

## **Utrecht, the Netherlands: Social Sustainability for the Future**

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### **Abstract**

*As the human population grows across the planet, so does the concern for social sustainability. There is a considerable amount of interest and research that delves deeper into maintaining an open society in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The quest for social sustainability has been executed in a number of fashions including working papers, journals, ethnographic studies, and networking. Aspects of daily interactions that have been researched to procure sustainability for the people living in Utrecht are stratification including social mobility, the community and its strengths, social networking and its applications, urban restructuring and its effects on the population, and the role of language and communication with inclusion of culture for immigrants. These core subjects have repeatedly been investigated and have led to innovative topics for the future that may serve a greater purpose than anticipated. Above all, maintaining the ability to have all resources available increases social cohesion for any population.*

### **1:1 Introduction**

Utrecht is a city that has withstood the sands of time. A modern example of this stamina is the Dom Tower, which represents the Protestant religion and the peace treaty<sup>1</sup> tribute made in 2013 for Utrecht (“History Domplein“, n.d.). This one structure alone is a long-standing pinnacle that has been abandoned and repeatedly restored throughout its history. Much like the city of Utrecht, the Dom Tower has survived its neglect and trials over the years, and continues to be omnipotent in a way (“History Domplein“, n.d.). Revisiting this historical site with heroic efforts gives insight into the level of determination displayed by the people who have lived in Utrecht in the past, and those who continue to live there in the present year of 2015.

Leeuwen & Maas (1997) stated that Utrecht’s occupation concentration has shifted from primarily labor intense positions in the past, to the present being social science positions. Having an occupational core like this allows the people of Utrecht to focus on their city’s social sustainability. Utrecht’s inhabitants have examined the likelihood of social mobility within their stratification system. There are reports on community affairs and social ties affecting local neighborhoods in Utrecht that are available. The social networking taking place in Utrecht has proven to be useful for a lot of people and organizations. The people of Utrecht have also researched urban restructuring versus urban renewal and the effects of displacement for the individuals involved in order to reduce segregation. There are researchers who have also studied the importance of language and communication including cultural background for immigrants in Utrecht. These five key areas discussed above have a significant impact on social sustainability for the population in Utrecht.

In the future, cities from other countries seeking to resolve some of these same issues or concerns will have this research to initiate their development. As social sustainability becomes a vital topic for cities around the world, research emphasizing social interactions proves the usefulness of collective decision-making. Maintaining social cohesion for growing populations is a challenge worthy of everyone’s attention. The theory of having all resources available in Utrecht increases integration and allows for inclusion of different perspectives to become a fresh set of eyes.

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<sup>1</sup> The peace treaty of Utrecht is a series of individual peace treaties signed in 1713 by multiple warring countries including Spain, Great Britain, France, the Austrian Empire, Portugal, Savoy, and the Dutch Republic (Dadson, 2014).

## **2:1 Background**

According to Leeuwen& Maas (1997) research on stratification and social mobility of the Dutch society shows that there were two main theoretical debates concerning social stratification before 1850. This research claims that neither of these theories or debates supersedes the other. The first debate claims that economic position is the sole indicator of one's social position in society. The second debate claims that there were only two social groups before 1850 and that a middle class was largely absent. This theory of debate was due to small amounts of shopkeepers because people did their processing and manufacturing in their home (Leeuwen,& Maas, 1997). An absence of social mobility in the past has not been a deterrent for the city of Utrecht in 2015.

After 1900, and with the coming of the industrial age, this study found that occupation distribution had changed significantly from concentration in labor to a concentration in technical and administrative personnel (Leeuwen,& Maas, 1997). The core of economic activity today in Utrecht, lies in service and non-industrial research, and is most prominent in the fields of life science, health, and sustainable development (Barneveld, 2014). This change in occupation can be seen as the first important movement of social change that made way for what Utrecht is today as a city. Though Utrecht was considered a late bloomer for industrialization in the Netherlands, this city may have been the earliest to start industrializing (Leeuwen,& Maas, 1997). The citizens of Utrecht had started developing a major railroad center shortly after the turn of the century (Leeuwen, & Maas 1997). It would seem Utrecht as a city, took its time getting to where it is now, which is not necessarily a bad thing considering that decisions made in haste tend to overlook and create discrepancies.

