Selective interpretations of the social in social theory or ‘I wished those theorists had looked beyond Britain’

Based on qualitative interviews with thirty sociologists in England upon their self-understanding as sociologists, their claims and practices, my paper will deal with the theme of the selective interpretation of the social in social theory. The social is identified as one of sociology’s key features. Seeing the production of social theory as a key form of sociological practice, the social is often conveyed in ways that do not look beyond a Western perspective. The paper investigates how sociologists often do not question this selective perception and how those who have come from other than Western backgrounds are very much aware of this selectivity. The paper finally raises the question of what a perspective could like which does not express the social in a eurocentristic way and how on the other hand classic, eurocentristic authors could be revisited in this light.