Doug Peers: Good evening, ladies and gentleman. My name is Doug Peers. I'm the Dean of Arts at the University of Waterloo and it's my great pleasure to invite you all here for the first of what we're looking forward to a stimulating series of lectures and presentations by our students. But before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge that we are living and working on this traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated in the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the six nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Doug Peers: I have a few words, a few things to say. As I'm saying that, I'd like to invite those of you who are kind of drifting to the back to please come down and join us for the conversation that as much as I know some of my colleagues would like to kind of live the life of undergraduates again, it's much easier, particular for those of us with failing ears and eyes if you could come and join us down here. The director of the program, Jasmin Habib and myself, are delighted to have you come and join us to kick off the global engagement seminars first ever student summit. I'd like to begin by thanking our advisory board members; past senator Landon Pearson; Eve Beauchamp, Executive Director of the Jarislowsky Foundation, who are both in attendance this evening and to Senator Peter Harder and John Stackhouse, Senior Vice President of RBC, neither of whom were able to join us but who have been lending us extremely valuable support for this program.

Doug Peers: I would also like to extend a special thanks to the Steering Committee members for the program, who Katherine Acheson, Jim Rush, Jean Andrey, Bob Lemieux, Peter Douglas and Raouf Boutaba for their commitment advice, and for those of you who aren't familiar with those names, those are representatives of the six faculties at the University of Waterloo and this program is designed very, very deliberately to bring together the six faculties to tackle the kind of wicked problems that we need to be facing and which do require the kind of collaborative efforts stretching across and through the many disciplines we offer.

Doug Peers: Now, this program advances our strategic objective of fostering an innovative culture of experiential education. It's an out of the box teaching model, one that's being designed and redesigned as we speak led by Jasmin Habib, which is pulling together an interdisciplinary curriculum and hands on experiences for the students. Students, themselves, selected this program and we sought students from right across campus and we encouraged them to participate in an inquiry-based program. Students will apply their skills, their insights, develop new insights and ask questions we had not even anticipated and in the end, provide us with a very fertile ground for further discussions on the kinds of issues that this program is designed to advance.

Doug Peers: The sponsor of our program, the Jarislowsky Foundation, shares this vision of advancing interdisciplinary and experiential higher education and in particular, to the commitment of doing so in a globally informed and engaged way. Now, I'd like to take a few minutes now to listen to a message from our sponsor, Stephen Jarislowsky, who was not able to be with us but has this video presentation for us.

Stephen Jarislowsky: Well, the foundation, its main goal is excellence in Canada because I feel that this country and especially universities, they're government financed, there're not many private universities and therefore, the excellence has to come from the outside through the foundations of this country because the government will not supply it for many reasons including political. So, in order to get really good excellent education, I felt that if you had internationally acclaimed people to be chair holders in different up-to-date type of academic pursuits, that would make a great difference in bringing up the average level of professors up in Canada at the various universities and that that would also then infect all the other departments when they see what that would be doing. It will attract other excellent people to that particular department and so, there's a lot of leverage that can be gained.

Stephen Jarislowsky: Well, I feel that today's students are by and large too specialized, and the education in the secondary schools isn't sufficient up to scratch, so even in the universities, it's very important that the students broaden their point of view about the world and be interested not only in their specialty and as I said, specialization today is far, far too deeply driven into the schooling system, especially in the technical schools like the University of Waterloo, and so I thought that by broadening out through this kind of program, the idea that you have to be really broadened out if you want to have great achievement in life and that includes the humanities, history and everything that went before and so I thought that to set up this kind of scholarship would be the right thing to do to get students broadened out and take interest, lifelong, in other types of areas.

Stephen Jarislowsky: Today, unless you have post secondary education, you are going to be condemned to a low type of income unless you are a very brilliant entrepreneur and so, I think it's extremely important to get the best university education today. Again, I go back to the concept of excellence and bring forward students who can contribute really to society and to the part of the economy otherwise where they're involved and who have had this broadening out, which we talked just before and who can therefore, give leadership to other people, in turn when they deploy their skills in the workforce.

Stephen Jarislowsky: While we recently had an example in the United States after the murder in Florida where youth from all over America staged demonstrations for gun control, which is absolutely necessary and beyond that, I would say that with the type of politics which these days are totally in disrepute, I think that a post secondary education could be very, very vital in making the young people conscious of the fact that we have to do something in order to preserve democracy and not fall into dictatorships by insisting on [inaudible 00:08:54] on the part of the politicians and of the system of voting, which is ethical and which represents the population and which brings better people into power.

Stephen Jarislowsky: In my life, I was at the University of Chicago and I had two or three professors who were really of the quality of the type of professors which I like to see in Canadian Universities and they had an enormous influence on my life and what I wanted to do and I remember exactly the words still today and all the help they gave me in channeling me into the type of career which I've had subsequently and the service to my community and to the province and the country and the world to the extent that I could get that kind of response out of my work and out of my thinking.

Stephen Jarislowsky: While my important advice is something which I've said at the other university, it is extremely important that you learn how to think and to understand what you're thinking brings to you based on facts and then not just become a college professor but do something about it with your life in your lifetime. In summary, what the foundation is trying to do is to bring real true excellence of the highest order into the universities, through mentorship and through the association with professors of world reputation and come out of the university having been well-mentored and being well on their way to make their mark in life.

Doug Peers: This program is centered on bringing students together to address the kind of wicked problems, challenges facing the world today, the kind of problems you're gonna see on the front page of most newspapers and which cannot be resolved down to one discipline or one method of thinking. They're the kind of problems that require both imagination and application and engagement. And so, this term, we had students from math, engineering, physics, biology, peace and conflict studies, health sciences, political science, social development studies, English lit and rhetoric, and knowledge integration who came together every Thursday evening and often times, Tuesdays for film night as well as periodic meetings through the week as they worked together to try and tackle the kind of global challenges that face us today.

Doug Peers: The student's projects, which we showcase throughout tomorrow afternoon and evening, raise very important questions about civic engagement, mainstream feminism, the rise of anti-science movements, the rise of capitalism and it's implications for our communities, all this under kind of the broad rubric of populism. Something which we are increasing preoccupied with as we look at the rise of movements both locally and globally that seem to challenge a lot of the kind of confidences that many of us might have had back in 1989 when you had people writing books about the end of history and how things are gonna be wonderful and in fact, they don't seem to be going that way.

Doug Peers: This year's Jarislowsky fellow, Dr. Henry Giroux, whom you'll have a chance to meet tomorrow, joined efforts with Jasmin Habib, our course instructor, to lead students through discussions on selected readings so that they could gain a greater appreciation of the complexities of those contemporary challenges and to learn how they might respond meaningfully and collectively. The students don't only aim to initiate wider interdisciplinary conversations on these timely topics but they have also put forth recommendations for practical solutions and meaningful responses and I stress that latter point because that was, again, a key objective in this course was taking the knowledge, analyzing the problem but bringing forward solutions and further discussions. The summit this evening and tomorrow would both support and exemplify the important of increasing the kind of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research locally, nationally and globally and provide the foundations for further work by these students and by the rest of us as we look at these issues.

Doug Peers: The students will be mobilizing their knowledge in a variety of ways, developing scholarly papers for policy briefs which they can distribute to NGOs, civil society actors and think tanks. We hope also to transform the physical exhibits that you'll be seeing into a digital media form which will be posting online to increase their exposure beyond our campus. Next year, our intentions are to hold two classes with 25 students in each who will be led by two Jarislowsky fellows and the theme for next year is tentatively entitled, The Social and Cultural Implications of Digitalization, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence. Again, a very, very timely topic given recent events.

Doug Peers: Now, in closing, I'd like to introduce John Ravenhill, the director of the Balsillie School of International Affairs, who will take the floor and welcome our distinguished speakers. Thank you.

John Ravenhill: Well, many thanks Dean Peers, it's a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the Balsillie School of International Affairs. For those of you not familiar with the school, we came into being about a decade ago thanks to very generous gifts from Mr. Jim Balsillie and we're a very unique institution. We are a unique partnership amongst the two universities in the city, and the think tank, the Centre for International Governance Innovation. Currently, one of the major activities that we undertake is to host graduate programs on behalf of our two university partners and for the University of Waterloo, it's masters and PhD programs in global governance.

John Ravenhill: We've always aspired to have greater involvement in undergraduate education, believing that this wonderful building, this wonderful facility here should be fully utilized, and I'm delighted that the Dean of Arts at the University of Waterloo, Doug Peers, has proposed that the global engagement seminar program should be formally affiliated with the Balsillie School. I thank Dean Peers, Dr. Jasmin Habib for her leadership on this project and the Jarislowsky Foundation for its very generous support, but enough from me, my task this evening is a very pleasant one. I'm here to introduce, not one, but two very distinguished speakers, and the first of these is Dr. Ann Komaromi. Komaromi, I should say. My apologies. Dr. Komaromi is associate professor in the Center for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto. In addition to her study of 20th century literature and art, she has done research on Soviet dissidence, on underground publishing and international networks of activism. Her first book, with the titled, Uncensored: Samizdat Novels and the Quest for Autonomy in Soviet Dissidence, was published by Northwestern University Press and it won the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages award for best book in literary cultural studies in 2016.

