

Diversity, Inclusion & The Future Of Progressive Politics

by *Justin Trudeau and Sadiq Khan* - 28 September 2016

This conversation took place at the Global Progress Summit in Montreal, Canada, organised by Canada 2020, Policy Network and the Center for American Progress.

Thank you for being here. Before when I was preparing for this conversation (...) I was thinking back, cast your minds back to the 1960s, my mum moved to Montreal from Guatemala, 1969. Mayor Khan, your parents moved from Pakistan to the UK around the same time. And Prime Minister, your father was starting to reflect on Canada's multiculturalism policy which would be introduced in 1971.

So I think as countries, we've come a really long way. We've got wonderfully diverse nations, but there are some storm clouds out there that we're seeing. Thinking outside of London, a Polish immigrant who was murdered a few weeks ago. The, sort of, xenophobic rhetoric that's emerged from the Brexit vote.

Mayor, I thought, just to start things off, maybe you could tell us a bit about what it's like

Sadiq Khan right now in London, in the UK, and how you're addressing some of the people who would like to roll back the discussion on diversity and inclusion.

Sadiq Khan: Well, thanks Jennifer. It's a pleasure to be here and to share a stage with you. Justin, it's good to be here in Montreal. For those of us who are progressives, your election victory in October 2015 was an inspiration.

We modelled the good bits of our campaign on your campaign of positivity, on being positive. And it's really important we remember those things when it comes to the clouds, which are what you're referring to. Let me start by being open about the fact I think London is the greatest city in the world. I say that sitting in Montreal.

(reply by Justin Trudeau in French)

So Justin said, "When I start speaking French, I'm being unkind." It was after I told him I don't speak or understand French. Look, I mean, one of the reasons why London is great is because we don't simply tolerate difference. We respect it, we embrace it, and that's really important. You tolerate a toothache. I don't want to be tolerated. I want to be respected and embraced. It's something that Justin said in one of his recent speeches. If you look at all the scriptures, it never says 'tolerate your neighbour', it says 'love your neighbour'. And it's really important.

So yes, there are issues. Of course there are. And the Brexit campaign was used as a proxy for grievances people had. So if somebody wasn't happy, they couldn't get their child into a local school, they'd blame the EU. If somebody had a grievance because they didn't get the healthcare their parents needed, they blamed the EU. I think that's the politics of fear, and Justin's campaign in 2015, and my mayoral campaign, was out of the politics of hope.

You know, I'm proud of the fact that at a time of real challenges, when my opponent in the mayoral election had a very negative, divisive campaign, London chose as their mayor, not just an ethnic minority, a racial minority, not just a religious minority, but the religion I am a member of is Islam. And that shows why London is, I say with respect, the greatest city in the world.

I'm just wondering, for both of you, if we look at what's happening in the United States, not just the fallout from the Brexit and the inward-lookingness throughout Europe, but also the Trump campaign, can you put the genie back in the bottle after some of the guardrails have come down around how we talk about each other? How do you come back from that?

Justin Trudeau: Well, I think you have to start with a reflection and an honest assessment of the challenges. There are far too many people in our societies who are feeling left out of the success of our economies. Marginalised, given disadvantages, excluded. That do not feel that the success, the growth of our economy, the benefits of trade, of globalisation has anything to do with their own success. And they are, therefore, rightly anxious about their own future, their own jobs, but their kids' future and their grandkids' future.

What you do as a leader when you are faced with anxiety and concerns really defines, I think, the kind of leader you are. I think the example that Sadiq and certainly we were trying to put forward as a model is to know that people are better than some of the negative divisive politicians think they are. And give people an opportunity to pull together, be optimistic and face these challenges head-on with a sense of being able to solve them together. Rather than scapegoat or point fingers or look for easy, reassuring jingos that don't bring you any closer to real growth or real solutions.

So the challenge that I think we have in the world right now is really one of how are we going to approach the problems? Are we going to try and actually solve them? Are we going to use them as short-term levers for political gain?

And I think not just the electoral success of what Sadiq was able to achieve or what we were able to do here in Canada, but the success of the policies that flow from that approach around inclusive growth, around support for the middle class. Around making sure that we're improving understanding within and across neighbourhoods and communities, creating opportunities for people to feel not just included and part of communities or society but relevant to the success of the society they're part of. Full participants in the well-being of our economy.

