

The struggle to belong

Dealing with diversity in 21st century urban settings.

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The Organization of Studio K: finding the balance between Organizational Identity and Community Commitment in an Amsterdam Neighborhood.

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1. Introduction

In recent years a growing interest in the reinvestment in disadvantaged, inner-city neighborhoods can be observed. Not only governmental officials argue for an improvement of the living conditions in underprivileged districts, private foundations and cooperation have become increasingly involved in the process of neighborhood change. Revitalization ‘...involves the eradication of blight. It promotes increased economic activity in the form of business development and other private investments’. (Zielenbach, 2000: 4). Studio K, a cultural organization run by students in Amsterdam is a prime example of the growing urban reinvestment within the ‘Indische Buurt’; a neighborhood in the eastern part of Amsterdam.

The neighborhood is known for the ethnical diversity of its population, which also brings forward specific economic activity. The small shops and eateries that can be found on the main street in the neighborhood, the Javastraat, and on the renovated square the Timorplein, where we can also find Studio K, display all the diversity of the neighborhood. As urban reinvestment is enforced, it can be questioned in how far the character of the ‘Indische Buurt’ can be preserved.



Figure 1: The Timorplein Community Building in Amsterdam (source: dewijdeblik.com and oost.amsterdam.nl)

The basic idea behind Studio K has been to create a cultural centre which serves different interests: a multicultural center that combines metropolitan ambitions with a 'living room' experience. In the business plan of Studio K it is moreover stated that it wants to express the diverse influences from the neighborhood by which it is surrounded.

This dual identity concept is outlined in the business plan: Studio K is to be a multifunctional centre which serves as cinema, restaurant, bar and club, thereby attracting not a specific group but the *urban dweller* or the *urban flâneur* as such (compare White, 2001 and Fischer, 1982). On the other hand, Studio K is pictured as informal meeting place for the highly diverse neighborhood, as a place that through its activities actually represents the 'Indische Buurt'. Two-and-a-half years after the opening of Studio K it remains questionable if both interests, those of functioning as leisure place for the urban dweller and as 'living room' for the surrounding neighborhood, are still considered equally important. Plans that concern the corporate policy that have been written annually since the opening in September 2007, show increasingly less ambition to serve the interests of residents of the 'Indische Buurt' whereas the aim to attract the culturally interested Amsterdammer has become more prominent.

Whether the impact of Studio K on the neighborhood can really be described as positive depends on whose point of view is being taken into consideration. Changes that occur in a neighborhood are essentially political in the sense that they serve some more than others and moreover that they involve diverse, often conflicting ideologies.

In this paper we want to investigate the dual identity of Studio K by asking the question: *to what extent does the identity of Studio K depend on its locality within the 'Indische Buurt' and how do the members of Studio K perceive the dual identity of the organization?*

In what follows, we first will describe the specific organizational structure and the urban context in which Studio K is situated. Next, we will use a theoretical framework to explain how we see the relation between communities and identity in the context of urban development. Then we will present our empirical finding about the identity and locality of Studio K. We will end up with a discussion and a short concluding section.

2. Setting the scene: a developing neighborhood

For the most part, the ‘Indische Buurt’ dates back to the early 20th century. It is situated in the East of Amsterdam. Relying on data published by the *Dienst Onderzoek en Statistiek* (www.os.amsterdam.nl), we can state that the ‘Indische Buurt’ can be characterized as highly diverse neighborhood. Statistics dating from 2000 up to 2009 reveal that more than the half of the population is of foreign origin. The figures show a value that concentrates around 60% of people not holding a Dutch nationality. A major part of the foreign group is of Moroccan origin, other parts are Turkish and from the Surinam. A variety of smaller ethnical groups accompany those marking the population as being highly diversified.