John Ravenhill: She has also edited and provided the introduction for a history of the Jewish movement in the Soviet Union called We Are Jews Again, which was published last year from Syracuse University Press, and she's also developed a database of Soviet Samizdat publication as part of an electronic archive based at the University of Toronto libraries under the title The Project for the Study of Dissidence and Samizdat. This is a particularly timely lecture tonight given what is happening in the world at the moment in terms of social media, what's happening, of course, not just in the West but also in Russia as well. The topic for her presentation this evening is "Framing" Social Media, "Framing" Social Media. So, please join me in welcoming Dr. Komaromi.

Ann Komaromi: Thank you so much, Director Ravenhill. I would also like to acknowledge the Jarislowsky foundation for its support of the Global Engagement Program. As a scholar who works across literature and history and some media studies and someone who teachers in the Center for Comparative Literature, this type of interdisciplinary discussion is very close to my heart. I think it's very important to support it and provide a forum such as this one. I would also like to thank Dr. Jasmin Habib, director of the Global Engagement Program and Dani Marcheva, program coordinator, for extending the invitation to participate in this summit on global populism and democratic futures here at the Balsillie School of International Affairs at the University of Waterloo. It's a real honor for me to join you here for this important event.

Ann Komaromi: I haven't used this yet, so I want to see if I know how to advance. No. The green, I'm pressing the green. Yes, okay. Great. The widely noted shift from techno-optimism to techno-pessimism in the evaluation of social media provides my starting point this evening. It was not that long ago in 2010, that Larry Diamond hailed what he called liberation technology. The digital tools that could fundamentally change the calculus in favor of people outside positions of power, people who were struggling for democracy. More recently, however, there has been a lot of finger pointing in the wake of Donald Trump's surprise victory in the 2016 US Presidential Elections. People now site social media technology as one of the key factors in the rise, not only of Trump himself but in the rapid development of recent trends with which he is strongly associated including fake news and alternative facts, which Trump deploys to undermine a free press, the relative mainstreaming of fringe populism including the views of White Nationalists and the sensationalistic and divisive discourse that has inundated our public sphere.

Ann Komaromi: Without a doubt, new digital technologies have leveled the playing field for allowing many more people to get messages out to a broad audience. Whether this is for good or ill, seems to depend on local conditions and context. Therefore, framing social media technology as the culprit for a general decline in democracy would, I think, be an overly simplistic conclusion. Of course, we may certainly assign blame to a number of bad faith actors who have used social media. Current scandals have highlighted, for all of us, the role of Cambridge Analytica, which collected user data from Facebook and promised to sway the election for Trump and elections for others by manipulating voters and Russia, whose government and business leaders have, since 2014 certainly, been using social media to try to destabilize public discourse and de-legitimize the democratic process in the United States, probably also in France and elsewhere.

Ann Komaromi: However, pointing the finger at this or that bad actor is not enough. While I applaud Mueller indictment of Russian entities and although I agree that a response to such malfeasance is certainly needed, the problems with democracy in the digital age cannot be solved simply by banning one or another bad entity and of course, there is no way to roll back this technology. These cases highlight the dangers of which we were perhaps naively oblivious in the short lived era of techno-optimism. However, the response to them must go beyond particular instances. We need to grapple in a more holistic and long term way with the frameworks within which social media operate. That is, with the context of government policy and regulation on the one hand and with the culture and values of regular users on the other.

Ann Komaromi: I'll come back to those frameworks but to set up my comments, I'll briefly survey the area in which most of my research has been done, and these are old school social networks of Soviet Samizdat and dissidence. My interest in new media technologies grows out of my research on Soviet Samizdat or self publishing, dissidence self-publishing. People of my generation and older will still recognize names like Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Yelena Bonner and Andrei Sakharov. Much of the Cold War attention was given to outstanding individual dissidents like these, but I became interested also in the publishing system of Samizdat that constituted the lifeblood of Soviet dissidence and in the networks of people through which it moved. The basis for comparing Samizdat with new media social networks does not depend on a technological similarity to be sure. Soviet Samizdat was decidedly low tech with typewriters and carbon paper and onion skin sheets of paper of the fragile type you see here being the main way people produced and copied uncensored texts for distribution in the Soviet Union from the mid 1950s to the mid 1980s.

Ann Komaromi: As a low tech phenomenon, Samizdat can be useful to consider because it helps us think beyond what a given technology supposedly is or does, that way we can get away from the kind of technological essentialism expressed in both techno-optimism and techno-pessimism. It forces us to pay attention to the frameworks, the context of social norms and behaviors in the historical political context. The media of study's angle of research on Soviet dissidence help bring into focus the cultural norms and shifts. I was interested in what Soviet poets were describing as a pre-Gutenberg, or the phrasing I prefer, an extra Gutenberg culture. I wondered not just about the way Soviet dissidence contested how the regime went about its business. I wondered about the implications of this extra Gutenberg challenge to the hegemony of print culture, which favors established institutions and authorities. As Elizabeth Eisenstein famously described them, the principles of print culture in the wake of Gutenberg's introduction of mechanical movable type printing to Europe in the 15th century were standardization, dissemination, and fixity of text. These characteristics provided crucial support for major cultural innovations including the rise of modern scientific knowledge, the protestant reformation and Renaissance humanism.

Ann Komaromi: It may be that the print revolution is being succeeded now by a digital media revolution. If that's the case, it will likely take us many years to understand and to harness productively the consequences of this shift but in some ways, Samizdat provided a foretaste of what the current destabilization of the print paradigm means. An extra Gutenberg culture like that of dissident Samizdat was one that ran in tandem with print culture, not replacing it but challenging the hegemony of print paradigms as well as the monopoly of official top down government control on cultural production and public discourse, thus we might fruitfully consider the implications of that extra Gutenberg condition in the context of Soviet dissidence and think about how that manifests in our own current digital media culture.

Ann Komaromi: In the extra Gutenberg culture of dissident Samizdat, the functions of author and publisher were shared broadly across the network. This meant that readers could easily become authors and that those who received texts could choose to publish them or not by copying and distributing those further copies. Choosing to do so and putting in the labor required and taking the risk indicated that they valued the text and this mattered because it's value was not guaranteed by some authority from above. Those reader publishers might copy the text exactly or alter it, shortening it, giving it a foreword or other para-textual apparatus, fixing mistakes or even adding handwritten elements of their own. In this situation, the reader becomes an active participant in creating the work when she or he decides to publish it by making more copies and in the course of that collaboration, that person has to add in these hand drawn graphs. This is a humorous example, but it's meant to illustrate the kind of activation of readers to co-create the text that was really part of a dissident project to assert individual and independent agency to give readers the opportunity to assert that agency in a system that discouraged those things, to foster also more meaningful and humane ties among peers, among people within the network.

Ann Komaromi: Gorbanevskaya, founding editor of the rights activist bulletin, The Chronicle of Current Events, which began in April of 1968, reflected explicitly on the implications of these changes. She called the readers of Samizdat, its volunteer publishers and as such, she exhorted them from the pages of the bulletin to be vigilant and responsible. She cautioned readers of The Chronicle to be careful about making mistakes in copying an issue since the voracity of facts reported constituted a legal defense against the charge often leveled at dissidence, the charge of slander often used against Samizdat writers and publishers. She also coached these reader publishers to guard the integrity of the network. If they wished to pass information to the editors, they should do so by transmitting it via the person from whom they received their copy who would pass it on up the line. She warned them not to try to jump the line to go straight to the editors or risk being taken for an informant.

Ann Komaromi: So, scrupulous fact checking and protection of the accuracy of reported facts was an important part of this dissident culture, so was guarding the integrity of the pure network. It was not the case that everyone in the chain knew everyone else but people did know the person who handed them a copy or to whom they gave a copy and perhaps it was the embodied nature of these network connections combined with the risk people took to participate that helped them feel that they and their fellows were human participants with hard won an important agency and responsibility. In a Soviet context, people involved with independent publishing of this type also assumed the antagonism of Soviet authorities and institutions with good reason. They knew the KGB might try to compromise the network by circulating harmful materials and that every person involved needed to help protect the network. They called such attempts to compromise the network or materials a provocation and a provocation was recognizable if it was highly emotional or extremely divisive. Anything openly anti-government was suspect, so was anti-Semitic material. Rights activists tried very hard to report the facts of cases about which they learned in a strictly factual objective manner. Other groups of activists adopted this kind of reporting and modeled similar civility and respect for dissident groups and also this objective tone.

Ann Komaromi: The "opposition" of dissidents to the government like that of Samizdat to print was not a firm opposition in the way we might expect. This was not a hard and fast dichotomy. Practically never did dissidence actually advocate for the overthrow of the regime, which would have been just very dangerous. And in fact, rights activists studied and used the Soviet laws on the books to try to compel government authorities to observe the rule of law. This was known as a strategy of legalism. It went together with scrupulous fact checking and the avoidance of emotional and divisive rhetoric. They also sought the help of foreign print outlets to get the word out and to help validate the work they were doing.

Ann Komaromi: So, The Chronicle was praised by prominent foreign press and human rights officials for its accuracy and its lack of melodrama. The decision by Amnesty International to publish reprints of The Chronicle under its name was extraordinary. That was the first time they put their name on a publication not produced in house, and it was a marker of how reliable they thought the Moscow group putting this out was. So, how might the history of Soviet dissidence with their extra Gutenberg culture of dissident publication inform our debate today? I turn to those frameworks I mentioned previously. The first of which is government policy and regulation.

