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The Nature of School Leadership: Global Practice Perspectives

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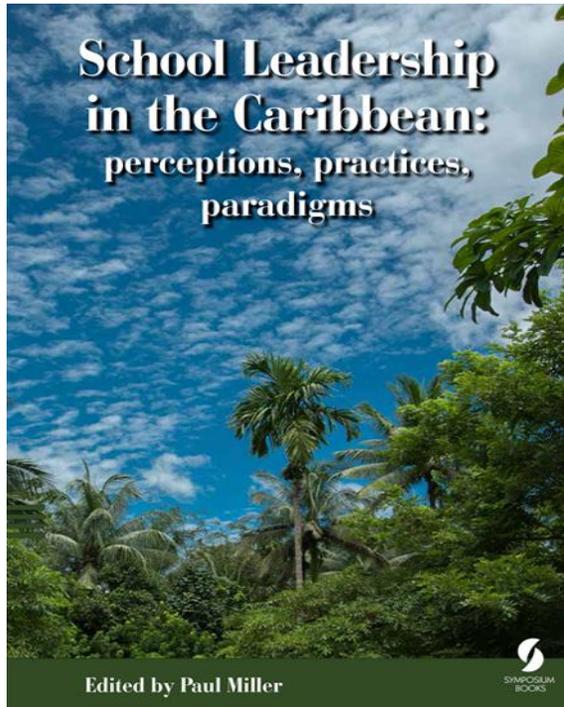
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The Nature of School Leadership: Global Practice Perspectives

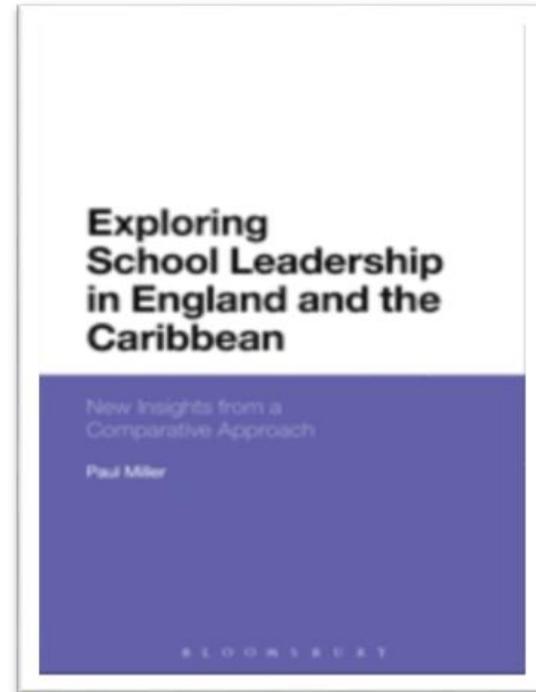
Paul Miller, PhD
University of Huddersfield