These are the things that we have to focus on if we're going to continue to demonstrate that different perspectives, that multiculturalism, that pluralism, that diversity are a

tremendous advantage for any economy, society, country, community or even company. This is something that we know but it's something we have to continue to work on.

But other than including different people, newcomers and so on, integrating them more into our society, I think that there is a large number – and I'm talking, Mayor, here about Canada, a large number of people who have concerns. They are concerned about security, they are concerned by what they see as people coming into our country without the same values, different attitudes especially towards women. We've heard about a father in Ontario who's fighting – he doesn't want his children to take music classes.

So other than telling the public that diversity is good, inclusion is good, how do you address those people who are afraid?

Justin Trudeau: There's nothing new about this. When Italian and Greek immigrants came to settle, north of the city in the post-World War II years, there was tremendous discrimination. There was tremendous distrust. There have always been challenges to integration of newcomers into a society.

And we have successfully demonstrated that the drawing in of people from around the world has been an extraordinary plus. Not just to our country and our wellbeing and our sense of selves, but to our economy and to our success as a nation. The concerns and fears people have are nothing new. The Komagata Maru happened well over 100 years ago and they were the same kinds of fears that end up being replicated or repeated or drawn on today.

What is necessary is that communities and the world finally learn from the fact that drawing people together is a tremendous benefit to everyone. And that's the message that we need to not just talk about, but demonstrate, because this country didn't happen by accident and it won't continue without effort. It takes a deliberate choice to demonstrate the positive power of inclusion, of success, of opportunity for all in order to allay those fears.

Sadiq Khan: Can I just echo what Justin said? You've got a choice. When people have concerns, you either address them or play on them. I think the politics of fear is about playing on people's fears and their concerns.

Look, I think it's not unreasonable to say to someone who comes to a country as a new arrival, "We've got some basic norms which, as a minimum, you should respect. We think it's a basic norm that you respect the human rights of others. We think it's a basic norm about gender equality. We think it's a basic norm if you are a public-facing worker, you know, you learn French or English depending on where you're living, if it's Montreal, clearly French and English, where it's London it's English."

Justin's right, though. Integration has been happening for a 1,000 years in London. Go back to the Anglo Saxons. At the beginning of the last century, Jewish arrivals. After the Second World War, those from the Caribbean. In the '60s and '70s, those from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Over the last 20 years, from Eastern Europe and North Africa.

Now, the reality is, the world is a smaller place than it used to be. Yesterday morning, I was in London, yesterday evening, Montreal, this evening, Chicago. Globalisation means we're going to have more diversity. The choice is to build walls or to build bridges, and that means talking, it means leading life side by side, it means forming friendships, it means breaking bread, it means wearing the same colour tie.

All the sorts of things you do to show that – it sounds a cliché. The reason why clichés are clichés is because they tend to be true, but we've got far more in common than divides us.

Now, sometimes when we talk about diversity and inclusion, some of the values are in conflict with each other. Earlier this week, for example, you were at an Ottawa mosque, and at the mosque women were segregated, I think including visitors. So there you have inclusion of religion and inclusion of women in conflict with each other, and I wonder how you navigate that. How do you reconcile that?

Justin Trudeau: Well, the first thing to recognise is there is work to do on all these sides everywhere. There is work to do in our parliament to get more women elected, there is work to do in all different religions to do a better job with equality. And the question is, do you engage and participate and share those values and talk about those values? Or do you stay away and say, "Oh, I'm not talking to you until you hit the norm and the perfect ideal that we all aspire to"? I think that's wrong.

I think what you need to do is open and engage and talk about, as I do regularly when I go to mosques or temples or synagogues or Gurdwaras or Mandirs or whatever. You know, the importance of equality, the importance of LGBT rights, the importance of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada which is not a buffet. You don't get to pick and choose the ones that you like that protect your right to have your traditional dress, while at the same time you don't want to pick the rights that protect someone else's rights to be different.