Figure 2 The ‘Indische Buurt’ in Amsterdam

The average income of the ‘Indische Buurt’ is relative low compared to the rest of the city. Following the common trend that becomes visible in the data provided by the *Dienst Onderzoek en Statistiek*, the income has risen in the last few years but it does not become clear whether the growth can be ascribed to a higher concentration of people belonging to the middle class. Such a change can however be deduced looking at the increase of owner-occupied houses. In 2005 around 11% of all housing was owner-occupied whereas in 2009 16% of all houses were of private property. Housing cooperation like Ymere have shown a great interest in de revitalization of the ‘Indische Buurt’, part of it being the transformation of social housing to owner-occupied housing. Thereby a new social class is attracted and new facilities like Studio K led to an overall economic appreciation of the neighborhood.

3. Studio K: the organization

Studio K is a part of the foundation Stichting Onderlinge Studenten Steun (SOSS), a project realized by a group of students in 1945. Their aim was to create a work organization that made it

possible for students to finance their studies and gain working experience in the cultural and service sector. The foundation started with two different projects, the first cinema Kriterion close to the centre, the second a baby-sitting agency. Later the foundation also set up a petrol station and a restaurant called Skek. Even though the cinema Kriterion became a rather independent part of the foundation after an incident in 1982 in which only a protest of the students could prevent it from being shut down, all projects of the foundation still stick to the same organizational principles.

In line with those principles Studio K is a non-profit organization, all earnings are reinvested in activities of Studio K and the SOSS. Studio K that can be characterized as the executive organ of the organization. The structure of the association is non-hierarchical and members hold the status of a volunteer, receiving not salary, but a financial compensation for their work. The non-hierarchical structure and high involvement of all members requires more meetings than one would usually expect in a work environment like Studio K. Everyone takes part in major decisions, the corporate policy is re-evaluated every twelve months and has to be approved by all members, otherwise it has to be rewritten. Once a year a new board is elected that rewrites the plans concerning the corporate-policy which then have to be approved by all members. The organizational policy thereby has to be shouldered by the majority of all members. One could say they are the ones forming the identity of the organization.

Recently, the critical financial situation Studio K finds itself in puts members under pressure to satisfy the interests of the foundation SOSS. Projects that are not lucrative as such are often rejected and all activities have to reach break-even. Even though Studio K is a non-profit organization, the current focus is on profit making or rather loss-control. Activities that involve the surrounding community might therefore be of less interest as members have to weigh benefit against risk. As major decisions are made by the collective, the direction Studio K is going to take in the future also represents the interests held by the majority. Every plan that concerns the corporate policy has to be discussed and agreed on so there is little possibility that voices within the organization stay unheard.

4. Theoretical framework

An argument to legitimate the need to diversify the housing stock in disadvantaged districts, such as the 'Indische Buurt' is that it attracts the middle class, thereby enhancing the chances of socioeconomically homogenous neighborhoods to improve and become more socially cohesive. A better environment is said to influence the capability of individuals to restore social capital (Leydon, 2003). The change of physical facilities is considered to bring the middle class to disadvantaged neighborhoods thereby positively influencing the community. The connection of the terms community and neighborhood is, however, more complex. In large urban settings we cannot be certain about the reciprocal influence of neighborhood and community.

Location does not necessarily implicate community and shared public space does not indicate an interpretive scheme that is even to some extent shared: 'Location, however, does not intrinsically produce community: '...locally based identities intersect with other sources of meaning and social recognition, in a highly diversified pattern that allows for alternative interpretations' (Castells 1997: 60). As a result, '...local environments *per se* do not induce a specific pattern of behavior, or, for that matter, a distinctive identity' (Blokland 2003: 10). To reside in a specific neighborhood does not necessarily implicate that the neighborhood forms the scope of day-to-day activities. Practices are however the entity that defines a community for it

considers the relationships between people. Therefore community is not so much a question of statistics but of agency. Neighborhoods do not as such indicate the potential for social identification and community experience. It is the form and content that renders neighborhood relations relevant and not the physical proximity. To what extent Studio K had an effect not only on the physical aspects of the neighborhood but also on the community building, is therefore not such much a question of its central location within the 'Indische Buurt' but one that needs to focus on the actual interactions stimulated through its activities. People *experience* that is they *perceive* interactions differently and it is the process of sensemaking (Weick, 1995) that defines the substance of community.