Inaugural Professorial Lecture

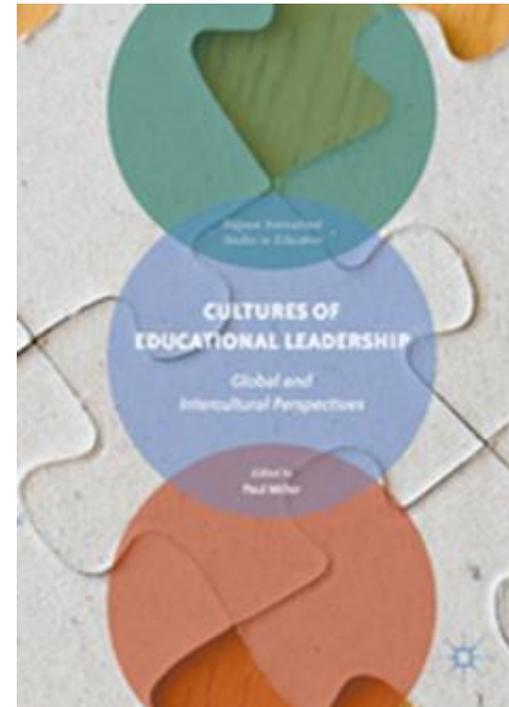
17 October 2017



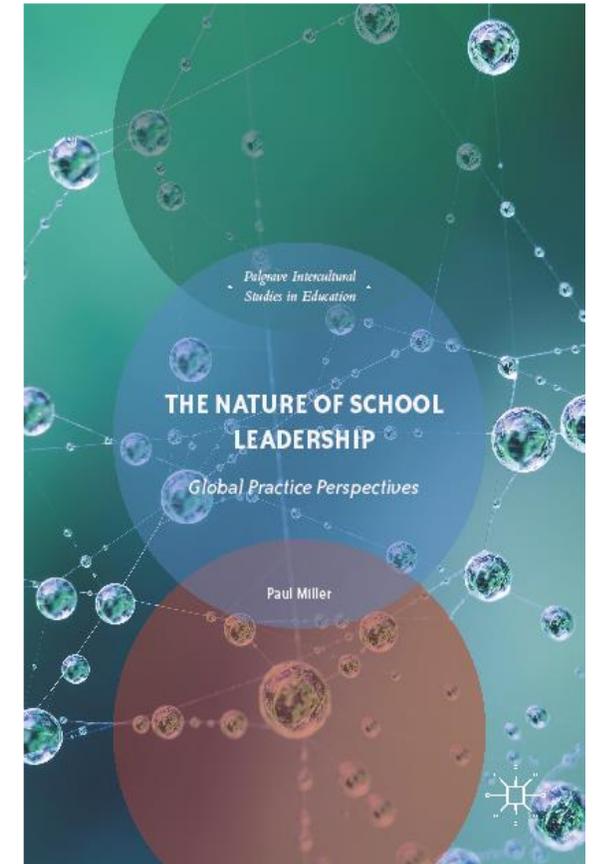
2013



2016



2017



2018

- ... “we write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture, which is specific” (Hall, 1993, p.222), “...the challenge for any transnational dialogue is understanding the new global terrain beyond national borders” (Blackmore, 2009, p.4).
- Thus, my research approach is a conscious attempt to diversify the field of educational leadership & management providing a voice to school leaders in small countries and developing countries, in particular, and to broaden and deepen our understanding of the practice school leadership through “descriptions of leaders in action...and detailed descriptions of them at work” (Southworth, 1993, p.79), and by providing evidence and insights into the “little stuff of everyday life” (Blasé & Anderson, 1995, p. 25) related to “the nitty gritty” (Miller, 2016, p.1) and “street realities” (Ball, 1987, p. 8) of their work.

school leadership: an area of renewed focus in international and national education policy agendas

- competition between and within national education systems,
- the deepening of performativity cultures,
- the introduction or strengthening of education accountability mechanisms,
- the introduction of leadership preparation and development agencies and
- the increased recognition of the role played by school leaders and schools in connecting schools and students to the 'real world'

the changing external environment of schools is characterised by:

- increased global competition among educational systems
- social, political and civil unrest
- multiple and competing policies requiring simultaneous implementation
- frameworks for increased accountability
- frameworks for and increased and improved performance
- the quality and adequacy of infrastructure and resources
- the threat and impact of natural disasters
- growing national/ international economic uncertainty

... changes associated with the internal environment of schooling:

- the quality and availability of teachers and aspiring school leaders,
- the quality teaching and learning,
- the behaviour of students,
- the quality of support received from and by parents,
- the location and size of a school,
- the size and gender make-up of staff and student bodies, as well as
- the degree of support/challenge received from the school board.

school leadership

- “... is not simply putting prescribed solutions into action, but a constant encounter with quandaries that demand thinking and problem solving, responding, and adjusting to situations...” (Acker-Hocevar et al, 2015, p.5).
- “More than ever, in today’s climate of heightened expectations, principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning. They need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs” (DeVita, 2005, p.1).

Themes & key questions

- Personal and internally motivated
 - Policy driven and mediated
 - Change oriented
 - Teacher dependent
 - Enterprising and entrepreneurial
 - Context dependent
 - Partnership dependent
- What is school leadership?
 - (not a definition but an understanding of leadership dimensions/ parameters)
 - How do you do school leadership?
 - (identifiable strategies used to support mission and vision)
 - What underpins your leadership?
 - (what grounds and shapes your practice?)

School Leadership is Personal and Internally Motivated

- *Leadership is heavily dependent on the individual: outlook, talent, goals, influence. The successful principal must have a strong belief in self and in her ability to achieve organizational goals, despite the odds (Jamaica, 1F).*
- *There is no doubt that effective and successful school's leadership begins with an individual's internal motivation. **A Principal has to inspire others whether they were teachers or students, thus to inspire others requires him to have an individual motivation.** In this way he can lead teachers and all those surrounding him to success and effectiveness. **Internal motivation leads to an investment in the in the work and effort in order to satisfy this inner need.** This way the school not only achieves good results and success, this motivation also influence and inspire others (Israel, 3F).*

values, beliefs and leadership

- Miller & Hutton (2014) argue:
 - [O]ne person's interpretation of the strictures, structures and processes may be very different to someone else's given, for example, their background and current social class, understanding of and engagement with educational policies, size and location of a school and philosophy of education. Due to the personal nature of values, we also propose that values are contested, recognising that the practice of leadership, although influenced by several factors, is equally a deeply personal enterprise, situated within the sum or parts of a series of critical incidents or individual's experiences (p. 71).

