

Research Question Examples: Sociology

About this document

This PDF contains 77 **sociology research question examples**, each quoted word for word from one of 44 completed dissertations and theses (2011–2026), grouped into 5 sections. Each question links to the thesis that asked it, so you can read how it was answered. Use them to see what a well-formed sociology research question looks like, then adapt the shape to your own study.

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Contents

Exploratory questions · 42 questions	2
Descriptive questions · 26 questions	6
Comparative questions · 5 questions	8
Relational questions · 3 questions	9
Causal questions · 1 question	9
How to adapt a question to your own study	10

Exploratory questions

These questions ask how or why something happens, usually where little research exists yet. They are common in qualitative studies built on interviews or observation.

1. What key moments have shaped the life of a young Afghan woman?

Asked in: [“I FORGOT HOW STRONG I HAVE BEEN”: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF ONE AFGHAN WOMAN’S STORIED EXPERIENCES](#) · Raymond, Cathy · Indiana University · 2021

2. What nuances, complications, and tensions do her storied experiences of everyday life as an Afghan woman living in Afghanistan reveal?

Asked in: [“I FORGOT HOW STRONG I HAVE BEEN”: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF ONE AFGHAN WOMAN’S STORIED EXPERIENCES](#) · Raymond, Cathy · Indiana University · 2021

3. How do activist competency constructions reflect and/or challenge dominant discourses of youth?

Asked in: [Activist skills, knowledge, and values: constructions of young people’s competency in a youth activist group](#) · Laura Weiner · University of Edinburgh · 2026

4. How can bridge-building across the energy system’s vast social and geographic divides be made more feasible?

Asked in: [Bridge-Building in the U.S. Energy Transition Movement: Navigating Social and Geographic Divides in a Contentious Environment](#) · Dawn Harfmann · University of Oregon · 2025

5. How do the interviewed students experience the extent and the consequences of cyberbullying?

Asked in: [Cyberbullying from students’ perspectives : a qualitative study](#) · Kakai, Golan · University of Gävle · 2016

6. How do they achieve upward occupational mobility in white America?

Asked in: [Elite Black women in a white society](#) · Singleton, Tamara · Texas Woman’s University · 2022

7. How does discrimination impact the upward mobility of elite African American women?

Asked in: [Elite Black women in a white society](#) · Singleton, Tamara · Texas Woman’s University · 2022

8. How do contemporary Chicanas/Tejanas living in South Texas remember and make meaning of experiences with colorisms?

Asked in: [Güeras y prietas: remembering lived experiences with colorism through history and ethnoplática](#) · Sandra D. Garza · The University of Texas at San Antonio · 2015

9. How have Internet cafés facilitated, constrained, or complicated the development of the Chinese game industry, and how has the industry responded to these challenges and opportunities?

Asked in: [How chinese play: internet cafe culture](#) · Zheng, Pengze · Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute · 2026

10. What role have Internet cafés played in shaping governmental regulation and public discourse on gaming, particularly in influencing the perceptions of non-gamers, parents, educators, and other authorities?

Asked in: [How chinese play: internet cafe culture](#) · Zheng, Pengze · Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute · 2026

11. What role does sexting play in young Canadian women's lives, sexualities, and relationships?

Asked in: [How Young Canadian Women Make Sense of their Experiences of Sexting](#) · Watson, Erin · University of Guelph · 2018

12. How do occupational downgrading experiences of immigrants shape their integration to the U.S. workforce?

Asked in: [Immigrant Experiences of Occupational Downgrading: Their Stories in Light of Possible Selves Theory](#) · Adversario, Jan A. · Texas State University · 2017

13. How can we make sense of the participants' narratives through the lens of possible selves theory?

Asked in: [Immigrant Experiences of Occupational Downgrading: Their Stories in Light of Possible Selves Theory](#) · Adversario, Jan A. · Texas State University · 2017

14. How can we understand the process of implementing digital tools from a project leader perspective?

Asked in: [Implementing new digital tools in the workplace : Combining top-down and bottom-up perspectives](#) · Tjernberg, Emma · Umeå University · 2020

15. How does the user perspective add to the understanding of the process of implementing new digital tools?

Asked in: [Implementing new digital tools in the workplace : Combining top-down and bottom-up perspectives](#) · Tjernberg, Emma · Umeå University · 2020

16. How does Indigenous beadwork function as a co-constitutive process between human and other-than-human relations?

Asked in: [Indigenous Women and 2SLGBTQIA+ Perspectives on Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Governance: #cwdbeadsproject and Indigenous STS Interventions](#) · Bennett, Arlana · University of Alberta · 2025

17. More specifically, how have the parenting decisions of upper-middle class, second-generation Muslim Americans primed their children for adult life as fully incorporated members of the American mainstream and as devoted members of a religious minority?

