

The Poilievre-Peterson platitudes part two

By Bill Kilpatrick

For those waiting with bated breath for part two of my series on the unwellness industry, you're just going to have to wait longer. I realized that there was so much more to say about that interview between Pierre Poilievre and Jordan Peterson. And what they said is really important for the future of our country and the planet and something we need to consider when we go to the polls this year.

I believe I established last week that Poilievre is a free market ideologue, who bases his decisions not on facts and evidence, but on pre-conceived notions he has about the world. Those pre-conceived notions lead him to see the world not as it is, but instead he sees the world and its happenings through his ideology, which often leads to wrong conclusions and false information. For example, Peterson says to Poilievre that he's been 'tracking economic statistics in relationship to Canada' and that those statistics left him 'open mouthed in amazement at our dismal condition.' He then cites some of those statistics stating, 'The richest people per capita in terms of GDP per person [in Canada] is Ontario and Ontario inhabitants are now poorer than the inhabitants of Mississippi and that's the poorest American state. So, the inhabitants of Canada's richest province are poorer than the inhabitants of the United States' poorest state.' Poilievre nodded in agreement with Peterson's assessment and did not challenge him once on his assertions.

Well, I hope Peterson is better at doing psychology than he is at reading statistics because what he stated above is simply wrong. A quick Google search revealed an article by the [nationalreview.com](#) that cites Calgary professor of economics Trevor Tombe who pointed out that Ontario is not Canada's richest province in terms of GDP per capita, but Alberta, and that in comparison to Ontario, Alberta has a per capita GDP of \$82,000 whereas Ontario's sits at \$59,700. Also sitting above Ontario was Saskatchewan at \$80,300.

Where does Ontario sit in comparison to the United States? While we are not below Mississippi, as Peterson asserts, the picture is still not good. Professor Tombe says that Ontario would be the fifth poorest state in the United States, behind Alabama at \$58,800, Arkansas at \$57,400, West Virginia at \$56,200, and Mississippi at \$49,800. Quebec would be the second poorest state and Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island would all qualify as the poorest states. Why did Poilievre not challenge Peterson on these statistics? Either he didn't know, which he should've known, or he didn't challenge the information because it simply fit his ideological narrative. I'm inclined to believe the latter.

The article by professor Tombe, originally appeared in [thehub.ca](#) and painted a not-so-good picture of Canada's economic future, but not one as bad as Peterson and Poilievre paint. Did Peterson lie or simply mess up the information? He had notes right in front of him. Surely, he must have read the article and surely he must have taken notes, right? Well perhaps his note taking skills aren't what they used to be, because he was wrong.

If he wanted to show how bad the economy was doing Peterson could have simply used the accurate statistics from the article which stated that, 'Real GDP per capita in the U.S. now stands at approximately \$66,300 (in 2015 dollars), compared to Canada's \$44,400,' but he didn't. Instead, he created a fabricated picture that is far worse than it really is. Throughout the video Peterson and Poilievre constantly use scare tactics to paint Canada as this awful dystopia, because they know that most people don't check the facts and that scaring people works. If you vote Liberal or NDP, the country will fall apart, but the conservatives will somehow save it, was the general message.

Later in the video Poilievre really pulls out all the stops in terms of scare tactics stating that Justin Trudeau created a 'hellscape' across Canada and, 'deprived single mothers of food for their kids, doubled housing costs,' and 'unleashed crime in neighbourhoods across the country.' Really? Does Trudeau have that kind of power? What about provincial policies? I'm not defending Trudeau, as things have certainly gotten worse under his watch, but let's talk reality, as opposed to make believe scare tactics.

One real policy that Stephen Harper?oops I mean Poilievre? said that he would implement involves threatening already cash starved municipalities with further starvation. Poilievre says that he would 'incentivize' municipalities to 'grant the fastest building permits

in the world to build homes.? While this appears to be a good plan, because homelessness is a real problem and God knows we need houses, this will only deprive municipalities of one of only two sources of income and result in higher taxes. This plan, one way or another, will just result in a deepening fiscal crisis for municipalities. Poilievre states, ?I'm going to say to the municipal governments that they either speed up permits, cut development charges, and free up land or they will lose their federal infrastructure money.? Notice that there was nothing in there about negotiating with municipalities. He's gonna tell them how it's gonna be. This, coming from the man that criticized Trudeau for being a dictator and an ?authoritarian socialist.?

Here's the reality, municipalities have two basic sources of income, taxes and development/building fees. So, what Poilievre is effectively saying to municipalities is you better voluntarily deprive yourselves of income, or I'll do it for you. And he's using as leverage the fact that municipal infrastructure desperately needs funding. He says it's a ?carrot and stick,? approach, but I fail to see the carrot. It's a lose/lose for municipalities no matter what they do, and our taxes will have to go up to support basic municipal services. However, developers stand to gain a lot from this policy.

I think my favorite part of the interview is when, in a colossal feat of word smithing and failed logic, Peterson and Poilievre try to convince those watching the interview that by increasing energy production in oil, gas, and natural gas that we will alleviate ?absolute poverty,? increase environmental sustainability, and ?have a green future and eat our cake to.? True to his word, Poilievre is continuing with Harper's war on science. Earlier in the interview Poilievre accused Trudeau of utopian thinking? a saying about a pot and a kettle comes to mind here.

Poilievre, despite what climate science says about reducing emissions to help save humanity, states, ?Why don't we address the environment with energy abundance instead of energy poverty.? To back up his ridiculous and unsubstantiated claim, he uses a hypothetical analysis that will never happen involving Canada displacing half of India's future electricity demand over the next 20 years.

The argument is that if Canadian natural gas companies replace half of India's future demand for coal energy with natural gas energy, that change will prevent 2.5 billion tonnes of emissions entering the atmosphere. A number, says Poilievre, that is three times Canada's emissions. I guess he plans on waving his magic wand to make this happen, because changes like this do not happen over night and require, years of negotiations, and massive infrastructure builds, to change from coal to natural gas. This will never happen and he knows it. What will most likely happen is that India will continue to burn both coal and natural gas, speeding up climate change that much more. And who will benefit? Those in the energy sector, while we deal with more fires, floods, and super storms without insurance coverage. I guess I'm just one of those, in the words of Poilievre, ?environmental loons that hates the energy sector,? but also wants a viable future for my children and their children.

A platitude, for those who do not know, is defined by Oxford Languages as ?a remark or statement, especially one with a moral content, that has been used too often to be interesting or thoughtful.? Poilievre and Peterson's platitudes are both neither interesting or thoughtful and represent nothing but the status quo that will ?unleash? the energy sector and the development sectors with little or no regard for the environmental consequences. Poilievre, will not save Canada, or fix Canada, or make Canada great, he will unleash the ?free market? which will unleash climate change, dooming us all, but hey, at least we'll get to eat cake.