

OTHERING & BELONGING CONFERENCE



Post-Conference Report

conference.otheringandbelonging.org

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On the cover, clockwise from top: Rev. William J Barber's closing keynote speech; Dawn-Lyen Gardner and Michael Bennett on the opening night culturemaker panel; CONTRA-TIEMPO dance company; Casey Camp-Horinek. Below: Bianca Medina from CONTRA-TIEMPO



Introduction

FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR

I am pleased to present this report about our remarkable [2019 Othering & Belonging Conference](#), which was held April 8-10 in Oakland, California. This detailed summary of the conference was produced for all who were part of its execution and success—sponsors, attendees, speakers, and our staff at the Haas Institute at UC Berkeley. It is also intended as a point of engagement for those who are interested in being part of future work and public events that are organized around our framework of belonging.

During my conference welcome remarks, I asked everyone to meet one another with the traditional Zulu greeting, "Sawubona," which means "I see you." In this saying, "seeing" means I see not only you, but your family, your community, those who came before you, and those who will follow you. It also means that I see a "you" who is also a part of me. As this greeting affirms, "seeing" is not just something done with the eyes, but also with our hearts and souls, and with validation and affirmation of our connection.

Yet many in our world today fail to practice this kind of deeper seeing. And too many of our leaders attempt to distort our view of other people, asking us to view those who have differences from us—whether across race, religion, sexual orientation, ability, political affiliation, or other perceived differences—with fear and suspicion; as threats rather than opportunities; as less than, rather than equal to; and as separate from, rather than connected to.

Disability justice advocate Haben Girma, in [her opening keynote address](#) at the conference, also made a point about truly seeing, speaking directly to the context of disability, ability, and possibility. Haben—who is both deaf and blind and has paved a path for herself through Harvard Law School, becoming a surfer and passionate salsa dancer—stated that disability should be seen as an opportunity for innovation and new forms of connection and communication. "Disabilities are not barriers," she noted. "Social attitudes and norms are what creates barriers."

Dr. Rev. William J. Barber, in his rousing [closing keynote address](#), echoed the call to focus our sights on where our efforts truly matter—in our systems, structures, and policies. "Real racism is not what's in your heart," he said, "but what's in your systemic policies."

Indeed, how people are viewed, or made invisible, within systems and structures, is a core part of what the Othering and Belonging framework aims to illuminate. When institutions can only see the needs of some groups—thus ensuring their rights and protections—while those of other groups remain concealed or distorted, outcomes are deeply unequal and unjust.

Another main thread we held throughout the 2019 conference was the need for us to activate [bridging](#) as a response and formation in our times of increasing polarization and division. In these times, it is often easier to close ourselves off and engage in a politics of breaking, whether that be soft or hard breaking. But bridging allows us to fully see each other by insisting on our shared humanity. As was illustrated at the conference through the stories of those actively practicing it, bridging is not easy. And it must take place with people outside of our own groups, communities, and comfort zones in order for us to achieve a more radically inclusive space of belonging.

Thank you for your willingness to collaborate and co-create together with us during the 2019 conference. While this report highlights many examples of the conference's positive impact, we know that the real measurement of its success will be in what we do next with what we learned and experienced together.

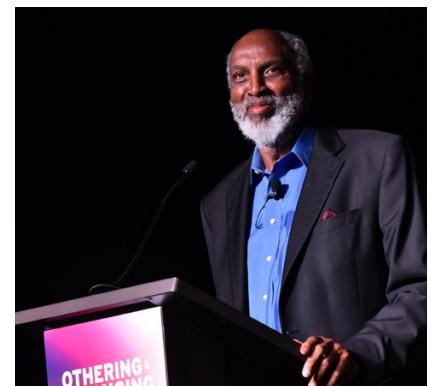
This gathering powerfully demonstrated that we're not only fighting that which attempts to divide us, we're also collectively reimagining new conceptions of belonging. The issues that facing us and our living planet cross boundaries and borders and the old ways of working may not be sufficient to tackle our current and future challenges. We need new ways of seeing and we need new ways of being. This is what Othering & Belonging is about.

As one attendee noted in their conference evaluation, "It feels like I've been given an entirely new way to view the world. My eyes are still adjusting."

Yours in belonging,

john a. powell

john a. powell
Director, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society and Professor of Law, African American, and Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley



We need new ways of seeing and we need new ways of being. This is what Othering & Belonging is about.

—john a. powell

92%

found the conference excellent or very good.

1500 people attended Othering & Belonging 2019, including speakers, staff, volunteers

200+ scholarships awarded

Everyone who applied for a scholarship received one!