In considering neighborhood change as a subject to identity and vice versa, the content of relations is regarded as distinguishing the actual effect it has on community. In this regard, an organization Like Studio K displays an identity that reconciles multiple identities. Gioia argues that: 'Actually, at the organizational level, the notion of multiple identities is perhaps a key (if subtle) point of difference between individuals and organizations. One has a markedly easier time making the case for the simultaneous presentation of multiple "personalities" because organizations are acknowledged to be complex entities with distinct components; they are expected to display different identities to different audiences.' (Gioia, 1998: 21). What values are referred to, and which practices to apply depends entirely on the situation. Identity traits are not arranged in a hierarchy for their formation shifts if it is required.

As organizational action is multi-directional, so is identity (Albert, 1998; Alvesson, 2002; Ybema et al., 2009). In accomplishing multiple identities, organizations show an inclination to retain some ambiguity in their identities. 'If...', Gioia argues, '...the organizational identity is not precisely pinned down, it can accommodate many different presentations and actions; it can accommodate many complex pursuits; and it can engage in planned and unplanned change without appearing to violate its basic (and ostensibly enduring) value.' (Gioia, 1998: 23) Moreover, one has to realize that the external image of the organization does not necessarily reflect the identity organizational members hold on to (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). Organizational identity has a tendency towards adaptive instability: 'We argue that because of the reciprocal interrelationships between identity and image, organizational identity, rather than enduring, is better viewed as a relatively fluid and unstable concept.' (Gioia, Schultz, Corley: 2000: 63-64). Finally, 'Identification only influence thought, feeling and action when the associated identity is *salient*, that is, situationally relevant and subjectively important' (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley 2008: 330).

Studio K puts emphasis on its ability to stimulate community building. If community is assessed with regard to personal relationships then the importance of Studio K for the surrounding neighborhood can only accurately been described in terms of the interpretive scheme that underlies the interactions between the organizational members and residents. However, neighborhood revitalization does not necessarily lead to an improvement of the bonding capacity of the residents. In their rich empirical study *Better Together*, Putnam and Feldstein (2003) illustrate different initiatives that aim to encourage community building. They rely on social capital theory to describe their findings mainly they distinguish between bonding and bridging capital.

Social capital that is accumulated in networks that link people who share similar backgrounds and interests, is referred to as bonding. Bridging social capital on the other hand, concerns networks between different types of people (Putnam, 2001, compare Burt, 2005). Those

networks are characterized as outward looking while a feature of networks that produce bonding social capital is that they can be described as inward-looking.

Theoretically speaking, Studio K provides an opportunity for residents to mix with other people but also to revitalize their relations with each other. Yet, as we will see in the empirical part of this paper, the focus of activities has shifted away from the neighborhood and bonds with residents that are more than just functional, seemed to have been removed from the agenda.

5. Methodology and methods

The research underlying this paper was ethnographic by nature – it included research *in-situ*. The fieldwork brings theory to life and more importantly adds new insights that hopefully enrich future research projects. In conducting the study, we were interested in determining the way in which Studio K's organizational members and stakeholders give meaning to its identity and policy. In particular Weick's concept of *sense making* is consonant with our approach (compare: Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). For Weick (1995: 6), sense making is about '...such things as placement of items into frameworks, comprehending, redressing surprise, constructing meaning, interacting in pursuit of mutual understanding and patterning.' Following Weick, we see sense making as an ongoing process, which is grounded in the identity construction of Studio K and rooted in the history and culture of the organization.

We collected the data for this paper through fieldwork and participant observation.¹ Following Alvesson we think that: 'The use of a multitude of methods – sometimes referred to as triangulation - is often to be preferred, not in order to zoom in the truth through different methods, but in order to create a richer picture.' (Alvesson 2003: 172).

