

# Michael Levien

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## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA 2013-Present  
*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology*

## EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, Sociology, 2013.

M.A. University of California, Berkeley, Sociology, 2007.

B.A. Williams College, American Studies, Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa, 2001.

## PUBLICATIONS

### ***Books:***

Levien, Michael. 2018. *Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### ***Edited Volumes:***

Levien, Michael, Michael Watts, and Yan Hairong, eds. 2019. *Agrarian Marxism*. London: Routledge.

Madeleine Fairbairn, Jonathan Fox, S. Ryan Isakson, Michael Levien, Nancy Peluso, Shahra Razavi, Ian Scoones, and K. Sivaramakrishnan, eds. 2015. *Global Agrarian Transformations, Volume 1: New Directions in Agrarian Political Economy*. London: Routledge.

### ***Peer-Reviewed Articles***

Agarwal, Samantha and Michael Levien. 2019. "Dalits and Dispossession: A Comparison." *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. Published online April 13.

Levien, Michael, Michael Watts, and Yan Hairong. 2018. "Agrarian Marxism." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 45(5-6): 853-883.

Levien, Michael. 2017. "Gender and Land Grabs: A Comparative Analysis." *UN Women Discussion Paper Series*. No. 15, July 2017: 1-27.

- Revised versions reprinted with permission in *Journal of Peasant Studies* 44(6) and *Gender Equality and Sustainable Development* (2016), edited by Melissa Leach. London: Earthscan. Pp. 105-132.

Levien, Michael. 2015. "Social Capital as Obstacle to Development: Brokering Land, Norms and Trust in Rural India." *World Development* 74: 77-92.

- Winner of Faculty Article Award, Sociology of Development Section, American Sociological Association

Levien, Michael. 2014. "Da Acumulação Primitiva aos Regimes de Desapropriação." *Revista Sociologia y Anthropologia* 4(1): 25-53 (Translated into Portuguese by Markus Hediger).

Levien, Michael. 2013. "The Politics of Dispossession: Theorizing India's 'Land Wars.'" *Politics & Society* 41(3): 351-394.

- Winner of Graduate Student Paper Award, Marxist Sociology Section, American Sociological Association.

Levien, Michael. 2013. "Regimes of Dispossession: From Steel Towns to Special Economic Zones." *Development and Change* 44(2): 381-407.

- Reprinted in *Governing Global Land Deals: The Role of the State in the Rush for Land* (2013), edited by Wendy Wolford, Saturnino M. Borrás, Jr., Ruth Hall, Ian Scoones and Ben White. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell. Pp. 185-210.

Levien, Michael and Marcel Paret. 2012. "A Second Double-Movement?: Polanyi and Shifting Global Opinions on Neoliberalism." *International Sociology* 27(6): 724-744.

- Winner of Graduate Student Paper Award, Sociology of Development Section, American Sociological Association.
- Winner of Graduate Student Paper Award, Pacific Chapter of the American Association for Public Opinion Research

Levien, Michael. 2012. "The Land Question: Special Economic Zones and the Political Economy of Dispossession in India." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39(3-4): 933-969.

- Winner of the 2011-2012 Bharadwaj-Wolf Prize for outstanding article by a young scholar in JPS.

Levien, Michael. 2011. "Special Economic Zones and Accumulation by Dispossession in India." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 11(4): 454-483.

Levien, Michael. 2007. "India's Double Movement: Polanyi and the National Alliance of People's Movements." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 51: 119-149.

- Winner of Blumer Prize for best paper in the Department of Sociology, U.C. Berkeley.

### ***Book Chapters, Review Essays, and Other Publications:***

Levien, Michael. 2018. "Reconstructing Polanyi?" Review essay on *Reconstructing Polanyi: Excavation and Critique* by Gareth Dale. *Development and Change* 49(4): 1115-1126.

Levien, Michael. 2017. "From Primitive Accumulation to Regimes of Dispossession: Theses on India's Land Question." In *The Land Question in India: State, Dispossession and Capitalist Transition*, edited by Anthony P. D'Costa and Achin Chakraborty. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 49-75.

- Originally published in *Economic and Political Weekly* 50(22): 146-157.

Levien, Michael. 2013. "Subalterns Scrutinized." Review essay on *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* by Vivek Chibber. *European Journal of Sociology* 54(3): 485-497.