Ann Komaromi: Soviet dissidents knew there were forces trying to undermine them and their network. They also tried to work with government structures, laws, and international agreement obligations to hold officials responsible. I think we need to assume today that there are hostile forces trying to undermine us as agents and citizens, trying to compromise our social networks. There have certainly been enough revelations recently to give the lie to the facile slogans of tech companies, and their leaders who claim that they're making the world a better place. The model of these tech industries is problematic to the core. As Dipan Ghosh and Ben Scott remarked of social media platforms like Facebook and others, "The central problem is that the entire industry is built to aggregate user attention and sell advertising. There is an alignment of interests between advertisers and the platforms and disinformation operators are typically indistinguishable from any other advertiser." Facebook is a for profit company. Sure, Zuckerberg and others may profess to have been taken aback by the realization that their platform was used to manipulate voters, but they have done practically nothing to safeguard user data or protect the network. They're not going to do it for us.

Ann Komaromi: They did not honor the terms of a consent decree to which they agreed with the FTC, the Federal Trade Commission, in 2011 regarding precisely this type of data collection through apps that we've been hearing about. Facebook apparently felt no obligation to follow up on its responsibilities, the FTC did not enforce the rules and there were no consequences. Our governments in North America are not yet totalitarian but the unholy alliance of corporate profit interests and bad political actors in social media is real, and I believe it to be true like the dissidents, the Soviet dissidents believed that the character of our societies is at stake.

Ann Komaromi: Of course, Facebook operates globally. It is larger than any single nation, almost unimaginably large. Toronto based journalist and scholar Navneet Alang in the week argued that Facebook, Twitter and other valley companies, that is social media platforms we increasingly turn to for news, commerce, and community are becoming crucial ways today in which societies mediate a relation to themselves. Facebook is a place where we represent and see ourselves as citizens, not just as private persons. Soviet dissidents felt the future of their society was at stake in their networked activity, and we should feel so too. Like Soviet dissidents, we need to work with legal means to hold people accountable and restrain those who would violate democratic rights and undermine liberal values. It seems clear government policy and regulation of social media platforms should be stepped up significantly to address threats the companies themselves have very little incentive to resist.

Ann Komaromi: We as an engaged public should identify and battle the erosion of core public values. We need to demand regulation of social media including transparency about who is promoting what adds and what content at what cost. We can leverage our position as social media consumers to insist that user data policies be updated and open to public scrutiny and regulatory oversight. We can tell companies like Facebook that we want to make choices about the kind of content we receive. One way to do this, it has been suggested, is to let people see a raw data feed in tandem with the one algorithmically targeted for them. Users should know what the boundaries of the echo chamber of which they are placed are, and they should be able to get out of it.

Ann Komaromi: I also wonder can Canadian governmental tools be used to hold social media companies accountable. The reluctance of US legislators to do more at this point than vaguely threaten regulation of the industry is a shame. However, perhaps the global reach of the company could be turned to some advantage. Could Canada, like the EU, standing up to these companies on privacy issues, take a lead to demand transparency from Facebook and others regarding advertising, the promotion of content and user data collection and sale. I don't know the answer to this, but I'd like to hear people talk about it. A little bit more within the realm of things I usually talk about is culture and values of the users. A recent important study of the spread of false versus true news items on Twitter offered some alarming insights. It said, "Falsehood diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information, and the effects were more pronounced for false political news than for false news about terrorism, natural disasters, science, urban legends or financial information."

Ann Komaromi: False stories provoked expressions of fear, disgust, and surprise and these emotions proved to be particularly powerful motivators. While this study was based on multi-year information from Twitter specifically, experts think it applies to other social media platforms. As we saw, the dissident rights activists modeled an emotional objective tone for strategic reasons and because it made them reliable in the eyes of outside observers. When we are consuming entertainment or art, we may, as Aristotle said, with the catharsis of emotions like those cited in the study. As a literary scholar, I'm a big believer in the power of art to expand our minds and increase our critical faculties but not if we can't keep facts straight. We need to distinguish the reality of our political lives and decisions from dramatic spectacle and fiction. We may not be totally ascetic in our habits, I'm not advocating that, but we need to have a stronger sense of civic responsibility in our online activity, which is never really private.

Ann Komaromi: In the extra Gutenberg environment of digital media, this means seeing ourselves as authors and publishers even when we are reading, if for no other reason than that our preferences and engagement are being tracked and employed in algorithms that determine the content we see next. We have to be careful about what we share. We have to protect the integrity of facts and the integrity of the network so that we do not become simply passive consumers susceptible as citizens to emotional manipulation.

Ann Komaromi: What are our political values? The Soviet dissidents were fighting for the principles of liberal democracy including the rule of law and respect for individuals. Canada's user citizens need to see themselves in their public activity online as empowered within our national and global framework and I think we need to believe that liberal democracy is something worth fighting for, and we need to act on that conviction. The end of the Cold War brought about a feeling of complacent triumphalism, this end of history that was alluded to before. The west won and liberal democracy established and stable in western countries would only have to spread its goodness around the globe. Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case.

Ann Komaromi: That was one of the ways Cold War thinking was simplistic and naïve. Yascha Mounk and The People Versus Democracy has argued that liberal democracy is de-consolidating before our eyes in part thanks to the destabilization effects of social media. The de-coupling of liberal values from democratic values give rise to two bad scenarios we see playing out in various places today. One of those is democracy without rights such as we see in an increasingly illiberal democracy, Poland and Hungary are among those and rights without democracy, something that people see in the EU. The good news for us is that in both of these schemes, Canada is still exemplary of liberal democracy but for how long? Mounk cites alarming evidence of increasing disaffection among young people today with the liberal democratic system. I see that, and I'm sure many of you do too. The injustices, problems, and contradictions of liberal democracy are real, and the struggle against those is urgent. However, I agree with Mounk that the advantages of this system of government are too great for us to throw the baby out with the bath water.

Ann Komaromi: In fact, reflecting on the contradictions and problems of real lived liberal democracy seems like a particularly important task in light of the problems our capitalistic version of extra Gutenberg culture raises. The attraction to the promise of individual liberation and personal expression held out by social media, and the American cultural tendency to heroicize successful individuals like Zuckerberg. These things seem like an attachment to harmful illusions of liberal ideology. Furthermore, as Franklin Foer reminded us in a piece for The Atlantic, the values of Silicon Valley are rooted, apparently unbeknownst to people like Zuckerberg, in a long history of modern Western political belief about the virtuous power of engineers and technology who will benevolently channel the bad forces of the mob. Reflecting on the paternalism, the antidemocratic and anti-humanistic qualities of this line of thought would be in order. However, neither the would be engineer kings of Silicon Valley, nor the type of excitable social media users they have sought to cultivate seem prone to reflection or consideration of history.

Ann Komaromi: Speaking from a literary perspective, I would say in the Russian context, Dostoevsky warned us, perhaps most forcefully, of the way human nature would rebel against attempts at Western rational systematization and manipulation. Dostoevsky is not a bad author to revisit because he also showed how awful people could be just to prove that they were human and had free will. Dahlia Lithwick at Slate made the point that students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School seemed so good at turning out to speak publicly about the need for reasonable gun legislation because they had been trained by an excellent public school education with ample civics training and arts enrichment. It was inspiring to see young people acting forcefully and respectfully, mobilizing digital tools alongside traditional media in savvy ways. Combining the virtual social contact of social media with speeches and marches in the streets. These people had skin in the game. They also had a good education and when the news spotlight fell tragically on them, they were ready.

Ann Komaromi: We obviously need young people who know the potentials and pitfalls of our networked global and digital culture to step up and fill gaps in elected leadership, to model good civic participation, to prompt our officials and institutions to do the right thing and to also become the new, more savvy leaders we need. I'm encouraged to see a program like this one, and I think the commitment to education and engagement it demonstrates, can give us hope at an anxious moment for the future of our democracy. Thank you for your attention.

John Ravenhill: Right, many thanks indeed. What we're gonna do this evening is to run the two talks back to back, so please note down any questions and I'm sure you have lots for Dr. Komaromi. I apologize for absolutely mangling the pronunciation on several occasions of your family name. I am not having a good evening this evening. I will keep trying and I am sure by the end of the evening, I will get it right, so apologies.

John Ravenhill: So, what we will do is move directly to the second of our speakers and we're very pleased this evening to welcome Dr. Kurt Huebner. He received his PhD in economics and political science from the free University of Berlin in Germany. He's currently professor in the political science department at the University of British Columbia and holds the Jean Monnet chair for European integration and global political economy there. He has three recent books, the first is entitled, Europe, Canada and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. The second is the New Economy in Transatlantic Perspective, Spaces of Innovation and the third is Innovations as Driver of Sustainability, Ecological Modernization and Economic Globalization. So, you can see how diverse his interests are but you'll also see that they are linked together around particular themes here and the central theme of much of his work is the integration of Europe in the context of the global political economy and much of his work has been on the Euro, the role of the Euro in global currency relations as well as the economic political mode of governance in the European context.

John Ravenhill: His most recent project deals with national pathways to low carbon emission economies. Tonight, Dr. Huebner will present a lecture entitled, Cultural and Social Economic Factors of Populism in Europe. So, please join me in welcoming Dr. Huebner.

