

The im/possibilities of imagining university futures: leadership discourses of utopia and dystopia in the liminal space of a pink pandemic

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Leadership in the entrepreneurial university: diversity and disengagement

- ARC Discovery with 3 Australian case study universities: Group of 8 (elite established 1850s), Utech (Technical Institutes became Universities post 1989), Regional (established post 1960)
- Interviews (n= 150) and desktop study of websites
 - VC down to post grad students (research, teaching and line management leaders across all disciplines e.g. Deans) including professors, research centre leaders
 - EO/Diversity, NTEU reps and HR
 - Indigenous units
 - Policy makers: Universities Australia, Learned Academies
 - Headhunters (Search firms: gatekeepers)
- thematic analysis and biographical narratives how contemporary leaders were managing challenges facing HE, how leadership was perceived by academics
- Leadership was lens to analyses change management and impact on academic work
- Theoretically : feminist re-reading of Bourdieu, critical organizational theory new contractualism
- **Australia significant case study: outside regional governance (EU, NAFTA, ASEAN), voluntary structural adjustment, HE unification), reliant on international education**

Vulnerability of (Australian) Higher Education: “pre-covid”

- *Massification*: unification of sector post-1989 , trebling numbers, student staff ratios x4
- Reduced *funding* of universities and research (Australia lowest in OECD(2.1-1.9 % R& D)
- *Volatile policy environment*: changes in government, financial crises, trade agreements...
- *Third mission*: diversify funding sources and *partnerships* in industry, edu-businesses (KPMG, Deloitte, Pearson....), NGOs and philanthropic organisations
- Reliance of Anglophile nations on international students (Education is 3rd largest Export in Australia and first in Victoria)
- *Internationalisation*: offshore campuses commercialising curriculum etc (Australia assumes instrumentalist rather than idealist or educationalist approach)
- *New competition* : Asian, SE Asian and South American (Brazil) : ‘return diaspora’
- *Global Ranking (VC fetish to be ‘world class’)*: research reputation creating hyper-performativity
- *Digitalisation*: Online developments (MOOCs, on/off campus), AI, data and learning analytics, cybersecurity, automated responses eg. Genie
- *Innovative learning environments*. : open planning, built environment to seduce students on campus, flipped classrooms, airless offices without bookshelves or pen desk plan offices for academics etc
- *Privatisation*: new competitors, microcredentials, , loss of post graduate markets
- *Graduate employability*: degree is no guarantee, longer time before employed (18-36 months), ‘the global auction’ – WIL, internships, 21st C skills adding value to university and student

Changing political, socio-cultural and economic context

- *Emerging Post truth era* ' My opinion is equivalent to your expertise' challenges authority of expertise legitimization of knowledge (*RealPeerReview*) and conspiracy theories challenge legitimacy of science
- First Challenges to patriarchy with *#MeToo*: calling out of sexual harassment, discrimination, unconscious bias and growing awareness of overt and organised vitriolic and misogynist trolling
- Australian cultural sensibility : science equated to innovation
 - *Anglo-American conventions...[restrict] the term 'science' in its central or paradigmatic meaning to the natural sciences, in contrast to the European practice of seeing as equally deserving of the label 'scientific knowledge-seeking' those modes of systematic ... inquiry that are favored in the social sciences and even in humanities and arts.(Sandra Harding (1991: 306)*
- Instrumentalist view feeds into neoliberal notions of usefulness, instrumentalism and vocationalism if not anti-intellectualism
 - *This bi-partisan utilitarianism of government was tinged with anti-intellectualism as articulated by professors and university executives: 'This lack of respect felt by leaders and academics alike from government is undoubtedly linked to government positioning HE as a cash cow and the absence of creative thinking and generative policy for the HE sector' (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, DVC, Go8).*
- *Rise of the New right*: resistance of religious, white socially conservative masculinities, see universities as site of political correctness, ongoing culture wars over Indigenous, feminist and postcolonial knowledges, social and unlikely coalition of Murdoch media, rise of right extremism (neo Nazism) and conspiracy theorists.