6. Studio K in-action: organizational identity and community commitment

The building

The enormity of the building and its specific architecture, make Studio K highly visible within the neighborhood. Its central location moreover characterizes Studio K as a possible hub for the people living in the 'Indische Buurt'. At first glance, Studio K displays an open and warm character. Huge windows on the whole ground floor let daylight pass through creating a pleasant atmosphere. Moreover, they also visibly draw a connection between Studio K and the neighborhood for one can see what is happening in the public space that surrounds Studio K. In the summer month, Studio K also has a huge terrace on Timorplein enforcing the interaction of guest with people that pass by. The interior of Studio K can be described as straight with a comforting touch of chaos to it. There is an enormous white bar placed in the middle of the ground floor which opens up to both sides of the separable restaurant floor. Moving on from the most visible part of Studio K, one finds two cinemas and the former theatre upstairs. Even though there is a ticket sale in the foyer downstairs, there are still people that stay unaware of the fact that Studio K offers more than just a restaurant. The whole extent of the inner part of Studio K makes it hard to overlook for visitors as well as for members. Most of the time there is a group of members present not working but studying, drinking coffee or just hanging out together. Guests therefore do often mention that Studio K feels like a place really owned by the people that work there even though it still stays open to visitors.

¹ One of the authors of this paper worked for a couple of months at Studio K.



Figure 3 Studio K the interior (source: freeamsterdam.blogspot.com and cineville.nl)

The intimate connection members show towards the place and the group as such, and furthermore their social background, might be an extra obstacle to the diverse groups of the 'Indische Buurt'. Like other cultural venues in major cities, Studio K tries to present trend-setting events in a hip, arty surrounding. Most people working at Studio K belong to the higher educated middle class and grew up in an environment that cherishes art, education and music. They are the kind of people that search for upcoming, cultural venues and experience them as open space.

Having a look at the common guest, one can further say that most of the visitors, even being older, still appreciate Studio K for not being typical for the 'Indische Buurt' but for being a place that adds a urban touch to the surrounding neighborhood. Even the menu and the films shown, do not refer back to the specific character of the 'Indische Buurt'. As one of my interviewees mentioned, one has a hard time finding dishes that meet the needs of the Muslim community highly representative of the population of the 'Indische Buurt'. There is no Halal meat, nor are there dishes referring to the huge group of Surinam people living in the neighborhood. Films are mostly from European or American origin. Members characterize Studio K as 'the new Movies van Oost', 'the Movies' being a well known arthouse cinema in Amsterdam, underlining the fact that Studio K strives to show 70% cross-over, 20% Arthouse and 10% niche films. Films that represent the ethnical diversity of the 'Indische Buurt' have vanished and looking at the Movies, the films clearly address the higher educated middle class.

It can be concluded that physical characteristics of Studio K do not show a specific affinity towards the neighborhood. Instead of bearing an open and welcoming character, those groups Studio K might seem like a place they do not belong to the Eastern part of Amsterdam.

Studio K behind the Scenes

Next to the physical appearance of Studio K, its internal structure is significant for the change of bearing it has undergone in the time passed since its opening in September 2007. As a place that is entirely run by students, it misses the consistency of other commercial organizations. Students only stay temporarily for they have no clear direction in life as all doors seems to stand open in that period of life. In addition, their main occupation is that of a student. They spend less time working which leads to less professionalism. Most projects at Studio K succeed thanks to the improvisational skills of the students, not to their well-organized attitude.

The temporal nature of Studio K's staff is its biggest limitation. The average member of Studio K stays about one year and then leaves for various reasons. Primarily, the workload gets too heavy or students decide to spend time abroad. Members are supposed to work sixteen to twenty hours a week but that only includes their major tasks within the organization. The high commitment of the members is the drive of Studio K for they guarantee the existence of the organization. It is, however, also an aspect Studio K continuously struggles with. Leaving the organization after a few months, members take knowledge and skills with them and it has not been figured out so far how to preserve that knowledge. In the first year of Studio K, the community formed one of the focal points of the organizational identity and brought forward several activities.

The financial aspect also plays a role for Studio K is unable to finance an old and new member working side by side. In the case of the community-building activities of Studio K, it can be concluded that the parting of old members led to a loss of knowledge not only in far as the contacts with the neighborhood are concerned but they also took away the interest in the ideal that focuses on the strengthening of community ties. In total, the missing continuity results in a process of reinventing the wheel every time an influential member leaves or the board steps aside to make room for a new one.

