

University in Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy –
Department for sociology, Belgrade

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УДК 316.74:008 Диркем Е.

316.253 Диркем Е.

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DURKHEIM'S USE OF THE TERM CULTURE

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Abstract: *Using the method of content analysis, in our work we offered a concise insight into the use of the term “culture” in the work of Emile Durkheim. Bearing in mind that the heritage of enlightenment can be perceived in Durkheim’s work, but indirectly the traditions of Romanticism as well, we consider the issue of using this term an important one. The specter of meanings associated with the notion of “culture” makes it suitable for use as a kind of indicator. Much like the Rorschach stains, very different meanings can be loaded into it. Findings show that Durkheim did not use the word “culture” very often, considering the volume of his work. He most often connected it with the scientific, intellectual, logical, etc. We paid special attention to his most important works (*The Division of Labor in Society, Rules of Sociological Method, Suicide and the Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*). Other works are covered by a quantitative analysis of the use of the word “culture” in which we tried to find the most frequent attributes that appear alongside the aforementioned term. The analysis covers most of Durkheim’s opus published during and after his life.*

Key words: *Culture, Emile Durkheim, Content Analysis, Positivism, Romanticism, Enlightenment*

The emergence of Romanticism and departure from Enlightenment in Europe creates a split which remains an eternal feature of the development of philosophy and science. In his book *Another Philosophy of History for the Education of Mankind*,¹ which can be seen as a response to Kant’s work

1 Herder, J. G. (2004) *Another Philosophy of History for the Education of Mankind*, in: *Another Philosophy of History and Selected Political Writings*,

*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*², Herder starts a long tradition of controversy over the role and place of the universal in the domain of products of human spirit, i.e. culture as an irreducible singularity of people. In fact, this ‘split’ occurs earlier, within the framework of Enlightenment itself. In his famous work *The Spirit of Law*, Montesquieu is the first who try to systematize and explain the differences between the governments of the peoples of Europe and the East.³ In this venture, he starts from the assumption that every form of government (republic, monarchy, despotism) is appropriate for a certain set of natural and social conditions. The universality of the spirit (law) is neither a necessity, nor the *telos* of all nations, or the entire human race, because the diversity of customs, morals, religions, natural, i.e. geographical conditions does not allow for such a possibility. It could only be achieved if we were guided by Procrustes’ principles. Later on, the spirit of the law will obviously experience its reincarnation and transformation in the form of the spirit of the people (*Volksgeist*).

Disagreements with regard to different notions of self-importance and uniqueness of culture (or different cultures) did not stop with the disappearance of the carriers of the Enlightenment and Romantic ideas. Here we cannot show all the authors who have given a lesser or greater contribution to the discussion on the relationship between the universal and general on the one hand, and the authentic and unique on the other. Therefore, we cannot follow the thread which still has no end, at least not in social sciences. We do not take the present as our destination, but rather the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. More precisely, we want to use the work of the classic of sociology as an ‘experiment’ in which we will better understand his work, i.e. discern the effects it has taken, with the help of different meanings and use of the term “culture”.

In this paper, we do not merely want to show that Durkheim followed the already trodden path of the French thinkers who believed that culture was a synonym for civilization, that is, that any of its elements could be ‘transposed’ into every social or ethnical environment. Although Enlightenment was the heritage which had the greatest impact on him, Durkheim was shaped by the Romantic tradition in various ways. Gouldner points out that, in the case of Positivism, which had the most powerful influence

Evrigenis, I. and Pellerin, D. (eds.), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, pp. 3–99.

2 Kant, I. (1991) *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, in: *Political Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 41–54.

3 Montesquieu, C. (1989) *The Spirit of the Laws*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

on Durkheim, there are unmistakable effects of Romanticism.⁴ The intention of our work is to explore how Durkheim observed and used the notion of culture which is fundamentally different in the abovementioned philosophical traditions. We could devote a comprehensive study to this issue; however, due to the limitation in terms of the size of this paper, our goal must be more modest. We found restriction which will keep us within an acceptable framework (scope) in the methodological approach. Although in our work we will apply both the qualitative (for the four most significant works) and quantitative approach, analyzing this term in ‘close-up’ will allow for reduction within the desired framework.

Method

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the content of the use of the term “culture” in the work of Emile Durkheim. Establishing content analysis as a method is still the subject of discussion and debate,⁵ however, we will remain within the framework of one of the definitions of this term.⁶ As the basis of our analysis, we will use the website⁷ containing Durkheim’s works, both published during his life and posthumously. This website does not contain all of Durkheim’s works, but it is currently the largest electronic database of the books and articles available to us in the original, French language.

For the analysis unit in our work we took the word “culture”. Such a choice seemed justified for several reasons. The first reason for the solution to such a ‘narrowly’ defined unit of analysis is the nature of the material being analyzed. Namely, ever since his death, the work of this classic of sociology has been the subject of numerous analyzes and interpretations. The secondary literature dedicated to his works is particularly ample – even when only the major world languages are taken into

4 Gouldner, A. (1980) *Za sociologiju*, Zagreb: Globus.

5 See more: Manić, Ž. (2014) *Primena i mogućnosti metoda analize sadržaja u sociologiji*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd.

6 Fajgelj, S. (2010) *Metode istraživanja ponašanja*, Beograd: Centar za primenjenu psihologiju, str. 406.

7 The website (http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/durkheim.html, accessed on 24 February 2018) appears as a project of a group of Canadian enthusiasts and is dedicated to classics of social sciences. The stored works of the classics were published in French. In this paper, we will regard Durkheim’s works published on this website as his entire opus. The website does not contain all of Durkheim’s works, but certainly a significant majority of them. We deliberately left the quotes in the original, French language, because we believe that, in the case of using the available translations, the analysis would have lost its credibility.

account. This fact is probably one of the reasons why the content analysis method is so rarely applied to the ‘founding fathers’, i.e. works of the classics. Using this method, in our case, we cannot obtain new knowledge on the subject of the analysis by ‘assembling’ a big and comprehensive picture from small parts. Our intention is not to discover the latent elements of the subject of the research which would show us the ‘grand plan’ in its integrity, or in its entirety, by using the content analysis. The goal is much more modest.