Above from left: Eryn Wise speaking in the "Bridging Generations: Intergenerational Movements" conversation; Jeff Chang on the "Making Belonging: Culturemaker Panel"

50% of attendees were between the ages of 35-55

85 % of presenters were people of color

More than
96%

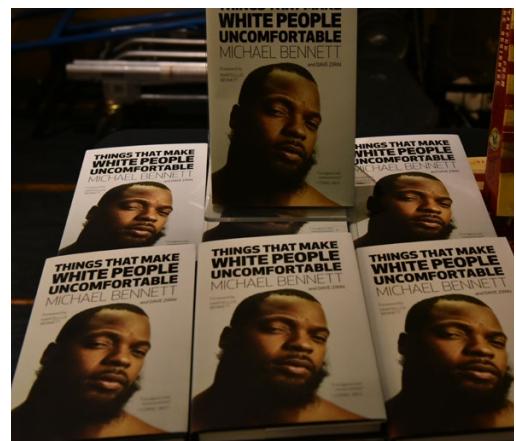
said the conference offered content that was useful in their work or studies

More than 85% said that they left the conference with an expanded concept of "we."

O&B 2019 HOSTED
100 high school students from five local schools

WHO ALL CAME ON SCHOLARSHIP!

The 2 highest-selling books at our popular booktable were *Racing to Justice* by John Powell and *Things That Make White People Uncomfortable* by Michael Bennett and Dave Zirin



“Inspired”

was the most frequently used word to describe the O&B 2019 experience on conference surveys

O&B 2019 HOSTED
109
presenters

non-profit, movement organizing, education, government, law, artists, cultural workers

Conference Quick Facts

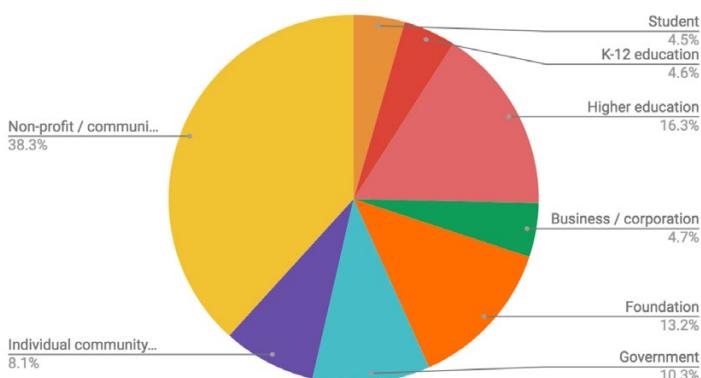
SNAPSHOT OF O&B 2019



7 groups
sent cohorts of 20 or more attendees

including: Sierra Club, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, SEIU, Atlantic Fellows, Marin County Free Library and UC Berkeley Division of Equity & Inclusion

Sector of Conference Attendees



40% and **25%**
of participants
were from nonprofit
and community-based
organizations

See figure above. Education sector includes students at 4.5%, K-12 at 4.5%, and higher ed at 16.3%

Presenters came from

8 countries outside the United States

including Honduras, Cuba, South Africa, Canada, Mali, Ireland, UK, Australia



Bertha Zúñiga Cáceres (left), a social activist from Honduras, spoke on the Global Migration panel (seen here with her Spanish translator)

Othering & Belonging 2019 was planned around a set of core Haas Institute frameworks. The foundational framework is **othering and belonging**, which guides our scholarship and work on systemic and structural inclusion, and addresses multiple expressions of prejudice against groups. Not merely conceptual, othering and belonging is designed to inform policy, shift discourse, strengthen movements, influence pedagogy, and deliver a set of best practices and strategies.

More than half of the 1,500 registrants at **#OBConf2019** indicated a desire "to learn more about othering and belonging" as their main reason for attending the conference (information we collected when people registered); as well, feedback from previous conferences indicated a desire from attendees to not only better understand othering and belonging, but also

deny but incorporates our shared history, and is based on an ethics of human dignity. Bridging calls on us to co-create a responsive government and civic life that advances belonging for a shared future and a bigger and more inclusive "we."

Bridging and breaking were integral planning components and informed the way we shaped a majority of the 2019 agenda. The organizing committee designed multiple ways to explore and model bridging across the conference with the goal being for all of us in attendance to have a more direct and experiential understanding of the concept. To accomplish this we opened the conference with a special session called **Coffee-house Conversations** (see p. 12), which was intentionally designed as a space of dialogue, provocation, deep listening, and engagement with each other. We also curated a set of **Bridging Dialogues** with

Frameworks for Change

**BRIDGING, BREAKING,
BELONGING**



learn more about how to apply it—whether in movement organizing, research, philanthropy, narrative change, or other efforts. Therefore one of our major efforts in 2019 was to create a conference program that focused on "operationalizing belonging."

