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EDITORIAL

This first 2023 Journal of Social Intervention presents a peer reviewed article, three book reviews and an interview in our section Innovation in Practice and Education (IWO). In a sense all the authors write about power dynamics.

In the peer reviewed research article *Perceptions of informal coercion among care users and mental health professionals*, Liesel Vandekerkhove, Jürgen Magerman, Wouter Vanderplasschen and Dirk Meesen focus on the power dynamic between client and professional. Results show that informal coercion can be experienced in a supportive way when certain preconditions are met, but that professionals have limited insight into how their actions are received by care users. The article argues that reducing the use of power in psychiatric care asks for systematic reflection in which care users and their network should participate. It also suggests that professional proximity and alignment with the needs of the client are key in using informal coercion in a respectful and reflective manner.

In our book review section Rick Kwekkeboom discusses the effects of legislative changes, implemented in 2015, within the Dutch social domain. Overall, the reviews paint a discerning image of a power dynamic between policy and practice. The dissertation, *Omwille van fatsoen: De staat van menswaardige zorg*, contains an impressive outline of the formation of the Dutch welfare state. The author, Willemijn van der Zwaard, also meticulously describes the daily reality of a social

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work practice to illustrate the effects of the legislative changes. She is critical of the Dutch welfare state and argues that it pressurizes the human dignity it wants to guarantee.

Five years after the implementation, Mariska Kromhout, Patricia van Echelt en Peteke Feijten researched to what extent the expectations of these changes were met. The picture painted in the report of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP), *Sociaal domein op koers? Verwachtingen en resultaten van vijf jaar decentraal beleid*, is rather bleak. It gives an image of drastic, complex and sometimes confusing changes. Kwekkeboom points out that although the findings are valuable, the report disregards the professionals in the social domain.

The review of the updated Dutch professional profile of the social worker, written on behalf of the professional association of social workers (BPSW), gives more insight into how the legislative and policy changes effected the social work profession. Laura Koeter and Ton Flierman outline what professionals consider to be the collective core of their profession. Kwekkeboom states that this profile clarifies what can and cannot be expected of social workers and that policy makers should take it into consideration before they make changes that will impact the social functioning of (vulnerable) citizens.

For our IWO section Annica Brummel interviewed Sonja van Rooijen, Jeroen de Haan-Rissmann and Mariël van Pelt, all of whom are involved in the Dutch Knowledge and Research Agenda for Social Work (also see our call for state-of-the-art papers on p. 39). Among other things the interview points out that there should be a balance between scientific, practice based and experiential knowledge to ensure the value of the agenda. A power dynamic in the social domain in which researchers and professionals think and act for instead of with (vulnerable) citizens, is still seen too often.

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