Enthusiasm for Studio K and its activities is one of the most important reasons students join the organization. Knowing the criteria applied during job interviews, it can be said that enthusiasm is a crucial motivation to let someone apply for a membership at Studio K. After three months, members are entitled to their say concerning the functioning of the aspirant as an anonymous evaluation is held. Only after having convinced the majority of the members, a student becomes a full member of the organization. An evaluation process that includes the whole organization, requires a long breathe but also a strong motivation to meet the expectations. The nature of the selection process, displays a tendency in favor of highly ambitious individuals. On the one hand this leads to a creative working atmosphere, encouraging members to constantly initiate new projects. On the other hand, individual ambitions often form the fundament of new projects.

The last three years, it seems only a few projects have managed to gain continuous enthusiasm and become a permanent part of the activities, and moreover get mentioned in the business plans rewritten every year. Looking at the strong ambition visible in the first business plan, one explanation of the decrease of community building activities of Studio K points at the departure of the founders of Studio K who envisioned the organizational identity to carry on a sense for the surrounding community. They also had their individual interests and ambitions and did not confer them on others to keep them alive.

The insiders' identity work

As it seems as if the community-building activity of Studio K has diminished, it has to become one of the focal points of the board or other members again so to be taken over by others and be included in the organizational identity again. The decision to invest time and energy in community building activity rests on the shoulders of all members, meaning they have to be convinced first. In addition, the flat structure of Studio K also leads to a specific kind of relationship between its members. People feel no hierarchy. Meeting others on the same level makes it easier to intensify the contact and also become friends. Supporting a friendship culture based on the feeling of equality, Studio K also displays a tendency to look inward and to appear self-contained. Even other students and middle class visitors sometimes utter that they feel as if

disturbing the privacy of organizational members when entering the building. The intimacy between members of Studio K must be even a bigger obstacle to people that belong to another social class and might prevent the diverse neighborhood to grab a cup of coffee at Studio K instead of taking a seat in their well-know community centre.

Members asked to position Studio K within the 'Indische Buurt' overall agreed that the organization has been of positive influence to the neighborhood. They stressed that Studio K has initiated a rapid change of the physical environment by attracting the middle class:

'I think that we contributed to the development of the neighborhood a lot. Before Studio K came to this place it was an impoverished neighborhood. So, after Studio K came, together with StayOkay (a backpackers youth hotel housed in the same building, HL and KB) the housing prices rose quickly as did the business in Studio K's surroundings. So, yes, you see the neighborhood profits a lot' (Interview 30.03.2010/ 14:33)²

As one can see, the logic of the members follows the common discourse that is also voiced by housing cooperations and the municipality. The students argued that Studio K plays an important role within the neighborhood for it enhances its economical and physical capacity by attracting younger, high-educated people. Members stated that serving the interest of the middle class Studio K has enforced the reinvestment of the area and thereby positively influenced the 'Indische Buurt' as such. Asked more specifically if they think that Studio K is of positive influence to all people belonging to the neighborhood, members commonly agreed that Studio K foremost serves the interests of the middle class thereby excluding or ignoring a huge part of the inhabitants. Some members mentioned that there is still a group of old Turkish men visiting Studio K, that there has been a Turkish film festival and a community project called Jalan Jalan. It becomes however clear that the overall organizational activities and interests do not include a focus on the diverse population of the 'Indische Buurt'. Even though Studio K does not refer to a huge part of the inhabitants of its neighborhood, members still held that there is a general acceptance of, if not positive attitude towards Studio K:

'I don't a possible negative feeling about Studio K is the reason why they don't come to visit it. I just think this is the place to be for them. What Studio K offers is not of interest for the kind of people living in this neighborhood. They are just not interested'. (Interview 07.06.2010/ 21:05)

Studio K does not actively exclude parts of the 'Indische Buurt' but its members acknowledge that they have less interest in a venue such as Studio K and that most of the settled inhabitants of the neighborhood have already found their places somewhere else. Being used to small cafés and community centres, they feel no need to make use of the facilities of Studio K.

'One cannot find a collaboration of Studio K with the neighborhood that is not found. According to me, that is one thing that needs to be improved. It is not that the local residents are alienated from Studio K. I don't think so. But if you look at its business plan one can conclude that the ideals are a bit convergent'. (Interview 30.03.2010/ 14.33)

² The interview citations are translated by the authors of this paper.

