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# Planning for Gender: Perspectives on Urban Development

Discussant: Ryan Centner, Assistant Professor, Sociology Department,  
Tufts University

Panel Reporter & Panel Summary: Fatima Sattar, PhD candidate, Sociology,  
Boston College

## Panelists:

Adina Koch, MA candidate, Sociology, Boston College

*"Gender Transcendence: The Social Production of Identity in Urban Queer Community"*

Magdalena Sabat, PhD candidate, Media, Culture, and Communication, New York University

*"Mannequins and Prostitutes: Re-Making the Amsterdam Red Light District through Art and Commerce"*

Brian Traylor, MA candidate, City Planning and Urban Spatial Analytics, University of Pennsylvania

*"Dinks, Homos, Boomers, and Bobos: Creating Inviting Urban Environments that Encourage Investment through Diversity"*

The panel on "Planning for Gender: Perspectives on Urban Development" started out with Adina Koch's ethnographic research on the construction of gender and sexuality in queer and lesbian communities in a Northeastern urban city. She presented field notes on various events including sporting games, advocacy organization meetings, and other neighborhood bar social events. She found that identities associated with one's gender and/or sexuality are fluid, context-dependent, and informed by participants' experiences in community settings. The urban setting enabled participants to form community and build a space that allowed for fluid identities and freedom of self-presentation to emerge. Her observations found that the extent of fluidity was more appar-

ent in queer communities compared to lesbian communities. Her ethnography provided a vivid snapshot of gender and sexuality identity construction in queer and lesbian communities.

Continuing the discussion on gender and urban settings, Magdalena Sabat presented her research on the presentation and meaning of art and commerce in Amsterdam's Red Light District. Focusing on an urban planning project, she discussed the intersections of art practice, sex work, and city planning in relation to Amsterdam's plan to reduce the size of the district in the coming years. The conflict between representation by administration and actual qualities of prostitution was illustrated using the film *Red Light Fashion Amsterdam the Movie*. Sabat argued that the Red Light District mythology is used as marketing and social force by different actors for their own purposes.

Lastly, Brian Traylor discussed investment and urban environments. Traylor made the case to focus on the needs of "Dinks, Homos, Boomers and Bobos" in order to aid the quality of life in cities because these groups have the potential to have a positive economic impact on local governments. Describing the characteristics and practices of each group, Traylor advised city planners on design interventions and policy directions that would attract these financially contributing groups to cities. Some suggestions included increasing food establishments, bars, coffee shops, book stores, affordable housing, affordable retail shops, as well as providing walkable cities, access to quality healthcare and fitness facilities, and access to creative jobs. Painting a vibrant picture of the utility of these groups, Traylor concluded by giving examples to show that "Dinks, Homos, Boomers and Bobos" are not only an indicator of successful urban spaces, but also their cause.