Questions a Social Scientist Would Ask

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|  | Types of Questions | What is their research goal | Data Collection Methods |
| Anthropologist | What do we know about this culture?  How do people from this culture behave?  What are the mechanisms for this culture to make changes?  What ideas or explanations can we use to describe what causes this culture to change? | Observe a group closely to see first hand the different behaviours of that culture | Living with a cultural group for extended periods (participant-observation); observing rituals and group behaviours |
| Sociologist | How does this society develop?  How does the society function?  How does social change come about?  What are the massive shifts in the behaviours and attitudes of groups and whole societies? | Study group behaviour to see how people act in group situations | Conducting statistical analysis and observation |
| Psychologist | How does an individual feel about a situation?  How does an individual behave in a situation?  What must people do to successfully change their behaviours?  What factors make behaviour modification programs successful? | Study individual subjects and their behaviour to have a better understanding of how they function and why | Studying people’s feelings, thoughts and personality development; conducting animal experiments |

One Topic: Three Questions (there are more than can be asked)

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| Field | **Moving from hand washing to just using hand sanitizer** |
| Anthropology | What has led the community to stop washing their hands and become reliant on hand sanitizer? |
| Sociology | Is hand sanitizing more socially acceptable than hand washing? |
| Psychology | What has lead the individual to want to sanitize instead of/ in addition to cleaning their hands? |



You Try it:

Here are two scenarios. What questions would social scientists ask?

1. The Du Maurier company is no longer allowed to sponsor the Jazz Festival due to a ban on cigarette advertising.

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| Anthropology |  |
| Sociology |  |
| Psychology |  |

1. Ashley-Madison.com, a website that connects married people with discreet extramarital connections, has had over 12million members since it began in 2002.

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| Anthropology |  |
| Sociology |  |
| Psychology |  |

**Researching in the fields**

Fortunately, while the methodologies may vary, the scientific method is a fairly standardized approach. Through its application, researchers can test their theories and modify their hypotheses accordingly. Not only does this contribute to a stronger argument, but also it provides validity to the study and subject matter.

**The scientific method operates in steps:**

1. Define the question.

2. Gather information and resources (observe).

3. Form hypothesis.

4. Perform experiment and collect data.

5. Analyze data.

6. Interpret data and draw conclusions.

7. Repeat and modify hypothesis (as needed)

**Research Ethics**

Almost all sciences research is performed in accordance with ethical principles acceptable both to society and to science. In Canada, the conduct of social science research is monitored at a variety of levels. The standards seek to guarantee the safety, privacy, and well-being of all research participants and are strictly enforced. There is risk of harm involved for participants in all research not just biomedical or health research. Harms could include physical, social, psychological, emotional, financial or legal. The benefits should outweigh the costs and harmful effects should be minimal or preferably nonexistent.