

Henk Aarts, Utrecht University

## **Unconscious Motivation and Adaptation of Goals and Experiences**

Experimental research has discovered that human goal pursuit can emerge in the absence of conscious awareness. Whereas these goal priming effects are commonly explained in terms of habitual automatic processes, recent studies shed new light on the matter. Building on this recent work, this presentation attempts to promote a more comprehensive understanding and examination of the potential mechanisms that enable people to pursue their goals in a nonconscious fashion and how such nonconscious goal pursuit may be related to people's conscious experiences of self-agency or willfully pursuing goals. Specifically, it addresses (1) the human capacity to pursue goals without awareness of the activation and operation of the goal, even when habits are inadequate; (2) the fundamental role of positive affect in nonconsciously modulating the motivation of goals and their pursuit; and (3) the process that may connect nonconscious goal pursuit to the conscious experience of self-agency.