



EIJA PAUKKURI

How is the Phenomenon
of Shared Leadership Understood
in the Theory and Practice
of School Leadership?

A case study conducted
in four European schools



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
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UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

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FOREWORD

I still remember the first time I got in touch with a foreign culture. During my early years I spent several summers in Sweden where my mother worked. I learned about the culture, the people and the language. I also met a few foreigners that had settled in Sweden, and grew curious of their cultures and living styles. Cultures have intrigued me ever since.

When I was a pupil at school I used to participate in lessons a lot and passed the tests usually with excellent marks although I did my homework mainly during the breaks in the ballet school or theatre or on the morning bus to school. As a senior student I ran several school clubs, played the guitar and sang in the choir. I even painted sun flowers on the windows in the Principal's office, which I guess was my own idea. Later on, nobody was astonished when I, after finishing my active ballet dancing at the age of twenty-two, had decided to become a teacher.

I obtained my Master's degree after six years of rather easy-going foreign language studies at the University of Tampere. The second year, however, I spent in Paris and studied French and life. During several summers I worked as a foreign language course teacher in England for Finnish upper secondary school students. At the beginning of the 1990s I qualified as a foreign language teacher and taught English, Swedish and French for sixteen years in the upper secondary and comprehensive schools.

School life and work as a foreign language teacher turned out to be interesting and, at the same time, extremely demanding work. The primary and secondary schools where I worked in the 1990s seemed to have a lot of changes going on, i.e. decentralisation of the administration, quality work with self-evaluation, and site-based curriculum work. At the beginning of the 20th century Finland was heavily drawn into a banking crisis and depression that affected the whole of society. As a consequence, schools came to suffer from a lack of resources, which meant that students had to be taught in larger groups. The consequences of profound changes in society and families became obvious in the classrooms with a delay. With the percentage of unemployment of the parents in the school area being more than 30 per cent teachers noticed that students had more misbehaviour and learning problems and the demand for special needs education grew dramatically. At that time, a lot of foreign students, many of them refugees from camps, started to arrive in the big suburban secondary school where I worked. These students had difficulties in adapting themselves to the new culture as many of them still suffered from their experiences in wars and camps and

would have needed more help. Some of them had lost their parents and arrived with relatives. With some students we had no common language. Sometimes students were even used as interpreters for their parents, for the benefit of nobody. Instruction of Finnish as a second language needed to be started, too. In all, with these challenges the staff and the school had to change the way they had been used to. As a result, teachers started to cooperate more with one another. Some of us teachers started to work even in pairs in the classes, i.e. I and a special needs teacher taught English and Finnish together in my class where we had students of seven nationalities. Furthermore, communication and cooperation had to be extended outside the school. Networks had to be built to help the students and their families as well as the staff. Then something started to ring the bell: we needed the convening strength of the surrounding community. The school needed partners and multiprofessional networks had to be built for student care functions.

Teaching heterogeneous groups and students who had culturally different backgrounds, some with no previous basic education, was full of challenges. As a teacher I felt that I needed not only new tools for my teaching but also new arenas for thoughts of change. The learning I had got from the teacher training was soon used. At that time I joined the PD (for Professional Development) study group led by Professor Viljo Kohonen who was keen on building partnerships between schools, teachers and the Department of Teacher Education in Tampere. Along with the PD studies I grew interested in school leadership. I wanted to continue my studies to become a school leader. As soon as I had completed my studies in school management and administration, I was elected a deputy head of a secondary school in southern Finland. In that school I managed a pilot curriculum plan for the joint comprehensive school. In addition to interesting work, the town offered a two- and- a-half-year programme in leadership training. After three years of work as a deputy and a head I was elected the head of a secondary school in Nokia where I have now worked for more than ten years. During those years I have participated in numerous professional leadership programmes in Finland.

Having earlier joined in worldwide educational discussions as a member in the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (DKG) for key women educators in 18 countries and in the Children's International Summer Villages (CISV) of peace educators in more than 60 countries I wanted soon to expand my work to cover the field of international cooperation in school leadership as well. To combine international cooperation with the intercultural aspect of learning at work I participated in the Arion EU programme for school heads in October 2004 in Wales where I and 20 leaders from 17 countries in Europe met for the one-week meeting around the theme of shared leadership. There I met my companions who wanted to continue the discussions on the European dimension in education and participate in the study of the phenomenon of shared leadership.

My research process was carried out in two phases. The first phase, the school development project during the years 2006 to 2008, was carried out in the manner of action and research where periods of working in the joint EU project with the

partners, reflecting on and evaluating the results and developing them further in the school alternated. Work as a head and a coordinator took turns with my own doctoral thesis. I owe my gratitude to the heads and deputy heads of the partner schools, the teachers who participated and the students that I met during those years. I also want to thank the Comenius team teachers in my school who were brave enough to start the project with me and help me by sampling data and evaluating the project. My special thanks go to the Assistant Head of my school Virpi Koivula who shared the school leadership with me and took over when I was on study leave. I could not have completed the dissertation without you.

The research was carried out mostly in terms of full time work as a head and researcher of my own work and during three study leaves in the years of 2008 to 2012, which would not have been possible without the grants from the Delta Kappa Society International, the University of Tampere and Financial Support for Continuing Adult Education. I am grateful for their support.

For guiding and keeping me on track I take especially great pleasure in thanking Professor Eero Ropo who has always supported and encouraged me in a wonderful way during the whole research process. Without his patience and untiring encouragement I would have given up long ago. At the final phase of writing the research report Professor Jukka Alava's comments and guidance have been much appreciated. I also want to thank Professor Eeva Hujala for making me think of the findings in a more critical way. I thank Professor Anneli Lauriala whose remarks I needed to realise how far from scientific writing my first report was. In the final phase of writing the research report I owe my special thanks to Professor Hannele Niemi for all the clarifying remarks after reading several versions. Sincere thanks are due to her for her critical comments and guidance.

My warmest thanks go to my wonderful family: my four children Noora, Saara, Eeva and Eetu who have grown up with the papers and books on the floor and tables and everywhere and to my husband Pertti who was always confident that I was able to carry out and complete the research successfully. Without the long talks with my brother Raimo this research would hardly be what it is. Thank you for the time you spent in the late-night discussions about changes and school life. Finally, I am forever grateful to my mother Hilkka who always valued education very highly and supported progress. I dedicate this research to all members of my beloved family.

12 February 2015, in the middle of the spring term in Tampere, Finland

Eija Paukkuri

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the research was to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership in culturally different school contexts. Another aim was to find out how school leaders understand their part in sharing leadership. The framework builds on recent research on school leadership and discussions on change in particular. The very essence of school leadership implies a high degree of multifacetedness and multilayeredness due to the versatile character of the phenomenon itself. Effectiveness, sustainability and ethics along with the pedagogical perspectives enable a fresh approach to the constantly varying needs for a change in the whole concept and practice of school leadership of today.

The methodological solutions of this research project were ethnographic case study and bricolage as a research design. Paradoxically, the phenomenon of shared leadership is the object of the study and main concept by which this research is conducted. The data were collected during a three-year-long EU project in the four case schools in Germany, Greece, Estonia and Finland. The heads of the schools were interviewed and the heads and the teachers and some students participated in the group discussions. Student essays, drawings, comic strips and videos were used to illustrate the school culture in each school. The report was written in a narrative form to offer an authentic picture of leadership and school life as experienced in different school cultures by the researcher.

The most important finding of the research was that although a culture sets restrictions on implementing new models of leadership, new meanings of shared leadership could be reflected on and learned in collaboration with other schools. Networking and different forms of team building opened new ways of understanding diversity within and outside the school. Similarities and differences in the decision-making processes and participation in schools seemed to bond issues culturally. The role of the pupils and their parents turned out to be very weak in the Finnish and Estonian schools whereas the German and Greek ones presented a higher degree of parent participation in the decision-making. In all the case schools involved in the research project the issue of pupil participation in decision-making processes seems to present the greatest challenge for future developments to school leadership in general and the phenomenon of shared leadership in particular.

Keywords: school leadership, change in school, shared leadership, participation in the decision-making, ethnography, principal as a researcher

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksesta oli ymmärtää jaettua johtajuutta kulttuurisesti erilaisissa kouluissa. Toisena tavoitteena oli selvittää, kuinka koulujen rehtorit ymmärtävät oman roolinsa johtamisen jakamisessa. Viitekehys rakentuu viimeikaiseen koulujen johtamisen tutkimukseen ja erityisesti keskusteluun koulujen muutoksesta.

Koulun johtaminen näyttää ilmiönä, jonka tutkiminen edellyttää moniuotteista ja monikerroksista tarkastelua. Nykykoulun johtamista ja siihen jatkuvasti kohdistuvia muutostarpeita tarkastellaan tehokkuuden, kestävyyden, eettisten ja pedagogisten näkökulmien avulla. Paradoksaalista on, että tutkittava ilmiö jaettu johtajuus on sekä tutkimuksen kohde että tutkimuksen väline.

Jaettua johtajuutta on tutkittu ilmiönä ja aineistoa on kerätty Saksan, Kreikan, Viron ja Suomen neljän tapauskoulun kolmivuotisen EU:n Comenius-projektiin aikana vuosina 2005–2008. Tutkimusmenetelmänä on käytetty etnografista tapaustutkimusta ja bricolagea. Koulujen rehtoreita haastateltiin ja koulujen rehtorit, opettajat ja oppilaat osallistuivat ryhmäkeskusteluihin. Oppilaiden laatimia kirjoitelmia, piirroksia, sarjakuvia ja videoita käytettiin valottamaan jokaisen koulun kulttuuria johtamiskulttuurin takana. Raportti on tapauskouluista kirjoitettu narratiivinen kuvaus koulujen erilaisista johtamiskulttuureista.

Tutkimuksen tärkein tulos on, että vaikka kulttuuri rajoittaa uusien johtamismallien käyttöön ottoa kouluissa, uusia merkityksiä jaetulle johtajuudelle voidaan pohtia ja opiskella yhteistyössä toisten koulujen kanssa. Verkostoituminen ja erilaiset tiimien muodostamiset luovat mahdollisuksia ymmärtää erilaisuutta koulun sisällä ja koulujen kesken. Samankaltaisuudet ja erilaisuudet päättöksenteon prosesseissa ja niihin osallistumisessa näyttivät olevan sidoksissa kulttuureihin. Oppilaiden ja heidän vanhempiensa osallisuus päättöksenteossa osoittautui varsin vaativammaksi suomalaisessa ja virolaisessa koulussa, kun taas saksalaisessa ja kreikkalaisessa koulussa vanhempien osallisuus näkyi päättöstenteossa. Kaikissa tutkimuksen tapauskouluissa oppilaiden osallisuuden lisääminen päättöksenteon prosesseissa näyttää asettavan tulevaisuuden koulun johtamiselle ja erityisesti jaetulle johtajuudelle suurimman haasteen.

Avainsanat: *koulun johtaminen, koulun muutos, jaettu johtajuus, osallisuus päättöksenteossa, etnografia, rehtori oman työnsä tutkijana*

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Exploring Shared Leadership

I started this research in 2004 in Wales by asking some questions. The first one was: *Hands up! – Who wants to join in a research project?* As ‘shared leadership’ seemed an interesting but a rather unknown theme to many of us school heads I suggested that we could continue to work with school leadership questions and set up a Comenius school development project where I offered to work as a project coordinator. Before going home six secondary school heads had gathered in a meeting to discuss and decide about a project together: one from Germany, Estonia, Greece, Romania and France (Gouda Loupe, a remote island of France) and I from Finland. This was the beginning of a common journey for the four of us, from Finland, Greece, Germany and Estonia, who got our proposals accepted by the national agencies for the European Union educational cooperation programmes. The journey to ‘*What can we learn from each other*’ started in the autumn of 2006 as soon as we had got the school started.

In the beginning of the project we (I) understood shared leadership as a process in which a leader interacts actively with employees before making decisions, nurtures a culture in which everyone has a right to participate and have a voice in the school.

The following questions I posed myself: *Do you know your cooperators? Do you love them?* If I had had to answer these questions in the beginning of the project I would have answered: No. Love is such a strong word. And, yet, this is what Mother Theresa, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize of 1979, once suggested in her opening lines in a Leadership Seminar as a short course to excellence in leadership: *Learn about your cooperators and love them.*

However, this attitude serves as an overall orientation to the study project of the phenomenon of shared leadership. In this research you can follow how my idea of leadership grew to interpret the idea to mean commitment to people and getting to know those you work with. When coordinating the joint work I needed to learn to know how the partners work before I could connect the school leaders to the learning processes. In this bridge-building work I learned to dance my partners’ dances, sing their songs, eat and laugh with them. Perhaps this kind of perception of the relationships between the leadership partners does not fall into

the category of a typical way of thinking of our workmates or our cooperators in western society.

This is also one of reasons why I needed to study the phenomenon of 'shared leadership'. I find the current definitions of school leadership too limited. Emotions and work are supposed to be kept apart in work life, so the emotional part does not easily appear in the forefront in a three-year international school project. However, my idea of leadership resembles this feminine approach to leadership: when you learn to know your cooperators who can have different cultural backgrounds but who offer their hospitality and go to great lengths to be useful cooperators you cannot help falling in love with them. And cooperation on this basis will become an experience for a lifetime. In fact, this aspect of leadership can be connected to pedagogical leadership: the nurturing care in the relationships will create commitment, or is, in any case, very difficult to resist.

It is roughly the same thing that happens when something is shared with trust between friends. Friendship is often established when you share something from your own personal life with other people even if the cultures and native countries are different. The visits you pay to their country and their schools and homes can also teach you a lot of the culture. The experiences can even give more powerful insights to the foreign culture than any cultural studies and education at school but what is more, they affect your own perspective of your culture as well.

On the other hand, if there was more evidence of how schools, their staff and students get connected with issues such as what they do and who they are and what and how they learn through networking, would international cooperation perhaps be integrated to everyday work of schools and school leaders?

Finally, I define shared leadership in school praxis to be contextual and accomplished in action and through interaction and cooperation of several actors. I argue that shared leadership emerges in the relations of actors, processes and values of the school where participation is nurtured for both ownership and building of identity and learning. In this research, producing leadership through interactions (and as we have practised in the joint EU project), school leadership can be shared, distributed and multiplied through a social influence process and become a property of the system (compare with Uhl-Bien 2006; Leithwood et al. 2006; see Bolden et al. 2011 for review). I will come back to these ideas with the leadership theories in 2.3.

I will next present the aims of this research as regards the connections between the micro- and the macro-context and the links between leadership and learning.

1.2 Aims of the Research

This research report intends to offer the readership an authentic picture of school leadership in different case schools as I have experienced it as a head and a researcher. With the study of shared leadership I aim to illuminate school leadership and the micro-context of education in terms of international cooperation. I will not go into further details of the politics and the discussion on integration processes within Europe and its areas in this research although they exist in the macro-context. However, despite globalisation and the European unification processes, it is relevant to note how surprisingly unknown the educational systems and their historical and cultural features have remained outside the respective nation states (Ropo 2009; Autio 2009).

According to Ropo (2009, 3), one reason could be that although comparative studies that are usually quantitative (e.g. PISA measuring the learning results in the OECD countries) have increased interest in national educational systems, they have failed to give answers to who we are as people and how identities are built in the complex mutual relations between society, culture, education, and subjectivity.

On the other hand, political and social aims require increased educational cooperation between people in the EU. Comenius, which is one example of the Lifelong Learning Programmes of the EU and aims at building bridges between partners in general education, is based on the idea of the philosopher *Amos Comenius* (1592-1670 AD) who believed that everyone should be entitled to learn everything in the world. People are encouraged to learn from each other's cultures and educational institutions. Participation in international cooperative programmes is believed to offer everybody new perspectives to educational institutions and their staff and students for developing their everyday practice.

One aim of this research is to gain more understanding of how school leadership is understood in different countries. Another aim is to find out how school leaders in partner schools understand their part in sharing leadership, and to reflect on it with my own understanding of school leadership.

Shared leadership is a group phenomenon which can serve as a diagnostic tool or a mirror for understanding change and what is needed for a change in practice. In this research project shared leadership is understood as a tool for change in the practice of school leadership. By a group phenomenon I refer here to the joint interest of the school heads for teambuilding in the study of shared leadership. This teambuilding was realised within the joint international school development project. Shared school work can also be seen as a matter of broadening the perspective of commitment and meaningfulness or it can be discussed in terms of democracy. Developing the school towards democracy and equality needs to be viewed in an international, multicultural perspective. The aim of the research is to understand the participation in decision-making in culturally different school contexts. My personal interest in this research is

crossing the cultural and organisational borders and learning more about leadership and cultural diversity. For the development of shared leadership in a school community the aim of the research is also to understand the processes in decision-making in a school community.

Although the school education of today is challenged by a multitude of competitors, e.g. technological inventions and computer-based programmes that can be far more fascinating than books and traditional ways of working in schools, school culture and school community remain important scenes for practising e.g. social skills and ethics. Meaningfulness and reflective attitudes need to be practised and learned together with other people, which calls for a critical pedagogical stand of teachers and school leaders alike.

Schools are complex work places and communities where culture is built and rebuilt in action over and over again. One possibility of renewing the culture is exchanging the perspectives. According to Spillane & Diamond (2007) the appeal of a distributed perspective to school leadership lies partially in the ease with which it becomes many things for many people. Distributed leadership is a term sometimes used of a type of leadership, mostly by educational researchers, to emphasize the distributed perspectives (e.g. Spillane 2006; Huxham & Vangen 2000; Denis 2012, 213-214). The focus is on how leadership is distributed within cultures and across levels of time as well as across intra-organisational and inter-organisational boundaries (see more on p.47). However, I will use the term shared leadership instead of distributed leadership.

Similarly, choosing *the phenomenon of shared leadership* offers several perspectives for developing a theory of practice. In this research shared leadership is understood as a broader concept for the phenomenon which is studied within the context of school leadership in practice. The phenomenon will be investigated through leaders (heads), followers (teachers and students) and through processes (such as decision-making and meaning-building in schools). As the theme of shared leadership was agreed on with the heads in the joint school development project in the first place I saw it as a suitable research phenomenon that could be continued for the evaluation of my own school leadership as well as for learning from the perspectives to shared leadership in other schools. After the joint school development project I chose to continue to study the phenomenon of shared leadership in order to gain a deeper understanding thereof.

In this study school is also investigated in the context of other participating schools. In this perspective schools are professional learning communities that are exchanging and creating new intra-organisational and inter-organisational meanings for distributed leadership. Leadership is defined as a social process of meaning making towards the achievement of shared aims in the school practice (Northouse 2004; Uhl-Bien 2006; Bolden et al. 2011; 38-39).

Although there are some differences between the terms shared leadership and distributed leadership I will use shared leadership in the formulation of the research questions.

My main research question is:

How is shared leadership understood in the case schools?

And as supplementary questions I present:

- a. *How do principals understand and practise shared leadership?*
- b. *How can teachers, students and parents participate in the decision-making in the school?*
- c. *How is shared leadership connected to learning in the school?*

1.3 For the Reader

As this research report intends to offer the readership an authentic picture of school leadership in different countries as I have experienced it as a head and a researcher I hope that the preliminary questions in chapter 1 will assist the reader in getting acquainted with the research area and my pre-understanding of the context. Thereafter I will present my commitments.

In chapter 2, the main concepts and theoretical framework will be presented and highlighted through contemporary - for the most part Anglo-American and Nordic - school leadership literature and recent research on leadership. The main focus in this chapter is on understanding what makes educational leadership special. The reader will get acquainted with some leadership theories at different times. I will present the basic ideas of transactional and transformational theories of leadership, which I will link with discussions of change in the context of educational leadership after which I will continue with recent school leadership research and school leadership research across cultures. Then I will continue to discuss change within school leadership in terms of effectiveness, sustainability, ethics and pedagogics which I see as promising tools for bringing about change in the school practice. Then I will write about the theory of shared leadership and distributed perspectives on school leadership. As the context of school leadership and education is culturally bound on several levels I will discuss culture and education before leading the reader to the analysis of schools as cultural organisations.

In chapter 3, I will write a summary of the concepts and move on to present the methodological solutions in chapter 4. I will make my autoethnographic statement as a researcher and describe the hermeneutic circle of my understandings of the research process.

In chapter 5, with the results given I will invite the reader to meet some people and experience some moments with the episodes as parts of the constructed narratives of the schools and the issues connected to school leadership and shared leadership. Rather than for comparing, the cultural perspective is supposed to function as a means of understanding. With these

samples I want to illustrate to you how the phenomenon of shared leadership is understood in practice. If you are a school head, a politician or an administrator I hope that you will benefit from these ideas.

Finally, I invite the readers to make their own connections with the present themes of school leadership and the phenomenon of shared leadership with the discussion in chapter 6. I also wish the reader could return to the beginning and the questions to see if I have convinced you with my report. But before that I will inform the reader of my commitments.

1.4 Commitments

As a researcher I have three main commitments that are connected to learning in educational contexts. The first commitment can be labelled as my *ontological belief* about a human being and their being in the world. The second regards my *epistemological belief* of a human being and the building of knowledge. The third commitment deals with human beings as members of a culture and society. The *socio-cultural belief* is connected to human beings as cultural learners in society and in the world.

I start with the first commitment. My understanding of human beings is based on the *holistic view of human beings* and their life as a whole, their whole situation (Rauhala 2005). I believe that human beings are constructions of their whole situation (the body, consciousness and life). For building an educational partnership it means that people need to be considered as individuals with their own life history, experiences and bodily expressions, too.

Second, I believe that human beings are active and construct their own knowledge of their world by adding new meanings to what they have learned and experienced earlier. In this commitment I draw on *socio-constructivism* and learning by doing (Dewey 1966). I expand this idea towards the co-constructivist model of learning and to problem-solving in dialogue between participants (i.e. heads, teachers and students). The emotional aspects of learning are taken into account and the responsibility for learning shifts from individuals to emphasize collaboration in the construction of knowledge (Cornell & Lodge 2005).

Third, I believe that their learning is a socio-cultural process. Education is seen as a forum where human beings participate in culture creating and culture remaking through active participation in the meaning-building processes. I see assisting human beings in their growth towards a good life as the main task of education. In this process educators become helpers and colearners. This is how I understand my own part as a teacher, too. As a head I find my role as a facilitator of the process on a system level. Working in an international context is a learning experience itself for any researcher. In this research, personal growth and learning have been the driving forces and motivation of the research.

What is really meant by shared leadership in different cultural settings? Definitions depend both on cultural and individual views. The interactions that are shared together through participation in the project with representatives from other cultures led to multicultural interpretations of shared leadership. In other words, constructing new meanings together also serves as a tool for experiential learning that can be returned back to the original community which in turn can develop through the learning of its participants.

How can I justify my subjective knowing and informing of knowledge to be legitimate for a scientific report? I refer to Bruner (1986) who has gone out from the linguistic turn and the idea that subjective knowledge can also be legitimate since language is a construction and not necessarily a true reproduction of the reality. Bruner (1986, 93–105) points out that after the Second World War psychology and philosophy met over methodology; methods for making the subjective objective, the hidden overt and the abstract concrete became a preoccupation. The late 1950s is known for starting the cognitive revolution and the ‘mind’ was being reintroduced into psychology. Psychologists like Herbert Simon and George Miller and linguists like Noam Chomsky devoted themselves to what they knew and how they acquired knowledge. The emphasis shifted from performance to competence. The paradigm shift from naive or scientific realism toward constructivism meant a linguistic turn into texts, discourses and narratives. (Lincoln & Guba 1985.)

The constructivist view of the mind as an instrument of construction can be traced to Kant (1965) according to whom what exists is a product of what has been thought. Thoughts, on the other hand, are culturally bound. According to Bruner (1986, 65, 121–123), we learn how to express intentions in accordance with our culture. Meaning is according to Bruner (*ibid.*) what we can agree upon or at least accept as a working basis for seeking agreement about the concept at hand. In this way social realities are meanings that we achieve by the sharing of human cognition. This hermeneutic or transactional view has deep and direct implications for education: culture is constantly in a process of being recreated as it is interpreted and renegotiated by its members. In this way, a culture is as much of a forum for negotiating and renegotiating meaning and for explicating action as it is a set of rules or specifications for action.

I agree with Bruner (1986, 123–129) who claims that education is or should be one of the principle forums where the participants play an active role in constantly making or remaking the culture. Much of the process of education consists of being able to distance oneself in some way from what one knows by being able to reflect on one’s own knowledge. In the same way as Bruner (1986, 130) who believes that we construct or constitute the world, I also believe that ‘Self’ is a construction, a result of action and symbolisation. Storytelling, theatre, science and even jurisprudence are all techniques or ways of exploring a possible world out of the context of an immediate need. Bruner concludes (1986, 131–133) that language is both a mode of communication and a medium for representing the world about which it is communicating. In this way language

not only transmits but also creates or constitutes knowledge or reality. The meta-cognitive aspect of language is present in reflection on and distancing knowledge.

I also believe that the language of education is the language of culture-creating and agree with Bruner (1986, 149) who claims that meaning and reality are created, not discovered, and negotiating is in the art of constructing new meanings by which individuals can regulate their relations with each other. In Bruner's (*ibid.*) constructivist view any reality that we create is based on a transmutation of some prior reality that we have taken as given. We construct many realities, and do so from differing intentions. *The constructivist view of building knowledge holds the idea that reality is built by means of narratives, which are constructed in the process of social action.* (Bruner 1986, 158–159.)

In taking Bruner's ideas into consideration, one of the aims of this research is to construct new realities through examining *the phenomenon of shared leadership* in different schools. The results presented of each case school in 7 are also researcher's constructions of reality made to narratives of which new meanings can be created through interpretation.

Rosaldo (1984, 140) explains the view of culture and meaning in anthropology as processes of interpretative apprehension by individuals of symbolic models. Culture and meanings are learned and developed in action with other people. Therefore people and their personal meanings and feelings become important in the learning of new cultures (also applicable when there are changes in organisations or when new ways of working or solving problems are needed). *Personal interpretations are made on the basis of the 'Life world', which is to say that the earlier experiences of a person form the understanding of a situation.*

Blumer (1986) points out that *meanings are born in social action and that people acquire these meanings by interpretation and working up things that they experience in action.* According to the symbolic interactionism theory *meanings are seen as social products.* Blumer (*ibid.*) declares that society, a group of people or a community exists through action and with symbolic interactionism he refers to how people interpret and define each other's actions instead of plainly reacting to them. (Blumer 1986, 2-19.)

In other words, their action is not directly based on actions but on the meanings that are attached to the actions. Thus human interaction is mediated by symbols and interpretation of symbols. Blumer (*ibid.*) concludes that all human action takes place in the human world. A social organisation and changes are outcomes of human interaction. According to the social interaction theory, a social organisation is the framework where the parts of social interaction develop. Social features as 'culture', 'social systems', 'social organisations' or 'social roles' define but do not determine the actions of people.

Similarly to Blumer, I have chosen a naturalistic way of doing research, but unlike Blumer, I believe that people are active creatures who act through meanings. The phases in a Blumerian research project are: sensitising and testing concepts, exploring the concepts and inspecting them with an open mind. The

idea in his naturalistic way of doing research was to find indisputable, scientific truths with quantitative and qualitative methods for real problems. The role of a researcher was to get acquainted with the life of the researched and to make sure that the concepts in the research were relevant. Behaviour in action could then have been reproduced. Blumer did not succeed in finding scientific truths with his method, but the idea that the researcher should learn about the life and the situation of a person researched, however, survived. On the other hand, symbolic interactionism has been criticised for the idea that people merely react to each other's actions by adjusting. It is, of course, obvious that people need to create their own action as well. The actions of a person are results from interaction within the individual (Charon 1998, 27), which implies that constructing one's own meaning is necessary for action. In the theory of symbolic interactionism it is interesting how action is connected to the social context.

My conclusion is that human beings construct their own meanings that can be different from those of other people. A cultural context is certainly also powerful in affecting people's behaviour but does not determine their action. Strong trust in people, learning by doing and collaborative efforts to improve human conditions for a better life may result in a change in action and more lasting results, too.

As a head of school I have grown fond of using metaphors. What metaphors do we have for school life and organisation? Our life and culture is full of linguistic constructions. For example, the iceberg metaphor (by French & Bell 1975) meaning that what is visible in an organisation is only a small part of the organisation like the top of an iceberg. The formal part of the organisation, e.g. the structure, techniques, economy, resources and goals, is visible, whereas e.g. communication, motivation, attitudes, norms, values, beliefs and emotions form the bigger informal or invisible part. In schools, this informal part comprises all the cultural assumptions, the beliefs that people have, and the hidden curriculum. But the metaphor *iceberg* itself is also a construction.

For me, a Finnish school head, for example the iceberg image started to have a personal meaning first when I understood in my work that the informal, invisible part of the iceberg accounts for more than the visible part in all leadership. The metaphor became alive only after I started to understand people and how they work in practice. Later in the connection of the results in this research, I will also use metaphors to give concise descriptions of the organisation and the culture in the case schools.

Improvement of the function of the school organisation is, of course, is my interest as a head. Around the beginning of the 20th century scientific models of improving the function of an organisation were sought after. The action research model, for example, is known as a normative model (French & Bell 1973, 84-87), which includes steps in the cause-effect analysis like in a machine. These kinds of rationalistic analyses could still be applied to human actions but in cooperation with people. However, French & Bell (1973, 199-200) criticise temporary improvements made by means of action research in organisational

development. People learn how to solve problems rather than describe what should be done differently.

I believe that managing the culture of the school organisation is a transactional process of people working together to improve their practice. From my perspective as a school head, much of the developing could be done from inside the culture or organisation. I understand this as a socio-cultural process of the professional learning of teachers and school leaders and their growth in connection with the others. Instead of working alone, common perspectives can be formed and discussed. Critical and development-oriented attitudes towards one's own work should, hopefully, be reflected on in relation to student learning. The whole school community could be involved in the identity work. I also agree with Etienne Wenger's (1998, 4-5) idea of "*not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do*" as part of sharing professional learning and promoting participation in a community.

How can new meanings be found and learned together? I believe that a professional learning community can expand from the school community to the world outside it. In this research where the EU project offered a social forum where new meanings could create new social patterns and practices (Figure 1.):

A PROCESS OF CREATING NEW MEANINGS

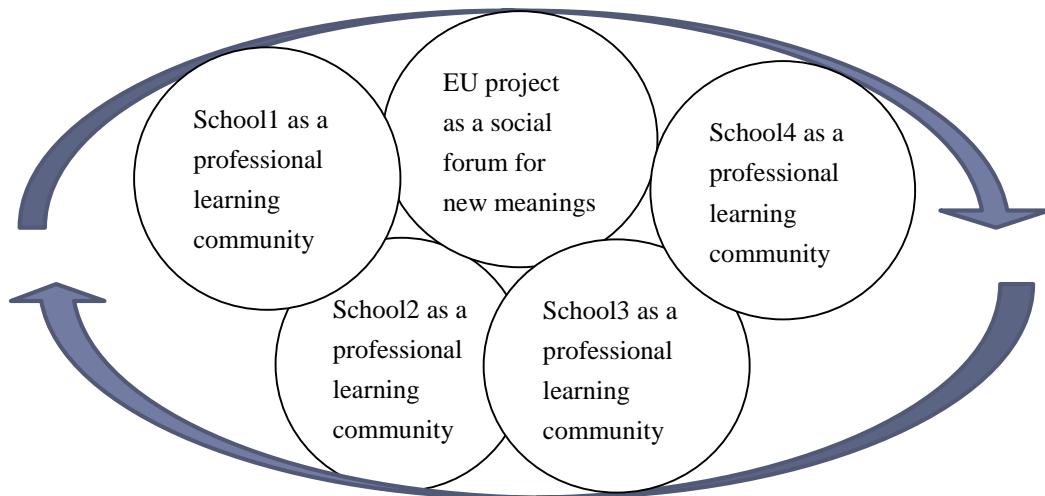


Figure1. Professional learning communities of four case schools co-constructing new meanings through the EU project as a forum for joint meaning-making

To summarise:

- schools as professional communities are made up of people: teachers, heads and other staff who create meanings of actions and act themselves in the leadership situations
- meanings are shared in the school community through communication (also in situations related to leader and subordinate positions)
- shared meanings are created between people through a common social forum
- shared leadership takes forms in actions based on meanings and creates new meanings in the community members (transactional leadership)
- new meanings create new social patterns and practices (transformational leadership)
- participation in a school culture creates commitment to, and ownership of shared tasks and action (see more on p. 58)

In the following chapter, chapter 2, I will move on to describe the theoretical framework and concepts necessary for understanding educational leadership. In the end of the following chapter I will write about different perspectives and streams of research connected to shared leadership and distributed leadership.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS

2.1 Understanding Educational Leadership

The theoretical framework has been written from the point of view of understanding the phenomenon of shared leadership within educational leadership discussions. Since there is no single theory to be given as a base for theory building I have chosen to present several different leadership concepts and theories based on different epistemological and ontological beliefs that can be adding to our understanding of the meanings connected to the phenomenon of shared leadership. I will start with the image of leadership that I came across in my leadership training.

In 2002 I thought that some leadership questions seem to be eternal as in the Allegory of the Cave, originally presented by Plato, the Greek philosopher and a student of Socrates and a teacher of Aristotle in ancient Greece in the fourth century (c. 427–347 BC). The popular allegory of the cave by which we tried to understand how people and organisations function serves as a memorable example of the challenges a leader will meet in bringing about change in the organisation. The chained people who were watching the dancing images behind the flames and who could not believe there was another world outside the cave needed to be convinced by the leader. However, my own understanding of leadership has changed with the years of experience and practice as a head to see the people as equal companions in bringing change in the organisation and in education.

What makes educational leadership special? First, educational leadership is considered to be a special kind of leadership for the purpose of deepening the experience of growth. According to Novak (2008) leadership can also be seen as a fundamentally imaginative act of hope which can be manifested in a communicative approach to the educative process which requires the leader's heart, head and hands in putting learning first. As a learning result a person should be able to appreciate their own experience and understand the others' experiences and in that way become a more educated person. In the quality of the connection that develops, not only in an aesthetical but also in an ethical sense, between people and the activities in the community, an educational leader is interested in

how well individuals can use their own potentials to become themselves as individuals and full members of the community and later in society. (Novak 2008, 40-43.) This type of leadership has *a clear connection with moral and ethical school leadership* that will be discussed later in 2.3.3 p. 50 and onwards.

Educational leadership aims at sustainability in learning outcomes. In order to call forth human potential heads need to breathe life and excitement to their schools. They know the people, the community and the organisation. They ask questions rather than provide answers. They help the magic to happen for the benefit of learning achievements. This kind of leadership can also be seen as the essence of successful schools. (MacBeath 2008, 124.)

Hargreaves (2008) points out that without emotions people would have no capacity to change, to imagine and have feelings about the future or as he puts it: “Without emotion, we would have no passions for causes or work to drive us, no sense for calling or vocation to guide us, and no greater purpose to sustain” Hargreaves (2008, 129). In other words, intellect is not adequate for making a change to happen. Emotions are the essential driving force in educational leadership.

To discuss understanding of educational leadership I need to discuss understanding the concept of leadership. Leadership has been a topic for human discussion for centuries. As leadership is a widely discussed phenomenon that can be viewed from several historical perspectives and organisational aspects one single clear definition of the concept of leadership is not possible or maybe even necessary to be given but it can be generally stated that *leadership is always connected to people, situational facts, time and a social context which, in turn, formulate the phenomenon*.

