

ENOP Newsletter

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Editorial Responsibility

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A cooperative project on burn-out between the work psychology department at Nijmegen and the work psychology department at Krakow

Charles de Wolf with his research staff (Dr. Bram P. Buunk, Dr. Wilmar B. Schaufeli) and Prof. Dr. Tadeusz Marek together with his research staff (Dr. C. Noworol, Dr. Z. Zarezynski) have put together a framework for cooperation between the Catholic University of Nijmegen and the Jagiellonian University of Krakow to carry out a rather extensive, crosscultural research program on burn-out. The program involves some of the following highlights:

General topic

Intercultural differences in the burn-out syndrome and ways of coping with it in human service and industrial work settings.

Aim of cooperation

The aim of the cooperation is to study and compare the influence of organizational, socio-cultural, and economical factors related to the etiology and course of the burn-out syndrome in both countries. It is expected that different social and economic systems will produce different kinds of work related stress. Another important aspect is assessment of intercultural differences in ways of coping with burn-out, which are also supposed to be related to the above mentioned factors.

The burn-out syndrome

Since a decade or so it is recognized that the burn-out syndrome is a major determinant of decreased work involvement, workers' absenteeism, poor quality of products, and organizational inefficiency. These factors contribute to a substantial degree to a decreasing competitiveness of work organizations. Moreover, the burn-out syndrome, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment, is known to be related to psychosomatic disorders such as coronary heart disease, and may even lead to mental illness.

In the Netherlands about 25% to 30% of the disabled workers are dismissed because they experience mental problems related to their job. In some professional groups (e.g. secondary school teachers) this percentage amounts up to 50%. Moreover, work related mental health problems tend to increase in almost all professional groups. In many cases the burn-out syndrome might be responsible for the severe mental problems, which eventually lead to occupational disability. In 1983 more than 16 billion guilders have been spent on disability allowances in the Netherlands, corresponding with 4.9% of the National Product. Similar developments have been taken place in Poland, as is documented by official papers.

Research traditions of the institutes

The main topics of research at the Department of Work Psychology and Ergonomics of the Jagiellonian University are mental workload, mental fatigue, and chronic fatigue problems. In the past years several occupational groups have been studied, for example VDU operators, land transport workers, nurses, and different types of shift workers. Papers were published in books and international journals concerning the application and testing of different methods for evaluation of mental and chronic fatigue. The study of burn-out has to be regarded as a specification of the present line of research, since emotional exhaustion is a key symptom of this particular syndrome.

At the Department of Work and Organizational Psychology of the Catholic University a longstanding research tradition exists in the field of organizational stress. Many research projects have been conducted on the relation between organizational stressors (e.g. role ambiguity, role conflict, lack of social support), behavioral measures (e.g. absenteeism), and individual strains (e.g. psychological and psychosomatic symptoms). Research findings concerning specific occupational groups such as nurses, assembly line workers, police officers, middle managers, and personnel officers have been published in books and (international) journals. It is recognized from the general study of organizational stress that the detailed investigation of a particular strain (i.e. burn-out) is a logical next step.

PLANNED RESEARCH

The research in both countries will be conducted in two successive phases.

In the first so-called epidemiological phase the pattern of distribution of burn-out is studied in several occupational groups. Moreover, a valid and reliable indicator of burn-out is constructed.

In the second so-called process-research phase the etiology and course of burnout is studied in particular professional groups at risk. The focus of attention will be on differing intercultural coping strategies.

The planning of the second phase depends on the results obtained in the preliminary phase.

The epidemiological phase

Three types of occupational groups are studied:

1. Human service professions with known burn-out risk (e.g. nurses, teachers).
2. Stressful jobs with no specific burn-out risk (e.g. shift workers, assembly line workers).
3. Non-stressful jobs as a control group (e.g. clerks, officials).

In each of these groups several concepts are assessed with self-report questionnaires:

- a. Specific related symptoms (i.e. burn-out, chronic fatigue, affective strain).
- b. General personality dimensions (i.e. neuroticism, reactivity).
- c. Behaviors (i.e. absenteeism, medical consumption, work efficiency).