Although we do not seek to reveal a single and comprehensive picture of the subject of the analysis, we believe that there are nevertheless latent layers of meaning which need to be discovered, or at least shed light on. The content analysis has been understood from its beginning as a procedure that allows insight or explication of latent messages as subjects of research, or a method based on which we can predict the behavior of certain actors.⁸ Another reason is that our focus on a specific segment of Durkheim’s work gives us the opportunity to more precisely define the context in which the word “culture” is used, or an easier approach to comparing various cases in which the subject of our analysis appears. More precisely, we believe that, for a word as the *unit of analysis*, in our case, it is best to take the sentence⁹ (in which it occurs) as a *unit of context*.¹⁰ This, of course, opens the issue of interpretation possibilities in relatively limited frames (sentences), especially in cases where the context in which a unit of analysis occurs cannot be determined merely on the basis of a given unit of context. But any ‘expansion’ beyond this framework would also mean a wider interpretation of Durkheim’s work, that is, consideration of our subject of analysis as a whole. In that case, we would lose the accuracy and comparability of the obtained data.

In the analysis, we mostly focused on determining adjectives which clarify the type of culture. Without considering the rules of the French language syntax, we can see that in the majority of cases, apart from the word “culture”, there is also an adjective which gives us an explanation of which meaning and form of culture Durkheim actually speaks.

8 Manić, Ž. (2014) *Primena i mogućnosti metoda analize sadržaja u sociologiji*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd, str. 210–221.

9 In the case of Durkheim’s four most important works (*The Division of Labour in Society*, *Rules of Sociological Method*, *Suicide*, and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*), the unit of context will be wider.

10 Manić, Ž. (2014) *Primena i mogućnosti metoda analize sadržaja u sociologiji*, doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd, str. 176.

Given the diversity of works we have taken into consideration (monographs, articles in scientific journals, book reviews, transcripts of debates, propaganda materials, etc.), we can say that here we actually want to determine to what extent and in what way Durkheim used the notion of culture in quite different circumstances, that is, in works which were not merely scientific in nature (e.g. *L'Allemagne au-dessus de tout*). It is even more important to mention that, for Durkheim, the notion of culture was not of the highest theoretical significance. Unlike concepts such as social fact, collective consciousness, religion, church, suicide, etc., Durkheim has never offered a definition of the concept of culture. Otherwise, our analysis would have made much less sense and had less significance (or at least we would have had to choose entirely different research objectives). However, even the absence of such a definition tells us something about the subject of the research, therefore, seemingly unusually, the analysis of the content which we will carry out can also be considered as the analysis of the 'voids' in the content.

In addition, by analyzing the material, which includes more than just scientific papers in the context of the meaning of this word, we discover the possibility of determining the consistency of the use and meaning of the term "culture", regardless of the context of its use, or the nature of the work in which it occurs. This makes it possible to establish more clearly the influence on Durkheim's work which is external to science, i.e. possible influence of extracognitive circumstances which contributed to the consistency of its use. Notwithstanding the above mentioned, in the methodological sense, we believe that selecting Durkheim's most important works is justified (*The Division of Labour in Society*, *Rules of Sociological Method*, *Suicide*, and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*). Such a step enables us to notice the way of use and significance attached to the term "culture" in the works which have had the most significant influence on further development of sociology, whose founder, at least in institutional, academic frameworks, was Emile Durkheim himself.

In the analysis of Durkheim's work, we did not take into account the occurrence of the abovementioned word in quotations. We believe such a procedure to be justified, since in this way we would perform interpretation of an interpretation, and in addition, the frequency of such examples is extremely small. Also, we did not distinguish between the singular and plural form of the word "culture". In this case too, the frequency of occurrence of the word culture in the plural form is extremely small.

The Division of Culture in Society

In his doctoral dissertation, which will later become a book published under the title *The Division of Labour in Society*, the word “culture” appears 15 times. In this work, Durkheim often perceived the notion of culture in the context of social differentiation.¹¹ We can say that Durkheim anticipates the emergence and development of subcultures as an inevitable process that occurs in correlation with the increasing division of labor. Nevertheless, we must emphasize that the subcultures of certain social groups would in this case be determined by their professional knowledge and abilities, and not by some other criteria of division, to which the notion of subculture in contemporary sociology is commonly related (e.g. generations, lifestyles, etc.).

“De plus en plus nous jugeons nécessaire de ne pas soumettre tous nos enfants à une culture uniforme, comme s'ils devaient tous mener une même vie, mais de les former différemment en vue des fonctions différentes qu'ils seront appelés à remplir”.¹² In this example, it is possible to note that Durkheim used the term “culture” in the meaning of education or knowledge to be transferred or adopted. As can be seen (from Table 2), the highest frequency of use of the word “culture” is observed in works which are specifically dedicated to education and upbringing. “Même dans sa partie la plus générale, à savoir le droit civil, il n'entre en exercice que grâce à des fonctionnaires particuliers: magistrats, avocats, etc., qui sont devenus aptes à ce rôle grâce à une culture toute spéciale”.¹³ In this case also, the word “culture” appears with an adjective which points to a special, or specialized culture whose development in this case depends precisely on the transition from the repressive to restitutive law. Even by superficial reading of *The Division of Labour in Society* can it be concluded that Durkheim's consideration and differentiation of these two types of law was in fact merely a methodological process by which he established the differences between the mechanical and organic solidarity. Therefore, in this case as well, culture appears as a ‘dependent variable’ of social development.