Response of executive managers to uncertainty: organisational restructuring to achieve 'efficiencies', 'distinctiveness' and control what they can – academics

- *Corporatisation* (Managerialism and markets now entrenched in everyday practices of the university) (managing image and reputation)
 - *Strategic planning and research centres*: prioritise funded research, inclusions/exclusions, captured in notion of 'alignment' of research with faculty, university and government objectives
 - *Restructuring into larger Faculties* under executive Deans (clumping arts, education, social sciences, welfare etc in one of 4-5 Faculties) reduces academic voice in committee systems up
 - *Focus with research assessment* moved from
 - quantity to quality to excellence
 - quantification to datafication to financialisation
 - pure to applied
 - engagement to impact
 - Unification and sameness but increasing differentiation
- 

Executive power: to be nimble and world class

- *Serial restructuring*, critical university studies show, there has been an increase in the size and powers of executive management
- *Proliferation of DVC PVC positions* (Partnerships and Engagement, Graduate Employability, International, Research Integrity, Indigenous...)
- Increases administration and policy initiatives across multiple fronts that academics have to address and respond to
- Forging industry partnerships leads to external recruitment of those without academic careers from industry into executive teams.
- reduced the influence of intellectual leadership (earned through research and teaching) relative to academic leadership (gained through positional leadership) (Bourdieu) (academic boards are only about quality assurance) (Rowlands 2016)
- equity as an institutional asset or a form of individualised social capital as embodied in the entrepreneurial woman-manager and academic
- Even when women in formal leadership, a gender division of labour remains at the executive level,
 - women managing the domestic labour of teaching and learning, quality etc.
 - men manage research and external face of the university.



Leadership or leaderism

- *'The cultural ideology of leaderism suggests that certain subjectivities, values, behaviours, dispositions and characteristics can strategically overcome institutional inertia, outflank resistance and recalcitrance and provide direction for new university futures' (Morley 2013).*
- **Note**
 - no strong empirical research base on leadership, strategic planning and change in HE
 - higher education leadership literature draws from corporate studies which focus on strategic thinking and management in generic terms
 - does not address the complex set of roles, accountabilities and stakeholders in universities
 - Professional development of leaders undertaken by corporate consultants
 - Selection of key staff (head-hunters)

Gender injustice and division of labour in executive roles 2016

<i>Position</i>	<i>% of women</i>
Vice-Chancellor	25
DVC (Academic)	44
DVC (International)	31
DVC (Research)	36
DVC (Corporate)	21
Average percentage of women	31.4

► Source: Universities Australia 2016

VCs in UK and Australia are white, male and from STEMM



Epistemic bias in selection: DVC research

A senior Australian Research Council bureaucrat argued, for a DVC Research, science skills were essential because

'this discipline is where numerical and analytical skills are developed' and a science background means a person can 'get their head around difficult concepts' whereas those from HASS humanities are 'not exposed to the same level of research activity'.



Competing Logics

- *Corporate logic of managerialism* : alignment of all aspects of teaching and research and third mission with university and national priorities (funding, research assessment, promotion, performance management...), loyalty to university
- *Techno-administrative logic of digital governance (third space administrators of research, engagement etc)* : consistency and standardisation, learning management systems, templated teaching, non-user-friendly administrative software, learning analytics, digital data bases , brokers partnerships
- *Collegial logic of academic practice*: collaboration, inquiry, criticality, peer review, mentoring, professing, advocating ...loyalty beyond university to profession or discipline



Impact on academics

- *Gift economy*: collegiality (peer review) and communities of practice continues under changing work conditions of the *gig economy* (privatisation of time, cost and labour as we work at home)
- *Intensification* of workload due to
 - continual escalating of demands for quality of teaching, research and service (engagement)
 - widening scope of work to include industry partnerships, winning research income, service to community, engagement, impact
 - scaling up expectations to gain international reputation and collaborations (rewards mobility)
- *Unbundling* of academic work: teaching only, teaching and research, and research only: early choices can have long term consequences (for women in particular) ie. pathways into tenure
- Constant *upskilling* of technology and online *compliance* regimes
 - *downloading* of administration onto individual academics
 - increased *surveillance*
 - *standardisation*
- *Financialisation*: every aspect of academic work is valued according to \$ (income in and out)
- 'Being nimble' at executive level means *Institutional flexibility*:
 - labour precarity
 - flexibility about where and when you work invades personal time at home— 'no stopping work'

A precarious life :
academic
casualisation in
Australia

- 2000-16
 - Student numbers rose by 85.5% while FTE staff (including casual) increased 56.3%.
 - student-staff ratios increased by 36%
 - 2000 - 2017
 - limited term contracts increased by 83.4%,
 - FTE casuals increased by 77.9%
 - tenured FTE increased by 39.5%.
- 2019: 67% academics either contract or casual
(NTEU 2018)

Gender effects: it is not a 'woman problem'!