Evidence summary: Theme 1

- Both female and male school leaders regarded school leadership as a uniquely personal activity;
- Female school leaders appear more internally motivated than male school leaders (**men were motivated by the prospect of winning; women were motivated by the prospect of serving**),
- School leaders faced with resource constraints showed greater signs of internal motivation; suggesting they are motivated by their desire to improve or change things as well as by challenges in their environment. This was especially noticeable among school leaders in Pakistan, Turkey, South Africa, Mozambique and the Caribbean.
- There were no discernible differences in patterns of motivation among school leaders based school factors such as size, school type and school location in a country.

educational policies

- Miller (2016): educational policies “...are the fuel on which education/ schooling is run, simultaneously establishing parameters and providing direction” (p. 142).
- Miller (2016): “Educational policies give shape and structure to an education system and can lead to both coherence and mayhem for those who must enforce, deliver or otherwise experience them” (ibid).
- Miliband (2003): “... the government and school leaders can be described at some point in time as either the motor of progress or its handbrake”.

education as panacea?

- *....education is being positioned as a golden ticket to individual and national prosperity and a hedge against social displacement, since through education, students should be in a better position to assess and develop their talents and to produce goods and services that are more highly valued and more useful to society. A further consequence of this policy shift is that schools and school leaders are finding themselves in cross fires between differing political interests and dictates as they try to deliver on their primary commitment to students and their secondary commitment to the national state (Miller, forthcoming).*

School Leadership is Policy Driven and Mediated

- *Without organisation policies and procedures, a school can be like a rudderless ship. It is important to have these guidelines, union collective agreements etc. to help unite us as an organization. At the school level, it is important to have clarity, which leads to consistency – allowing staff to do their jobs without ambiguity. However, “Policy” needs to be tempered with common sense (Canada, 1F).*
- *The school does not exist in a vacuum or in an empty space, it is affected and driven by many factors, and one of these factors is education policy. Usually it is a general education policy that allows some flexibility. Principals can take advantage of this flexibility to be somewhat autonomous. This need for autonomy is highlighted especially when education policy ignores the uniqueness of minorities (nationality, culture, history, traditions) and does not respond to their needs (Israel, 3F).*

- Gunter (2012): “school leaders are caught in a game where those outside of schools are in control of school leaders” (p.18).
- Eacott’s (2011)... the current educational policy context is steadily leading to “the cultural re- engineering of school leadership and the embedding of performativity in the leaders’ soul” (p. 47).

- Lumby & Coleman(2017):“The policy context changes not only what is done in schools, teaching and learning, but also the relationships between staff and children, between staff, and between staff and parents. **The pressures of performativity, that is, constant scrutiny by means of league tables or inspection, accompanied by fear of potential public exposure, are particularly corrosive**” (p.20).
- Lewis & Murphy (2008), “...in some respects, many **headteachers are more like branch managers...** handed down expectations, targets, new initiatives... all of which may or may not be manageable in their context” (pp. 135–6).

Evidence summary: Theme 2

- School leaders felt, at times, they were being “driven” instead of being “led” by policies, where being “driven” by policies is about having to implement several, often conflictful, policies simultaneously.
- Although all school leaders, at times, challenged the content and implementation of policies, male school leaders were more likely to challenge;
- Female school leaders were more likely to implement policies without challenge as they saw that as important to building or nurturing relationships (which confirms earlier research by Eagly & Koenig’s (2006) female school leaders tend to exemplify more communal qualities).
- School leaders in Europe, especially in Cyprus showed a greater degree of agency (resistance) in mediating policies and school leaders in England showed the highest degree of frustration with educational policies (perhaps due to ongoing events in the national economic and political environments).
- School leaders in developing countries were more likely to adopt a filtered approach to policy implementation

the role and purpose of education: UNCRC, A29

- development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own;
- preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- development of respect for the natural environment.

- Brighthouse (2006): “schools should orient themselves to the needs of children who will have to deal with economy, and not to the economy itself” (p.28)
- *Education, schooling and school leadership are about change. And never before in the modern history of humanity has the responsibility for individual, community and societal change been more firmly placed in the hands of so few: school leaders. Put differently, school leaders are important in assisting and supporting governments and nation states in achieving change agendas within and outside education. As a result, schools have become sites of change for the individual learner, communities and national societies (Miller, forthcoming).*