I mean, these are things that we need to engage with and talk about. For me, that first generation is always going to have challenges integrating. Like I said, in my district in Saint-Michel there are Italian grandmothers who still pretty much only speak Italian, don't speak much French or English, but their kids and their grandkids are seamlessly and completely integrated into Montreal. The only difference is that they tend to be tri-lingual and not just bi-lingual.

This is understanding that when we think about integration and success, we can't be overly impatient. We need to be respectful and keep a solid pressure and forward movement. Articulate it. But we do have to know that the pressures of particularly the second generation will be faced, if you're not thoughtful about it, between having to choose between their identity and their religion and their community and the school that they're part of.

There shouldn't be contradictions and conflicts because we all fundamentally, in Canada, need to aspire to the same shared values of openness, respect, compassion, willingness to work hard, desire to be there for each other, equality, justice, opportunity. These kinds of things are shared by all of us, they need to be.

Mr Mayor?

Sadiq Khan: The reason why what Justin said is so important is if we're not careful, the concern you rightly raise is playing to the narrative of Daesh and so-called ISIS. Let me tell you what I mean.

There are people in Daesh and so-called ISIS who say it's incompatible to be a Muslim and to hold Western liberal values. And, by the way, there are far-right politicians in the USA, in the UK and elsewhere saying the same thing. Look, I'm the West. Daesh and so-called ISIS hate someone like me because I've proven it's possible to be a Londoner, it's possible to be a Brit, it's possible to be a European, it's possible to be of Pakistani heritage, of Asian origin and to be a practicing Muslim.

It's really important that we don't inadvertently help Daesh and so-called ISIS do their job of recruiting our youngsters to join what they're doing. And that's why the shared values that Canada is famous for is so important. It's really important that the Left recognises we've got to address this issue. "The time of laissez-faire integration is going to happen by itself, just chillax," those days are gone.

Globalisation, the internet, the messages of hate being transmitted into bedrooms means that people like Justin, the Prime Minister of Canada, people like me, the Mayor, have responsibilities. But we mustn't allow people with concerns to not have those concerns addressed, and it's very different from playing on people's fears or concerns.

Mayor, I just wanted to read something that you recently issued a joint statement with the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo.

You said, 'Together we can act as a powerful counterweight to the lethargy of nation states and to the influence of industrial lobbies. Together we can and will shape the century ahead'. So I'm wondering what role that you think specifically that cities play in the whole process of integration, inclusion, celebration of diversity.

Sadiq Khan: Sure. Justin, close your ears. This is a power grab from the mayors to prime ministers and presidents.

If the 19th century was known for the century of empires, the 20th century as the century for nation states, I think the 21st century is about mayors. That's where the action is. I know you love your job, but I love mine too. And why is that where the action is? Because that's where people tend to go. That's where you've got this fusion of ethnicity, of faiths, of sexual orientation, of socio-economic diversity, of all the things that we love about Montreal or Toronto or Vancouver or London or Paris or Berlin.

So we've got to recognise, though, that actually we need to be working together. So I'm here talking to Justin now, I'm meeting the Mayor of Montreal shortly, Denis, going to meet Rahm Emanuel in Chicago, Bill de Blasio in New York, working closely with Anne Hidalgo. We need progressives to come together and realise that, whether it's fighting for air quality, I know you've taken a real interest in relation to climate change, whether it's making sure that we have inclusive growth.

You know, this issue about making sure everyone enjoys the fruits of the growth is so important. That means skilling up our youngsters to apply for the jobs being created by globalisation so they don't feel left out. Making sure that when resources are finite, working out a way to allocate finite resources in a way that's fair so people don't perceive an unfairness and blame the other.

It means working together, and that's one of the reasons why I was keen to come to Montreal, Chicago and New York. Trying not to get involved with the Presidential elections, unless I'm asked to do so, (laughter) but also building bridges.

Justin Trudeau: I won't ask.

So from the federal perspective, what tools do you see – and I'm going to start off with a little example here. By January, February, March, Syrian refugees who came to Canada a year ago are going to be in the infamous month 13 where their federal help runs out. And I'm talking about government-assisted refugees.