- **Structural and cultural impediments** in context of the changing nature, function and authority of the university lead to
 - the notion of merit (success) narrowing with quantification of everything (ERA: quality, impact and engagement; workload measures)
 - norm of exceptionalism: 'exceptional woman' (usually single, no kids, retired partner, or can afford home child-care)
 - forever escalating expectations for quality (research) while increasing quantity (teaching)
 - enduring if not intensifying work/family conflict: health and wellbeing
 - widening scope of academic work – entrepreneurial, impact, engagement, internationalisation, partnerships, etc (Johnson 2017, Jarboe et al 2017).
 - 'disengagement with leadership : *I do not want to become like that*' – *managerial habitus*

Real problem

- privilege incumbents
- overrepresentation of Anglo- men in leadership

Disenfranchisement, Disengagement, Discontent & Dissent

- Shift from intellectual capital to managerial capital e.g. parallel lines of decisionmaking
 - line management (HoS to VC) responsible for staffing, funding and policy
 - Academic Board responsible for domestic labour of quality assurance
- Failure of executives to call upon expertise of academics ie not distributed leadership
- Academics view management as requiring compliance to line management ie. 'managerial habitus'
- General discontent about the trend to performance management, compliance, accountability
- Commercialisation changing the public role of the university
- Administrative overload detracting form core work
- Intensification of labour and workload, unpaid 'structural overtime'
- Concern over academic freedom (e.g. Murdoch university, whistleblowers etc)
- Growing dissent leading to activism (AAUP, Conferences, manifestos, CAPA..)

Leadership: mistrust and misalignment

- Academics are in an ambiguous and ambivalent relationship with the university as an institution and its management
- academics are experts within their field and leaders (university and in community) but expertise within university not recognized in university change management – call on management consultants

Policies demanding consistency and compliance are therefore not well regarded if there is no strong evidence base or rationale. Hence a sense of disenchantment with the change processes mobilised by management exists, even at the professorial level (Evans 2018).

- THE 2018 survey (available online)
 - ‘around four in ten university employees feel unable to make their voices heard within their institutions
 - academics sought less stressful work
 - Stress factors identified were reduced autonomy, lack of role clarity, lack of support, work relationships and lack of say in decision making e.g., job control + job insecurity.
 - Gender was significant with females experiencing greater work-life conflict.
 - mental health issues such as depression due to work-life conflict, lack of time and lack of consultation regarding work practices.
 - the psychological contract of universities providing safe and caring workplaces no longer as market contractualism dominates

Pre-Covid State of Universities

- *Disinvestment* in HE since 2012 leading to reliance on international students and student growth to fund research
- increased *social inequality* in affluent societies : access
- *New right*: religious, white masculinities viewing universities as site of political correctness, culture wars over Indigenous, feminist and postcolonial knowledges, social and Murdoch media, rise of right extremism, and conspiracy theories challenge legitimacy of science
- *divisive politics* of fear (immigration, border control vs refugees)
- universities challenged to act on *#MeToo*: calling out of sexual harassment, discrimination, unconscious bias..
- Ridiculous *salaries* of Australian VCs relative to academics (\$1-1.5m) highest in world
- *Post truth era* ' My opinion is equivalent to your expertise' challenges authority of expertise (*RealPeerReview*)
- female (feminists in particular) academics attacked anonymously by orchestrated vitriolic and misogynist trolling
- HASS being squeezed out
- Changing relationship and contract between the individual and the state in education: privatization of costs, lack of reciprocity of care ie implicit psychological contract

Covid-19 exposed Carelessness of governments and university managers

- Exposed the vulnerability of Australian HE
 - Casualisation of staff (400 continuing positions on average in 39 universities: 17,300 in 2020 another 20,000 on contract and casual not renewed (THE 2020 3 Dec)
 - Research funding decimated as
 - Legislation disallows cross subsidisation of research from teaching (10%)
 - No international students to fund university based investment
 - Overload of administration work on academics
 - Over-investment in built environment now superfluous
 - Inhospitable open plan workplaces proven more dysfunctional
 - Partial moves to blended learning (elite focus on experiential to be distinctive) now a major issue
 - Reliance on gift economy of academics - unpaid 'structural overtime'
 - Health and wellbeing of academics poor (second to health workers)