While othering and belonging is the running through-line of our work, we have also been working intensively in utilizing an analysis and framework of "**breaking and bridging**" as responses and formations in our current moment of rapid global change. As John Powell explained in his opening keynote, "breaking" is based on a belief in an "us vs. them," and manipulates anxiety around change. Breaking generates animosity that targets vulnerable populations, and results in a smaller and smaller "we." Extreme breaking creates the conditions for increased authoritarianism and rising nationalism, a subject we explored from the mainstage in the keynote panel on rising authoritarianism and its threats worldwide.

Bridging, on the other hand, affirms our inherent connection to each other and our planet, welcomes our differences, does not

speakers who discussed their work across race, generation, sector, and political affiliation. The closing keynote panel, entitled **The Urgency of Bridging**, underscored the power that bridging can bring to policy efforts as well as large-scale and long-term movement building. These bridgers shared their experiences of leading an organizing campaign in Florida that was interracial and bi-partisan and led to the historic re-enfranchisement of formerly incarcerated people in the state. Another Bridging Dialogue, **Partnerships in Belonging**, brought together leaders from philanthropy, government, advocacy and research to explore the importance of cross-sector coalitions and partnerships.

This focus on the frameworks of the Haas Institute resulted in overwhelmingly positive responses from participants: more than 96 percent said the conference offered content that was useful in their work or studies and 88 percent saying that they left the conference with an expanded concept of "we" through engaging with ideas and models that affirmatively advance belonging.

"This idea of coming together with people of all ages to fight injustice really stuck with me."

-2019 attendee, referring to the **Intergenerational Bridging Dialogue** with Native American leaders

Resources

LINKS AND MEDIA

All of the below and more information about past conferences, our agenda, speaker bios and more can be found at conference.otheringandbelonging.org.

In the Media

Nonprofit Quarterly:

[Cultural Organizing Needed for Equity: A Framework of Belonging](#)

KQED:

[Christine Wong Yap Asks: Where Do You Feel a Sense of Belonging?](#)

KALW:

[Convening to Build Belonging in the Age of Trump](#)

Berkeley Talks:

[Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II: 'Forward together, not one step back'](#)

Videos

Recordings of most mainstage and break-out sessions can be found on our YouTube [O&B Conf 2019 playlist](#).

Also see our [2019 video collage/recap of the conference](#) featuring a collage of the proceedings and interviews with attendees and speakers.

All previous Othering & Belonging conference content can be also be found on our YouTube channel at youtube.com/haasinstitute.

Presentations

Revisit O&B2019 topics by checking out the session [presentations and slides](#).

Engagement numbers

The YouTube [O&BConf2019 playlist](#) had 1,186 views (as of June 1, 2019)

Conference livestream had about 1,000 average views each day of the conference

In March and April 2019, there were over 27,500 unique visitors and 108,000 page views of our conference website.



A full set of new curricula was developed for the 2019 Othering & Belonging conference and focused on core frameworks that would be discussed at the conference such as "Bridging and Breaking."

Curriculum & Pedagogical Tools

These series of robust, integrated engagements tools serve as a blueprint of creative exploration into the concepts of Bridging and Breaking, The Circle of Human Concern and Targeted Universalism. [Find all the curricula here](#).

Audio & Podcast

Our podcast, [Who Belongs?](#), offers a diverse range of content related to othering and belonging and the research of the Haas Institute. The podcast, accessible on iTunes and Spotify, features interviews with guests who study or apply bridging and belonging in their work. Interview highlights related to the 2019 conference include [Episode 6](#) with Desmond Meade on the victory to regain voting rights in Florida and episode 10 with John A. Powell on our Targeted Universalism framework. Listen to full episodes at haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/whobelongs.

Coffeehouse Conversations

View the initial set of provocations as well as the resulting [Big Ideas](#) generated from the two Coffeehouse Conversation sessions.

The goals of the conference were identified through an in-depth process that took into account the work of the Institute along with relevant issues in our current historical moment and feedback from past conferences. The following are the four goals of the conference, which we made publicly available on the conference website and were used to guide the conference evaluation. Below is information on how each goal was rated (see figures at right that correspond with each goal).

Goal 1: Participants walk away with models, tools, and strategies for operationalizing belonging.

In designing for this goal, we created discrete opportunities such as new, free curriculum, a half-day training on the Blueprint for Belonging curriculum, and the artist-in-residence installation. We also sought solution-focused presenters and session designs that could speak to or demonstrate models, tools, and strategies for operationalizing belonging. For example, with Haben Girma's presentation, participants' commented on the power of audience members engaging in conversation with her through technological assistance as a specific demonstration of operationalizing belonging.

The importance of these opportunities is reflected in the one attendee's comment, that the most valuable part of the conference were the sessions, "that were engaging and talking about tools and ways in which to bridge across different groups." Overall, a majority of respondents (69%) agreed or strongly agreed that they left with models, tools, and strategies.

