

Heirs  
UI Sophia  
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## Call for papers

Venue:

Loppiano (Florence)  
April 22-23, 2016

Keynote speakers:

**Erik Borgman**,  
Tilburg University  
**John Milbank**,  
University of Nottingham  
**Domenec Mele**,  
IESE Business School,  
University of Navarra  
**Pierre Yves Gomez**,  
EM Lyon (& GRACE)

Scientific committee:

**Giuseppe Argiolas**,  
University of Cagliari  
**Luigino Bruni**,  
LUMSA University, Rome  
**Piero Coda**,  
UI Sophia, Loppiano  
**Luca Crivelli**,  
University AS of Southern Switzerland  
**Anouk Grevin**,  
University of Nantes and GRACE  
**Benedetto Gui**,  
UI Sophia, Loppiano  
**Vittorio Pelligra**,  
University of Cagliari  
**Pier Luigi Porta**,  
HEIRS, Milan  
**Alessandra Smerilli**,  
Auxilium University, Rome  
**Stefano Zamagni**,  
University of Bologna  
**Laszlo Zsolnai**,  
Corvinus University, Budapest

Important dates:

Deadline for submission (abstract):  
**February 28, 2016**  
Acceptance by: **March 15, 2016**

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# Vulnerability and gift in economics and business

## An interdisciplinary conference

*Communities and organizations that have preserved their creative and fruitful character over time have been able to live with members' vulnerability to fellows' wounds; they have not eliminated it entirely from their territories but have found ways for coping with it. Vulnerability (from Latin vulnus: wound), like many true words of the human realm, is ambivalent, because good vulnerability coexists with bad vulnerability, and often the two are intertwined. Good vulnerability is inscribed in all generative human relationships, where if I do not give the other the chance of "hurting me", the relationship does not reach the depth needed for being fully fruitful.*

*The most creative work teams are those where people receive an authentic – therefore risky – openness for credit. 'Generativity' in all areas has a vital need for freedom and trust, both of which make the person who grants them vulnerable. Good life is generated by relationships open to the risk of relational wound. This risk is the main reason for the preference that economics and social sciences in general have given to contracts over gifts. In fact, contracts*

*look like 'invulnerable' relations, whereas gift exchanges are uncertain and fragile for their exposure to lack of reciprocity.*

*The culture of large global companies today looks for the impossible: bosses want creativity from their employees without accepting to make themselves vulnerable. Think of the growing phenomenon of the so-called "managerial subsidiarity", according to which the leader should only be directly involved in the decisions of a branch when these would be worse without his "subsidiary" intervention. Large companies are, in fact, realizing that in order to get the best from their employees they must grant the proper conditions so they feel the protagonists of their own work. No creativity is given except out of freedom, but for subsidiarity to function well it is essential that workers and work groups experience genuine, and therefore vulnerable, trust.*

*The thesis at the origin of the conference is therefore twofold: authentic relationships require the exposure to vulnerability; today's economic and business culture does not allow the cultivation of authentic relationships because it fears vulnerability.*

The conference is open to economists, social scientists, experimental economists and psychologists, philosophers, theologians, historians. Some of the issues that will be discussed:

- empirical/lab evidence about the role of vulnerability in economic, organizational and social interactions
- historical and philosophical reasons behind the expulsion of vulnerability and/or gift from economics and social sciences
- gift and trust in business organizations
- subsidiarity and vulnerability in the governance of organizations
- theories and models of vulnerability in interactions
- theological explanations for the absence of gift in economic and social theories