Durkheim's evolutionism was manifested in the sphere of social development and consideration of changes in social structure

11 Durkheim, E. (1893a) *De la division du travail social: livre I*, p. 50, footnote 45, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/division_du_travail/division_travail_1.pdf.

12 Ibidem, p. 50.

13 Ibidem, p. 108.

and organization. He has never been inclined to biologicistic¹⁴ and psychologicistic explanations of social phenomena which often occur in other authors along with evolutionistic premises. He saw the main task in establishing sociology as a science precisely in isolation of the domain of the social as reality *sui generis*, thus, a separate realm of reality with laws or, at least, lawfulness irreducible to its psychic, biological, or physical (geographical) basis.¹⁵ The latter can be seen most clearly in the study *Suicide* where he devoted entire chapters to deliberations of extra-social factors, in order to show that they have no (decisive) influence on the social rates of suicide in the given societies.

Nonetheless, we can see that Durkheim was not entirely immune to the consideration of human, biological evolution, and the related conditions for achieving the development of (high) culture: “Si notre intelligence et notre sensibilité se développent et s’aiguisent, c’est que nous les exerçons davantage; et si nous les exerçons plus, c’est que nous y sommes contraints par la violence plus grande de la lutte que nous avons à soutenir Voilà comment, sans l’avoir voulu, l’humanité se trouve apte à recevoir une culture plus intense et plus variée”.¹⁶ Interestingly, here Durkheim advocates an evolutionary and biological argument which, on the one hand, is considered to be the basis of the Darwinist theory, and on the other, it is a postulate of liberal understanding of the role of competition and all the positive outcomes resulting from it. In the latter case, we refer to Montesquieu and Adam Smith. The first of the two regarded honor as the driving principle of monarchies,¹⁷ and the second regarded material wealth as a motive for individual economic action.¹⁸ In both cases, the individual motives create general social well-being that arises as an unintended consequence of personal interests and actions. The most obvious example of this view of culture can be seen in the following example: “Du moment que le nombre des individus entre lesquels les relations sociales sont établies est plus considérable, ils ne peuvent se maintenir que s’ils se spécialisent davantage, travaillent davantage, surexcitent leurs facultés; et de cette stimulation

14 Here we are referring to narrowing down explanations of social phenomena to the biological basis of an individual.

15 Jones, R. (2004) *The Development of Durkheim’s Social Realism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

16 Durkheim, E. (1893b) *De la division du travail social : livres II et III*, p. 44. 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/division_du_travail/division_travail_2.pdf.

17 Montesquieu, C. (1989) *The Spirit of the Laws*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

18 Smith, A. (1977) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 30.

générale résulte inévitablement un plus haut degré de culture”.¹⁹ Still, the above quotation should be taken with a grain of salt and understood in the context of the nineteenth-century social sciences, among which sociology sought its place. The biological discourse was almost omnipresent in considerations of the past and future of European societies,²⁰ thus making it difficult for Durkheim to completely avoid or ignore the question of the biological (racial) relativity of social phenomena. Moreover, Durkheim demonstrates important and significant departure from the ideas of classical economists as regards the causes of the division of labor.

Not only does Durkheim oppose the influence of theories which take race as a basic starting point, or at least as a sociologically relevant notion, but he tries to offer explanations for any obstacles to the establishment of a meritocratic society.²¹ Here we can see that he actually understands culture as a certain type of *cultural capital*.²² In further consideration of this issue, as well as in the following example of use of the word “culture”, Durkheim clearly indicates the multiple effect of conditionality: “Enfin, dans les établissements où ils achèvent leurs études, les fils de savants se trouvent en contact avec des esprits cultivés ou propres à recevoir une haute culture, et l’action de ce milieu nouveau ne fait que confirmer celle du premier”.²³ It is interesting how, in his studies dedicated to the issue of education and upbringing, Durkheim did not pay more attention to social differences in the possibility of accessing high culture, i.e. that (professional) knowledge which enables a more favorable position within the social structure. In this respect, we need to take into account the fact that Durkheim’s argumentation was derived primarily from the point of his disagreement with Francis Galton,²⁴ while in a wider context it can be seen as a denial of social Darwinism and theories which found their source in it.

19 Durkheim, E. (1893b) *De la division du travail social: livres II et III*, p. 44. 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/division_du_travail/division_travail_2.pdf.

20 Jackson, J. and Nadine W. (2004) *Race, Racism, and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, pp. 29–96.

21 Durkheim, E. *De la division du travail social: livres II et III*, p. 93, 24 February 2018, http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/division_du_travail/division_travail_2.pdf.

22 Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

23 Durkheim, E. *De la division du travail social: livres II et III*, 24 February 2018, p. 75, http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/division_du_travail/division_travail_2.pdf.

24 Ibidem, p. 74.

On the same track of opposition to general, i.e. “widespread culture” and the set of knowledge and skills necessary for performing a certain social function (profession), there is also Durkheim’s comparison with which he wants to point to the development of culture that follows the development of society itself: “Pour être un bon médecin au temps d’Esculape, il n’était pas nécessaire de recevoir une culture bien étendue; il suffisait d’avoir un goût naturel pour l’observation et pour les choses concrètes, et, comme ce goût est assez général pour être aisément transmissible, il était inévitable qu’il se perpétuât dans certaines familles et que, par suite, la profession médicale y fût héréditaire”.²⁵

