

SOC1001 Social Analysis

Module outline

2025-26

1. Module information

SOC1001 Social Analysis is a Year 1 30 credit module introducing you to the main themes and empirical approaches in sociology and other social sciences. The module is compulsory for BA Sociology, BSc Sociology, BSc Criminology, and BSc Social Data Science students. The main idea for the module is to focus on some concepts / issues in contemporary social sciences (such as inequality, social class, immigration, etc.) and to show how they can be studied empirically, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The module is team taught and spans across terms 1 and 2. There will be four lecturers delivering weekly lectures (**Tuesday 4.30-6pm in Newman Purple LT B** in Term 1; TBC in Term 2):

- Prof Alexey Bessudnov (a.bessudnov@exeter.ac.uk; module convenor; weeks 1 to 7 in term 1)
- Dr Chris Playford (C.J.Playford@exeter.ac.uk; weeks 8 to 12 in term 1)
- Dr Nick Dickinson (N.Dickinson3@exeter.ac.uk , weeks 1 to 6 in term 2)
- Prof Anthony King (a.c.king@exeter.ac.uk, weeks 7 to 11 in term 2)

Please email the module convenor with questions about the module in general and the assessment, and relevant lecturers with questions about the contents of specific weeks.

Lectures will be supported by weekly tutorials run by:

- Matthew Hedrick (M.Hedrick3@exeter.ac.uk)

Please check your timetable (<https://mytimetable.exeter.ac.uk/>) for the time and location of your weekly tutorials.

Attendance of lectures and tutorials is compulsory.

2. Assessment information

Assessment for this module consists of two parts:

- **Essay** (2,000 words; 50% of the mark). The deadline for submitting your essay is **Thursday 11 December 2pm (week 12)**. Please submit on ELE. Further instructions and essay topics will be released and published on ELE separately. As a formative assessment (meaning that it would not count towards your module mark) you can also submit a 500-word essay plan if you'd like to receive feedback from a member of the teaching team. The deadline for submitting essay plans is Thursday **13 November (week 8)**.
- **Examination** (2 hours; 50% of the mark). To be conducted during the examination period in term 3 (in person). The exam will cover the contents of all 22 weeks of the module.

The university assessment criteria for Year 1 students are available here:

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/specifcites/tqa/lts/LTS_Handbook_Chapte_4_Anne_x_2_Generic_Criteria_for_Assessment_RQF_at_Level_4.pdf

Please see more details in the assessment briefs on ELE (in the Assessment section).

3. Generative AI policy

Generative artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, and others) allow you to automatically generate text in response to your prompts. The **essay** on this module can be **AI-assisted**, which means that you can use AI tools for certain specific tasks when preparing and writing your essay, such as:

- To develop ideas
- To assist with research or information gathering
- To help you understand key concepts and theories
- To provide feedback on a draft
- To improve the plan or structure of your assessment
- To generate images, figures or diagrams
- To proofread and correct spelling or grammar errors
- To format citations or references

You are expected to use GenAI as an assistant (in a similar way to how you would use the spellchecker, internet search engines and electronic libraries). You still need to produce

the ideas and arguments for the essay. You are not allowed to generate the whole essay or substantial parts of it automatically, without your input. This will result in a low-quality essay that will be unlikely to receive a high mark and that will be referred to the department academic misconduct officer.

When submitting your assessment, you must:

1. Check the box during the submission process, that confirms you have adhered to the university's academic conduct policy and the expectations on use of GenAI in your assessment brief.
2. Treat the AI tool like a citation from any other source.
3. Include a list of all AI prompts and hyperlinks to their output with your references, at the end of your work. You do not need to include the outputs themselves, just the links.
4. Retain the full outputs generated by the prompts you have used during your assignment. These outputs should be accessible at the hyperlinks which you have submitted with your assignment. You may be asked to produce this material in the event of an academic conduct inquiry.

The **exam** is **AI-prohibited**. This means that you cannot use AI tools at the exam.

For more information on the use of AI tools please see:

- Using GenAI tools in academic work on the Library website:
<https://libguides.exeter.ac.uk/referencing/generativeai>

4. Weekly content and readings

Part I. Immigration, Ethnicity, Discrimination, Welfare State, Income Inequality (Prof Alexey Bessudnov)

Term 1, Week 1. Introduction

In week 1, I will introduce the module and review its main elements. We will discuss what social analysis is and what methodological tools we may use for it. We will also review the assessment for the module. There are no readings or tutorials in week 1.