Kurt Huebner: Thanks so much for the nice introduction. Sometimes I learn about myself more on those occasions what kind of things I did in the past as you could hear quite a variety of topics. Usually, I only accept invitations very close to the areas I'm working on, so I'm not a political party specialist or something like this but in the context of my work over the last couple of years, I could, first of all, empirically observe obviously changes in the political landscape and the compositional political landscape in Europe and as a Jean Monnet chair, I had very often the ability to talk in various [inaudible 00:50:48] in various countries in Europe with other experts and this created a kind of more political first interest to understand what's going on in those countries including my own home country, Germany, that was for quite a while seen jointly with Canada as the last kind of fortress of liberal democracy and I recall I did a little article there and a couple of interviews one and a half years back or so before the last parliamentarian elections in Germany and to [inaudible 00:51:23] what happened [inaudible 00:51:25] for Germany a kind of right wing party moved to the parliament and is now, given the outcome of the formation of the government in Germany, the official opposition party in Germany.

Kurt Huebner: So, things can change rapidly and to understand what's the reason for all that, what's going on, so I invested a bit more time in learning about those things and what I will do this evening is more or less not providing you with a complete analysis because there are so many questions that are still open to understand all those kinds of processes, developments in the various parts, now in disregard particularly in Europe that are actually posing more questions for research than that you would have immediate very quick answers still if I try to infuse my take on all that and to start with, I would like to run through a couple of those pictures.

Kurt Huebner: You're probably familiar with those guys, Marine Le Pen, Front National to the left. She experienced her own Waterloo so to say with the last elections, didn't make it as far and with the kind of outcome she was as expecting but still Front National even its seen as it's in kind of crisis but the voters are still there and a party sometimes can disappear but sentiments and voters stay. The guy in the middle, he is Beppe Grillo, he's the founder of the Five Star Movement in Italy that may or may not form the next government. Not with him actually because he's not allowed to take any public office due to a kind of car accident with a deadly outcome a couple of years back, but he's the background, the kind of the guy who is responsible for the rise of this party. The other one, on the right side, Geert Wilders, one of the most dangerous politicians in Europe I would say, in Netherlands with a very anti-migrant, anti-EU policy, always very successful relatively spoken in elections, something goes down but still it's a kind of fixture in this very liberal democracy of Netherlands.

Kurt Huebner: You know him? Probably. Austria, now the new chancellor of Austria, he is probably younger than some of the students here or the same kind of range, like he was the youngest prime minister who is 26 or 27. He's now 30 or so, chancellor of Austria. He formed a coalition government only a few months ago with a very far right wing political party and his own party also, if you look at the program they're different not too much, so he's running Austria, is running on this kind of program now. A couple of years back when his coalition partner, [inaudible 00:54:20] was also a part of the government in Austria, the European Union was boycotting Austria and they were no longer allowed to sit on the same table, nothing happened at this moment, also reflecting the fact that it's only Austria we see those kinds of guys, those kinds of political programs not only in isolated cases but in a couple of countries across Europe, and I'm only talking more or less about Europe. This evening, there would be opportunities to talk about other parts of the world.

Kurt Huebner: I don't know whether you know him, probably not, but he may also become very prominent already those ones who are more aficionados of politics so to say, they know him, [inaudible 00:54:59] he's the leader of the formerly called Lega Nord. This was a right wing political party in Italy, very much in favor of separating the north from Italy from the South. The Lega Nord is now called the Lega, league, extremely successful. They formed this kind of pre-coalition with the guy you know, Berlusconi, but I don't know, Berlusconi made this kind of coalition in advance before the elections in the expectation that Berlusconi's party would become the strongest party in Italy. It turned out the voters have a different kind of feeling. Berlusconi fell back enormously and the league has become the strongest right wing party besides the fascist part in Italy and it can happen that this guy will form a government jointly with this person, that's Matteo, the political leader, the one who is really in the foreground of this Five Star movement I mentioned already.

Kurt Huebner: So, those two parties Five Star movement, I'll talk about later on a bit more, and Lega Nord may form a new government, both are classified at least in literature and also in the kind of use as populous parties and to probably those two persons, I don't know, the left one is the left [inaudible 00:56:21] Kaczynski brother, also a person not having any kind of public office in Poland but seen as the real emperor of Poland making and arranging all this kind of policies in Poland and the right one is Orban, the prime minister of Hungary. So, also in Eastern Europe we see those guys and there would be more pictures only to add another element so populist notions, put it this way, notions about populism are not only restricted to Europe. He's no longer alive, he died recently, Chavez in Venezuela, very much seen again literature as a kind of prototype of another type of populist politician and then you know those two guys, so populism depending what it is is not a far cry from home, at least left one also no longer alive. He was seen as a Canadian prototype of a populist politician and his brother maybe similar kind of [inaudible 00:57:23], maybe more educated a bit but same kind of thing.

Kurt Huebner: So, the populism has become a kind of [inaudible 00:57:32] two to three years and seen when you use the word that this is already explaining what it's all about and to already the kind of the little show of the pictures tells you at least or poses the question, what do all those kinds of guys I just showed you have in common? Not only are they representing different political regimes, different national cases, they differ, if you look closer to it, in many, many ways. So, this term populism is something we need to define a bit closer obviously in order not only to have a kind of catch word we can throw around and things, so that is the kind of etiquette, the label we can use, we need to have a better understanding and what I'm suggesting is out of the used literature in political science, particularly over the last two, three, four years or so, I think so, at least according to my reading, there are two contributors who really made huge differences in the literature.

Kurt Huebner: This one is Jan-Werner Muller, german name, he's a german political scientist but teaching in Princeton in the US, and he, very much early on, in various smaller books and a lot of articles, is making the case as a general element that is common for all those kinds of various populous parties, populous politicians that populous parties, populous leaders make this distinction between the pure people, something that is actually not really existing but it's kind of creation with their own pure interests and they are, so to say, victimized by those ones who are the elite, the others, a small kind of minority who perform in democratic framework and pretend they would act in the interest of all but in real life, what they are doing is actually following their own kind of interests. So, this is this kind of confrontation where populous parties play with in various ways.

Kurt Huebner: So, the implication, so to say, from this pure people perspective, we have to, in order to overcome all this kind of problems, we have to get rid of the elite. We have to, in various ways, to make them either label them as criminals and I will show you cases later on or at least bring them in a kind of situation where it's pretty clear we have all the rights to fight against them. They are the kind of the source of the evil, if you would like. That's one way populous parties are phrasing the political discourse. The other author I'm very much in favor of is a Dutch scholar, also teaching at Georgia Tech, I think so, [inaudible 01:00:34] in a very bottom, his name, he has the same kind of suggestion when it comes to based on both cases, based on various strong comparative empirical work but he's adding a very critical element, I think so. It's again, the pure people against the elite, us against the others, us against them. In order to define them, to define us is the same proposed by Miller but them can take various forms and what he is suggesting is, and again, I will use this later on, is that populous parties, by first identifying them, the others, in this kind of negative way, they add this additional element that labels this as kind of host ideology.

Kurt Huebner: Populous parties not only restrict themselves to the identification of the other, them, but also add in various ways other elements and this helps us, hopefully, to understand why populous parties take different ... There's a different variety put it this way, let us say in Poland compared to France, Netherlands and so on, so the host ideology element is a very critical element in all this. Now, if you think about the pictures I showed you then it's not by chance that a vast majority, not all of them but a vast majority of parties we are used to label populous parties, they come with very charismatic leaders. The party is identified very often with a particular name of the leader and parties would often not exist if their leaders would not act in the way they're acting.

Kurt Huebner: In other words, if they leave, the parties are gone. One example would be, and you know about is, would be [inaudible 01:02:33] UKIP, the United Kingdom Independent Party, as long as Farage was the visible hat leader of the whole thing, the party was really booming. When the goal was succeeded, Brexit but also the leader was no longer willing to follow through with all those kinds of implications, the party broke apart more or less. It's still there but not really as a party, no longer there. So, leaders, charismatic leaders are very, very important and again, you will see later on in one example, there are exemptions.

Kurt Huebner: Now, there is a huge debate what is causing the rise of populism, and again, if you take a very global perspective, there is no doubt and there's been ... I don't tell anything new here, that democratic values and democratic institutions are in no good shape today compared to the second half of the 20th century that democratic values and institutions were spreading out, were getting stronger and stronger, the last 20 years or so, democratic values and institutions are no longer the same standing. There's a lot of empirical work out there that shows with all kind of indicators that democracies are under threat that only take, even the situation in the south, two famous political scientists, David Ziblatt and Steve Levitsky and a small book only came out with a kind of litmus test so to say about the decay of democracies and they make the case that the US today out of the four little sub tests so to say, would fail too. So, they see even the democracy in the US under threat. We have to digest this in all seriousness what this means not only for Canada but also for the rest of the world.

Kurt Huebner: So, what I'm going to say is, we see all those kinds of things and there is no big debate about empirical validity of the kind of statement that democracy is under threat, the question though is what are the driving forces. Why is this happening, why it is happening in various countries in various ways. So, let me start with, I call this here, the big drivers and the big driver, number one, would be following one strand of literature and work I'm doing myself, this is very much to do with what we can call hyper-globalization, that's a particular kind of opening of international markets of all kinds that only started actually after the fall of the [inaudible 01:05:26], after 1989. We had an economic globalization far before, that to say it really stated in the 20th century after the so-called dissolution of the [inaudible 01:05:37] in 1971, we don't have to go into details but this was a thing, kind of globalization but on a very relatively low level. Really, this hyper-globalization where all forums of economic activities, social relations have become globalized, this only started after the breakdown of the Soviet Union and no doubt about it, there's been all these kinds of open spaces that needed commodification and then we had at the same time political classes in lead countries of the west that were pretty much making the case that open markets are producing wealth.