School Leadership is Change Oriented

- *The purpose of education is to educate people to be better, and in this way the community and the whole society gets better. Education which doesn't have its impact on people and changes in society as a whole is not a successful one. WE always have to move on, to make a difference at school and at the community we belong to. The change starts with the first circle, as an individual then heads to the second level, as a community and then the whole society. School leadership dictates which kind of influence and difference it will be (Israel, 3F).*
- *Leadership is change. I have spoken to our staff about this point. In the constant search for excellence we use the research and good practice we find locally and internationally to help shape our practice in school. Even when we have things running smoothly, we challenge ourselves to see what can be changed to make it even better. Of course in school we also have the demands of the changing cohorts of children – what works for one year / period of time, may not work in a similar way due to the change of pupils. In inner city schools, where the makeup of the students can change quickly, there is a requirement to be agile and responsive to the community (England, 3M).*

- Gordon Brown (2010): “It is education which provides the rungs on the ladder of social mobility”.
- David Cameron (2007): “Without good education there can be no social justice”.
- Miller (2016): “... the road to national economic development starts at the gate of a school” (p.147).

Evidence summary: Theme 3

- All school leaders very much valued and treated education/ schooling as a tool for change;
- Both male and female school leaders also showed a strong degree of personal and internal motivation towards change;
- Female school leaders focused more on change to individuals, and institutions whereas male school leaders appear to focus more on changes at system-level;
- School leaders in England, Jamaica and Israel expressed frustration with the speed of policy-making and implementation, which they felt, was having a negative effect on their work and the ambitions they have for their schools.

- *Teachers are the lifeblood of an education system, without whom, all the educational aims and objectives for society and for individuals may not be realised (Miller, forthcoming).*
- Lipsky (1980): “street level bureaucrats who establish and invent devices, decisions and routines to cope with uncertainties and work pressure that become the public policies they carry out”.

School Leadership is Teacher Dependent

- *Teachers are the wheel of a school. Without help from teachers, it is not possible to run a school (Pakistan, 4F)*
- *The dynamic nature of schools today makes it difficult or even discourages school leaders to operate as 'heroes'. It is important for me as a leader to identify the skills of teachers and harness their energies so as to positively engage the whole school in learning (Montserrat, 1M)*
- *Teachers are the most valuable resource we have. What they do in the classroom, day after day, is to be marvelled at and respected. The best teachers are again those with strong moral purpose – fortunately this is most (England, 7F).*

Evidence summary: Theme 4

- Both male and female school leaders believe school leadership is teacher dependent, although female school leaders show a greater orientation towards this.
- Female school leaders constructed their partnership with teachers as an essential partnership that needed to be nurtured and protected.
- Male school leaders, although recognising teachers are important to their work, tended to see teachers as doing a job for which they are being paid and as such they did not necessarily have to “depend” on them
- School leaders in developed countries tended to view teachers as simply “doing their jobs”, whereas school leaders in developing countries tended to view teachers as important partners without whom their jobs would be impossible.

Entrepreneurialism

- *Having a corporate mindset means being aware of events in a school's external environment and how these could impact schools and being able to combine data from within a school's internal and external environments to make decisions, pursue opportunities, and build alliances that align to provide their school an advantage in the marketplace for schools for the foreseeable future (Miller, forthcoming).*

- Coffey (2001): “schools are supplied and consumed” (p.21).
- Hentschke & Caldwell (2007): “conditions of compulsory schooling have changed in ways that are encouraging more entrepreneurs to enter the field and to behave entrepreneurially” (p. 146).
- *“increased focus on school performance; marketization and choice for parents and students; reduced national spending on education; reduced budgetary allocations to schools; and increased competition within and between education systems are among primary policy issues driving school leaders to entrepreneurial leadership” (Miller, forthcoming)*

School Leadership is Enterprising and Entrepreneurial

- *As a Headteacher I have certainly embarked on projects I didn't think at the start I would be able to achieve, and I have, at times, acted on instinct, very much flying by the seat of my pants! I suspect this aspect of school leadership will grow...but I wonder if sometimes it will take Headteachers away from their central role of ensuring children's learning is supported as well as it can be (England, 10F).*
- *To a large extent school leadership is entrepreneurial, but this area of leadership should not become a substitute to compensate for reduced central funding. Some aspect of current educational policy in England may be breeding an unhealthy set of enterprising and entrepreneurial leaders (England, 9F).*

School Leadership is Enterprising and Entrepreneurial 2

- *Schools today are affected by the global and more specifically the economic environment in which they operate..... As a result, **a school must be innovative, resourceful, creative, adventurous, business-like and willing to take risks as it attempt to address the challenges that emerge daily.** When the leader incorporates these elements into the school's operation it gradually establishes an enterprising and entrepreneurial culture (Montserrat, 1M).*
- *When I became part of a team/school that has poor support and negative feedback in the community, **I decided to "sell" all the positive aspects** regarding the students and believed that the rest would eventually follow. It began with social media and the community started to state they never knew all this good came out of the school. **The positive aspects did not begin as I walked through the gates. It began before, but, no one "sold" it before.** No one placed a price tag on the students' crafts and the students could never recognize the value of their work (St Maarten, 1F).*