One challenge of assessing the uptake of models, tools, and strategies is how elements of the conference get used or have ripple-impacts over time. People may not immediately read a presentation as explicitly being a model or strategy, but it may become a point of reference, guidance or inspiration for operationalizing belonging in their work.

Goal 2: Participants explore the concepts of "bridging and breaking" and learn to apply strategies that expand the circle of human concern and create shared, empathetic identities.

86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this goal had been successfully achieved. Directly witnessing bridging take place, such as with the [Bridging Generations: Intergenerational Movements](#), the interracial feminism panel, and

the final keynote panel on The Urgency of Bridging were examples of how modeling bridging took place on the stage.

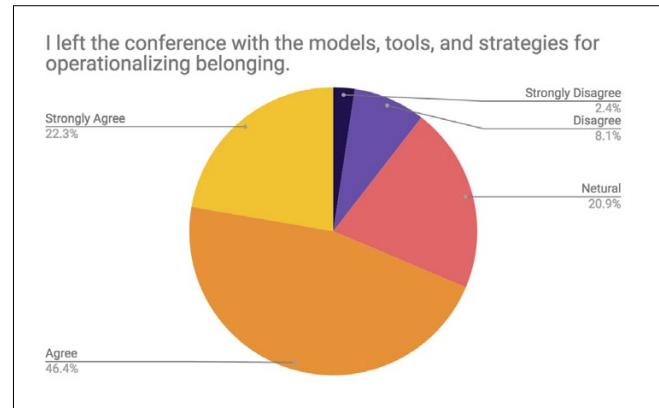
Several of the breakout sessions also focused on building empathetic identities, such as the Operationalizing Bridging and Science, Spirituality and Belonging sessions. One speaker noted how this layering across the conference spaces was impactful, "john powell spoke directly to the ideas of bridging and breaking...The panel that followed him also dealt directly with these concepts and built up from his statements tying everything together which was very effective."

Many respondents also spoke to the impact that specific speakers had in relationship to meeting this goal, such as how keynote speaker Haben Girma created "shared empathetic identities" and one attendee shared how Saru Jarayaman "modeled bridging."

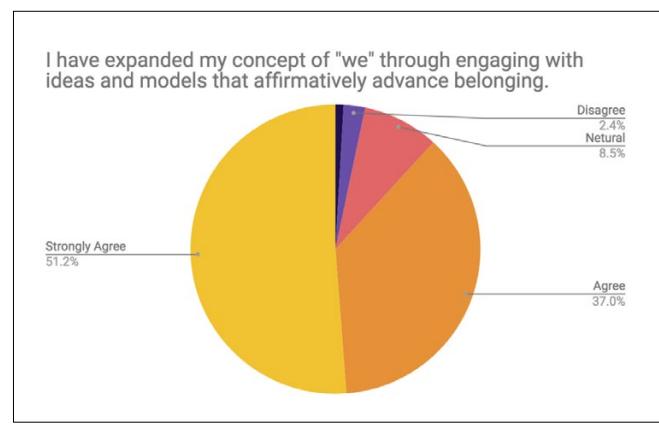
Goals & Impact

HOW DID WE MEASURE UP?

Goal 1



Goal 2



Ten percent of respondents raised questions about the concept of bridging, with a majority expressing a desire and need to have a deeper engagement in the topic. Some felt there was a solid offering of "practical ways to bridge to get things done," others expressed that they wanted to, "role play and practice" as a way of in-

Goals & Impact continued

tegrating the learning in a way that would deepen their understanding.

Other questions reflected the topics that had been brought up in conference sessions, especially from John Powell's keynote talk: "How to determine which options are better for which situations—soft/hard break and short/long bridging." There was also expressed interest in more specifically learning how to apply the ideas of breaking and bridging in work and community efforts.

Goal 3: Participants expand their "we" through engaging with ideas and models that affirmatively advance belonging.

Over half the attendees strongly agreed this goal had been achieved, with nearly 90% answering affirmatively to this question. Many speakers were identified for their connection to concrete models and forms of analysis that can expand the "we," such as Manuel Pastor's characterization of the economy in his mainstage conversation on "Building an Economy of Belonging" or the "Will the Future be Feminist? An Inclusive Vision for Belonging." In designing breakout sessions, speakers were asked to focus their presentations around models that advance belonging. As an example, the session on local government and racial equity centered on three policy initiatives that sought to affirmatively advance belonging. The Reproductive Justice breakout session sought to expand who is centered in and leads reproductive justice efforts through a racial analysis. The session on Parenting with Disabilities contributed to a too-often erased aspect of living with disabilities on a topic that is accessible and widely relatable.