Kurt Huebner: And again, if you, like myself, if I'm teaching students economics 101, in international economics it's pretty clear everything we know from our economic theories is open trade in goods and services is something that generates net benefits and I have to say, that's quite incorrect. Each simple model tells us and empirics can show us that that's correct. At the same time, that's often forgotten even by advisors and politicians anyway, the same models, 101, if you go to this textbook showing the same case, that each country has winners and losers. Only the net if you compare the absolute amount of gains compared with the absolute amount of losses, open trade will, for each country, [inaudible 01:07:13] tell us there's a net benefit but we don't care too much about the losers. Open trade needs to produce losers. For example, if you would now go like myself over here, I go into my suit and see where it's being made. It's not made in Canada. Why should be make suits or jeans or something like this? Doesn't make any kind of sense. You can get this whole stuff somewhere else much cheaper. The labor is cheap, all those kinds of things.

Kurt Huebner: We are specializing. So, it means those guys who're producing suit cloth of all kinds in the past, they will lose their chops and that's good because as consumers we have a benefit. We can buy the same kind of things in cheaper ways. The problem only is if we don't care about the losers, now you have a critical mass more and more over time of citizens who feel, rightly so, that they are losing, that they're losing out. So, hyper-globalization may have created overall benefits but those benefits were highly unevenly distributed and this is due to the fact, not with the globalization, with domestic policies, so if they don't care about these kinds of things, how to deal to compensate losers, you're creating problems. Those problems, that's the other element is, there's a time component in it. If people are losing out, they may get frustrated. They may go to all kind of things but it needs time until those kinds of discontent is building up. So, you don't have to expect immediate responses in those times so that it needs time is a critical element.

Kurt Huebner: Number two, also something we know very well, it's well-documented and it's a kind of debate but without any real implication in terms of policy making since the 1980s, the world and inside nation states has become more unequal. The level of inequality is rising again due to the fact how those economies are approaching their winner take all structures, particularly with the [inaudible 01:09:20] economic developments in new technologies, all those kinds of things. Winner takes all means at the end of the day, everybody may win but there are some who are winning enormously more, so the feeling, the sentiment to lose out also is increasing, has become a huge political element in discussions without that we had any kind of good solutions so far. All this is creating at the end of the day in that kind of, again, building up slowly, something that we can call status anxiety, means even there is a critical number of people who are losing jobs, who are losing income. There are welfare state mechanisms [inaudible 01:10:01] at least in the western world but on low standards. You may lose your job, you get a new job but the new job has a lower wage for example, all these kinds of things.

Kurt Huebner: So, that's the one critical element that really feeds to the sentiments of citizens, and this is something that can be exploited by political parties, by leaders who finger point to this and say, you know, you are ... There are reasons why you are losing out. At the same time, the nation state has a lot of problems in types of hyper-globalization to control all the facts of hyper-globalization. The best kind of way to describe it in one example is we see, again, since the 1980s until today, an enormous strong race to the bottom when it comes to tax rates for the private business sector. You recall maybe, it was only a couple of months ago on the radio, absolutely terrible situation with a guy that [inaudible 01:11:05] kind of business advisor, when Trump's tax reform went through and CBC had a kind of two people round table so to say on the radio and the one person was saying, my counterpart so to say, okay, this is the end for Canada. We need immediately ... The liberal government needs immediately to decrease the tax rates because all the kind of Canadian companies will go to the US. So I tried to make the case, all these kinds of things but this tells to the discourse [inaudible 01:11:34] discourses and they are based in reality.

Kurt Huebner: So, if there is something in an open world, national governments indeed have problems to control the border, not only in terms of migrant, also in terms of money, of all those kinds of economic indicators and so sometimes even there is a left center politicians who are maybe revealing to risk confrontations [inaudible 01:12:00] to the problem, how to deal with it. The fact that there is something like footloose capital, there are companies who can threat to leave and all those kinds of things, so this has changed the discourses enormously and this means in a time when in many respects, based on policy decisions, borders have become less relevant at least for goods sources and capital, they are relevant for the citizens because they feel they are victimized by the free flow of capital and goods and services. So, this feeds another sentiment then saying okay, we must regain control of the borders. All this leads, at the end of the day, to something I talk about later on, economic nationalism in many, many respects and that's the answer to the problem given by populous parties making a kind of complex situation to an under-complex kind of policy or response so to say.

Kurt Huebner: So, this is a long ... The problem I just described has a long tradition [inaudible 01:13:09] German who was the head of the Latin School of Economics, he died a couple of years ago. He referred to this already 1970s and made this kind of triangle. So, there is a contradiction. You can't have all three at the same time. You can't have globalization; the free movement of capital, goods, and services; democratic liberty; and social cohesion. One must give. That was already his analysis in the 1970s. That's exactly the situation that we are currently dealing with. So, this is, so to say, the first necessary condition to understand, at least according to my analysis, the rise of populous. We have all this kind of ... The sentiment, we are victims. We can't do anything. The state has no longer power. We are exposed to all this negative and so on.

Kurt Huebner: Then a second necessary condition I would argue following the literature again to understand the rise of populous parties has very much to do with the fact that the center parties, center right and center left, European case center left is usually a social democratic party, very strong during 1970s, 80s and 90s and the center right parties, they would move closer together when this comes to policies, strategies to programs [inaudible 01:14:38] because they are both in favor of opening markets, a kind of an idea that globalization can be beneficial and they were all in support with slight differences but the differences between the center right and center left are getting smaller and smaller. Very often, voters don't have any longer the kind of ability to make a clear cut distinction. In other words, the polarization of political parties is no longer as strong nowadays than it used to be, let us say, 20, 30 years ago. This is making the whole ... This creates a kind of political mess if you would like from a voter perspective. They leave, at the same time, what's called an electoral gap.

Kurt Huebner: No longer are social democratic parties, for a long time in the European context, those ones who stand, so to say, for the interests of the losers of hyper-globalization. They try also in order to maximize their votes to get a median voter in the middle, so to say, and so populous parties, they don't fight for votes of the median voter in the middle of the center, they want to get the votes of those ones who feel rightly they are left out, the losers and very important, maybe in absolute numbers, the most important group, those ones of the lower middle class who feel that they may become the next victim. Again, that's very important. They are not victims now but they feel insecure. They feel, oh, the next round is ours, so to say, then we have to pay the price, so to say, and that's exactly those two type of groups are getting addressed by populous parties.

Kurt Huebner: Again, when we ... I didn't want to feed you with all those kinds of tables and so on and so on, only to give you some ideas. French elections, for example, in the first round of the presidential elections in France, the second one is in a different character and then [inaudible 01:16:47] won by far but the first round is more or less, you can see better who's actually voting for whom. In the first round of elections, you could see that Front National, Le Pen had really her strongest voter potential in the blue collar section. Workers no longer totally frustrated from the socialist party, social democratic party but because they follow this kind of mainstream policies, they were moving and everything, unlike you would expect it from what we know from the past that workers and those ones lose out, they would vote left. No, they are voting for right populous parties, and usually those voters in France, like in many other cases, it's not the younger blue collar workers, it's the older one, the older group. So, to some degree, one could argue populous parties are successful due to the support of male elder blue collar workers.

Kurt Huebner: If this would be the whole kind of analysis, we would say lean back, we wait 20 years, the guys are dead and then the problem is solved but there are other elements probably. To some degree, alternative Germany ... in the German elections, a kind of similar thing, then we have a huge kind of, let us say, split between Eastern Germany, the former GDR, the former socialist part of Germany and the west. The [inaudible 01:18:21] for Germany, this populous party, is getting its highest vote shares in Eastern Germany by these old guys who were actually having passports for the former GDR. They were voting for the socialist party all the time and now they vote for right wing populous parties. Interesting. The [inaudible 01:18:42] ideology of the alternative party [inaudible 01:18:44] it's anti-migration.

Kurt Huebner: Now, if you ever had the chance to travel through this wonderful Eastern Germany, there are a lot of ... Looks fantastic. Everything is renovated, it's really very nice way to make holidays actually, what you would see there is ... Put it this way, what you don't see in Eastern Germany are foreigners. There are no foreigners. All the foreigners, not only migrants, others, are living in Western Germany, not in the East. So, again, you have this kind of situation that populous parties can be successful with a host ideology saying the foreigners were running everything and they're responsible for kind of the bad situation we are in even though there are no foreigners in this part of Germany. So, this gives you ... And again, I would make the argument, it's not fake news, it's the way of perception. Those voters have a particular kind of perception and they try to find [inaudible 01:19:44] interpretations how to understand their own situation and I think this is a narrative and those narratives are very important because narratives are, at the end of the day, given by those populous parties with the help of media, no doubt about it, but it's really a question of narratives that is very, very critical in many of those situations.