Social mobility in the nineteenth century for the people of Utrecht changed from mobility due to marriage or chosen partner, to escaping parental social circles, and eventually to changing social circles due to career field (Leeuwen, & Maas, 1997). Overall social mobility increased in Utrecht from the nineteenth century in both urban and rural areas, but the distance between social groups or stratification had little change during the period of 1850 to 1940. Researchers stated that from the years 1954-1992 the increase of social openness was not the tail of a long movement, but a phenomenon of recent date (Leeuwen, & Maas, 1997). This information reveals social openness is not something that came about and then stopped in Utrecht.

## **3:1 Stratification Including Social Mobility**

Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam are considered the four largest cities in the Netherlands (CBS, 2014)<sup>2</sup>. Utrecht being one of the four largest cities in the Netherlands has witnessed population growth due to continuing urbanization. Though there are other municipalities that have experienced population growth, urbanization has especially manifested for the four largest cities listed above between 2009 and 2014 (CBS, 2014). Immigration also reached an unprecedented level while emigration<sup>3</sup> remained stable in 2014 for the Netherlands (CBS, 2015b). The number of immigrants aside from Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Antillean that are coming from Poland, Romania, and Syria to the Netherlands has increased significantly in 2014. Emigration activity appeared to be on a steady incline, but this activity has tapered off in recent years for the Netherlands (CBS, 2015b). Having this much growth leads to the question of how immigrants are incorporated into the job market.

Gokdemir&Dumludag (2012) found research showing many immigrants in Utrecht work short-term, flexible jobs, which make them more vulnerable to dismissal than native Dutch employees during times of declining employment. However, research found by Kourtit, Nijkamp, & Arribas-Bel (2013) states that more favorable opportunities and network externalities are offered in larger cities that become melting pots of culture and people in the Netherlands. Social networking is a great asset to have when making a name for yourself. This concept can increase the possibility of having all resources available for the betterment of the people involved.

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<sup>2</sup> The Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek (CBS) does not separate statistics according to city in the Netherlands. All cities within the Netherlands are considered part of a whole.

<sup>3</sup> Immigration involves the movement of non-native people into a country in order to settle there. Emigration involves leaving one country or region to settle into another permanently.

International studies by Kourtit, et al., (2013) show that cultural diversity has led to favorable socioeconomic<sup>4</sup> conditions that form complementary opportunities in the market. Moroccan immigrant firms in Utrecht have been defined as “Business Champions”. This term stems from their contributions such as strengthening creative areas, innovations, improving product quality and service, and reducing prices which created competition (Kourtit, et al., 2013). A study of social comparison for Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in Utrecht showed that Moroccan immigrants emphasize similarities they have with the Dutch population (Gokdemir, & Duumludag, 2012). One explanation given for why Moroccans are more content is that they focus on thankfulness, which is encouraged in their Islamic belief system. There is a similar history of Islamic belief system, labor migration, family reunification, and marriage migration reported for Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in Utrecht. This study found that in the end, the Moroccan immigrants are identifying and integrating with the majority population instead of comparing themselves upwardly in socioeconomic status as the Turkish immigrants do. Therefore, the Turkish immigrants focus more on upward social and economic status compared to the Dutch than Moroccan immigrants do (Gokdemir, & Duumludag, 2012). Limiting segregation and the negative effects it causes for minority groups could increase social sustainability long-term. This study has validated the successful integration of Moroccan immigrants in Utrecht.

However, there is still the question of stratification<sup>5</sup> and where the majority of households lie on an income scale for the people of Utrecht. The current population of the Netherlands is 16,907,742 (CBS, 2015a). This information states the majority of households in the Netherlands have an income between 16,000 euros to 20,000 euros (CBS, 2013a)<sup>6</sup>. In essence this is a relatively low income suggesting a high amount of poverty for the people of Utrecht. A poverty survey provided by CBS (2013b) states that the Netherlands experienced a sharp increase of poverty rates in 2011 and 2012 due to the economic crisis that began in 2008. However, the poverty rates for 2013 are expected to weaken, and further reduction is anticipated for 2014 (CBS, 2013b). Recovering from an economic crash may require a great deal of time and efforts that exhaust every possible avenue. In the past economic crashes have devastated populations across the planet. This information posits that the people of Utrecht may have suffered from the economic crash of 2008, but the Dutch remain hopeful and foresee a brighter financial future for their city.

