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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'.
