Sub-theme 1: *Back to the Future: History & Institutions Matter!*

**Convenors:**

Giuseppe Delmestri  
Università degli studi di Bergamo  
Luigi Moschera  
Università degli studi di Napoli “Parthenope”  
Behlül Üsdiken  
Sabancı University  
Istanbul - Turkey

**Supporters:**

Luca Solari  
Peter Walgenbach  
Filippo Wezel

Submission of papers: only through [www.woa2011.it](http://www.woa2011.it)

- 14/03/2011 Paper Submission Deadline
- 18/04/2011 Notification of Acceptance and Reviews
- 16/05/2011 Final Paper Submission

**Objectives:**

World societies are shackled by unprecedented uncertainty and lack of knowledge as to which paths may pursued to support more equitable and sustainable economic recovery and growth. The idea that market incentives are the necessary and sufficient condition for economic governance has proved to be a limited “monoculture” (Ferraro et al., 2005). The needed seeds of variety in organizational forms and practices can be found along two tracks. One leads to the past, where discarded institutional arrangements can be revaluated and where the path-dependent trajectories of the present situation can be traced. The second escorts us in places distant from the cultural and institutional features of Anglo-American capitalism (the most studied and theorized form) to rediscover cultures and institutions considered outdated as ways to organize economic activity, like families, guilds, bureaucracies, cooperatives, or the state. We contend that the redefinition of organization theory as a realistic and pragmatic design theory (Greenwood & Miller, 2010) needs addressing the roles of history, culture and institutions as central elements in studying actors, organizations, populations of organizations and fields.

**Themes and methodologies:**

Some of the possible questions addressed by studies submitted to this track are:

- How can quantitative longitudinal studies be integrated with historical approaches?
- How can historical studies help us to avoid the paradox of embedded agency with regard to institutional entrepreneurship?
- What is the role of heroic individuals in comparison to wider social forces in shaping new organizational forms?
- How do routines and corporate culture interact in shaping organizational evolution?
- How do fields evolve? How do the historical conditions at their inception affect their future evolution?
- How are market constructed and how do product categories come to be taken for granted?
- How do social categories (practices, organizational forms, products, technologies) become legitimated and taken for granted?

We are interested in studies that analyze either historically or comparatively actual organizational forms and practices (Üsdiken & Kieser, 2004). We are open both to quantitative longitudinal and to case study designs, that use a variety of related theoretical lenses such as new institutionalism (Ansari et al., 2010; Temple & Walgenbach, 2007), institutional logics theory (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999), organizational ecology (Wezel & Lomi, 2003), the world polity approach (Zelner et al., 2009), path-dependency (Sydow et al., 2009), to cite the most obvious ones.

**Keywords**
New institutionalism, organizational ecology, path-dependence, longitudinal studies

**Literature**