Then all of that gets downloaded on the provinces, and I won't get into a whole discussion about the fiscal imbalance and all this stuff, but what happens? What tools does the federal government have? Do you have a moral responsibility to continue taking care of those people after they've left your care? That's probably not the right word, but you know what I mean.

Justin Trudeau: No, it's not the right word because the fact is, as soon as the Syrian refugees, but immigrants of all backgrounds, arrive in Canada, they are cared for not just by the federal government but by provincial agencies and by the cities often in which they settle. That has always been an ongoing partnership, and it's essential.

As we said from the very beginning, if we're going to succeed in not just bringing over Syrian refugees but in having them become successful Canadian families and contributing to our communities and our growth and our success as a nation, everyone needs to be involved. That's not just the different orders of the government, it's communities and individuals.

That actually has been the inspiring story for so many people about what we did. It was an opportunity to show that this was about Canadians opening up their hearts and their arms and their communities to people who needed a chance to contribute, to grow, to raise their families right. So how we work together instead of sitting in silos and saying, "Oh, that's that person's responsibility," or, "That's this level's responsibility," instead understanding that we're all serving the same community, the same aspirational goals is really essential.

So when it comes to one of our really important signature issues, which is infrastructure investments, we've said, "Look, the federal government isn't in the business of deciding where and what transit line you need and what bridge you need to rebuild. We're in the business of listening to the experts, local communities, municipalities in terms of what is going to best help their citizens, our economies."

Being in a respectful frame with how you engage with different orders of government and build on the things that we all know matters is at the heart of what citizens expect from government. So instead of the finger-pointing and saying, "Oh no, don't talk to me about garbage pickup, I'm federal," you connect them to the concerns that will be addressed by all of us."

Sadiq Khan: Can I just touch on that, Jennifer? Can I just say this as somebody who's, sort of, 3,000, 4,000 miles away and wished my country did as much as your country is doing. Can I just tell you how the actions of Prime Minister Trudeau and Canada are enhancing the reputation of Canada all across the world. You are a beacon of how a civilised G7 country should treat those who are vulnerable and need help. You are showing what it means when people say, "I'm not going to walk on the other side." You're showing what it means when people say, "I am my brother and sister's keeper." You are walking the walk.

Do you know what? I make this point, if we believe that a society, a country, should be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable, a society should be judged on how civilised it is by how it treats the most vulnerable of the world, you're doing a pretty good job.

I think, Mayor, that there are a lot of areas of work to do.

Justin Trudeau: And I'm the first to recognise it, and we're the first to recognise it.

If I just can continue on the diversity line, you've announced a new process for appointment to the Supreme Court. And I think this has to do with how people see themselves represented and the power structures of our nations.

If you look at the lower court system, the provinces, 2,100 provincial Superior Court of Justices in the lower courts, 1% is aboriginal or indigenous and 3% come from racial minorities. So I wonder again, and here's another area where there's natural tension in the system, if you're going to have a more diverse court system, and not just one sector of our society but one that's very important, is our, for example, official languages policy doing damage to the effort to get more people from racial minorities, more women into these positions?

Justin Trudeau: I think we're the first to admit there's an awful lot of work to do. Not just in our court system but across the level of appointments in government. And by government, but the representation of minorities or even of women on boards in Canada is way under where it needs to be.

It's not just a moral issue. It's not just, "Oh yes, we need to be nice and inclusive in our approach." It's that we know that organisations that have better representation by women, more diversity in their make-up, actually make better decisions, make better judgements. And they're more reflective of the communities and the society that they are charged with serving. It means a lot for people to be able to see in their leadership levels themselves reflected, in their values but also in their identities. So this is a really important priority for us.

But as you point out, it's not something we can suddenly do overnight. There is an awful lot of work to do in the lower courts to be able to get the diversity up, to be able to get more women to the bench, to be able to move along. What we're going to do with this new Supreme Court process is choose the absolute best possible Supreme Court justice to serve Canadians, and keep in mind that we want to make sure that we are representing as many Canadians with that court as we possibly can.

Now, you raised the subject of women on boards, something that a lot of us care about, and women in leadership positions. There were some very terrible statistics that came out this week about the percentages in Canada.