Levien, Michael. 2011. "Rationalising Dispossession: The Land Acquisition and Resettlement Bills." *Economic and Political Weekly* 46(11): 66-71.

### **Book Reviews:**

Levien, Michael. 2019. *Land Dispossession and Everyday Politics in Rural Eastern India* by Kenneth Nielsen. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 42(1): 208-217.

Levien, Michael. 2013. *The Agrarian Question in the Neoliberal Era: Primitive Accumulation and the Peasantry* by Utsa Patnaik and Sam Moyo. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 40(1): 307-311.

### **In Progress/Under Review:**

Levien, Michael. Revise and resubmit, *Economy and Society*. "Fictitious but not Utopian: Land Commodification in Polanyi and Rural India."

Levien, Michael. Revise and resubmit, *Sociology of Development*. "Land Mafias in Neoliberal India."

Levien, Michael and Smriti Upadhyay. Under Review. "Explaining Opposition to Capital Projects in India: Towards a Sociology of Dispossession."

Levien, Michael. Under review for edited volume at Duke University Press. "Dispossession and Democracy: The Land Acquisition Act and the Future of India's Land Wars."

Paret, Marcel and Michael Levien. In Progress. "Redistribution and/or Reaction?: Global Left and Right Populist Opinion After the Crisis."

Levien, Michael. In Progress. "The Sociology of Dispossession."

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

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| 2017 | Faculty Article Award, Sociology of Development Section, American Sociological Association.                                |
| 2013 | Graduate Student Paper Award, Sociology of Development Section, American Sociological Association (with Marcel Paret).     |
| 2013 | Bharadwaj-Wolf Prize (for outstanding article by a young scholar), <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> .                     |
| 2012 | Graduate Student Paper Award, Marxist Sociology Section, American Sociological Association.                                |
| 2012 | Graduate Student Paper Award, Pacific Chapter of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (with Marcel Paret). |
| 2011 | Berkeley Alumni Prize for Public Sociology.  |
| 2009 | Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, U.C. Berkeley.  |
| 2008 | Herbert Blumer Prize (for best paper), U.C. Berkeley Department of Sociology   |
| 2001 | Phi Beta Kappa, Williams College.  |
| 2001 | Gaius C. Bolin Essay Prize in Afro-American Studies, Williams College.   |

2001 Kenneth L. Brown Prize in American Studies, Williams College.

### GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2019 American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Long-Term Fellowship.  
2017 American Council for Learned Societies Comparative Perspectives on Chinese Culture and Society Conference Grant of \$25,000 for “Land Dispossession in Rural China and India” (with Joel Andreas).  
2014 Visiting Professorship, Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi (May-July).  
2012 Leo Lowenthal Fellowship, U.C. Berkeley Department of Sociology.  
2011 Northern California Association of Phi Beta Kappa Dissertation Fellowship.  
2010 Simpson Memorial Research Fellowship, Institute of International Studies, U.C. Berkeley.  
2010 Land Deal Politics Initiative, Small Grant Recipient.  
2009-2010 Social Science Research Council, International Dissertation Research Fellowship.  
2009 American Institute of Indian Studies, Junior Research Fellowship (Declined).  
2007-2008 Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Year-Long Fellowship (Hindi).  
2007 National Science Foundation, Graduate Fellowship Honorable Mention.  
2007 Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship (Hindi).  
2006 Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship (Hindi).  
2006 National Science Foundation, Graduate Fellowship Honorable Mention.  
2005-2007 University of California Regents Fellowship.

### PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCES

2019 “Land Mafia in Neoliberal India.” Sociology of South Asia Mini-Conference, Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting. Boston, MA. March 17, 2019.

Discussant, Panel on “Dispossession, Labor Control and Resistance.” Sociology of South Asia Mini-Conference, Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting. Boston, MA. March 17, 2019.

Presider, Panel on “The Everyday State: Power and Subjectivity.” Sociology of South Asia Mini-Conference, Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting. Boston, MA. March 17, 2019

“Surplus Population and Anti-Incumbency.” Invited paper and presentation, Indian Democracy in Peril Workshop. Center for Contemporary South Asia, Brown University. Providence, RI. March 16, 2019

Author Meets Critic Session on *Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India* (participants: Patrick Heller, Nitsan Chorev, Julia Chuang, Gowri Vijayakumar). Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting. Boston, MA. March 15, 2019.

2018 “The Agrarian Question: Legacy and Relevance.” Invited opening remarks, symposium on Land Questions: Agrarian and Material South Asia. Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI. October 11, 2018.