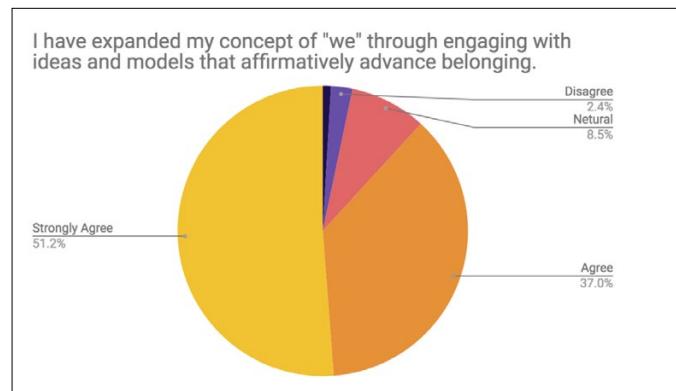
The wide base from which presenters and attendees came from created a unique and powerful atmosphere. This was coupled with an appreciation for the diversity of

speakers, reflecting an expanded "we" in practice. Several comments were also made on the powerful centering of Native leadership throughout the conference.

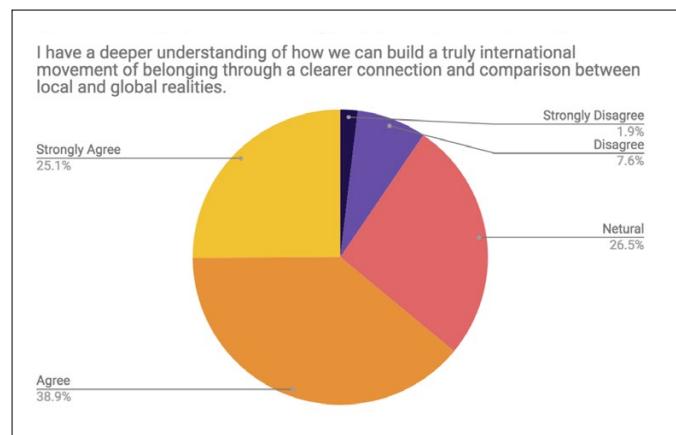
Goal 4: Participants make clear connections and comparisons between local and global realities in order to build a truly international movement of belonging

Seven of the 18 breakout sessions had a presenter from outside the US or whose work focused on the connection between global and local. On the mainstage, the Global Migration panel had the most explicit focus on this topic, with speakers from Canada, Honduras, and Mali.

While most of the Haas Institute's active partnerships are California and US-based, and the bulk of the Institute's research takes place within a domestic context, the



Goal 3



Goal 4

For over a year leading up to the 2019 conference, the organizing committee worked to design a conference agenda that encouraged big-picture discussions on the major challenges of our current historical moment. These included rising authoritarianism, extreme inequality, climate chaos, forced migration, enduring manifestations of racism, sexism, and domination—and what the othering and belonging framework can offer as a way to understand and mitigate these forces. We placed special emphasis on an expanded offering of materials and interactive elements to meet the request of past attendees to have more takeaways and tools that can help them walk away with practical applications of this work. Session design, speaker selection, and the overall program curation focused on the following set of strategic questions that guided our planning:

- How can we create structures that support a large, diverse society, with people who are connected across cultures, religions, race, and other lines of perceived difference?
- What models and systems already exist and how can we strengthen them? What new or re-calibrated institutions are needed to realize an inclusive society?
- How we respond to breaking and how can we activate bridging? How does this analysis help inform our work?
- How do we form and sustain relationships, advance narratives, and build movements that truly support a larger and more inclusive "we"?
- How do we make clear connections between global and local models, struggles, and strategies for expanding belonging in order to build a truly international movement of belonging?

Mainstage Sessions

The conference mainstage served as the backbone of the event—defining key ideas, setting the tone, and providing powerful and generative inspiration for attendees.

The mainstage featured presenters who had both strategies for operationalizing belonging and who also personified and exemplified belonging as a core practice, including Rev. William Barber's focus on fusion-based, multi-racial coalitions to build a beloved community, Dawn Lyen Gardner's reflections on multiracial experience and belonging in Hollywood, Brett Cook's exploration of community based arts practice, and the exploration of belonging in the context of migration from the Global Migration panel speakers.

The mainstage also prioritized an examination of current global political and social phenomena, how they are in close interaction and relationship with US political and economic systems, and how the global rise of exclusionary, ethnic-nationalist, and authoritarian politics are informing and threatening our world today. This grounded the presentations of the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson's reflection on Canada's attempts to create more inclusive national policies, the discussion of authoritarianism as explored by Miriam Juan-Torres of More in Common, and the relationship of contemporary feminist issues as connected to global issues."

