



Report on the Workshop “Business Ethics and Democracy: Illiberalism as a Challenge for Business and Society”

Held in Philadelphia, USA from 28 to 29 July 2026

On 28 and 29 July 2026, we convened the workshop “Business Ethics and Democracy: Illiberalism as a Challenge for Business and Society” in Philadelphia, in the days immediately preceding the Society for Business Ethics Annual Meeting and the Academy of Management Annual Meeting. Held by invitation only presentations, the workshop carried forward the research agenda established at our Rome conference in June and extended it into the North American research community.

The workshop was organized by Prof. Dr. Andreas Georg Scherer (University of Zurich), Prof. Peter Bloom (University of Essex), Dr. Cristina Neesham (Newcastle University and Swinburne University), and Prof. Yuan Li (Saint Mary’s College of California). It gathered scholars working on corporate political responsibility, illiberalism, and democratic erosion and more for two days of focused presentation and discussion.

We were delighted to welcome three distinguished scholars as keynote speakers: Prof. Joanne Ciulla (Rutgers University), Prof. Eric Orts (University of Pennsylvania), and Prof. Abraham Singer (Loyola University Chicago). Participants intensively examined how business ethics and practice should reconceive its assumptions when liberal-democratic institutions can no longer be taken for granted.

As in Rome, the University of Zurich was strongly represented. Alongside Prof. Scherer as the main organizer, Dr. Siddhant Ritwick and Dr. Roman Gibel, both from the University of Zurich, took part as invited speakers and discussants and presented their work and provided constructive comments on other papers.

The workshop deepened a network first convened in Rome and strengthened its reach across the Atlantic. We are grateful to our keynote speakers and to every participant for their insights and generosity they brought to the discussion, and to all those whose work made the two days run smoothly. We thank Silvia Agustoni for her tremendous support in making this event possible.

The questions raised in Philadelphia are ones we intend to keep pursuing together, and we look forward to the collaborations that will grow from this meeting.

Dr. Siddhant Ritwick