Kurt Huebner: And then, in the very particular way, out of the three, the other ones are only summaries of what I just said. The cultural threat, the idea that you're losing your identity. In all those cases, whether it's Germany, whether it's France, the UK, across Europe, particularly in Denmark, very, very strong, in the Netherlands, the feeling, the sentiment in a vast majority of voters of citizens is that given the fact that with migration crisis, with other developments, open borders in Europe due to the [inaudible 01:20:49] of European integration, that you are becoming a minority in your own land, in your own country. So, think about it ... I had the pleasure to teach two summer schools in Copenhagen the last three years, out of [inaudible 01:21:06] two years out of the last three years and fantastic city, absolutely liberal, fantastic. Four weeks ago, I got a mail check, a mail from Denmark telling me when I'm 65, I'm getting a pension from them. It's really welfare, I didn't even ask for it. For two summer schools, they pay a pension, imagine.

Kurt Huebner: It's a total liberal society, enormously developed welfare state. They pay high taxes, 50% on high incomes, means also they have the feeling that they pay taxes and are getting all this kind of goodies from the welfare state, those newcomers, they don't pay the taxes. They only just arrived and they are getting even welfare subsidies or so. So, they are not eligible for those kinds of claims. We keep them out. So, for them, it's a huge threat of the whole kind of model of citizenship in those countries. Again, I don't want to apologize it but you have to understand those kinds of different situations but anyway, in a very strong case, populous parties seem to play across most of those countries with the sentiment that a maturity ... No, I don't want to say maturity. A strong segment of voters feel that they are losing their national identity. They are losing ... Coming from language and all of a sudden, you've all those kinds of people speaking along the proper language of the home country.

Kurt Huebner: There're implications for schools and so on and so on. [inaudible 01:22:38] certain parents are discussing, I can tell you in the German case, even very liberal friends of mine, when they had smaller kids, they took them out in Berlin from Kreuzberg and so on because there were 80% Turkish kids. Not because they were anti-Turkish. They were saying they can't speak German and our kid who has to come has to go to [inaudible 01:22:56] later on if they are not trained properly early on, then we lose out. So they moved, fake addresses that the German system you only can send your kid in a school when you have a postal address somewhere, so they asked others that live in nicer part of the city whether they could get registered there and then could send their kids in kind of proper white German schools.

Kurt Huebner: So, it's a reality, again, something I don't want to apologize, just want you to see that's the kind of sentiment, the feeling, the loss of identity in many respects. There are all these others coming and rather than having, let us say, good, responsible responses from the main stream parties, the populous parties actually play with those kinds of scares, anxieties and so on in a very successful way. Also, because there is this void, this gap that we don't have proper answers how to deal with those situations. So, the minority fears, the idea or sentiment to get marginalized and so on, is very, very strong. Now, at the same time, as I've tried to stress and I don't go through all those kinds of cases in detail but it's pretty clear there are huge differences. I started here with a group of countries where we have populous parties and the host ideology would be very strongly nationalism. The reverence of the nation is extremely strong.

Kurt Huebner: This is particularly true in Poland. In the graph you have seen, it's very often labeled using a term brought into the discussion by Orban, the prime minister of Hungary, so the term illiberal democracy is now used in Poland by the politicians, by the peace party themselves and that's the way we want to deal with it and if you look carefully at it, it's a very interesting combination. First of all, it's all about Poland in the sense of a rewriting of history. History textbooks, very important, we don't think about it but they shredded all the history textbooks, after they had to be [inaudible 01:25:15] made in the last 20 years and they are now substituted by history textbooks that have a different writing, a different kind of play with the Polish history than the one that are used not only in Poland in the past but also a lot of them is in contrast to what other European textbooks, history textbooks at schools would tell us. So, it's a play, so to say, okay, we, Poland are different and we have this kind of particular kind of history, so playing with this national reverences is very, very important, including that they are bringing back all kind of anniversaries and trying to make into public holidays in a very militant way.

Kurt Huebner: So, it's all about preparing or putting the Polish [inaudible 01:25:59] so to say into a kind of homogenous kind of mass if you would like in this regard. So, at the same time, Poland is getting about 7% of it's GDP is coming from the European Union. So, they're the largest net receiving nation state and member state of the European Union. Imagine, so there is on the one side, they are doing all these kinds of things and then they are getting all this kind of money from the EU. So, they play it in a very strategic, in a very smart way at the same time. It's not that the populous party and the leaders [inaudible 01:26:42] personalities and only backward looking. They try to bring together a lot of elements.

Kurt Huebner: The third element is that the government, immediately after taking over power, introduced enormous, generous welfare state payments for families with kids, for old age people, for people in the countryside, enormous generous [inaudible 01:27:07] that's also a way, kind of strategic source of policy to bind and to create something like support and legitimacy. So, it's just ... It's a very interesting kind of combination we can find in Poland. Hungary, their Orban is really moving very strongly towards ... And I have to say Poland, only [inaudible 01:27:27] you know from newspapers, I don't have to tell you. They're redoing the independence of the supreme court and a lot of things are changing. That's the reason why the EU is fighting against them but EU only has kind of limited ways to deal with the violation of democratic institutions due to the fact there's a famous article VII in the treaty of the European Union that they could be pushed out but it needs anonymity.

Kurt Huebner: The next guy, Hungary, Orban, made pretty clear from the very beginning he will not vote for any kind of punishment for Poland, again, very rational because if they would ... If he would support something with Poland, he would be the next victim because Hungary is doing pretty much the same kind of things, undermining democratic values. Think about the example of fighting against your [inaudible 01:28:18] university, but then identifying in a very strange way for us but very successful in Hungary. He was able, mainly him and his party but really Orban was the leader in all this, to give the enemy, the other, the ones that are responsible for all the kind of bad things a face and the face is George Soros, the founder of open society. Actually Orban got once a student grant from open society from Soros, so to say not personally but from his institution. He went to LSE for his PhD, then he broke up. He didn't finish it but so, doesn't matter, that's a kind of small thing but this is ... If you go to Hungary, there are a lot of kinds of billboards and so on with the face of Soros, Jewish background, [inaudible 01:29:15] he had to kind of flee from the Nazis and so on and he's the face of all the evil, so to say.

Kurt Huebner: But this is, again, in Budapest, it doesn't make him successful but in the country side, they need, there is a hunger for getting a face to make somebody responsible for the not so good situation, that's something in Hungary that's being exploited enormously. It's a very extreme case but pretty much the kind of thing, I try to make the argument, you find very often. You need to identify the them, the others that you can make a good argument in your own favor. Alternative of Germany and very interesting paradoxical case, again, 14.2% in the federal parliament, never happened before in German history after World War II.

Kurt Huebner: It started out as a so-called professorial party, [inaudible 01:30:12]. There were only a couple of ... They have all the kind of strange economies in Germany, those were the strangest [inaudible 01:30:18] you could find at all and they were with very strange argument against [inaudible 01:30:22] against the Euro but the Euro, when they founded a party, this was during the Eurozone crisis 2010 [inaudible 01:30:30] when the sentiment in Germany was anyway, we don't pay for these lazy Greek people who are out of money and all this kind of thing, cause this was the way they really made a wave and were relatively successful but only on a smaller scale but when the Eurozone crisis was petering out and was no longer critical and didn't play any kind of political role in Germany, something great happened, opening up the border for migrants, we can do it. [inaudible 01:30:58] but this has a longer history and all of a sudden, this party turned from an anti-Euro party to an anti-migration party, anti-Muslim party and this didn't play any role before and that's now the [inaudible 01:31:11] ideology in the sense, we need to keep or get back the sovereignty of our borders.

Kurt Huebner: We have to send all those kinds of guys back to [inaudible 01:31:24] to Turkey and all those kinds of things and we need to really control our borders. We can do this in combination with the support of courts, the chancellor of Austria [inaudible 01:31:37], Italy, both parties, the League as well as the Five Star movement have in common that they want to send back hundreds of thousands of people of migrants that are currently in Italy or pass through, sending them somewhere even with military kind of means and so on. For there's a new kind of alliance forming and alternative for Germany is pretty in front of making those kinds of proposals. Brexit, again, a different kind of case compared to the others but not doubt about it, the overarching topic for Brexit, it's all about the British idea to get back control of the border, sovereignty.

Kurt Huebner: I already call before the referendum I gave a talk [inaudible 01:32:26] to London, had to fly from Vancouver to London, British Airways, they paid for economy class, had to go to the washroom. I was sitting in the very front, economy, so I went to the business class washroom and there were all those kinds of guys. They had their briefcase in their hand and so were joking and were making jokes about me, why I come from economy class to the washroom in business class and so on but this was a way to start a conversation and then they were asking me, "What are you doing?" I said I will be partaking in a round table on Brexit and they're, "Oh, Brexit." And this is all successful business people and I never had two hours in an aircraft where I couldn't go away, besides to my seat, there is so much hatred, uninformed hatred about [inaudible 01:33:08] response for everything. Based on, first of all, misinformation where there's talking things about it with no factual kind of foundation but also you could really see they really hate the European Union due to the fact that it's integrated space where decisions are being made no longer only in London but in the European Parliament with support of the European Commission.

Kurt Huebner: So, this idea that we would live in a world where we can get back control of our borders, that's a driving force. In the European context, I would argue this doesn't make a lot of sense. It's a much too small kind of entity and only if you're pulling resources in a kind of democratic controlled way, you really can make a difference. You can actually, in the best way, avoid or deal with problems but this idea of sovereignty for any price and then they identified obviously the [inaudible 01:34:13] all those kinds of people from Eastern Europe who are actually really working there, no doubt about it but again, the unemployment rate of workers from Eastern Europe in the UK is much lower than the unemployment rate of domestic British people since six, seven years on average. So, it's not that they would come, sit around and ask for kind of welfare state payments or so, they're actually working, very often terrible jobs nobody wants to have but they are working.