In the first phase the following topics are addressed:

1. Psychometrical quality of the specific burn-out measure; i.e. invariance across occupational samples, dimensional structure, reliability.
2. Conceptual validity. Can burn-out be differentiated conceptually from other types of psychological work stress (i.e. chronic fatigue, affective strain) and from indicators of dispositional vulnerability (i.e. neuroticism, reactivity).
3. Ecological validity. Self report measures of burn-out and related problems vs. behavioral measures. Do they measure the same constructs?
4. Occupational specificity. Is burn-out specific only for human service organizations and are related psychological symptoms (i.e. chronic fatigue and affective strain) only found in stressful jobs?
5. Cross-cultural differences. Does the extent to which burn-out appears differ between Poland and Holland (absolutely as well as relatively). Differences have to be interpreted in terms of different social and economical systems.
6. The effect of specific job features on burn-out have to be controlled for. The so-called Vitamin-model of Warr (1987) offers a promising perspective to integrate these factors (e.g. autonomy, control, skill use, money, physical security, social contacts, status) in the design. Specific hypothesis must be formulated which specify the association of specific job features with burn-out.

On the basis of the research findings obtained in the first phase particular occupational groups as well as a specific set of variables is chosen to study in more detail in the next phase.

The process-research phase

Some keywords might illustrate the type of research to be conducted in this phase:

- The approach should be longitudinal in order to study the process of burn-out in depth.
- Two groups of respondents must be concentrated on: young people who recently entered the profession and workers over 50 at the end of their occupational careers.
- A specific theoretical (social) psychological frame should be employed in order to explain the etiology and the course of burn-out (e.g. a social comparison, social exchange, or expectancy-value model)
- The relevance of (nation specific) coping processes should be emphasized.
- Intervention strategies on an organizational and individual level as well should be included and their effectiveness will be assessed.

Expected results

- Development of a reliable and valid assessment method of burn-out.
- Epidemiological data of burn-out in comparable occupational groups in the Netherlands and in Poland.
- Identification of etiological factors contributing to burn-out
- Information about the course of the burn-out syndrome, including ways of coping with it.

- Insight into the intercultural differences in (ways of coping with) burn-out
- Practical recommendations for reducing the risk of becoming burned out, both on the organizational as well as the individual level.
- Joint conferences and publications (book, articles)

Time schedule

This joint research project is planned to take at least five years starting in 1989 with final results expected in 1993.

Exchange visits

Exchange visits from each side are planned to take a total of six weeks each year. Since no computer network is available, day-to-day communications will be handled by Telefax.

Costs

The research programmes will be funded individually by both parties. Only the extra costs for international cooperation (i.e. exchange visits, communication, joint and international conference) will be covered by outside sources. As for the exchange visits, the inviting side covers all expenses for stay in the host country, while the invited side covers travel expenses.

Joint Study Programs under the ERASMUS Program are already under way and will be carried out in the near future

Pol Coetsier has successfully started two Erasmus-projects during this academic year with the help of ENOP members.

During 1988-89 he coordinates a student mobility program for first degree (licentiate) work and organizational psychology students between the State University Gent (Belgium), the Free University of Amsterdam (Netherlands), the University of Valencia (Spain), and the Catholic University of Nijmegen (Netherlands). Pieter Drenth, José Maria Peiro and Charles de Wolff are collaborating with Pol on this program.

A second Erasmus program that Pol Coetsier coordinates is a grant for study visits during 1988-1989 in Trento (Italy) by colleagues from Belgium, France, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands. The goal of these visits is to work on the possibility of establishing an inter-university cooperation programme, like a summer school every two years on relevant topics in European personnel management.

Pol hopes that next year he will be able to include more ENOP-colleagues in the Erasmus projects.

Bernhard Wilpert and Rob Roe (together with other colleagues) will start their joint venture on teaching with the FIRST European Summer School on New Information Technology and Work Psychology in Berlin. The Summer School will take place September 4 - 29, 1989. Everything is ready to go and the coordinating staff is now looking for promising students. Several applications have come in already but Bernhard is asking for support from all ENOP members to send postgraduate students who have had some prior professional practice and have graduated to two years ago in psychology or related fields, like sociology, ergonomics, or other relevant fields to the general topic of the Summer School. Bernhard has already sent you the necessary materials.

European Research Project on Organizational Climate and Diagnosis

A group of researchers, from Europe, the USA and Australia, presented the results of their research in the field of Organizational Climate during the International Congress of Psychology in Sydney, Australia the 2nd of September 1988.

Among the speakers there were 3 ENOP members: Enzo Spaltro, Göran Ekvall and Gaston de Cock. These three and Karel De Witte took the initiative to start a joined European Research Project on Organizational Climate and Diagnosis.