Evidence summary: Theme 5

- Female school leaders are more likely to be engaged in activities considered enterprising (to do with the curriculum and teaching and learning) and less external facing entrepreneurial (to do with the school's image and networking), which was the opposite for male school leaders.
- Although school leaders in both developed and developing countries were engaged in various fundraising activities, school leaders from Brazil, Cyprus, Jamaica, Mozambique and South Africa were far more engaged in fundraising efforts
- School leaders in smaller countries, in particular Guyana, Anguilla, Antigua and Montserrat, were most likely to be engaged in directly marketing school activities, not necessarily to increase student numbers but as a means of showcasing what was happening at school.

Cont'd

- English school leaders saw entrepreneurial activities as a major distraction and viewed being able to navigate the fast changing UK educational policy environment itself an act in enterprising and entrepreneurial leadership.
- English school leaders appear to prefer inward facing enterprising strategies
- All school leaders appeared internally motivated towards entrepreneurial school leadership - although some by economic necessity associated with context and others by their natural inclination.

elements of context

- *...each education system has its own peculiarities, and each school within an education system has its own peculiarities, and school leaders, despite years of teaching or leadership experience cannot simply transfer what worked in one school to another one, no matter how well these may have worked elsewhere (or in the past) (Miller, forthcoming).*
- Institutional Context
- Community Context
- National cultural context
- Economic Context
- Political Context

School Leadership is context dependent

- *We cannot separate the school from the cultural, social and moral context which surrounds it. A school is not an isolated island. The school influences and influenced by the context that surrounds it. School leadership must adapt itself to this context in order to be efficient and effective leadership. Each school has unique characteristics so the school principal must take this into consideration when he chooses the appropriate leadership style (Israel, 3F).*
- *Context defines everything. Each school has its own specific context which determines every course of action. This is made very clear when school leaders move from one context to another. When trying to implement tried and tested policies, they can only work if tweaked to reflect the context of the current school. Context is not only important between schools, but within schools themselves. As a school culture changes, so the context changes – what served a purpose once needs to be redefined in order for school improvement to continue and to avoid stagnation (England, 1F).*

Evidence summary: Theme 6

- Both male and female school leaders regard context as an important element in the success or failure of leadership, although female school leaders scored more highly.
- Female leaders showed a stronger correlation between “entrepreneurial and enterprising leadership” and “context dependent leadership”.
- “Personal and internally motivated leadership” strongly correlated to “context dependent leadership”.
- All school leaders were affected by a combination of events in their national social, cultural, political and economic environments, although some more than others. **In Pakistan, school leadership is more likely to be influenced by events in the cultural and social environments.** **In Jamaica, Mozambique, South Africa, Cyprus and Turkey, school leadership is more likely to be influenced by events in the economic and social environments.** **In the USA, Canada and England, school leadership is more likely to be influenced by events in the economic and political environments.**

school partnerships

- Miliband (2003): partnerships “expand the horizons of young people, and ensures that their progress inside the classroom is supported outside it”.
- He also noted, “Partnerships are challenging but they are also exciting. They require brokerage, planning and critical review”.
- More broadly, he suggested partnerships “could contribute to teaching that is more effective, and lead teachers and learners to become more knowledgeable and more aware” (p.3).
- Miller (2016): “as the policy landscape continues to experience rapid changes, nationally and internationally, schools will become (more) involved in partnership working rather than attempting to go it alone” (p.14).

School Leadership is partnership dependent

- *Community* partnerships allow for **additional resources** – e.g.: role models, apprenticeship, career exploration opportunities, financial support (Canada, 1F).
- School **community** relationship is critical in today's society and it is imperative that as a school leader I try to forge meaningful partnerships with the **community** in an effort to aid student learning and help in the realisation of the **vision** of the school (Antigua, 2F).
- Educational Leadership depends on **partnership cooperation between the school principal and teachers, also between the school and the community outside**. Students are customers of the school and it is better to manage positive relationships with them and with their parents. **The school's success depends on partnership with various factors, but teacher's community is the most important one**. Partnership with them will lead to success. School Partnership makes a school stronger by providing support and new resources to exploit (Israel, 3F).