Term 1, Week 2. Immigration

Immigration has become one of the major social issues in contemporary Western societies. In week 2 we will look at the patterns and trends in international migration, with a specific focus on the UK. We will discuss what data sources and methodological approaches can be used to study immigration. We will also consider fiscal effects of immigration, the position of immigrants in the labour markets and educational systems, and public attitudes towards immigration. At the tutorials, you will discuss an empirical study by Zhou and Lee who used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explain the educational and socio-economic success of Asian immigrants in the USA.

- F. van Tubergen. (2020). Introduction to Sociology. Section 11.2 (“International migration), pp. 369-376.
- Cuibus, M. V. (2024) Migrants in the UK: An Overview. Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/MigObs-Briefing-Migrants-in-the-UK-an-overview-2024.pdf>
- Sturge, G. & Kierans, D. (2025). Who migrates to the UK and why? Migration Observatory briefing, COMPAS, University of Oxford. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/who-migrates-to-the-uk-and-why/>
- Zhou, M., & Lee, J. (2017). Hyper-selectivity and the remaking of culture: Understanding the Asian American achievement paradox. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 8(1), 7–15.

Questions:

1. *What is the number of immigrants in the UK (and their proportion in the population)? What countries do they come from? What data sources are normally used to produce these figures and what are their limitations?*
2. *What are the main reasons for immigration to the UK?*
3. *Is the UK exceptional in attracting immigrants compared to other Western countries?*
4. *Discuss the concept of the selectivity of migration. Are immigrants positively or negatively selected (hyperselectivity vs hyposelectivity in Zhou and Lee’s article)? What determines the selective pattern of immigration?*
5. *What is the methodological approach Zhou and Lee used to study the selectivity of Asian immigration in the USA?*

Term 1, Week 3. Discrimination

It is against the law in the UK to discriminate against people because of their age, sex, race and some other 'protected characteristics'. Yet discrimination is pervasive and notoriously hard to prove. In week 4 we will define discrimination and discuss how we can study it empirically.

- M.Bertrand & E.Duflo. (2017). "Field experiments on discrimination". In Handbook of Economic Field Experiments 1, ch. 8, sections 1 and 2, pp. 309-345.
- D.Hangartner, D.Kopp & M.Siegenthaler. (2021). "Monitoring hiring discrimination through online recruitment platforms". Nature 589: 572-576.

Questions:

1. *What is discrimination?*
2. *How can discrimination be studied empirically? How do correspondence tests work and what are their advantages and limitations?*
3. *How do implicit association tests work?*
4. *What is list randomisation and how can it be used to ask sensitive questions in surveys?*
5. *What is the research design in Hangartner et al's paper and how is it different from correspondence studies? What are the main findings of their analysis?*

Term 1, Week 4. Gender

An American economist Claudia Golding, the 2023 Nobel prize winner in economics, described the change in the gender relations in the 20th century (more specifically, in the 1960s and 1970s) as the 'quiet revolution'. At the beginning of the 20th century, only a small minority of women in Western countries achieved higher levels of education and women's labour force participation lagged far behind men's. Now the situation is entirely different: women often outperform men in education, female and male labour force participation are at comparable levels and the gender gap in earnings has decreased (although it remains). This week we'll discuss the drivers behind the 'quiet revolution' and the explanations for the gender income gap.

- Goldin, C. (2024). "Nobel Lecture: An Evolving Economic Force". American Economic Review 114(6): 1515-1539.

- G.Razzu (ed.). (2014). Gender Inequality in the Labour Market in the UK. Oxford University Press. Ch.1 (“Wider Context”). Pp.1-34.

Questions:

1. *What are the main factors that explain the change in the position of women in education and the labour market in the 20th and 21st centuries?*
2. *Why is there a gender gap in earnings?*
3. *What is “greedy work” and how it affects gender equality, according to Goldin?*
4. *What is the effect of having children on gender equality?*

Term 1, Week 5. Ageing

One of the main demographic forces driving social changes in the societies across the world (and more specifically although not exclusively in Western economically developed countries) is ageing. In the 20th and 21st centuries, life expectancy increased dramatically resulting in the rising population share of older people. This creates challenges for public finances, pension, health and social care systems. Population ageing will inevitably continue in the 21st century – what will be its social consequences?