Asked in: [Making Muslim Americans: Parenting Practices, Parochial Schools, and the Transmission of Faith Across Generations in Metropolitan Detroit](#) · Karam, Rebecca · The Graduate Center, City University of New York · 2020

18. How do Muslim Syrian adolescent women refugees frame their resettlement experiences in the United States?

Asked in: [Muslim Syrian Adolescent Women Refugees' Resettlement Experiences in the U.S.: A Critical Narrative Analysis](#) · Einas Bashir Albadawi · University of Texas at San Antonio · 2021

19. How has migration evolved and affected agriculture, development and population dynamics in the study area?

Asked in: [Narratives of Migration : Complex Answers of a Society in Transformation, Ghana](#) · Adaawen, Stephen Ataamvari · University of Bonn · 2016

20. How are the subject positions of child, mother, and father constructed in the district court's rulings in custody disputes?

Asked in: [Norms and power in custody disputes : A discourse analysis of subject positions in family law cases](#) · Maticic, Joanna · Halmstad University · 2024

21. How do black college students conceptualize their racial identity and make sense of the racial landscape of their university?

Asked in: [On the Battlefield?: Using Cultural Schemas to Navigate the Racial Terrain of College](#) · Kennedy Alexandra Turner · University of Michigan · 2019

22. How does the pursuit of permanent legal status affect international student graduates' career plans and trajectories?

Asked in: [Pursuit of Permanent Status and Career Choices for International Students in Canada](#) · Zhang, Rujun · University of Alberta · 2025

23. How does racial identity develop over time among White women?

Asked in: [RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS, IDENTITY, AND DISSONANCE AMONG WHITE WOMEN IN STUDENT AFFAIRS GRADUATE PROGRAMS](#) · Robbins, Claire Kathleen · University of Maryland · 2012

24. In what ways do educational and professional experiences, including those that occur in [student affairs and higher education] master's degree programs, influence White women's racial identities?

Asked in: [RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS, IDENTITY, AND DISSONANCE AMONG WHITE WOMEN IN STUDENT AFFAIRS GRADUATE PROGRAMS](#) · Robbins, Claire Kathleen · University of Maryland · 2012

25. In what ways do multiple layers of social context, including power and privilege, influence White women's racial identities?

Asked in: [RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS, IDENTITY, AND DISSONANCE AMONG WHITE WOMEN IN STUDENT AFFAIRS GRADUATE PROGRAMS](#) · Robbins, Claire Kathleen · University of Maryland · 2012

26. How do individuals take up body positivity, and how do their identities influence their consumption of the content?

Asked in: [Redefining health on Instagram: Women's experiences with body positivity and body neutrality](#) · Scully, Olivia G. · Queen's University · 2024

27. How does consumption of body positivity content on social media shape constructions of health?

Asked in: [Redefining health on Instagram: Women's experiences with body positivity and body neutrality](#) · Scully, Olivia G. · Queen's University · 2024

28. How do ephemeral moments of interaction in the music scene ultimately lead to the formation of a community and intimate feelings for one another often identified as family?

Asked in: [Sound Affects: The Role of Music in Affecting Quality of Life](#) · Harmon, Justin Tyler · Texas A&M University · 2015

29. How and why do parents and persons considered short (or different) mobilize?

Asked in: [Stretched to the Limit: Organizations for Short Statured People and the Management of Stigma](#) · Leslie M. Rott · University of Michigan · 2013

30. How do roller derby participants make sense of their everyday experiences performing paid and unpaid labor for the sport?

Asked in: [Turning Passion Into Profit: When Leisure Becomes Work In Modern Roller Derby](#) · Draft, Amanda Nicole · Wayne State University · 2019

31. How did the migration to Sweden influence the women's understandings of gender norms?

Asked in: [Weaving Translocal Lives, Bridging Ageing Experiences : Turkish-born Women in Sweden](#) · Tuncer, Merve · Örebro University · 2023

32. How do female students living in Nepal and international female students living in Denmark understand and experience empowerment in their everyday lives?

Asked in: [Women's Experiences of Empowerment in Different Cultural Contexts: A Comparative Qualitative Study of Female Students in Nepal and Denmark](#) · Rimka Gurung · Aalborg University · 2026

33. How can the portrayal of Sonia's reflections about her identity in the book 'The Whole Story of Half a Girl' be understood based on Peter Berger's description of modern identity, particularly in relation to Berger's description of relative openness and differentiation?

