

- > Wednesday, March 18, 2026
- > 14:00 – 16:00
- > iLead - ICIE

RESEARCH SEMINAR



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

‘A LEGITIMACY THEORY OF INCLUSION’

PRESENTED BY HANS VAN DIJK

Full Professor of Leading Inclusion at TIAS School for Business and Society, Co-founder of the Including Behavior Institute



ABSTRACT

We advance a legitimacy theory of inclusion that delineates how including and excluding behaviors relate to perceptions of inclusion and exclusion. We argue that it is not the including or excluding nature of behaviors that shape perceptions of inclusion or exclusion (respectively), but evaluations of the legitimacy of those behaviors.

By further disentangling the behavioral, evaluative, and perceptual components of inclusion and exclusion, our theory explains why acts of inclusion as well as acts of exclusion can be legitimate or illegitimate, and why actors and targets often diverge in their legitimacy evaluations.

We introduce the concept of legitimacy conflict to explain the frequent occurrence of tensions arising from divergent legitimacy evaluations and outline the process through which legitimacy conflict may be resolved. By integrating insights from legitimacy theory and inclusion research, our theory offers a novel lens for understanding inclusion as a dynamic, context-sensitive process.



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BIOGRAPHY

Professor Van Dijk is a Full Professor of Leading Inclusion at TIAS School for Business and Society (Tilburg University and Eindhoven University of Technology) and co-founder of the Including Behavior Institute.

His work is widely published in top-tier academic journals, including *Academy of Management Annals*, *Academy of Management Discoveries*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, and *Organization Psychology Review*. He is also the author of a highly regarded management book on destructive dynamics in organizations.

Currently, Professor Van Dijk is developing a **new theory of inclusion**, which forms the foundation of the *Including Behavior Training* program he designed and delivers globally. His research offers valuable insights for scholars interested in leadership, diversity, ethics, organizational behavior, and societal impact.



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