Coffee hour for graduate students (with presenters)
9:30 a.m. | Adjacent to LWSN 1142

Felix Elwert, Ph.D.
Vilas Associate Professor of Sociology
Department of Sociology & Department of Population Health Sciences
University of Wisconsin-Madison
http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~felwert/causality/

10:30 a.m. | Lawson Computer Science Building, Room 1142

Title: Graphs for Causal Inference

ABSTRACT: Causal inference is threatened by a small army of biases. Some biases are obvious, others are not. This lecture introduces directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) from computer science to classify biases in causal inference into three distinct groups: overcontrol bias, confounding bias, and selection bias. This classification helps social scientists spot, understand, and eliminate biases at the design, data-collection, and analysis stages of their research. This lecture will introduce the basic principles of DAGs and use them to illustrate examples of bias across the social sciences.

Weihua An, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology & Department of Statistics
Indiana University
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1:30 p.m. | Lawson Computer Science Building, Room 1142

Title: Causal Analysis of Peer Effects in Social Networks

ABSTRACT: Prior research has shown that many health and social outcomes are contagious through social networks. However, it turns out to be very difficult to pin down the causality. This talk introduces three broad approaches to providing causal estimates of peer effects in social networks, including the instrumental variable methods, social network-based interventions, and the stochastic actor-oriented models. In the process of describing the three approaches, the talk also introduces new network-based methods for reducing measurement error in social surveys and new software for social network-based interventions and causal analysis under interference.