According to Coleman (2005) the interest in leadership studies grew from *the great man theory* where leaders are supposed to have been born with certain qualities to different styles that could be chosen. In early leadership studies a lot of attention was paid to individual traits of leaders and to suggesting that there are certain characteristics or traits that a good leader should possess. As leaders were expected to have these traits from birth, it was considered that the ideal traits could not be gained by leadership education. Jennings (1961), however, concluded after fifty years of empirical studies that the research had failed to discriminate leaders and non-leaders by a trait of personality or a set of qualities. If they could have been found, leaders could have been selected according to them. At that time, leadership training would have been considered useful for only those with the inherent traits. The empirical studies suggested, however, that instead of certain traits, *leadership is a dynamic process, varying from situation to situation with changes in leaders, followers and situations*. The best known of these contextual or situational theories is Hersey & Blanchard's theory (1969) according to which leaders could adjust their relationship to the led according to two variables; *the experience of the led and the level of their commitment*. In other words, leaders could adjust their own style to the led by taking the situational factors into account (i.e. delegating more with the more experienced

staff, and coaching and supporting the less experienced). When efficacy was introduced as a third dimension in addition to the task and human relations dimensions by Reddin (1967) it was understood that any leadership style may be efficient or inefficient depending on the situation where it is used. (Coleman, 2005, 10.)

Current leadership theories seem to support the situational approach to leadership. What turns out to be problematic, though, is that human life and behaviour are neither predictable nor repeatable from situation to situation: what seems to work in one situation does not necessarily do so in another. However, although the complexity of life and the world of today demand different approaches to leadership from those of some decades ago, many of the basic assumptions and definitions are still working (i.e. suitable traits, gender, and age are considered and put in order of preference when leadership positions are filled).

Explaining and understanding the past may be helpful in learning how we have come to the leadership studies of today. According to organisational theories leadership has had different roles at different times. Their (1994, 13) has compared the different organisational systems and roles of leadership of the 20th century and calls the system from the beginning of the century to the 1930s *a closed system* (an organisation that works inside itself with authoritarian leadership and rational action), the system from the 1940s to the 1960s *a system of rules-based leadership* (which is also a closed system with rational action) and the system from the 1970s to the 1980s *an open system* (an organisation that works both inside and outside) with an aim or outcome and social action, and from the 1990s onwards *a system of general leadership* with a rules system and social action.

Another way of classifying leadership is by the length of planning in an organisation. Kamensky (2000, 30-35) identifies long-term planning typical of the 1960s and strategic planning in the 1970s and 1980s, strategic leadership in the 1980s and 1990s, strategic thinking and behaviour in the 1990s and communication leadership in the first decade of the 21st century. According to this type of classification *we are now living in the era of communication leadership* and are *moving towards network and digital communication and informatics leadership* where living and reacting *ad hoc* have in many respects replaced long-term planning in organisations.

Leadership seems to become altogether a phenomenon that needs to be studied in the connections of everyday life through several lenses or perspectives for the purpose of saving resources (human and environmental). As future leadership is expected to be dynamic and sustainable at the same time, what kind of leadership behaviour is then expected?

A traditional view of leadership that has been described as 'masculine' is often linked to a high-profile man with great charisma and a clear vision, which is articulated and set as an example of behaviour in practice. This traditional view

can be challenged by a 'feminine' and 'ethical' approach that is based on more 'democratic' educational relationships. Although the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' have been used to describe or point out differences in leadership styles, passionate leaders can be either men or women. Gender does not determine the leaders' values although there are culturally and gender-bound expectations attached to leaders (as with female school leaders, in Juusenaho 2004). Examples of leadership behaviour and expectations that heads meet in their work are also discussed later in this study with the results in 4.

2.1.1 Transformational and Transactional Leadership

With the discussion of how leadership can cause change in individuals and social systems it is worth presenting the theory of *transformational leadership*. The notion of transformational leadership first used by Burns (1978) has been in the focus of much leadership research since the early 1980s. According to Burns (ibid.) transforming leadership is a process "in which leaders and followers help each other to advance each other to a higher level of morale and motivation". Burns (ibid.) established two concepts: *transformational and transactional leadership* which he explained to be mutually exclusive styles. While transformational leaders strive for cultural change in the organisational culture by helping the employees to adjust their values to the values of the organisation and by providing them with a strong sense of mission and vision, transactional leaders work for the existing culture. Other researchers (i.e. Bass 1985, 1998; and Bass & Avolio 1994) have developed the theory further by suggesting that leadership can simultaneously display both transformational and transactional leadership. This view I will deal with later in my understanding of school leadership and the connections to the phenomenon of shared leadership in particular (see more in 5.1).

On p. 21 I presented fig. 1 for schools and their professionals co-constructing new meanings and patterns of work through the EU-project as a joint social forum. This view is connected to social constructivism. In transactional leadership the leader tries to find out what is needed for the work to be done whereas in transformational leadership the leader and the led form a mission or share a meaningful aim that they want to work and fight for. In transformational leadership the emphasis is on charismatic and affective elements of leadership. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, and long-term goals, and includes assessing the follower's motives. Charisma is also mentioned as a relevant driving force in transformational leadership and leadership of change. Charisma is needed in building trust. Transformational leaders consider the led as adult persons who have their own motives and try to aid them through their own charismatic behaviour and inspiration, intellectual challenges and individual planning in the organisation. (Juuti 1995, 66-70.)

Northouse (2007) notes that transformational leadership is part of the New Leadership Paradigm where leadership is understood as a process that changes and transforms people (Northouse 2007, 175). Renewing a culture needs transformational leadership. For understanding the whole process of educational leadership a leader needs to form a personal theory of practice which starts and ends with people and which is a self- correcting way of thinking of what is worth doing. I refer to Novak (2008) who lists a set of interconnected principles of a theory of practice:

1. *people are valuable, able and responsible and should be treated as such*
2. *the process of educating should be a collaborative, cooperative process*
3. *the process of educating is a product in making*
4. *all people possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavour*
5. *this potential can be realised in places, programmes and processes designed to trigger off development (Novak 2008, 44.)*

According to Novak (2008, 54) inviting passionate leadership is an ideal, a theory and a method alike where leaders cultivate educational living in themselves and others personally and professionally with the aim of including more and more people in making the world a better place for living. With the consideration of people and how they build meaningful connections in a community, passionate leadership is related to love and commitment. For this type of community, a leader needs to work with all three: *the heart, the head and the hand.* (Novak 2008, 54.)

Transferring Novak's ideas to practice means that school leaders share the values and their leadership and work with the school community. The formal and informal culture of the school is full of messages that either invite or hinder participation. Inclusive, democratic and respectful ways of participation are realised both in words and actions. The curriculum and the programmes of a school are manifestations of what is emphasised in each individual institution and can be evaluated by the national or local authorities of education. Leaders need to articulate their vision and connect these formal aims with the people in the school community. If not anything else, this kind of transforming of schools may sound highly idealistic, but I argue with Novak that renewing a culture needs transformational leadership. Transformational leadership raises also questions of equality and sustainability. How can we make sure that there are equal opportunities for all schools? For working for educational change where student learning is in the centre, all educational leaders need to cooperate. But the work is not one-man work. Integrating all stakeholders equally in the process of change in everyday practice becomes a major challenge of future school leadership.

2.1.2 Research on School Leadership

According to the OECD (2008) report, improving school leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally for several reasons. The tasks and duties of principals and the context of their work have undergone distinctive changes during the last two decades. Many countries have moved towards decentralisation, making schools more autonomous in their decision making and holding them more accountable for results. A demanding set of roles that include financial and human resource management and leadership for learning now increasingly define the function of school leadership across the OECD countries. The OECD (2008) report claims that there is much room for improvement to professionalise school leadership, to support current school leaders and to make school leadership an attractive career for future candidates. At the same time, the requirement to improve overall student performance while serving more diverse student populations is putting schools under pressure to use more evidence-based teaching practices. (OECD 2008.)

However, although research has become a key priority in educational policy agendas in the OECD and partner countries there is still little research on principalship and school leadership. For example in Finland, on the basis of the university reports of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2010) out of 661 dissertations in educational and behavioural sciences only 28 dealt with principalship, the various contexts of school principalship and change in the Finnish universities between the years 2000-2010. (Risku & Kanervio 2011, 162-164.)

Next, I will present some relevant research projects (tasks and duties of principals, building a learning organisation, gender, identity building and change, shared or distributed leadership and dialogue-based school culture).

Most of these research studies were conducted within the national context. However, Mustonen (2003) who studied the duties of Finnish school principals in North-Savolax comprehensive schools and compared them with the duties of Dutch and German school principals makes an exception to the rule. According to the results the duties of German principals were found to resemble the duties of Finnish principals in the 1970s and in the 1980s. The Finnish schools were still run like expert organisations but changes were noticed in traditional management and leadership duties: some school principals worked as modern development-and-human-relations-oriented leaders whereas others worked mostly in their office. Teachers expected more support from their principals whereas the principals thought they worked more as pedagogical leaders. Different expectations of principal work could be seen as a matter of lacking communication between heads and teachers. Mustonen (2003) concluded that there should be more common ground for communication between the management and the teaching staff and more opening up and expanding outside school for school to develop in the direction of a learning organisation.

Juusenaho (2004) interviewed female school leaders in Finland and found out that gender is powerfully connected to our hidden assumptions of school leaders. Female school heads found that their gender truly had an effect on their school leadership. Juusenaho wrote that real school leaders are still in many cases expected to be male, or at least behave in a 'male way'. As female school heads emphasised soft values like the wellbeing of students and good relationships in the staff in the work community, male school heads stressed good management and a well-run economy of the school, and wanted to make sure that there are enough resources for the functioning. Due to the different ways of approaching problems (i.e. taking care of people and their wellbeing) it was also concluded that female school heads met more difficulties in their work than men.

With the EU and a growing number of international projects and more networking, however, several educational leadership researchers in Finland and elsewhere in the world have also noted a need for international cooperation in leadership training (e.g. Mäkelä 2007). Mäkelä (*ibid.*) dealt with what the principals really do and made an auto-ethnographic case study in his own school. The purpose of this study was to clarify the principal's tasks in the 21st century comprehensive school. The aim was also to clarify the principal's task domains and whether the domains established in the 1990s (these domains being administrative-economic leadership, staff management and pedagogical leadership) are still valid in post-modern comprehensive school. Mäkelä found out that social changes in the 1990s have changed the principals' tasks. The principal has an increasingly important role in developing the relationships between their school and its partner collaborators (i.e. parents, partners in social student care institutions, construction service, social and health care, safety and rescue service and various other partners that school heads work with). While networking, heads face a new domain of work which strengthens the view that society is in the process of being networked (Mäkelä 2007). In the autumn term networking was emphasised and in the spring term administrative-economic. Mäkelä (*ibid.*) noted that legislation and the present context of society also modified the head's work. He is worried about the diminishing amount of time left for pedagogical leadership. A recent research states that network management is a growing domain of the duties of a Finnish primary school principal. (Mäkelä 2007, 220.)

Helena Ahonen (2008) studied leadership and leadership identity building of 14 heads by using their life stories as the main research material. The purpose of this study was to describe how leadership in educational institution settings is constructed, and to characterise a leader identity as narrated by heads. The results indicate that leadership is constructed in a process of social interaction, the actors of which are the head and the other members of the school community. Various interest groups of the school, such as parents of the students, also have an effect on the leadership of the institution.

Kuukka (2009) studied the ethical leadership of Finnish head teachers in multicultural schools and found that the challenges expressed by the heads were associated with the pupils learning and achieving the curricular goals, ethnic-cultural interpretations and interaction in the school context. Heads approached the ethical problems pragmatically and used the best interest of a student as a guiding principle in responding to the ethical dilemmas. The values of heads were emphasised. However, although the research serves as a good opening for the discussion on ethical leadership, there is no discussion on multicultural students reaching the goals in the curriculum or being helped in the process of learning and later in integrating into society.

Rajakaltio (2011) dealt with the theme of change with the title 'Diversity in coherence-comprehensive school in the cross-pressure of change'. The object of the research was to increase understanding of the multi-layeredness of the school and the complexity of change. According to the results the everyday reality of schools has to do with coping with diversity and conflicting pressures rather than offering a coherent culture. Processes and factors adding to the integrative functions were, among other things, changing the work organisation and establishing team-work-like procedures, the forming of pedagogical management as a common development task, and the shared leadership. After the action research, however, it was recognised that other organisational changes like district school leadership and the new administration model changed the roles of the head and the leadership team and brought more administration work to the head although cohesion between schools increased.

Kyllönen (2011) focused her research on future school and leadership and made four alternative scenarios for general education in the 2020s. The representatives of principals, the National Board of Education, in-service training educators and administrators participated in a one-year scenario study. As a result three scenarios for a desirable future emerged: multifunctional school, learning centre school, and network school. The two alternative threatening scenarios were labelled as stagnated school or market-based school. Kyllönen found that opportunities for growth exist inside the school if the school develops as an organisation and opens up to the surrounding society and if the school develops as a learning organisation. In the development of a learning organisation the school needs a switch-over from the traditional culture of working alone toward a collaborative and dialogue-based organisation culture. Implementation of distributed leadership became a critical success factor in the future school. Another critical factor was how school will succeed in combining the identity-building of the majority of students and multicultural students.

Although recent research on school leadership claims that changes in the school organisation need to be implemented they leave a gap for understanding what kinds of individual meanings and processes can be connected to shared leadership in schools.

This research report discusses the different aspects of leadership applying such concepts as shared leadership and distributed leadership that can be found

in educational leadership literature and in the case schools. I will write more about shared leadership and distributed perspectives to leadership later on pages 29 to 37.

Under these circumstances the research aims at finding out how the phenomenon of shared leadership is understood in the school leadership practice. I will continue with this theme in chapter 2.2.4.

When carrying out this research, I have applied a constructivist approach to studying school leadership and the meanings of sharing leadership in the case schools. I am aware that there are cultural differences e.g. with the involving of students and parents in decision-making processes in the school. However, I argue that this fact can be used for gaining a richer understanding of the different phenomena in the research.

2.2 Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is ambiguous but it can be generally stated that with shared leadership *the focus is more on the level of the organisation than on the individual*. Shared leadership can reflect management with sharing functions. Shared leadership can be manifested as *distribution of tasks* which can be seen as part of more efficient management and administration in accordance to strategic plans that are ready-made for actors or workers. Dividing the leader's tasks and responsibilities (e.g. by building teams) is done top-down with the purpose of controlling and managing the organisation and the operations.

As in many fields, however, work changes towards specialisation and expert work, hence more flexible organisations are needed. There is a need for another type of shared leadership which can be used as a metaphor for changing the prevailing, traditional power relations in hope for better commitment, wellbeing and efficacy in work. Behind this type of sharing there is the idea of transformative leadership with more participation but also a more democratic work life and ultimately a more democratic world with bottom-up decision-making.

According to Ropo & al. (2005) shared leadership offers a possibility of leadership as a process where actions, planning, experiences, knowledge, and information are shared, people are met as human beings with a body, history, ideals, values, feelings, a gender, trust, a need for power and a time perspective. This kind of shared leadership is 'both and' leadership, which means inclusion of different aspects and finding the part of work that is common and that can be done together. Sharing information includes sharing the hierarchies and control in the community, facts and interpretations. Shared leadership is good for situations where there is a need to build a multidimensional organisation with an

aim of achieving better quality, where there are different interests, tensions, values and multiple voices. Shared leadership is *post-heroic* and means that leadership can be shared between members who can take turns in leadership roles depending on their knowledge and expertise needed. Shared leadership work does not happen by chance. People need to know how to work well together, make decisions and communicate with each other, meet with each other face to face when needed, and learn to listen to each other, too. All this is very different from the traditional, *heroic* leadership where one person in the lead is supposed to be responsible, make the final decisions, energise the troops, plan, and control and coordinate the work. (Ropo et al. 2005, 18-21.)

As leadership is in many ways culturally and historically bound it is difficult to change our ways of thinking of leadership. It is especially hard to change the view of leadership being perfect when harmony exists. However, there is still little understanding in work life for multidimensional leadership with contesting values and different ideas that are used only in the rhetoric of leading the work community. (Ropo et al. 2005, 23-29.)

School leadership does not make an exception there. In school leadership discussions in the States, however, Wahlstrom & Louis (2008) note that, for the last 30 years and for the cause of effectiveness, too, school reform proposals have recommended inclusion of teachers in shared leadership roles. The researchers state that in school leadership literature in the States the effective schools initiatives of the mid-1980s indirectly distributed some leadership tasks to teachers, whereas in the late 1980s and early 1990s efforts to promote school-based management often included a formal but weak representation of teachers in the decision-making. In recent policy discussions in the States, however, teacher inclusion in leadership and the decision-making tasks has gained importance especially owing to research suggesting that increased teacher influence has a positive effect on school improvement. But what constitutes and promotes the distribution or sharing of leadership in a school is more ambiguous. How school leaders share leadership formally and informally is not known, either. Trust seems to be an important issue in the research of school improvement studies but expanding the decision-making arenas to non-administrators in schools is an even more important step that leaders can take in long-term efforts to improve instruction. (Wahlstrom & Louis 2008, 460-461.)

In order to gain more understanding of the process of sharing leadership in schools I will continue with some definitions of shared leadership seen in the light of the research.

2.2.1 Research on Shared Leadership

There are several different definitions of shared leadership to be found in literature, a few of which are presented here. In this research, the emphasis of the conceptualisation of shared leadership lies on the social process.

According to one definition *shared leadership can be understood as a dynamic, interactive process between the actors in a team with clear aims and goals of leading a group or an organisation*. In shared leadership models *leadership is defined as actions that are performed by people* (Badaracco 2001; Kouzes and Posner 2002). Shared leadership is also *a study of leadership as a group phenomenon* (Pearce & Conger 2003). *The focus is on the social process*. Shared leadership is built in the context where it is situated. (Lave & Wenger 1991; Suchman 1987.)

Researchers Denis & al. (2012) have chosen the broader label “leadership in the plural” to encompass the range of phenomena and their conceptualisations considered in these bodies of work. They find *four streams of research on plural leadership* each of which has a different focus on organisational sharing of leadership, and different theoretical and methodological orientations:

- 1. Sharing leadership for team effectiveness (*the empirical focus is on teams and mutual leadership in groups and members leading each other, organisational behaviour within the teams and achieving organisational goals, vertical leaders and self-leadership contribute to shared leadership development, empirical work involves hypothesis testing by using quantitative methods and surveys, used in organisational behaviour and social psychology; e.g. Pearce & Conger 2003; Fletcher & Käufer 2003*)
- 2. Pooling leadership at the top to lead others (*the empirical focus is on dyads, triads and executive role constellations; pooled leadership bridges expertise and provides legitimacy in professionalized settings, qualitative case studies, used in knowledge-based organisations, management, and sociology; e.g. Gronn (2002)*)
- 3. Spreading leadership across levels over time (*the empirical focus is on leadership relayed between people to achieve outcomes, inter-organisational collaboration: distributed leadership in public services and education, sociology, educational management, and public administration, qualitative case studies and some surveys; e.g. Spillane & al. (2001); Spillane (2006); Spillane & Diamond (2007)*)
- 4. Producing leadership through interactions (*the empirical focus is on leadership as an emergent property of relations, used in knowledge-based organisations, historic precursors: practice theories of leadership, conceptual papers and ethnography; e.g. Uhl-Bien (2006).*

(Applied from Denis et al. 2012, Table 1, 215-217.)

Each of these research streams has its claims and findings within the literature. In this research they will be referred to with the results of the case schools and their ways of sharing leadership in chapter 5.

However, some critical remarks and limitations can be raised as to their basic expectations of people and how they work in their organisations.

In the first stream of research, effectiveness is expected to be positively related to shared leadership behaviours in teams. Commitment to shared goals and possessing of self-leadership is taken for granted, but no attention is paid to the power relations and the role of formal leaders in the organisation. In the second type of plural leadership where leadership is pooled there is a lack of clarity in the boundaries between leaders and others and limited attention is paid to dynamics over time. In the third research stream where leadership is relayed or distributed there is an ambiguity of what constitutes leadership. In the fourth stream where leadership is relational and where leadership is seen as a social influence process, power is overlooked and there is a risk of diluting the notion of leadership. (Denis et al. 2012, 216.)

According to Fletcher & Käufer (2003) shared leadership is full of paradoxes: *a self- versus- group dilemma arises* when a leader is initiating shared leadership practices; in other words who is active in the beginning. Another paradox is that *leaders can get stuck in old individualistic and heroic principles* and forget what they are preaching. This would be forgetting the communication and practices such as taking time from one's own work for sharing information. A third paradox would be that the *skills that leaders have can be different from the skills required for involving others in leadership*. Therefore people who are familiar with relational leadership practices are often not described as leaders but as nice and thoughtful people who care about others' feelings (and are often female). (Fletcher & Käufer 2003, 24-26.)

However, when it comes to schools, shared leadership can certainly contribute to school improvement by enhancing the motivation, participation, and coordination of the teachers. Hargreaves (1994) remarks that in discussions on change, the collaboration and collegiality of teachers can be seen forming vital bridges between school improvement and effectiveness and teacher development and shared decision-making (Rosenholtz 1989). If collaboration and collegiality are seen as promoting professional growth and internally generated school improvement, they are also widely viewed as ways of securing effective implementation of externally introduced change. Collaboration and collegiality should not be based on a received culture: *teachers should have a part in the process of building meaningful change*. (Hargreaves 1994, 186-189.)

For as Hargreaves (1994, 11) points out: "*Teachers are not just technical learners. Teachers are social learners, too. Recognising that teachers are social learners draws our attention not just to their capacity to change, but to their desires to change (and indeed for stability).*" In other words, if teachers are asked, they generally want to participate in decision-making processes and designing changes in their own work context. This type of shared leadership comes very near democratic or collective leadership.

Sergiovanni (2001, 24-25) translates these ideas into school leadership and claims that cultivating *shared values* provides the glue that connects people

together in meaningful ways. Leaders who express symbolic aspects of leadership work beneath the surface of events and seek for deeper meanings and deeper values. Following Sergiovanni's ideas, leadership that counts in school provides symbols that help teachers, students, parents, and others make sense of their world. Sergiovanni (2001, 103) claims that the challenge for leaders is thus one of connections, and he suggests the following common moral challenge to the school community: school community should be bonded by a set of shared conceptions, purposes, ideas, and values.

The art of leadership is found in the steady balance by which leaders bring their ideas into their practice (Sergiovanni 2001, 123). The leader needs to know how people can become tied together and become tied to their work not just interpersonally but morally and spiritually as well. For leaders, this calls for a change in practice: more time spent on developing idea structures, building a shared followership and helping their schools to become communities of responsibility. A change in the practice first requires a change in thinking with subsequent rethinking in the practice. Leadership is about selecting the suitable means of achieving the goals needed for the change in practice. Knowing the culture is an essential part in all educational leadership.

But this kind of change still sounds like a change. And schools and staffs have had enough of changes. Hargreaves (1997, 3) sympathises with the objections that teachers make in school improvement and change discussions as they ask *who needs these changes, anyway?* Teachers would like to see more money spent on instruction in the classrooms instead of other programmes.

Another aspect of sharing leadership can be what Lambert (1998, 91) calls building leadership capacity in school improvement. "Leadership capacity refers to broad-based, skilful participation in the work of leadership. The work of leadership involves attention to shared learning that leads to shared purpose and action. This leadership is built on reflective practice that aims consistently to innovation, high or steadily improving student achievement "(Lambert 2003, 5). "Principals, teachers, parents, and students are the key players in the work of schooling. When working together, they form a concentration of leadership that is a powerful force in a school. If led by a skilful principal, teachers will often band together to form a team of professionals that invites parents and students into the work of leadership. When individuals work together in reflective teams, they make the most out of their combination of talents "(Lambert 2003, 6).

For building leadership capacity in school Lambert (1998, 78) also recommends that when new people are recruited to schools, the new personnel should have following capacities:

"A constructivist philosophy of learning (although the candidates may not use the term), a view of themselves as being responsible for all of the students in the school, a willingness to participate in decision making, a readiness to work

together to accomplish the school's goals and an understanding of how they can learn to improve their own craft" (Lambert 1998, 78).

Lambert's ideas for recruiting new teachers sound familiar but quite idealistic although finding the right type of teachers is necessary for the capacity building in the school.

Sergiovanni (2001) sees capacity building as a capital although he admits that it sounds strange to use terms like 'capital' and 'expanding value' that are borrowed from economics. Organisation-like schools are efficient generators of management, physical and other forms of *material capital* whereas communities are efficient developers of social, academic, intellectual, professional, and other forms of *human capital*. Both managerial and human capital can add value to teaching and learning. Material capital provides the structures and resources that can make the work easier. *Capacity building creates intellectual capital by emphasising the development of knowledge, competence, and the skill of parents, teachers, and other locals in the school community.* Teacher development can help build the intellectual capital that teachers need to keep up by increasing their knowledge of the disciplines and the pedagogical knowledge along with the subject-specific content knowledge that they need to teach these disciplines effectively. (Sergiovanni 2001, 48.)

Developing school is, in all, a cooperative process. It is a community of learners and a learning community of all actors working together. The idea of a cooperative school requires a new evaluation of school culture and a cognitive change towards a culture with collegiality, cooperation and respecting individuality (Kohonen & Leppilampi 1994). But as Schein (1985) has pointed out, the competition of values in organisations can limit the possibilities of reaching a consensus. On the other hand, shared culture of organisation is the level where the values become so deeply embedded that they are pre-conscious and observed without reflection (Hoyle & Wallace 2005, 118).

There is also an ideal picture of a successful school leader who creates consensus in running the school smoothly with the minimum of shared values. Nias & al. (1989, 53) point out that a successful school and its culture of collaboration are considered to be *a culture with tolerance of the values of the others.*

Sergiovanni (2001, 49-54) states that as centrally used policy strategies change from mandates incentives to the capacity-building and democratic participation of educational leadership, *the leaders' roles change from managers to motivators, developers and community builders.*

According to Sergiovanni (2001, 51) school leaders need to master seven basic competencies in order to lead effectively: the *management of attention, meaning, trust, self, paradox, effectiveness and commitment.* Management of attention is about focussing the others on values, ideas, goals, and purposes. Management of meaning is to connect teachers, parents, and students to the school so that they find their lives useful, valued and sensible. Management of

trust means to be trustworthy and honest. Management of self is the ability of heads to know who they are. Management of paradox is about bringing together ideas that seem at odds with each other. Management of effectiveness is about getting results and more. This process involves both *learning* and *cultivating relationships*. Learning builds on the capacity of teachers to know more about their work and to improve their practice. Relationships provide the support that teachers need to come together as a community of practice. (Sergiovanni 2001, 51-53.)

If 'self-in-relation' is the key to growth in a community, it would follow that shared leadership in the school would be sharing what is constructed together in dialogue as common meanings. In this way shared leadership can be seen as mental practice, too. With mutual learning and growth participants gain five good things: *zest*, *empowered action*, *increased self-esteem*, *new knowledge* and particularly important with this discussion, *a desire for connection*. (Fletcher & Käüfer 2003, 29.)

In conclusion, let me show how to put these ideas into practice: schools need to be transformed into meaning-building communities where common meanings are negotiated and constructed together in dialogue, and school leadership is the core function in that change process. Moreover, I claim that shared leadership promotes learning processes and achievements when meanings are shared, which fosters the overall learning capacity of the whole school community. For true change at school sharing leadership has to become conscious action. On the basis of the above, I argue that leadership is also a tool for creating meanings and therefore a tool for learning.

In the following chapter I will continue with what school leadership researchers write about distributed leadership.

2.2.2 *Distributed Leadership in Practice*

There are also varying uses of the terms of 'shared' and 'distributed' in school leadership literature and they are often interchangeable. According to Harris (2008) distributed leadership is frequently used as a synonym for shared, collaborative leadership, democratic leadership, and participative leadership.

According to Bolden & al. (2011) a distributed approach to leadership draws attention to very different aspects of leadership from the traditional models of leadership. Bolden & al. (2011) argue that the concept of distributed leadership is one form of shared leadership theory that has been especially developed within the educational contexts by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in the U.K. The distributed theory of leadership puts leadership practice in the centre stage rather than the principal's actions and proposes that leadership practice takes shape in the interactions of people and their situation. Distributed

leadership widens the perspective from the leader-follower perspectives to seeing leadership as a social process emergent from the relations in the organisation and stretching beyond the community. For example in school life a distributed perspective on leadership requires a system-wide perspective on the school organisation and openness about the roles beyond the boundaries of leadership. Therefore e.g. the contribution of parents, pupils, teachers, the local community and other stakeholders would be seen as necessary in building good distributed leadership practice in the school. (Spillane 2004, 3; Spillane 2006, 25; Uhl-Bien 2006, 668; Bolden & al. 2011, 6-7; 34-39).

In school life, however, as regards shared leadership or distributed leadership, there are great fears that distributed leadership will become anything and nothing at the same time or just another attempt to share or delegate leadership tasks to others, which is regarded as the narrow but also the most common interpretation of shared leadership in school organisations by the researchers (Harris 2005; Spillane 2006; Fullan 2006; Hargreaves & Fink 2008). Delegating tasks is a common way in school where there is lot of segmented work, expert work and separateness of subjects along with a constant shortage of time.

However, researchers Spillane & Diamond (2007) hope that distributed perspective would continue to be part of school improvement discussions. They define *taking a distributed perspective* in school leadership and management as *the leader plus aspect* which means that the leading and managing the work in schools takes multiple individuals and goes beyond the work of individuals in formal leadership positions. A distributed perspective frames the practice as a *product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation*. (Spillane & Diamond 2007, 6-7, 146-149.)

According to Spillane and al. (2001) *school leadership is best understood as a distributed practice, stretched over the school's social and situational contexts*. “Situation as both the medium for practice and an outcome of the practice and as a medium of practice, aspects of the situation offer both affordances and constraints in leadership and management practice”. In turn, leadership practice can transform aspects of the situation over time as new tools or routines are designed or put to place. (Spillane & Diamond 2007, 10-11.)

Spillane & Diamond (2007) suggest a distributed perspective to be used as a descriptive, conceptual lens or diagnostic tool for practitioners and researchers for probing and analysing practice. However, they note that relatively few scholars have taken up the challenge of theory building around the practice aspect of a distributed perspective. (Spillane & Diamond 2007, 148-163.)

Practitioners and administrators would, however, need tools that are applicable for analysing practice. One possible diagnostic tool in investigating school leadership and a distributed perspective is a model which is derived from the empirical studies of Harris & al. (2007; see more in Harris 2008). The model outlines three different types of leadership distribution: *within* the school, *between* schools and *outside* schools. Some schools may have all three types of distribution and may have multiple layers of distributed leadership practice. The

model suggests that there is greater potential for knowledge creation and system transformation by the creation of more leadership opportunities and by increasing the surge between and across organisations of information similarly to the system redesign by Hargreaves (2007). Harris (2008) categorises distributed leadership in the following way (Figure 2):

- *Within schools*: restructuring roles and responsibilities
- *Between schools*: forms of collaboration, federations, networked activity
- *Outside schools*: multi-agency, partnership, extended schools, schools as a social centre and community engagement (Harris 2008, 73-74).

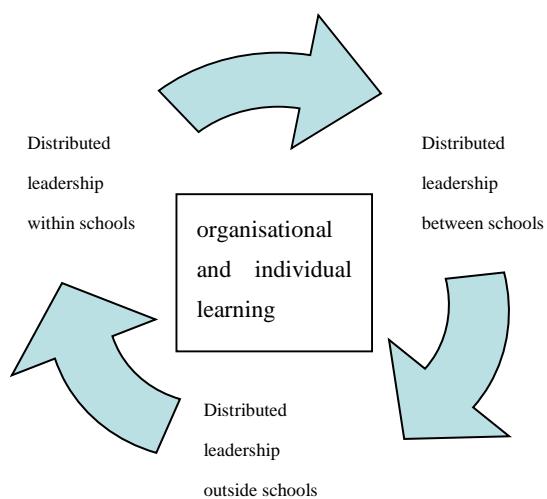


Figure2: Model of distributed leadership (Harris 2008, 74)

The model seems a promising tool for analysing school leadership and how leadership is shared in the case schools in practice. However, when combining the model with the individuals who are personally engaged in cooperation in schools, grasping and transforming their learning experiences, their observations and reflective thoughts on and knowledge of school practice (compare the idea with Kolb's Cycle 1984) will be needed in transforming the schools into learning communities. How can this idea be connected to school leadership and shared leadership in particular? In the following chapter I will connect shared leadership with the idea of the leadership of the learning community.

2.2.3 Leadership of the Learning Community

In the school of today, the task of a head is to form a consensus of the mission of the school with the staff. For that purpose a head has to have a vision and charisma. To implement pedagogical leadership, a head benefits, first of all, from

the experience and training and secondly from the courage which are all needed for visioning, developing and experimenting. In order to mediate the vision, a principal needs to communicate the vision clearly and to lead by setting an example. In any organisation there are practices, values and beliefs that get aged and need to be discussed. Having the courage and being able to criticise the status-quo constructively can be a matter of experience and communicational skills. The use of dialogue as a tool for a shared meaning building of a vision in action also requires time for human relations and discussions. *Values that are in the heart of all leadership and functioning in a school need to be discussed continuously.* Time and how we spend it can also be a matter of what is valued highly.

According to the results of a Finnish research from 2001-2002 (Ojala 2007) in the Finnish comprehensive school, the importance of the administrative and managerial duties of the heads will remain roughly the same, whereas there is a generally growing tendency for exercising pedagogical leadership, both in large and small schools. (Ojala 2007, 146-147.)

The growing need for pedagogical leadership emphasises the role of a head, too. Like teaching, pedagogical leadership is technical, experiential, emotional, ethical, political, situated and cultural practice. For instance, when a head needs to take a closer look at teaching and learning, moral leadership and values may be emphasised. This will also lead us to discuss quality in education and *developing the school as a learning community.*

However, focussing on learning instead of teaching requires leaders to change from producers and managers to colearners. This change is seen necessary in the education of today. For school leadership this causes a turn-around: instead of being bureaucratic implementers of laws and orders, heads need to put learning first and become pedagogical leaders themselves and build on leadership capabilities rather than roles. Future leadership needs to be forward looking, multi-layered, inclusive, and collective, distributed, and networked driven by learning before results (Harris 2008).

Education is one of the most important means of influencing people in society. Although education is also powerfully connected to developing future society, educational leadership is not always understood as a special kind of leadership. Neo-liberal trends in society that are forced to leadership in education cause short-term planning in hope of economic profits and the loss of solid grounds for long-term planning with longer-lasting results. These aims contradict the traditional educational values and what is seen as important in education and worth fighting for, i.e. equality and justice in society.

Vision, commitment, trust and charisma are also often emphasised in educational leadership. With these qualities school leaders are expected to serve creating and leading the school culture. Schools can also be seen as cultural products where leadership is moral functioning. In this respect we could talk about deep values that are connected to leadership and the people that are part of the culture and share the process of meaning building. According to Kurki (1993;

69) *leaders can also be understood to be artists* who need several frames or lenses to analyse and make sense of the world around: structural, human- resources-related, political, symbolic and cultural frames that can be switched according to the need and the situation.

For a school leader, transformative leadership and the use of several cultural lenses simultaneously sets tremendous challenges, but can give a lot of opportunities for creating a school culture that is part of changing society. To build a school culture with equality and other positive moral aspects, a school leader needs to know the people and invest time in human relations. With transactional leadership a school leader's deep *values* are working in their communication and in the everyday routines of their school culture.