#### **4:1 Community**

There have been many studies done around the world on communities that use their resources to the benefit of all. Though many would not give this a second glance, there is much to appreciate from a firm grip on what keeps people together even if they are unaware of their prosperity. Social capital<sup>7</sup> plays a pivotal role in keeping a community together. Crime rates in Utrecht communities have a significant impact on those who are living there. Perception of social disorganization has a role to play in Utrecht communities as well. The education system in primary schools combined with a health system allows the people of Utrecht a certain freedom within the community. Without the sense of belonging people are left to their own devices that in turn may lead to many problems that could be prevented in the future.

Having social capital in Dutch neighborhoods leads to a cohesive community by means of increased safety to the neighborhood, cleanliness measures improve, physical activity is promoted, and people are medically healthier (Mohnen, Volker, Flap, & Groenewegen, 2012). These benefits listed for the neighborhood can be broken down with a cause and effect explanation. Think about neighborhood crime watches that benefit the entire community and keep many safe who would not necessarily be able to defend themselves on their own or to prevent crime in the first place. If the neighborhood has a strong sense of community and pride in their home, wouldn't they want to keep it clean and presentable instead of watching it degrade before their very eyes? Sharing this sentiment with a neighbor increases the chance that most will become involved in community affairs for the benefit of all.

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<sup>4</sup> Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

<sup>5</sup> Stratification is a system or formation of layers, classes, or categories.

<sup>6</sup> This income equates to between \$16,976.16 and \$21,220.20 in U.S. dollar amount today.

<sup>7</sup> Social capital is the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.

In this environment, people would engage in more outdoor and physical activities to only further that sense of belonging which would decrease stress levels for one. These outdoor activities also promote less smoking and ultimately lead to a more medically healthy Dutch community (Mohnen, et al., 2012). Most people who smoke are resting at the time. Being social and participating in outdoor activities gets smokers outside and away from their habit. The previous statement can be summed up by the saying “A body in motion tends to stay in motion”. Having these social ties helps to alleviate the individual of many self-destructive behaviors in Utrecht.

Studies on crime and delinquency in Utrecht neighborhoods have repeatedly been done by the University of Utrecht. “Crime and Delinquency; Reports” (2012) stated that businesses in Utrecht may attract offenders, but the number of employees for a business may dissuade the offenders. Researchers stated there is a positive relationship between business presence and neighborhood disorder. This study concluded that neighborhood businesses could rival the social disorganization theory<sup>8</sup> (“Crime and Delinquency; Reports”, 2012). Local businesses that have tight-knit groups stand a better chance of deterring criminals in Utrecht.

“Criminology” (2014) revisited neighborhood crime rates in Utrecht for adolescents with a comprehensive approach. This research pool consisted of 603 adolescents (age 12-19), and found parental monitoring, parental limit setting, and parental-adolescent relationship were related to a decrease in time spent in criminogenic<sup>9</sup> settings (“Criminology”, 2014). Parental guidance is extremely important for adolescents that are coming of age in Utrecht. Statistical comparisons between environments for juveniles and adults was also studied at the University of Utrecht (“Crime and Delinquency”, 2015). This research found the likelihood of a juvenile offender targeting an area for burglary is influenced by the proximity to their home, easily accessible targets, and the total number of targets (“Crime and Delinquency”, 2015). This research strengthens the importance of parental guidance for adolescents in Utrecht communities and ventures towards preventing future crimes as well.

