The conference will focus on the tensions between two dimensions of social theory: as an academic discourse with analytical intent, and as a form of political action. In particular, our goal is to highlight the position of social theory between

(a) Theory construction—as a social-scientific practice that is both normatively oriented and historically self-reflexive, i.e. willing and able to recognize its embeddedness in the social process; and

(b) Progressive politics—as it is inspired by the prospect of qualitative social change, and thus, oriented toward the transformation of the object of social theory.

Social theory must engage this tension, as its efforts are directed both at rigorous analyses of the social world and at its normative transformation. The conference poses questions in the framework of the overarching query about the relation between theory and politics—as provocative, open, challenging inspirations for a most diverse set of possible inquiries.

• Theoretical and meta-theoretical essays about theory and politics are as much part of this as cultural and critical inquiries into contexts of political action and agency;

• New developments fusing theoretical traditions are as much welcome as are works that analyze the conflicting interstices between concrete local actions and the larger theoretical and symbolic underpinnings of these movements;

• Works on the grounds of normative commitments are as much needed as empirical/discursive deconstructions of existing imaginaries and socio-political beliefs and assumptions.

Papers are invited that speak to the topic from:

- Classical & contemporary social theory: working with our inheritance Methodology of Critical Theory Literary methods and Social Theory The interpretive tradition, depth hermeneutics & analysis The performative aspects of public life Media power and image magic Psychoanalytic method and social theory Phenomenology, hermeneutics, and critical hermeneutics Epistemologies and philosophies of knowledge today Asian philosophies and methods Socrates, Plato, and working with the Greeks today Political anthropology and reflexive historical sociology

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: Mel Barber – Convenor, Sociology, Flagler College, St. Augustine; Florida, Harry F. Dahms – Sociology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Bert Koegler - Philosophy, University of North Florida, Jacksonville; Kieran Keohane - Sociology, University College, Cork

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