Polarization and Preconditions: *Bridging Across Identities for a Society of Belonging*

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The problem of “Othering” is the problem of the 21st century.

And the possible demise of the nation state as we know it.
Transactional to Transformational
When there’s a crack in the container, when the context in which we live is broken, everyone feels othered and our solutions need to be more radical.
A Larger inclusive WE Belonging
Co-Creation

- The co-creation required for belonging goes beyond allyship to partnership.
MacKenzie Scott’s philanthropy priorities

MacKenzie Scott announced in 2019 that she would give away at least half of her fortune, which is worth tens of billions of dollars. In July 2020, she disclosed an initial round of gifts totaling nearly $1.7 billion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racial equity</td>
<td>$587 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health</td>
<td>$128 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ equity</td>
<td>$46 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global development</td>
<td>$130 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender equity</td>
<td>$133 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functional democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy &amp; bridging divides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic mobility</td>
<td>$40 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>$125 million</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Amounts shown do not reflect the $4.2 billion in additional giving Scott announced in December 2020.

Table: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: MacKenzie Scott • Get the data
together we must

start change
demand justice
admit we can do more
stand as one
right wrongs
listen and create a better future
end racism.

and together we will.
WHAT I STAND FOR IS WHAT I STAND FOR WHEN I’M IN POWER IT’LL BE TOO LATE.

AT THIS RATE TO TANK IF YOU DO NOT ACT WE WILL.

THERE WONT BE AN ECONOMY IN 2020 I’D LIKE TO SEE ONE.

PLANET OVER OF IT BE PART OF THE SOLUTION NOT PART OF THE PROBLEM.

PARTHEID IS WRONG WORTH IT!
Polarization: What it means for us and how do we co-create to overcome?
Rapid change produces collective anxiety and at times is polarizing:

- **Change in demographic Climate, Tech Globalism**
- **Increase in anxiety**
- **Leadership, Meta-Narrative, Structures, Organizing**
- **Fear, anger, Othering**
- **Empathy, Compassion, Belonging**
- **Connecting on similarities, common threads of identity**

Breaking and Bridging relationships to enhance understanding.
Exposure to opposing views even on social media can increase polarization.

Demographic voting blocks in the 2020 election, brought power of POC voters forward.
We are more comfortable talking about polarization from a neutral perspective….

We must remove preconditions and not lose moral dimension of these issues.
Belonging or being fully human means more than having access. Belonging entails being respected at a basic level that includes the right to both co-create and make demands upon society.
A just and inclusive society will see all of its members as inside our circle of belonging.
Power Matters

- Bridging may look different where there is a power differential.
- Power is positional, structural, and hierarchal.

- People can gain power through linking social networks and creating social capital.
  - Individuals can build relationships with institutions and individuals who have relative power to access resources.

- Power also shifts.

- For example: people of color may have more power than whites in certain settings. (e.g. an anti-racism convening)
Inter-Group Bridging

Bridging happens not only between individual, but between groups as well.
“Bridging requires really listening, not just to our policy positions, but our deep emotions, our fear, our desires, our injuries”
What matters and works

1. Leadership. De Klerk and Mandela; Trimble and Adams Northern Ireland

2. Civil engagement; Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace; Millions of Conversation U.S.

3. Institutions/structures, fixing gerrymandering. Bridge
Creating space where everyone is heard

• This does not require flattening the hierarchy of the organization but understanding investment, experience, and responsibility.
  • Those with the same investment, experience, and responsibility will have the same say.

• A leader’s role is to create space and make sure everyone can contribute, considering the multiple identities in the room.
• Leaders must contend with an emphasis on making sure marginal voices are heard and an emphasis on empathetic listening

• We all need to be recognized and heard. This is not the same as getting everything we want or being right but valuing each other.

Consider:
Who has the most power in the room?
Who has the most authentic voice?
How can leaders reinforce marginalized voices and ideas?
Design of the room
Philanthropy must begin prioritizing organizations that power build through bridging.
Generosity is Not Enough

Your Pledge is More than Generosity

What is Your Pledge?