Political leadership and Covid-19

- Australian PM (ScoMo) failed test of 2019 bushfires so responded quickly:
 - Closed border and told international students to go home
 - Changed rules to exclude universities from Jobkeeper
 - put economy first
 - Partisanship in response to different states
 - National cabinet and working parties with business and unions disintegrated
 - Refusal to take responsibility for gross mismanagement (aged care, sports-ports, robodebts) and evidence of secretive government, no accountability and attacks on whistleblowers
- State governments put health first (economy is subsumed by society)
 - responsibility for managing pandemic
 - Worked together
 - Shared knowledge
 - NSW Health had not been privatized/outsourced and under funded as had Victorian public service in 1990s Kennett)
 - A healthy society leads to economic benefits

Indigenous leadership

- Indigenous knowledges after wildfires recognized as critical to addressing climate change
- Black Lives Matter movement echoed in Australia with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peacefully marching in recognition of 432 *Australian Aboriginal Black Deaths in Custody*,
- The Indigenous health leaders immediate lockdown from external access to protect an exceptionally vulnerable population in the Northern Territory
- agreement negotiated with government over community based -health management.
- Indigenous self-management is critical for Makarrata (truth telling process)
- Indigenous leadership offers as a two-way process of dialogue and practices that are inclusive of all stakeholders, discussion and resolution (Uluru Statement from the Heart 2017)



Intellectual leadership

- Academics shared research internationally
- Scientists at the forefront providing strategic advice to government about how to 'flatten the curve' and economic 'recovery'
- Go8 professors provided the government with potential scenarios
- Australian Council of Learned Academies : Rapid Research Information Forums advising new National Cabinet.
- Public health professors in front of premiers on daily briefings for 18 months
- Celebrity scientists etc



University leadership

- Government left it up to VCs to restructure: deep antagonism to third export earner
- Individual VCs strategies –alternatives offered: voluntary and involuntary redundancies, alter EB, defer increment , pay cut of 10%, taking leave etc..
- Union agreement only worked for 4 universities, academics did not trust VCs, some symbolic reduction in pay of a few senior managers
- Increased consultation forced on executives because of EB : Academics felt still not listened to when asked to provide ideas
- Appealed to academics to do even more with less to move fully online
- Support for international students varied : reliance on philanthropic /community
- Lack of united front from Universities Australia (Go8 divisive)
- *Government Job Ready Legislation* doubled costs of Arts degrees and halved for science and education!! Ideology not good policy
- Predicted perverse effects have been for languages and arts to be cut but also science courses

Failure of neoliberal individualism and competition

Pandemic indicated the relative strength of democratic institutions in Australia, countering longer term lack of trust in politicians, churches, banks etc..

- Willingness individuals to relinquish some freedoms for the public good
- Required strong state intervention
- Privatization does not work (aged care, public health)
- Gig economy was primary facilitator of spread of virus
- Social cohesion and voluntarism: role of philanthropy, individuals and ethnic groups
- Role of public ABC central for fires, floods and pandemic
- Insidious links between anti-science conspiracy theorists, anti vaxxers and new right
- Gendered division of labour at work and home: pink pandemic
- Discourse shifted from money to people, social growth to economic growth and not vv
- Government solutions were 'blue recovery' ie gendered!(construction, apprenticeships)
- Academic collaborative response based on their professional responsibility to the public



Collective leadership

- Student and community activism : Black Lives Matter movement echoed in Australia with Indigenous Deaths in Custody marches
- Coalition of climate scientists and cooperation across borders
- AAUP : academic freedom, whistleblower at Edith Cowan
- Community responses to support international students, homeless etc
- Restored sociality and sense of civic culture and sense of responsibility for others during lockdowns

