

## INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Anthropology studies the biological and cultural variability of humanity across space and time. *Social and Cultural Anthropology* studies society and culture through description (ethnography) and analysis and interpretation (ethnology) of cultural similarities and differences. Culture, the object of anthropological study, is what we acquire as members of a society, what we share with its members and what we use to explain and interpret the surrounding world.

To understand people, we need to know their principal cultural touchstones. Studying *Social and Cultural Anthropology* can provide the basis for understanding human diversity and addressing social intervention in pluricultural contexts with a chance of success. If anything characterizes the globalized world in which we live, it is the interaction of very diverse cultural groups in shared spaces and on a previously unseen scale. Knowledge of the fundamental concepts of social and cultural anthropology and mastery of its main research methods and techniques will undoubtedly prove to be vital tools for the success of social workers operating in the contexts of great cultural diversity and complex intercultural relationships that are found in contemporary societies.

### COMPETENCIES

- Know the different understandings of the concept of culture, its history and its application to the different fields of anthropological knowledge.
- Know and be able to apply theories on sociocultural diversity to the analysis of the different processes of intercultural relations.
- Know how to select and apply the main ethnographic research techniques according to the object and context of study.

### CONTENT

1. Object of study, method and techniques of anthropology. Cultural relativism. Holistic approach. Intercultural comparison. Fieldwork and participatory observation. Observation of behaviour and verbal techniques: informal and systematic or standardized.
2. The concept of culture and its different meanings. Culture as an adaptive strategy and culture as a system of ideas and beliefs.
3. Biology and culture.
4. Ecology and cultural processes.
5. The economic system.
6. Structure and social organization.
7. Political activity.
8. Culture as a cognitive and symbolic system and culture and personality.