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Understanding uncertainty: on the manifestations, antecedents, and consequences of cognitive uncertainty experiences of social care professionals

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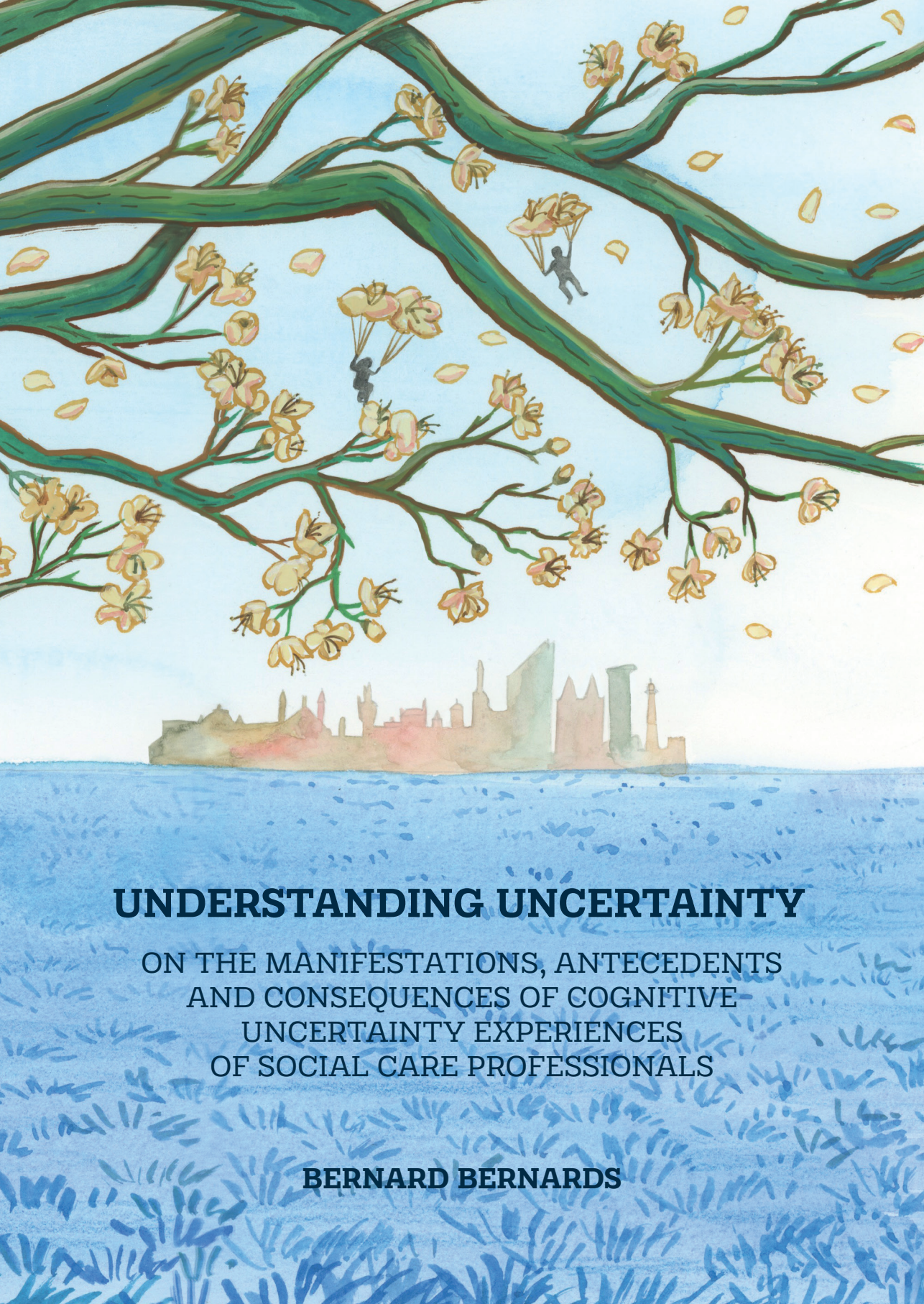
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UNDERSTANDING UNCERTAINTY

ON THE MANIFESTATIONS, ANTECEDENTS
AND CONSEQUENCES OF COGNITIVE
UNCERTAINTY EXPERIENCES
OF SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONALS

BERNARD BERNARDS



The decentralization of social care in the Netherlands has had a major impact on the professionals working in this field. This dissertation examines this impact by specifically focusing on the cognitive uncertainty experiences of social care professionals. It shows that cognitive uncertainty is a multi-faceted concept that covers different domains of the work and can have multiple sources. Contrary to the frequently expressed view in the literature on bureaucracy, this dissertation shows that rules do not reduce cognitive uncertainty. Leadership of team leaders, in contrast, can reduce cognitive uncertainty experiences of professionals. Moreover, leadership plays a key role in managing cognitive uncertainty. When properly managed, cognitive uncertainty can prove highly valuable as it can spur innovation and thus contribute to achieving the goals set in the decentralization of social care in the Netherlands.