Communities in Utrecht face social disorganization just as any other community on this planet might. However, a study done in 74 neighborhoods in Utrecht over a ten year period by Steenbeek & Hipp (2011) indicates that some neighborhoods may experience less disorder than others. This theory can be attributed to residential stability, higher socioeconomic status, and more ethnic homogeneity<sup>10</sup>. This research states that improvements in previous studies have been acquired by distinguishing between the potential for social control (feelings of responsibility) and the actual social control behavior. Communities that experience social disorder face large consequences for subsequent levels of social control and residential stability (Steenbeek, & Hipp, 2011). There is a difference between perception and reality that can be applied to this research for the communities of Utrecht today.

A modern example of how social ties increase the sense of community in Utrecht would be education because this is important for children to be able to succeed as adults. According to Fiske & Ladd (2010) the Netherlands uses weighted student funding (WSF) to finance primary schools. 90% of WSF funding received is from the national government, while only 10% is from municipal government. The WSF funding system stemmed from political struggles over public and private schooling in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The primary goal of this system was to serve large numbers of disadvantaged students with additional resources for school. The Netherlands has been ranked at the top of the UNICEF<sup>11</sup> scales, and Dutch students outperform other students on such tests as PISA<sup>12</sup>, and TIMSS<sup>13</sup>. The Dutch offer preschool programs, homework and guidance for possible early school leavers, enrichment activities, funding for educational areas with substantial numbers of disadvantaged students, language and intercultural education for immigrants, and a public health system including nurses and doctors that work closely with primary schools (Fiske & Ladd, 2010). A Public Health system in schools including not just nurses but doctors as well is quite amazing.

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<sup>8</sup> The social disorganization theory directly links crime rates to neighborhood ecological characteristics; a core principal of social disorganization theory is that place matters.

<sup>9</sup> Criminogenic means (of a system, situation, or place) causing or likely to cause criminal behavior.

<sup>10</sup> Homogeneity is the quality or state of being homogeneous. Homogeneous means of the same kind; alike.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund.

<sup>12</sup> Program for International Student Assessment.

<sup>13</sup> Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

In situations where children need to be seen, traveling far to achieve their goal is all but eliminated. In certain situations, a hospital visit may be required for children. This system for the most part brings the doctor to the student and addresses the needs of the child foremost.

Having this kind of educational system in place for the children of Utrecht provides a multitude of benefits to grow with into adults. These benefits are available to these children right on their home front. Instead of having to go elsewhere, they can have access to what they need, when they need it, and not have to seek them out on their own followed by the discouraging feeling that comes with helplessness. A helping hand in the dark goes a long way for anyone who struggles in this world that becomes cruel at times. Supporting each other only adds to the sense of belonging in the Dutch community because the children and parents have an education system that will support them.

### **5:1 Social Networking**

Another modern influence of social unity in Utrecht would be the diversity of the community. The ethnic composition in the Netherlands changed significantly due to immigration flows following World War II (Zorlu, & Mulder, 2011). This research states that the Netherlands migrants can be grouped into six primary categories ranked according to population size of the country they are from originally. These groups are Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, Antilleans, other non-Western, and Western migrants. Some of these migrants face difficulties when entering Dutch society due to lack of understanding in relation to the native language prior to immigration, adapting to Dutch culture, having less education and high dropout rates, and frequent unemployment rates (Zorlu & Mulder, 2011).

Though these problems do exist, there are social networks available that will help immigrants adapt to the way of life in Utrecht by finding like-minded contacts, Dutch and foreign language classes, cost of living and housing information, as well as social events (Internations, n.d.). Having networks like these in place can promote diversity for these communities by inviting them into the Dutch culture instead of excluding them. The University of Utrecht has a one week period every year called "UtrechtseIntroductieTijd" that orients their students to Utrecht and to the way of life as an attending student whether they are domestic or foreign (Utrecht University, n.d.). This example is yet another way to show that a sense of belonging goes a long way in Dutch society. To become part of a community has virtually unlimited possibilities for the future.