Asked in: ["Det som påminner mig om vem jag är, påminner mig alltid om vem jag inte är" : En religionspsykologisk studie om identitetsskapande i en kontext av att växa upp med olika religiösa traditioner](#) · Khan, Saera · Uppsala University · 2020

34. How do shift workers experience the impact of shift work on social relationships and family life?

Asked in: ["Trots att skiftarbetet har sina negativa sidor..." : Industrierbetares upplevelser av skiftarbetets påverkan på det sociala livet](#) · Granmyr, Lovisa · Luleå University of Technology · 2026

35. How do shift workers describe their participation in leisure activities in relation to shift work?

Asked in: ["Trots att skiftarbetet har sina negativa sidor..." : Industrierbetares upplevelser av skiftarbetets påverkan på det sociala livet](#) · Granmyr, Lovisa · Luleå University of Technology · 2026

36. How do young women feel they are influenced by following beauty-oriented influencers in social media?

Asked in: [Det viktigaste är att vara snygg : En kvalitativ studie av feminism i sociala medier och hur unga kvinnor påverkas av att följa skönhets-inriktade influencers](#) · Backlund, Ida · Uppsala University · 2023

37. How do men and women experience opportunities and challenges within flexible work?

Asked in: [Flexibelt arbete utifrån ett genusperspektiv : En kvalitativ studie om det flexibla arbetets påverkan på traditionella könsnormer](#) · Elin Andersson · Halmstad University · 2023

38. How do people of different age groups, professions and gender construct place in established mining communities in transition?

Asked in: [Konstruktioner av plats i gruvssamhällen i omvandling](#) · Eugenia Segerstedt · Luleå University of Technology · 2020

39. How has the existence of Icelandic adolescents changed over the past twenty years in the light of societal changes and the development of children's issues over the past twenty years?

Asked in: [Líðan íslenskra unglinga : yfirlit um rannsóknir 1997 til 2018 í ljósi samfélagslegra breytinga og þróun í málefnum barna](#) · Thelma Björg Árnadóttir · University of Iceland · 2020

40. In what ways has the micro-environment of Icelandic adolescents changed over the past twenty years?

Asked in: [Líðan íslenskra unglinga : yfirlit um rannsóknir 1997 til 2018 í ljósi samfélagslegra breytinga og þróun í málefnum barna](#) · Thelma Björg Árnadóttir · University of Iceland · 2020

41. How do security vetters describe their professional discretion in practice?

Asked in: [Säkerhetsprövarens praktik. : En kvalitativ studie om det professionella handlingsutrymmet i säkerhetsprövningsprocesser.](#) · Wallén, Weronika · Linnaeus University · 2026

42. In what ways is the professional discretion of security vetters used in their daily work?

Asked in: [Säkerhetsprövarens praktik. : En kvalitativ studie om det professionella handlingsutrymmet i säkerhetsprövningsprocesser.](#) · Wallén, Weronika · Linnaeus University · 2026

Descriptive questions

These questions ask *what is happening*: how much, how often, or what kinds. They describe a situation rather than explain it.

43. How are girls' and boys' sports activities portrayed in children's books?

Asked in: [" 'But you're a girl' . . . 'You should find it more fun to play with dolls and do sewing crafts' . . . " : An analysis of gender norms within the context of sports in children's literature](#) · Johansson, Therese · Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences · 2025

44. What other factors (for example, role models, adult influence, feelings and attitudes) are highlighted in relation to the sport activities of characters in children's books?

Asked in: [" 'But you're a girl' . . . 'You should find it more fun to play with dolls and do sewing crafts' . . . " : An analysis of gender norms within the context of sports in children's literature](#) · Johansson, Therese · Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences · 2025

45. Do the women convey their stories in such a manner that gives indications of insignificance?

Asked in: ["The Rape Capital of the World" : Rape survivors stories](#) · Eriksson, Hannah · Uppsala University · 2024

46. What skills, knowledge, and values do participants conceptualise as activist competency?

Asked in: [Activist skills, knowledge, and values: constructions of young people's competency in a youth activist group](#) · Laura Weiner · University of Edinburgh · 2026

47. What were reasons for migration and language background of ethnic Kazakh returnee students from China?

Asked in: [Bridging Language, Identity and Integration in the Ethnic Migration- Student Experience of China-Kazakhs in Kazakhstan](#) · Toktau, Zhuldyz · Nazarbayev University · 2017

48. How do ethnic Kazakh returnee students from China identify themselves and how do they see their social integration now and in the future?

