

john a. powell

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john a. powell is an internationally recognized expert in the areas of civil rights, civil liberties, structural racism, housing, poverty, and democracy. john is the Director of the [Othering and Belonging Institute](#) at the University of California, Berkeley, a research institute that brings together scholars, community advocates, communicators, and policymakers to identify and eliminate the barriers to an inclusive, just, and sustainable society and to create transformative change toward a more equitable world.

john holds the Robert D. Haas Chancellor's Chair in Equity and Inclusion and is a Professor of Law, African American Studies, and Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley. Previously, he was the Executive Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at the Ohio State University where he also held the Gregory H. Williams Chair in Civil Rights & Civil Liberties at the Moritz College of Law. john also founded and directed the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota.

john also served as Director of Legal Services in Miami, Florida and was the National Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), where he was instrumental in developing educational adequacy theory.

john led the development of an "opportunity-based" model that connects affordable housing to education, health, health care, and employment and is well-known for his work developing the frameworks of "targeted universalism" and "othering and belonging" to effect equity-based interventions.

john has written extensively on a number of issues including structural racism, racial justice, concentrated poverty, opportunity-based housing, voting rights, affirmative action in the United States, South Africa and Brazil, racial and ethnic identity, spirituality and social justice, and the needs of citizens in a democratic society. He is the author of several books, including his most recent work, *Racing to Justice: Transforming our Concepts of Self and Other to Build an Inclusive Society*.

john has lived and worked in Africa, where he was a consultant to the governments of Mozambique and South Africa, and has also worked in India and Brazil. He is one of the co-founders of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council and serves on the board of several national and international organizations, including More in Common, the Institute for New Economic Thinking, and Open Society Foundations. john has taught at numerous law schools including Harvard and Columbia University.

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On john's book *Racing to Justice*:

"Few scholars today explore racial (in)justice with as much depth and clarity, and with such fresh insight, as john powell. In these enlightening essays, powell challenges those of us who consider ourselves relatively evolved on issues of race and social justice to think far more critically about the basic assumptions and paradigms that frame our perspectives, animate our scholarship, and drive our advocacy. The central question he poses--"Can we stop focusing simply on transactional moves that we see as winnable and start working for the transformation of institutions that perpetuate suffering?"--is, perhaps, the most important and pressing question for racial justice advocates today." —Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*