Brown Bag Session

Join us for the Brown Bag Session to explore the research of faculty and graduate students. Following the talk, socialize and connect with your peers!

Time: 12pm -1pm on April 18 (Thursday)
Location: Sproul Rm 1224
Speaker: Soojin Park, Assistant Professor at SOE

Title: How to rigorously identify contributing factors for reducing social disparities with quantitative methods

Abstract: Large disparities in educational, economic, and health outcomes persist across social groups, such as those based on race, gender, sexuality, in the US. Traditional approaches to decomposition (e.g., difference-in-coefficients or Oaxaca Blinder decomposition) have been utilized to identify risk factors, such as educational attainment, that explain these disparities. However, these approaches have limitations, as they fail to define clear causal estimands (effects of interest), do not clarify assumptions that permit a causal interpretation of the effects (e.g., no omitted confounding), and lack a clear way to validate findings against possible violations of those assumptions. The development of causal decomposition analysis (Jackson & VanderWeele, 2018) has defined causal estimands within a counterfactual framework. My recent work on methods for disparity research (Park, Kang, Lee, & Ma, 2023) developed a sensitivity analysis that assesses the robustness of findings against a reasonable amount of omitted confounding. As a result, stronger causal interpretations of effects can be made. In this presentation, I will discuss the application of causal decomposition methods and sensitivity analysis using an educational example. An R code will be provided.

Required Reading:
Womack, Palardy, & Park (2024). The Role of Opportunity to Learn and School Socioeconomic Composition in Reducing Racial and Gendered Disparities in Mathematics Achievement, *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, Accepted.

Be a student presenter! If you are interested in sharing your work, please reach out to Soojin Park, Heather Killeen or Nicole Colchete (ncolc001@ucr.edu).