Asked in: [Bridging Language, Identity and Integration in the Ethnic Migration- Student Experience of China-Kazakhs in Kazakhstan](#) · Toktau, Zhuldyz · Nazarbayev University · 2017

49. What do children perceive as positive ways to solve a conflict?

Asked in: [Conflict resolution in peer cultures : – Children's perspectives on negotiating and solving social situations with their peers](#) · D'Souza, Katinka · Linköping University · 2022

50. What do children perceive as negative ways to solve a conflict?

Asked in: [Conflict resolution in peer cultures : – Children's perspectives on negotiating and solving social situations with their peers](#) · D'Souza, Katinka · Linköping University · 2022

51. How do children perceive the role of adults in conflict resolution?

Asked in: [Conflict resolution in peer cultures : – Children’s perspectives on negotiating and solving social situations with their peers](#) · D'Souza, Katinka · Linköping University · 2022

52. What methods and strategies could be used in order to prevent cyberbullying, according to the interviewed students?

Asked in: [Cyberbullying from students’ perspectives : a qualitative study](#) · Kakai, Golan · University of Gävle · 2016

53. First, how have patterns of educational attainment changed over time in Europe, and are they shaped by policy and educational systems?

Asked in: [Educational Stratification and Intergenerational Mobility in Ireland from a European Comparative Perspective](#) · Silva Pedroso, Monika da · University College Dublin · 2023

54. Who are elite black women in terms of education, occupation, income, and power?

Asked in: [Elite Black women in a white society](#) · Singleton, Tamara · Texas Woman’s University · 2022

55. How do Black women perceive workplace affinity with White women colleagues at predominantly White land-grant institutions?

Asked in: [Exploring the Perceptions of Black Women and Their Workplace Affinity for White Women Colleagues at Predominantly White Land-Grant Institutions](#) · Wilson-Langley, Kellynn Arlette · University of Houston · 2026

56. How do Black women perceive race as an influence on their workplace affinity for White women colleagues at predominantly White land-grant institutions?

Asked in: [Exploring the Perceptions of Black Women and Their Workplace Affinity for White Women Colleagues at Predominantly White Land-Grant Institutions](#) · Wilson-Langley, Kellynn Arlette · University of Houston · 2026

57. What are the historical discourses of colorism as it pertains to Chicanas/Tejanas?

Asked in: [Güeras y prietas: remembering lived experiences with colorism through history and ethnoplática](#) · Sandra D. Garza · The University of Texas at San Antonio · 2015

58. What do young Canadian women need to support safe and enjoyable sexting?

Asked in: [How Young Canadian Women Make Sense of their Experiences of Sexting](#) · Watson, Erin · University of Guelph · 2018

59. What are the journeys of adult immigrants adapting to the demands and the new environment of the U.S. workplace?

Asked in: [Immigrant Experiences of Occupational Downgrading: Their Stories in Light of Possible Selves Theory](#) · Adversario, Jan A. · Texas State University · 2017

60. How do people perceive climate change and its impact on agriculture in northern Ghana?

Asked in: [Narratives of Migration : Complex Answers of a Society in Transformation, Ghana](#) · Adaawen, Stephen Ataamvari · University of Bonn · 2016

61. What is the lived experience of an adult transgender Latinx person with their family before, during, and after transition?

Asked in: [Navigating Familismo: the Lived Experiences of Transgender Adults of Mexican Ancestry](#) · Johnson, Indira · Texas Woman’s University · 2026

62. What strategies and tactics do the organizations use in articulating and publicizing their stance on the Internet, in the mass media, and to the general public?

Asked in: [Stretched to the Limit: Organizations for Short Statured People and the Management of Stigma](#) · Leslie M. Rott · University of Michigan · 2013

63. In the existing research literature, what parental attitudes and behaviors are attributed to Swedish families?

Asked in: [Swedish Approaches to Parenting : Conceptions of children and childhood in Swedish families](#) · İsci, Gülsüm Yaprak · Jönköping University · 2021

64. How do women with experience of prostitution describe the reasons for entering prostitution in autobiographical books?

