



Department of Psychology
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學心理學系

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Departmental Seminar

Social Utility in Coalition Formation: Three Is More Than Two in More Ways Than One



Prof. Dr. Ilja van Beest
Professor of Social Psychology
Department of Social Psychology
Tilburg University

11:00a.m. – 12:00noon
Room 1103, 11/F
The Jockey Club Tower
Centennial Campus
The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Coalition formation refers to the process in which two or more agents negotiate how to allocate payoffs among those who are included—and those who are excluded—from a coalition. This process highlights that being included is crucial, as only coalition members have a say in how rewards are distributed. In this talk, I will argue that people often underestimate this simple fact. Many approach coalition settings as if their inclusion is guaranteed, rather than as something that must be actively secured. Drawing on research from our lab on deception, emotions, perspective-taking, and allocation rules, I will show how this failure to appreciate inclusion can produce paradoxical and sometimes disastrous outcomes—particularly for those who hold more resources than others. The irony of coalition formation is that having a lot to offer often leads people to demand too much, and as a result, they end up with nothing. This dynamic—visible in political negotiations, business alliances, and even romantic relationships—reveals that strength can sometimes be a weakness.

About the Speaker

Ilja van Beest is a behavioral scientist whose research examines how people navigate cooperation, competition, and exclusion in groups, seeking to understand how fairness and self-interest shape social decision-making. He obtained his PhD in 2001 from Leiden University and is currently Professor of Social Psychology at Tilburg University.

Zoom Meeting (For participants who couldn't attend the Seminar in person)

<https://hku.zoom.us/j/6985555998?pwd=V05yTGJWNTlzazd2OFZ0Q3FRHVkdz09>

Meeting ID: 698 555 5998 | Password: Psyc

~ All are Welcome ~

Enquiry: chenz@hku.hk

