



Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley

RESEARCH FOR A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

The Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley brings together researchers, organizers, stakeholders, communicators, and policymakers to identify and eliminate the barriers to an inclusive, just, and sustainable society in order to create transformative change. We are a diverse and vibrant hub generating work centered on realizing a world where all people belong, where belonging entails being respected at a level that includes the right to both contribute and make demands upon society and political and cultural institutions.

The Othering & Belonging Institute responds to issues that require both immediate action and long-term strategy. The Institute engages in innovative communications, arts and cultural strategy, and strategic narrative work that attempts to re-frame the public discourse from a dominant narrative of control and fear towards one that recognizes the humanity of all people, cares for the earth, and celebrates our inherent interconnectedness.

Advancing multidisciplinary research, analysis, policy, and strategic narrative

Our research examines the structural and cultural impediments to opportunity that limit full inclusion and block benefits derived from an equitable society. We address complex and intertwined issues holistically, cultivating research contributions and collaboration across fields. Research is informed by understanding how structures and systems work across domains to produce exclusion and inequality, and inclusion and equality.

Employing communications and culture to illuminate research and impact policy

To be most successful, we must engage the conscious mind and the unconscious mind, which is less empirical, less fact-driven, highly social, and more animated by stories, values, and metaphors. This communications and cultural work goes beyond only messaging to engage in a battle of big ideas—to take command of how a debate, such as the entire concept of public space or citizenship, is framed in public discourse, in order to construct and employ new narratives.

Building relationships among diverse groups and across disciplines

We align our research efforts with the needs of community organizers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Community-centered collaborations help inform our research while our scholarship helps community partners and policymakers with strategies and policy, which increase our mutual effectiveness at many levels. This type of relationship-building moves beyond just coalitions toward deeper synergy, is strengthened by time and interaction, and ultimately yields a greater capacity to effect change.

Making a difference

Our model allows us to work not only in a different way but also at a different scale, countering a lack of capacity that has made many of our most important efforts seem intractable. Our resources are also devoted to a few “game changers”— issues that if won or lost will have a profound impact on society.