Kurt Huebner: So, anyway, this kind of thing. So, sovereignty, the control, the idea that if you control your border that you control your own fate and that you control your own culture, those are the kind of motives I would argue that are so critical in the kind of narratives presented by political parties. Only briefly, Italy, because, I don't know, I thought so, this will happen the next three months or so and we may see something that indirectly at least also will have implications for Canada, what can happen and we see first signs of this, the two populous parties, but populous parties from very different angles may form a joint government. Five Star Movement on the one side and the Lega Nord. Five Star Movement, over the last couple of years in 80% of all parliamentarian decision makings, when the parliamentarian is set to vote, they voted central left. The base of the Five Star Movement are actually green party people, are left wing people and so on and so on.

Kurt Huebner: So, it's reflected in a very kind of progressive social policy agenda of the Five Star Movement, at the same time, they are fighting for low carbon technologies, so the green side of it. The other side of the Five Star Movement is they're anti-migration and anti-EU. They want to have all the foreigners out and the migrant foreigners out, some others maybe too and would like to get out of the Euro and so that they ... They would like to do this only if they would have no longer this [inaudible 01:36:35] this kind of framework of the European Union, they would have the ability to spend money to pass it along, social policy programs to those ones they want to support. The membership in the EU would make this not possible. The right wing party, the Lega Nord, they, and I have to say, the Five Star Movement, they won more or less more than 50% in the south of Italy, the very deprived, poor south. The Lega Nord, they won relatively spoken, most of the votes, 90% of the votes actually, are from the north of Italy, the kind of developed, high income regions and in the past, they wanted to separate the north from the south, saying the south is only a kind of burden for us, let's get them away and rebuild our own kind of formation but again, they have anti-migration and in a different way, same kind of idea.

Kurt Huebner: We need to, even in the north, there are losers, we need to compensate them with very progressive social policies. So, that's the kind of the overlapping element and this may lead to something that they are, in their populous ways, with very prominent leaders they have, they are addressing actually populous sentiments from both poles of the population, the Lega Nord, the populous sentiments of the left that is also there and the League, the Lega, the populous sentiments on the right and if this would come together, then you would have a government in Italy that would be totally anti-EU and given the fact that Italy has a public debt of 130% of GDP and a very fragile banking system, this could be a huge economic crisis in Italy that could bring down not only the Euro but also would have implications for the world economy. Only to let you know the kind of implications if you try to serve those sentiments, what can happen in the kind of worst case scenario. Hopefully, this is not playing out.

Kurt Huebner: Now, last slide, this is the kind of glass half full, half empty picture but you can see that the disturbing part I talked about and we all are thinking about is that we see a kind of secular rise of the share of right populous parties in elections, from the 1980s like 1% or so, we're up to 12% European average. So, the trend is pretty clear and that's disturbing. On the other side, you could often see on average for Europe the share is still pretty low. Maybe we can see this also as a kind of normalcy. A way, we, Western societies at least in Europe and including the US, not so much Canada at the moment, that we have to live with those political sentiments of a critical minority that is getting expressed in party preferences and all kind of public discourses, they don't have the majority at least at the moment and we have still, so to say, time to develop strategies, political responses to many of those problems I tried to name in order to address those very often, legitimate problems of the losers and those ones with status anxiety, we can't afford to leave them alone and to leave them in the hands of those populous parties and that may be the kind of task we all have to face as a collective, as individuals, as scholars and also as students. Thanks so much.

John Ravenhill: Great. Okay, many thanks, Dr. Huebner. Now, I will invite Dr. Komaromi and Dr. Jasmin Habib to join Dr. Huebner on the stage. Dr. Jasmin Habib will serve as the moderator for the discussion part of this evening's event. Jasmin will be well-known to most of you besides being director of the Global Engagement Seminar Program, she's, of course, professor of political science at UW and besides being a specialist on populism, is also a specialist on Middle Eastern politics, on migration and on indigenous peoples. So, over to you, Jasmin.

Jasmin Habib: Great. Thanks very much. We can't see you because all we can see are the lights in our eyes but thanks again to everyone for coming to join us. This is the inaugural summit for the Global Engagement Seminar Program and we're really happy to see so many of you here for a Thursday night, or sorry, a Wednesday night and we welcome you all to come and join us tomorrow for the other summit events which includes our students' presentations as well as a keynote presentation by Henry Giroux. Tonight, though, we have an opportunity to engage with our two speakers. We have microphones, I think, sitting at the ends. Yes, at the two ends, so if you have any questions, we'd invite you to come up and ask them or if you'd like to ask from within your ... From your seat, you could also do so. Do we have any questions?

Jasmin Habib: Yes? I see a hand but I don't know who you are.

Speaker 8: Thanks [inaudible 01:42:27] sort of a funny question but I find the slogan for these parties to be pretty interesting. So, in North America, we have the [inaudible 01:42:36] brothers who have [inaudible 01:42:37] and then Trump has his, "Drain the swamp," and this sort of thing. I'm just curious, are there similar sort of slogans that are used by these parties in Europe though?

Jasmin Habib: Kurt? Ann?

Ann Komaromi: I'm thinking Kurt might be more current with that.

Kurt Huebner: Yeah, the political discourses and the way parties are run and elections are run are so different on average, at least, in Europe, so it's difficult to make this kind of case. The US is, first of all, the democratic party, the republican party are different beasts than regular parties the way of the setup, the way they're getting financed, all this kind of things than European parties. So, a lot of those extra elements that are so critical to understand what's going on in the US even the kind of way that, for example, take one topic close to my heart, climate policies, when the fact that in North America for a long time, including Canada, I recall, there was a prime minister called Hopper, at the very beginning of his tenure was saying climate change is not man made. That's a kind of scientific statement from his side. The fact that the climate change deniers are so strong has very much to do with the setup of media of think tanks they are creating, the Koch brothers is one example, there are many others. The fact that you create think tanks in order to manipulate public discourse and sentiments, that's really something we see also in Europe but at a much lower level.

Kurt Huebner: This also has to do with the simple fact that one of the catastrophes for me as a German European in Canada besides having not access to good cheese and cheap cheese is the situation of media. But you can't read anything informed about Europe. Just the newspaper, the Globe And Mail tries hard sometimes, after a time they didn't try hard and now get better but still there's one guy who reports for whole Europe in 80% of the cases, it's actually nonsense. If you only need to read five newspapers per day in various languages in Europe than you know better, but it's forming the kind of impression what's going on there. So, if in Germany, there are terrible things with anti-Jewish kind of things and so on, it's a huge kind of headline here. Nobody talks about the way they are dealing with those situations back in the country, there's only one example and so on and so on. You pick out the kind of things and then it's getting spread out. I would say, on average, the voters are much more informed and this makes it so tricky in terms for those populous parties, when they also play not with fakes [inaudible 01:45:32] I don't think so, at least the European case, fake news is [inaudible 01:45:37] a bit.

Kurt Huebner: People are much too smart and too informed but narratives, narratives are more kind of story lines, whole stories and they are much more ... They're you're much more ... Even I, I'm a victim of my own kind of stories based on my own kind of political history and so on. I try to believe that this is all true and helps me to understand what's going on. I have difficulties sometimes to readjust and to modify my own kind of narrative so to say and that's even more true for many other people I would say and that's the real problem.

Ann Komaromi: I was trying to remember and perhaps you know, because I think this question about slogans is a really kind of important one and I couldn't remember which party this was in Europe but they said, "You know what we stand for." Maybe that was in Switzerland, I don't quite recall but I think all of them, "Drain the swamp," or "Stop the gravy train," or certainly, "Make America great again," allow people to project what they want to project into the slogans and they're vague enough to encompass whatever voters want to believe they are.

Jasmin Habib: Yes, go ahead.

Speaker 9: My question is for Ann. Considering less responsive global regions and less comprehensive in their media regulations, how best can the global community-

Robert: Can't hear you.

Speaker 9: Mic check. Okay. Good. Considering less responsive global regions, how best can the global community combat the scourge of fake media? I'd like to highlight the example of Kenya, which was brought up in the Cambridge Analytical scandal. Now we have the rapidly exploding African continent and the possibility of manipulation in democratic process by these media scourges. Now, these governments are most often not aligned with comprehensive media regulations and combating these problems. Social media is a hydra. You cut off one head, another one grows. How best does the global community combat this looking at the inextricable role of Africa in the west development?

Jasmin Habib: Oh, but there's a tough one.

Ann Komaromi: Yeah, wonderful questions and I wish I had a cogent answer. I feel strongly that there needs to be some kind of government regulatory response and I know that it must be very complicated in the global environment and what it means in somewhere like Kenya, how does it happen? I don't know and I have to confess, I'm not a policy analyst and this is really not my area. I guess just from the little that I know about, for example, the EU trying to lead on some security protections, so forcing these multinational companies to observe particular constraints that will spill over, that may have effects for the US where they're not going to do the same kind of regulation, how true is that around the globe and honestly, I wish I understood better what forms of both national and global governance might create an effective response. All I know is that I think these are really important questions to talk about and if someone else has a better idea, I'd love to hear about it.

Speaker 9: Thank you.