“India’s Land Acquisition Problem: A Quantitative Analysis.” (with Smriti Upadhyay). Land Dispossession in Rural China and India Conference. Singapore Management University. Singapore. July 29, 2018.

“Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited talk, Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego. May 17, 2018.

“Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Seminar discussion of book organized by Chin Kwan Lee, Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles. May 15, 2018.

“Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited talk, Center for India and South Asia, University of California, Los Angeles. May 14, 2018.

“Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited talk, Blum Center for Global Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development, University of California, Santa-Barbara. May 9, 2018.

2017

“Land Mafias in Liberalizing India.” Invited talk, Development Research Seminar Series, International Institute of Social Studies. The Hague, Netherlands. November 28, 2017.

“Brokers and the Politics of Dispossession.” Invited talk on opening panel and closing roundtable, Land Brokers, Farmers, and Financiers Workshop. International Institute of Social Studies and University of Amsterdam. The Hague, Netherlands. November 24, 2017.

“India’s Land Acquisition Problem: A Quantitative Analysis.” (with Smriti Upadhyay). Section on the Sociology of Development Roundtable, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Montreal, Canada. August 12, 2017.

“Gender and Land Grabs in Comparative Perspective.” Section on Sociology of Sex and Gender Roundtable, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Montreal, Canada. August 14, 2017.

“Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited talk, Center for Policy Research. New Delhi, India. July 18, 2017.

“Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Book pre-launch presentation and panel (including Jairam Ramesh, Jayant Sinha and Partha Mukhopadhyay). Oxford University Press South Asia Conclave. Taj Mansingh Hotel. New Delhi, India. July 8, 2017.

“India’s Land Question.” Invited keynote lecture, International Conference on Property and Environment in Developing Countries. Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR-Govenpro). Paris, France. June 7, 2017.

“The Future of India’s Land Wars.” Invited talk, South Asia NYU. New York University. New York, NY. February 3, 2017.

- 2016 “Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited Talk, Displacement Seminar, Middle East Studies, Brown University. Providence, RI. December 6, 2016.
- “Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited talk, Center for Modern India Studies, University of Göttingen. Göttingen, Germany. October 26, 2016.
- “Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited talk, Contemporary South Asia Seminar, Oxford University. Oxford, UK. October 20, 2016.
- “India’s Land Question.” Invited talk, Agrarian Change Seminar, Development Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies. London, UK. October 19, 2016.
- “Dispossession without Exploitation: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Development in Question Conference, Cornell University. Ithaca, NY. October 8, 2016.
- “Dispossession without Development: Land Grabs in Neoliberal India.” Invited book workshop, PLACE, Penn State Department of Geography. State College, PA. April 28, 2016.
- “Differentiation by Speculation: Real Estate and Agrarian Change in a Rajasthani Village.” Invited talk, Gilded Age Seminar, Watson Institute, Brown University. March 3, 2016. Providence, RI.
- “Towards a Sociology of Dispossession.” Invited talk, International Institute of Social Studies. The Hague, Netherlands. January 18, 2016.
- “Social Capital as Obstacle to Development: Brokering Land, Norms and Trust in Rural India.” Invited presentation, Broker and Entrepreneur Workshop, Transregional Research Network, University of Göttingen. Göttingen, Germany. January 15, 2016.
- 2015 “Differentiation by Speculation: Real Estate and Agrarian Change in a Rajasthani Village.” Invited talk, India Political Economy Workshop. Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, PA. December 4, 2015.
- “From Primitive Accumulation to Regimes of Dispossession: Theses on India’s Land Question.” Social Science History Association 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Baltimore, MD. November 15, 2015.
- “Differentiation by Speculation: Real Estate and Agrarian Change in a Rajasthani Village.” Invited paper and presentation, Agrarian Studies Colloquium, Yale University. New Haven, CT. September 25, 2015.
- “Dispossession after Development: Real Estate and Agrarian Change in a Rajasthani Village.” Invited talk, Land Fictions Workshop. Rutgers University. New Brunswick, NJ. May 2, 2015.

“From Primitive Accumulation to Regimes of Dispossession: Theses on India’s Land Question.” Invited talk, Workshop on Extraction, Contention, Development: Global Perspectives on Resource Politics. The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington. Seattle, WA. April 30, 2015.