- D.Dorling & S.Gietel-Basten. (2017). Why Demography Matters? Wiley. Ch. 6. Population Ageing. Pp.123-150.
- E.Naumann & M.Hess. (2021). Population Ageing, Immigration and the Welfare State: The Political Demography in Western Europe. In: A.Goerres & P.Vanhuyse. (Eds.) Global Political Demography: The Politics of Population Change. Springer. Pp.351-371.

Questions:

1. *What is ageing and how can it be measured?*
2. *What are the social, economic and political consequences of ageing globally and specifically in the UK?*
3. *What is the relationship between ageing, immigration and the support for welfare state?*

Term 1, Week 6. Reading week (no classes)

Term 1, Week 7. Income inequality

This week we will look at income and wealth inequalities both in the UK and internationally. What are the trends in income inequality? Why has it increased? What are the effects of income inequality on social life? We will discuss the work of the French economist Thomas Piketty who is well known for his studies of inequality and his proposals for reducing it.

- M.Brewer. (2019). *What Do We Know and What Should We Do About Inequality?* Sage.
Ch. 1, Introduction, pp. 1-20.
Ch. 2, Background, pp.21-39.
- T. Piketty. (2022). *A Brief History of Equality*. Harvard University Press.
Ch.7. Democracy, socialism and progressive taxation, pp.150-174.

Questions:

1. *How can we measure income / wealth inequality?*
2. *What were the trends in income inequality in the 20th and 21st centuries, in the UK and internationally?*
3. *What was Thomas Piketty's contribution to the study of inequality?*
4. *What are Piketty's proposals for reducing inequality?*
5. *What could be potential problems with these proposals?*

Part II. Social Inequalities (Dr Chris Playford)

Term 1, Week 8. Social class and social status

Many outcomes in life are patterned by inequality according to social background. This week we will explore the concept of social stratification and corresponding ways in which researchers have tried to measure dimensions of social stratification. This will include the basis and measurement of social class, and how this is related to social status. This will provide a foundation for the following weeks.

- Van Tubergen, F. (2020). *Introduction to Sociology*.
Section 9.2 (Social class and status), pp.303-306.

- Platt, L. (2011). *Understanding Inequalities: Stratification and Difference*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
 - Section 2.1. Concepts, definition, measurement, pp.36-44.
 - Section 2.2. Class distributions and inequalities, pp.44-53.
- Connelly, R., Gayle, V., & Lambert, P. S. (2016). A review of occupation-based social classifications for social survey research. *Methodological Innovations*, 9, 1-14.

Questions:

1. *What is social class and how is it measured?*
2. *Is social class different from social status? How and why?*
3. *What might each of these measurement schemes be useful for studying?*
4. *Why does what we think about social class matter for how we study inequalities?*

Term 1, Week 9. Inequalities in childhood experiences

In this session we will look at how children grow up in different circumstances and the implications this has for their education. Taking a lifecourse perspective is helpful, as this helps us to understand the roots of inequalities in later life. In particular, we will look at research by Annette Lareau and the quantitative and qualitative methods employed to investigate social class differences in early years education.

- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 - Chapter 1: Concerted cultivation and the accomplishment of natural growth, pp.1-13.
 - Chapter 15: Unequal childhoods in context: Results from a quantitative analysis, pp.333-341.
- Vincent, C. and Ball, S. J. (2007). 'Making up' the middle-class child: families, activities and class dispositions. *Sociology*, 41(6), 1061-1077.

Questions:

1. *What is the difference between concerted cultivation and natural growth?*
2. *How did Lareau collect the data for her main study?*
3. *Why did Lareau choose to add a quantitative element to this research?*
4. *What are the strengths and limitations of qualitative research on this topic?*
5. *What are the strengths and limitations of quantitative research on this topic?*

Term 1, Week 10. Inequalities in education and employment

This week we look at the influence that social background has on educational attainment. Alongside empirical studies which have attempted to measure this, we will look at the main theories suggested to help us understand the primary and secondary ways in which educational inequalities are manifested. We then look at how this affects differences in the jobs that young people get and the legacy of social background on pay.