Breakout Sessions

Two sets of concurrent breakout sessions offered deep dives into a range of topic areas and provided smaller spaces that encouraged attendees to interact with one another more directly. Eighteen breakout sessions were offered, each lasting 90 minutes. Their themes ranged from discussions on bridging to curriculum and pedagogy, artificial intelligence to spirituality and science, and racism and the right to the city to operationalizing belonging in local government. Highly interactive sessions included a session led by CONTRA-TIEMPO dance company (who later performed on stage and brought session participants into that performance), a virtual reality workshop by DR. Shakti Butler that brought participants into restorative justice scenarios, and a sports/movement workshop by Dania Cabello that expanded on themes brought forward in the mainstage presentation of NFL player and activist Michael Bennett.

Sessions also sought to present concrete opportunities for operationalizing belonging. Some of these, like the "Economics of Belonging" session did this through presenting new frameworks and sharing case-study models. Others sought an interactive format such as the "Rewrite the Future" workshop which used science fiction to imagine new forms and opportunities for belonging. The importance of these opportunities is reflected in feedback that the most valuable part of the conference were the sessions "that were engaging and actually talking about tools and ways in which to bridge across different groups."

Of those surveyed, the most appreciated aspect of the breakouts was the opportunity to deepen discussion on topical and relevant issues (53.6%). A quarter of respondents appreciated that they were interactive and engaging.

Conference Agenda

SESSIONS & CONTENT



from top: Participants at the opening session of the Coffeehouse Conversations sessions; speaker Saru Jayaraman on the Future of Feminism panel; Pulitzer-Prize winning author and essayist Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah; and, (from left) the Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson and Mamadou Gaita

Arts and Culture

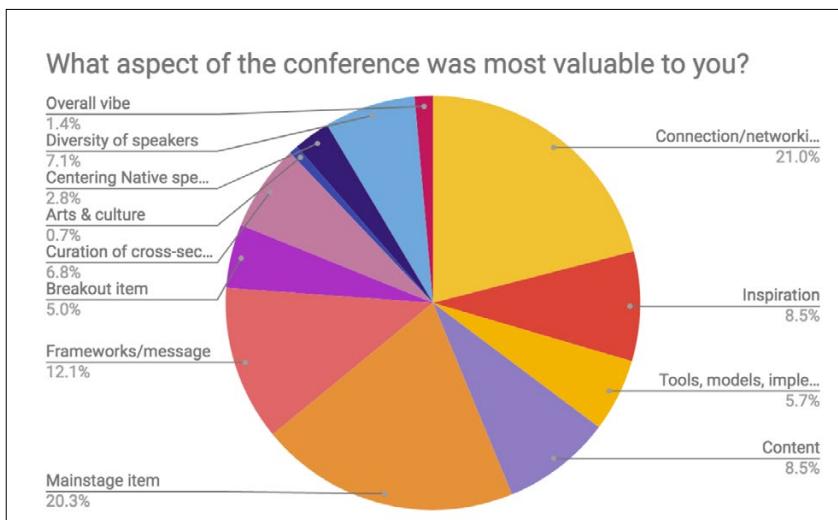
Authentic, widespread belonging will require a cultural shift and building a world built on belonging requires recognizing and engaging culture as a site of change.

In 2019, we again made arts and culture a central element of the Othering & Belonging conference. This was reflected in the curation of the opening night which began with a welcoming by Vincent Medina and Louis Trevino, representing the Ohlone people whose land the conference was held on, a performance by Supaman Christian Takes Gun Parrish, and presentations by representatives of key sites of culture such as literature and criticism, professional sports, and Hollywood.

An interactive installation took place throughout the three days which represented the culmination of the Haas Institute's inaugural Artist-in-Residence Christine Wong Yap's project. Significant programming time was provided on the mainstage and in breakout sessions for artists and culture workers, including opportunities for facilitated dialogue (Coffeehouse Conversations), youth spoken word poetry (curated by Youth Speaks), community based and public arts (Brett Cook, Roberto Bedoya), urban latin dance (CONTRA-TIEMPO), hip-hop and fancy dance (Supaman), a pan-Arab music ensemble (Aswat), and singing (Melanie DeMore).

Another key element was the Omi Wellness space, the curation of which was led by Ashara Ekundayo, Patrick Brown, and Takiyah Franklin, and provided a resource for rest, reflection, and healing that was based in multiple contemplative modalities.

In an article about the conference for Non-Profit Quarterly, Steve Dubb recognized the way that culture "permeated" the approach of the conference and offered a compelling framework for belonging, opportunities to reflect on and move through trauma, and articulated connection points between cultural and policy change.



Evaluations indicated the most valuable aspects of the conference were the opportunity to connect and network with others, mainstage sessions, and the frameworks and messaging that were delivered.

Takeaways

Attendees found a wide range of valuable experiences from attending the conference. Of these, three themes stood out—content, connection, and inspiration. When asked what one word summarized their conference experience, the most common responses was "Inspiring."