For making a connection between shared perspectives on school leadership in globalisation, both transformational and transactional aspects to school leadership can be recognised in the paradigm shift of teaching and learning described by Cheng (2008) whose conclusions I will present next.

2.3.4 School Leadership in Paradigm Change

Cheng (2008) describes new learning and school leadership in the paradigm shift from the 1980s to the beginning of the 21st century.

According to Cheng (*ibid.*) effective school movements in different parts of the world were typical of the *first wave paradigm in the 1980s*. The first wave of educational reforms had the assumption that education is knowledge delivery and that learning is mainly a process of students receiving knowledge, skills and cultural values from teachers, and the curriculum reforms aimed at enhancing the *internal effectiveness of schools* in achieving pre-planned educational aims and curriculum targets. *The role of school leadership was a form of internal school leadership concerned with improvement.* *The second wave of reforms in the 1990s* emerged internationally in response to concerns about educational accountability to the public. *This wave emphasised interface effectiveness between school and community.* Education was seen as provision of a service to multiple stakeholders and the nature of the service cast students as its recipients. The role of school leadership with this paradigm was to ensure accountability to the public, to ensure the quality of education as satisfying the stakeholders' expectations. *Towards the third wave since the beginning of the 21st century school leadership has had a key role in facilitating multiple and sustainable developments of individuals, the community, and the whole of society for the future.* The emphasis in school leadership has been on strategic leadership, environmental leadership, public relations leadership and brand leadership that emerged with the impact of rapid globalisation, far-reaching influences of IT at

the turn of the new millennium and urgent demands for economic and social developments. It is expected that human nature should also be contextualised so that people assume multiple identities as a technological person, social person, economic person, political person and a learning person. (Cheng 2008, 17-24.)

According to Cheng (2008) to survive with sustainable and multiple developments intelligence also needs to be contextualised. Developing CMI (Contextualized Multiple Intelligences, CMI) becomes a primary goal of learning in the third wave, *which leads to a new thinking of effectiveness in education and new learning*, a third wave of world-class educational reforms *with a heavy emphasis on future effectiveness*. In this changing world, learning is seen as localised and globalised, happening everywhere and is lifelong continuous learning at the individual and group levels. The teachers' professional learning feeds *multi-level learning leadership on individual, group and organisational levels, action learning on a daily basis, short-or-long-term actions or projects*. With this model *school leadership is also a process of action learning*, in which a leader or a group of leaders draw on the wisdom and the knowledge-in-action of their colleagues. (Cheng 2008, 17-24.)

Moreover, according to Cheng (ibid.): "To facilitate the paradigm change towards the third wave in learning, school leadership needs to be seen as a form of triplication" which implies that school leaders become facilitators of the whole learning processes at individual, local and global levels. On the global level the school leaders are involved in the discussions on the relevance of the learning context and the programs both for students and teachers. (Cheng 2008, 26.)

International school development projects as Comenius seem to fit the third category of educational reforms where school leadership can become a process of action learning on several levels where the main task of school leadership is facilitating the multifaceted learning of individuals and a community, and securing the needs of future society as described in the following figure (Figure3.)

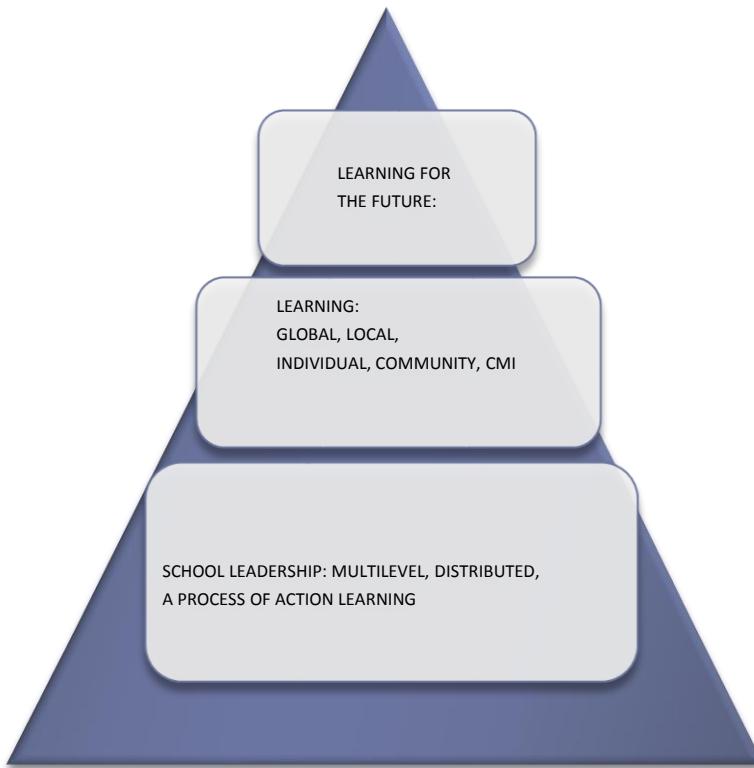


Figure3: Change in school leadership (Modified from Cheng 2008, 17-26.)

In order to describe change in school leadership I connected Cheng's ideas (Cheng 2008) to a figure where distributed school leadership becomes a process of action learning on several levels.

However, it is worth noting that although the main aim of this research is to understand the phenomenon of shared and distributed leadership within the context of the case schools, their organisational cultures, and everyday practice of school leadership, other cultural aspects cannot be neglected.

Although this research is not comparative some differences and similarities in the school leadership practice will be taken up for discussion later. For understanding the differences there are in school leadership practice in each case country, however, some historic background for educational leadership will be discussed later with the results. But before that I will write about the connections there are between school leadership, culture and education.

2.3 School Leadership for Change

School leadership takes after leadership in general. Leadership involves achieving goals with and through people, as defined before. Therefore a leader

should be concerned with both tasks and human relations. According to Shaw (2005) leadership and management is a social science that concerns the human interactions between people. However, definitions and distinctions between *leadership*, *management* and *administration* are sometimes confusing as the same terms are used in different meanings in the current leadership literature. In the U.K., administration often refers to the 'lower level' of office work, whereas in other parts of the world it is equivalent to 'management' activities, such as planning, controlling and budgeting, and may include leadership. (Coleman & Earley 2005, 254.)

In 2.1.2 I presented research on school leadership in Finland where there have been vivid discussions on how change affects leadership, the tasks and the roles of school heads (Mustonen 2003; Pennanen 2006; Mäkelä 2007). Researchers have also discussed the differences of managerism and leadership or the changes in the head's role (Lambert 2002; Mäkelä 2007).

For example, in Finland where the systematic developing of the comprehensive school started in the 1980s the tasks of the head were divided into pedagogical leadership, economic-governmental and human resource tasks. The idea of 'accountability' and planning for static circumstances typical of modernity were the running themes in school leadership in the 1980s and 1990s. Surprisingly, however, this division of tasks has remained roughly unchanged although the context, society and school life and the world have undergone tremendous changes.

Throughout the first decade of the 21st century, developing 'quality' and 'strategic planning' accompanied with decreasing public financing resources have been the themes affecting school leadership. School leadership is under a constant pressure of economic values. Strategic planning is often connected to utilising the money available in the best possible way. An evaluation of quality would follow as a means of controlling what has been achieved with the money. Quality can then be explained by figures and numbers as part of the management, which is to say that 'quality' needs to be measurable. But is this the whole picture of quality?

The practice of school leadership seems to be going in the direction of more managerism and administration. Unfortunately, there seem to be few long-term programmes for developing the pedagogical excellence of school leaders or programmes to support the professional growth of school leaders in their leading of the learning community. Constant reacting to planned and unplanned changes and possibilities, too, requires school heads to become more flexible in their work. The changes in a school head's role reflect the many changes that the postmodern time causes to people in their work. There are no clear boundaries. Traditions seem to lose their importance. Clinging to the past is not possible either and the future is unknown. Then living in the present and reacting 'ad hoc' seem to be the only possibilities.

It is obvious that there are many unplanned elements interfering with leadership of our time; not only have the rapid scientific and technological

advancements in society within the last decades changed our life, but the circumstances and dramatic changes in our environment give rise to a need of re-evaluations of leadership. The amount of information and communication in continuously changing circumstances call for new forms of leadership in work life. Society changes the people and vice versa. A lot of workers are nowadays more educated, more self-directed and willing to take responsibilities. Many have an expectation of a more flexible organisation and a more 'personally adjusted' way of leading. Surprisingly, at the same time, although hero leaders (according to Badaracco 2001) are not as popular as in earlier times, workers wish for high-profile leadership and strong leaders for their support. Ideally leaders are still expected to have *charisma, to spearhead in expressing clear visions, to set an example* in their actions, and to have an understanding of people.

Change seems to get a lot of attention in the discussions on educational leadership. Kurki (1993, 66) concludes that we need a new type of leadership and refers to Burns (1978) who thinks that we need both transactional (*based on a relationship of exchange*) and transformative leadership (*where the leader helps people to change society*). Leadership has to be *critical, transformative, educating and ethical*. Both *transactional and transformative leadership* are based on values which are typical of moral leadership. On the other hand, leadership is also understood as an ability to listen to other persons and understand them and their lives. The aims of transactional and transformative leadership described above and changes promoted by work life can be quite contradictory, too.

But these are not the only prerequisites for changes in schools. Improving student learning is often the focus of change in schools. For example Caldwell (2008, 184-189) lists four capitals that contribute to the transformation of schools and to the change for improving student learning. All these capitals or resources contribute to each other:

- *social capital* (e.g. partnerships in the community, parents)
- *intellectual capital* (skills and knowledge of those who work in or for the school)
- *financial capital* (money available)
- *spiritual capital* (coherence between values, beliefs and attitudes about life and learning). (Caldwell & Spinks 2008, 33.)

Trust in the people and the institution, mutuality, shared values and norms, social relationships and participation in the community are all important elements in the gaining of social capital. Transformation of schools for improved student learning and educational leadership are also linked together in political decision-making. However, Caldwell (2008, 194) notes that loss of trust especially in respect to politicians and their decision-making in education has been a popular theme in recent educational leadership research discourse. It also works the other

way round: there is even mistrust in heads and teachers as professionals who are considered only to spend taxpayers' money.

An integrating or energising force could be *enchanting leadership* that can only come true if *there is trust* between all educational partners in educational systems and action in schools. In that way trust also seems to be the key to building passion, vision and strategy with a compelling moral purpose in education.

A different and perhaps a far more popular view of gaining change in schools today is connected to strategic planning and the politics. School leadership is then often contrasted with the economic outcomes, operational outcomes and client satisfaction. With a strategy an enterprise or an organisation is believed to be able to control or to govern its environment in the world of change. Kamensky (2010) believes that there is a drama going on even in non-competitive organisations since they have to compete for the funds to meet the needs of their clients and make the best use of their knowing in practice in the competition with other non-profitable enterprises. However, with a strategy even non-profitable organisations can pay attention to how they can make better use of their resources or make a better strategy for the future. But a strategy that contains future orientation could also add to sustainability (Kamensky 2010, 16-24.)

On the one hand, strategic leadership and planning can be criticised for non-flexibility, being based on a mechanic and static world, lacking the systematic evaluation and energy of change leadership. Implementing the strategies efficiently and successfully seems to be difficult and new strategies are made in an accelerated tempo. It is often the high heads that make the strategies and the confused middle heads have to start their implementation with the result of the staff not knowing much about it in practice after two years. It is leadership, thinking and communication that also make a difference in strategic leadership. Developed for the business life and making profit and following the outcomes in the quartals of the year, it can also be asked whether this kind of thinking of outcomes is at all suitable for schools. Many of the outcomes in teaching and learning are not measurable or can be seen much later in life if at all. The notion of clients in schools is also an interesting one. For example in Finland, the comprehensive school is compulsory for nine years. Our students are not clients who can choose not to go to school. Neither do they necessarily commit themselves to their studies in the way written in the curriculum plan as would be the case in an idealistic quality organisation as I stated in my Master's thesis for education (Valjakka 1997).

What is there for school leadership? It is obvious that school leadership is part of the financial planning in society and responsible for achieving the best possible learning outcomes but school leadership can also be associated with the concepts of *empowerment, transformation and community*. Then leadership no longer refers only to titular or officially designated leaders, but can be distributed within the school among members of teaching or support staff. Their claim is that *the*

more distributed leadership there is throughout the school community, the better the performance of that school is in terms of problem-based learning and student learning. (Silins & Mulford 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2004; crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu.)

The ability to lead this type of learning depends on the relationships or networks leaders cultivate. Promoting distributed leadership styles can also be a matter of trust and support. Thus, teachers as leaders and teachers as supporters of leaders are beginning to play a central role in determining school reforms. The atmosphere of learning is connected to the leaders and their leadership practices and styles. To lead this kind of change in practice *school leadership needs to be effective, sustainable, ethical and pedagogical.* These aspects to school leadership will be discussed in the following chapters. I will start with the meaning of effective school leadership.

2.3.1 Effective School Leadership

How is leadership connected to learning at school? Nowadays, there is convincing evidence research on school programmes where leadership serves the purpose of improving learning results (Leithwood & al. 2004). According to Leithwood et al. (*ibid.*) different forms of leadership are described in the literature “instructional,” “participative,” “democratic,” “transformational,” “moral,” “strategic” and the like. “Instructional leadership,” for example, encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school. “Transformational leadership,” on the other hand, draws attention to a broader array of school and classroom conditions that may need to be changed if learning is to improve. Both “democratic” and “participative leadership” are especially concerned with how decisions are made about both school priorities and how to pursue them. (Leithwood et al. 2004, 6.)

School leadership can be connected to quality in education and in discussing values, meanings and ethics in society. School leadership is always connected to learning in effective schools (Leithwood et al. 2004). This moral challenge is presented to school leaders who need to balance between political, financial and educational demands of different stakeholders i.e. governmental and local authorities, politicians, parents, heads, teachers, other staff and students in school. Effective leadership is widely recognised as integral to school improvement and there are numerous lists of leadership styles and traits that are beneficial for an effective school leader. In the U.S.A. and in the U.K. leadership is identified with solving problems and the purpose of leadership is finding solutions. Sergiovanni (2001) suggests that head teachers, rather than solving problems, should help people to understand the problems they face. According to him, leadership is a quest of ‘doing the right thing’.

Recent studies have widened the range of school leadership research to various organisational levels: school managers, department heads, coordinators, teachers (Goldhaber, 2002; Harris, 2004) and distributed leadership that could

yield a higher impact on student achievement than what is shown. In this way, efficacy is connected with leadership. Improved student achievements are measured and viewed through the efficacy of leadership. This understanding of more efficient education has been popular especially in the U.S.A., the U.K. and Australia where action research has been used for improved student achievements.

Sergiovanni (2001, 48-53) also believes that effective leadership is integral to school improvement and that leadership for learning includes local capacity which has to be put to work. For different purposes leaders have to cultivate different leadership roles: *when capacity building and democratic participation* are emphasised, *leaders focus less on managerial and motivational roles and more on developer and community builder roles* and vice versa; *in building strong communities of learning they use manager and motivator roles*.

A contemporary view of effective school leaders is also summed up by Riley & MacBeath (1998) in the following way:

"Effective school leaders are distinguished by their vision and passion and by their capacity to bring a critical spirit into the complex and demanding job of headship, whilst at the same time focusing on staff and pupil performance, and on classroom pedagogy" (Riley & MacBeath 1998, 151.)

Fullan argues (2008, 25) that leading knowledgeably also means bringing teachers to a high level of *pedagogical effectiveness*. In order to do so, leaders need to foster interactions that keep teachers at that level through continuous application and refinement. This is, in my opinion, an important part of the work as a pedagogical leader: the school leader needs to have a pedagogical insight into teaching and learning and a need to keep on learning more to be able to lead knowledgeably.

Moos & al. (1998) have studied perceptions of good leadership identified by Danish, English and Scottish teachers and give five 'definitions' of what good school leadership means:

"Good leadership means a clear vision, working tightly alongside with colleagues, respecting teachers' autonomy, looking ahead and preparing the others for change, being pragmatic and able to negotiate and compromise" (Moos & al. 1998, 63.)

Teachers' perceptions of good school leaders are probably commonly shared by teachers from different western cultures. I am, however, surprised that an expectation of 'support' that often comes up in the discussions with Finnish teachers is not mentioned as an expectation in educational leadership literature. Maybe practitioners and educational researchers define good leaders differently. The researchers Day & al. (2000, 165) state that *good school leaders communicate clear sets of personal and moral purposes for school*.

Southworth (2008) notes that according to the researchers Leithwood & al. (2006 and the reports of NCSL 2007) *successful school leaders are optimistic, are ready to learn from others, have a vision for the school and a sense of mission in their work*. They believe that *successful school leaders are open-minded rather than dogmatic in their thinking of core values and pursuit of high expectations of staff motivation, commitment, learning and achievement for all*. (Southworth 2008, 154.)

And Sergiovanni (2001) adds humility to the leadership virtues:

“Knowing how little one knows and can accomplish alone is a true virtue of a successful leader in the complex schools of today (Sergiovanni 2001, 122-124)”.

To the qualities that a successful school leader should possess to be effective I would like to add *emotional intelligence and common sense* which I have found useful leadership qualities in many situations. A headship is a job full of fighting for the others and caring about the others.

A good school leader is also able to express clear sets of visions and moral purposes for school as mentioned earlier. However, personal and moral purposes can easily cause contradictions in visions about what is understood by being 'effective'. Education that is thought to be 'effective' by politicians is often criticised by teachers on the school level e.g. for the values it includes (e.g. entrepreneurship). It seems that schools are nowadays expected to fulfil the needs of work life in an accelerated tempo according to regulations which can be altered even at short notice by changes in the political power or the financial circumstances. As it seems, all effective education is not necessarily sustainable. What could be meant by sustainability in the context of educational leadership where learning is put first?

2.3.2 Sustainable School Leadership

Sustainability is one more recently popular aspect to school leadership. The term was first taken up in discussions on environmental issues and then applied to education in the meaning of solutions that are based on lasting values and a wise use of human and material resources.

Hargreaves & Fink (2006, 17) cite Michael Fullan (2005) who defines *educational sustainability as the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose*. Hargreaves & Fink (2006, 21-23) claim that *sustainable leadership matters in connection with learning and integrity because it preserves, protects,*

and promotes deep and broad learning for all in relationships of care for others. Sustainable leadership is three-dimensional: it has *depth, breadth, and length*. Sustainable leadership includes *justice, diversity, resourcefulness and conservation*, and they have to be taken into consideration with any change and improvement at school. Sustainable leadership honours the past in creating the future, and promotes diversity and cohesion. What does this mean in practice?

Sustainable leadership in a school is not limited to a principal or even to teachers; it stretches across individuals, communities, and networks and up and down organisational layers (Hargreaves & Fink 2006, 136). They also remark that sustainable leadership is distributed leadership but not all distributed leadership is sustainable. *Sustainable leadership stays centered in learning and that lasts over time, is deliberately distributed and stretches across the school or a system, is genuinely shared responsibility, and is as much taken as given.* Sustainable educational change and renewal is built on mutual trust on all levels of leadership; students and what is beneficial for their lasting learning should be given the main emphasis and wasting the energy of teachers and leaders in educational improvement should be ended (Hargreaves & Fink 2006, 139). By the wasting of the energy of teachers and leaders they probably mean improvements other than those for the benefit of student learning.

Hargreaves & Fink (2006, 266-269) also propose that learning should be put in the focus of change, which of course, also implies a moral challenge. Educational systems should support and provide resources for improving learning in schools. According to their thoughts, sustainable school leadership reaches beyond the present, too. The school, the locality, and the state or nation and the world are seen interconnected in spheres of mutual influence, each one a network of strong cells organised through cohesive diversity. Leadership in each sphere has its own dynamics but is also related to leadership in the others.

One might ask again if there is any sustainability to be reached in educational leadership systems of today. The problem of meaning is also central in making sense of educational change. In order to achieve a greater meaning, we must come to understand both the small and the big picture: the small picture concerns *the subjective meaning* or a lack of meaning for individuals and the big picture *is a socio-political process* and how people experience change as distinct from how it was intended to be (Fullan 2007, 8). For Fullan the implementation of educational change involves change in practice at many levels e.g. the teacher, the school, the school district (Fullan 2007, 30). According to Fullan (*ibid.*), principals suffer from the same problem as the teachers do in implementing new teaching roles: principals have had little preparation in implementing the role of a facilitator of change (Fullan 2007, 96).

To implement these ideas of making sense of educational change we school leaders need to construct a shared meaning of the process of learning and we need to practise new roles as facilitators. In order to reach sustainability the whole process of educational leadership needs to be shared for the benefit of learning. In order to share the process of learning, the values and meanings need to be

shared or negotiated. For negotiation we need communication and a dialogical approach to leadership in education.

In sharing the process of meaning building, school leaders are undoubtedly in the key position in their schools. In this process, instead of hiding behind the laws and norms, school leaders need to know how to handle ethical problems as professionals. In the following paragraph I will discuss ethics and the implications on the practice of educational leadership.

2.3.3 Ethical School Leadership

The values of the school leader and the school determine how ethics is practised in schools. The school leader's values count in the leadership of the processes of the whole school community: a school leader's values should reflect the laws and norms on the institution on the one hand and, on the other hand, they should be subjected to critical evaluation, possibly conducted by professional, autonomous school leaders themselves. Värrí (2002) remarks that if there is a contradiction between personal values and the values of the community, a school leader needs to balance between the institutionally set values. Johnson (2008) is sceptical of giving a list of ethical rules for school leaders and recommends instead an analysis of values, which is typical of school leaders in Finland. (Värrí 2002; Kuukka 2009, 86-87: 104.)

It is obvious that leaders' ethics or ethical ways of thinking become visible in the processes of communication and meeting with other people in the everyday school life. Ethics that strives for the equality of all people on the basis of human rights and where everybody is respected with dignity often demands negotiations between all partners. In education a dialogue between all the partners can be established only if there is a respect for all human beings as equal participants. These values are in the heart of ethics in school practice. The relationship of participants has to be open for conversation and negotiation which, of course, is a prerequisite for a dialogue. Education that can be negotiated between the partners in the processes is based on the ideas of one of the most distinguished educational philosophers of the 20th century, Martin Buber (1878-1965).

The basic ideas of Buber's ethics are in dialogue and meeting with the other person. These form the basis of Martin Buber's dialogical ethics and pedagogies that are explained e.g. by Värrí (2004, 15). According to Buber's philosophy, when people meet each other there are two possibilities in treating the other: either it is *I-Thou* or *I-It*. This relationship is based on the equality of and respect for the other person as an equal partner. These concept pairs and their meanings are used, according to Värrí (2004, 16) in connection with the world and the actual being of persons in it. However, educational relationship between a child and an adult and therapeutic relationships are special cases and not purely of the

type *I-Thou*. In an educational relationship *I-It* it is treated and dominated by the other person (as e.g. an educator or teacher decides about suitable education or a therapist a cure). The adult is a mirror for a growing child and sets the limits for the right and wrong. This adult and child relationship is necessary for a child to grow up and become a person. The ideal educational relationship between a child and an adult is based on respect, care and love. According to Värri (2004), a child needs to be educated for growing up and being part of the community of other people where knowing the ethics of *I-Thou* is essential. This means according to Värri (*ibid.*) that in *I-Thou I* can accept *you* as you are. (Värri 2004, 17.) Everyday school life serves as an example of a context where meaning building can be practised. According to Värri (2008) the philosophy of meeting with the other person is ethically based on a responsibility of helping the other as a companion with empathy and compassion. People become persons via the relationship with other people and the world. All real being is crossing the borders of *I* and meeting with the other subjects in the life world. (Värri 2008, 331.)

In Värri's philosophical reasoning it was already said that meeting the other people with respect and open communication is a prerequisite for a dialogue. Dialogical approach is not a method; it is an ethical attitude that can be chosen consciously. Listening is needed for a genuine dialogue. Värri (2008) remarks that the role of education in society is twofold: helping the individual to become able to reach for a good life and the society to develop towards democracy. (Värri 2008, 342-344.)

Varto (2004, 23) criticises the aim in education of obtaining better results with more effective methods and means as typical of the official educational ideologies of the postmodern economic and political era. Varto sees these as relics of the rational thinking. The problem, according to Varto, is that education has gone far from its history and traditional values and forgotten its real issues and purposes e.g. discussions on a good life. According to him we seem to get a lot of 'want-to-be-value-free' ideologies from psychology or business life delivered to education by consultants who are telling a lot of nonsense on e.g. development of skills in accordance with methodological requirements and standards set for work life. Varto also mentions 'entrepreneurship' towards each other and the environment in the search for a good life.

On the other hand, the philosophical view of education by Rauhala (2005) emphasises ethical responsibilities that people have towards each other and the environment in their search for a good life. Rauhala (*ibid.*) criticises the culture of seeing people as individuals and thinks that, instead, people should strive for clarifying their own values of living with the other people. From this point of view we would need education that researchers (Skinnari & Syväoja 2007) call *eternal pedagogy* which means that people need to be taught to search for a good life and make wise choices with a view to not only financial benefits but also ecological points of views (Lehtovaara 2007, 608).

How is ethical leadership to be understood with the change discussed before? My experience of and insight into education is that we seem to have lost the

genuine meaning of change in education. We need more time for building relationships with a dialogical approach and for negotiating what is meaningful education. We need more time for building educational partnerships.

Since everyday school life is a series of new situations where there are no right or wrong answers dialogical ethics could be used for learning to listen to each other. According to Talib & Lipponen (2008, 236-237) in situations where people of different cultural backgrounds do not necessarily understand what the other person tries to say, learning through listening to different voices could be a valuable method of gaining an understanding. Despite being different it is possible to learn how to find compromises and act even when no mutual dialogue with shared meanings is established. The kind of learning of ethics in practice could open new possibilities for e.g. intercultural education in schools which in turn can be connected with the increasing of mutual intercultural understanding and communication in Europe according to the EU recommendation given for teacher education almost three decades ago. Behind intercultural competence which relies on the values of justice, equality and mutual respect, lies a philosophy, according to which a person's attitudes, knowing and skills are intertwined in the thinking and behaviour (Kuukka 2009, 180-182).

Furman (2003) defines participation in the processes of the community as a moral responsibility of a pedagogue. Furman's idea is interesting because the emphasis is on the ethics of the community instead of an individual. The idea of meaning-building in this type of pedagogical leadership is in the processes of the community. The ethics of a community is built on understanding the processes of communication. The meaning of ethical wellbeing is based on good communication and relationships between people.

For school leadership this would not only imply arranging time and place for communication, but what is more important, ethical leadership would also demand personal participation in the processes. Involvement in action with one's own values is more time-consuming but more effective pedagogical leadership of ethics than telling what is right or wrong. And what is more important, this type of pedagogical school leadership seems quite contradictory to what dynamic leaders of today are often expected to do at school. As many heads of schools that are also perhaps in charge of several schools are expected to accomplish more administrative tasks, they also complain that there is hardly any time left for pedagogical leadership. Without an insight into the daily basis of work and life at school, however, a lot of potential to develop the community will be lost. Having time for participation and communication, and taking care of relationships in the community are the essence in good pedagogical leadership at school.

2.3.4 Pedagogical School Leadership

Pedagogy is the science and the knowledge, even the art of education (Kurki 1993, 23-24). Pedagogical research is focussed on the future and improving educational systems on the whole. Pedagogical research participates in the evolutional social process where the deepest aim is that children and youngsters have a chance to create their own future. According to Kurki (ibid, 24-25), pedagogy cannot be returned back only to methodology since it always includes a vision of the world and of the ideal. Pedagogical leadership includes: “on the one hand the *concepts of community* (by Mounier, Buber, and Freire) and on the other hand *charisma* (by Tönnies; Weber). “To put it in a simple way; *a pedagogue is a charismatic leader who has an ideal and a vision of the world to which they want to lead the others*” (Kurki, 1993, 24-25).

Combining pedagogical leadership with student performance demands special attitudes from a school leader. With pedagogy most people think of teaching but Greek pedagogy has the meanings of *both teaching and leading*, as Sergiovanni points out when dealing with leadership in a learning community (Sergiovanni 2001, 72-73).

According to Their (1994, 42-46) a leader has to have a vision of leadership and understand especially their own role as a leader. “For communication with the people a leader needs to trust people as active partners in building a learning organisation and a practical theory of how knowledge is built together. The school leader needs to understand what kind of communication is needed for building this type of a learning organisation. Personal values are presentations of what is important in life and are therefore necessary in pedagogical leadership, too. The task of a pedagogical leader is to share knowledge with others with the purpose of adding to the competence of others along with their own competence. The pedagogical leader works thus near the others and with the others as a teacher or a colearner using rich communication, giving feedback, listening, adjusting, making questions, rewarding etc. *The key to this type of leadership is the shared process of learning.*

The shared process of learning is in the centre of constructivist leadership. Lambert et al. (2002) refer to constructivist leadership as the reciprocal process that enables participants in all educational communities to construct meanings that lead toward a shared purpose in schooling:

“The concept of constructivist leadership is based on the same ideas that underlie constructivist learning; adults, as well as children, learn through the processes of meaning and knowledge construction, inquiry, participation, and reflection. Leadership is defined as a concept of transcending individuals, roles, and behaviors”. (Lambert et al. 2002, 35-36.)

Lambert et al. (*ibid.* 36) claim further that constructivist leadership continues to distinguish itself from the prevailing notions of leadership that influence education and business especially with reference to *who is in the lead, the role of constructivist learning, and the need for a community*. The goal of leadership to enhance student learning and adult learning is based on the principles of constructivism. These principles suggest that learning is an active social process when learners share ideas, where learners must have a chance to make sense of the new knowledge and create meanings for themselves, where reflection and metacognition contribute to the construction of knowledge and the process of sense-making and a process where new learning is mediated by prior experience, values and beliefs. (Lambert et al. 2002, 205.)

As mentioned before, educational leadership is culturally bound. In educational leadership literature one can recognise the ambiguity of terms and definitions connected to different cultures and traditions. In Anglo-American educational literature school leaders are *headmasters, head mistresses, head teachers, heads of school, heads and school heads, principals and school leaders*. In the British literature school leaders are usually *heads or heads of schools or head teachers* whereas in the American literature they are called *principals or school leaders*. In this research, these terms are all used equally, even side by side.

Kurki (1993, 133-143) writes that Finnish pedagogical leadership research and internal school development are based to a great extent on the Anglo-American literature with an emphasis on management. Pedagogical leadership is understood as practical actions which the leader uses in order to reach the pedagogical aims and goals in the curriculum. Curriculum is in other words used as a tool for instruction on several levels: *the world, the state, local authorities, the institution and the students*. Pedagogies for implementing the curriculum have been left to teachers who have had great autonomy in their work. The highly normative curriculum with its accurate substance contents has also been understood as a written document of the subjective rights and duties of students.

In the Finnish schools the division of organisation is usually twofold: the heads have the administration, management and finance as their duties whereas the teachers' duty is teaching the students. The separateness and specialisation in tasks have led the heads and teachers to some kind of isolation and separateness mentally, too. In the Finnish discussion on school leadership Hämäläinen (1993) notes that pedagogical leadership has been understood as the tasks of the principals who need to see to the prevailing curriculum plans being carried out. This highlights the rationality in the Finnish notion of pedagogical leadership. According to this philosophy of 'scientific' knowledge principals and teachers can be seen as well-trained technicians, as Sergiovanni (1991, 6) points out. However, this managerial, rational notion of pedagogical leadership is totally different from one of professionals who use reflective practice and create professional knowledge when they meet pedagogical problems in their work.

In the Finnish research of school leadership, too, the pedagogical role of a school leader has gained little attention whereas administration and management have been emphasised in the work of heads. The role of a head as a pedagogical leader could be raised in research as an issue that could also be understood as a means of developing not only the institution but the community. Research could be connected to teacher development programmes or an evaluation of the functioning of the whole school could also be used as a tool for pedagogical development. Although researchers (Kolam & Ojala 2001, 93-95) claim that pedagogical leadership is not a question of economic resources, it must be pointed out that there is still a problem of time and human resources, which leads me to ask: *How could more time be arranged for developing the school community?*

Pedagogical leadership has been discussed as typical of teachers and leaders in educational contexts. The pedagogical leadership of principals will be needed, however, in bringing a change in schools and in the ways that schools work.

When connecting transformative and transactional leadership and sharing the processes of meaning building I come finally to discuss shared leadership and how it can be understood in the school context where shared decision-making is part of a collaborative, learning community of practice where all decisions are interdependent. In the end of the following chapter I will lead the discussion to what kind of changes are needed in the roles of pedagogical leaders, teachers and heads alike for shared leadership and why.

2.4 School Leadership and Culture

In this chapter I will write about some of the connections between school leadership and culture. The context school leadership and education is culturally bound on several levels. Culture and history are powerfully connected to all educational leadership. The following, often cited classic definition of culture is from the 19th century:

“Culture, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor 1871).

Culture can be discussed on several levels: *global, national, institutional and individual*. Globally, culture is a meaning system that is mediated and learned through meaning systems of social symbols. International and national aspects to culture can be understood as a part of the historic development in life and society that has resulted in some values being considered more important than others. These cultural values are also mediated through education (e.g.

citizenship education). In education, culture is transmitted by the processes of teaching and learning. Socially acquired patterns are transmitted by the use of *social symbols* such as *language, art, science, morals, values, belief systems, politics, and many more* (Steinberg 2006, 117).

Culture plays an important part in all educational leadership. Every leader has also inherited their educational culture with their schooling. Culture is thus inseparable from the human ability to be acculturated, to learn, to employ language and symbols. Steinberg (2006, 119) points out that the educators are (or should be) directly involved in the analysis of culture and cultural pedagogy.

The socio-pedagogical research deals with the communication of an *individual and the community* and the means of communication within and outside the culture. *From the socio-pedagogical perspective, learning is seen as an outcome of active participation in a culture.* Participation in a community is understood as commitment to shared tasks and action. The means and ways of communication bind the participants together. Knowing how to communicate in a culture is seen as community-based, shared knowledge of action (Lave & Wenger 1991; Kumpulainen 2008, 23).

There are numerous ways to define 'culture' and several ways to discuss culture, but culture can be dealt with on three levels: *as a meaning system*, in terms of a *cross-cultural theory and organisational culture*. Culture is often defined *as a shared meaning system or mental programming* (Hofstede 1991) which generally implies that the members of the same culture share common meanings and they are likely to interpret and evaluate situational events and management practices in a rather similar way. Hofstede (1991) uses an onion metaphor for describing culture: when you peel the outer layers of an onion, you will find the core. The visible layers outside are the symbols and practices, and hidden inside are the values.

The words culture and organisation are metaphorical constructions that can be used to describe social realities. Organisations have also been described by metaphors. On the other hand, the culture metaphor (i.e. a 'machine' or a 'holographic brain') can be criticised for giving a mechanistic, rational and stable image of an organisation which is, in fact, a self-organising social reality that is in constant change due to the human impact. Although culture and change are in many ways contradictory to each other, according to Morgan (2006), "the strength of the culture metaphor is the contribution that it makes to our understanding of organisational change" (Morgan 2006, 145).

However, when school leadership and change are discussed the school culture and the social organisation of the school play important parts in the leader's work. In order to lead a school towards change, school leaders need to come to grips with the symbolic consequences of organisational values that shape the day-to-day work culture and, at the same time, be aware of the consequences of their own actions when they are trying to foster desired values in the school culture.