Jasmin Habib: Other questions from the audience? Okay, we have one ... a student up there and are you coming down? Okay.

Robert: So, my name is Robert [inaudible 01:49:46] and I'm very interested in interdisciplinary matters and I helped ... I was a key assisting founder of two multidisciplinary centers at the University of Waterloo, and physics is my main background with mathematics and in physics, rigorous definitions are important so you can effectively proceed, but you use the word fact an awful lot and it's what I would call a zero one type of definition that's used there. Either something is a fact or it isn't but the degree of representation of reality represented by a fact varies along a continuum and nobody's doing anything with that type of thing. So, when is a fact 100% a fact and when is it a lot less than that? Arts people aren't dealing with that type of question and they need to, okay, because it's fundamental to proceeding in a more viable way into our future. Just to comment. Any comments on the comment, that would be fine.

Jasmin Habib: Comments on the comment?

Ann Komaromi: If I heard you correctly, you're saying the definition of a fact is what's ...

Jasmin Habib: That those of us in art need to consider the definition of a fact because in physics or in science I suppose.

Ann Komaromi: So, this study by scientists at MIT of the spread of fake news in Twitter, they had to confront this question and you would probably understand the logic better than I did. I think there was a kind of practical use of fact checking organizations that had identified fake news and memes and so they're kind of ... They were taking the practical definition of fact as it had been practiced since from between 2006 and 2014 as their basis.

Robert: An important reference here that covers this somewhat is a book written in the 1930s by Count Alfred Korzybski, is called Science Insanity and he gets into these types of questions. It was very popular at the time in the university community but today 99.9 repeating in professors have never heard of it.

Jasmin Habib: Thank you. I think I've got Keagan. Yes?

Speaker 11: Hello, my question is for Dr. Huebner, I hope I'm pronouncing that correctly. You talked about sort of regarding the domestic winners and losers which have been created by the current system. Do you have any propositions for how the losers can be helped? You talked about sort of the need for the losers domestically to be helped out. Any sort of ideas regarding that?

Kurt Huebner: This would be fantastic [inaudible 01:53:22] so would be highly paid advisor for dealing with all those things but seriously spoken, if you go through the list of suggestions I try to make to explain why all this is happening, obviously economic factors are not causal but they seem to play a very important role, at least in my argument and one implication would be [inaudible 01:53:51] bearing and it's something we don't have in mind, it's not a kind of alternative economic national has been closing down everything but I would really make the argument that it needs, at least when it comes, let us say financial capital mobility, we need to think about returning to a regime that we had during the ... Between 1950 and the early 1970s where we have a much stronger control. The control would, first of all, allow us to end this kind of race to the bottom tax competition that is undermining the fiscal capacity of nation states, of government to deal with problems. Very often, they don't have the kind of financial means due to the fact that what I tried to describe. So, this kind of control.

Kurt Huebner: Now, this is something that can be done on the national level alone. So, it means either the European context, that's one of the reasons I am, despite a lot of [inaudible 01:54:58] details on, very much in favor of European integration. Technically spoken, there would be the possibility to create a pretty large, the largest consumer space in the world, 500 something citizens to create this kind of space of control. Re-control of those kinds of flows means also making the financial industry to say more boring. Again, a simple example, now we see this whole kind of disturbances with Facebook and all social media.

Kurt Huebner: When I have the privilege, I could do it now, I go on my iPhone, I would go to [inaudible 01:55:36], that's my pension from UBC and I can tell you, I do this out of fun, I have this kind of ... For my own kind of graph, between when this Facebook thing came up a couple of days ago and today, I lost from my pension fund, $74,000, $74,000, due to the fact that my university and the kind of financial service they are hiring, they have a lot of stocks in new technologies, it comes down. It means the fact that we are dealing [inaudible 01:56:09] with a highly unregulated technosphere, we're actually, it's also so funny, when I don't have a Facebook account, I don't have PayPal or those kinds of things and [inaudible 01:56:23], one of the most prominent guys who was one of the first financiers of Facebook and the founder of PayPal, when he is like the whole kind of [inaudible 01:56:35] we have Silicon Valley, they're all libertarians. They're not liberals, they're libertarians. They have Ayn Rand books on their shelves.

Kurt Huebner: The best idea for them is having countries, nation state without a state. Markets are dealing everything by themselves. That's the whole idea of the thing. That's also the idea of Bitcoin. It's all about amount of regulation. We don't need central banks. All this kind of stuff. This is for young people sometimes fascinating, it's actually dangerous and crypto-fascistic what they are doing, and that's the kind of program. So, that's the reason why I don't support those kinds of things. Still, have an iPhone, I support Apple, obviously and so on but what I want to say is the fact that we have those kinds of unregulated spheres, they all come with enormous implications because the economies are very much entrenched in those kinds of sectors and in the simple case, I lose $70,000 from my pension, means I need to work two years more probably before I retire and those kinds of things. Those are daily life experiences I don't want to showcase myself as a victim but that's what it's about.

Kurt Huebner: If you think about carefully about the things and the information, you have analytical tools, something [inaudible 01:57:49] was telling us as the tool for students to think critically, we need to digest information. We have those analytical tools available to learn about it and then we come to those conclusions, then it's pretty clear we need to re-regulate, also the techno sector, and I thought about it. I don't think so in terms of content that we need ... I would totally be not happy about a state censorship or something like this but the summit that [inaudible 01:58:15] excellent I think, so very great example. There's also a kind of self control. But the fact that why are we sharing all our data with companies where we know what they're doing about it? That's crazy. We are victimizing ourselves. It's the self regulation also is a part of [inaudible 01:58:36] we need to get educated in the way we are using new technologies. The problem is that new technologies are moving much faster than we, as educators, are able to learn and to understand and to teach. So, there's this other gap we are dealing with and that's also very dangerous kind of situation.

Kurt Huebner: No, I don't have problem to ... I don't feel bad with people who are willing sharing with apps all their kind of private information. Why would you do that? When it's crazy, [inaudible 01:59:07] all the kind of things. Absolutely crazy. Don't have those kinds of things. I don't do those. I have smart phone, I'm using it in a smart way. I make phone calls and emails and that's it.

Jasmin Habib: Okay, we've got one more question before we're going to invite you all to a reception. So, we can continue this conversation in the reception area but go ahead. Is that Nicole?

Nicole: It is.

Jasmin Habib: Yes, go ahead.

Nicole: So, thank you so much for your presentations. They were both very good. I've written down my question because I don't think I could do it extemporaneously. So, my question is, at what point do we start looking at the official media, so outlets like CNN, New York Times, Washington Post as main vehicles that allow many of these more controversial movements to flourish and go unquestioned? So, I found Dr. Komaromi, I think ... I hope I got that right, Komaromi very interesting because you mentioned that the Soviet Samizdat had a very strong commitment amongst members to fact check and maintain a coherent message in order to be taken seriously among other international channels. During the 2016 presidential election, channels such as CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post, went for more sensationalized stories and often failed to display the same kind of verve for rapid dissemination in the days following an outbreak of a story and the most sort of salient example I guess we could use is shortly before the actual presidential election, the FBI said that they found another cache of Hillary Clinton's emails and that blew up and it took so much space on the newspapers and then a few days later when the FBI confirmed, oh, we didn't find anything relevant in those emails, it was like a tiny paragraph.

Nicole: So, I suppose my question is do these kinds of movements, the more controversial ones, face the same level of scrutiny for their messages the way more traditional parties do and if they don't, isn't that kind of the problem?

Ann Komaromi: That's another great point, and great question to raise. I think traditional media absolutely do need to be held responsible and I know that there are people talking about it at least there's an awareness that there should be an ethics of journalism that is somehow at stake or creates standards that some news organizations are going to do their best to maintain and debate even in the midst of what we have today which is frankly a changed media environment for traditional outlets as well as the newer kinds of social media we think of. So, for sure, reporting on Richard Spencer or reporting on some of these fringe stories and figures even when it's done in a negative way, helps mainstream the messages themselves. It provides amplification. If this is an attention economy, then giving attention to things gives them weight and presence more than I think many of us think they should have, and absolutely that's not a problem confined to social media or purely digital media. Newspapers, 24-hours news cycles of TV news, this has to be discussed as part of the problem too.

Nicole: Okay, thank you.

Jasmin Habib: Thank you. Thank you all for your questions. We have a reception in the hallway. So there is some cheese and crackers and fruit as well as some cold drinks. So, we invite you all to join us and we can continue this conversation in that setting rather than this more formal one. I'd like to thank John and Doug for their introductions, Ann and Kurt for coming, making their way here. Kurt leaves tomorrow morning. Ann leaves tonight. So, you will not get to see the exhibits that our students have formed, yes, but to all of you who are in the audience, we are hoping you will be able to join us tomorrow for Henry Giroux's keynote at around 11:30. There's lunch to be provided and then all of our students have their exhibits running through the afternoon. At around 3, we have a panel discussion that there's a hashtag feminism group that is going to be facilitating a conversation about mainstream and populous feminism and around six o'clock, we will gather again and the students will be making their more formal presentations on some of the things that they've learned in the course of working together throughout the year or throughout the term and where is it we might want to go next and I think some of their recommendations, honestly, beat both of yours at this point. So, I'm gonna keep my mouth shut for now and maybe draw you all back for tomorrow's proceedings.

Jasmin Habib: So, thank you again to everyone and do join us for the reception.