Critical

Leadership in HE

*-critical thinking
capacity*

-criticality disposition

*(ethics, self
reflection)*

*-Socio-cultural
dimension (inquiry,
theory and
pedagogy)*

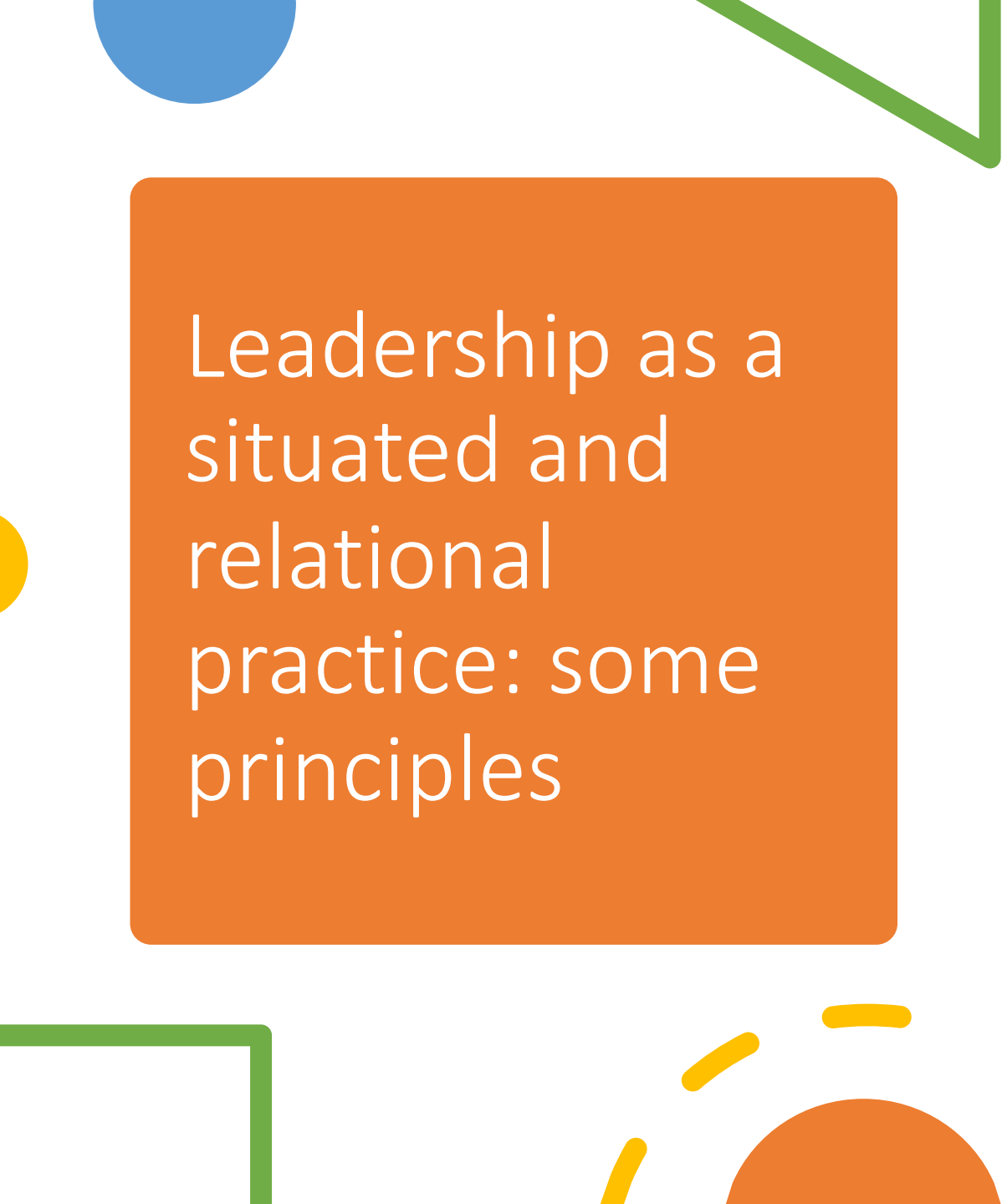
(Jameson 2018)

- Being a buffer or protect academics and students from external pressures by uncritically aligning with policy logic while maintaining integrity of the university mission to the public
- Being reflexive on position and practice eg. whiteness and masculinity
- recognising multifaceted and diverse knowledges and knowledge practices and benefits of diverse ontologies, politics, identities and bodies
- Recognising ‘being critical’ is not just being oppositional but is core academic and leadership work
- recognising expertise within the university to inform more participatory processes in which change and the role of the university comes to be owned by academics
- Being a listener by establishing processes with meaningful feedback loops tracking the impact of changes and evaluating how new initiatives impact academic work
- Re-engaging with collegiality, the social glue of academic practice
- Being inclusive of people from varied backgrounds on a participatory parity basis throughout all ranks and divisions of an organisation.