2.4.1 Schools as Cultural Organisations

Hofstede's seminal research on different cultures has opened a path for understanding different cultures and their implications for *organisational cultures*. Hofstede makes cultural differences and similarities more understandable in a work life context by showing in his research how organisational culture is related to the cross-cultural theory. Hofstede uses the following five dimensions as continuums to describe different organisational cultures:

- a) Individualism/Collectivism, b) Power/Distance, c) Uncertainty/Avoidance,
- d) Masculinity/Femininity, e) Confusion/Dynamism

According to Hofstede (1991) these dimensions are culturally bound and affect the organisational cultures (e.g. distance to power is culturally related and can affect how people react to their leaders). On the other hand, a leader's position in relation to power is also culturally bound and so is the way people react to power. Cultural differences and similarities are interesting from the point of view of constructing a theory. The cross-cultural theory is interested in finding out about interactions between cultures even if Hofstede's cross-cultural theory can also be criticised for making cultural stereotypes. Although individuals can differ within a culture, with a multitude of work life examples a typical cultural tendency to react can be found for understanding and explaining cultural differences in general. On the other hand, Hofstede's continuums of dimensions can, however, assist in making sense of why people tend to react in certain ways in different cultures. Although there is a lot of individual variation within different cultures these culturally learned and accepted ways of reacting affect organisational cultures and can have implications for leadership in practice.

Critical cultural studies researchers deal with the complex interactions of *power, knowledge, gender, identity, and politics*. Cultural studies have a link to education on an institutional level: school education is powerfully linked to citizenship education and the research of it. The cultural pedagogy issues that arise for research include e.g. the means by which students and citizens make sense of their personal experiences and narrative positions. In her research of the complex issues Steinberg (2006) creates her own *bricolage* or a tool box where different methods can be used in raising meanings and solving the research problem. Bricolage will be discussed in more detail as a research design in chapter 3.3 p. 73.

2.4.2 School Culture

On the *institutional* level, *school culture* is used as a metaphor to describe the values, norms and rules agreed on by people working together as a community. A school culture is a development of people and their values or a consensus of what has been agreed on together as a community for the wellbeing of the people. School culture is also a complex combination of history, a formation of a locality with its past, present and future happenings and its people who have *individual* opinions and values.

With school culture we refer e.g. to what people know and how they actually work in a particular school. School cultures are built with values and beliefs that affect the ways people work or react to challenges and problems. School cultures contain rules, pedagogics, communication and leadership. Some school practice is shared with other schools, other written and other unwritten.

Mustonen (2003) divides school cultures from the leadership perspective to *rational (production and expert leadership)*, *ideological (change leadership with innovation and charisma of the leader)*, *cohesive (good atmosphere and shared decision-making with advisor leadership)* and *bureaucratic (conservative, with reluctance to change the system, hierachic leadership)*.

According to my experience, school cultures are both mixed combinations of different historic and cultural backgrounds, and individual solutions. Being an outsider in cultures other than my own I choose to present the other school cultures by giving examples of them through individuals who are members of the school community (e.g. heads, teachers, students, parents etc.).

School cultures are also learned. Therefore it is not surprising, according to Harber (1995) that e.g. a *hidden curriculum* in schools should be so powerful and that it should turn out to be very hard to change. A hidden curriculum could be understood e.g. as rules or approved ways of behaviour which are not spoken of, written of or maybe even negotiated. People usually learn this when they break rules and especially if they try to change them. If a leader starts to work with the hidden curriculum and contests the teachers' notion of what needs to stay unchanged conflicts may arise. Even the parents' assumptions of school education may cause powerful hidden curriculum expectations as regards the school culture and cause contradictions (e.g. expectations of school discipline which parents remember from their school times). All these hidden curriculum powers cause pressures to leadership. As Harber (*ibid.*) has pointed out in his research, "*people tend to learn through what they experience from the behaviour of their leaders rather than from what they are told*", which makes the responsibility of educational leaders even greater. This also leaves the door open for change: new examples are needed in leadership. It should be borne in mind, however, that *the cultural context of education always contains values and beliefs*:

“Education is widely recognised as the crucible where the next generation’s attitudes and values, the whole cultural heritage are forged. Through it, citizens are shaped, and leaders emerge (Shaw 2005, 27). “

Values seem to be in the heart of the meaning-building process of both the identity of a community and its individuals. Values are manifestations of people's beliefs concerning the central goals in a good life, society and the world. Values determine what a person or society favours (Lyytinen & Nikkanen 2008, 26; Suhonen 1988; Schein 1985; 2004). Values form a hierarchy that can be recognised in a culture; certain values are core values and appreciated on a general level in society. The representations of a culture or cultural artefacts have been created for a certain purpose that can be traced back to a value. Every person also has a personal system of values (an ethos) that is partly dependent on and partly independent of the common cultural 'ethos' or the system of values. People can also create a new culture by making a combination of the 'ethos' in their personal way that in turn may cause others to set their values in the same order.

Culture is a meaning system that is built on values. Hofstede (1991) presents values as part of the mental programming of human beings. Mental programming can also be explained as learning which starts in early childhood when children are encouraged by the parents to behave in a way that is appropriate and accepted. In this way children learn to connect their actions and values and can later elaborate on them to more general and abstract values. (Suhonen 1988, 67.)

2.4.3 School Life and Education in the World of Change

In general, school life and education are based on continuity and transferring of a culture to future generations. However, in times of change, *school life is the meeting point for several competing and often contradictory expectations of change.*

With the changes in the curriculum the meaning of the values connected to the youngsters' education has been widely discussed. These discussions have been concerned with the changes in the whole educational sector and, in Finland, started when a lot of power was moved to the local authorities and to the schools in the 1990s. Changes and renewals have continued in an accelerated tempo. With the changes the staffs in schools have needed to start practising new openness in discussing the values. Multiculturalism is one more reason that has forced the schools to change the way they work. Discussions on the values are an important part of goal-setting in all schooling and education. What is valued in society is usually also supported and financed. In the evaluation of education, values are, however, not often discussed or even acknowledged (Lyytinen & Nikkanen 2008, 25-26; Suhonen 1988; Schein 1985; 2004).

As I pointed out earlier, change is a frequently discussed subject within educational leadership. According to Sergiovanni (2001) it is unfortunate that we tend to forget about the cultural and symbolic aspects which in his opinion are more powerful in influencing things and bringing about change and contributing to effectiveness than the behavioural and instrumental aspects of school leadership and life. Sergiovanni explains why, and cites Susanne K. Langer (1957), the philosopher who states that:

“It is in and through symbols that we engage in this world, live our lives and find meaning and that by our nature we thrive in the construction of meaning”.
(Susanne K. Langer 1957, 28; cited in Sergiovanni 2001, 23.)

Open dialogue between all educational partners is a process that gives birth to new meanings and feelings of belonging to the community. As pedagogical leaders in schools it is also our responsibility to assist the children in their process of making sense of the world and searching for meaningfulness for their lives. Therefore, school also simply needs to work as an arena for practising meaning-building and promote active participation in the discussions and action.

In schools we know that changes often provoke negative feelings and objections as people tend to react towards the unknown through their earlier experiences and their interpretations of the world. However, changes that are needed in sharing power are one essential part of the meaning-building process in a school community.

2.4.4 Making Sense of Educational Change

It is the symbols, or as is pointed out by Geertz (1973, 46), values, norms, and ways of knowing that make us part of a particular culture and our attempt to understand this culture is an attempt to understand ourselves. In other words, the process of searching for a meaning also involves questions of who we are as human beings. Constructing meaning in life is essential for our growth as human beings. We construct ourselves and our identity while living our lives. The more complex the world, the more people seem to search for meaning.

Hargreaves (1997, 3-13) also believes that schools need to make conscious and constructive connections with the wider world for several reasons: “e.g. *teachers and principals need to work with the outside world in order to improve the learning because schools are losing their monopoly in learning, students and families face problems that follow with the students to school and schools could provide hope for solving the crisis of community.*”

Hargreaves notes that the educational change needs to develop what Goleman (1995) calls the emotional intelligence of students and teachers alike: *emotional intelligence that actually increases in the students in classrooms and in the teachers themselves resulting in higher professional competence. Building on trust, care and hope seems to be one true possibility in the education of today and tomorrow.*

The emotional part is, however, mostly forgotten in the literature of educational leadership where educational change, leadership and teacher development are treated in rather rational, calculative, managerial and stereotypically 'masculine' ways. "Good teaching is not just a matter of being efficient, developing competence, mastering techniques, and possessing the right kind of knowledge. Good teaching also involves emotional work: pleasure, passion, creativity, challenge and joy" (Hargreaves 1995; Hargreaves 1997, 13). Hargreaves also points out (1997, 21-22) that connecting school to the community through market relations or managerialism marginalises many social groups and ethnic minorities with bureaucratic procedures and suggests instead feminine principles to be used in community-building. However, the following perspective is presented by Henry (1994):

"All decision-making policy and practice starts from the notion of caring; school leaders, teachers and other workers, parents and community people act as co-workers in teaching and learning. Schools are responsive to social needs. Professional educators are social workers as well as teachers." (Henry 1994, 18).

Hargreaves (1997) believes that meeting the learning needs of all students is worth fighting for in schools. By doing so schools build on the common ground of the parents as well because this is where the emotional connection between school and community is strongest. (Hargreaves 1997, 20.)

Educational change also has to face the growing alienation among teachers; the balkanisation and burnout: passionate and reform-minded teachers on the one hand and, on the other hand, the overwhelming multiplicity of unconnected fragmented change initiatives. For teachers Fullan suggests (1997) *emotion and hope* as constructive concepts in complex times. *Emotion and hope are needed as much for nurturing the individuals as the group.* (Fullan 1997, 217-218.)

Hoyle & Wallace (2005, 8-20) believe that a deepening comprehension of leadership and management in the context of school organisations is essential for the development of more realistic knowledge-for-action and instrumentalism. Hoyle & Wallace (2005, 16) also acknowledge that there is a lot of endemic ambiguity in the terms that are used in educational contexts. They raise the ambiguity of such concepts as 'culture' and 'educational change' to a perspective of irony and want to gain *knowledge-for-understanding* of what happens in the educational leadership and why. They claim that while this realistic view is ignored, the managerial one continues its victory despite the irony it generates.

Fullan (2001, 8) argues that the problem of meaning is central in making sense of educational change:

"In order to achieve greater meaning, we must come to understand both the small and the big picture. The small picture concerns the subjective meaning or lack of meaning for individuals at all levels of the educational system. Neglect of the phenomenology of change or how people experience it, is in the heart of all lack of success of most social reforms. It is also necessary to build and understand the big picture, because educational change is after all a socio-political process". (Fullan 2001, 8.)

Being aware of both the big and the small picture is essential in creating a new one. In order to understand the big picture and the cultural context in educational change, individuals first need to have a subjective meaning for change. Secondly, they need to participate in making the change happen. However, in making sense of educational change individuals also need a wider perspective of the societal culture that frames educational leadership.

As I mentioned earlier, research carried across cultures has attracted little interest among school leadership researchers in Finland. However, in the following chapter I will go through some of the issues that have drawn researchers' international attention elsewhere: *the effectiveness of the school, improvement in student learning, and the leadership role of school principals and the respective approaches to the study of school leadership across cultures*.

According to Heck (2002) one area that has drawn researchers' international attention is how school leadership contributes to the schooling effort. In schools this *effectiveness* was usually understood as a synonym for the 'leadership' and improvement paradigm, which has been considered an organisational, rational process. Rather than identifying the processes through which schools can become more effective over time, this approach took organisational change as a rational process carried out by the principal. However, this approach left considerable gaps in our understanding of how school leadership affects schooling processes and improvement from the global and comparative perspective. (Heck 2002, 77-78.)

In contrast to effectiveness literature, *school improvement* literature has focussed on the processes of site-level change, most of which has involved small-scale qualitative studies. The principal's role has been one of managing the change. Although this approach has suggested that change in school is school based and contextually dependent and cannot therefore be comparative there have been a few attempts to transfer the findings from one context to another. (Heck 2002, 77.)

One more line of research issues that have gained international awareness is the fact that the leadership role of school principals (Heck 2002) has changed over the past decades in many nations. This change in the principal's role has

been noted as requiring a range of new responsibilities, and according to Heck (ibid.), also the sharing of authority and leadership among others in the community. (Heck 2002, 79.) I discussed this kind of change in more detail in 2.3.

Heck (ibid.) notes that several epistemological approaches to the study of school leadership often have their roots in positivist, interpretative and socially critical theories of knowledge. School leadership researchers have often worked on a particular problem from a relatively narrow perspective as in the *structural-functional or rational approach* (i.e. having one or two research questions in terms of filling in some gaps in the empirical knowledge of the principal's work). Trait theories and the situational theory have been linked with this orientation of research. The organisation in this approach is viewed as a closed system with its own cultures, values and structures where the role of the leaders is to maintain the functions and goals in the organisation. However, only a small number of these descriptions included preliminary comparisons of the principal's work in cultural settings but the knowledge accumulated from this orientation has been of limited use for building a theory. (Heck 2002, 80-82.)

Heck (ibid.) continues that alternative approaches have been less concerned about the descriptions of the principal work or the impact of the principal leadership on the school effectiveness. Instead, like in the *political-conflict approach*, newer perspectives suggest that micro-politics in the school play an important part in school leadership and that relations between teachers and administrators are complex and multidirectional. This approach suggests that the order inside the school is politically negotiated and in the heart of the leadership work of the principal. Comparative research in this approach could be carried out for finding out how school politics differ across cultural settings. (Heck 2002, 84-85.)

In the *meaning-and-sense-making, or constructivist, approach* the study of school leadership focuses on the meaning behind the actions and the way it is communicated in relationships. For example, the research in this approach has focussed on how school leaders and others make sense of various aspects of school life, including change and reform processes. In this approach the research is keen on finding out how administrators act in decision-making and problem-solving situations. As many traditional leadership theories are no longer valid in understanding the complex realities of schools the *critical constructivist, positivist, postmodern and related approach* takes in a variety of perspectives such as the feminist, neo-Marxist, gender and cultural studies as well as participatory research. This stance appears more concerned with social justice, moral and democratic processes. (Heck 2002, 85-87.)

One possibility for a future research on school leadership on more global terms is integrating the investigation of culture and leadership. Although it is still unclear whether researchers should conceive culture as a variable that influences leadership, or whether leadership should be viewed merely culturally situated, it is generally accepted, according to Heck (ibid.), that any cultural system lends to

individuals a set of values and behaviour that may be very different from those in other contexts. There are also differences in educational systems and their expectations for school leaders, which makes comparing difficult. Heck (*ibid.*) concludes that a theory and method play a mutually reinforcing role in the building of new knowledge on school leadership across cultures. A more international and comparative perspective on school leadership will likely take teamwork among researchers internationally and is likely to yield knowledge of how to resolve schooling problems of international concern. (Heck 2002, 89-95.)

Several researchers (e.g. Walker & Dimmock 2002) have pointed out that societal cultures should be taken into greater consideration especially in cross-cultural and comparative studies of educational leadership and educational management. At the same, Walker & Dimmock (*ibid.*) doubt that the use of any single-level framework will be sufficient alone in explaining cultural similarities and differences. The researchers therefore suggest multilevel cultural perspectives and theoretical tools that stretch beyond the structural-functional models for comparing educational leadership for aiding the analysis and understanding of schools and their leaders. (Walker & Dimmock 2002, 15-17.)

2.5 Conclusions for This Study

As the main purpose of this study is to gain more understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership I have chosen to present several different interactional theories which represent different disciplines and which are not interchangeable for the building of a multidimensional theory of shared leadership within educational leadership contexts. However, I have also presented several leadership elements in order to create a solid ground for a change in the school leadership practice.

When discussing leadership in chapter 2, I presented several theoretical perspectives and classical definitions of leadership based on their particular background beliefs or theories of knowledge. The underlying assumptions extend to how human beings are understood and how they act.

First, for understanding what makes educational leadership special I started in chapter 2 with the concept of leadership and how it has been understood at different times. I used the popular allegory of the cave, originally presented by Plato, as an example of the challenges a leader will meet in bringing about change in the organisation. I also linked this metaphor to my own leadership training. However, from this image of chained people and a leader who tries to convince the people of the world outside my own understanding of leadership has grown with the years of experience and practice as a head to see the people as equal companions in bringing change in the organisation and in education. What ties the people in educational leadership is, however, a special kind of bond: as

educators we share the purpose of deepening the experience of growth. Second, through education we educational leaders work for nurturing the sense of hope. Therefore educational leadership can be considered special.

In 2.1.1 I discussed the theories of *transformational and transactional leadership* briefly. In educational leadership contexts *transformative leadership* presented on p. 25 can be linked to nurturing participation and understanding other people and their feelings as one way of changing society. My conclusion for this study is to take both *transactional (based on a relationship of exchange)* and *transformative leadership (where the leader helps people to change society)* as the theoretical basis to understand leadership processes in the schools. For understanding the whole process of educational leadership a leader needs to form a personal theory of practice which starts and ends with people and which is a self-correcting way of thinking what is worth doing. This can also be assumed to be the case in the schools investigated in this study.

For the building of a theory in school leadership, I moved on to present some recent research on school leadership in 2.1.2.

Thereafter I took up definitions of *shared leadership*. As regards *shared leadership* in 2.2, one could ask who shares and what is shared. Is the world 'given' and already portioned in pieces to be applied or 'built' as in a dialogue together through negotiations? When values, meanings and culture are shared, we could also talk about shared leadership on a psychological level. Shared leadership could be understood from at least two perspectives: as a continuation of managing and delegating tasks (a given world) or building a leadership of shared meanings (building of a mutual world). I found that both are needed in school leadership. My definition for shared leadership is built on a combination of the different aspects of leadership: partnership, mutuality and active participation in the meaning-building processes in the learning community.

After discussing the definitions for the phenomenon of shared leadership in 2.2.1 I continued with some research on shared leadership labelled by the researchers Denis & al. (2012) as "leadership in the plural" to encompass the range of phenomena and their conceptualisations considered in this research work. The four different research streams of plural leadership were connected to organisational leadership through 1. *leadership shared for team effectiveness*, 2. *pooling leadership at the top to lead others*, 3. *leadership relayed or distributed across and between organisations over time* and 4. *producing leadership through relations*. Although these streams of research represent different basic ideas of viewing the organisation and understanding the people I will use these for the analysis of effectiveness and understanding the change in the organisation of the case schools later.

In 2.2.2, I wrote about the distributed perspective to school leadership. I referred to Bolden & al. (2011) who argue that the concept of distributed leadership is one form of the shared leadership theory. According to them the distributed theory of leadership puts leadership practice in the centre stage rather than the principal's actions and proposes that leadership practice takes shape in

the interactions of people and their situation. Distributed leadership widens the perspective from the leader-follower perspective to seeing leadership as a social process emerging from the relations in the organisation and stretching beyond the community. In school life the distributed perspective on leadership requires a system-wide perspective on the school organisation and openness about the roles beyond the boundaries of leadership. In this chapter distributed leadership was described to occur *within, between and outside the schools*. I will later use this analysis as a tool of analysing shared and distributed leadership in the case schools.

In chapter 2.3, I continued to discuss how *transactional and transformative leadership would change school leadership*. I wrote about *effective leadership* which is widely recognised as integral to school improvement in the U.S.A. and in the U.K. where effective leadership is identified with accountability and the purpose of leadership is finding solutions. Thereafter I discussed *sustainable leadership* and referred to Fullan (2005) who defines educational sustainability as the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with the deep values of human purpose, and to Hargreaves & Fink (2006) who also claim that sustainable leadership matters in connection with learning and integrity because it preserves, protects and promotes deep and broad learning for all in relationships of care for others.

As change seems to get a lot of attention in the discussions on educational leadership I continued in 2.3 to write about the kind of changes that are needed for bringing about change in the school leadership practice. I chose to present several ideals of leadership for the building of a theory of practice in school leadership. Many of these definitions of leadership imply *virtues* like *effectiveness (economic), sustainability (biological) and ethics (moral)* which could easily be pursued and put into practice. These concepts of leadership were all chosen to describe a culture in school where the aim is to produce specific kinds of change through learning and active participation in the community. If leadership is built on a minimum of shared values through active partnership, the world can be constructed in joint efforts with meanings of leadership shared together as in *transactional leadership*. There is also a strong connection with change in schools in *ethical leadership*. Ethical leadership, p. 50, is transactional, passionate leadership that strives for the equality of all people on the basis of human rights. As everybody should be respected and treated with dignity, understanding different ethics often demands negotiations between all partners. In education a dialogue between all the partners can be established only if there is a respect for all human beings as equal participants. On p. 53 I moved to discuss *pedagogical leadership* typical of educational contexts where the world is shared for meaning-building in learning. In *pedagogical leadership* one could ask who learns and under what conditions. Who owns the learning? And as school leaders we need to ask who leads the learning? For active pedagogical leadership leaders

should become active colearners themselves, which would imply a lot of changes in their ways of leading, too.

Although this study takes elements e.g. from a theoretical model such as the research of leadership in the plural (presented on pp. 31-32), later used with the results of the cases in 4 as a way of classifying the sharing of leadership used in the school organisation, I will not take it as the only starting point for the study of shared leadership in the school practice. In the context where schools, actors and cultures are different no one model is suitable for all school contexts. Therefore schools need to be examined as cases where school leadership is shared and constructed as a result of narratives within the time perspective and their causal relations. The cases cannot be compared because their cultural contexts are different. For the most part, however, they have elements that resemble each other although their cultural differences also come clearly across in school leadership.

When, in chapter 2.4, I moved on to describe the societal, political and cultural context where the schools work I continued to make a cultural analysis of the schools as organisations and claimed that identities are built within the political, cultural and socio-cultural contexts that are intertwined. For understanding the processes of meaning-building, cultural lenses are needed. However, participation from the perspective of an individual, community or organisation cause a rethinking of leadership. Rethinking school leadership in communities of practice could result in refining the existing practice and finding out what is needed for the support of learning and participation in the community. The interplay between all the different participants in the school organisation (the heads, teachers, students, parents etc.) and the rules, the organisation or sharing of work, the means and factors outside school all need critical research. Making this interplay visible is one way of developing school life.

This study can be read as a practice-based attempt to reach to a theory for shared leadership within a context where schools and school leaders are from different cultural origins. There, too, the aim is to understand the phenomenon of shared leadership in a broad sense for the developing of school leadership practice.

3 METHODOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

3.1 Hermeneutic and Phenomenological Perspectives

This research draws on the qualitative research tradition. It is based on a holistic understanding of human beings and their life. In qualitative research the object of research is usually a human being and the 'life world', a term initially introduced by the 'father of phenomenology', the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). The 'life world' is the whole entity where the human being can be studied. It is the entity of the meanings formed by the objects that are usually found in the human research: i.e. individuals, community, social interaction, reality of values and generally the relations between people. All qualitative research takes place in the 'life world' where the researcher is part of the meaning context. (Varto 1992, 25-26.)

Phenomenological research is about human experience and a person's relationship with the 'life world'. A phenomenologist says that the relationship with the world is intentional and that everything has a meaning, or in other words, our experience is formed by meanings. Those meanings are the objects of phenomenological study. Experience can be analysed according to meanings. An analysis can reveal several different aspects of meanings and their nature: e.g. different values in teaching or experiences of studying in a group and moral and other meanings in a group. Rather than a universal truth, phenomenological research aims at understanding the 'life world' and the meanings of a certain local group of people e.g. the culture of an educational institution or organisation. (Laine 2001, 26-29.) Phenomenology is about finding out about the structures of meanings and relations between the entities of meanings. A research is successful if it makes us see the phenomenon more clearly than before and if we can understand it better than in the beginning of the research project. When the whole structural entity is being constructed, the researcher can get free from the borders of the data and analyse the results from any point of view that is relevant.

In this research the phenomenological starting point is in understanding the frames of meanings connected to school leadership. Understanding the frames of meanings precedes developing school leadership in an institution. The idea in the research is to use the phenomenon of shared leadership primarily as a diagnostic

lens to understanding what meanings principals from different cultures give to the phenomenon in the school. What goes on when shared leadership is understood from a larger perspective than just the perspective of one person, the principal? Do shared leadership and pedagogical leadership have a connection? How is the connection seen in the school community?

Hermeneutics is generally a theory of understanding and interpreting. From a hermeneutic point of view human life is a process of narrative interpretation. The data is usually collected from interviews; the interviewee puts their experience into words and the researcher tries to make a trustworthy interpretation of the experience. Hermeneutical research studies the world of human communication. Expressions carry meanings the interpretation of which is a basic phenomenon in human culture. (Laine 2001, 29-30.)

Hermeneutics starts from the presupposition that a life and a story are internally related. According to Bruner (1986), by the mid-1970s the social sciences had moved away from their traditional positivist stance that had meant a closer scrutiny of language and its forms and structure toward a more interpretative posture where the meaning became the central focus. These two complementary modes of thought or two modes of cognitive functioning provide different ways of processing experiences or constructing a reality. The paradigmatic mode deals with general causes and tries to reach higher abstraction whereas the imaginative or the narrative mode leads instead to good stories, gripping drama, believable (though not necessarily true) historical accounts. (Bruner 1986, 8-15.)

Both phenomenological and hermeneutic research work on two levels: the basic level which is the experience and pre-understanding of the person studied and the second level where the research takes place and which is about the first level. According to Laine (2001), with the hermeneutic circle we refer to the researcher's dialogue with the data where the researcher makes a suggestion of an interpretation, a hypothesis of the data. In this circle the researcher tries to find the most verisimilar and trustworthy interpretation of what the interviewee has meant. (Laine 2001, 34-35.)

It was already noted that phenomenology is interested in one's experience. Therefore a phenomenological interview is as open, natural and as discussion-like as possible. The questions are made in a way the answers can be extensive and in-depth. On the one hand, according to Ricoeur (1981), hermeneutics is based on phenomenology and thus preserves something of the philosophy from which it nevertheless differs: *phenomenology remains the unsurpassable presupposition of hermeneutics*. On the other hand, phenomenology cannot constitute itself without a *hermeneutical presupposition*. The hermeneutical condition of phenomenology is linked to the role of *Auslegung* (explication) in the fulfilment of its philosophical project (Ricoeur 1981, 101).

In writing the research report I have tried to follow the rule for a hermeneutic circle by opening first my own preunderstanding of the research field for the reader. Thereafter I have written a conceptual summary in order to lead the reader

to my understanding of the concepts linked to the research problem. Having now presented the philosophical perspectives I will describe my methodological solutions in this research in the following chapters.

3.2 Ethnographic Case Study

I have included both autoethnographic and ethnographic elements in this research as a narrator and a researcher of my own work and the work accomplished with the other participants. As Kukkonen (2007) points out in his research, the researcher's position is part of the research in all phases in the autoethnographic and heuristic research. In other words, the researcher's voice and experiences are heard along the research process. Interpreting the meanings of the experiences is a phenomenological process that in this research is realised as a narrative analysis of the data. In ethnographic research the researcher's part is active. In autoethnographic research the researcher includes personal experiences and inspective knowing of the culture whereas in the ethnographic research the researcher is keen on other - even exotic and foreign - cultures. In heuristic research the experiences of the researcher and the active participants are a subject of joint discussion. (Kukkonen 2007, 126-127.)

In this research I have included my own experiences in the ethnography. Syrjäläinen (1994) notes that the ontological and philosophical beliefs of an ethnographic researcher rely typically on phenomenology. Ethnographic research is based on knowing from the experiences of the informants and the researcher. Ethnographic research has rightly been criticised for being subjective and based on the values of the informants and can therefore be considered as restricted, too. (Syrjäläinen 1994, 77–78.)

Ethnography is defined as experiencing or learning from the experiences. Eskola & Suoranta (2000, 105–106) explain that in ethnographic research small groups of people and their behaviour are studied in their everyday contexts through several means: e.g. observation, interviews, collecting documents etc. Ethnography has been done in different types of organisations and institutions such as healthcare centres and schools, but also in pubs and youth groups in the streets etc. The first to use ethnography in her dissertation was Syrjäläinen (1990) who studied the roles of teachers and 4th –grade pupils in a Steiner school. However, according to Eskola & Suoranta (2000, 104), there are only few ethnographic research projects concerning school in Finland although ethnography is frequently used in other fields, as opposed to e.g. the U.S.A. where ethnographic research has been popular in school contexts.

Ethnography typically includes a period of fieldwork characterised by a limited duration, a variety of data, versatile methods and analytic points of view.

Research is carried out in circumstances where the people usually work. Participation, observation and experience are central to the research processes (Lappalainen, S. 2007, 11). Ethnography can also be seen as a methodology that frames the research process where the researchers make their definitions visible, write out their own personal relation to power, ethics and the responsibility as a researcher. It can also be a way to see in a different way as in the British feminist research (Lappalainen 2007, 10).

In my research project the study of a school culture and different school cultures calls for an anthropologist mind as the people represent different cultures. So this study is concerned with anthropology, too. The method anthropologists commonly use is ethnography. Geertz (1973) argues that the anthropologists can never fully understand a culture outside their own, but they can learn how to describe it and analyse the meanings or significance of events very carefully indeed. This method of describing he calls 'thick description' or ethnography that aims at revealing several layers of different social meanings.

A case study is one of several ways of doing social science research. Yin (1994, 13; 2009) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear. It is typical of a case study that it is used for producing specific, intensive information on one case or a group of cases. Several ways of collecting and analysing data can be used. Syrjälä & Numminen (1988) list different forms of case studies: ethnographic case studies, evaluation case studies, action research case studies and biographical case studies. In this research project ethnography was primarily used and suitable episodes or units of data were chosen for the analysis.

Case studies have been criticised for a lack of discipline in gathering and analysing the data and sometimes for carrying too small an amount of information. Hamel et al. (1993) have criticised the subjectivity of the researcher and the informants and their input in the research. The case study has indeed been criticised for the lack of objectivity and that it provides a thin basis for scientific generalisation. A case study can, however, be useful in qualitative data-based research where something generally interesting can be worked out from the data (Saarela-Kinnunen & Eskola 2007, 185). Yin (1994, 129; 2009) includes colleagues in the same field, policymakers, practitioners, community leaders and other professionals, special groups and funders of research in the audiences of case study reports. The different stakeholders can be notified in different ways publicly or they can be informed of the research individually. When a case study is a project of a school, it is obvious that all partners should be informed of the results. Parts of this research have also been reported to different stakeholders on several occasions: the relevant staff, students, politicians, national authorities and international authorities.

In this ethnographic and autoethnographic case study four European schools are the main cases that in turn consist of several sub-cases and chains of episodes. The fifth case is the autoethnographic researcher myself and my

experiences and interpretations of the process. Yin (1994, 38–39; 2009) lists as cases an individual, a family, a community, an organisation, an action or a chain of actions, a process, a physical entity or a situation. Even concepts or the relationship between concepts can be a case. Yin (1994, 38; 2009) recognises a primary distinction in designing case studies: single case and multiple case designs that can be either holistic (a single unit of analysis) or embedded (multiple units of analysis). Syrjälä et al. (1995, 10) point out that an educational case study is usually some practical action in a certain context or a chain of actions or an action of a certain school class. I enlarge the idea of a case study to be used for the study of school leadership.

In the beginning of the school development project we used action research. According to Syrjälä et al. (1995) action research is a form of case study where the researchers or actors aim at improving their social or educational practice and at understanding it and the circumstances more in-depth (Syrjälä et al. 1995, 30). As a research strategy, action research aims at connecting practice to theoretical research. One of the most important areas in applied action research is the study of work life (see more e.g. in Engeström 2004). Action research was needed especially when we discussed and worked with values (Appendix 6.) during the Comenius project in schools, and in discussions on the teachers' work (Appendix 7.) and improving the culture in the schools (Appendix 2).

In action research, too, the researcher is part of the research. Others are aware of the research and can participate in producing, analysing and evaluating the research material. In this research the staff and students have participated in producing and evaluating the materials. I also found this type of action and research in the school giving a lot to my headship. It was a good way to raise questions and discuss the needs for change in the school culture. A common goal in action research is to gain an awareness of problems and change the action by means of an action research process which in turn will become a learning process for the whole participating community (Syrjälä et al. 1995, 35).

On the first level of the research I observed each case school. Then I formed a pre-understanding of the main processes in each school. The descriptive framework was organised by the themes that arose with the data. In the final part of the research there is also an autoethnographic statement of what I have personally and professionally understood and learned in this multicultural context and how I want to develop the ideas further as a principal in my own school. The Comenius project serves thus as a setting for the whole process where the main idea is to describe the phenomenon of shared leadership in different school cultures and to understand how the different sub-categories in schools with different cultural backgrounds are linked to the research questions.

Yin (1994, 1-9; 2009) uses a case study with 'why' and 'how' research questions when the researcher has little possibility to control the actions and when the object is an action in real life. These kinds of explanations of case studies can be accompanied by research or descriptive case studies. In research

case studies there are usually 'what' questions. In this research the first research questions were of the type 'how' and 'what'. In the beginning they were used to gather information about shared leadership and the context in schools.

After the first phase I asked: "*What is there more that I do not know?*" And found myself gathering a lot of other material: e.g. student cartoons, manuals, videos and essays on school days etc. There I found a lot of interesting points such as personal opinions and ideas of how students see their schools and what is important at school and how it should prepare students for life (see Appendix 4.). Key informants in the research are the heads and deputies but students and teachers also give their views on the phenomenon. The key informants can be used in different phases of the research for different purposes (Syrjälä & Numminen 1988, 103–104). In this research the key informants have been interviewed and/or observed in their schools in different phases of the process.

I am aware that a research interview is not a genuine dialogue although I have done part of my research by interviewing people. The question of power is, however, an interesting one and comes up in several ways in the interviews. As Kvale (2007, 14-15) points out: "There is a power asymmetry in qualitative research interviews where the researcher initiates and defines the interview situation, determines the topic, poses questions, decides what answers to follow up and also terminates the conversation". An interview is not an open everyday conversation between equal partners. It is not normal to interview your colleagues either but in this research my interviews of the heads were an important part of solving the research problem.

Although my roles as the coordinator and the researcher equal with the roles as a principal of one of the case schools and a researcher I am aware of the limitations that there are in doing research: on the one hand, my position as a researcher and a head gives credibility to the research but, on the other hand, there are limitations to credibility. Therefore I try to illuminate the different aspects to the phenomenon of shared leadership in school not only through interviews but through several other means: i.e. group discussions, data gathered by teachers, student essays, e-mails, my observations and diary notes.

In the following chapter I will write about bricolage and explain why I needed it as a research design.

3.3 Bricolage as a Research Design

Bricolage is a research design which can be explained in several ways. The term is originally French and means freely translated "*anything that can be used to get the job done*".

That there is no precise equivalent to bricolage or bricoleur in English may even have led to different interpretations of the terms used in research contexts. Crotty (1998, 48-49) gives two different descriptions of researchers as bricoleurs:

either a kind of professional do-it-yourself person (applied by Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 2; 2005) or the kind of description given by Lévi-Strauss (applied in his *Savage Mind* 1966, 18-19) for a makeshift artisan who creates an entirely new whole of a collection of bits and pieces. Crotty (1998, 50) explains the difference: Denzin & Lincoln's (1994; 2005) bricoleur is a self-reflective researcher who performs a large number of diverse tasks and is knowledgeable of many different interpretative paradigms, such as feminism, Marxism, cultural studies, constructionism etc. whereas Lévi-Strauss describes the bricoleur as a person working without self-reflection to give a new life to objects or materials. Lincoln & Denzin (1994, 584) find that the ideal type of qualitative researcher is a bricoleur who uses different methods creatively in solving the problem. Lyttinen (2007, 198) states that to his mind this way of doing research is particularly suitable in carrying out action research.