- Platt, L. (2011). *Understanding Inequalities: Stratification and Difference*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Chapter 6: Education, pp.133-162.
- Bukodi, E., Goldthorpe, J. H., & Zhao, Y. (2021). Primary and secondary effects of social origins on educational attainment: New findings for England. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 72(3), 627-650.
- Laurison, D., & Friedman, S. (2016). The Class Pay Gap in Higher Professional and Managerial Occupations. *American Sociological Review*, 81(4), 668-695.

Questions:

- 1. What are primary and secondary effects in educational outcomes?*
- 2. Why is there a social class gradient in school examination results?*
- 3. Why is the choice of qualification or subject important in understanding educational inequality?*
- 4. Do class origins still have an impact on young people in managerial and professional jobs? If so, how?*

Term 1, Week 11. Social mobility

Studies of social mobility help us to understand the relationship between social class origins and destinations. Has social mobility in Britain increased or declined over time and how has education changed this? This week we explore this topic and the challenges of measuring social mobility over time.

- Van Tubergen, F. (2020). *Introduction to Sociology*.
Section 9.5 (Social Mobility), pp.314-317.
- Goldthorpe, J. H. (2016). Social class mobility in modern Britain: changing structure, constant process. *Journal of the British Academy*, 4, 89-111.

- Social Mobility Commission. (2023). State of the Nation 2023: People and Places. <https://socialmobility.independent-commission.uk/app/uploads/2023/09/state-of-the-nation-2023.pdf>

Questions:

1. *What is social mobility?*
2. *Are social mobility and inequality the same thing?*
3. *What is the difference between intergenerational and intragenerational mobility?*
4. *What does it mean to talk about relative rates of social mobility? How is this different from absolute rates of social mobility?*
5. *Which is more important, the openness in a society or the reduction of inequalities?*

Term 1, Week 12. Culture and consumption

The social class of the family in which someone grows up influences the culture which they are exposed to and their preferences as an adult. But is this part of explanation of how social class is reproduced between generations? This week we will look at the work of Pierre Bourdieu and how this has contributed to our understanding of class and status.

- Van Tubergen, F. (2020). Introduction to Sociology.
Section 9.6 Ascription and achievement, pp.318-319.
Section 9.7 Modernization and mobility theory, pp.319-322.
Section 9.8 Cultural reproduction theory, pp.322-324.
- Grusky, D.B. and Weisshaar, K. (2014) Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective.
Chapter 114. Distinction , pp.982-1003.
- Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y., Hjellbrekke, J., Le Roux, B., Friedman, S., & Miles, A. (2013). A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment. *Sociology*, 47(2), 219-250.

Questions:

1. *What is the difference between ascription and achievement with regard to outcomes as an adult? Why does it matter?*
2. *What is cultural capital and how does it differ from economic or social capital?*

3. Are children growing up in middle class families advantaged in the educational system because of consumption of culture or is it merely epiphenomenal?
4. Savage et al. (2013) present a 'new model' of social class - how does this differ from the approaches discussed in week 8?
5. In what spheres of life do you think cultural capital might matter more and where might it matter less?

Part III. Politics and Power (Dr Nick Dickinson)

Term 2, Week 1. Civic culture and democratic values

What makes democracy work? Why do some societies sustain democratic institutions while others struggle with political instability? This week we examine the concept of civic culture and how social attitudes, values, and behaviours shape democratic governance. We will explore the empirical methods used to measure political culture and discuss how civic engagement varies across different societies. At tutorials, you will analyse how Almond and Verba's groundbreaking comparative study used surveys and interviews to understand democratic stability.

- Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 1: An approach to political culture, pp. 3-42.

Questions:

1. *How do Almond and Verba define civic culture and how does it differ from other forms of political culture?*
2. *What empirical methods did the authors use to study political attitudes across five countries?*
3. *How does social capital relate to democratic performance according to Putnam?*
4. *What is the difference between diffuse support and specific support for democratic institutions?*
5. *Can civic culture be measured reliably across different cultural contexts? What are the methodological challenges?*

Term 2, Week 2. Collective action and political participation

Why do some groups succeed in influencing politics while others fail? This week we examine the logic of collective action and the challenges of organising for political goals.

We will discuss how rational choice theory explains patterns of political participation and why small, well-organized groups often prevail over larger but diffuse interests. The tutorial will focus on how Olson's theoretical framework can be tested empirically through case studies and statistical analysis of interest group activity.