“Dispossession after Development: Real Estate and Agrarian Change in a Rajasthani Village.” Sociology of Development Conference. Brown University. Providence, RI. March 15, 2015.

2014

“Dispossession and Democracy: The Land Acquisition Act and the Future of India’s Land Wars.” Social Science History Association 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada. November 7, 2014.

“Dispossession and Democracy: The Land Acquisition Act and the Future of India’s Land Wars.” Invited talk, Recalling Democracy: Lineages of the Present Conference, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. September 6, 2014.

“The Land Broker State: Dispossession and Development in Neoliberal India.” Sociology of Development Section Session on Development in Hard Times, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. San Francisco, CA. August 17, 2014.

“Regimes of Dispossession: Capitalism and the Politics of Land in India.” Invited talk, Institute of Economic Growth. New Delhi, India. July 24, 2014.

“Dispossession and Social Theory: Comparing the Politics of Land and Labor.” International Sociological Association World Congress. Yokohama, Japan. July 17, 2014.

“The Land Broker State: Dispossession in Neoliberal India.” Invited talk, Watson Institute for International Studies Seminar on Development and Governance, Brown University. Providence, RI. March 19, 2014.

“Regimes of Dispossession.” Invited talk, Urban Theory Lab, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. March 13, 2014.

“Regimes of Dispossession: From Dams to Special Economic Zones.” Guest lecture in Planning Against Evictions and Displacement, taught by Balakrishnan Rajagopal and Miloon Kothari, Department of Urban Planning, MIT. Cambridge, MA. March 12, 2014.

“From Primitive Accumulation to Regimes of Dispossession: Theses on India’s Land Question.” Invited presentation, international conference on The Return of the Land Question: Dispossession, Livelihoods, and Contestation in India’s Capitalist Transition, organized by the University of Melbourne, IDS Kolkata and IIM Kolkata. Kolkata, India. March 3, 2014.

“Regimes of Dispossession: From Steel Towns to Special Economic Zones.” Invited presentation, Zonal Logics of Modernity Workshop, New York University and the New School for Social Research. New York, NY. February 22, 2014.

- 2013 “Regimes of Dispossession and the Politics of India’s Special Economic Zones.” Invited talk, University of Zurich (University Research Priority Program on Europe and Asia) Conference on Traveling Norms and the Politics of Contention. Zurich, Switzerland. October 25, 2013.
- “Gender and Dispossession.” Invited presentation, UN Women Concepts and Methods Workshop for the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2014*. United Nations. New York, NY. September 17, 2013.
- “Dispossession, Development, and Resistance: From Dams to Special Economic Zones.” Political Sociology Regular Session, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. New York, NY. August 13, 2013.
- “The Politics of Dispossession: Comparing Land and Labor Struggles.” Power and Justice Mini-Conference, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. August 9, 2013. New York, NY.
- 2012 “Dispossession and Development: From Dams to Special Economic Zones.” Johns Hopkins University, Department of Sociology. Baltimore, MD. November 14, 2012.
- “Dispossession and Development: From Dams to Special Economic Zones.” Binghamton University, Department of Sociology. Binghamton, NY. November 16, 2012.
- “Dispossession and Development: From Dams to Special Economic Zones.” London School of Economics, Department of International Development. London, UK. November 21, 2012.
- “Social Capital as Obstacle to Development: Brokering Networks, Norms and Trust in Rural India.” Development Sociology Regular Session, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Denver, CO. August 20, 2012.
- “The Land Broker State and the Politics of Dispossession: Connecting the Urban and Rural?” The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Indian City Conference, University of California-Berkeley. Berkeley, CA. April 28, 2012.
- “The Politics of Dispossession: Understanding India’s Land Wars.” Yale Modern South Asia Workshop. New Haven, CT. April 7, 2012.
- “The Politics of Dispossession: Understanding India’s Land Wars.” University of California-Berkeley, Center for South Asia Studies. Berkeley, CA. April 19, 2012.
- “The Politics of Dispossession: Understanding India’s Land Wars.” Political Economy of the World System Roundtable, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Denver, CO. August 20, 2012.
- “The Politics of Dispossession: Understanding India’s Land Wars.” Global Land Grabbing Conference II, Cornell University. Ithaca, NY. October 17, 2012.