As a research activity Steinberg (2006, pp.119-120) describes bricolage in the following ways: ethnography, textual analysis, semiotics, deconstruction, critical hermeneutics, interviews, psychoanalysis, content analysis, survey research, and phenomenology simply initiate a list of research methods an educational scholar might present. "Such a laistic view of research has been labelled bricolage by several scholars; a term attributed to Claude Lewi-Strauss (1966) who defined *bricolage as the processes by which societies construct language and myth* whereas Derrida's definition for research as bricolage is *the activity of borrowing from one's own textual heritage whatever is needed to produce new and different texts* with an emphasis on intertextual borrowing for the purposes of textual construction" (see more in Berry 2006, 87).

Bricolage is in this research understood quite loosely as a research design where textual borrowing is done with any suitable tool or method at hand for tuning the data to form a narrative construction of the research process. According to Steinberg (2006, 119), bricolage involves taking research strategies from a variety of scholarly disciplines and traditions as they are needed in the unfolding of the research situation. Such an action is pragmatic and strategic, demanding self-consciousness and an awareness of the context from the researcher. "*A bricoleur or a researcher who employs bricolage, must be able to orchestrate a plethora of diverse tasks including interviewing and observing, historical analysis, self-monitoring and intrapersonal understanding. The text produced by this research process of bricolage should be a complex collage, as it weaves together the scholar's images, insights, and interpretations of the relationship between the popular cultural text, critical questions of justice, the social context that produced it, and its effect on youngsters and the cultural curriculum*". (Kincheloe & Berry 2004.)

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) place bricolage in the era of the methodologically contested present from 2000 to 2004 and have donned the mantle of bricolage on Berry. In their mapping of research, traditional research stretches from about 1900 to 1950, the modern ranges from the 1950s to the 1970s, the time of blurred

genres and a crisis of representation from 1970 to 1986, the postmodern period from 1990 to 1995, the post-experimental inquiry from 1995 to 2000, the methodologically contested present from 2000 to 2004 and the fractured future from 2005 onwards.

Berry (2006, 89) remarks that positivistic and other traditional research designs tend to work with a singular, linear and step-by-step structure with certain features such as rationality whereas bricoleurs struggle to avoid a monological, single-path method. Bricolage works with elements of randomness, spontaneity, self-organisation, far-from-equilibrium conditions, feedback looping, and bifurcations, all features of the world of chaos and complexity. In addition, poststructuralists, feminists, and researchers working with multiple discourses, and a host of various narrative structures, create and borrow features from multiple sites befitting bricolage in a manner similar to intertextuality. In that sense, bricolage can be considered a creative and divergent way of doing research. Bricoleurs are persons who like to do it in their own way and use reasoning rather than one single method in solving a problem.

What is interesting to find out about contemporary research theorists and practitioners is the criticism that has been raised towards bricolage. Bricoleurs are criticised (Berry 2006, 89) because despite the new methodologies that they have developed they tend to think in terms of totalising frameworks where research processes and methodologies seem self-contained, individualistic, singularly applied, isolated from one another. In other words, the new methods of subjectivity are used in a manner which suggests authority and objectivity, neither of which are conditions for the postmodern sensibilities of bricolage.

On the other hand, Crotty (1998, 51) asks researchers in the constructivist vein doing research in the mode of bricolage to pay sustained attention to the objects of the research but at the same time to reinterpret the conventional meanings that we have learned to associate with the objects of the research and with an open mind to search for deeper meanings in research. The constructivist view of knowing implies that people construct their knowledge on the basis of their previous knowledge and experiences. The constructivist concept of knowledge is representative of knowledge as relatively dependent on time and place and on the position of the observer. According to constructivism, people construct their knowledge and identity by means of narratives. It can also be used in describing the research material or it can refer to the means of analysis or it can be used as a practical tool in research (Heikkinen 2002, 16-17).

My way of organising the data has been mixing the narratives and combining them with the narrative analysis of each case school and my own interpretations. According to Kaunismaa & Laitinen (1998, 182–192) Ricoeur (1991) finds a narrative a primary means of interpreting the ‘self’ and forming an identity. A narrative identity is a result of a process where the interpretation of the self is formed by means of narratives, symbols and signs. A narrative identity is constituted in a narrative that has a plot. The process of building a narrative consists of three phases:

1. *The world of action is constituted from symbolic meanings*
(*Mimesis 1=pre-understanding of the world*)
2. *The pre-understanding of the world is formed to a narrative*
(*Mimesis 2= textual construction of the world*)
3. *A narrative is interpreted by the reader*
(*Mimesis 3= a new understanding of the world*) (Kaunismaa & Laitinen 1998, 182–192.)

These three phases describe the hermeneutic circle through which the understanding of the world of action is deepened. Similarly the narrative identity, which is constructed and fictive, is a possibility of understanding oneself in a new way.

In teachers' professional development the reflectivity principle is a gateway to researching and thinking

The function of a narrative analysis is to explain how and why a particular outcome came about. From the narrative point of view, Bruner (1986) makes a distinction between lives as lived, experienced and told. A life experienced consists of the images, feelings, sentiments, desires, thoughts and meanings known to the person whose life it is. A life told is a narrative or several narratives influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by the social context. According to Kvale (1996): "a narrative is both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation (Richardson 1990). People can both apprehend and tell about the world narratively, which can lead to a new awareness". (Kvale 1996, 274.)

As Polkinghorne (1995, 19) reminds us: "The finding is the outcome of a series of constructions". The data used in narrative inquiries, in turn, are "dialogical productions resulting from interactions between subjects and the researchers" (Tierney 1993). In narrative research the researcher is the narrator of the story and an active subject who uses their own voice in telling the story. The subject matter in the stories is human action. A storied narrative is the linguistic form that preserves the complexity of human action with its interrelationship of temporal sequence, human motivation, change happenings and changing interpersonal and environmental contexts". The narrative that the researcher and the subject construct in the dialogue to a linguistic form is in turn an 'autonomous unit' open to interpretation of meanings from several standpoints (Ricoeur 1981).

Lyytinen (2004, 179) discusses the nature of narrative knowing in teachers' action research which is often used as a tool for professional development, and notes that this form of research enables teachers to bring closer to one another the theory and practice of education. Its credibility has, however, been

questioned: *the narrative nature in this type of action research of a teacher as a researcher of their own work does not seem to meet the standards of science*. This credibility can be secured according to Lyytinen (2004, 185; applied from e.g. Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998; Kemmis & McTaggart 2000; Engeström 1998; Winter 2002; Heikkinen 2001) by the following principles:

1. *the historical continuity principle (the analysis of the context and action in an historical perspective)*
2. *the reflectivity principle (the researcher's understanding of the meanings and the adequacy of subjectivity)*
3. *the dialectical principle and how understanding came about with those who are in the research, different voices and simultaneous interpretations, authenticity)*
4. *the workable principle (good action research aims at good practice: what works is true) (Lyytinen 2004, 185.)*

In teachers' professional development the reflectivity principle is a gateway to researching and thinking. Or as Lyytinen (2004, 190) puts it: *for growing to become a researcher, a teacher needs to become a thinker*. Practitioners as teachers should speak and write in their own voice. Teachers' action research is not a method but rather *a philosophy of action* (according to Elliott 1997; see more in Lyytinen 2004, 190).

3.4 Data Analyses

How does a bricoleur start? I started by wondering and asking questions of shared leadership in the first place. The Comenius project with the other schools from 2006 to 2008 worked as a frame for sampling material and interviewing people. The data are a collection of samples of the school cultures in a three-year project work e.g.: *values* discussed by the staff, students and parents, *posters of values*, *student essays of their school days*, *a student speech*, *group discussions on teachers' work circumstances*, *interviews of heads, deputies and teachers*, *e-mails and diaries*. During the research project I kept a diary where I wrote about small incidents and my reflections during the three years in the project with the other schools. I interviewed people and taped individual conversations and group discussions. Many of the notes I wrote down during the visits to the other schools or when I received the visitors to my own school in Finland. I also collected the e-mails from the communication with the partners.

The aim of the second phase of the research was bringing together the different aspects of shared leadership from my experiences and forming an agenda for the research. The third phase has been gathering the data for the research questions. Action and research have taken turns all along the process:

first three years of working in the Comenius project with the other participants and then two years in the research process with the data. In this case my own involvement in the project of Comenius could not stay on the level of 'myths' of shared leadership and feelings of friendship forever. The experience needed a more general explanation that I started to search by means of ethnography.

The whole research was carried out in the following way: the experiences and other evidence were collected in a 'bricolage' manner to form a narrative. As a researcher I have gone through the theoretical part in a dialogue with the data and, to some extent, with the other participants. In the final phase of the research my aim is to follow the experiences from the particular to the general to form a theory. My idea of the particular is that subjective knowing is based on an experience that is situated in a certain time and a certain place, but to become general, these experiences need to be disconnected from the time and the place so that they can form something more general. In this way I follow the ideas of creative or 'wild' thinking (compare e.g. *La pensée sauvage* by Levi-Strauss; *three years can be enough to give birth to a 'myth' that needs to be tamed by more general or abstract connections through theoretical thinking*; in Varto 2008, 28).

When I interviewed some of the key informants of leadership and tried to find out how shared leadership was understood and seen in each school culture, I found out about many other cultural points and relationships within the school communities that I did not know before. On the other hand, my purpose was to work with the other people and include as many people as possible in the process of participative action research in the beginning. A lot of the mapping of and reflecting on the project material was done together. Action and research took turns when we planned our project: first a couple of heads together, then with our staff in the Comenius groups in the individual case schools and in a larger group with all groups together at the meetings. In the case schools the work was extended to teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders. For the narrative analysis of the Finnish school culture I included e.g. samples from the following Comenius project materials (Table 1.):

Table 1. Data from the Comenius project in the Finnish school

Date	Data from Activities	Actors involved
9/2006	Values at our school: collected to a poster	Students, teachers, heads, parents
11/2006	My school day: a description made in a story or a comic strip: collected to a booklet	Students, teachers
2/2007	My school week: a diary of one week: discussions in the meetings	Teachers, heads
5/2007	Developing our school: a questionnaire for teachers for improving the school	Teachers, heads
10/2007	Student exchange: German students in the Emäkoski school for five days	Students, teachers, parents
11/2007	What consequences does the EU have for us? A questionnaire for 9 th - graders	Students
2/2008	Student exchange: Finnish students in Herder-Gymnasium, Cologne, for 5 days	Students, teachers, parents
3/2008	What have we learned from each other: common values that we share made to a poster and the evaluation of the project by the group at the final meeting	Heads, teachers, students
5/2008	Evaluation of the Comenius project at the Emäkoski school level	Heads, teachers

During the first years the project materials led me to ask more about the phenomenon of shared leadership in a school culture in particular. The different voices of school leaders, teachers and students and sometimes parents were present when I spread all the materials on the floor, watched the videos or the photos and read the essays. I soon understood that in order to describe the process I would need bricolage as a research design. Thereby I saw myself as a 'bricoleur' who after the process of reflection on action and research was 'tuning' the experiences into a narrative research. I wrote my autobiographic statement of what I learned as a principal and a researcher of my own work during in the research process.

In an early phase of the research project I designed a questionnaire of shared leadership in order to learn how leadership is shared in each school culture. I thought that I could use the questionnaire for asking more questions and making a deeper analysis of shared leadership. To my great disappointment the questionnaire did not seem to give much information either on the leadership or the school culture. I understood that a survey was not the right way to find out about the school culture and started to arrange time for the interviews. In the interviews I was surprised to find out how many actors they connected to share

leadership in the school community. When I observed the school work I noted the different atmospheres and nuances in the teaching and learning cultures and soon formed two categories: the identity and values of the school and the connections the actors had to the decision-making (e.g. heads, teachers, students, parents, local authorities etc.). Why did I first choose these subcases or units? My previous experiences of doing research were of the type 'case study' and 'grounded theory' (Valjakka 1997; Valjakka 1998) where I had formed thematic categories of the data to form a general theory. In this research I first organised the themes of shared leadership to categories and there are also some other features from organising the data in themes as in the 'grounded theory'. However, in the end I had to return from the details and form a narrative out of the samples.

The difference between a grounded theory type research and a narrative research is, however, that in a narrative study the attention is drawn to the details, where as in the grounded theory the attention is on the themes and more general questions that can be raised. In this research I had chosen shared leadership as a theme of interest and as the interesting phenomenon from the very beginning, but I must admit that there are some more usual categories which I have used in this research to capture the phenomenon. Because this narrative analysis is also case-centred, it can generate 'categories' of general concepts as other case-based methods do, but the generalisation to theoretical propositions is to some degree transferable (Riessman 2008, 13).

I use for example *identity and values* to represent the school culture. *Leadership* included both the structural features in the organisation and organising leadership work. With *teachers* I discussed e.g. pedagogies and the circumstances in the teachers' work. *Students* give their voices to the discussion on what they think is important in school and life. *Parents* and their roles in the school are interesting for several reasons, but it is obvious that there are big cultural differences between the case schools. *Community* was chosen to represent all the aspects in school leadership. I moved all the people back under the *community* and formed a narrative of their participation in the processes of shared leadership.

The themes that arose during the process were viewed either with groups of people or individuals and their further ideas influenced the research. The mapping of the data and reflections was a process that led me to ask new questions through the cycles of experiencing, reflecting and creating new ideas. Practice and theory walked hand in hand during the whole research process. I was part of the research but so were the others, too. The partner schools were aware of the research and participated in producing, analysing and evaluating the research material. *One important purpose of the research on shared leadership was to activate and encourage the actors to analyse and improve their work.*

Narrative analysis

In this research project the staff and students participated in producing and evaluating the materials, but my research of shared leadership was discussed by the heads and teachers only. The data for the narrative were, however, collected from all different sources in order to create a lifelike frame.

According to Riessman (2008, 11) narrative inquiry is, generally speaking, grounded in the study of the 'particular' and the intention and language of 'particular actors in particular social places, at particular social times'. Moreover according to Riessman (*ibid.*): "*Narrative analysis refers to a family of methods for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form. Analysis of data is only one component of the broader field of narrative inquiry, which is a way of conducting case-centred research*". The 'cases' that form the basis for an analysis can be *individuals, identity groups, communities, organisations, or even nations* (in a political narrative). With the narrative analysis the narrator can organise the narratives to do political work and mobilise others into action for a progressive social change. The audience's interpretation of the narrative can, however, be different from the participant and investigator's narratives and with the narrative the narrator can also argue with the audience that may be sceptical. Anyway, "*A good narrative analysis prompts the reader to think beyond the surface of a text, and there is a move to broader commentary*". (Riessman 2008, 11-13.)

To energise the study of school leadership I have constructed a story from sequences of social events and experiences of different cultures within a bounded time sequence within the Comenius project and formed a narrative for the audiences of school practice. In forming the narrative I have selected and organised the data in connection with the research problems and questions. The narrative analysis has also been chosen in this research to offer a lived and lifelike setting for the inquiry. With my own participation and observation and gathering of the different kinds of materials of events and episodes in a three-year school development project I have constructed a narrative that is a collage of what I have experienced with the people in the project together and discussed later as a researcher.

The purpose of a narrative analysis is to produce a story as an outcome in the research. I have also occasionally applied an analysis of the narratives. I often needed to interview people and learn about their history and their positions as teachers and heads in the school community before I could go further in the research. I did this to clarify my own thinking and to understand the phenomenon of shared leadership and what can be connected to it in school. I also decided to use the grounded theory for the themes that rose from the analysis of the data of shared leadership in each case school. This phase of the analysis reminded me of my earlier use of the grounded theory in my Master's thesis (Valjakka 1997).

In qualitative research the notions of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability are used in discussions on the truth (Lincoln & Guba 1985,

300). In assessing the credibility in the narrative research, the accuracy of the data and the plausibility of the plot are taken into account, although the configurative analysis is a researcher's construction. The story is a reconstruction of a series of events and actions that are not necessarily in a chronological order but make sense in the idea of collage.

Polkinghorne (1995, 15) points out that a narrative analysis requires that the researcher should select a bounded system for study. Stake (1988, 255) adds that: "the researcher needs to have some conception of the unity of the totality of a system with some kinds of outlines or boundaries". He refers to a bounded system that can be e.g. a time sequence of two years when data which relate to a particular system under study are sought. Within this bounded system the story needs to have a beginning, middle and an end. A good narrative analysis' makes sense' in intuitive, holistic ways (Josselson et al. 1993, xii). However, a story cannot stand alone but needs to be linked to some theoretical context.

The bounded system for the narrative analysis in my research is the time sequence from 2005 to 2008 when we had the Comenius project with the four case schools and the people in the project. After the Comenius project, however, the research process was carried out and the research report was written in 2008-2011. The themes that arose from the project were carried on to the narrative analysis. The narrative analysis has a beginning, i.e. the roots, in the common project. The middle of the narrative is in looking deeper into the political, cultural and social context of the research, i.e. the wings. The end is the results and discussion. The plot is constructed on a global, national, socio-cultural and autobiographic level to a narrative where I am the narrator.

Metaphors as data-reducing means

As I told earlier on p. 58, school culture is a complex combination of history, a formation of a locality with its past, present and future happenings and its people who have *individual* opinions and values. One of the ways to describe a school organisation or culture or can be building a *metaphor*. An organisation can sometimes be thought of as a machine (structural) or a human being who has an identity (humane), or a jungle (political) or a carnival, a theatre or a temple (symbolic-cultural). A metaphor is a narrative, colourful, linguistic construction that can be differentiated from other semantic constructions. A metaphor is different from a symbol, which has a steady meaning. A metaphor is the concept of understanding one thing in terms of another. It constructs an analogy between two things or ideas; the analogy is conveyed by the use of a metaphorical word in place of some other word. *The metaphor is a narrator's own construction, or rather, a result of the action research process.* Metaphors are also data-reducing means. The use of metaphors in qualitative research is advocated e.g. by Miles and Huberman (1994; referred to in Kvale 1996, 275) as *richer, more complete than a simple description of the data.*

In change leadership it is common to talk about metaphors as powerful ways of leading change in organisations (Morgan 2006; in Juuti & Virtanen 2009, 78-79). According to these metaphors an organisation can be understood as a machine, a culture, politics etc.). Although metaphors are much simplified, linguistic constructions of the reality they can be helpful in selling the ideas of change in organisations.

In this research I use metaphors to give a succinct description of the identity and values, atmosphere and culture of each case school. By metaphors I also reveal the framework of school leadership that I see emphasised in each school culture.

For example, a 'band' has a certain connotation when used alone, but used as a metaphor for leadership in the Finnish school has several implications connected to listening, tunes and different voices. The metaphor of a 'band' has a political meaning. Playing, too, is metaphorical, and so is the tune from the mobile phones connecting people.

A 'mermaid' holding a globe in her hand and protecting the world seas, travelling on the top of the carnival car, gives the aspect of sustainability to leadership in the German school and the humour in the school culture.

Or a 'traditional, solid wooden sailing boat' with everybody aboard and with its cotton sails in a brisk wind gives an image of shared leadership, and sailing combines the past, present and future in the Estonian school.

A 'family' dancing traditional Greek dances holding each other by the waist or shoulder connects bodily expressions and a tight emotional unity with care and passionate leadership in the school culture.

According to Huttunen & Kakkori (2002) a good story can also be an autobiography where the writer tries to find selfhood, self-understanding and the truth through critical reflection. This kind of hermeneutic or dialectic experience can, as Gadamer (1998, 354) points out, widen our notion of the overall world and through genuine experiences people can become aware of their ability to learn new things and widen their meaning perspective through dialogue and reflection. In educational literature they are referred to as *reflective learners*. (Huttunen & Kakkori (2002, 77-78.)

Principal in building a professional identity

I link my personal experiences as a school leader with the analysis of the data and make my own autobiographical statement.

Can autobiographical knowledge help teachers and other educational leaders to use experiences connected to the body, movements, feelings, etc. that are non-verbal as methods of inquiry? In the joint school project we practised non-verbal learning through the steps of Greek dances, tasting some foreign food, smelling the lovely bagels as part of sensing the atmosphere in our Greek partner school and admiring fine pieces of art in the museums. Both our students and teachers

pointed out how exciting it was to learn about other cultures through e.g. participation in dances or tasting exotic flavours.

The subjective nature of the narrative analysis and of the interpreting of the social reality leads to a discussion on the truth and conformability. Eskola & Suoranta (2000) suggest that a researcher's subjectivity could lead to objectivity when researchers try to write out their own attitudes and values in the research. Dialectics could be presented in the form of the researcher's own conclusions and the conclusions of other researchers. This dialectic bridge in research could possibly lead to objectivity. In other words: what is hidden must be made visible.

H.L.T. Lyytinen (2004, 179-181) emphasises that the teacher's pedagogical knowledge is naturally narrative, situated in a certain time and in a certain location. The product of a narrative research project is a temporal narrative that is connected to a time and a location and has a clue. Things that happen are seen as an intentional chain of actions. The researcher is interested in describing action in teaching and education. This type of knowing can lead to developing the teacher's practice, thinking and is worthwhile in building a theory of education. Tacit knowledge (by Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995) has been raised as a topic in discussions on creativity in the postmodern systems of production. Haldin-Herrgård & Salo (2008, 277) note that personal, professional knowledge must be seen through the action and *that knowing -in- action* and *knowing -on- action* can be useful in evaluating and describing the professional knowledge in practice. This tacit knowledge is in other words experiential and concrete whereas explicit knowledge is theoretical and abstract.

In practice-based learning theories the participants build their identity and knowledge in work as members in a community of professionals. Both a teacher's profession and a head's profession contain a lot of features from the handicraft type of learning a profession: traditional skills are transferred and learned through the positions of a learner, craftsman and master and practised by looking, thinking and acting. But to be able to teach and lead teachers and heads one also needs to master modern and postmodern work skills typical of formal and informal systems.

In the work life reality of today people face both the multitude of modern and postmodern ideological expectations and still dream of the craftsmanship type of identity (Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen 2006, 31). In the theoretical aspect, the professional identity grows in connection with the community. A teacher needs the community for a dialogue and a continuation basis for professional learning. Likewise, a principal or head needs the community and the dialogue. For the learning of heads, other heads are valuable companions in dialogue as well. Professional growth and the building of the work identity, however, have seldom been research topics (Ropo & Gustafsson 2006, 50-51).

How can people manage all the expectations and still survive in building a personal and professional identity? Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen (2006, 40) claim that the socio-cultural and situational perspectives on professional learning seem

to be too restricted as they overlook individual development and subjectivity that are central to work that demands creativity and personality.

Principal as a researcher

In this research my own professional learning takes a narrative form. According to Karjalainen & al. (2006) professional identity is constructed in a dialogue with the emphasis on either individual or social factors at different times. Dialogue is the discussion where people construct a meaning, purpose or understanding (*logos*) together. In this process of the professional identity, people search for meaning and interpretation for their lives and the world. Logos is created in the space between (*dia*) people and through them. Logos is never completed and it flows and moves on when people communicate. (Karjalainen et al. 2006.)

How does this apply to school leaders` professional growth and building of the identity? Hellström (2006, 25; who refers to Eskola 1985) defines the professional growth of a principal with four phases; *from a drifting principal to one who organises everyday routine work, or one who understands the entity, or finally a professional who manages and leads the whole entity*.

Growing from the status of a novice who only knows how the school functions to an expert who knows how the complex metaphorical fields at school can be managed, run and changed, can be quite a tough process. Being able to control one's own work and sometimes even being able to think clearly can prove hard work in the hectic work life. Practice and theory often seem to go their own ways. However, professionals who can manage their own work have had to develop a personal theory-of-action and know what is important and can arrange their overloaded schedule accordingly. A theory-of-action is according to Hellström (2006, 31) usually tacit knowledge which is spoken out. Speech also produces a theory-of-action. A theory-of-action is tried out with the help of literature and experiences. Hellström distinguishes (2006, 30-31) four phases in a principal's theory-of-action building: 1. *recognising and textualising*, 2. *conceptualising and mapping*, 3. *testing in reality*, and 4. *doing research on leadership* (in accordance with the Teacher as a Researcher Movement).

The same idea can be applied to a theory of school leadership when a principal describes the process of learning in a shared leadership practice: intentional chains of actions describe the process of leadership and can lead to new ideas as a synthesis and develop the principals' day-to-day practice and thinking through reflective practice.

Learning is an autonomous and social process. Learning can start as a social process of sharing e.g. leadership experiences between the actors in a practice-based learning community where learning is connected to direct work processes. In the practice-based communities the individuals have their maps-of-knowing but they act still using their theory-in-use. Self-reflection is a possibility in making knowledge visible through communication of meanings. Action learning

is a process that starts from a problem and observations, leads to a hypothesis and theory proposals, experimenting and evaluation, stabilising the new theory and again finding new problems. Revans (1983) (referred to in Järvinen & al. 2002, 102-105) connects action learning in the context of leadership, planning and organising and sees that learning should be in the hands of those in action, otherwise learning will not be sustainable. *Leadership is then part of a learning organisation and an organisation is part of leadership.*

Schein (2004) differentiates three levels in organisational cultures according to the degree to which cultural phenomena are visible in an organisational culture to the observer:

1. *The surface or artifact level includes the visible artifacts (what we can see, hear and feel) and is based on visible organisational structures.*
2. *The exposed beliefs and values level manifested in the strategies, goals and philosophies of the organisation.*
3. *The underlying, not visible assumptions level with the unconscious beliefs, thoughts or feelings etc. (Schein 2004, 4-26.)*

In finding out about the phenomenon of shared leadership in different school cultures the first and the second levels can be observed through what we can see, hear and feel in the organisational structures of schools. The third or underlying level, which is about beliefs, thoughts and feelings, cannot often be seen but sensed. Both the visible and invisible form together the organisational culture.

In gaining an understanding of school leadership Sergiovanni (2001, 30-33; also referred to in Värri 2006, 156) has described three theories of school: *school as a pyramid, school as a railway and school of excellent performance*. In the first one the head is the controller who gives orders. In the second one the railway describes the several ways that people can use to control their own work by standardised processes. And the last one starts from scattered processes and the empowerment of the workers and leadership that strives for excellent outcomes.

A principal's thinking and way of seeing the organisation affect their leadership behaviour. A principal also needs to learn to recognise different frameworks behind the perspectives on the school organisation. Värri (2006, 157) notes that it is possible that in the beginning of their career heads use different glasses for their headship from later ones. Värri (*ibid.*) refers to the typing of Bolman & Deal (2003) according to whom the perspective on the school organisation can be seen at least from four frameworks: *structural, humane, political or symbolic-cultural* (Bolman & Deal 2003, 16; in Värri 2006, 157). These frameworks also force different challenges to leaders. In a structural framework the leadership challenge is to adjust the structure to the task and the environment. In the humane framework the leadership challenge is to adjust the organisation and the needs of the people whereas in the political framework the leadership challenge is to create an agenda. In the symbolic-cultural framework

the challenge of the leadership is to build trust, to create beauty and to give meaning. In different phases of the research I have touched all these frameworks.

As I pointed out earlier, my interest in the research arose from my professional need to reflect on school leadership in the context of international cooperation. The discussions with other heads of schools have played an important part during the research process and the discussions with teachers, students and parents have been meaningful in building a theory of practice.

In the beginning of the research I started to collect data that I thought would contribute to the research on leadership. After the first questionnaire I felt rather empty-handed and I had to go back to the schools to find out more about the school cultures and values that determined their school leadership. But what was more important, I realised that I needed to learn more about the people and started to interview the heads, some teachers and students and learned more of the people than the theme, as I thought at that time. Writing a diary was a useful way of keeping the data in order. Typically of us teachers, I started to draw some conclusions of the schools as metaphors. That is how the schools got their identities. Later I was surprised to find out that some researchers can connect metaphors to different frameworks of organisations. Symbols helped me to capture the organisations and the atmospheres.

At an early phase I chose to create a narrative of the data. From time to time it looked as if the data were a bunch of adventure stories illustrated with comic strips, videos and e-mails. Bricolage was needed in combining a collage of the different methods that were used during the project work and when analysing the results. The phenomenon of shared leadership was all the time the main theme that was followed in the different school cultures. Participatory action research was used while we discussed the values that could be seen in individual schools. Discussions continued at school with the staff and students. The idea of community started to get a deeper meaning. School leadership needed a deeper analysis of the context and the individual school cultures. The discussions also revealed critical views of the organisation and the decision-making system of in the schools.

One of the practical conclusions of the project for my own school leadership was that the decision of taking part in an international school development project could only have been made *with the community* and not *for the community*. I can now understand why but at the time of application I did not. Of course, a lack of time could always be blamed but basically it is the question of how we are used to operating in a school community or how the head, too, is expected to operate by the community. Traditionally, the head is often the person to make the decisions in school and also the one who is responsible and the one to be blamed, too. Building contacts and making preparations are part of the head's work. For an ownership of learning, a better commitment of the staff and the community, participation should, however, be favoured as early as when planning any cooperative partnership. A multicultural, international partnership worked as an excellent mirror to my own values, beliefs and attitudes on school leadership and

my own role as a head of school. Also, in relation to ethical problems and dilemmas in a multicultural context (as I referred to pp. 50-52 by using the research of Kuukka 2009) I got some valuable insight through coordinating the international school development project with the participants from different school cultures. The double role of a principal and a researcher revealed a contradiction in relation to power and made me ask whether my own idea of shared leadership is only about delegating tasks or really forming a school culture with participation, empowerment and meaning building through dialogue.

It is not easy for practitioners to study their own actions and the reality in action. Heads of schools as researchers make no exception. According to Schön (1984, 42) reflection-in-action captures the head at work making judgements in trying to manage the very work context. Reflection-in-action involves on-the-spot surfacing, criticising, restructuring and testing of the intuitive understandings of an experienced phenomenon. *Professional growth can be linked to this reflective practice.*

The role of a principal as a researcher, however, is not without problems. How to study your own work when you are the one who is in charge? The aspect of power is always worth consideration. When I chose the narrative method to be used in this research I had to pay attention to the ethics with the research material. It was a difficult question: on the one hand *openness* and *life-likeness* were needed but, on the other hand, *confidential* and *intimate issues* had to be left out. Narratives are also individual and intimate constructions and therefore I asked the interviewees to review their statements. However, the multiple voices of other people in the context have given me a lot to think about and I have found several new meanings for leadership after rereading some parts of the data. To be on the safe side, I also e-mailed the whole text to the partners in December 2008.

The idea of a principal or a school head as a researcher may sound odd for most people working in school and in administration. Sergiovanni (1991, 3-5) points out that principals and other school leaders' mindscapes of leadership, and how schools work, and the nature of human rationality shape the way we think about theoretical knowledge and the link between this knowledge and how we practise it. Sergiovanni compares mindscapes of practice to intellectual security blankets and road maps that provide the rules, assumptions, images and principles that define what the principalship is and how its practice should unfold. These mindscapes, as Sergiovanni (1991, 3-5) argues, unfortunately do not always fit the actual mindscapes of teaching, administering and schooling.

For school leadership the use of community-based and culturally developed narratives can open a perspective to the individuals and their identities in the community. When writing the narrative I have formed a synthesis of what I and other people have experienced. At the same time with the reflection of the past I visualise the future as a head of school. With the narrative I walk my talk.

4 RESULTS

To give answers to the research questions I have chosen different types of data and formed a narrative of each case school. The discussions of values that we started in the Comenius project together with the other schools were an important starting point. It was the roots. This led me to ask what the identity of the school is and what distinguishes this particular school from the others. In this way the case schools got their identities as metaphors.

The discussions on values in each school led us to look for deep meanings in what we do in each school. Later, while visiting each other's schools, we analysed what values we could recognise in their action: visible or hidden, real or ideal values. We realised that we all had our own cultural lenses to look at our own culture. Surprisingly enough, participants from other cultures could sense a lot of our ideal values and see them working in practice even if they did not understand the language. The same happened to us Finns while visiting other schools. But it was even more surprising how quickly the partners noted our hidden values in the school culture (e.g. contradictions in the official policy and the everyday routines at school). During school visits there were moments when no words were spoken but the others could instinctively tell from the behaviour of the leader and those led that there was a problem.

Shared leadership was the theme that I started to do the research of in the first place. I noticed soon, however, that a lot of cultural things were connected to the culture of sharing leadership at school. School leadership seemed to be connected to the micropolicies of the school. With the help of interviews, letters, posters describing the prevailing and ideal values, pictures, comic strips, videos, photos, e-mails, diaries and manuals made by the participants I started to construct a narrative of the phenomenon. I could use as background information my observations and diary notes during the meetings in the schools.

With the help of this data I wanted to understand the participation in decision-making in culturally different school contexts. For the development of a theory of practice in school leadership, an aim of the research was also to understand the processes in decision-making and give answers to *how shared leadership is understood in the case schools* by asking:

- *How do principals understand and practise shared leadership?*
- *How can teachers, students and parents participate in the decision-making in the school?*
- *How is shared leadership connected to learning?*

With the results I also

1. form a metaphor of the identity of each case school and describe their school culture of sharing of leadership to answer questions a. and b.
2. reflect on what I have understood and learned as a head to design my own theory of practice as a synthesis of the data and to answer question c.

During the first year of the Comenius project I started to collect material about leadership in the project schools. I sent a questionnaire to the partners (Appendix 1.). Some of the questions were too difficult to be answered and especially the continuum of cultural dimensions (Hofstede 1991) should have been explained in advance or the respective question should have been answered by me, the researcher. The result of the poorly designed questionnaire was, however, that only one principal answered and returned the questionnaire, but it gave a lot of inspiration to the interviews and discussions. With this experience I learned, however, that I needed to discuss leadership with the partners using different kinds of questions. When I interviewed the leaders and teachers in the project groups I got a lot of information on their situation and the school as a community. At this point I decided to use the case study research method and describe the schools each as a case with its leaders, teachers and students. Later I added the parents and community because I realised what a difference they made in the case schools.

This widening of the theme of leadership allowed me to become an ethnographic researcher. When we had meetings with the partner schools I used my camera and took pictures from the schools and people and videos from the classes. First it seemed right to collect whatever material I could get hold of, which, of course, led to an overload of all material. However, in that phase I got a lot of pictures, videos, and posters with the prevailing and ideal values, diaries of school heads, teachers' school weeks to students' school days and weeks. I grew particularly fond of the students' comic strips of their school days and their videos and manuals of their own culture. I even learned to know personally a couple of students from my own school, Germany and Greece with the project.

Interviews with the school heads and teachers also offered a way to understanding the school culture and the work situation of the people in the school. However, timing the interviews with the programme during the meetings was in itself a kind of art. When meeting several times over three years, our ways of working and talking improved each time we met. From our first meeting in Athens I remember that I, as the coordinator, had to shout: SILENCE before everybody could listen and I could hear my own thoughts.

At the last meeting when everybody was able and willing to listen to each other and wait for a turn to speak up I felt like a champion! But in between we needed a lot of practice of how to work together. In the following chapters I will present the results of the case schools and our work together and find answers to the research questions. I will start the narrative with the Finnish school.

4.1 Finnish School

The Finnish school is a big band playing together some kind of music where all the sounds can be heard. I am the conductor but I also enjoy playing the saxophone in the band. The Nokia tune connecting people can be heard somewhere in the background.