- Olson, M. (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press. Ch. 1: A theory of groups and organizations, Ch. 6: The "by-product" theory of large pressure groups.

Questions:

1. *What is the "free rider problem" and how does it affect collective action?*
2. *How do selective incentives help overcome collective action problems?*
3. *Why might small groups be more effective at political lobbying than large groups?*
4. *What empirical evidence supports or challenges Olson's theory of collective action?*
5. *How do social movements differ from interest groups in their approach to collective action?*

Term 2, Week 3. Political leadership as a social phenomenon

What type of person becomes a politician, and how do they maintain power? This week we examine politics as a profession and politicians as a distinct social group. We will explore the characteristics of political elites vary across different political systems. The tutorial will examine contemporary research on political recruitment and the social backgrounds of political leaders.

- Bovens, Mark, and Anchrith Wille (2017), 'Political Elites as Educational Elites' in *Diploma Democracy: The Rise of Political Meritocracy*. pp. 111-136

Questions:

1. *What social characteristics are overrepresented among political elites and why?*
2. *How do different electoral systems affect the recruitment of political candidates?*
3. *What methodological approaches can be used to study political elite backgrounds and career patterns?*

Term 2, Week 4. Social roots of partisanship and political parties

Why do people support different political parties? This week examines how social characteristics like class, education, religion, and geography shape partisan attachments and voting behavior. We will explore both traditional social cleavages and how they have evolved in contemporary democracies. The tutorial will focus on how survey research and electoral data can be used to study the social foundations of party politics, examining both individual-level voting patterns and aggregate electoral geography.

- Evans, G., & Tilley, J. (2017). *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class*. Oxford University Press. Introduction, pp. 1-18.
- Mair, P. "Ruling the Void." *New Left Review*, vol. II, no. 42, 1 Dec. 2006, pp. 25-51.

Questions:

1. *What are the main social cleavages that structure party competition according to Lipset and Rokkan?*
2. *How has the relationship between social class and party support changed in Britain over recent decades?*
3. *How do different methodological approaches (surveys, census data, electoral geography) reveal different aspects of partisan social roots?*
4. *Are traditional social cleavages being replaced by new forms of political division (e.g., education, values, geography)?*

Term 2, Week 5. Electoral shocks: voter volatility and disruptive events

How do major crises and unexpected events reshape electoral politics? This week examines how "electoral shocks" – such as the 2016 'Brexit' referendum - disrupt normal patterns of party competition and voting behaviour. We will explore how citizens and political parties respond to unprecedented challenges and discuss the methodological difficulties of studying politics during periods of rapid change. The tutorial will analyse polling data and electoral outcomes before, during, and after major political disruptions.

- Fieldhouse, E. (2021). Rise of the Volatile Voter in *Electoral Shocks. The Volatile Voter in a Turbulent World*. Oxford University Press. pp. 50-73
- Hobolt, S. B. (2016). The Brexit vote: A divided nation, a divided continent. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(9), 1259-1277.

Questions:

1. *How do Fieldhouse et al. define "electoral shocks" and what are their three defining characteristics?*

2. *What is electoral volatility and why have British voters become more volatile over time?*
3. *How did the Brexit referendum reveal and create new political divisions in British society?*
4. *What methodological challenges arise when studying politics during periods of crisis or rapid change?*
5. *How do electoral shocks interact with existing social cleavages and partisan attachments - do they create permanent changes or temporary disruptions?*

Term 2, Week 6. The good politician: trust and anti-politics

What makes a "good politician" in the eyes of the public? This week examines how citizens' expectations of political leaders have changed over time and contributed to rising anti-political sentiment. Using both survey data and historical materials, we will explore how folk theories about politics shape public trust and democratic legitimacy. The tutorial will focus on Clarke et al.'s innovative mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis with qualitative historical evidence.