New members were not aware of the concept of Studio K as living room for the surrounding neighborhood. They were surprised by my explanation of the first business plan and argued that they had never been confronted with the former ideals of Studio K. Older members that are still active in the organization, had heard about the first plans to represent the specific interests of the 'Indische Buurt'. They agreed however, that the direction of Studio K has clearly changed and only includes one of the root ambitions that is functioning as cultural centre supporting young artists. Members that have known Studio K even before it opened its doors in September 2007, were familiar with the concept outlined in the first business plan. Just as well, they acknowledged that the community-building activities have been dismissed. Describing the organizational progress in the last three years, they found that the ideal concerning the community had been attached to few individuals. After they left the organization, activities that primarily focus on the community decreased and finally vanished. Former members stressed the individual attachment of particular members to the community related activities:

'I think it is really important to have an active member in the organization who takes care of the connections and the networks in the neighborhood. We has such a member, she was member of the board. What was her name again...!? Yes, it was Inge. Inge has a lot of contacts, also with people from the neighborhood, with local organizations. She was the one who took the initiative to participate in the Jalan Jalan festival. I think we miss such a person who is willing to take such responsibilities.' (Interview 11.06.2010/10:57)

Their utterances emphasize that the success of a line of thought is detached to *personal ambitions*. Different members also stressed that the temporality of membership leads to a loss of knowledge:

'It shouldn't be that way. In any organization it would be normal to transfer the knowledge to the successors. I think that those who were really enthusiastic to make links with the local neighborhood didn't take care of the continuation. At the same time the board often misses a clear focus.' (Interview 08.06.2010/ 18:54)

Members are all students and therefore usually leave the organization after a relatively short period of time. Not securing enough time to guarantee that old members show the follower the ropes, knowledge often diminishes. Next to the reasoning based on the internal structure of Studio K, members equally agreed that the financial pressure Studio K found itself in during its opening, caused a change of plans and ideals. Members were forced to constantly stay aware of the financial threats which pushed them to concentrate on lucrative projects:

'In the first place, I think this is because of the fact that we thought Studio K was bigger. Not bigger in the sense that we are housed in a big building, but in the sense that we overestimated our possibilities. I think that the first business plan did not take into account the fact that money is needed for the organization. One needs money first before a plan can be executed. So that is why recently the plan has been modified to primarily focus on activities that bring in the money we need. And to be honest, I think these are activities that are not rooted in the neighborhood, since the 'Indische Buurt' is not a rich neighborhood, it is not the place where people want to spend their money on thing we do.' (Interview 08.06.2010/ 18:54)

The interviewees described community activities as not being of direct financial value to the organization and argued that they have been therefore let go. Another argument they gave, is that community projects did not result in a success. The reasoning here is that members want to receive something in exchange for their engagement and if not in money, they want to have enthusiastic neighbors joining their activities. It seems as if a number of members regarded it as

a waste of their breath to continue community related activities. Interviewees supposed that the diverse neighborhood has already found its place somewhere else and that they felt more comfortable following their routine and possibly would have continued visiting their neighborhood centers and small cafés anyway:

‘Studio K did a lot of effort to do just that. However, we give them, the neighborhood, the opportunity to respond to our activities, but did they really appreciate it!? If not, it is not strange that the Studio K members think; we did our best, but from now on we are gonna focus on those groups who find us interesting enough to work with’ (Interview 08.06.2010/ 11:30)

In sum, it can be said that the ideal of bonding with the people of the ‘Indische Buurt’ seems to have vanished. On top of that, most interviewees referred to the specific organizational character of Studio K, the background of members and the financial struggle Studio K dealt with during the last years. Most members were hardly familiar with that ambition and attributed a different role to Studio K. They saw Studio K in a position to improve the neighborhood not by bringing people in touch but by attracting a new social class.