- 2011 “The Land Broker State and the Politics of Dispossession in India.” Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics Annual Conference. Madrid, Spain. June 25, 2011.
- “The Land Broker State and the Politics of Dispossession in India.” States of Emergency: A Conference in Honor of Peter Evans. University of California-Berkeley. Berkeley, CA. May 6, 2011.
- “The Land Question: Special Economic Zones and Accumulation by Dispossession in India.” International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. Brighton, UK. April 7, 2011.
- “The Land Broker State and the Politics of Dispossession in India.” Regular Session on Globalization, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. Las Vegas, NV. August 21, 2011.
- “The Land Question: Special Economic Zones and Accumulation by Dispossession in India.” Invited talk, University of East London, Department of International Development. October 4, 2011. London, UK.
- “From *Bighas* to Square Metres: Special Economic Zones and the Production of Rural Real Estate.” 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI. October 22, 2011.
- 2008 “*Sangarsh and Nirman: Alternative Development in India’s Narmada Valley.*” Real Utopias Graduate Student Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI. May 2008.
- “A Second Double Movement? Polanyian Insights on Global Responses to Neoliberalism” (with Marcel Paret). Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics Annual Conference. San Jose, Costa Rica. July 21-23, 2008.
- 2007 “Contemporary Counter-movements against Neoliberal Globalization: Polanyi and India’s National Alliance of People’s Movements.” Berkeley Journal of Sociology Annual Conference: “Globalization and Social Change.” Berkeley, CA. March, 2007.
- 2006 “‘Our Rule in Our Villages’: Alternative Development in the Narmada Valley.” Second Annual Brown University Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference: “Space as a Category of Analysis: New Perspectives.” Providence, RI. April 7, 2006.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### ***Undergraduate***

Issues in International Development (230.150)  
 Social Theory (230.213)  
 Sociology of Dispossession (230.363)  
 Undergraduate Research Seminar (230.379)  
 Theories of International Development (230.391)  
 Contemporary Social Theory (230.395)

## **Graduate**

Contemporary Social Theory (230.602)

Agrarian Change (230.647)

## **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

### *Department*

2017 Member of Search Committee, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Latin American Studies position  
2016-2018 Member of Graduate Student Job Market Committee  
2015 Member of Graduate Admissions Committee  
2014-15 Member of Speakers Committee  
2014 Member of Graduate Admissions Committee  
2013 Member of Undergraduate Committee

### *University*

2018 Faculty Spotlight Presentation, JHU Admissions Open House Weekend  
2016- Board Member of International Studies Program

### *Discipline/Academy*

2018 Reviewer, National Science Foundation (Sociology)  
2018 Awards Committee, Faculty Article Award, Sociology of Development Section, American Sociological Association  
2018 Reviewer, International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council  
2018 Awards Committee, Graduate Student Paper Award, Eastern Sociological Society  
2018 External Dissertation Examiner, City University of New York, Department of Anthropology  
2018 External Dissertation Honors Examiner, Institute for Social Studies, Department of Development Studies, The Hague  
2018 External Dissertation Examiner, University of Hyderabad, Department of Sociology  
2014 Faculty Mentor, Association for Asian Studies-Social Science Research Council  
Dissertation Workshop on “Dispossession, Capital, and the State.” Philadelphia, PA.  
2013-2017 Book Review Section Co-Editor, *Journal of Peasant Studies*  
2013; 2018- International Advisory Board Member, *Journal of Peasant Studies*  
2005-2007 Co-editor, Berkeley Journal of Sociology

Referee for the following journals:

*American Journal of Sociology, Antipode, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Contemporary South Asia, Critical Historical Studies, Current Sociology, Development and Change, Economy and Society, Environment and Planning A, EPA: Economy and Space, Environment and Planning C, Geography Compass, Globalizations, International Development Planning Review, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Journal of Agrarian Change, Journal of Contemporary Asia, Journal of Development Studies, Journal of Peasant Studies, Land Use Policy, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History, Political Power and Social Theory, Research in Political Sociology, Social Forces, Social Problems, Sociology of Development, Sociopedia, Socio-Economic Review, South Asia Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Theory and Society, Third World Quarterly, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*

Referee for the following presses: Oxford University Press, Polity Press.

Member of: American Sociological Association (Sections: Sociology of Development, Political Sociology, Sociology of Labor, Global and Transnational Sociology, Theory, Political Economy of the World System, Asia and Asian-American, Marxist Sociology); American Association of Geographers.

### **LANGUAGES**

Hindi (speaking, reading, and writing proficiency)

Spanish (basic reading and comprehension).