On September 24 - 27, 1988 a meeting took place in Warsaw, Poland, where Marian Dobrynski, Karel de Witte and Gaston de Cock developed a framework for future research in the field of Organizational Climate and Diagnosis in Europe.

The objectives of the planned research projects are:

- to advance theory of social systems;
- to elaborate instruments for organizational diagnosis;
- to facilitate international cooperation;
- to develop future oriented interventions within organizations.

The comparison of organizations across countries becomes more and more important. Certainly with the perspectives of 1992 there is a need in Europe to be able to understand and to help organizations in international cooperation and to foster international trade.

Before the end of the year 1988 we will formulate an elaborated research proposal. Therefore Karel de Witte and Gaston De Cock will meet Enzo Spaltro in Bologna, Italy on December 17 and 18, 1988.

The research proposal will be sent to the interested researchers and will be discussed in Leuven, Belgium on April 6 and 7, 1989. The purpose of the meeting is to finalize the research proposal.

Until now the following countries expressed their willing to participate in the project:

Australia, Paul Ryder
Belgium, Gaston De Cock, Karel De Witte
Italy, Enzo Spaltro
Netherlands, Pieter Drenth, L.A. ten Horn
Poland, Marian Dobrynski
Sweden, Göran Ekvall
USA, David Turnipseed, John Gaulin
Yugoslavia, Mihael Kline

We are looking for one or two participants from other countries.

The contact Address: Prof. Dr. Gaston De Cock
University of Leuven
Center for Organizational Psychology
Tiense straat, 102
B-3000 Leuven
Belgium

Research projects in the MRC/ESRC Social and Applied
Psychology Unit in the Department of Psychology at the
University of Sheffield

The Measurement of Personal Effectiveness

Government-sponsored training schemes in the United Kingdom distinguish between two kinds of intended outcome: performance in specific job tasks (the primary training objective), and outcomes referred to generally as "personal effectiveness" and "ability to transfer".

The later outcomes refer to an employee's competence in coping with job variation and complexity, over and above narrowly-defined task competences. They concern planning and prioritizing, self-confidence, and ability to work with others.

The first intended outcome (task competence) is relatively easily measured. But the less tangible aspects of performance are difficult to conceptualize and assess. Peter Warr and colleagues are working to develop and standardize new practical measures in that area. He would like to hear from ENOP colleagues with experience in the field, with a view to exchanging ideas and measures. Please write to him at MRC/ESRC SAPU, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, United Kingdom.

New Books

Recently-published books by ENOP members include:

Clegg, C.W., Warr, P.B. and others. People and Computers: How to Evaluate your Company's New Technology. Chichester: Ellis Horwood, 1988.

Warr, P.B. Work, Unemployment, and Mental Health. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Warr, P.B. (ed.), Psychology at Work (third edition). London: Penguin, 1987.

Exchanges

Planned visits to the Social and Applied Psychology Unit, University of Sheffield, include:

Franco Fraccaroli, Verona (January to March, 1989)

Marrietta van Soesbergen, Free University of Amsterdam
(January to May, 1989)

A new European Handbook of Work and Organizational
Psychology (Nigel Nicholson reports)

Members may be interested to learn of a new European Handbook of Work and Organisational Psychology which will be appearing in 1989. It is edited by Siegfried Greif, Heinz Holling and Nigel Nicholson, and is to be published initially in German by Urban & Schwarzenberg.

The Handbook has a radically different conception from, and therefore does not compete with, similarly titled volumes currently available. It collects together more than 100 very short essays on discrete topics or projects. These are written in a direct and straightforward style, suitable for a variety of levels, from undergraduate through to postgraduate. The essays are not written in the manner of encyclopedia entries, but as succinct summaries of key topics in the field which convey the distinctive approach of their authors. The Handbook is intended to be attractive and useful for use on courses where work psychology and organisational behaviour are only minor themes, as well as suitable for specialist readers looking for a comprehensive set of essays covering the entire field.

The volume will be divided into four main sections:

1. foundations and theoretical perspectives (12 essays approx.)
2. concepts and issues in the field (68 essays approx.)
3. research instruments and methods (13 essays approx.)
4. projects (15 essays approx)

The contributors are drawn from all over Europe, with a specially strong German representation in this edition. At a later date we may issue a English edition.

Newsletter readers are invited to address any queries they may have about the book to either Professor Greif or Dr. Holling at the University of Osnabruck, West Germany, or to Dr. Nicholson at the University of Sheffield, England.