Sharing space, connection and networking with a broader community was noted as a valuable aspect of the conference (21% of responses); a mainstage presentation (20%); the frameworks and overall message of the conference (12.1%) and content presented (8.5%) were also critical takeaways for attendees. Content and frameworks were most often mentioned in relation to clarity, applicability, power and their visionary nature.

Below: Mainstage panel "Will the Future be Feminist?" with (l-r) Nina Simons, Morning Star Gali, Linda Sarsour, Charlene Sinclair, and Saru Jayaraman. People were drawn to this panel for its direct "truth-telling"



Integrative Features

NEW ANCILLARY PROGRAMMING

The 2019 Othering & Belonging Conference created space for three new offerings that aligned with the conference goals: an interactive installation and station developed by and featuring the work of the inaugural Haas Institute Artist in Residence; the Coffeehouse Conversations sessions; and a new set of Haas Institute curricula.

Belonging in the SF Bay: Artist in Residence Christine Wong Yap

The deep integration of arts and culture is an essential part of the work of the Haas Institute and to further that work the Haas Institute created its first Artist in Residence position, which was awarded to artist Christine Wong Yap. Her culminating project, "Belonging in the Bay," was an exhibition and interactive installation at the conference. The exhibit was based on Yap's [The Belonging Project](#), which shared pivotal places, communities, and experiences that shape Bay Area residents' connectedness to a neighborhood. As part of the project, Yap developed a set of workshops for participants to share their stories of belonging and those places were commemorated with handmade certificates. At Yap's installation at the conference, attendees could view photos of Bay Area "places of belonging" and purchase her new book with maps and contributors' stories. Attendees were also invited to share their own place of belonging in a collective mapping installation created especially for the conference.

Coffeehouse Conversations

Recognizing that one of the essential components of bridging is through dialogue and opening oneself up to alternative perspectives, at O&B 2019 we consciously made space for these type of interactions with our first Othering & Belonging Coffeehouse. The Coffeehouse (a version of which we first participated in at the Six Degrees conference in Toronto)—was a highly-interactive, carefully planned and facilitated

space of robust and critical dialogue. Its design, led by culturemaker Abdul-Rehman Malik of Yale University, aimed to engage conference participants in a set of questions and thematrics that connected with the overall agenda of Othering & Belonging. Participants had the opportunity to engage in deep discussions on provocative and even uncomfortable topics related to the conference frameworks and topical matters. The Coffeehouse served as a temperature check and interactive feedback loop for the conference at large, helping ground the conference in a sense of community and illuminate places of alignment as well as divergence among perspectives.

The session had participants engage in roundtable discussions around topics such as ideological purity; emergence of the interfamily—racially, ethnically, culturally, religiously mixed families; cultural production its ability to shift politics and change societies; and more.

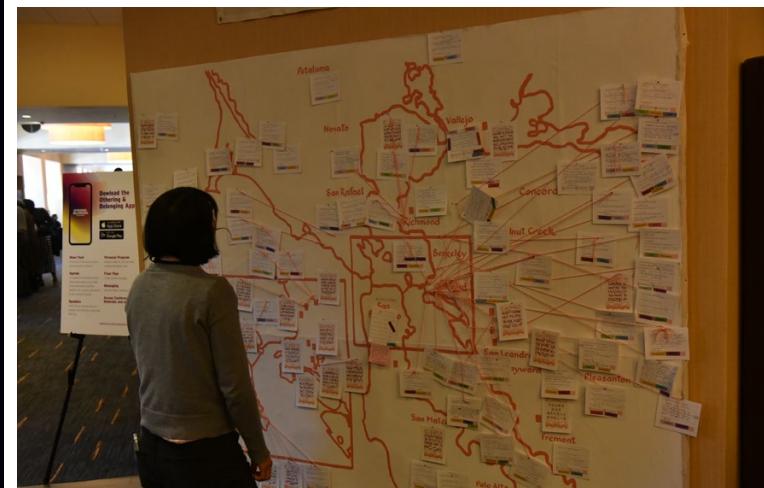
The Coffeehouse received rave reviews from participants. "The Coffeehouse conversations were essential to my enjoyment of this conference," one attendee said. "I rarely get to hold conversations about race, poverty, and equity with people who actually do that work. The conversations were in depth and engaging; I walked away with thoughts and questions unanswered and I am okay with that."

Curriculum

Another key goal of the conference was to equip participants with models, tools, and strategies for operationalizing belonging, and the Othering & Belonging curriculum was a key step towards that end. The curriculum offerings (see Resources on p. 7) are a series of robust, integrated engagements tools that serve as a blueprint of creative exploration into core concepts such as Bridging and Breaking, The Circle of Human Concern, and Targeted Universalism.

