Masera, and Yousaf (2023), QJE* and *Patriarcapitalisme* (2021)
- RA work: writing ethics applications, literature review, co-designing an experiment on mental health and technology, building the experimental treatment mobile application and Qualtrics survey, managing logistics of pilot implementation

Lehan Zhang Photography Jan. 2017 - Present

Freelance Photographer, Photojournalist | *View portfolio here*

- Provide reportage photography services to private and corporate clients including MigrArt, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, FBi Radio, Belvoir Street Theatre, UNSW Sydney, Gonski Institute, OutInCanberra, Region Canberra
- Managing editor of Australian and Swiss music and entertainment media publication *Music Beyond Headlines*
- Portrait and fashion photography published in magazines including Picton Magazine, Sheeba Magazine, Leiden

headspace Australia May 2021 - Jul. 2023

Youth National Reference Group Member

- Selected to advise on national public engagement, media and brand strategy and development, governance, and risk and assurance for the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, established by the Australian Government
- Public advocacy media features on cultural identity and mental health in an *Australia-wide campaign*, invited speaker on *SBS Insight*, a current affairs TV program, and SBS news articles (*web*, radio, and TV)
- Drafted submissions to the Australian Senate inquiry on ADHD and the National Mental Health Commission
- Consultant on *Digital Safety in the Metaverse* with Meta and Project Rockit

Quantium Feb. 2023 - Apr. 2023

Graduate Data Analyst, full-time

New South Wales Ageing and Disability Commission Jan. 2021 - May 2021

Project Officer Intern, Strategy and Communications, part-time

Toyota Finance Australia Jun. 2020 - Dec. 2020

Data Science Intern, full-time

- UNSW Co-op Scholarship sponsored industry placement within the Data Science and Risk Management team

UNSW Founders Jul. 2019 - Mar. 2022

Program Coordinator, part-time

Service and Awards

- Board Director of World Meditation Day Association (2025 -)
- Winner of the Australian Financial Review/Gradconnection Top100 Future Leaders Award for the AECOM Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Award (2020)
- Board Director of Arc@UNSW and Chair of Nominations and Remunerations Subcommittee, the not-for-profit overarching organization for student experience and support services at UNSW (2019 - 2021)
- Undergraduate representative on the Faculty of Science Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion working group (2019 - 2022)
- Student representative on the UNSW Centre for Ideas advisory committee (2020 - 2022)
- Youth advisory group member for headspace Camperdown (2019 - 2023)
- Football Coach of the Randwick City Football Club's not-for-profit Purple Hearts all-abilities squads (2019 - 2020)

Skills

Art projects:

View details at website

Programming Languages:

Python, Stata, R, SQL, C

Certifications:

Standard Mental Health First Aid Certificate Australia (issued 2019)