A new Research project at the Technical University in Munich

"Humanising the design of office automation systems: development of methods to design and evaluate prototypes of user-computer interfaces" is the title of a research project performed by the Department of Psychology at the Technical University of Munich (Prof.Dr.C.Graf Hoyos) in cooperation with the Siemens AG Munich. The intention of this project is to develop and test psychological methods for evaluating the usability of prototype interfaces of office automation systems. The final report will summarise the evaluation procedures in a form usable for non-human factors specialists. The project is financially supported (DM 865000) for three years (1.9.1988-31.12.1991) by the Bundesministerium für Forschung und Technologie (BMFT). For detailed information: Dipl.-Psych. Gisa Aschersleben, Lehrstuhl für Psychologie, TU München, Lothstraße 17, 8000 München 2, Tel. 089/2105-4243.

Research and other developments at the University of St. Gallen
for Business Administration, Economics, Law and Social Sciences
(reported by P. Dachler)

Since Switzerland is not a member of the European Community and following to a long (conservative?) tradition of taking small steps we start our joint research and study program first within our own country.

As a first step we are in the process of founding the first Swiss Association of Work and Organizational Psychology in 1989. This Association is meant to serve as a means to establish Work and Organizational Psychology as a separate and recognizable subdisciplin within Switzerland and to work toward specific university training program in work and organizational psychology. At the moment, none of the psychology departments at Swiss Universities have a degree program specifically designed for Work and Organizational Psychology. With the accomplishment of these goals we shall have the necessary prerequisites for a full participation in European joint training and research programs.

As a second step we are designing a summer school for Swiss W & O psychologists in 1990, in which all universities that provide courses in W & O psychology will cooperate. Students from other European countries will be welcome. We will provide the necessary information when the program is fully worked out.

Together with colleagues from the University of Basel and the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich we have just finished a two-year study of leadership and management in Switzerland. The focus of this research project, which is supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation, is the implicit self-understanding of people in management positions from the foreman-level to chief executives.

A rather time-intensive qualitative method was developed to let managers tell stories from their lives as managers which were then analyzed with a consens-validation methodology for the hidden assumptions, implicit personality theories, personal constructs, mental scripts, values, and interests that were expressed in the stories. A complex set of socially constructed leadership realities including the relational networks of leaders were put together showing the crucial impact of managers' implicit self-conception as leaders on the meaning given to the relationships they enter into with colleagues, subordinates and superiors. Numerous interesting self-fulfilling prophency problems as well as power strategies were identified.

From this data we are developing a theoretical framework of management as a relational and communicative social system phenomenon in contrast to the traditional conception in the person-situation interaction tradition. The results will be published in a book to appear in 1990.

Report from the CoCo Meeting on November 18 in Paris

1. Proposal to the EC Erasmus program for support to develop a joint teaching curricula in W & O Psychology within ENOP

Peter Herriot wrote an application with great speed for Erasmus support of ENOP to work out a joint curricula for the teaching of W & O Psychology to graduate students across the European Community, to explore the methods of distance learning, especially via the Olympus Satellite, and to establish transferrability of professional training accreditation by 1992. Unfortunately the proposal was turned down. Several members of the CoCo and ENOP will follow up the reasons and develop new strategies in order to get the necessary help to carry out the general guidelines on joint study programs within ENOP which were discussed at the last ENOP symposium. The next CoCo meeting will be used to prepare another ERASMUS proposal.

2. ENOP Symposium and Business Meeting in 1989

As was already announced in the last ENOP Newsletter, there will not be a separate ENOP symposium in 1989. Instead it will be an integral part of the European Congress of Psychology in Amsterdam. But please note that the ENOP Business Meeting will take place before the Congress, on Sunday, July 2, from about 2 to 9 pm.

The Business Meeting will have as its main agenda the discussion of the Erasmus programs within ENOP.

Important: Before the Spring CoCo Meeting which will be held on Friday, April 18, 1989 in Paris we need from each ENOP member a short 2 - 3 page report on the W & O psychology training at your university: The curriculum, description of requirements, the kind of certificates students can get, the examination system, etc. Please send these informations to Anne Rocha Perazzo at the Maison in Paris as soon as possible.