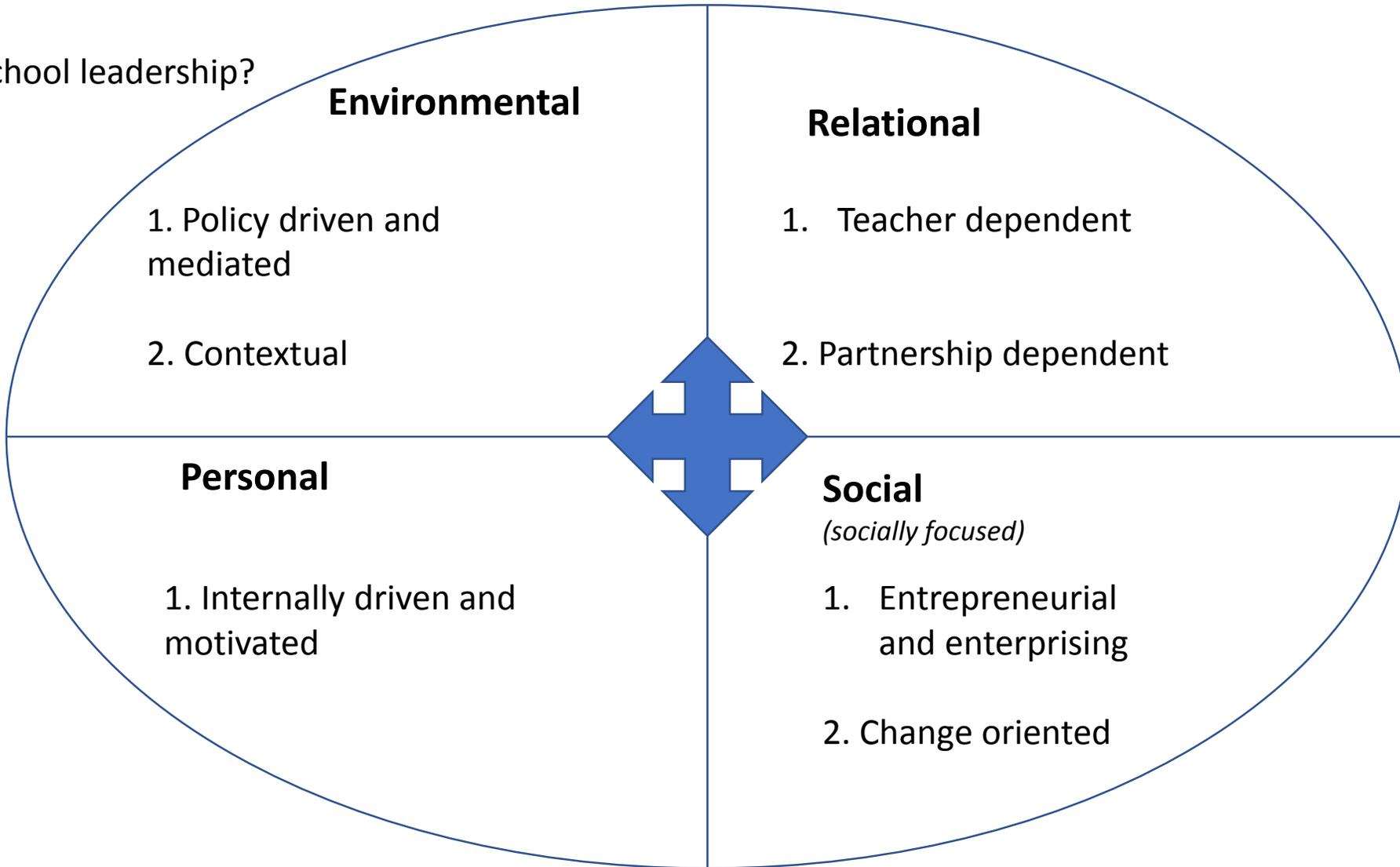
Evidence summary: Theme 7

- Both male and female school leaders scored highly for partnership dependent leadership, although female school leaders are more likely to enact leadership through partnerships
- “Personal and internally motivated leadership” correlates strongly with “partnership dependent leadership”
- There was also significant correlation between “partnership dependent leadership” and leadership that is “policy driven and mediated”, leadership is “change oriented” and “enterprising and entrepreneurial leadership”
- School leaders in both developing countries entered into partnerships for pragmatic and strategic reasons.