- Clarke, N., Jennings, W., Moss, J., & Stoker, G. (2018). *The Good Politician: Folk Theories, Political Interaction, and the Rise of Anti-Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Introduction & Ch. 1: The problem of anti-politics, pp. 1-32

Questions:

1. *How do Clarke et al. define "anti-politics" and how has it evolved in Britain since the 1940s?*
2. *What are "folk theories" of politics and how do they influence citizen expectations of politicians?*
3. *What methodological advantages does the Mass Observation archive provide for studying changing political attitudes?*
4. *How do citizens' images of the "good politician" differ from the realities of modern political practice?*

Part IV. Social Groups and Institutes (Prof Anthony King)

Term 2, Week 7. Shipwrecks, fires, and other disasters

In this section of the course, we look at the human social group, how they are formed, maintained, and changed; that is, how cooperation is possible? We start with crisis

situations in which it might be thought human groups and human cooperation would be impossible. Yet, shipwrecks and other disasters are very useful. They show that even in extreme situations, total anarchy rarely reigns. Rather, patterns of cooperation – social groups – emerge or endure which influence the outcome of the catastrophe.

- Robb, G. (2007). 'Come Back, You Bastards! London Review of Books 29(13), 17-18.
- Weick, K. (2000). *Making Sense of the Organization*. Oxford: Blackwell. Ch 4. 'The Collapse of sense-making in organisations: the Mann Gulch disaster'. (Also found in: *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1993-12, 38 (4), 628-65).
- Benjamin, C and Jing-Mao, H. (2022). 'Network Structure in Small Groups and Survival in Disaster' *Social Forces*, 100 (3), 1357-1384.

Questions:

1. *Why might it be useful to study shipwrecks?*
2. *Why do some groups survive while others do not?*

Term 2, Week 8. The Crowd

The crowd is an enduring feature of human society. Against accusations that the crowd is irrational and chaotic, even spontaneous, violent crowds display some order and coherence. The actions of the participants in them are understandable and they members of the crowd cooperate with each other.

- Zemon Davis, N. (1973). 'Rites of Violence: religious riot in sixteenth century France'. *Past and Present* 59 May: 51-91.
- Nassauer, A. (2016). 'From Peaceful marches to violent clashes: a micro-situational analysis'. *Social movement studies*, 15 (5), 515-530.
- Collins, R. (2020). 'Theorizing the time-dynamics of violence'. *Journal of Violence* 2020, 1 (1), 166-184.

Questions:

1. *Are crowds irrational?*
2. *How do the dynamics of crowd action affect individual behaviour and emotion?*
3. *Is crowd violence inevitable?*

Term 2, Week 9. The Gang

Gangs are informal groups, often organized for specific and local advantages. They have become an increasingly important part of urban existence. The gang offers an insight into how humans form groups and enforce order on their members.

- Horowitz, R and Schwartz, G. (1994). 'Honor, Normative Ambiguity and Gang Violence'. *American Sociological Review* 39(2) 1994: 238-51.
- Venkatesh, S. (2006). *Off the Books: the underground economy of the urban poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch 6.

Questions:

1. *Why have gangs become so prominent in the 21st century?*
2. *How do gangs form?*
3. *How do gangs maintain loyalty?*
4. *What benefits do gangs offer to their members?*
5. *How do gangs compete with rival groups?*

Term 2, Week 10. The Team

Sports teams do not seem to be very important. Sport is supposed to be for fun. Yet, in fact, sports teams display some very intriguing elements of collective action and cooperation.

- Chambliss, D. (1989). 'The Mundanity of Excellence: an ethnographic report on stratification and Olympic swimmers'. *Sociological Theory* 7(1): 70-86.
- King, A and de Rond, M. (2011). 'Boat Race: rhythm and the possibility of collective performance'. *British Journal of Sociology* 62(4): 566-83.

Questions:

1. *Why are teams useful as a sociological example?*
2. *What makes a good team?*
3. *Why do some teams fail?*
4. *What is the relationship between the team and the individual?*

Term 2, Week 11. Organisations

Organisations have become a central part of our existence. They dominate our lives. They appear permanent, rational, and stable. In fact, the process of organising for large scale ventures is hard and fraught with difficulties. Organisations are often not very organised. This week we explore some of those challenges.

- March J and Olsen, J. (1976). *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations*. Bergen: Universitetsforlagt. Ch.2.
- Janis, I. (1982). *Group Think: psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascos*. Ch. 1.
- Bittner, E. (1974). 'The Concept of the Organization' in Turner, R (ed) *Ethnomethodology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Questions:

- 1. Why do we create organisations?*
- 2. What problems do organisations create for themselves?*
- 3. How do organisations try to overcome these problems?*
- 4. Is it possible for an organisation to make a good decision?*