Durkheim was aware of the tension which arises with development, i.e. functional differentiation. In this case, social development is evidently reflected in the domain of culture as well: “On a parfois proposé comme remède de donner aux travailleurs, à côté de leurs connaissances techniques et spéciales, une instruction générale. Mais, à supposer qu’on puisse ainsi racheter quelques-uns des mauvais effets attribués à la division du travail, ce n’est pas un moyen de les prévenir. La division du travail ne change pas de nature parce qu’on la fait précéder d’une culture générale. Sans doute, il est bon que le travailleur soit en état de s’intéresser aux choses de l’art, de la littérature, etc.; mais il n’en reste pas moins mauvais qu’il ait été tout le jour traité comme une machine”.²⁶ We would say that, unlike Marx (Karl Marx), Durkheim was nevertheless disinclined to utopias promising solutions for the realization of all human potential, regardless of the place occupied by each individual in the process of social reproduction. However, although he believed that *general culture* in some sense would only be a hindrance to the progress of the division of labor, Durkheim, almost in Marx’s words, expressed hope of a beneficial effect of insight into totality.²⁷

While in the previous case there is a discourse which postulates general culture as a privilege, and in some circumstances even as an obstacle to further development of society, Durkheim also sees it as a sign of a lack of specialization: “Ce n’est donc pas sans raison que le sentiment public éprouve un éloignement toujours plus prononcé pour le dilettante et même pour ces hommes qui, trop épris d’une culture exclusivement générale, refusent de se laisser prendre tout entiers dans les mailles de

25 Durkheim, E. De la division du travail social: livres II et III, 24 February 2018, p. 78, http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/division_du_travail/division_travail_2.pdf.

26 Ibidem, p. 118.

27 Ibidem, p. 118.

l'organisation professionnelle".²⁸ We can compare general culture with the fate of mechanical solidarity and collective consciousness, and its survival among individuals as refusal or insufficient commitment to the emerging organic solidarity in which subcultures would have to appear and continue to evolve.

Culture, Science and Sociological Method

In his methodological manifest (*Rules of Sociological Method*), Durkheim mentions the term culture in no more than three sentences. The term he uses in this work conveys the meaning of professional education: "Une culture psychologique, plus encore qu'une culture biologique, constitue donc pour le sociologue une propédeutique nécessaire; mais elle ne lui sera utile qu'à condition qu'il s'en affranchisse après l'avoir reçue et qu'il la dépasse en la complétant par une culture spécialement sociologique".²⁹ In all three cases, i.e. sentences, the term culture appears in a specific, professional context: "La sociologie n'est donc l'annexe d'aucune autre science; elle est elle-même une science distincte et autonome, et le sentiment de ce qu'a de spécial la réalité sociale est même tellement nécessaire au sociologue que, seule, une culture spécialement sociologique peut le préparer à l'intelligence des faits sociaux".³⁰ In this case, the abovementioned examples show us the number of cultures which identify with the knowledge and methods of a 'cold' and rational science. Perhaps, in this kind of discussion on culture (separate sciences), Durkheim went the farthest from the romantic tradition of determining this word. We can observe that, in the aforementioned examples, culture is equated with the knowledge itself, that is, the epistemological order among the sciences. Considering the time when the famous methodological study emerged, we can say that it certainly did not refer to a particular scientific community. Only in one instance does the term "general culture" appear together with the term "philosophical culture": "Tout cet appareil de précautions peut sembler bien laborieux pour une science qui, jusqu'ici, ne réclamait guère, de ceux qui s'y consacraient, qu'une culture générale et philosophique; et il est, en effet, certain que la mise en pratique d'une telle méthode ne saurait avoir pour effet de vulgariser la curiosité des choses sociologiques".³¹

28 Ibidem, p. 139.

29 Durkheim, E. (February 2018) *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*, p. 64, 24.; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/regles_methode/durkheim_regles_methode.pdf.

30 Ibidem, p. 79.

31 Ibidem, p. 80.

Culture and Suicide

In the work *Suicide*, the term culture appears 11 times altogether. What can be said for the entire Durkheim's work is also valid in this case – the word “culture” far more often occurs having a meaning which does not relate to an ethnic, national, or religious context. The latter is true even in cases where Durkheim compares the different nations within Europe in order to judge the factors that influence the various suicide rates. Thus, for Durkheim there is a “higher level of culture”³² or “high culture”³³ which is clearly comparable (among different nation), i.e. at least in the event of suicide as a phenomenon, it causes the same consequences regardless of the ethnic/national prognostic. The same is true with the use of the term “basic culture” which too can be used for comparison. In this work, he uses the “strong culture” syntagm to explain the particularity of the Jews and their position within the Western societies.³⁴ He emphasizes the existence of a large degree of group cohesion (integration), on the one hand, and “strong culture”, on the other: “Il joint ainsi les avantages de la forte discipline qui caractérise les petits groupements d'autrefois aux bienfaits de la culture intense dont nos grandes sociétés actuelles ont le privilège”.³⁵

Durkheim stood out as a representative of moral relativism, more precisely, as an opponent of ‘deduction’ of moral principles from ‘pure’ *ratio*, regardless of the social organization and structure at a given historical moment. Nevertheless, here we can see that in the case of culture, Durkheim is closer to the evolutionary point of view. On the other hand, Durkheim does not consider that only high culture can be shared by different societies: “Inversement, la culture grossière et rude, qu’implique l’altruisme excessif des primitifs, développe une insensibilité qui facilite le renoncement”.³⁶ In this sense, we can understand the distinction between the Greek Catholics and Protestants, or

32 Durkheim, E. (1897c) *Le suicide. Étude de sociologie: livre III*, p. 29, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/suicide/suicide_Livre_3.pdf.

33 Durkheim, E. (1897b) *Le suicide. Étude de sociologie : livre II*, p. 27, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/suicide/suicide_Livre_2.pdf.

34 On Durkheim's attitude toward the Jews, see more: Strenski, I. (1997): *Durkheim and the Jews of France*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

35 Durkheim, E. (1897b) *Le suicide. Étude de sociologie : livre II*, p. 32, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/suicide/suicide_Livre_2.pdf.

36 Durkheim, E. (1897c) *Le suicide. Étude de sociologie : livre III*, p. 29, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/suicide/suicide_Livre_3.pdf.