Social networking has allowed the University of Utrecht to gain many scholarly allies from other countries. According to Bleichrodt (2007), an initiative taken by the Dutch universities in 1948, called to thousands of refugee scholars from across the planet. This initiative was named the Utrecht-based University Assistance Fund (UAF), and was mobilized to take action on behalf of intellectuals facing persecution. This initiative allowed refugees to escape a dangerous environment where civil rights have been abused and to continue their academic career that would otherwise be abandoned. The UAF continually campaigns to raise funds within the academic world in order to continue the intellectual development of scholars and scientists (Bleichrodt, 2007). This initiative is a great way to use social networking to the benefit of all. The people of Utrecht are not only focused on their social sustainability, but they have invited others to join them as well in intellectual harmony.

Social networking also grants the people of Utrecht the ability to demonstrate their views on topics that are considered wrong not only to them, but to other people as well. An example of this would be the protest held by 800 people in Utrecht over the Gaza/Israeli conflict ("Pro-Gaza", 2014). The people of Utrecht gathered to demonstrate outside the Ministry of defense to support the people of Gaza. Another example would be the demonstration held by more than a thousand people in Utrecht against the law which would make squatting illegal ("Utrecht", 2009). This demonstration was held just before a decision was made by the senate over the law in question. The freedom involved with social networking can make a great deal of difference for like-minded individuals. Social networking allows the people of Utrecht to come together for great purposes.

Social charity networking plays a big part for those living in poverty in Utrecht. One major player for charity work is the church and their religious network within the community (Wiepking, & Maas, 2009). Religious organizations are notoriously known for having large social networks and for being a helping hand for members of the community. Freedom to express religion in the first place is very important to many people. Another example is having an extended social network, in general, which can also be due to higher education and resources available to the affluent (Wiepking, & Maas, 2009).

Social networks based on charity work build relationships between people and further the sense of belonging to something greater than individual needs in Utrecht. This collective attitude brought on by networking allows for perspectives that are unknown to become known.

There are also many more organizations available to either donate to or work with as a volunteer in Utrecht. Some examples of what the organizations in Utrecht focus on are leadership development for women, encouraging youth members to take initiative in their community, movements for peace, as well as environmental concerns that affect the community (Charity, n.d.). Charity organizations can give resources that individuals need such as clothing, shelter, safety, food, and water. This charity work not only gives those in poverty who struggle a fighting chance, but it gives them the sense of belonging because these organizations are not just focused on immediate needs. The long-term needs people acquire through these organizations can lead to a successful future which promotes the sense of community and the use of all resources available.

### **6:1 Urban Restructuring**

In terms of urban restructuring in Utrecht, Kempen & Weesep (1994) found that it was the lesser evil compared to renewed suburbanization. Urban restructuring resulted in the social housing sector being expanded, an elaborate system of the housing market regulations were adopted, and diverse housing subsidies were instituted. Urban restructuring policies and measures have been implemented and repeatedly studied in order to reduce residential segregation in Utrecht and to increase assimilation for the parties involved (Beckhoven, & Kempen, 2003; Bolt, & Kempen, 2010; "Urban Planning", 2014; Kempen, & Weesep, 1994). Revisiting this issue continually, confirms the Dutch interest in social sustainability. This research posits the Dutch have and still are using urban restructuring as a method of action to dispel segregation in Utrecht.

One concern that has been addressed for urban restructuring and integration of communities in Utrecht is network governance<sup>14</sup>. Bortel, Mullins, & Rhodes (2009) stated the power within network organizations behind urban restructuring can lead to hierarchical relationships. Hierarchical relationships create inequalities within these groups and can mask state dominance and steering. In this case, local government would have the strongest role to play by refusing necessary permissions needed for urban restructuring. However, requests for understanding of democratic anchorage during decision-making and further development of network governance methodologies have been addressed. Research on adopting and developing network governance paradigms has been highly beneficial to the pursuit of equality (Bortel, et al., 2009). To have the people of Utrecht realize there may be inequalities lurking in the background is quite impressive. Dissolving inequalities like this is extremely important for social cohesion.