the nature of school leadership

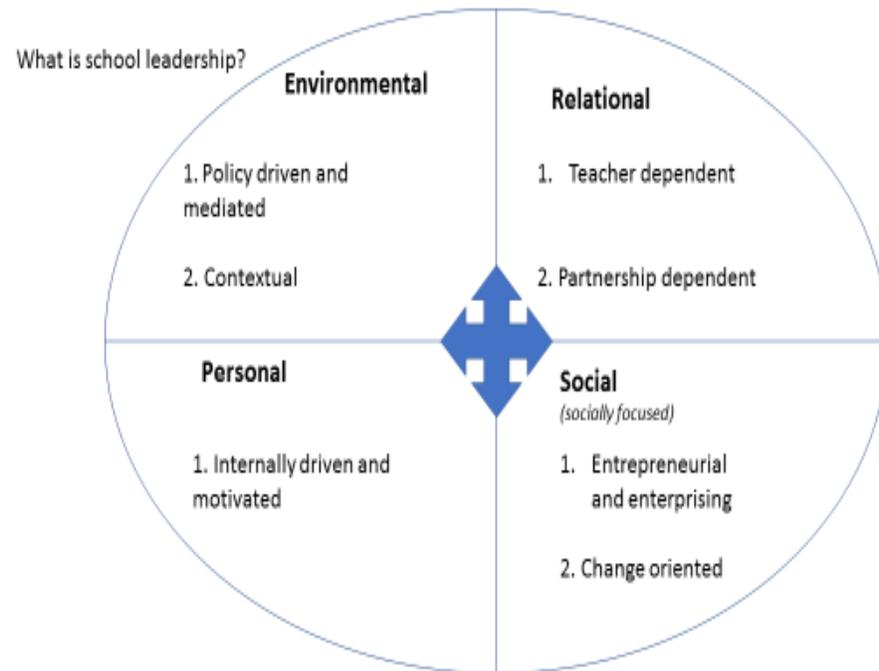
- Dinham (2011): “... a more contentious, complex, situated and dynamic phenomenon than previously thought” (p. 4).

What is school leadership?



“The Dimensions of School Leadership”, Miller 2018

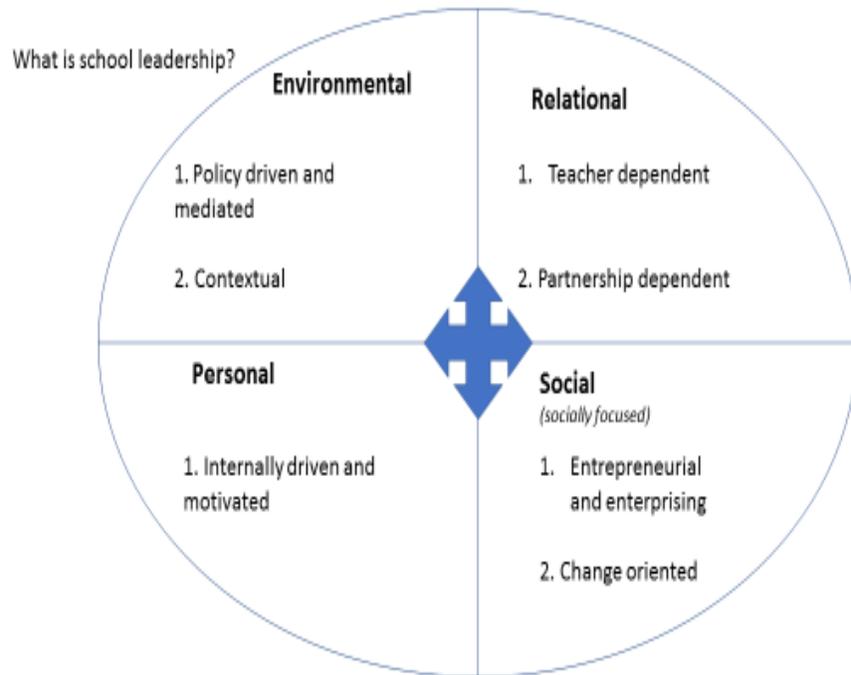
Personal



"The Forces of School Leadership", Miller 2018

- Hutton (2013): “the complexities related to running schools have forced principals to develop their unique approach to effective leadership” (p.90).
- Ashby & King (1988): “Make no mistake: your personal philosophy shapes your educational philosophy and influences the decisions you make on the job...” (p.55).
- Larsen & Derrington (2012): “most reliable guide at the principal’s disposal may be the ‘moral compass’ upon which the individual has learned to rely” (p. 2).