Catholics.³⁷ In *Suicide*, only on one occasion does Durkheim use the concept of culture with adjectives which have ethnic, i.e. national denotation.³⁸ We cannot say that this French classic belongs to a group of sociologists who wanted to establish a simple deterministic set to explain social phenomena; however, one can conclude that, in this study, culture was not only treated as a cause which explains the differentiation of the suicide rates of different social groups.³⁹

The Elementary Forms of Culture

While in *The Division of Labour in Society* and *Suicide* Durkheim had modern, contemporary societies as subjects of his research, in the case of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, he placed the so-called primitive society in the center of his analysis. As he explained himself, the study of totemism on the ground of Australia (predominantly the Arunta tribe) was chosen with a clear methodological justification. For Durkheim, the social structure and organization of the local tribes represented the basis for the simplest form of religion known to the West at the time (during Durkheim's life). He, thus, hoped that by studying the elementary form of religious life, he would discover the key to understanding the religions of a much higher level of evolutionary development. Therefore, the dichotomy of 'primitive' culture *versus* Western (high or developed) culture is obviously expressed in this work.

Much as in the other works, in the case of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim opened the explanation for his theory by challenging the argumentations of 'competitive' authors. With the view to providing his definition and view of religion, he also questions the significance of the notion of the *supernatural* as constitutive to the definition of this term. For Durkheim, this definition should lay a claim to universality and could not relate only to a particular historical period, or the evolutionary stage of development: "En tout cas, ce qui est certain, c'est qu'elle n'apparaît que très tardivement dans l'histoire des religions; elle est totalement étrangère non seulement aux peuples qu'on appelle primitifs, mais encore à tous ceux qui n'ont pas atteint

37 Durkheim, E. (1897b) *Le suicide. Étude de sociologie : livre II*, p. 19, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/suicide/suicide_Livre_2.pdf.

38 Durkheim, E. (1897c) *Le suicide. Étude de sociologie : livre III*, p. 64, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/suicide/suicide_Livre_3.pdf.

39 Ibidem, p. 64, footnote 3.

un certain degré de culture intellectuelle”.⁴⁰ Here *culture*, or more precisely, “intellectual culture”, apart from the obvious evolutionary dimension, has an epistemological plane, because the knowledge of the supernatural is obviously impossible without a developed culture.

Considering the approach given in the study *Totemism and Exogamy*, Durkheim notes that the author of the study applied an entirely different methodological solution. In his wish to discover all the traces of totemism, Frazer includes various societies: “les sociétés les plus différentes par la nature et le degré de culture: l’ancienne Égypte, l’Arabie, la Grèce, les Slaves du Sud y figurent à côté des tribus de l’Australie et de l’Amérique”.⁴¹ Here, “culture” evidently appears in the evolutionistic attire. On the opposite side, ‘lower’ culture is the context of the emergence of the original self-awareness of society which appears through symbols as labels of an entire community.⁴² The same evolutionistic discourse is also present in the context of the interpretation of the work of another author (Lang), in connection with the emergence of the idea of monotheism. Durkheim speaks about the culture of the developed Western societies as a *privileged culture* thanks to which (according to Lang) the idea of monotheism re-emerges, which was originally ‘forgotten’ due to the influence of animism and totemism: “Elle aurait ainsi subi une sorte de dégénérescence progressive jusqu’au jour où, par effet d’une culture privilégiée, elle serait parvenue à se ressaisir et à s’affirmer de nouveau, avec un éclat et une netteté qu’elle n’avait pas dans le principe”.⁴³ Given that he criticized such an approach to totemism, we can say that here Durkheim described culture as a significantly complex phenomenon, which due to its ‘opacity’ can mask the ‘purity’ of totemism. The above mentioned is also evident in the following example: “Mais les sociétés auxquelles ces faits sont empruntés sont déjà parvenues à une culture assez élevée; en tout cas, elles ont dépassé la phase du pur totémisme”.⁴⁴

As we will see later in our analysis, Durkheim used the syntagm *scientific culture* very often. In view of his positivism, i.e. his

40 Durkheim, E. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: livre premier*, p. 33, 22 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_1.pdf.

41 Ibidem, pp. 190–191; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_1.pdf.

42 Durkheim, E. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: livre deuxième*, p. 255, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_2.pdf.

43 Ibidem, p. 273.

44 Ibidem, p. 170.

attitude towards science and its role in the change of the French society, such information cannot surprise us. However, given the high frequency of the occurrence of this term in his entire opus – though it occurs less frequently in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* – we can say that the use of this syntagm is extensive. When taking into account his entire work, the information which will be presented later in this paper forces us to such a conclusion. On the other hand, when it comes to this study, the term *scientific culture* is not so frequent, but its pronounced use is even more noticeable if one takes into account the fact that this work has so-called ‘primitive societies’ as the subject of its research, i.e. the very beginning of the evolution of religion (totemism). In addition, *scientific culture* implies that Durkheim did not have in mind mere development of knowledge and skills which science brings, and which would be created and reproduced in a narrow circle of academic institutions (faculties, institutes, laboratories, etc.).

During his discussion with Bréal (Michel Bréal) concerning the idea of the influence of language on constituting and formulating ideas, Durkheim observes as follows: “Sans doute, notre culture scientifique nous permet de redresser aisément les erreurs que le langage pourrait nous suggérer ainsi; mai l’influence du mot dut être toute-puissante alors qu’elle était sans contre-poids”.⁴⁵ The syntagm *scientific culture* ‘exudes’ the enlightenment spirit. It therefore appears as an obstacle to errors, or misconceptions. This syntagm also occurs in the role of epistemological, or cognitive ‘normalization’.

