Description: Apartheid has been over for three decades, yet the South African government continues to evict Black land occupiers on a mass scale. In this talk on his award-winning book Delivery as Dispossession, sociologist Zachary Levenson presents comparative fieldwork from two mass occupations in Cape Town, one of which was evicted, the other tolerated. He investigates rationales for eviction, developing a relational ethnography that takes the politics of the urban poor seriously. How residents view the state, Levenson argues, shapes how they self-organize. This, in turn, affects how the state sees them, ultimately impacting eviction outcomes.

Zachary Levenson is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Florida International University and a Senior Research Associate in Sociology at the University of Johannesburg. He is the author of Delivery as Dispossession: Land Occupation and Eviction in the Postapartheid City (Oxford University Press, 2022) and the co-editor of the forthcoming volume The South African Tradition of Racial Capitalism.