This article is in a synthetic analysis of the way sociology has became an academic discipline at the turn of the 20th century. It first focuses on its institutional developments and on the professionalization of the human sciences during the last third of the 19th century. It then emphasizes the weight of the political and intellectual context (the Third Republic, the rise of Socialism, the Dreyfus Affair). Within this framework, the paper finally concentrates on the internal life of this new field of knowledge. This life is punctuated by the competition opposing social actors of groups of actors. Through the professional courses and rivalries opposing three men (Émile Durkheim, Gabriel Tarde and René Worms), are also disclosed three intellectual strategies and social networks.

Keywords
Durkheim; Tarde; Worms.