The outsiders’ perceptions

Asked to describe the role Studio K plays within its neighborhood, outsiders mainly affirmed the assumptions made by members of the organization. The Timorplein (the square on which the building is situated) was described as a prime example of how a neighborhood can be stimulated by providing new facilities that attract a different social class. Bringing new people to ‘Indische Buurt’, it was argued, the whole neighborhood would benefit as the economic capacity expands. Respondents of Ymere describe Studio K as new cultural and economic heart of the ‘Indische Buurt’. Studio K was described as one of the driving forces behind the change for it improved the image of the neighborhood. Studio K seems of clear relevance to Ymere for they promote their housing projects with the urban sphere that entered the Eastern Part of Amsterdam. Housing advertisement does therefore always refer to Studio K as a leisure centre in the close neighborhood. However, entrepreneurs, situated in the same complex as Studio K, were more critical. They also made clear that they saw Studio K as one of the key players concerning the neighborhood revival:

‘I live here for over 10 years now, so I can say that I am familiar with the neighborhood – also with the situation before Studio K came. I have to say that the neighborhood has changed dramatically and Studio K is certainly one of the driving forces in this whole process.’ (Interview, 07.06.2010/ 16:10)

They did however acknowledge that Studio K foremost meets the interests that fit the middle class they belong to:

‘When we came here for the First time and we met the type people we were use to meet. You won’t find that people not that easily in this neighborhood. They go to other places. Now we have more diverse facilities where people are going to because they find them attractive. I remember that we came to this place (Studio K, HL and KB) and we thought: where do all those people come from, do they also live in this neighborhood? Because on the street you see the people from Surinam, and Turkish people. You miss them at Studio K; they don’t go to that place.’ (Interview, 07.06.2010/ 16:10)

They made clear that Studio K pushed the ‘Indische Buurt’ in a particular direction, adding an urban sphere to it. Even though they appreciated their development of their neighborhood, they stayed skeptical to what extent Studio K does really represent the overall population of the

neighborhood. They questioned if the progress of the neighborhood had been evaluated equally positive by the total of the population.

In contrast to the entrepreneurs, a member of the Timorplein Community, a group organizing community activities around Timorplein, discussed if Studio K should strive to attract the diverse neighborhood at all, or if it rather better stick to its function as a cultural centre for the 'elite':

'Alright, the connections of Studio K with the neighborhood... Well, I would like to ask: Why is it that Studio K wants to be the neighborhood's living room? Why is it wrong to say that they want to focus more on the neighborhood's elite; people like me!? We also live in the neighborhood, we are the elite and we Studio K meets our wishes. You can ask yourself the question: is there a link with the majority of the people living in the neighborhood. The majority prefers to stay at home, watch television shows, etc. They belong to a different culture. For me that is an important question: how important is it for Studio K to become the neighborhood's living room?' (Interview 17.05.2010/ 19:00)

The member stressed that the neighborhood change enhanced a feeling of *personal safety*. In line with the entrepreneurs, it was also uttered that new facilities as Studio K made the member feel more at home in the 'Indische Buurt'. Studio K, the member argued, brought other people and new business to the neighborhood, which resulted in an increasing economical power. It was also questioned in how far the member saw the changes as a danger of conflicting interests. The member concluded that there have always been struggling interests but that conflicts have not expanded due to the neighborhood development. The member assumed that the founders of Studio K had not succeeded to implement their ideals in the organization thereby not securing their duration. A change in thoughts and direction, the member supposed, would only be possible if there was to be a shared and moreover clear policy and if cooperation with external organizations was to be embraced more fully:

If Studio K decides to change its vision and mission, for example to become more professional, than you have to make sure that the vision maintains and that the mission is sustainable. One cannot do that in a top-down fashion, and one must be sure that the mission becomes sustainable in cooperation with others.' (Interview 17.05.2010/ 19:00)

This member suggested that a combination of diverse target groups would be possible at Studio K, if each group received enough space to follow its specific interest. Small steps would be necessary to bring people together. In first instance, it would be about stimulating the curiosity towards each other for only then people start leaving their known territory to get to know others.