Globally responsible university

- Gender and Ethno-racial Diversity in leadership produces better decisions
- reframe innovation policy to include social innovation ie significant role of humanities, creative arts and social sciences in producing the good society
- integrate SDG goals throughout university strategic plans and mission
- Make equity scorecard central to all planning and KPIs of managers
- focus on social responsibilities for all stakeholders of universities
- interdisciplinary research network/knowledge centre on the role of university in the global knowledge-based society, through joint research, training and experience sharing



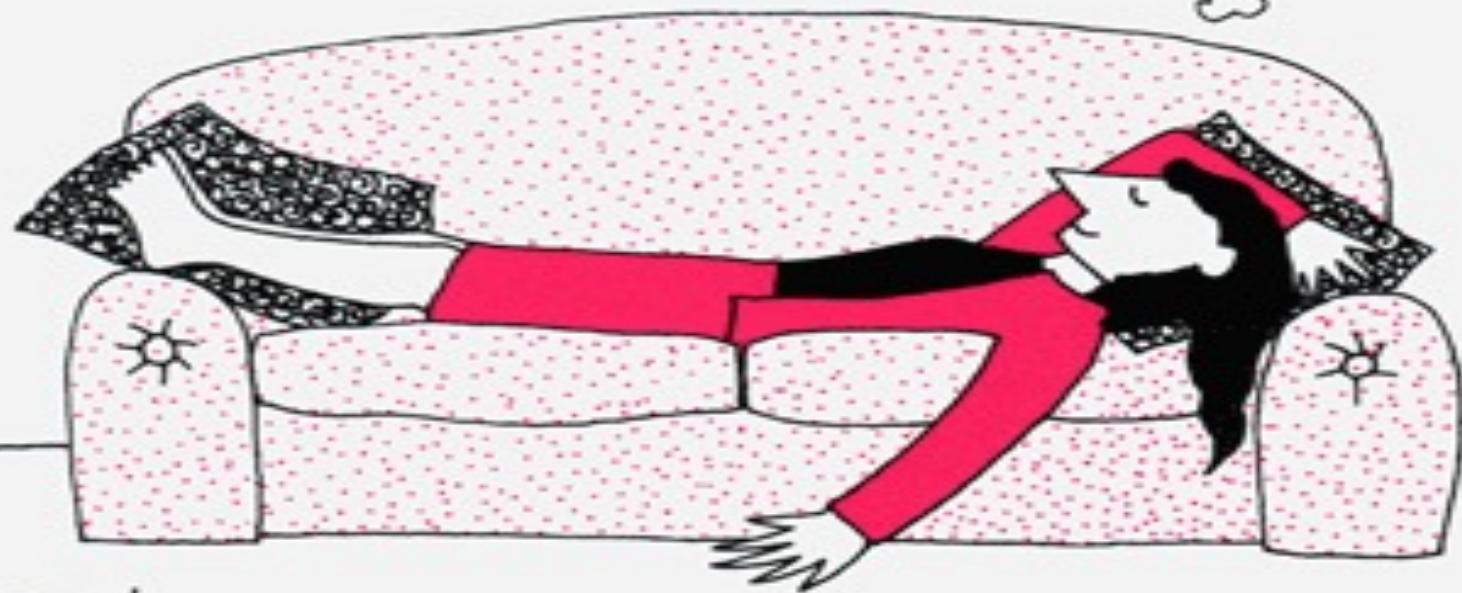
Leadership as a
situated and
relational
practice: some
principles

- *Trust*: has to be earned and not gained through position
- *Transparency* : reduces corruption
- *Respect* : listen to all in organization regardless of position (get out of the corporate bubble)
- *Recognition*: multiplicity of experiences, knowledges
- *Relationships* : focus on care and share and social wellbeing before economic
- *Responsibility*: admit mistakes, change practices to avoid similar ones
- *Symbolic*: do what you expect others to do (eg leaders take wage cut rather than a bonus for downsizing)
- *Moral and ethical stance* : value position is made clear
- *Social justice*: inform decisions, realize and address equity implications

CAREER ADVICE No.49

A good leader needs energy, wisdom
& patience...

And every so often a
bit of a lie-down



horacek