Asked in: [The Pathway into Prostitution : A Qualitative Study of Women's Autobiographical Narratives](#) · Thostrup, Rebecka · Linköping University · 2025

65. What social and relational circumstances do the women associate with their entry into prostitution?

Asked in: [The Pathway into Prostitution : A Qualitative Study of Women's Autobiographical Narratives](#) · Thostrup, Rebecka · Linköping University · 2025

66. What strategies do shift workers use to manage their social lives?

Asked in: ["Trots att skiftarbetet har sina negativa sidor..." : Industriarbetares upplevelser av skiftarbetets påverkan på det sociala livet](#) · Granmyr, Lovisa · Luleå University of Technology · 2026

67. How do young women perceive the relationship between influencers, feminism and beauty in social media?

Asked in: [Det viktigaste är att vara snygg : En kvalitativ studie av feminism i sociala medier och hur unga kvinnor påverkas av att följa skönhets-inriktade influencers](#) · Backlund, Ida · Uppsala University · 2023

68. What are the possibilities and limitations of different research methods in relation to including residents' perspectives in the transformation process?

Asked in: [Konstruktioner av plats i gruvsamhällen i omvandling](#) · Eugenia Segerstedt · Luleå University of Technology · 2020

Comparative questions

These questions compare two or more groups or settings, such as two schools or two teaching methods, to see whether they differ.

69. Is there diversity in demographic characteristics when comparing proximate locations in the Swedish rural setting?

Asked in: [Rural demographic change over space and time - the case of Vilhelmina municipality](#) · Yoshida Ahlin, Celia · Umeå University · 2015

70. Do people with various socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education level, and employment status) experience volunteering for natural resource management agencies differently from one another?

Asked in: [Volunteerism at Natural Resource Management Agencies: Examining the Effects of Volunteers' Motivations, Satisfaction, and Generativity on Volunteer Commitment](#) · Ding, Chen · Texas A&M University · 2020

71. What are the similarities and differences in empowerment perception and practices of Nepalese and Danish women?

Asked in: [Women's Experiences of Empowerment in Different Cultural Contexts: A Comparative Qualitative Study of Female Students in Nepal and Denmark](#) · Rimka Gurung · Aalborg University · 2026

72. How does the experience of flexible work differ between men and women from a work-life balance perspective?

Asked in: [Flexibelt arbete utifrån ett genusperspektiv : En kvalitativ studie om det flexibla arbetets påverkan på traditionella könsnormer](#) · Elin Andersson · Halmstad University · 2023

73. Are there differences in how sports activities are used between social classes?

Asked in: [Föreningslivet i Malmö - En Studie i Förhållandet mellan Samhällsklass och Idrottsförening](#) · Andreas Sjögren · Malmö University · 2011

Relational questions

These questions ask whether two things tend to go together, such as study time and exam results, without claiming that one causes the other.

74. Second, to what extent do group attributes (e.g., gender, migrant status, the intersection of the two) or institutional context (e.g., language of instruction and linguistic background) shape patterns of educational stratification in Ireland and in Europe more broadly?

Asked in: [Educational Stratification and Intergenerational Mobility in Ireland from a European Comparative Perspective](#) · Silva Pedroso, Monika da · University College Dublin · 2023

75. What is the relationship between persistent outmigration and the effects of environmental risks in the area?

Asked in: [Narratives of Migration : Complex Answers of a Society in Transformation, Ghana](#) · Adaawen, Stephen Ataamvari · University of Bonn · 2016

76. Can the commitment of those volunteering for natural resource management agencies be attributed to their motivation, satisfaction, and generativity?

Asked in: [Volunteerism at Natural Resource Management Agencies: Examining the Effects of Volunteers' Motivations, Satisfaction, and Generativity on Volunteer Commitment](#) · Ding, Chen · Texas A&M University · 2020

Causal questions

These questions ask whether one thing causes a change in another. Answering them usually takes an experiment or a careful design that rules out other explanations.

77. How do experiences of racial discrimination, demographic characteristics, and ethnonational diversity affect panethnic identity formation?

Asked in: [Creating Panethnicity: How Discrimination and Ethnonational Identity Affect Racialized Political Alignments](#) · Christine Capili · University of Oregon · 2025

How to adapt a question to your own study

Every question here was asked by someone else, about their own setting. These four steps turn one into a question that is yours.

- 1. Pick the shape, not the wording.** Notice whether the question compares, explores, explains or measures. That shape is what transfers to your study.
Recommended reading: [How to write a research question](#)
- 2. Swap in your own population and setting.** Change who, where and when, and check the question still makes sense.
Recommended reading: [How to find a research gap](#)
- 3. Check it fits your method.** A "how" or "why" question usually points to qualitative work; "how much" or "is there a relationship" to quantitative.
Recommended reading: [Qualitative vs quantitative research](#)
- 4. Line up your aims, objectives and questions.** Your committee will check that they agree.
Recommended reading: [Research aims, objectives and questions](#)

Do this with two or three questions and compare them: the one you can actually answer with the time and access you have is usually the right one.