Another important request: Bernhard Wilpert has been asked to provide a lecture in Amsterdam on European W/O psychology. In order to provide a representative overview of European W/O psychology he needs materials on the historical developments of W/O psychology in the various European countries. If you know of a relevant publication regarding your country please send a copy or the reference to Bernhard in Berlin as soon as possible. If not, perhaps you could put together such an overview yourself and let Bernhard have it. He will gratefully acknowledge the help from ENOP members. Please do not assume that another colleague in your country will do this. Even two or more inputs from one country will be helpful and will give Bernhard something to chew on!

A Final important message: The ENOP budget for 1989 was put together under the expectation that most ENOP members will find their own support to attend the Congress in Amsterdam. Please try not to forget to take the necessary actions to secure support from your institution for the Amsterdam Congress and the ENOP business meeting.

3. East - West Cooperation

Due to our ENOP symposium in Siofok, Hungary, our main contacts with colleagues in the Eastern countries are now in Hungary. There is another workshop planned in Siofok for October 1989 on technological change processes and its impact on work. It is organized by Robert Antalovits, who has now taken the chair at the Technical University in Budapest in ergonomics.

Colleagues from Hungary have come or are coming to France, Italy, Germany and are interested in getting ENOP related funds to visit the Maison in Paris.

The CoCo discussed the importance of also establishing relationships with Russian colleagues in W/O psychology. Our Russian colleagues are eager to cooperate and have chosen La Maison for their main counterpart in Europe.

Bernhard will put together a small proposal to run a workshop with Russian scientists on joint ventures. This is one of the main avenues for economic cooperation and deals with management and technological transfer.

CoCo feels that ENOP should develop a proposal for joint European-Russian exchange programs. To do that we need the necessary infrastructure and relevant names of people for the exchange program.

In this connection several activities have taken place or will take place:

- Giancarlo Trentini has been invited to go to Russia
- Rob Roe will start the process of organizing a meeting in Russia
- Bernhard Wilpert, as a preparation for the above mentioned proposal regarding a workshop, will try to find out what is happening in W/O psychology in Russia
- Rob Roe will check with ENOP members about already existing or planned bilateral connections with Russian W/O psychologists
- ENOP should also start working on more specific relationships with the CSSR, Bulgaria, Poland, etc. Please let Rob Roe know of any information you have regarding relationships to W/O psychologists in Eastern countries.

4. Membership

- Boris Petz for reasons of age has asked to retire as an active ENOP member
- We are working on finding ENOP members from Austria and Czechoslovakia
- Prof. Timpe and Hacker have been invited to join ENOP from East Germany
- Prof. Greif, Frese and Schuler have been invited as additional ENOP members from Germany
- We are still working on possible ENOP members from Finland
- Due to withdrawals and retirements, some changes in ENOP members from France will have to take place

- Norway still needs to be represented in ENOP; so is the Soviet Union
- Prof. Johanssen from Sweden will be invited to become an ENOP member
- New members from Greece, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia are also sought

5. Publications:

Aside from the publications mentioned earlier in the news from individual ENOP members, the following ENOP publications were discussed:

- IDE research: The replication of the original IDE project has been accomplished. The results are in the process of being written.
- P. Herriot is editor of the Handbook of Assessment in Organizations which will be published by Wiley in 1989. ENOP members acted as section editors and many contributors were drawn from ENOP members.
- The Spanish Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology has published several papers of ENOP members' research activities.
- Some papers from the ENOP symposium in Siofok were published in the German Journal: Psychologie und Praxis.
- The proceedings from the ENOP symposium in Siofok will be published before the end of this year.
- The book on methodologies in W/O psychology which Enzo Spaltro and Rob Roe are editing is on its way and should be published by December 1989.

News and Announcements

Workshop on Telematics:

On April 13 - 15, 1989 there will be a workshop in Bad Homburg, Germany on the topic of Telematics. Interested people should contact Rob Roe at Tilbury University in Holland.

Spanish Summer School in June 1989:

J.M. Prieto is asking for proposals for a workshop to be held in the Spanish summer school this summer. The workshop can be held in English or French or, of course, in Spanish. The summer school will be held in Madrid for students who are professional psychologists in industry. It should be designed for a time period of 15 hours and will be financially supported. A week in Madrid, financially supported, quite an incentive to give a workshop!