As we know, according to his philosophical orientation, Durkheim was a NeoKantian. His attempt should also be considered in this light, the attempt to provide a sociological explanation for the emergence of basic categories, including the causes, at the very end of *The Elementary Forms*: “L’idée de cause n’est pas la même pour un savant et pour un homme dépourvu”.⁴⁶ For him, *scientific culture* in this case implies a radical epistemological ‘leap’. However, in order to be able to constitute his sociology of epistemology, he clearly pointed out that the concepts did not need to occur only as a result of a developed (scientific) culture: “Dire que les concepts expriment la manière dont la société se représente les choses, c’est dire aussi que la pensée conceptuelle

45 Durkheim, E. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse : livre premier*, p. 77, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_1.pdf

46 Durkheim, E. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse : livre troisième*, p. 352, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_3.pdf

est contemporaine de l'humanité. Nous nous refusons donc à y voir le produit d'une culture plus ou moins tardive".⁴⁷

Durkheim was well aware of the dual role of culture. It is, above all, the Piedmont of the human spirit: "D'une part, l'individu tient de la société le meilleur de soi-même, tout ce qui lui fait une physionomie et une place à part parmi les autres êtres, sa culture intellectuelle et morale. Qu'on retire à l'homme le langage, les sciences, les arts, les croyances de la morale, et il tombe au rang de l'animalité".⁴⁸ Culture is clearly shown as a repository of the best that human society has created. On the other hand, culture can also be a *doxa* which an individual or an entire society questions, thus evolving through the process. In combating the ideas of naturalism which sees the emergence of the idea of supernatural in human admiration of the wonders of nature, Durkheim claims as follows: "Il y est trop accoutumé pour en être fortement surpris. Il faut de la culture et de la réflexion pour secouer ce joug de l'accoutumance et découvrir tout ce qu'il y a de merveilleux dans cette régularité même".⁴⁹ Regardless of the continuous cycle of creating and overcoming the achieved degree of a given culture, Durkheim also finds permanent elements in it: "Ainsi, il y a un ascétisme qui, inhérent à toute vie sociale, est destiné à survivre à toutes les mythologies et à tous les dogmes; il fait partie intégrante de toute culture humaine".⁵⁰ Although in *The Elementary Forms* he did not deal with the issues of social differentiation (at least not to a greater extent, as was the case with *The Division of Labour in Society*), what is interesting is the fact that in this work we can find an example of a 'protoprofessional' group which creates and governs a particular culture.⁵¹

Frequency of Occurrence of the Term Culture

Due to the limited space, Durkheim's entire work will be analyzed here only at the level of quantitative data. As we said in the introduction of the paper, our analysis will be limited to the 'general aspect' of the term "culture", which would in our

47 Ibidem, p. 412.

48 Ibidem, p. 333.

49 Durkheim, É. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: livre premier*, pp. 82, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_1.pdf

50 Durkheim, E. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse : livre troisième*, p. 307, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_3.pdf.

51 Durkheim, E. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: livre deuxième*, p. 233, 24 February 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/formes_vie_religieuse/formes_elementaires_2.pdf.

case mean that we will first and foremost direct attention at the attributes which occur with this term. We want to see what kind of culture Durkheim (most often) speaks in his works. When we look at Table 1, we can see that the term *scientific culture* had the highest frequency of occurrence (29), which cannot come as a surprise since Durkheim was heavily influenced by Auguste Comte and Saint-Simon (Henri de Saint-Simon) – authors whose works emanate scientism. We could, however, say that the remarkably low frequency of occurrence of the word *culture* alongside any ethnic or national determinant is, in fact, surprising. Thus, *la culture allemande*, together with other ethnic/national uses of the term *culture* (*culture française*, *culture romaine*, *culture grecque...*), does not occur as often (12 times). These results confirm classification of Durkheim into the long, enlightening tradition of authors who felt that culture in its essence is a product of a spirit which can be generalized, or universalized.

Moreover, it is surprising how often Durkheim speaks of certain, separate parts of culture, instead of speaking of culture in general, whether by the latter we refer to national cultures or an even wider sense of it – culture as such, general culture, culture of the entire human race, etc. We cannot speak of these ‘special’ cultures (*culture scientifique*, *culture intellectuelle*, *culture logique*, *culture morale*, *culture esthétique...*) as of subcultures in the full meaning of the word.⁵² It is clear, however, that Durkheim devoted a great deal of his work to showing us the layeredness and complexity of the term culture, regardless of the fact that this term did not have a prominent and significant place in its categorical apparatus (in relation to other terms).

Table 1⁵³

1. culture scientifique	29
2. culture intellectuelle	25
3. culture logique	17
4. culture générale	14

52 In this case, we are referring to Durkheim’s use of these terms.

53 It should be mentioned that, for the purpose of the transparency of the table, we excluded certain cases which are not ‘pure’ examples of the stated attributes that occurred alongside the word “culture”. Thus, for example, under number 10. *culture spécial*, we did not include *une culture toute spéciale*, although, given the meaning of the word, such a merger could be carried out. We believe that such a combination of classification categories would complicate the presentation of the data without significantly affecting the structure of the frequency. Moreover, in the table there are only reports of the word “culture” occurring with a certain attribute. Other instances of the occurrence of the word “culture” were not included in Table 1.

5. culture morale	11
6. culture esthétique	11
7. haute culture	10
8. culture humaine	10
9. culture littéraire	8
10. culture spéciale	6
11. culture secondaire	6
12. culture allemande	6
13. culture pédagogique	4
14. culture française	4
15. culture moyenne	4
16. culture religieuse	3
17. culture classique	3
18. culture professionnelle	3
19. culture grammaticale	2
20. culture historique	2
21. culture mentale	2
22. culture sociologique ⁵⁴	2

When we look at Table 2, which gives us a general overview (of the frequency) of the use of the term “culture” for each of the works, we see that this term most often occurs in works dedicated to education, or pedagogy.⁵⁵ This cannot be a surprise to us, given his understanding of the process of socialization, or upbringing. For him, upbringing does not imply that the child only adopts and develops a “number of physical, intellectual, and moral states” required not only by society as a whole, but also “by a special environment for which it is specifically intended”.⁵⁶ In this respect, one should understand that Durkheim devoted a great part of these studies to the contemplation of the

54 We did not account for the word “culture” in this table when it appeared less than twice.

55 As we know, Durkheim constituted sociology as an academic discipline along with pedagogy Lukes, S. (1973) *Emile Durkheim – His Life and Work*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, pp. 105–106.

