Abstract
The present paper aims to identity some of the presuppositions underlying the idea of understanding in social theory based on hermeneutic-phenomenological approach. It first critically examines the inherited presuppositions of Illuminism and Romanticism regarding subjectivity and objectivity, arguing that they share a same conception of tradition (albeit with an inverted sign). Then, taking Gadamer and Heidegger as an inspiration, it discusses contemporary hermeneutics' project, in order to conclude by observing that understanding has the structure of an experience. From this it follows that understanding in the social sciences is ultimately engaging in a dialogue with the “other” through building a historic - and therefore changing – mediation between two different horizons.

Keywords
Hermeneutic; understanding; phenomenology; social theory.