Metaphor for the school culture and organisation

The metaphor of a big band suggests that all the players and sounds are equally important. In a band, everybody is equally responsible for the sound. Music is one of the key elements in the school although there is not a special programme for music in the school. The school can boast with several former students who are famous pop musicians. There are extra-curricular clubs for music in the school, too. However, the class in the school to which students are admitted on a selective basis is not for music but for media studies. Music is, however, heard more than before.

Listening to music is one of the head's tasks. The duty of a leader is to make sure that the sound is right, too. I could play the saxophone or any other instrument with the band and the others could take turns in the lead. I am fascinated by composing and creating something new. In my headship I want to work for promoting creativity and sharing pedagogical innovations with other people. The band in the metaphor can consist of both adults and pupils. This is the ideal for sharing leadership.

Identity of the school

The identity of a school could also be described by facts and figures. The school is about 50 years old. The building is newly renovated. The school is situated in a villa area in Nokia with some 31,000 inhabitants, just 20 minutes by car from my home town Tampere which has more than 200,000 inhabitants. The town of Nokia is also known for its industries and the label of an industrial town is still present in school life through the families.

I have worked as head of the school for almost 10 years and have now one deputy and one assistant head and 45 teachers sharing the leadership work with me. It is a secondary school with roughly 530 students between classes 7 to 10, 45 teachers and 15 other staff. The size of the school is above the average which used to be 350 students in a secondary school before the year 2004. After the last curriculum change a considerable number of comprehensive schools were united from classes 1 to 9 but this school has only teenagers.

With the changes in the curriculum, however, more small rooms would be needed for more personalised instruction of students. This is especially true with

the special needs students. With the growing number of students, too, there is not enough space in the school, which is unfortunate for pedagogical leadership functions.

Organisation of the school

The school is run by the head, an assistant head and a leaders' team. The head is responsible for the decisions and leading the school in the direction set by the local authorities in line with the national guidelines for school administrators in the national and local curriculum. The leaders' team is formed by teachers who have volunteered to assist the head for a small monthly sum allocated to school development in the teachers' contract. The leaders are responsible for their own teams and they participate regularly in the leaders' meetings to discuss issues with the head and the assistant head before the teacher conferences. In this way *leadership is pooled at the top of the school* (on p. 48). But *leadership is also shared for team effectiveness* for better commitment to the goals set for the school.

Strong sense of community

When I became head in 2002 I was surprised at how strong the sense of community is in the school. I learned that there was a spirit considered special in this school that had already developed during the first decades of the school's existence. What the spirit was like I found out later. The school was originally a private one but was later changed to a public one. The stories of the spirit of the school are nowadays told with reference to the good old times but also when the community spirit is discussed. I think the current culture of the school is still characterised by this community spirit:

From the interview with the assistant head (18 March 2008):

Eija: Well, now this school has been long ago some kind of an experimental school, hasn't it? A sort of project school with cooperative aims and that's why there still is some spirit of that left, some kind of a project school with community education?

V: Well, it was no official project and there was never any money to it. It is so old that there was no money, but it was formed naturally when the new school started and the new teachers were elected to it. It started when they came; the famous spirit of the school was established with them.

I also learned that the community spirit was not created with money. The spirit of the school was constructed with the first teachers that came to the new school. Presumably, as it was a new school to everybody, they had to negotiate and agree on things together. Perhaps they chose the values that most of them could agree on. How a community spirit is kept alive is a matter of living and

experiencing life in a community. But is the spirit still alive? Our partners noted that in the gathering in the assembly hall and in the way our students behaved there was a strong sense of belonging to a community and that made our partners think that there is a strong sense of community in our school.

As head, I have learned to respect the original consensus; even if I do not always approve of the ways it is manifested. By this I mean clinging to the past and sometimes defending old things that we could let go. A strong sense of community can also work as opposing to all that is new. Balancing for the consensus is worthwhile. In my theory of practice I will go on searching for the minimum that everybody can agree on. This is an ongoing theme in my own school leadership.

The local authorities only occasionally interfere in the school life. As regards distributed leadership (mentioned earlier on p. 51-53) with more *inter-organisational collaboration in public services and educational management, and public administration* there is not much in this research for the Finnish school. At the moment as in the times of low economies, discussions on saving money from teachers' salaries and teachers' lay-offs are going on at the local level. Starting new projects, including international programmes, is also threatened in fear of spending money. The latest news about schools can sometimes be read about in the local paper. That is the Nokia tune connecting people.

Surprising aspects in the school culture

When our partners first visited our school in February 2007 they were surprised by the large number of technological equipment in the school. But there were also other surprising aspects in the school culture found by the partners:

Surprising aspects in the Finnish school culture:

- *a lot of technological equipment (computers, cameras etc.)*
- *cleanliness, everything is clean and in order*
- *size of the classes (ideal for learning)*
- *no bells at the beginning/end of lessons: it works + is very relaxing*
- *students and teachers enjoy a very high standard of motivation (interested in learning: openness)*
- *a difference: students address teachers with their first name: a very intimate way of addressing the teachers: but still there is a lot of respect (surprisingly this works!)*
- *very few foreign students/ immigrants at school*

Our visitors from the other case schools noted no foreign-looking or foreign-originated students and, independently of this, the cleanliness of the school house. Finnish students addressing their teachers by the first name and yet with respect was a great surprise for the Greeks and Germans. Cultural differences gave birth to a lot of interesting discussions. It seemed that most values in education are quite international and can be discussed with people with different cultural backgrounds.

One school for all and a culture full of paradoxes

Within the last fifty-sixty years Finland has changed from an agrarian country to an industrial and technological one. During that time a lot of people have moved from the countryside to the cities. The idea of comprehensive school was born with demands for more equality in education in the 1970s.

Comprehensive school was started in Finland gradually from the north to the south in the years 1972-1977 and was connected to the demands of social democracy in Finland. The main principle was that all children should have equal rights to comprehensive education. The school for the whole age group replaced the earlier parallel school system where the pupils were separated to different schools depending on their theoretical skills. Pupils spent either four years in elementary school and continued five to six years in lower secondary school or six years in elementary school with an extension of two or three years where the emphasis was on practical subjects and less on theoretical subjects. The first led to upper secondary and the second to vocational school. (Hövel 2009, 88).

The Finnish comprehensive school has been under construction during its more than thirty years. How has the culture formulated our educational system and educational leadership?

Curricula were developed to describe what skills a student needed to learn. In the curricula of 1970 and 1985 not only the ideas of cognitive and societal aims of education are found, but there are also ideas of supporting students as human beings and their growth to harmonious persons. In the 21st century new liberal ideas of competition and individualism have affected the curriculum but the basic ideas of equality and support of the growth of human beings as whole persons with feelings, values and a meaningful life can still be found in the Finnish Core Curriculum.

The Finnish National Core Curriculum Plan of 2004 did away with the division to elementary and secondary school and created a unity of classes 1 to 9. The principle 'One School for All' has resulted in the success story of the Finnish education system. Teachers with university degrees and the homogeneity of society are also offered as explanations for the success. Instead of standardisation of the evaluation, education is built on flexibility and rather loose standards. Accountability has been replaced by trust-based professionalism and sustainable leadership according to Sahlberg (2007b, 149-153; Salo & Johnson 2008, 42).

Although Finnish education has received a lot of positive acclaim, the educational reform is full of paradoxes. Simola (2005) claims that paradox number one is that the model students in Pisa are carrying an ethos of obedience and subjection typical of the past agrarian cultures. Paradox number two is that the politically rather progressive comprehensive school in Finland is implemented by rather conservative teachers. (Salo & Johnson 2008, 42.)

Values as the roots in the school culture

When we started the Comenius Project the first common task was finding out about the values of each school. The values that are accepted in the official education policy determine and lead much of the action at school. The values in the Finnish school are almost equal to the values in the Finnish National Core Curriculum Plan of 2004. Education is largely based on such cultural values as social, legal, aesthetic, theoretical and religious values, whereas ethical values are more personal values and always an expression of another value. Social values are complex in nature. They are primarily realised in family by means of love and care and later applied in school education. At the state level values can also include the use of power and even violence (by the state, police etc.) in the name of law and order.

Many Finnish philosophers, e.g. Erik Ahlman (1892-1952) who has studied values, have also affected Finnish pedagogical and educational research. According to Ahlman's studies, values are understood emotionally, not with senses or only by knowledge (Ahlman 1976, 18-21). Some values seem to be more appreciated than others. Peace, health, work and money, equality, the safety of family life, friends and spare time activities are the leading values. One value that has emerged with the natural catastrophes is preventing pollution and a change in climate. The order of the top ten values can differ on the individual level according to age, social status, ethics and gender. One of Ahlman's ideas concerning education is finding the deep meaning of love in another person, which must be realised in oneself first (Skinnari & Syväoja 2007, 369).

Suhonen (1988) and other Finnish researchers who have investigated the values of Finns have noted that individual and collective values take turns in determining the direction of change in society. The 60s was a time of collective values whereas at the end of the 80s more individual values were prevalent. This theory implied an increase in individualism for the 90s and the first decade of the 21st century.

The beginning of the 21st century has shown a turn again: collective values such as *community spirit, safety, and the wellbeing of people as a whole group* are in evidence. These values have recently been raised in public discussions in the aftermath of the tragic school shootings. Values prevailing in education and school life seem to become more interesting when something dramatic happens.

There is a general tendency for super-individual values to lose significance in society, which can be noticed as changes in the rights of individuals (e.g. new norms in the EU forbidding smoking indoors or new laws that are passed according to which, instead of protecting the individual's right to secrecy of personal records, the authorities have the right to pass on information for safety in society).

According the investigations of the Finnish Ministry of Education the values of young people in Finland in the 21st century are very traditional. Young Finns appreciate education, friends and family, good health and stable work although

work and a good salary are not as highly valued as they used to be in their parents' youth. Young people are, however, willing to work hard for the things they believe in, e.g. protecting animals or the environment. Politics is not seen as a meaningful way of participating in the decision-making of society. Violence is not accepted as a means of influencing things either. Church and religion have partly lost their significance to young Finns. In the future, young people in Finland wish to have good friends, stable work, a family and children.

But the school culture is also full of good ways of working, *practical values* that have lasted in the school culture. Some of them are openly expressed, but a lot of them are hidden and presumed to be learned very soon by the newcomers. After a discussion with their parents our students (at least some of them) chose the top ten of the values they believed that existed in the school and the values they would see as ideal even if they did not exist yet (Appendices 2 and 3). Their values resembled the values of the teachers and even the ones mentioned in the curriculum, which was not very surprising. The values were found out about in the first Comenius task (Appendix 2.). These values were also collected to the poster of our school as the main product of the first year Comenius Project. Students are presented in this poster lining up side by side with all the different looks, which to me symbolises diversity and equality at the same time. There are no teachers or heads visible in their poster. Does this also indicate how separated from the teachers in the school students see themselves?

The next step in the processing of values was done during the visits to each partner school. *Were the exposed values visible in the school and in classrooms?* The main values that the Comenius visitors noticed during their visit to the classrooms in the Finnish school were a *sense of community, tolerance, safety, democracy, equality, responsibility, respect, creativity, entrepreneurship and sound self-esteem*:

The values prevailing in the Finnish school according to the discussions held on 15 February 2007:

- *tolerance and safety were especially seen in the special classes*
- *in normal classes we saw responsibility (students are eager to learn and quiet, attentive)*
- *concert: sense of community, entrepreneurship, creativity (also self-esteem because everybody was enjoying the concert)*
- *creativity: concert + arts + handicraft lessons*
- *community spirit: shown between the teachers and the students (in their interaction)*
- *equality/democracy: girls and boys learn the same aspects in home economics (cleaning, doing the washing up) – this was especially surprising to the Greek teachers because the traditional education in Greece is that boys don't have to do chores in the household*
- *safety: in the chemistry lab (glasses, jackets), also in the corridors (students were quiet and very well-behaved when waiting for the teachers in between the classes)*

Although many of the values are ideal and set as targets in education, partners could also find them working in practice. But some of the values could not be seen. Critical remarks were made e.g. of the value *entrepreneurship* which Germans could not see in the classrooms. All they saw was quiet students writing a lot. The Germans would have expected different ways of working and active initiatives from students. The Greeks, on the other hand, found the opposite as they thought this was a sign of students who had learned to be responsible for their own work and not spend the time on disturbing. In this respect the cultural differences and expectations came clearly across: for Germans 'entrepreneurship' could have a different meaning and expectation in a school culture compared with the Greeks, but they could all agree on the sense of community.

When visiting our school our partners wanted to find out what was different in our school compared with their schools. Free school food for every student was a practical value and one big difference that could be found. The partners found that the free school food for everybody in the school is a great advantage for the students. In fact, some believed this could even be the reason for the excellent results of the Finnish students. Namely, in the 50th Anniversary Publication of the German school there was a picture of our school taken from the Cantina (the German word for a lunch room) which they called *The Place of Mensa* in the Finnish school, a reference that I could understand later after the discussions with the new head of the German school.

The reputation of Finland as a Pisa winner was also eagerly discussed by the Germans and the Greeks. The German head mentioned as a reason for joining in the Comenius project the fame of the excellent results that Finland had got in PISA. He also told me how they kept hearing about the superiority of the Finnish school in their heads' meetings and that was why he was eager to learn more about the Finnish school. And he wanted to learn more about shared leadership. But shared leadership turned out to be hard to trace.

Shared leadership and the role of a head

For finding out how shared leadership is understood in the Finnish school I interviewed my colleague, the assistant head who has worked in the school since 1980 and as an assistant head since 1997. She worked as a substitute head for seven months during my absence from work during the last project year. My absence and the time reserved for research offered us an opportunity to analyse the sharing of leadership together:

I am visiting the school as a researcher. I am having an interview with the assistant head on 18 March 2008. I have sent the questions in advance (Appendix 1). We sit in the head's office, which is a nicely decorated big room with bright colours, blue and red. There is also a comfortable big blue sofa in the room, a gigantic green plant in front of the large window, a computer on the table and a modern painting on the wall. The assistant head is a friendly warm-hearted tall woman, a foreign language teacher who has worked in the school since 1980 and as an assistant head since 1997. She is blond and tall and wears glasses. She loves animals and has a picture of her two

lovely cats on her computer screen. She gives well-considered answers even when she is busy. I start the interview:

Eija: What does shared leadership mean to you?

V: It is sharing the responsibility of some tasks in the work community. Everybody shares a bit of that responsibility.

Eija: Is shared leadership part of that participation?

V: Yes, quite. Everybody is responsible for something.

Eija: Well, how is this sharing of leadership seen in the Finnish school?

V: Well, it depends on the teachers, some are enthusiastic about responsibilities whereas others think that they are teachers at school and do not want other responsibilities and that teaching is enough.

E: Is there a lot of shared leadership in our school?

V: Well, we have the teachers' meeting and the teachers think that the teachers' conference decides about things.

V: Although there are a lot of things that the head has prepared and that have already been decided somewhere else and the teachers' conference only give their acceptance but pedagogical matters are honestly discussed together.

The Finnish way of sharing the work is based on sharing the tasks. Sharing leadership is problematic because, the sharing of responsibilities, the head is responsible for most of the things even if they are distributed. Decision-making is to a large extent a privilege of the head although the teachers think that the teachers' conference decides about things. This shows a contradiction in the power relations between the head and the teachers. In other words, power should be divided but no tasks shared without extra pay. To me, this part of the work culture in the school reflects transactional leadership (mentioned on p. 25).

Even if participation in the decision-making is seen as an important part of democracy in school and the teachers' commitment to work, there are also varying opinions of whether the work of making decisions can be done by teachers at all. Being responsible is sometimes seen in the negative light. There is, however, more freedom in the sharing of the decision-making in pedagogical matters:

Eija: Well, there at least their professionalism comes in more useful. And pedagogical matters are also often questions of money, but maybe they are easier to be discussed.

V: Quite.

I also find discussions on pedagogical matters with teachers easier. This is where we have more shared meanings, too. I am aware that structural and political matters are hard to change top-down and that time for important changes down-top would be needed as well. Apart from a lack of time for necessary and useful discussions, school is short of money, too. Many financial resources in the

Finnish secondary school have remained on the level of the economic depression in the 1990s:

E: But why do you think it is like that?

V: It is a question of what is considered valuable in this society. Perhaps it is not the children or the old people. There it is easy to save.

Decision-making in the matters of finance is a profoundly socio-political process: it is highly interactive involving many people in meetings and informal conversations. Accordingly we can say that values affect political decision-making, which in turn affects the schools. However, the assistant head is still optimistic about education and confident that the political decision-makers in the Ministry of Education will give more money to schools in the future:

E: Yes. It seems difficult as we know that there won't be more money for the local school authorities in the future. Rather on the contrary when more money will be needed for the health care of the older people.

V: The Ministry of Education has promised a total of six million to the local school authorities for creating smaller groups in schools. Hopefully it will be earmarked! Maybe the decision-makers have understood what it is about at schools. Maybe they have understood what this is all about in the final analysis.

As a conclusion, the themes that came up in the interview concerning shared leadership in the Finnish school were:

- *leadership is shared with the leaders' team*
- *teachers form teams and have a contact person in the leadership team*
- *shared leadership is understood as sharing responsibilities in the work community of teachers where everybody is responsible for their part*
- *different views and opinions exist about sharing leadership: some are willing to participate, for others lessons are enough work*
- *shared leadership is not a model that people are used to in this school*
- *teachers' idea of the decision-making is that the teachers' conference is the decisive body in the school, but that in fact it is the head who has often prepared the decisions with a team*
- *in pedagogical matters there is more room for discussions and decisions are made together*
- *a parental board can have a say in things and take part in making decisions*
- *more time is needed for listening to people*
- *we would need more people to take care of the administrative work*

Shared leadership is seen by the assistant head as sharing the responsibility of some tasks in the work community and her idea is that everybody shares a bit of that responsibility. To me this implies that shared leadership in this school is still based on a traditional sharing of the work and power according to the positions people have through their work (1.). The expectations for the head and the assistant head's work are also culturally bound and they are expected to do the

leadership work as they are the leaders. This is clear in the interview when the assistant head tells that the head and a team of leaders have often prepared the issues that are discussed in the teachers' conference. The teachers' teams work as part of the organisation of the school, but it is mostly the head and the leadership team that have the power to make the decisions for the whole school (2.). Leadership is pooled at the top for the effectiveness of the organisation. There are contradictions in the expectations of power and participation in the decision-making in the school. Students are not part of the decision-making other than through the student board. Time is always a problem. The assistant head feels, that more time is needed for listening to people (3.) in the Finnish school headship where administration and management and routine work (e.g. teachers' salaries etc.) seem to take an extensive part of the head's work time.

It seems that more discussions and a genuine dialogue are needed for the meaning building of the shared values with the school community. I think that pedagogical leadership can be a starting point for shared meaning building in practice, which can lead to more cooperation between the heads and the teachers. Next we will move on to discuss teachers and their work in the school.

Role of the teachers

After discussions on shared leadership with the assistant head we moved on to discuss the teachers' work. The teacher's work and their work conditions were also taken up as a theme in the international discussions with the partners during the second year in our common Comenius project. How does the assistant head see the teachers' part in sharing leadership? Here is an example:

Eija: At some point when we talked with teachers about better commitment, some teachers said that it is not a question of the small sums of money, the euros, but others are quite keen on their free time.

V: Yes, they want free time more than money.

E: Maybe that's the trend now.

V: And the situation of people, for instance somebody might need time for the small kids.

E: And it must be taken into consideration that people have their individual needs.

V: And then there could be part-time or short-time working which would require a change in the law and labour market negotiations.

E: It could help teachers to endure at work.

The assistant head sees individual planning necessary for the teachers' improved commitment and endurance at work in the future._Why is individual work planning needed nowadays? It is simply because the burning out of some teachers in work is a problem. But as better commitment of teachers was taken up in connection with sharing leadership I realised that there is a contradiction in the expectations on the teachers' part in sharing leadership.

I was not sure whether it was a symptom of trust or mistrust. However, when our partners visited our school in 2007, for them one of the surprising issues was the trust in the teachers' work and missing central exams. Differences in the school systems and school cultures were eagerly discussed. It was also interesting how foreign teachers very soon noticed some contradictions in the Finnish teachers' work:

- *If Finnish teachers decide to send a student out of class for the rest of the lesson (because of misbehaviour), they must look after them: but how can they do so if the teachers are still in the classroom?*

Colleagues from other countries understood without words the problems that teachers had. In the discussions on the contradictions the teachers wanted to find solutions to problems in their colleagues' work. Or they wanted to raise discussions on what they saw problematic in the school:

- *in the physics lesson half of the students were doing nothing (just a few pupils were doing what they were supposed to although the group was very small)*
- *in special needs education, visitors noticed that students had different rules from the rest of the school (e.g. students can use their mobile phones, listen to music from their iPods or decide whether they want to work in the class or not)*

Discipline turned out to be an interesting topic for the teachers visiting our school. When discussing some differences, however, the visitors seemed to be unsure whether they should discuss them with me, the head. I, however, found the discussions fruitful for developing the school organisation and community. I knew I had to find solutions to these disciplinary problems when the visitors had gone.

When the teachers' working conditions were discussed eagerly with all the partners in the project, the initiative came from the teachers in the Finnish school for designing a form of questions for the teachers in our own school which was then used by our partner schools (Appendix 6.). The questionnaire was answered and discussed first in each school and afterwards with the partners at a meeting. It appeared in the discussions that '*feeling good at work*' was seen important especially in Finland. However, it was found out that support from the colleagues and a friendly atmosphere were also appreciated by the teachers in the partner schools. According to the answers feeling comfortable at work in our school was thought to consist of:

- the friendly atmosphere and the sense of humour in the teachers' room*
- colleagues and their support (you can talk about problems in your work)*
- nice pupils (some of them)*

Teachers felt uncomfortable about:

- the hectic pace*
- not all teachers follow the common rules*
- (some) pupils mess up the school building*
- difficult pupils and the slowness of the support system for pupils who need help*

- bullying (by colleagues and by pupils)

The question of feeling good or uncomfortable and the discussions on the teachers' work conditions can be labelled both as micro-political and as macro-political questions. According to Asanuma (2009), in the 1990s when two cross-national surveys were commissioned by the Finnish National Board of Education on 50 comprehensive schools that were considered innovative, it was found that differently from e.g. other Nordic countries and Britain the Finnish teachers still followed the traditional curriculum and instruction. Teachers were teaching in the front of the classroom and kept a distance to the pupils. Pupils seemed to work in an archaic and authoritarian collective culture. Simola (2005) pointed out that the high level of student achievement could also depend on traditional aspects of Finnish teachers' work, job satisfaction, ethics and trust. Hargreaves (2007) calls this a 'creative recombination' where resources from the past are recombined with an interest in trying out new ideas and methods. However, Sahlberg (2007a) notes that in Finland teacher resistance or reluctance to change has been seen in a positive light and as a resource of sustainable development. On the other hand, Almiala (2008) reports changes in teacher job satisfaction, teacher career and the building of professional identity. However, changes in the society challenge teachers and school heads to build a new school culture.

In the Finnish school the teachers felt that they get support from their colleagues. They also expect to get disciplinary support from their colleagues during the breaks. They value respect, trust and acceptance from their colleagues. Commitment to the common rules and support for surveillance during the breaks are expected as forms of support from the colleagues. The teachers also expect to get more support from their head in disciplinary issues with students.

As a result I found out that the teachers' roles in the school community and participation in the decision-making processes need restructuring in the future. But there is an even more acute need for sharing leadership and increasing participation in the decision-making process, i.e. the part of the students.

Role of the students

What is the role of the students and their part in the decision-making process? In the Finnish schools there is usually a board of students who represent all the students in the school. During the Comenius project, however, we practised discussions with whole classes.

In the Finnish school, students, teachers, parents and heads together with the leaders' team discussed the values that were considered to be important in the school (Appendix 2/1 and 2/2). After discussions at school the students and their parents continued the discussions on values (Appendix 3), the teachers discussed the values in the teacher groups and leaders' team, and finally the top ten of the prevailing values were collected to a poster made by one student. The surprising

thing was that all the partners, students, teachers, parents and heads, could agree on the top ten values, and how smoothly the work was done by everybody.

To me, for tolerance to be a working value more respect for diversity would be needed. Discussing these values with students and teachers was interesting from the point of view of shared leadership, too. These tasks also made me as a head reflect on what values were visible in my work as a head and how I put the ideal values into practice. This is where I started to reflect on expressions of culture for my interpretation of meanings for shared leadership.

How does the assistant head see the part of the students in the Finnish school? When the future is discussed with the assistant head, her intuition concerning change is that more tailoring and custom-made solutions for individuals will be needed both for students and teachers in the future:

Eija: How do you see the future? You are an experienced teacher, so if you had a crystal ball, what kind of school would you see in the next five or ten years?

V: We need more and more individual plans for students since there will be fewer and fewer students who can follow the general education teaching.

Eija: Why do you think this will happen? We also have small special needs groups in the primary schools and here. Why do you think this is the direction? What is causing this?

V. We would need to have more resources for smaller groups in the primary schools and also in the secondary schools. In the secondary schools sixteen students in a class would be ideal. We had that number of students in groups before the depression of the 1990s.

Eija. Have we got stuck on the level of the depression time resources in schools?

V: Yes. We still have the same resources.

Eija: Why is it so?

V: The better time has never been seen yet.

Smaller student groups would be needed for several reasons in the secondary school. Students in the Finnish school see their part very organised and structured by timetables and organised teaching and the contents in the curriculum. It was interesting to see the comics drawn by the students where the teachers are described standing in front in the classrooms facing the audience while students are often drawn with their backs to the audience. They do not have faces, but they put their hands up when asked. Students are drawn with their faces to the audience only in the handicraft lessons, in home economics, during lunch breaks and in their spare time. Despite all the community spirit that was noted in the school, students have only little say in the decision-making process:

Eija: Other foreign visitors have noticed that they could sense the community spirit in our school in the way we work together in the school. Has it got anything to do with the decision making in our school? Have students got any part in the decision-making in our school? As a head, do you see students as part of the community in that sense?

V: Yes, of course. Decision-making should be extended to the student board but as we just had their profile of wellbeing filled, only 10 per cent of the students felt they had a say in decisions

that concerned them. Maybe they are members on the student board or support students. The majority of the students are left out.

Only 10 per cent felt they had a say in the decision-making. The assistant head remarks that students should take more part in the decision-making. However, it is not customary in the Finnish school to include students in decision-making. The student board is the link to the decisions in the school. Earlier they also had e.g. a class meeting where they could discuss and bring their suggestions forward. This practice has not become a living tradition in the school culture, as the assistant head tells:

The class meeting expired in the same way a couple of years ago. The class meeting must be returned. The class meeting would deliver information to the student board and we had agreed that there is a class meeting once in a term or once in a period. But that has not survived as a living tradition either.

Lacking the time and organisation for participation in the decision-making is obvious in the Finnish school culture. When students describe their usual school days and their everyday routines at school, they often use time as an indicator of things: e.g. the times of beginning and ending days, lessons and breaks. Some students are critical of their lives and wonder if their life is too structured.

The students' essays or comic strips of their normal school days are also full of expressions of values. In analysing them I have thought of the positioning theory and how students express their situations at school. The positioning theory (Harré, R. & van Langenhove, L., 1999) is the study of moral orders as ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights of speaking and acting. As pointed out in the theory of positioning, the local implications, rights and duties, tasks and responsibilities are heard in speech and seen in action. The following essay serves as an example as a 15-year-old Finnish boy writes:

My Monday

I wake up early in the morning. Actually too early, I have like an hour and a half to get to school. I have a routine, which I repeat every morning, except at weekends, for the past four years! Oh, I guess I need to tell you people how it goes: I wake up precisely at 6:30 am, get a quick shower, and go back to sleep. I wake up precisely at 7:34, dress myself, and start walking towards my school. Sometimes I wonder if my life is too organised...

Yes, I don't eat anything for breakfast. Don't patronise me, I make my own choices! My school day starts with English. I "own" in English "owning" is a term we computer nerds use when we are very good at something. Well, the next subject is biology. The day continues with economics, two hours of it. Maths ends my typical school day.

I spend the rest of my day at my computer. After all, I am a true geek, but I like my life that way. I have a social life at the internet, and I also have a good friend here in the "real" world,

*who I spend most of my days with. Well, I guess that's that, I hope it is.
A 15-year-old boy*

This student makes 'a cultural statement' by saying 'don't patronise me'. Finnish students' positions in school are culturally bound, too. This fifteen-year old student is not fond of patronising. He represents a normal attitude of a Finnish 15-year-old student. He wants to make his own choices but eating seems to be one of the few things he can decide himself. The student tells us about 'owning' as being very good at something, but he could also point out that this is something he and his friends have in common as a group and do together and where the school does not have a say. The position the student takes in his studying of English for his own interest in computers is active and he feels that he is the owner of his learning. He is a responsible student but he wonders if his life is too organised. On the other hand, although time symbolises strict control he seems to have a life of his own and friends, too. Finnish kids value their own life and friends. Although there are contradictions in the position of students in school, participation in the decision-making process is a matter of democracy which should be taught and practised at school. Or maybe student participation in the decision-making process is connected to their position in the school, after all. Anyway, students should not be left outside. In the following I will move to discuss the parents' role in the decision-making in the Finnish school.

Role of the parents

Parents are quite invisible in the Finnish secondary school. They can be part of the decision-making process only through the parental board where a handful of parents meet with the teacher representative. This was confirmed by the assistant head:

(From the interview with the assistant head on 18 March 2008)

E: How do you see the role of parents? Should parents be part of the decision-making at school?

V: Well, the parents' board can of course represent only a small part of the parents but it can be contacted.

I learned that there is a parental board which meets six to eight times a year. The earlier school board, which expired in the 80s, had a broader representation of the community, the head, representative teachers, parents and students. The assistant head had been a teacher representative in the school board that expired in the middle of the 80s. It is striking how little cooperation there is with parents in the Finnish secondary schools. Instead of a school board the school has a parental board which consists of two teachers and a couple of parents. The role of the parental board is supportive: they give out scholarships for students and discuss some educational matters with the teacher representative but they are not

part of decision-making in the school. Most parents are met by their teachers a couple of times during the three years their children spend on the secondary school level. Contacts are also nowadays often made via the internet through a web programme called Wilma where the parents are informed e.g. of the absences from classes and missing homework etc. There is usually more face-to-face communication only if the student has some problems with the studies or behaviour. Occasionally teachers and parents work together on raising funds for excursions or special events at school.

What is the reason for the outside position of parents in the Finnish school? I think it is a cultural thing. Culturally, school education has been left to teachers and heads that are seen as professionals. Interfering in the professional work of teaching is rare.

In Germany and Greece we met eager German and Greek parents who were willing to discuss school matters with the teachers and heads. At the meetings with parents from other cultures I started to realise that the absence of parents in the Finnish secondary school is an unfortunate cultural thing. Maybe the separateness of the former primary and secondary schools has let the parents believe that they are not needed any more. In conclusion, our Finnish school could take more initiatives and welcome parents to participate more in school matters. School and children would benefit from more cooperation with parents especially in sharing educational matters as they do in Germany and Greece.

Finnish school culture summed up as regards the aspect of shared leadership

In the following I use the SWOT analysis in order to collect the themes that I found in the data and that can be connected with shared leadership practice for the development of shared leadership in the Finnish school (Table 2.):

Table 2. A SWOT analysis for the development of shared leadership practice and participation in the decision-making in the Finnish school:

	CASE1.	
NOW	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pedagogical decisions can be made together - flexibility for individual needs - strong trust in the teachers' work - strong sense of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - many decisions are made before discussions - students and parents are outside - pedagogical leadership is not supported - lack of proper organisation for participation
FUTURE	OPTIONS	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - joint development of schools by professionals - increased participation of pupils and adults in the decision-making processes can add to wellbeing in the school - more individual planning for better commitment of teachers and students in the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - schools lose their autonomy - teachers lose control - teachers oppose to 'extra work' - teachers' work conditions are weakened by unwise political decisions

There are issues in participation in the decision-making process that need new evaluation in the Finnish school. Teachers find that many of the issues have been decided beforehand by the head and the group of leading teachers. In most cases, however, teachers do not want to have extra hours spent in discussions. Finding time seems to remain a real challenge for shared leadership practices in the future. Many of the responsibilities are carried out by the head and the assistant head who admit that more time would be needed for discussions and meaning-building. Teachers are worried about their wellbeing at work and would need more support for the disciplinary problems from the head. There is a growing fear that politicians will save money from the schools and make bigger student groups, which hardly benefits pedagogical leadership or learning in the school. There is a long list of micro-political contradictions in the school.

The most worrying fact is, however, that only 10 per cent of the students feel that they have a say in the school. Paradoxically, all students are expected to grow into active members of future society.

4.2 German School

The German School is a beautiful mermaid sitting on the roof of a carnival car carrying the globe with the world seas. There I am dressed up as a soldier and reaching for the sweets that are thrown at us spectators in the streets of Cologne. And we all shout: Kölle Alaaf! Kölle Alaaf!

Metaphor for the school culture and organisation

The carnival car is standing in front of the large school house. The beautiful blue mermaid figure is sitting on top of the globe prepared by the art teacher. The mermaid protects the seas in the globe. In this image there is also a mission statement that everybody can agree to: protecting our environment is an important issue. What does the metaphor tell about the German school and shared leadership? The idea of sustainability becomes obvious in several ways.

Why do I give the German school a metaphor like a mermaid? A mermaid is a creature from a fairy-tale. Although it has the tail of a whale (it is big) it is still beautiful. The school functions beautifully. Participation in the decision-making process is a natural way in the school culture. At our partner school students are also encouraged to express their opinions. This is different from our school. It is almost the opposite of our Finnish school where silence is considered necessary and indicates concentration on studying. In the German school classes noise is not avoided. The atmosphere is relaxed and humour is used a lot, especially among the older students. Teachers encourage the students to take part in discussions. The active approach to environmental issues of the school is expressed in the work of the whole school with the commitment of the staff, the students, the parents and the support from the local community.

Identity of the school

Multiculturalism is a normal phenomenon in our German partner school where a lot of students have foreign backgrounds e.g. Turkish, Iraqi, and Romani, just to name a few. The partner school is situated in Cologne, has some 1100 students and 75 teachers, a head and a deputy. The school is a 'Gymnasium' that excels with its good reputation in the area. Students are encouraged to take part in the extra-curricular activities like circus and other forms of arts. The atmosphere is very relaxed.

According to Wikipedia, immigrant children and youth, most of lower-class backgrounds, are the fastest-growing group of the German population, so their

prospects bear heavily on the wellbeing of the country. Although money does not play a major role in children's academic performance, it is a fact that the poor tend to be less educated. 30 per cent of the Germans aged 15 years and younger have at least one parent born abroad. In the big cities 60 per cent of the children aged 5 years and younger have at least one parent born abroad. However, immigrants can also bring a wealth of human capital to the country if nurtured well, which remains a challenge for the policy-makers. Schools face a multitude of dilemmas in helping the young immigrants to succeed in the integration into society (see more in the report of the OECD 2009).

Germany is divided into 16 'Bundesländer' or autonomous, federal states that can decide about their own education. Each 'Land' or state has its own organisation for the curriculum although there is also an overall curriculum accepted by the federal government common to the whole country. For example in Cologne (the home town of our German partner school) which is situated in the North-Rhineland area of Germany, optional kindergarten education is provided for all children between three and six years, after which school attendance is compulsory for 11 to 12 years. In the first nine years all students attend school from age 6 to 18 or 19. Most children, however, first attend 'Grundschule' from the age of six to nine.