But Mayor, what role do you think that the private sector has? That's just one component, the women and their representation, but also I'm not sure about the statistics in the UK, but in Canada there's a disparity between the incomes of newcomers and the incomes of people who have been living here for a long time, which suggests that there's something wrong at the employment point of the continuum. So what do you think that the private sector should be doing?

Sadiq Khan: Sure. Just to give you an example how when Canada does something, people notice and respond. When Justin became Prime Minister and decided that half of his cabinet should be women because it's 2015, when I won my mayoralty in 2016 and was appointing deputy mayors, more than half my deputy mayors are women, because it's 2016 (laughter).

You know, Justin's right. It's not simply altruism. There's an economic and business case about making sure everyone's talent is recognised and fulfilled. And fulfilling potential is important. In London, I published, for the first time ever – the first Mayor ever to publish a gender pay audit. London is better than the rest of the country, and City Hall is better than London, but it's still 5%. If you work out from November 11th until December 31st, women are basically working for free in my country because women earn less than men.

I've got two daughters, how is it right that if my children had been born boys, their life chances would be far superior than the fact that they're born girls? That cannot be right in the fourth richest city in the world in 2016. That's why it's important as parents for Justin and me, but it can't just be a women's issue. It can't just be a public sector issue because if it's right that the public sector is not recognising talent in recruitment, retention, promotion and all the other things, then imagine the private sector.

The good thing, the private sector gets it. When you speak to chief executives, they get it. They're not recognising talent, they're not fulfilling the potential of talent, they're not seeing the career progression. You either believe that women should have children and return to work or you don't, alright? And if you do, you've got to make sure you've got decent maternity rights. You either believe men should have a role in raising a child or you don't. If you do, decent paternity rights.

It's important for those of us on the left, firstly to win elections, because you're going to improve people's lives by winning elections, but recognising that the private sector is not our enemy. They see the benefits of equality. It's something that Justin said recently – I

sound like a real fanboy reading all of Justin's speeches and stuff, it's a bit embarrassing, Justin. But, you know, gender equality is a strength, not a weakness, and I think he's absolutely right.

We have a few more minutes, I know I'm not going to get an answer out of the Prime Minister, a good one on this.

Sadiq Khan: Ouch.

I've listened to a lot of his speeches.

Justin Trudeau: I look forward to working with whomever the American people choose as their President (laughter). Doesn't even have to ask the question anymore.

Sadiq Khan: Who believes him when he said that?

He guessed what I was going to ask. So you're about to head into the United States. What is the view from London of the Trump campaign?

Discussion of that campaign is all we're hearing about here in Canada. When I was in Europe this summer, everyone was talking about it there as well. I'm just interested in what you think about it and what's going to be the impact, I guess, if Mr Trump wins.

Sadiq Khan: Well, look, can I scotch the rumours that the reason why I'm going to America before January is in case Trump wins and I'm stopped from coming (laughter). I mean, Donald Trump said that, you know, Muslims from around the world (I'm paraphrasing) would not be welcome to the United States of America.

Not only does that show a lack of understanding and awareness of the great country that is the USA, and its history and its legacy, but it's also inadvertently playing to the narrative of Daesh and so-called ISIS, because it's implying it's not possible to be a Western liberal and to be a mainstream Muslim. When I won the election in London, he said he'd make an exception for me.

The point I made to Donald Trump through the medium of the media is there's nothing exceptional about me. There are literally tens of thousands of Muslims around the world who love America, would want to go there to study, to work, to visit their family, many Americans of Islamic faith. I think it's important that USA maintains her role as a beacon for tolerance, respect and diversity.

So look, I think it's important for those of us who are foreigners to stay out of the US elections, hope the best candidate wins, and I hope she does win with a stomping majority.

Any comment on that? Come on, go for it. No? (Laughter) Thank you very much gentlemen. Just bear with us, the Secretary of State is going to be with us shortly.

Thank you very much for being with us. Thank you so much for the interesting discussion.

Sadiq Khan: Thank you.

*This panel was moderated by **Jennifer Ditchburn**, the editor-in-chief of Policy Options. We would like to thank Canada 2020, the Center for American Progress and Policy Network for giving us permission to publish this conversation. (Twitter: #GlobalProgress)*