Urban restructuring involves demolition of low-cost, social rented housing units, and leads to displacement of the residents ("Urban Planning", 2014). However, for a short period urban restructuring displacement disrupts social activities and contacts for youth. The youth that are displaced by urban restructuring in Utrecht are flexible and soon begin to create new contacts and participate in activities in their new neighborhood. Research concluded that long-term effects of displacement are limited for the residents in Utrecht ("Urban Planning", 2014). A study done on neighborhood social capital concluded that residents who live in an area for more than 6 years or less than 22 years have benefited the most in terms of social capital gains (Mohnen, et al., 2012). This period could be attributed to newcomers finding their niche and building long-term relationships. The elderly, in this case, may have all the contacts they need, or they may be physically limited. Overall, urban restructuring focuses on desegregation and the creation of new social contacts in Utrecht between the native and immigrant citizens.

Utrecht being the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in the Netherlands, has a 35% poverty rate for children 17 years of age and under (Visser, Bolt, & Kempen, 2013). Research that follows low-income families who are forced to relocate shows that these families are generally satisfied with their new location, but there is a disruption of social contacts from their old neighborhood. This research has also found that moving to less deprived areas decreases the crime rates, drug trafficking rates, poverty levels from 61% to 27%, and school dropout rates for the youth. The Dutch youth value forced moving to new homes or dwellings as much better at 40.2% and better at 39.3%. The Dutch adult opinion of forced relocation is lower than the youth due to disruption of social contacts which may not be a bad thing considering the crime rates (Visser, et al., 2013).

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<sup>14</sup> Network governance is interfirm coordination that is characterized by organic or informal social system, in contrast to bureaucratic structures within firms and formal contractual relationships between them.

Overall, there are many benefits to relocation for the community because of safety, crime, education, and living status in Utrecht. The loss of previous social ties should be considered in part because not all neighborhoods are centered on crime, and some of those relationships may mean a great deal to the people of Utrecht.

### ***7:1 Language in Conjunction with Communication***

The role of language for immigrants in Utrecht is significant in many ways. Mohnen, Volker, Flap, Subramanian, & Groenewegen (2013) stated in a study of neighborhood social capital that the population pool of neighborhoods is approximately 81.8% Dutch citizens and 18.2% Western/Non-Western citizens, which can be divided into 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Western, as well as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Non-Western (Mohnen, et al., 2013). Researchers have concluded that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation minorities from concentrated ethnic areas have weaker majority language proficiency (Vervoort, 2012). This language barrier is counterproductive for immigrants in Utrecht, which leads to the discussion of language in the classroom.

The role of language in primary school has an immense impact on the children attending. Ahern (2014) stated that Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in primary schools emerged progressively from the understanding that all learning is content and language integrated learning. This learning program offers rich learning experiences for children, caters to the needs of increasingly diverse student population, involves home language use, and follows the potential learning difficulties or advantages for every student. The CLIL process involves the deconstruction of content, joint construction of content, independent construction of content, and spoken interaction in the classroom (Ahern, 2014). Implementing this learning system allows minority children to integrate while keeping their cultural views intact. The children using this system are allowed to break down what they are being taught, and to voice their opinion on the content chosen for them to learn, with the support of the teacher and classmates. If minorities are portrayed and addressed in primary schools in Utrecht, then they should be equally portrayed and addressed in the adult world as well.

Effectively communicating positive stereotypes for minorities increases their chance of successful integration. Verkuyten & Martinovic (2012) did a study on Muslim immigrants and ethnic identification in the Netherlands. This study showed that higher ethnic identification is associated with higher national identification, stronger endorsement of Dutch liberal practices, and more positive stereotypes about the Dutch outgroup (Verkuyten, & Martinovic, 2012). Though it is difficult to influence stereotypes on fear and crime through policy, it is vital that policies do not unintentionally reproduce or strengthen them (Brands, Schwanen, & Van Aalst, 2015). All humans use a variety of stereotypes, which are mental shortcuts called heuristics<sup>15</sup>. How humans use their stereotypes in social settings impacts those they encounter. This motto for equality in Dutch Policy is a statement between the native Dutch and the minority groups living there and furthers that continual bloom spoken of earlier.