Over 300 people attended the Coffeehouse Conversations at this year's conference, a new feature of the 2019 event. A number of curated provocations informed this highly-interactive session and a set of "Big Ideas" were generated by participants.

Below (l-r): Coffeehouse Conversations session from the first day; Christine Wong Yap's Belonging in the Bay project installation in the main lobby space of the conference



We conducted a thorough review of the online evaluations (220 were completed), social media feedback, planning team feedback, and commentary that came from email and other follow-up to our staff. Our planning team evaluated this information to measure how the conference fared specifically vis-a-vis our goals (see p. 6), as well as analyzing other elements that participants spoke to in order to inform our future Othering & Belonging efforts and events. From the feedback we received in the 2019 conference, we identified the following takeaways of what we could do either differently, more of, or just simply better.

agenda, and creating more lead time to work more deeply with session facilitators on how to make sure the sessions allow for more participation and interactivity.

2. More time for networking and social activities. Another commonly suggested improvement was to create more opportunities to connect and network with other attendees. As well, this was one of the most highly-valued aspects of the Othering & Belonging conference. While similar to the first takeaway, this set of asks was not necessarily related to the conference content. For future conferences we aim to program

Learnings & Looking Ahead

WHAT COULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY, BETTER, MORE?



1. More participatory, interactive program design. Taken broadly, attendees are looking for more time to connect with the content and with each other without losing the same quality of content offered. Over a third of survey respondents wanted sessions to be more participatory. Several comments noted a desire to "go deeper" as well as having the space to process and facilitate what was being offered. A comment from one attendee on the Bridging Generations session with Native American leaders illustrated this: "I wish we had had time to process it in small groups. Not even turning it into outcomes or explicit take-aways, but getting to process it. I think the work of the conference is professional, but borders on retreat-like, and having space and facilitators to process more would have helped me come back more ready for change."

Also requested was more facilitation and design of the sessions that would support people in learning more about the application of the materials. When we were explicit about providing opportunities for application, such as with the breakout sessions on curriculum and local government strategies, more time to go in depth was requested.

Taken together there are a number of ways we could design the agenda to meet these requests. Ideas include pre-conference sessions, more focused trainings, extending the duration of the conference to allow for more breathing room across the whole

in more spaces that offer time to connect with others, such as more social activities, more ways to engage with the local place and culturemakers, and just spaces where there is not much programming.

Creating more spaces for joy and play as well as ensuring there are more intimate, smaller, and more reflective spaces are also ideas that have been generated by participants and our planning team as possibilities for inclusion into the programming. To meet this goal we must take our knowledge that people have a variety of learning styles and ways of processing material. We need to create more spaces that speak to a larger variety of diverse needs.

3. More identities, issues, and geographies elevated. With critiques around too few out-LGBTQ presenters, a lack of focus on issues of gender and sexuality, requests for more racial and ethnic identities to be included such as more Latinx speakers, we will continue to push ourselves to bring in a range of speakers that is more truly representational and celebrates the wide variety of difference. In addition requests for more focus on certain issues and thematics, such as disability justice and issues that affect other geographies outside of California and the US were also mentioned as points of critique or ways to go further and deeper in the curation to both examine othering and advance belonging.

Above, from left: Aparna Shah who moderated the Urgency of Bridging mainstage panel; closing keynote speaker Rev. William Barber II; and Linda Sarsour speaks on the Future of Feminism panel

Testimonials

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"The breakout session 'Operationalizing Bridging: Building a Bigger We' was FANTASTIC: great speakers on interesting projects, with the opportunity to go deeper in mini-breakout conversations. Would love more of that."



2019 attendee Joanne Calderon at the participatory dance breakout led by CONTRA-TIEMPO

"The sessions gave an equal balance of information and inspiration. Very helpful for moving forward in these challenging times."

"Linda Sarsour and the 'Will the Future be Feminist?' panel jump to mind with their tangible, relatable stories that easily depict inequity and overcoming, and their ferocious power, love, commitment to fighting the good fight. Truly though, I have profound take-aways from every single presenter and collectively they have shaped how I will now move through the world. I am so immensely grateful!"

"I was impressed with how connected the breakout was to the theme of the conference, but the participant engagement was the most powerful part of the breakout. The presenter demonstrated how to create community and belonging in a way that I could replicate."

"More breakouts should be like 'Rewriting the Future.' It was extremely interactive, got our imagination flowing and left us feeling inspired."



Member of Aswat Ensemble

"So many presenters were amazing but there was something about Casey's presentation with Eryn and Thomas that literally gave me chills. It was a historic conversation that will live one for centuries."



Apasalooke hip-hop artist and dancer Supaman Christian Takes Gun Parrish.

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POST-CONFERENCE REPORT

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