

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910457235003321
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Titolo	Visions of the social [[electronic resource] ] : society as a political project in France, 1750-1950 // by Jean Terrier
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Leiden ; ; Boston, : Brill, 2011
ISBN	1-283-16132-X 9786613161321 90-04-20725-2
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (248 p.)
Collana	International studies in sociology and social anthropology, , 0074-8684 ; ; v. 119
Disciplina	301.0944
Soggetti	Sociology - France Political sociology - France Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
Nota di contenuto	Preliminary Material / J. Terrier -- 1. The Collective Will: From The Political To The Social / J. Terrier -- 2. Nations And Their Adversaries As A Theme Of Social Thought / J. Terrier -- 3. Severing The Link To Nature: The Rise Of The Culture Concept In International Perspective / J. Terrier -- 4. "In Us, But Not Of Us". The Location Of Society According To Emile Durkheim / J. Terrier -- 5. The National And The Transnational: Marcel Mauss / J. Terrier -- Epilogue. The Language And Dialects Of The Social / J. Terrier -- Bibliography / J. Terrier -- Index Of Subjects / J. Terrier -- Index Of Names / J. Terrier.
Sommario/riassunto	An essentially contested notion, society is viewed by some as the most important level of human reality, while others deny its existence outright. Taking the example of France between the Enlightenment and the Second World War, this book recounts the debates among thinkers and scholars on the nature of the social. By way of an original analysis of the work of many key figures in the history of French thought, the author convincingly demonstrates the strength of the connection between social theories and political projects. He pays particular attention to conceptual and terminological developments, thereby

shedding a new light on the history of some core concepts of the human sciences, such as 'society', 'culture', and 'civilisation'.

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