56 Durkheim, Emile (1922) *Éducation et sociologie*, p. 9, 12. 02. 2018; http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/education_socio/education_socio.pdf

role of scientific, literary, aesthetic... culture in the process of upbringing.

Out of the 104 literature units involved in the analysis, the word “culture” appeared 332 times in total. The word was not found in 67 publications, while in 16 works it appeared only once (twice in 7 works, three times in three works, twice in two works, etc.). In just three works (*Éducation et sociologie*, *L'éducation morale*, *L'évolution pédagogique en France*), the word “culture” was used 218 times in total, which makes for approximately two-thirds (65.6%) of the total number of times this term occurred. Not only does this fact indicate Durkheim's understanding of upbringing and education, but it also indicates that the term culture did not have a more prominent place in his sociological theory.

Table 2

Title of the work	no. of use of the term culture
1. <i>La Suicide</i>	11
2. <i>Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse</i>	15
3. <i>De la division du travail social</i>	15
4. <i>Les règles de la méthode sociologique</i>	5
5. <i>Le socialisme</i>	0
6. <i>Éducation et sociologie</i>	25
7. <i>L'Allemagne au-dessus de tout</i>	3
8. « <i>Le « CONTRAT SOCIAL » de Rousseau</i> »	1
9. <i>La contribution de Montesquieu à la constitution de la science sociale</i>	1
10. <i>Cours de philosophie fait au Lycée de Sens</i>	1
11. <i>Le crime, phénomène normal</i>	0
12. <i>Définitions du crime et fonction du châtement</i>	0
13. <i>Discours aux lycéens de Sens</i>	2
14. <i>L'éducation morale</i>	33
15. <i>L'évolution pédagogique en France</i>	160
16. <i>La prohibition de l'inceste et ses origines</i>	1
17. <i>De la définition des phénomènes religieux</i>	1
18. <i>Deux lois de l'évolution pénale</i>	0

19. <i>Sur le totémisme</i>	1
20. <i>Sur l'organisation matrimoniale des sociétés australiennes</i>	0
21. <i>Leçons de sociologie</i>	3
22. <i>Pragmatisme et sociologie</i>	3
23. <i>Friedrich Ratzel, Anthropogéographie</i>	0
24. <i>Cours de science sociale. Leçon d'ouverture</i>	0
25. <i>La sociologie en France au XIXe siècle</i>	0
26. <i>Sociologie et sciences sociales</i>	0
27. <i>Alfred Fouillée, La Propriété sociale et la démocratie</i>	1
28. <i>Les études de science sociale</i>	1
29. <i>Les principes de 1789 et la sociologie</i>	1
30. <i>Sur la définition du socialisme</i>	0
31. <i>Socialisme et science sociale</i>	0
32. <i>La conception matérialiste de l'histoire</i>	0
33. <i>L'élite intellectuelle et la démocratie</i>	1
34. <i>Pacifisme et patriotisme</i>	4
35. <i>L'avenir de la religion</i>	0
36. <i>Le dualisme de la nature humaine et ses conditions sociales</i>	0
37. <i>Représentations individuelles et représentations collectives</i>	0
38. <i>Détermination du fait moral</i>	0
39. <i>Réponses aux objections</i>	0
40. <i>Jugements de valeur et jugements de réalité</i>	0
41. <i>La sociologie et son domaine scientifique</i>	1
42. <i>La science sociale selon De Greef</i>	0
43. <i>Une confrontation entre bergsonisme et sociologisme: le progrès moral et la dynamique sociale</i>	0
44. <i>L'état actuel des études sociologiques en France</i>	1
45. <i>La sociologie</i>	0

46. <i>Sociologie et sciences sociales</i>	2
47. <i>La sociologie et les sciences sociales. Confrontation avec Tarde</i>	0
48. <i>L'empirisme rationaliste de Taine et les sciences morales</i>	1
49. <i>Le problème sociologique de la connaissance</i>	0
50. <i>Débat sur l'explication en histoire et en sociologie</i>	0
51. <i>Débat sur l'économie politique et les sciences sociales</i>	0
52. <i>L'origine de l'idée de droit</i>	0
53. <i>La science positive de la morale en Allemagne</i>	4
54. <i>Communauté et société selon Tönnies</i>	0
55. <i>Le rôle des grands hommes dans l'histoire</i>	2
56. <i>La vie universitaire à Paris</i>	16
57. <i>Le problème religieux et la dualité de la nature humaine</i>	0
58. <i>Cours sur les origines de la vie religieuse</i>	0
59. <i>De l'irréligion de l'avenir</i>	0
60. <i>Crime et santé sociale</i>	0
61. <i>Le divorce par consentement mutuel</i>	0
62. <i>Débat sur le mariage et le divorce</i>	0
63. <i>Suicide et natalité. Étude de statistique morale</i>	0
64. <i>Débat sur l'éducation sexuelle</i>	0
65. <i>Définition du fait moral</i>	0
66. <i>Introduction à la morale</i>	0
67. <i>Débat sur le fondement religieux ou laïque à donner à la morale</i>	2
68. <i>Débat sur les rapports entre les idées égalitaires et la rationalité de la morale</i>	0
69. <i>Introduction à la sociologie de la famille</i>	0
70. <i>La famille conjugale</i>	0
71. <i>Origine du mariage dans l'espèce humaine d'après Westermarck</i>	1