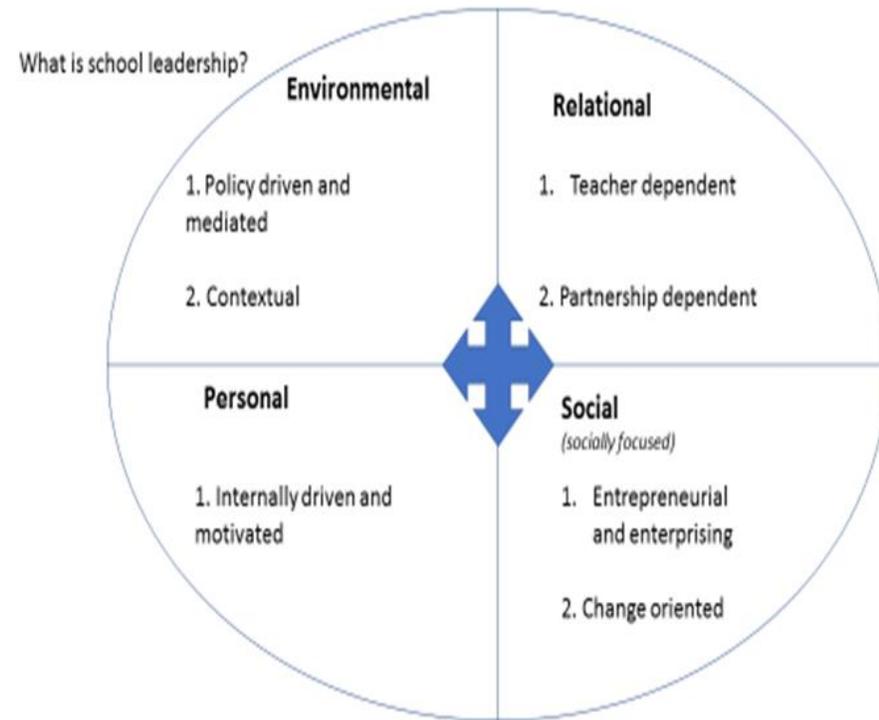
Social



"The Forces of School Leadership", Miller 2018

- Sidhu & Fook (2009),
“...educational leaders must recognize and assume a shared responsibility not only for students’ intellectual and educational development, but also for their personal, social, emotional, and physical development” (pp. 106- 107).

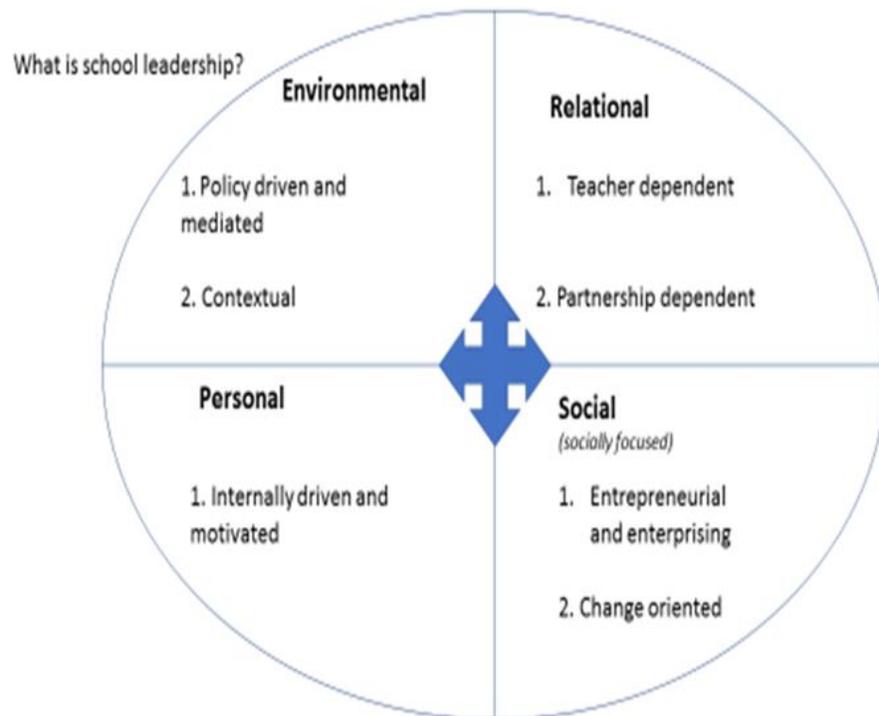
Relational



"The Forces of School Leadership", Miller 2018

- Dinh et al (2014): "... for school leadership to be effective, school leaders cannot lead in isolation of others" (p.55)
- Dinh et al (2014): "consider how processes change and evolve as they are influenced by context as well as by leadership occurring from multiple sources within organizations..." (ibid).

Environmental



"The Forces of School Leadership", Miller 2018

- Gorard (1997): "An education market is a zero-sum game. As one school wins, another loses, and so schools put more and more into marketing, they may, like Alice in Wonderland, find themselves running faster and faster just to keep up" (p.254)
- Lumby & Coleman (2017): "School leaders and teachers are at the centre of this messy process" (p.17)
- Sidhu & Fook (2009): "the evolving nature of school environments has placed high demands on educational leaders... where knowledge of school management, finance, legal issues, and state mandates... the primary focus... of school leaders...." (pp.106-107).

Finally

- “...demands placed on principals and their leadership comes at a time when, more and more, school leaders are being called upon to carefully balance intuition against logic; the intrinsic against the external; the legal against the moral; the natural against the supernatural – in order to negotiate and secure best outcomes for all who study and work in their schools” (Miller, 2016, p.16).