Centralised school system

Although Comenius, who was born at the end of the 16th century and who lived in different countries in Europe, had already demanded a 'school for everyone' with grades 1 to 7 and ages 6 to 12 as the first democratic demands for civil rights and justice for all, his idea of school to everyone was reduced to the first four years of the school called 'Grundschule' (Hövel 2009, 88). Since 1919 Germany has had 'school for everyone' for the first four years and then a 'continued one' which is tripartite.

The school system became centralised with the German Empire in 1871. As well-educated young people were needed for professions, four different types of secondary school were established: a nine-year classical 'Gymnasium' (focussing on Latin and Greek or Hebrew, plus one modern language); a nine-year 'Realgymnasium' (focussing on Latin, modern languages, science and mathematics); a six-year 'Realschule' (without university entrance qualification, but with the option of becoming a trainee in one of the industrial, office or technical jobs); and a nine-year 'Oberrealschule' (focussing on modern languages, science and mathematics).

By the beginning of the 20th century, the four types of school had achieved equal rank and privilege, although they did not have equal prestige. This background can still be traced back in the German educational system of today. Even if Germany has both the parallel school system and the comprehensive school system, the comprehensive schools are still rare. Secondary education still

includes four types of school based on a pupil's ability as determined by teacher recommendations: the `Gymnasium` (upper secondary school) for the most gifted children heading for university studies; the `Realschule` has a broader range of subjects for intermediary students; the *Hauptschule* (the lowest school which prepares pupils for vocational education), and the `Gesamtschule` or comprehensive school, which combines the three approaches and which less than 10 per cent of all German pupils can attend. There are also `Förderschulen` (schools for the mentally or physically disadvantaged). One in 21 students attends a Förderschule. In order to enter higher education, students are required to take the `Abitur` or Baccalaureate examination; however, students possessing a diploma from a vocational school can also apply to enter. A special system of apprenticeship called `Duale Ausbildung` allows pupils in vocational training to learn in a company as well as in a state-run school.

Although Germany has had a history of a strong, centralised educational system, the recent PISA has demonstrated a weakness in certain subjects. The PISA shock became obvious in the test of 43 countries in the year 2000 as Germany ranked 21st in reading and 20th in both mathematics and the natural sciences (when the placement for Finland in 2003 was 2nd, 1st and 1st and in 2006 2nd, 1st and 2nd and where individual Finnish students' results did not vary a great deal and all schools had similar scores). Surprisingly, on the other hand, German immigrant-originated students got better results e.g. in mathematics than in the previous studies.

Some explanations for the scores could be found in the multiculturalism of the German society. Different cultural backgrounds and especially the lack of mother-tongue language education for a huge number of immigrant-originated students, and the division of the school system do not help to smooth out the cultural differences.

Even if the school system is quite inflexible, the teachers' attitudes are, however, admirable: they seem to lavish their own efforts and work in trying to help the students learn. I am convinced that if the PISA was about other than theoretical subjects, e.g. intercultural awareness and learning, Germany could be one of the model states in Europe.

Organisation of the school

The school is run by the head with the assistance of the deputy and leadership is shared further with the heads of the departments. Among the first things that the head showed me was an A4 with an organisation plan of the school. The chart was filled throughout with different boxes and tasks on several levels. The work was organised and structured according to this plan. The heads of the departments are responsible for their own subject areas and participate in the meetings to

discuss issues with the head. In this way *leadership is pooled at the top of the school* (compare p. 32).

The teachers work in their departments under the supervision of the department heads. The department heads are responsible for developing the work of the department towards the goals decided with the head and the school board. *Departments work like teams. The leadership is shared for effectiveness.* The teachers are active partners in the decision-making.

The head works closely with the school board. The school board also has student members. The local authorities and politicians work closely with the school. Discussions and negotiations between all partners of the community are the way of the school. The school clearly has a lot of intra- and inter-organisational structures and connections with the surrounding society.

In the German school leadership is distributed in several ways: *within the school organisation, between schools and other school authorities and even outside the school (e.g. students working in enterprises or volunteering for work in the elderly people's home).*

Sense of humour and other values in the school culture

Maybe the Germans are masters in humour. The German sense of humour is enjoyable. We found that some teachers used humour even in their classes. We had only arrived at the German school when a fire alarm was ringing out. Everybody went out relaxed, in no hurry:

To describe the atmosphere in the German school I use the following episode which was taped during our first visit to the school on 7 November 2006. Everybody had to go out because of the false fire alarm that somebody had pressed in the corridor. We were standing outside the German school building and waiting for the alarm to be stopped:

Eija: (They can trigger off a fire here, too, if they really feel like it...) Hello! What's your name?

My name is Walter. Hello! How are you (the students ask me)? The students seem to enjoy the gathering outside.

K: So, the teachers have come out with the students?

S: Yes, they have their class books and ...So, normally if it is an exercise there is normally a note in the teachers' room and it says that at eleven o'clock there is an exercise alarm but at this point there is no clue. So we don't know exactly if something has happened really or somebody has ...Maybe it's for you? I don't know.

Eija: Thank you!

S: I have no idea! I didn't do it, I didn't do it! (Laughing...). I didn't do it!

We experienced tolerance on our first visit to the German school. After this episode we already felt at home! We noticed that teachers are respected and

students behave in a friendly way towards foreigners. In contrast to the Finnish school, tolerance is one of the top values in the German school.

There is also a lot of tolerance towards students. This value we noticed everywhere when we visited the school. The same value was dealt with in the school musical. I found this out when watching the 'Linie 18' (the musical played and performed by students of the school, also the number of the tram that takes students to the school). The history of Germany and the 'trauma' of the Second World War are dealt with in society a lot and it was also one of the themes in the musical that the school had prepared. Tolerance got an explanation in the musical. Discipline was dealt with in the play as one reason for the 'trauma' when people blindly obeyed Hitler's Nazi commandos. Obedience and discipline have been replaced by tolerance. In this musical a finger was, as I understood, also pointing back to the education of young people and thus indirectly to us educators, teachers and heads. There was a message and that is why it was a fine musical.

School discipline seemed to be very different from what we are used to in our schools in Finland. We would not tolerate students chatting when the teacher is teaching. We would not tolerate students sitting with their coats on in the classes, eating, throwing rubbish on the floor etc. These differences gave us a lot to talk about. However, we wondered whether the liberal attitude had gone too far. On the other hand, we admired how humour was used in teaching by some teachers and the relaxed, although noisy atmosphere in the classes. This observation gave me some ideas of what can be behind an atmosphere where students feel accepted and relaxed. I thought that humour was a hidden value in the school culture. But I also needed to find out how the leadership was shared in the German school. In order to find out more about the leadership I interviewed the new German head.

Shared leadership and the organisation of the school

During the first visit to the school the head showed me the organisation plan and I learned that this large school with some 1,100 students and 75 staff members is divided into departments of subjects. During the second visit the former head had retired at the age of 65 and there was a new head in the school. In order to find out what kind of leadership this system is based on I interviewed the new head. Among other things I wanted to find out how leadership is shared in the German school. With the new head we talked a lot about leadership and how it is shared in this German school. The head told me that he has regular meetings with the heads of the departments and that he gets a lot of feedback for his ideas from the staff in the teachers' assembly:

I interviewed the new head of the German school while visiting the school on 7 February 2008 in Cologne. The interview was held at 10.00-11.10 o'clock in the head's office, which had a round table and chairs, not very much other furniture. We started to talk about how sad it was

when the father of one of the German teachers had died. He told how he can still recall the death of his father. I told him how my father died when I was only nine years old. The atmosphere was confidential and relaxed. I explained that my purpose in making the interview was to find out about shared leadership in that school and I also emphasised that my aim was not to evaluate him as a leader but to learn about leadership for my study. I had prepared a sheet with questions of shared leadership (Appendix 1.) but I had left out the continuum which I had tested with the other heads as one of the very first things for my research two years earlier. To start with, I asked him to tell me how he became a teacher and a head and this is part of the interview:

E: So, (pause). You have been ...the head in this school now for more than one year?

J: One year, yeah. I started on the first of February last year and so it's one year.

E: And before that, you were, you have worked in this school as well, as...

J: I was the deputy head for two and a half years.

E: And before that?

J: I was, I was responsible (eh) for the language department at my former school.

E: Quite.

J: So that was much shared leadership because we worked hard on leadership because we, I was responsible for the language department and had to coordinate the language profile of that school.

E: If you have a department in a German school, it means that you have several teachers working together? Is that so?

J: Yes, for sure. They work together with the head and the deputy head and are responsible for the school's profile and the school's programme.

Shared leadership was mentioned in the meaning of team work and working in a group when the head told me about working in the language department. He also told me that he had coordinated the language profile in his former school with the other teachers and that they had worked together with the head and the deputy head of that school:

E: The heads of these departments work in a group...to lead with the head?

J: It depends on the school. In my former school there was not much of shared leadership. It was only in emergency cases that the heads called us, but there were no regular meetings of the heads of departments.

E: Quite so. So that position does not necessarily lead to belonging to a decision-making group? Did I understand correctly?

J: Yeah, you were not always involved in the decision-making process and that was also for the reason that he was a very good head, very, very professional, a very good manager but... his idea was that he was the best. And that's why it was difficult for him to delegate leadership to others

As the new German head described the situation of many leaders who are not used to sharing their power I remembered several examples from my own previous schools. He told that it depends on the school and the culture if the heads

of departments are invited to the head's decision-making group. The experience of working together is essential in sharing the work. In Germany administrative experience is also a prerequisite for a head's post. The head had started as a deputy head in this school:

E: And you arrived here, did you become a deputy right away?

J: Yes, but yes, I applied for this post of a deputy head.

E: And before that, did you have to do some kind of, how do you say, an administrator programme or? A licence or what do you have in Germany?

J. Well, yes. The prerequisite for becoming a deputy head is having some administrative experience.

E: Right.

J: And I had been working with the local or the regional government and the administrative board and I was working in the English department...we were a group of eight headed by, well, the person responsible for everything in the regional government concerning English language.

E: Quite...

J: And I had been working there for eight years before I applied for the post here and that was considered to be administrative work.

Becoming a head

The head described the situation of becoming a head. There is training for leadership in Germany nowadays that takes two years, but the head had only had a couple of months of training.

E: Do heads have an education of any kind from a university or a teacher education department or anything for the pedagogical leadership?

J: At the time I started there wasn't any but there was a programme for you in your first years and you could apply for that. Unfortunately, I never got there. Well, the one I was only able to participate in for a couple of months. I didn't get the whole programme...but they've abolished that now. What they do now, in professionalising future leaders for schools, you can't even apply for because it takes two years. You must have done quite a lot of modules and you get a certificate.

I learned first out of the interview what kind of experience the head had gained before becoming a head. He had worked for more than twenty years as a teacher and a head for the department of English, had worked in the regional government for English, had applied for the post as a deputy head in this school at the age of 51 and had been a head now for one year and is 55. He had always worked hard and had been encouraged by his professors to do his dissertation. He told me that he had to turn 51 to know that he wanted to become a head, but it had not been his aim to build a career. In his interview the word 'responsibility' appeared several times. In the following the German head tells about how he

became a teacher and a head. The missing pieces to the narrative are found from the early age when he found out that he had wanted to become a teacher:

J: It sounds a bit childish but it was because when I was a small boy, I don't even remember if I went to school or it was the first year at school, at primary school when people asked me what you want to become, I said "a teacher".

E: Oh.

J: Of course. And at the very moment I started, even in my first classes, I enjoyed them so much, that it was obvious for me, well you'll go on doing that. And, ah, when I did my doctoral dissertation I had already been working for years and years and years as a teacher

E: How many years were you a teacher before becoming a deputy for example, roughly?

J: Twenty something.

E: Quite.

J: Well, I really enjoyed it. And it was quite by chance that I did my doctoral dissertation while holding a job. And making a career as a head was never in my vision.

E: Oh.

J: So, there was only one challenge left, being a head or a deputy head. That's why I decided to do that, but it had never been in my vision before. It was a kind of maturing. I had to become fifty to find out.

The head explained that becoming a head was a natural process of maturing and continuation to what he had worked with before and that he had always enjoyed working as a teacher: He had applied for the post as a deputy head in this school at the age of 51 and had become a head at the age of 54. In conclusion a head in Germany needs to be an experienced teacher and some have administrative experience, too. Experience as a teacher gives the head credibility as a school head in front of his teachers:

E: Why do you think it is necessary to have this experience before becoming a head?

J: It's a question of credibility, because...let me explain in detail...

E: Please do.

J: I worked at a teacher training college until 1990, teaching young history teachers.

E: History teachers, okay?

J: Yeah. And I came to know colleagues of mine who didn't give any lessons anymore and that made all the difference. At the very moment you have teaching expertise, experience, you know what is feasible and what is not feasible, with which message you can gain success and with which approach you can reach less success. But if you don't teach yourself or have never taught before, you can ask for many, many things from your staff without knowing what is feasible.

E: Yes. Right.

J: It is a bit like the Ministry of Education that has guidelines without asking teachers what is really possible.

E: I agree with you.

J: And so it's a question of credibility. You have no credibility in front of your staff if you don't teach yourself or have never taught before. Then you are asking for the moon without knowing that you are asking for the moon.

In the interview I especially enjoyed the German head's analysis of credibility. He is an experienced teacher and he knows what works at school and why. Therefore he will not ask his staff for the moon without knowing that he is asking for the moon. Credibility is based on knowing in practice. Experience as a head of the language department has also taught him what is feasible in the community. The reference to the Ministry writing guidelines without asking the teachers what is feasible is a description of the credibility of the political decisions in the school practice.

Building an identity as a head

In the interview I learned that building a professional identity and gaining the subjectivity position as a head seems to require of the head skills as a teacher along with an acknowledged expert position in the community. The empowerment of the identity and a personal voice are possible after one has acquired competencies and skills that have been learned in the school work culture.

The head also describes the two German schools (the present and the former) that are different in sharing leadership. In his opinion they are different because of the heads: in his previous school he told me that he was not always part of the decision-making process. The personal traits of heads affect their sharing of leadership. In his former school sharing leadership was not a way of the head whereas in his present school, the head before him had implemented a different mode of work. He finds that he has inherited this predecessor's principles of sharing leadership in this school:

E: Let's go back to this idea of shared leadership. How do you share leadership? What is your way of seeing your work? How do you share and what can you share?

J: Well, I inherited J's principles which I really appreciate.

E: Which are?

J: Which are that we involve the heads of the different departments and there are quite a few and we've got regular meetings and...

E: And 'regular' means?

J: Regular meetings and we discuss the topics for example for the next teachers' assembly. And so you get quite a lot of feedback as to the atmosphere from the staff.

E: And you said that you have inherited some of J's ideas. The ideas of sharing as well?

J: Yeah. He did share quite a lot of his leadership. Yeah.

Shared leadership is a school-culture-specific thing: the previous head had built a culture for sharing leadership. This proves, in my opinion, at least two things about the culture: the head and the staff have found a balance in sharing leadership (in the age near retirement the head had learned how to find a balance with the community) or the community had learned about the head's way and they know each other well. This also gives me an idea of sustainability and sustainable leadership in the school culture.

Discussing things is a typical thing in Germany. I was told that the teachers' assembly in the German school is usually a place of vivid discussions. The head does a lot of preparation for the assemblies and discusses his ideas in advance with the heads of departments. There are also discussions in the departments of subjects that have their heads. And there are a lot of discussions with active parents in the board meetings. The following serves as an example of the school culture where partners are included in the discussions:

J: Yeah, like that: the parents' part and the parents' and teachers' interest. They concerned our lunch break which we don't have. The staff does not want and...

E: The parents do?

J: The parents do, the parents definitely do.

E: Would they then want their kids to go somewhere to eat or longer...?

J: No, the parents ask for at least a forty-five-minute break.

E: Which will make the day longer?

J: For sure.

E: And?

J: And the teachers do not agree. The teachers' point of view is if the government reduces the school time from nine to eight years...

E: Yes.

J: They are responsible for running cafeterias...

E: Okay.

J: So that surveillance staff, so once again, the teachers are opposed to taking the extra work and that's why they refuse. Well, there is no way out of that level, because the government won't invest more money. The town council now invests money. They are really building a cafeteria, a kitchen and the room where the kids will be able to eat...

J: Well, because the town is responsible for the financing of the building. It's the government of the North-Rhineland area that pays for the staff and all the rest is paid for by the town council.

E: The town council, yes. Well, what is your opinion about it? If you are balancing all sorts of opinions, do you have your own opinion?

J: My opinion is: we need a break!

The macro-politics and contradictions with what is needed from the government and the town council to support the school and build a lunch cafeteria, and the micro-politics of the school collide with each other. The head needs to compromise between all the stakeholders. The head told how he after

discussions with the staff, parents and students had suggested that they needed a longer lunch break but it was not accepted. The teachers opposed because of the extra work they would have in the surveillance and the students and the parents did not want to have a longer day. A lot of opposing opinions made the head to give up in the end and to leave the initiative to someone else in the future. I guess that there was a clear turning point in this experience:

E: Yes. So you had a solution, but...

J: and I had the majority for that at the teachers' meeting, but then the town council had promised us to build a kitchen and this cafeteria and ...

E: Yeah.

J: On the summer vacation and at the beginning of this school year we could have started.

E: Yes.

J: and a week or two weeks after my staff's majority decision, the town council told us they won't invest the money.

E: It was a political solution?

J: Yeah, after that we had another meeting where the decisive half of the staff representatives, the parents' representatives and students' representatives, attendants to the so-called school council voted and they are decisive in the decision-making body. Well, on the basis of what we've learned from the town council, my staff representatives voted against it.

E: And the parents and?

J: The parents voted in favour.

E: And the students of course?

J: And the students against as well.

E: Really?

J: Yes, because we have senior representatives and they don't want to have a longer day.

E: A longer day. So,

J: And then I decided; you won't do anything anymore. I will wait for what some of the partners do.

E. Yes.

J: And if the parents take the initiative let them do so.

I understood that political decisions on the local level also play an important role in school leadership in the German school. Even if the solution of the discussion was a disappointment, the head seems to have learned something very valuable when he decided to leave the initiative to others in the future. To me this shows some real understanding of shared leadership in action when all partners are understood to be equal in the decision-making process. Self-leadership is a prime ingredient in the facilitation of shared leadership and here I got the impression that the head had learned this. The same idea has to be learned by team members who must also know that before they can effectively lead themselves and the other team members they need to know how to lead themselves (Houghton, J. & Neck, C. & Manz, C. 2003, 132).

Role of the head

Learning to differentiate between the different voices in a staff is part of growing as a professional and a head. Here I could really identify myself with the feelings of the German head as I could still remember some moments of despair in the beginning as a novice head, which I can now understand are necessary for building a professional identity as a head. Surviving is part of professional sustainability.

J: Now, sometimes it is very difficult because my self-image does not necessarily correspond to the image they give me as feedback but with the past half a year I have learned to differentiate them. There are some people who often voice their attitude, their opinion and are very articulate. And then you have got the silent majority. And I have learned to differentiate between these two voices. Because those who are very articulate are not necessarily the representatives for the atmosphere in my staff.

E: True!

J: And...

E: That's also true in my school!

J: I have learned to listen to those differences. And it is very difficult to find out the silent majority's opinion. Sometimes you get that in informal talks.

The burden of being responsible lies heavy on the head's shoulders after the first year as a head. The feeling of responsibility can be contrasted with the answer that his predecessor, the former head, gave at the final meeting in Athens to the question of what is the biggest change after he got retired:

(The former head's comment in my diary on 26 March 2008):

J: It is so nice to be responsible for myself only!

The head has learned to listen to his people. Missing school food also gets a lot of attention from the head. After one year the new head had also learned to reach a balance between his work and personal life:

E: How do you find the work now? How do you find it after one year?

J: That's very, very hard work (pause).

E: Did you know to expect it?

J: I didn't expect so much and as a deputy I had already been working much and I had worked very much in the evenings, the afternoons, until late in the evenings, in my other school. But the responsibility is a different one and that's a real burden on your shoulders. It's this feeling of being responsible for everything even if you are not.

E: Quite.

J: And writing the reports for some teachers who apply for promotion or so and that means quite a lot of work.

E: Yes, definitely.

J: The first period was a difficult period because at the same time I had no free weekends.

My relaxation at weekends was shopping to have some food. (Laughing)

E: (Laughing as well).

J: Well, but I have given that up now. I found time to relax.

E: You have to find a way.

With the amount of work that heads have, they have to learn what to let go.
That is part of building a professional identity as a head.

The European perspective as part of sustainability in school leadership

It is also interesting to learn more about the European perspective, which in the German school means that, to get a European label, a school needs to have a general curriculum that is EU-oriented, to include European topics in all subjects and to teach at least one foreign language beyond the officially required number:

J: One of J's great projects was giving the school a European perspective.

E: What does it mean in practice then?

J: Well,

E: Would it be some kind of system that you develop in this direction or what?

J: It's a certificate you get from the government but you'll have to fulfil a couple of requirements. Some of them are already fulfilled and that's what J. always said but he knew that we must fulfil all of them, so it is not true. The general curriculum must be EU-oriented; you must have European topics in all kinds of subjects. You must have partnerships with different countries. And you must teach at least one language beyond the officially required number of languages.

I understood that the new head continues to work with the European perspective which he inherited from the previous head. This kind of shared leadership creates sustainability in the community. Although there is a culture of vivid discussions, it can be, however, quite hard for the head to build a consensus in the community.

One of my conclusions in the interview with the German head is that feelings and experiences of micro-political contradictions were surprisingly similar although it was a different culture. Despite all the differences in cultural backgrounds I found common perspectives in our work as heads of schools. I noticed there are several levels of sharing and understanding leadership: the personal level, the school community level and the universal level. When using a foreign language, which in this case was English, some of the nuances may be interpreted in a different way due to cultural differences; but in a global perspective some features can be universal. Global phenomena also create

intercultural learning in the professional sense. Cultural differences can act like spices when we are trying to understand global phenomena.

Building a professional identity through the values of the work organisation is typical of the postmodern times. Reflecting on and learning from informal work skills is also typical of this time where the subjectivity position is approved of by the community. The school head's subjectivity position can be gained through credibility. The German head is an experienced teacher, but learning how to lead the community must also be learned. The interview also revealed that an organisational culture and the culture of the school are learned through a process. Heads are cultural learners in leadership and there are different phases in the process. The moment of surprise in the interview was how easy it is to share the feelings in the moments of disappointment as leaders. Accepting negative feelings is part of learning how to become professional. Despite the cultural differences a mutual understanding of the professional identity can be built.

The head's role as a follower was apparent, which to me implied that there was sustainability in leadership in the German school. The European perspective served as a concrete example that the new head had already continued to work with the teachers in the school. This could also be understood as professional sustainability in developing the school. As a conclusion from the interview I found that leadership is shared in the community on the following levels:

- *on an individual level: heads, individual teachers*
- *on a group level: teachers, students, parents, local administrators, local authorities, one's own culture and country*
- *on a cultural, global level: between people from other cultures*
- *shared leadership is both organisational and mental practice*

With this interview I also grew aware of the fact that a research interview is not a genuine dialogue. The interview entails an asymmetrical power relation. As Kvale (2007, 14-15) points out: "There is a power asymmetry in qualitative research interviews where the researcher initiates and defines the interview situation, determines the topic, poses questions, decides what answers to follow up and also terminates the conversation". The interview is not an open everyday conversation between equal partners on leadership and identity. However, later when I was listening to this interview at home, I gathered many interesting points that I could link with literature. The genuine dialogue with the data started at that point.

The process of asking questions led me to ask more questions about leadership. I started to reflect on what is shared and how and, on the other hand, what is not shared and why. Somehow I looked back to Hofstede's continuums (Appendix1), too, and grew aware of the fact how easily conclusions could lead to cultural stereotypes. With shared leadership e.g. the binary oppositions of masculinity to femininity, power to distance and individualism to collectivism can only give some background information on different cultures in general.

School cultures are more complex than that. On the other hand, according to Berry (2006, 105) problematising is done in order to avoid reducing the complexity of the world for the sake of control, management, objectivity, classification. Bricoleurs are continuously problematising binary oppositions. And I am a bricoleur, after all.

In the following I will tell something about the German teachers that I met in the joint work project. By this I also try to find a clue to how they see their role in making decisions.

Role of the teachers

The German teachers were strong pedagogical leaders. The German teachers in the Comenius group participated actively in the creating of the joint programme. They shared the leadership tasks, set up a website for the project and persuaded me to have students in the programme even if it was not planned beforehand. They did not accept my apologies for sticking to the original plan where travelling was meant for staff only. And I am glad they persuaded me to change my opinion, which also led me to convince my teachers of the necessity of including students in the programme.

Perhaps this also shows how new ideas are hard to cultivate in the Finnish school and that out-of-curricula programmes have little chance to survive in the Finnish school culture. There were great suspicions towards the student exchange between Germany and Finland. However, as the student exchange needed a lot of preparatory work to come true, the initiative came from a German teacher who was energetic and optimistic in arranging the exchange. She also arranged the project work done with the Finnish and German students in the Finnish school. In the 50th anniversary booklet of the German school this German teacher wrote about Amos Comenius' ideas: *Alle Menschen sollen alle Dinge der Welt erlernen dürfen...* This German teacher wanted to put this idea into practice and convinced us of the idea of the exchange by telling that the Comenius project could only be approved of if not only the teachers but also students travelled. This view made sense in the German school where the colleagues also needed to substitute the absent teachers without extra pay. However, when taking the initiative, the German teacher also shows that by adopting an active role teachers can introduce a culture where changes can be discussed, too. As the teachers started to discuss their own work (Appendix 6.) using their diaries the professional identity was also taken up by one of the German teachers. Teachers' group discussions revealed that identification with what you are doing as a teacher is connected to commitment to the school: if teachers can identify themselves with the work at the school, it creates commitment and willingness to stay. Sustainability is seen as a relevant part of growth and developing the professional identity.

The students' identification with their school was also taken up by an experienced German teacher who presented us a speech that her student had held

in the German school. Her comments on values and identification led us to take a closer look at the speech written and held by a German student. I found this speech worth a deeper analysis, too.

Role of the students and their identification with the school

Identification with the school was taken up by a student who gave a speech on the 50th anniversary of his school. In his speech (Appendix 4.) he deals with the significance of education and the school community. The 18-year-old student sees the significance of education in the following way:

Education should not only be teaching subjects but should help us students to learn how to apply them. Consequently one should learn how to transform knowledge into practice.

Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher, was absolutely right when he said, “The great aim of education is not knowledge but action”. How to teach this ability has often been discussed among scientists. Let’s quote Goethe: “For we can’t shape children as we want to. As God gave them to us, we should take and love them, teach them as well as possible but that teachers should let them be the way they are”.

The student comes to the same conclusion as H. Spencer, i.e. that the great aim of education is not knowledge but action and school should teach students to learn how to transform this knowledge into action. Quoting Goethe, he also notes that children should be loved and taught as well as possible, but let them be as they are.

How can this be applied to school? As a head I see it as making the best for every student at school. Everybody is an individual and should be respected as such. I also think he hits the point when he says that school education teaches for school (e.g. teaching and learning for tests). Transforming knowledge into practice happens mostly after school. The student understands, however, that education can be defined from several points of views:

You see, education is not that easy to define. The notorious PISA study is the best example. Not only do politicians argue about reforming school and sponsoring students, even the Herder does. For example teacher trainees as well as young and committed teachers use a variety of new methods which leave us students sometimes helpless as to what they are really good for. Otherwise we are not content either if a teacher does nothing else but talks. I admit teaching is as hard as learning.

Although the student admits that teaching is as hard as learning he sees the importance of school education for society:

Society needs people who have enough knowledge to commit themselves. Not only those, knowing very little, who only spread prejudices when uttering their opinion.

He links commitment and identification with his school:

Being proud of the Herder, the feelings of identification and familiarity play a decisive role. If we are able to implement these feelings into what we will do with our education when school is over then school will really have been successful. So, I do hope that the Herder School will continue to educate students in such a positive way- and: I ´m sure it will!

The feeling of identification with the school plays a decisive role: the school is successful when the students are able to know what to do with their school education later in life. These ideas and the positive feelings that school has given as a community for commitment and identification are the forces that will carry on in the future: education is needed for life.

Students and their parents are also seen as active participants in the community and the decision-making process. Next I will write about German parents and their roles in the decision-making in the German school.

Role of the parents and the community

Parents are active partners in the decision-making in the German school. Sharing leadership with all partners does not, however, necessarily make life easier. In the interview, the head mentions that the parents are very important partners in the decision-making process. He describes how he needs to balance between opinions from parents, teachers and students, and of course the town council who is responsible for the finances:

J: We involve parents very much in decision-making.

E: Quite.

J: And we have very regular meetings each month.

E: Each month?

J: Each month. I have a meeting with four representatives.

E: And what do you discuss: the ideas that you have discussed with the teachers or their ideas or both?

J: Both ways. There are lot of initiative from parents, and that is what makes my life even more difficult.

E. You have to balance.

The parents' role seems to be quite important in the German school. Parents are active and very important partners in the decision-making process, which was apparent in the interview of the head. German parents were also eager to meet with us, the multicultural Comenius group, when we visited the school. They

took part in the conversations, attended evening ceremonies, wanted to build contacts with the Finnish parents, etc.

In the tree of values (Appendix 5.) the German parents gave an idea of what parents think is important in the education of their children. German parents value the growth of identity, character, maturity and perspectives as the highest aims of education. This tree showed to me that those parents are aware of what is important in the education of their children. But with their representation of the values the parents also expressed their willingness to participate in the discussion of the values in the school.

The significance of a community was also apparent in the interview with the German head. Participation in decision-making is expected by all the partners: decisions are discussed by teachers, students, parents and local administrative representatives. Participation and discussing are culturally acceptable. The school has a lot of connections with enterprises and arranges student exchanges abroad for work practice in enterprises and organisations. The school is also an active partner in the community, e.g. students volunteer for work at an elders' home.

German school culture summed up as regards the aspect of shared leadership

I found out that the German school is a place of vivid discussions. Although it is a large school there is time for discussions and participation of different interest groups is expected. It seems the opposite of the Finnish school especially as regards the parents' role. On the other hand, a culture of democracy is burdensome for the head who needs to balance between all the demands from the stakeholders.

However, it was most striking how people with different cultural backgrounds were involved in and integrated into discussions in the German school. Teachers were proud of having all kinds of pupils in the community and they work hard for the inclusion of foreign-originated pupils and their parents in the community. A couple of these pupils were also chosen to the Comenius project group. I was explained that this participation will add to their self-esteem. Shared leadership can, in other words, be understood as paying attention to all people in the community (Table 3.)

Table 3. A SWOT analysis for the development of shared leadership practice and participation in the decision-making in the German school:

	CASE2.	
NOW	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - culture of vivid discussions - parents are active partners - a strong culture of team work - a strong culture of participation - identification with the school - education for life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consensus can be difficult to reach - too much tolerance - there is no support system for the head - a bureaucratic school system characterised by control
FUTURE	OPTIONS	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continued discussions on the 'trauma' is a driving force - new cooperation due to the European perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - political decision-making process - teachers oppose all to 'extra work'

The threats for shared leadership resemble the issues in the other schools: political decision-makers are not trusted and teachers oppose to all new programmes because they often cause extra work.

In the following I will move on to look at the results in the Estonian school and I will start with a metaphor.

4.3 Estonian School

The Estonian school is a traditional wooden sailing boat with everybody onboard. And there I am enjoying the relaxed atmosphere and the nature around when we all are sailing along the Vörts-Järv.

Metaphor for the school culture and organisation

I chose the metaphor for the Estonian school after I saw how they all work together. I also remember how we sailed in this old-fashioned traditional wooden sailing boat all together. The crew were dressed in sailor costumes and they served us smoked fish and drinks and the wind was blowing. It was a fine day. But the metaphor represents sustainability, too. The sailing boat needs to be trusted and the crew need to know how to sail. The tasks are carried out together. The fine wooden boat and the cotton sails always work well when you know how to build a boat, sew the sails and sail the boat. Traditions in handicraft are strong in Estonia. Wildlife and nature are part of education.

Identity of the school

The school has a strong identity with its long history and respect of traditions. The crew knew how to sail the boat. My impression of the Estonian school and its identity is very similar to the one of a student:

Lots of happy faces and contented students. Attentive teachers and a cosy house. This is the way I see my school. Maybe I am optimistic and naive, but all my memories of the school are joyful. (Triinu, <http://www.rannu.tartu.ee/index.php?menyy=12&sub=111>)

The Estonian school is located in the countryside, surrounded by nature and there is also a garden where they grow some vegetables. The scene is peaceful. Countryside children with rosy cheeks look healthy. They greet strangers looking into the eyes in a friendly way as they leave their clothes in the ward space downstairs that is locked during the day as in the Russian tradition.

In this school it is easy to believe that, at its best, school can combine the interests of an individual and the community in meaning building. Our Estonian partner school is situated 30 km from the old university town of Tartu, in Rannu which is a small county with some 2000 inhabitants in the countryside. A centre of a small community is ideal for a school community; a place where everybody knows everybody. The size of the secondary school is as ideal with its 280 students and about 20 people in the staff.

Organisation of the school

The school is led by the head who has three deputies sharing the work with her: one who is taking care of the budget, one who is responsible for the pedagogics and one for the ICT in the school. In a small school with the 20 staff members the work seems well organised. The organisation of the school supports the teaching and learning. The head says that her door is open for teachers to enter. During the breaks they meet in the teachers' room to discuss things together.

The head also works closely with the board and the local school authorities. She goes regularly to meet her boss and discuss the budget or her ideas of developing the school plan. The parents support the school and participate in the preparations for school events. In the Estonian school *leadership is clearly distributed between all partners over time. Traditions are valued and the work of the school is respected by the partners. The school excels with a good reputation.*

Academism as a leading value in the school culture

The following values were emphasised in the Estonian school:

ACADEMISM

- *keeping traditions alive*
- *creating an academic atmosphere*
- *using the correct language*
- *wearing proper clothes for school*
- *paying attention to one's personal appearance and hygiene*

PURPOSEFULNESS

- *the quality of having a definite purpose (aim)*

CONTINUITY

- *the term has been taken from the mathematical sense of something being smooth and without breaks*
- *all new items of information are based on preceding ones*

COOPERATION

- *promoting partnership for everybody*
- *creating a friendly, collaborative atmosphere for work*
- *following the unified requirements*

SUCCESS AMBITION

- *recognition and support*
- *self-improvement*

- orientation to success

INNOVATION

- stimulating the introduction of new ideas, but still maintaining the traditional values, a critical attitude to too radical novelties

TOLERANCE

- mutual trust and respect, ethics, fair treatment of colleagues and students.
- broadmindedness

SAFETY

- providing a pleasant, beautiful and safe environment

Through the values like academism, school work is linked to traditional values in education. Education is still seen as a means of advancing in life and academism and studying are seen as a way to a better life. Innovation is not forgotten either, but with a critical attitude and by maintaining the traditional values. I understand these values as working towards sustainability. I learned that combining different values in education is possible in the Estonian school where there is still a garden for growing vegetables and plants behind the school.

The values of the school resemble the values of the Finnish school. The values of young people in Estonia also resemble the values of young people in Finland. I picked out the following from an Estonian power point presentation at our school in February 2007:

- home and family, friends, success and career, honesty, self-development, relatives, personal freedom, peace, home place, breakthrough ability, nature, conscientiousness (kohusetunne), optimism, helpfulness, profession and job, love for people, courage

For students, home, family and friends are the most important things. Success and career could be connected to the educational values (academism). Honesty is also mentioned as a value. The list of the values of young people also includes respect of nature and home place and love for people. All these values could be recognised while visiting the school in Rannu.