7. Discussion and conclusion

Overall it became clear that Studio K has not realized a community function in far as the diversity of the 'Indische Buurt' is concerned. They had the impression that it was meant for a specific group of people, leaving out others. They were however not negative about Studio K as they argued that they have their own places to go to. In general, members were not aware of the community function that had been an integral part of the organizational identity described in the first business plan. If they had been familiar with the former interest in community related activities, they agreed that the idea of becoming a community centre had been abandoned in the few years since the opening of Studio K. The ambition outlined in the first business plan is

clearly directed at the accumulation of bridging capital for Studio K is said to accomplish activities that suit highly diverse target groups. Residents have been imaged to conceive Studio K as a chance to connect to other people through shared activities. Moreover, Studio K is supposed to bring new people to the neighborhood as its activities attract students and the middle class.

It can be concluded that community bonding has never been an active focus of Studio K's activity, and therefore is not a characteristic feature of the organizational identity. Members described Studio K as cultural venue for the middle class, thereby defining this particular aspect as being central to their organization. It is also, what members took to be the distinguishing feature of their organization, as they argued that Studio K forms the first cultural centre of its kind within the 'Indische Buurt'. The interview accounts moreover reveal that members understood the interest in cultural activities that are directed towards the urban dweller, as most enduring aspect of their organizational identity. It can be found that the identity as laid out in the first business plan, was not to be a salient feature of the identity of Studio K. Members showed almost no ambition to engage in community strengthening projects. Community activities did not seem of individual importance to members. They argued that key figures would be necessary to motivate others to bond more strongly with the surrounding neighborhood. The community related identity trait had only been internalized by particular individuals amongst the founders and did not manage to spread amongst others.

The talk evolving around Studio K commonly shows a tendency to concentrate on the importance of organizational facilities directed towards the middle class. There was little criticism of the missing community function of Studio K as people argued that the organization played an important role in improving the economical status of the 'Indische Buurt'. The ideal of becoming a place for the whole community, forms no part of the existing dialogue. The utterances of most outsiders resemble the self-image of members of Studio K. If one speaks of identity as a relational notion, integrating the community interest into the identity of Studio K, becomes an even more complicated undertaking. If the outward reflects the chosen identity, the inward, that is the members, are not forced to rethink their chosen path. 'As we have sought to illustrate,' Humphreys and Brown argue, 'one reason why organizations cannot simply be constituted ontologically is that the identity constitutive stories told about organizations also directly impinge on the social identities of their participants. People author narratives not just to account for their organizations and other communities, but to 'enact' versions of themselves and their relationships to other social categories'. Humphreys and Brown, 2002: 439).

Neighborhood and community are too easily taken as Siamese twins, for location does not necessarily implicate community. 'argues that: "As a result, 'local environments *per se* do not induce a specific pattern of behavior, or, for that matter, a distinctive identity' (Blokland 2003: 10). In the case of Studio K, its central location within the 'Indische Buurt' had not created shared public space or generated activities that represent a place-relatedness of the organization. What can be spoken of, however, is the enhancement of the neighborhood and not as such the community. To be a positive influence to all inhabitants of the diverse 'Indische Buurt', Studio K would have needed to show a greater interest in the community. If translated to activities, such an interest can actually influence the bonding process between the community and the organization. Referring to Putnam (2001) it can be said that activities of Studio K are therefore

designed to increase bonding social capital between people that share the same social background. Its identity traits hardly inspire activities that concentrate on bridging social capital, ties that link people across a greater social distance. If Studio K would be to focus on its specific location more seriously, it would have to choose a different way. An effort would have to been made for the creation of bonds between unfamiliar groups and individuals that requests the exertion of all members.

There is a need to reconsider the organizational identity, to talk about the path chosen before being able to also identify with the value of being of importance to the community. 'Crafting cross-cutting identities', Putnam supposes, 'is a powerful way to enable connection across perceived diversity. That is, bridging may depend on finding, emphasizing, or creating a new dimension of similarity within which bonding can occur.' (Putnam 2001: 282) To form an identity that actively includes the diverse community, Studio K will have to start a process of communication with the people by which it is surrounded. In getting to know each other, a shared perspective and moreover space can be concretized. Only under the condition that the identity of Studio K becomes more outward looking, the first business plan can be realized and a process of bonding with the 'Indische Buurt' can commence.

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