According to Graaff, Francke, Muijsenbergh, & Geest (2012) immigrants in Utrecht face language and communication issues when having their health care needs met by health care professionals. Research found that patients with a Turkish or Moroccan background tend to speak little Dutch. This discrepancy leads to conversations in triads, which ultimately makes communication difficult for all involved. This multilingual communication triangle of patient-family-care provider complicates the bridging of differences in care perceptions. Professional care providers are encouraged to explore their conventions, and those of patients and their relatives (Graaff, et al., 2012). This encouragement promotes initiative for health care workers to seek information that will not only benefit themselves, but their patients and family members as well. Ultimately, this will bring everyone to the same page and leave no one out in the cold.

Verhagen, JG Ros, Steunenbergh, Laan, & De Wit (2014) stated that further research is also needed for the interpretation of ethnic variations in health care use. This interpretation can be done by taking medical need, patient treatment preferences, and treatment adherence into account (Verhagen, et al., 2014).

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<sup>15</sup> In psychology, heuristics are simple, efficient rules which people often use to form judgements and make decisions. They are mental shortcuts that usually involve focusing on one aspect of a complex problem and ignoring others.

This statement suggests that the cultural values of immigrants need to be incorporated into their treatment plan for effective communication in the future. The Utrecht Summer School 2015 (n.d.) created a course for students called “Migration, Integration, and Ethnic Relation” that can be taken this August (2015). In this course students will learn “reasons for international migration, modes of immigrant adaptation and acculturation, identity, religion, stereotyping, discrimination, inequality, radical right wing voting, and inter-ethnic contacts” (Utrecht Summer School 2015, n.d.). This course would be highly comprehensive to anyone who has an interest in social science, cultural variations, and possibly for health care employees that struggle with communication issues because of limited understanding. This course can also be seen as an ongoing commitment to social equality in Utrecht. The more humans learn about each other, the better their chances are of achieving social cohesion.

Lamkaddem, Spreuwenberg, Deville, Foets, & Groenewegen (2012) proposed an idea in their study of perceived quality of care in the Netherlands. Tests on the role of the health system of reference were conclusive, showing that patients accustomed to another health care system have different expectations in regards to health care (Lamkaddem, et al., 2012). Immigrants coming from another health care system is one explanation that may solve part of the communication error between immigrants, their family, and the healthcare team in Utrecht. One possibility for the future would be to integrate information and techniques from other health care systems directly into a patient’s medical record. This integration would make the health care team aware from the beginning of what system these people are used to.

This theory could potentially minimize the chaos involved with changing systems for immigrants and improve the quality of patient care provided by medical staff in Utrecht. The University of Utrecht began studying five dimensions of integration in the health human resources (HHR) policy that are needed (“Health and Society”, 2013). These dimensions to be studied were listed as system, occupational, sector, gender, and socio-cultural integration (“Health and Society”, 2013). All of these topics are significant to every individual because they all apply to every human on this planet. This information reveals that health care research is being conducted on this issue, but that projects this size take time to gather the data and formulate proper policy regulation for the future. However, there is no doubt the Dutch will revisit this research after it has been completed, as they have done before with many other projects in Utrecht.

### ***8:1 Conclusion***

Successful integration of immigrants including language and methods of communication that include culture, desegregation of neighborhoods, strong communities with positive attitudes, social networking to benefit all, and redistribution of wealth through urban restructuring will lead the city of Utrecht to the desired level of sustainability and beyond. All of these key topics even out the playing field for the people of Utrecht. However, the Dutch interest discussed surpasses expectations in regards to this topic. Utrecht as a city may face the discovery of future challenges in regard to social sustainability. There is no doubt that when a challenge arrives in the future for the city of Utrecht, it will be promptly addressed. Efforts to eliminate such a disturbance will only magnify the fortitude Utrecht’s inhabitants have displayed.

The future of social sustainability is one of import to all nations existing on planet earth. The claim for sustainability is not true for many cities around the world which results in constant conflict. With extreme population growth appears many concerns for the future sustainability of the human race as a whole, not just specific groups. Consequentially a disastrous scale of events may result in populations around the world if sustainability efforts are ignored. The research discussed here has illuminated many benefits to social sustainability in the city of Utrecht alone. Now, imagine the effects of social sustainability on a global scale.



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