Some announcements from Charles de Wolff:

- Croom Helm has published "Stress and Organizational Problems in Hospitals; Implications for Management" edited by Don Wallis and Charles J. de Wolff. This book is based on the ENOP-Workshop, organized in Wales in September 1985. 23 authors have contributed to this book.
- Don Wallis, Charles de Wolff and Jose Peiro intend to organize another workshop on this subject early 1990.
- Rob Roe has been appointed to the University of Tilburg.

UNIVERSITY OF LANCASTER
THE MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIOUR IN ORGANISATIONS

ANNOUNCING AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

RETHINKING ORGANISATION : NEW DIRECTIONS IN ORGANISATIONAL
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

6th-8th SEPTEMBER 1989

During the last two decades organisational studies has become much more pluralistic, not to say anarchistic, in terms of its central themes or problems and the intellectual frameworks through which they are analysed. This intellectual transformation reflects fundamental changes taking place in the actual organizational forms through which work behaviour is structured and controlled, as well as the wider institutional settings in which they are located.

The objective of the conference is to chart the major theoretical, methodological and substantive developments which have occurred in the field over the last two decades or so and to assess their longer-term implications for the future direction that organisational studies is likely to take. This will demand an evaluation not only of intellectual change and innovation, but also of the way in which this mirrors organisational and institutional transformations within the 'advanced societies'.

The conference will be organised into four central themes: 'theory', 'methods', 'forms' and 'futures' as they are outlined below.

Theme 1 : 'Theory'

An exposition and analysis of the most significant theoretical developments that have taken place from a number of different perspectives. Their longer-term implications for the form and content of organisational analysis as a field of study will also be reviewed.

Theme 2 : 'Methods'

An examination of the major methodological innovations which have occurred in organisational research and their grounding in a range of epistemological positions.

Theme 3 : 'Forms'

An overview of the comparative organisational structures that have emerged in the 'advanced societies' over the last two decades and their longer-term impact on socio-economical life.

Theme 4 : 'Futures'

An assessment of the issues that are currently providing a focus for organisational research and analysis as well as the manner in which they are likely to shape the future development of the field into the next decade.

For further information, prospective participants are invited to write for details to the conference organisers.

Conference Organisers:

Dr Mike Reed and Mr Mike Hughes
Department of Behaviour in Organisations
The Management School
Gillow House
University of Lancaster
LANCASTER LA1 4YX

Tel: 0524 - 65201 Ext: 4719.
Telex: 65111 Lancul G.

Further news from Lancaster University (reported by Silvia Shimmin)

Work and organisational psychologists in Britain are experiencing at first hand the impact of what Emery and Trist (1965) described as "turbulent" environments. Although times are difficult for higher education establishments in many parts of the world, the crisis in British universities should not be under-estimated. All have considerable financial problems following changes in the basis of funding and reduced support from government sources and some face possible insolvency. As a result, individuals, departments and institutions are preoccupied with strategies for survival.

In short-term, work psychologists have an advantage over some other colleagues in having marketable skills that will generate income. But commercial sponsors tend not to be interested in long-term projects, so resources for fundamental scholarship and research are becoming increasingly scarce. Against this background, the Department of Behaviour in Organisations at Lancaster is struggling to make time for and sustain a high level of academic debate. We are holding an international conference on "New directions in organisational research and analysis" from September 6 - 8, 1989, at which Chris Argyris will be one of the key-note speakers, and hope some members of ENOP will attend.

F.E. Emery and E.L. Trist (1965) "The causal texture of organisational environments", Human Relations, 18, 21-32.

News from the Department of Occupational Psychology Birkbeck College, London (reported by P. Herriot)

- A bill has now been passed giving psychologists chartered status in the UK. This is a major step along the road to professionalisation of psychology. It does not exclude non-chartered psychologists from practising, however. Similarly the Ergonomics Society now has a registered practitioner status, with a view to applying for chartering later.
- There is major national concern regarding the shortfall in managerial, professional and technical staff in the 1990's. Large-scale training initiatives are under way, which are based on simplistic notions of a few universal managerial competencies.
- The Department of Occupational Psychology at Birkbeck has for some years pioneered a scheme for PhD training called the "cohort scheme". Part-time students meet regularly as a group with tutors, having negotiated a contract with their employing organisation that data will be available. There is currently a major debate about what should be the nature of the PhD, and this scheme is providing a model for the future. So is the Department's distance learning initiative, which, commencing in 1989, will make the Msc. in Occupational Psychology available throughout the UK by computer conference.

The editor, who put together this newsletter under enormous time pressure, wishes all of you a very happy holiday season and all the best for 1989.