72. <i>Cérémonies nuptiales en Algérie</i>	0
73. <i>Droit matrimonial juif</i>	0
74. <i>Droit matrimonial au Japon</i>	0
75. <i>Le mariage en Égypte</i>	0
76. <i>Rites nuptiaux au Moyen Age</i>	0
77. <i>Coutumes sexuelles dans la mythologie grégoromaine</i>	0
78. <i>La condition de la femme en Chine</i>	0
79. <i>Vie sexuelle dans l'ancienne Allemagne</i>	0
80. <i>La condition de la femme</i>	0
81. <i>La femme dans l'histoire</i>	0
82. <i>La constitution selon Platon, Aristote, Machiavel</i>	0
83. <i>Une révision de l'idée socialiste</i>	0
84. <i>L'État</i>	0
85. <i>Tableau de l'organisation sociale au Japon</i>	0
86. <i>État et société en Russie</i>	0
87. <i>Le problème du clan comme noyau primaire de la société</i>	0
88. <i>Les communes françaises du Moyen Age</i>	0
89. <i>L'organisation politique des primitifs</i>	0
90. <i>Villes, États et confédérations en Grèce</i>	0
91. <i>Les tribus chez les Grecs et les Romains</i>	0
92. <i>L'autorité dans la Russie ancienne</i>	0
93. <i>Formes élémentaires de l'organisation sociale</i>	0
94. <i>Organisation sociale Masai</i>	1
95. <i>Origine de l'État et de la famille à Rome</i>	0
96. <i>La plèbe romaine</i>	0
97. <i>Organisation juridique et sociale des Bantous congolais</i>	1
98. <i>Organisations sociales des Baganda</i>	0
99. <i>Organisations sociales en Afrique orientale</i>	0
100. <i>La "pédagogie" de Rousseau. Plans de leçons</i>	2

101. *L'enseignement philosophique et l'agrégation de philosophie* 2
102. *Note sur la spécialisation de l'agrégation de philosophie* 2
103. *La philosophie dans les universités allemandes* 5

Conclusion

Why was it important to offer an analysis of the content of the use of the word “culture” in the works of Émile Durkheim? Firstly, the term culture is inherently significant for the sociological theory. In this regard, absence of a more frequent use of the term is equally indicative; therefore, even though the data are relatively ‘scarce’, we believe that the offered analysis is relevant. We can say that Durkheim did not use the term “culture” very often, given the scope of his work. Furthermore, it most often occurred in a context which does not imply particularity, uniqueness, and self-importance of a certain social group – in meanings that would be close to the romantic tradition. When it comes to the influence of Durkheim’s work on the later development of sociology, we would say that it is difficult to describe even in rough terms. However, here we can list only one author as an example – Jeffrey Alexander. His *cultural sociology*, which the author himself opposes to the sociology of culture, rests on the premise that “every action, no matter how instrumental, reflexive, or coerced vis-à-vis its external environments, is embedded to some extent in a horizon of affect and meaning”.⁵⁷ Therefore, culture is not a mere object (as in the case of the sociology of culture), but rather a starting point for any sociological research. Alexander found the roots of his cultural sociology precisely in the work of (‘the old’) Durkheim. His debt to Durkheim, that is, the influence he had on him, was also materialized through two collections honoring the French classic.⁵⁸

Secondly, it should be mentioned that Durkheim is not just a significant name for the history of sociology, but also for the emergence of anthropology. In a number of definitions, culture itself appears as the central concept of determining this science.⁵⁹ Together with his nephew Marcel Mauss, Durkheim made a significant contribution to the development of anthropology

57 Alexander, J. (2003) *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 12.

58 Alexander J. (ed.) (1988) *Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Alexander, J. and Smith, P. (eds.) (2005) *The Cambridge Companion to Durkheim*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

59 Naturally, we are not referring to biological anthropology.

in France. He largely influenced anthropology through his works on religion (totemism), taboo, rituals, etc. In this case, we see the discrepancy between the use of the term “culture” and Durkheim’s considerations of phenomena which, by their nature, can be classified in its domain. Therefore, our analysis must in no way originate the conclusion that Durkheim ignored the issues and problems studied by (sociocultural) anthropology. On the contrary, the data suggest that the use of this term in his opus is relatively restrictive, yet, if we were not to reduce it to the level of a term, it would gain entirely different dimensions. Nonetheless, this type of research was not the (primary) goal of our work.

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Божидар Филиповић
Универзитет у Београду, Филозофски факултет –
Одељење за социологију, Београд

ДИРКЕМОВА УПОТРЕБА РЕЧИ КУЛТУРА

АНАЛИЗА САДРЖАЈА

Сажетак

Користећи методу анализе садржаја у раду смо понудили сажет увид употребе појма „култура” у делу Емила Диркема. Имајући у виду да се у Диркемовом делу може уочити наслеђе просветитељства, али посредно и традиција романтизма, сматрамо важним питање употребе наведеног појма. Ширина значења која се везују за појам „култура” чини га погодним за употребу као својеврсног индикатора. Попут Роршахових мрља у њега се могу учитавати веома различита значења. Налази показују да Диркем реч „култура” није употребљавао тако често имајући у виду обимност његовог дела, најчешће је везујући за научно, интелектуално, логично, итд. Посебну пажњу смо посветили његовим најзначајнијим делима (*The Division of Labour in Society, Rules of Sociological Method, Suicide and The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*). Остала дела обухваћена су квантитативном анализом употребе речи „култура” у којој смо покушали да уочимо најфреквентније атрибуте који се јављају уз наведени појам. Анализом је обухваћен највећи део Диркемовог опуса објављеног током и након његовог живота.

Кључне речи: *култура, Емил Диркем, анализа садржаја, позитивизам, романтизам, просветитељство*