



RETROFITTING THE AMERICAN DREAM: AN UNLIKELY SITE FOR THE MAKING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUBJECTS

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Speculation about the future of the suburban American dream has intensified as economic conditions, energy concerns, and climate change make the low-density landscape of single-family homes increasingly unviable. There has been growing literature on architecture, planning, and policy efforts to reimagine automobile suburbs for a more sustainable future through introducing urban densities, green infrastructure, and transit-oriented development to suburban areas accustomed to the converse. Yet there has been little ethnographic research that sheds light on generative frictions accompanying the incremental transformation of spatial habits, aesthetic conventions, and sedimented anxieties. This talk draws on four summers of fieldwork in an unlikely site for the making of environmental subjects—a massive master-planned community in Utah’s Salt Lake Valley spearheaded by a global mining conglomerate on remediated mining land—and asks how we might conceptualize assemblages of environmental subject-making at the intersection of sustainable urbanism, neoliberal governance, corporate social responsibility, religious values, and social justice concerns.

RACHEL HEIMAN is Associate Professor of Anthropology at The New School and a 2018-2019 External Faculty Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center. She is the author of *Driving after Class: Anxious Times in an American Suburb* (UC Press, 2015) and co-editor (with Carla Freeman & Mark Liechty) of *The Global Middle Classes: Theorizing through Ethnography* (SAR Press, 2012). Her current book project, *Retrofitting the American Dream*, is an ethnography of suburban redesign.

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Building 50-51A