The school culture, too, gave me an impression of academism. The lessons were teacher-centred, and the students seemed to follow the instruction. The atmosphere was hard-working, but not strained. Teaching and learning resembled our Finnish school in many ways. But I also wanted to find out how shared leadership was understood in the Estonian school.

Shared leadership and the culture of the school

In the initial stage of my research project I used the five cultural dimensions presented by Hofstede (1991) in the questionnaire of shared leadership where the

heads were asked to place themselves on these continuums (Appendix 1). By the use of these dimensions I tried to gain an understanding of the organisational culture in each case school. I understood soon that I needed to learn more of the situation of the individual head and the school culture by other means: e.g. interviews, videos, diaries etc. Another reason for finding other ways was the fact that only the Estonian head wanted to try to place herself in the continuums.

When I met the Estonian head in an EU meeting in Wales in 2004, I noticed that she had a wonderful sense of humour. We were like relatives standing next to each other at a fair giving each other 'juicy' comments. Later, when we had started the Comenius project I learned to know her even better. She is a woman in her forties, a sporty, tall and blond woman who enjoys exercising, and a former P.E. teacher who also likes to ski in winter. In the following extract she tells how she became a head:

I first wanted to become a kindergarten teacher and studied for 2 years in the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute. Then one day I realised that it is not the right job for me. Then I started studying in the Physical Education Faculty and finished this in 1990. I have the diploma of a physical education teacher. My mother was a physical education teacher in Tartu University. I think she influenced me a lot. I worked for 3 years in a kindergarten and then for 2 years at school as a physical education teacher. Then I stayed at home for 8 years (farm work), raising my 2 daughters. When my elder daughter was 7 years old I had to choose a school for her. Then I realised that there is a small school-kindergarten (4 classes and 1 kindergarten group, 75 children, 10 workers) 3 km from our home. I worked there for 1 year and after that in 1995, I applied for the head's job there. Why? I scrutinised the work done by the head in that small school and did not understand why she didn't do this and that. I felt that I can do better work there and that's why decided to apply. I did not know anything about school management. I asked for help from my classmate's father who was an experienced school head then. We made a development plan for that small school and that's why I got the job. I worked there for 7 years. My team did good work but I wanted to try my competence in a bigger school and then I applied for the post at the Rannu secondary school, where my 5th year is ending in August 2008. 2 members from my team are with me in Rannu.

Becoming a head

The head of the Estonian school told me that she was originally a physical education teacher and had now been a head for 11 years. Her path to becoming a head resembled mine in what she told me how she became a head and that how she thought that she would do a better job than the person who previously worked as a head. We shared a similar experience: I also wanted to become a head since I knew I would do a good job as a head. Like this head, I also had an experienced school head as a mentor when I started as a head.

This female head gave me the impression of being a strong-willed and brave person who had learned to compromise. However, visiting her school in Rannu

in 2007 and watching her working with her staff and the students gave me an impression that the role as a head still contains an expectancy of masculinity at school. Then this could be seen as a cultural thing rather than a personal way of performing in the work as a head. The answers could be interpreted to describe the school culture rather than this person that I have learned to know as a dynamic and brave woman. The answers to my questions of shared leadership reveal quite feminine ways to define leadership:

How do you share your leadership? (From K's email of 24 March 2008)

- *I try to create an attentive and supporting environment at school.*
- *It is important to be informed, explore beliefs, hopes and feelings with each other.*
- *No top-down approach.*
- *Teachers are free in their actions and decisions and I am in my office when they need me. My door is open all the time for everybody when I am at school.*
- *I trust my workers, I do not control all the time.*

Creating an attentive and supporting environment at school was considered worthwhile. Trust in the teachers is also seen essential in sharing leadership.

Shared leadership and the organisation of the school

Shared leadership can have the meaning of equal partnership. The shared responsibility for leadership is manifested in sharing the common goals.

How would you understand or define shared leadership?

- *It is the professional work of everybody in the school.*
- *For me it is a question of trust and responsibility.*
- *It is equal partnership.*
- *Teachers –group members- take on the responsibility for leadership. We have a shared goal-to provide high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students and high-quality results in tests and exams.*
- *Everyone's skills and knowledge are important and valuable.*

Equality is a prerequisite in shared leadership with the common goal of providing high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students. *There is a link to the value of academism in the teachers' work and school leadership. Teachers are trusted to take on the responsibility of leadership.* There is a change from a structure where one leader leads, which was popular in the past; the head noted this seeing the participation of other educators now necessary. I asked her if there is a lot of sharing in her school and she answered the following:

- *I think yes. My deputies (3) make decisions in their fields.*
- *If we need to decide something, we (me and my deputies) put a sign on the teachers' room board, we discuss things and make decisions all together.*
- *It is important that everyone is included, shares, understands and contributes to what's going on. Then they want to take responsibility.*

The work of the head is shared with three deputies. I am told that they discuss matters and make plans together, but otherwise the head does not interfere in their work. It seemed to be a small school where discussions were going on during breaks. Collaborative work is important for this school head. The structure implying that one leader leads, makes the key decisions, motivates and inspires has been popular in the educational administration in the past. She sees that now the participation of other educators is necessary. She tells me in the interview that they usually discuss things and vote democratically. Sometimes decisions are made in small groups (subject teachers: economic problems, social problems with pupils; class teachers hold discussions with their class and parents). She thinks that heads must be champions in communication. The head sees communication as the most effective means in decision-making. Shared leadership seems to be a natural way of the head. This was clear when I observed her working with her staff in the school, too. She also says that she trusts her staff:

- *They are free to decide how to teach, they are the leaders of their classes.*
- *Teachers make decisions themselves in their classrooms.*
- *They can choose supplementary courses for themselves.*
- *They can buy up to 500 crowns worth of equipment for instruction that they need, (without asking me).*
- *We discuss and make common decisions together, everyone can express their opinion. Collaborative work is important. Sometimes we do group work. (SWOT etc.)*

The Estonian head thought that the school would change from a secondary school to a primary school. Her expectations of the school were a good microclimate and good state exam results. One of her constant worries was how all necessary teachers would be available. This is the idea of sustainability in the school. Two years later I learned that the head had moved to another school when the school was changed to a primary school.

What kind of part did the teachers have in the decision-making process in the Estonian school?

Role of the teachers

I was told that the teachers' board was convened 4-5 times during the school year. They make the most important decisions about teaching and learning, examinations etc. The values of the teachers included a sense of humour and positive attitudes. There was also a relaxed atmosphere in the teachers' room. Vivid discussions were going on during the breaks. The same atmosphere could be seen in the classes.

For us Finns it was easy to make contacts with the Estonian teachers. In the Comenius meetings the Estonian teachers seldom spoke, but when they did, they had something important to say. There they resemble us Finns: we do not speak for nothing. In the Comenius meetings these teachers were mostly listening and

talked later with the other Estonians. This does not mean that the teachers were without ideas: on the contrary. They were interested in finding out how their colleagues in other countries saw their teaching. Maybe the Estonian teachers were shy to speak English.

When the Estonian teachers had difficulties in speaking English in the joint project work it was the head who often translated what was said to them. Their relationship to their head was like that: they were used to sharing. In the Estonian school teachers worked and decided about things together. Maybe it was due to the size of the school and the culture of the school that shared leadership seemed to work in practice. The teachers seemed to be content.

Regardless of time and regime, good education has always been considered the reason for the vitality and survival in Estonia. Education has been laid on the shoulders of teachers. According to an Estonian saying a teacher is 'the salt of the earth'. Teachers have been trained in Estonia for more than 350 years (Trasberg 2002, 29). The principle of comprehensive school was established in the national educational school system as early as 1920, with the sovereignty, as free six-year primary school was started and students were taught in Estonian. Secondary school lasted for five years and was divided into two parts since 1934: 'pre-gymnasium' and 'gymnasium'. A lot of attention was paid to minority education: the legislation granted all the ethnic minorities (Russians, Germans, Swedes, Latvians, Finns and Jews) the right to study in schools providing their own mother-tongue instruction. With the Second World War, however, Estonia lost during the Soviet occupation 1/5 of its population including the traditional minorities of Germans, Swedes and non-communist Russians.

Education system and the occupation

During the occupation Estonia received a massive amount of immigrants from the Soviet Union (the amount grew from 2.3 per cent to 38.5 per cent) which of course affected the whole of society and its education. At that time there were two parallel school systems in Estonia: the Estonian and the Russian school. The Estonian school followed only the general directives on the ideology of education from Moscow, but most of the decisions were made on the local level which was the Ministry of Education of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Estonia. Teacher training which was paid a lot of attention to in the Soviet times, was very subject- and teacher-centred. When the school system was reorganised in a socialist spirit, the Russian language was added to the curriculum and even basic military training was given in the secondary schools. Religious instruction was forbidden (Trasberg 2002, 35).

The Russian school operated on the basis of the Russian curricula of the Soviet Union and used the textbooks and workbooks of the USSR. The teachers were also trained in Russia. It was a fact that Russian-speaking students were not taught the Estonian language and culture during that time. Bridging this gap between the two communities became the biggest challenge for education after

Estonia regained independence in 1991 (Trasberg 2002, 34-35). Even though the curriculum was required to follow with the Russian one, Estonia succeeded in maintaining the 11-grade secondary education instead of the Russian 10-grade education and some of its own cultural elements.

Educational systems were and are, however, still very much affected by the former Soviet times even if the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic and Secondary Education covering grades from 1 to 12, which was approved by the government and became a law in 1996, started a transition to a more student-centred school. The curriculum implies that students and teachers are co-operating partners and the students have an increased freedom and responsibility for their studies. According to Leino (2006, 22-223) this causes contradictions between the norms and the expectations. The conflicts in school are in line with ones in the whole of society: e.g. democracy should be strived at but in reality school is about competing and restricting, when to keep quiet or speak up is not clear and the pressure between collectivism and individualism is difficult in practical school life. In other words, at school students are demanded normatively, on the one hand, to keep quiet but, on the other hand, learn to know how to express themselves. Trasberg (2002, 37) remarks that with all the reforms and changes in the curriculum teacher training should be paid enough attention to. Citizenship education is an example of where teachers would need more training.

Citizenship education

Growing to become a citizen is not easy. The conflict between individuality and collectivism in school is not only a post-socialist phenomenon. Too much individuality would emphasise the right of the individuals and forget collectivism, whereas in the opposite case in a totalitarian collectivist society individuals have no rights. With the new liberal trends with the emphasis on individualism in the 1990s there seems now to be a movement towards a need of some kind of solidarity and community values in society. “We move from a collectivist society to individuality and now to a new level of a collectivist society” (Leino 2006, 224).

Participation in decision-making and the role of an active agent in society should be practised in a school community, but teachers can be unsure of the old and new norms. Identities and values are not only developed as ‘products’ at school, but also in relations outside school. At school the students’ resources are valued according to what kind of identities they can be used for and evaluated with numbers. The goals in a curriculum are idealistic but the goals in the school subjects are academic. The teacher needs to balance in between respecting the students as persons, subjects of their own learning and working as a teacher, a pedagogical leader who knows how to reach the goals in the curriculum. At the same time educating e.g. teenager-students in a secondary school is a process

where teachers balance between educating students to respect the rules and norms as well as negotiating on what is right and fair. Teachers could share their power in an effective manner and use e.g. the 'win-win' principle as suggested e.g. by Gordon (2006) although the principle of 'win-win' may sound as if there was a competition going.

However, a lot of conflicts arise along with oppositional pedagogical demands that exist in the school work and many of them have to do with the aspect of power as described above. The socio-pedagogical relationships at school could be used as a community role play for integration, dialogue, solidarity, openness, renewing and stability. Martin Buber suggests that what is the individual 'self' in everyone should enter into interactive relationships with the others, which implies the formation of a universal community (in Leino 2006, 222-238; Buber 1993).

The problem at school is not only the relationship of an individual and the community, but also the power relationships in society: both individualism and collectivism destroy the genuine dialogue. Individualism sees only the individual and collectivism only society. Turning towards the other person changes this relationship to a 'me-you' relationship where we can discuss matters and find solutions together. This relationship implies growing up with the help of true dialogue and love (Kurki 2006, 138).

Role of the students

I found that Estonian students appreciate and respect their teachers and school, too. What is the impression of the students and their roles in the school? The way students present their school gives an impression of pride. They are proud of the history of the school and recognise the usefulness of modern technology as well. In one of the presentations of their school in the internet, one of the students writes:

When it comes to the history of our school, the Rannu Secondary School is quite historic because it was founded in 1619. It makes over 300 hundred years. At first there were only a few classes and a small number of pupils but at the moment there are 12 classes with about 280 students plus teachers. As far as I can see, our school is developing for the better. Our school is modern and stylish. The parish is trying to help put our school in tip-top shape and assists when the school-board tries to renovate or repair something.

(Vadim, <http://www.rannu.tartu.ee/index.php?menyy=12&sub=111>

The respect of traditions is present in the students' comments on their school. It is also the history, tradition and experiences that are recognised to have made a good school:

I have attended the Rannu Secondary School for all the 10 years of my school career. My father and uncle have also studied here. Education has been given in Rannu for over 310 years, which

is impressive. All the experiences and consistence have made the Rannu Secondary School a place which provides a good education. It is a small school, there are about 280 students, and because of that the classes are small and the teachers can share their attention between all the students and help those who cannot catch up. Also, there is much less school violence than in urban schools, because all our energy goes to studying and our hobbies.

(Triinu, <http://www.rannu.tartu.ee/index.php?menyy=12&sub=111>

The students also believe that their school is better than the other schools:

As for the level of education it is quite high, actually our school's reputation is even better than that of some neighbouring schools. It probably comes from good performance in all kinds of competitions. The appreciation of academism shows in mentioning where some students have even continued their studies. (Lauri, <http://www.rannu.tartu.ee/index.php?menyy=12&sub=111>

The high academic standard is very much appreciated. A small school community is also seen as beneficial for students' education:

As for the level of education in our school, the school's level of education is quite high compared with some other schools. The Rannu School is acknowledged in the Tartu County and in our country especially in science subjects. Many students have finished with good grades and gone to study at Tartu University.

(Vadim, <http://www.rannu.tartu.ee/index.php?menyy=12&sub=111>

Students are proud of their teachers and give them credit for coming well prepared to their classes. They are considered friendly and helpful, too. The good relationships between teachers and students are also mentioned, although a student also admits that their behaviour can sometimes be foolish.

The pupils' board makes proposals and suggestions about everyday school life, about events. They are a link between the teachers and the pupils. The pupils' board also defends the pupils' rights, cooperates with the staff and represents the school. It seemed that students have a say in their school.

In the project work we noticed astonishing outcomes in the student questionnaire from the Estonian students (Appendix 6/p.2) as regards the question about being a European. The opinions were divided to the far ends: it is either beneficial or harmful, like in the totalitarian times, or maybe these students just knew their opinions exactly. But, as a German student pointed out, students can have different ideas about globalisation and its benefits or negative sides.

Role of the parents and the community

What is the role of the parents and the community in the Estonian school? We were told that parents do not usually interfere in the school life. In the Mother's Day performance we saw a lot of mothers and families sitting in the audience

watching their children perform. Excellence in action was seen in many ways. The Estonians are world-famous for being the nation who sang for their freedom. The music pieces were performed with great precision. And we saw a lot humour used in the plays and dances. Estonian students enjoy performing.

We were also told that whenever parents are contacted in school matters (behaviour problems or forgotten student homework) they support the teachers, school and discipline. In a small community people know each other and work together. The parents appreciate school education and support academism as a chance for their children for advancement in life. School also has a strong support from the community. The following shows how a student understands the importance of a school to the community:

In conclusion, I hope that everyone would realise what a small school means to students and to the community. The most important thing is not money, but the children's happy and grateful faces and continuity of education.

(Triinu, <http://www.rannu.tartu.ee/index.php?menyy=12&sub=111>)

The local community was also seen as working for the school, enhancing the hopes that the teachers' board has as regards the repairing and renovating of the school. In a small community the school is the heart of the community and assisted by the community. However, there are fears that the Ministry of Education will change small secondary schools, like this school, to a primary school, but at the moment of the interview, it was still only a rumour. Also, I learned that competition between individual schools has lately come very much to the forefront.

Estonian school culture summed up as regards the aspect of shared leadership

For the development of shared leadership the Estonian school already seems to have a lot of strengths (Table 4.):

Table 4. A SWOT analysis for the development of shared leadership practice and the decision-making in the Estonian school:

	CASE3.	
NOW	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cooperative model, democracy - the school is supported by the community - good results in the exams - academism - long history and traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - difficult to recruit qualified - the school needs renovation - isolation of the school
FUTURE	OPTIONS	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the school will be a renovated and well-equipped school in 2012 - new international projects and cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the school may be transformed to a primary school when fewer children are born - lack of qualified teachers - political decisions made by the authorities

The size of the Estonian school seemed ideal for shared leadership. Leadership was shared through a lot of discussions and communication. The head's ways of working and her attitudes towards her staff seemed helpful in building a culture of shared leadership and I thought her excellent sense of humour was helpful in building a school culture of trust.

The head and the teachers' work was supported by the community, which I think is different from our Finnish school. The head had three deputies to share the administrative work with, but the teachers also seemed to be committed to sharing some of it and participating in the decision-making process.

The head's idea for sustainability in the school was to have qualified teachers. She considered academism and good results dependent on good teachers. She was hoping for a renovated and well-equipped school in the future, although she knew the school was becoming a primary school in the future.

Next I will move on to our Greek partner school where the school environment was also seen an important part of the school culture. I will also describe how the culture of education affects school leadership and shared leadership in particular.

4.4 Greek School

The Greek School is a big family dancing Greek dances in endless circles, holding arms around each other and supporting each other. Bodies are moving as the bouzouki is playing. And there I am dancing Sirtaki on the table! And the music goes on and on...

Metaphor for the school culture and organisation

What kind of a school feels like a family? The Greek school represents a metaphor of a family where cosiness is created with a lot of caring and sharing and doing things together. Everybody is part of the family, where safety is created by adults making the decisions. The school culture is like that, too. Love for aesthetics and other people is shown in traditional Greek dances with bodily expressions and joy. Aesthetics is an important part of the school culture.

The Greek school is situated in Alimos, which is a municipality of Attica, ten kilometres from Athens on the east coast of the Saronicos bay. The name originates from the plant 'alimia' which is a bush that grows by the sea. The history of the town goes back to the ancient times; there are some important historical monuments and other smaller findings from the early Greek period 3000 BC up to the Roman years. The oldest ancient theatre that has been preserved is one of the most important archaeological findings. This theatre has a unique characteristic of a rectangular-shaped *orchestra*, instead of a round one.

Today Alimos is a nice and peaceful villa area with some 50,000 inhabitants along its shoreline. The building of the modern town was started about 80 years ago in the area which was earlier mostly occupied by farming. The settlement grew rapidly as rich Athenians began to build their nice summer houses by the sea and became little by little permanent settlers.

Identity of the school

I was told that the Greek school was founded in 1983 and they moved to the new building in 1993. It is a secondary school with 310 students and 35 teachers, 5 classes in A, B, and C grades with 22-28 students in each. To my great surprise I found that there is another secondary school equally large on the other side of the fence. But when I visited it I noticed that it was not in as good shape as our partner school. A special programme called SEPPE was offered as an explanation. Since 1997 our Greek partner school had participated in the programme of SEPPE (Reorganising of the school space) which is a programme used by 5500 teachers and 60 000 students in junior and secondary high schools in the country. The purpose of the reorganising is to create classrooms especially equipped for each subject (e.g. mathematics, literature, sciences, chemistry,

foreign languages etc.). The experiment's target is to develop new methods and techniques of teaching as well as the use of new technology.

As we came to our first meeting in the Greek school, the head was standing on the steps outside the entrance and the kids were playing and screaming in the school yard. She held her arms open and welcomed us with lots of loud kisses on both cheeks. When entering the school the first time I remember the lovely smell of bagels in the corridor that came to meet us. Some of the teachers were having a cup of coffee in the cafeteria in the corridor and smoking cigarettes. The school house looked very clean and beautiful. The sun was shining while the kids were still playing and screaming outside. There was a noisy and relaxed atmosphere in the school.

The school days were finished by 2 o'clock in the afternoon, after which the school organised clubs for traditional dances, theatre plays, plastic art, constructions, music (choir, piano lessons) and environmental education etc. In the evening a lot of the students went to private classes in English, mathematics and other subjects. Parents pay for these activities in a hope of a better future to their kids. A good education is appreciated and after compulsory studies there is a hard competition for entrance to academic studies. I learned later that not all students want go to their classes in the evenings.

Organisation of the school

The school organisation consisted of the head, the deputy head, the teachers and surveillance staff. The head seemed to be responsible for most of the things. The idea of community was important and leading the work of the head. The school worked closely with the school next to it. They could use their library. There were parents and local administrators who participated in our group discussions. The school had intra- and inter-organisational connections to the surrounding society. In that way their school leadership seemed to be distributed within the school and outside the school. The way of the school was said to be traditional.

High value on education

From history we know that the Greeks have been eager to conquer the world and they are famous seamen. From the historical perspective, the 'ethos' or the aims or goals of a human being in the Western world are much inherited from the Greeks and Aegean culture (Varto 2008, 6-8, 68- 69): e.g. *competing, wars, trade* from the conquerors and high culture, *morals, peace, art and town culture* from the conquered ones.

The Greek 'ethos' can also be understood as an effort to find harmony in living with the cosmic order and nature. According to ancient Greek mythologies the cosmic world is understood to have been constructed by an eternal order

where there is a place for everything in the hierarchy; but even the minutest details can find expression in arts.

In the European way of thinking *Nature* called 'Cosmos' is hierarchical and people are part of it. The combination of these features is the 'ethos' that has spread around the world in people's lives in good and bad. According to the philosophic striving at living in harmony is also striving at justice and equality in the community. Competition, trading and wars are still used as a means to keep up the balance between partners. This goes on in the society of today. The European Community is not an exception.

Greek culture, with its roots in classical civilisation, has always placed a high value on education. The respect for e.g. classical poetry and literature is still manifested in school education and the curriculum as studies of the ancient Greek language and literature. Aesthetics and arts are highly valued and given time to in the school education of today and e.g. Greek dances are taught eagerly in schools as a representation of their own culture.

Education in Greece (as in many countries) is also seen as a means of getting ahead in society. But especially in the post-Second-World-War period, the urbanisation of the Greek population has been closely connected with a desire for education and a key to a better life.

Multiculturalism

According to Verma & Papastamatis (2007, 83) it is a popular European stereotype is that Greece is an ethnically and linguistically homogeneous country with a continued emigration of its citizens, paralleled by the frequent but irregular arriving of tourists who stay only briefly. But on a closer look, Greece is a dynamic and complex society with its culture, language and immigration. Makri's analyses of immigrants show that masses of both economic and political refugees have immigrated to Greece after the Second World War (Makri 2003; in Verma & Papastamatis 2007) and still about one million Greek-speaking people live in the former countries of the Soviet Union who are not allowed to move to Greece even if they wish to.

Multicultural education is given to students of a different cultural origin and/or ethnic minority as well as to Greek immigrant students usually in the so-called multicultural schools that are separate institutions. In the years 2002-2003 the total number of pupils of a different cultural origin or ethnic minority was 12 per cent and the number of Greek immigrant students was about 4 per cent.

For multicultural education, out of the ethnic and linguistic groups it is the 150 000 Romani people 20 per cent of whom are Muslims that are the most interesting group although the smaller minorities of Turks, Valachs and Arvanites and Slavic people are also worth mentioning. In the Greek partner school the education of minorities and especially of the Romani students were a topic of vivid discussions: how to include these students and what kind of assistance they

need. The importance of social justice and equality were also raised on several occasions.

Cultural diversity, democracy and equality are themes of current interest in teacher training and education in Greece. Renewing the curriculum is one important part of responding to the demands of cultural diversity, but teachers need training in managing it. An awareness of cultural nuances and their effects on the behaviour and cognitive styles of children in the classrooms is also a matter of teacher training. Education should strengthen the cultural identity of all students and offer them a chance to see the world as one, albeit within its plurality. This developing of a cultural identity and sensitivity to others requires time and effort and skills of the teacher (Verma & Papastamatis 2007, 83).

In Greece, where young teachers are often sent to islands to work for the first years and can be appointed to mainland posts only after the service on islands, the teachers are appointed by the Ministry, which is also the practice in Germany.

Aesthetics as the leading value in the school culture

The values that are emphasised in this school are e.g. aesthetics, creativity, cooperation and openness. Arts play an important role in the Greek school education. Aesthetics is also emphasised as a value by the teachers in this school, which can be seen all over the school walls that are decorated with paintings and posters.

I noticed that there was a loving atmosphere in the school. The relationships between the teachers and pupils resembled parent-child relationships. Parent-child-like relationships between the teachers and students were obvious in the way how the teachers met the students. In our group discussions we found that whenever a student or a group of students were asked to give an opinion, the teachers started to explain their students' opinions (their complaints) to us. The students were not expected to criticise the adults in school. Children are brought up to respect adults.

It is also inherent in the culture to touch pupils like small kids. Even the head kisses the pupils on cheeks when they enter the school in the morning, which we found very different from our culture. The difference in the cultures was apparent when one of the Greek female teachers touched a seventh-grader on the shoulder in the classroom of our Finnish school and saw how the boy froze. She was surprised to notice the reaction and was really sorry that she did not know. We had to explain to her that it is all in the culture. Touching students, the body, feelings and sensations are cut out from our Finnish school, whereas they seem to be much more accepted in the Greek school.

For the Greek teachers it seemed to be a natural thing to take secondary school students by the hand or give a kiss on the cheeks. Greek teachers also seemed to enjoy teaching their students how to dance. Greek dances were the

uniting element between the teachers, students, parents and foreign partners. We were all invited to dance at school. We were all part of the school.

Shared leadership and becoming a head

What was special in sharing leadership in the Greek school? The focus was on students and their learning. Developing the school leadership for improving the student results was the prime motivation of the Greek head that I grew fond of as early as our first journey together. Later she told me what her motive was in accepting the post as a head:

(From my diary in Athens on 14 March 2006):

E. tells that she became a teacher by accident; she wanted to be an engineer but her university entrance exams were not perfect, so she became a mathematician. On her first day at school as a teacher she realised that it was the best profession for her! Since then she has been very happy to be a teacher (21 years). This profession offers an opportunity of doing a lot of creative things. She decided to become first a head, which was an intermediate position for becoming a didactics counsellor in mathematics in the university. She tells me that she has enjoyed being a school head at this school because the school has a lot of programmes; the members cooperate very well and learn from each other. She thinks that they are an effective group and that adds to their self-esteem.

She told me that she loved her work as a teacher because the profession offered an opportunity of doing a lot of creative things. I was very surprised by her remark. Creativity and the head's post sounded a peculiar combination to me. But this made sense when the Greek head also told me that she had accepted the post as a head as an intermediate position on the way to becoming a counsellor of mathematics teachers which is something similar to our head of didactics in the university. She could do her doctoral studies in the mathematics department of the university during two years with a full teacher's salary, but had to accept the post as a head for five years.

After the interviews in Greece the head sent me an e-mail (20 March 2008) where she answered the following questions of leadership and shared leadership:

1. *How do you share your leadership?*
2. *How would you share or define leadership?*
3. *How is shared leadership seen in the school culture?*
4. *Is there a lot of sharing in decision making in the school culture?*
5. *Ideas about leadership?*

The head told me that she asks for the opinions of the teachers, students, parents and members of staff that are directly involved. She tells them her own opinion and discusses the matters and picks the cleverest decision. If in a hurry, though, she asks for the opinion of the deputies and then decides. In order to plan things,

she calls a meeting of teachers with special abilities to discuss and plan what to do. In her answers she gives the impression that she communicates a lot.

When I watched her work day at the school in the morning I found that she had to stand in for missing teachers when they were late due to traffic jams in Athens. She went to the classes to start the lessons and give orders to the students. During the breaks she supervised everything and told me that she was obliged to keep an eye on her staff because some teachers forgot their surveillance duties. She was everywhere; she held the morning prayers in the school hall, talked a lot with the staff, organised things and spoke with the students, took care of students with fever or disciplinary problems, talked to the parents who came to the school to leave or collect their kids, answered the questions from the school office, held her own classes and prepared the evening programme for us. The head seemed to be a master having all the threads in her hands. She seemed to be able to work with a lot of things simultaneously. The following definition of shared leadership was given by her:

(From my diary: an e-mail sent to me by the Greek head on 20 March 2008)

Shared leadership is a situation of group function; in this case, many people share a decision/plan and therefore feel obliged to defend it, to work for it, to support it. It's for the school's benefit.

(From my diary: an e-mail sent to me by the Greek head on 20 March 2008).

Her idea of shared leadership is a group function which benefits the school: sharing a decision adds to the commitment and support of everybody in the staff. She compares this kind of functioning to shared leadership as in the Comenius group and believes that this can serve as a training course for teachers in Greece. Two of the teachers participating in the Comenius project became later deputy heads in the Greek school. Working in the international project was a preparatory experience of shared leadership to them:

(From my diary: an e-mail sent to me by the Greek head on 20 March 2008).

A shared leadership situation acts as a training course (for the teachers, students, parents, etc.) in school administration, and that is important in Greece with no official training and preparation of teachers. For example, the participation of J and E in the Comenius group (that functioned in a shared leadership) I believe acted as a preparatory experience in shared leadership and helps them now (they both became deputy heads in our school).

Sharing leadership is not a traditionally accepted way

In the Greek culture, sharing leadership is not a traditionally accepted way. The head is also unsure about how people react to sharing leadership. She points out that there are two ways to see shared leadership:

- *For many conservative teachers it may be a sign of inability. A head who asks for other teachers' opinions before any step may be an incompetent one! S/he may also be unproductive as s/he "spends" a lot of time in discussions instead of actions!*

Discussions can also be seen as wasting time instead of action. It is possible that conservative teachers see sharing leadership as a sign of inability of the director, the head.

(From my diary: an e-mail sent to me by the Greek head on 20 March 2008)

For more progressive teachers, such a head may be a model of what should be done. We give the best lessons by our actions and not by our words.

For progressive teachers the head outlines how the sharing of leadership should be done. After being a head for five years, the Greek head notes that there are things that cannot be shared and that there is always a gap between the teachers and the head:

(From my diary: an e-mail sent to me by the Greek head on 20 March 2008)

There is a gap in perspective between the head and any teacher. The head has a more general view, while a teacher has a perspective that is restricted to the fields of school interests. The gap sometimes leads to contradictions. The head's decision should support the students' best interests which sometimes are not what teachers prefer. If the decisions are taken in a group, where different points of view are heard, negotiations and debates are free, and then most people understand what should be done, no matter whether they like it or not. Therefore I believe shared leadership is a vehicle to right decisions as well as to establishing good cooperation. It strengthens the idea of community in school, which I value.

The Greek head sees shared leadership as a means of making the right decisions and establishing good cooperation. In her opinion, it also strengthens the idea of community in school, which she values.

I gather the following ideas out of this:

1. *the teachers, students, parents, members of staff are involved in decision-making*
2. *if in a hurry she asks for the opinions of the deputy heads*
3. *a shared leadership situation functions as a training course in school administration in Greece where there is no official training or preparation for teachers*
4. *shared leadership can be seen in two ways culturally: either as a sign of inability of a head (by many conservative teachers) or a model of what should be done (by progressive teachers)*
5. *there is a gap between the head and any teacher: a head has a more general view and also an idea of what is best for the students, while a teacher has a perspective restricted to the fields of school interests; the gap sometimes leads to contradictions*
6. *they learn from each other*

The culture in the school also seemed to be divided into different attitudes to whether leadership should be shared or not. I presume that the expectations of the head's role are cultural reflections from the society. The head mentioned conservative attitudes where sharing leadership is seen as an inability of the head, whereas progressive teachers accept this way of working. Shared leadership is perhaps not culturally accepted either. In the school we found out that parents demand schools and teachers to do their best and push their children hard to get better marks. The head pointed out, however, that shared leadership can work as a means of enhancing cooperation and strengthening the community.

The head mentions a gap between the head and the teachers that lead to contradictions. I suppose that she refers to different opinions and views that arise due to different positions in the school organisation. The contradictions often arise due to different points of views or micro-politics at school. Shared leadership can, however, work as administration practice at school for the teachers who participate in projects like Comenius, since there is no administrational schooling for teachers in Greece. Participation in the decision-making process is seen as administrational work and training for teachers, too. However, pedagogical leadership is an important part of all school leadership. In the following I will move on to attend a class in the Greek school.

Role of the teachers

One of the administrators in the Greek school is the deputy head, a biology and physics teacher who I got to know as a true pedagogue when I visited her physics lesson. Remember that I have never been keen on physics. This lesson made me see why:

(From my diary in Athens on 14 March 2006)

I am sitting at the back of the classroom. The curtains are drawn in front of the windows. The teacher is standing beside the overhead projector and holding something in the light. The students are all leaning forward to see. It is dark in the classroom. I notice that I am leaning forward, too. She is keeping the students focused by asking them to ask questions. And the students do. And they ask more. And they are guessing and getting more eager to answer. Now I know, she is teaching the prism light when she opens the curtains and asks about the sun. Then she makes some coins to disappear and I am stunned. It is magic. And the students start to draw conclusions and write them down in their notebooks. What happened?

Now I know why I never liked the way of teaching of my own physics teacher. Teaching is a profession where the expertise of a teacher can be sensed even if no language is understood. This type of professional knowing can also be called 'artistry' (Schön 1983) where tacit knowledge is gathered during a long time of experience in practice. Knowing in practice appears in the professionally fluent and intuitive way the teacher works. Teachers' professional artistry also seems to

be noticeable in teachers with other cultural backgrounds. This was noticed during the project meetings when teachers volunteered to teach in partner schools.

The way this Greek teacher got a contact with the students showed her artistry. She awoke the students' and our curiosity and asked a lot of questions in a Socratic manner. Her lesson revealed a true pedagogue who knew how to build an atmosphere of trust, excitement and enthusiasm for students and how to add to their joy of learning. She put *pedagogical leadership* to its correct place in the school: the genuine idea of the school education is teaching the students how to learn more. I also discussed equality in education with this teacher on several occasions. We spoke French with each other. She was curious to know whether the Finnish school system was built on equality throughout the country and if everybody had similar possibilities of getting an education in all parts of Finland. Special education was one of the subjects that we discussed eagerly.

In Greece special education is usually provided for students with special educational needs in schools of special education, although there are some inclusion classes as well. There is a growing trend for demands of special education in normal schools, where there are rarely special classes or special needs education for individual needs. In our Greek partner school this kind of instruction had been started after their first visit to our school. The head and the teacher who was giving this instruction were equally interested in developing special needs education at their school and discussed the subject eagerly with us. Shared leadership started to ring a bell for me on the international level.

Teachers' interest in developing their own practice together with other colleagues, even from other countries, is touching. Vivid discussions concerning teachers' work in English, German or French and on some occasions even with no common language at all have characterised our common project. Pedagogical leadership was shared by all of us.

The forming of a common understanding of the practice seems to be possible for the heads of schools through professional insight even if the culture is different. School heads showed a deep interest in sharing ideas with their colleagues. Changes in society and the schools require school heads to act as change agents in their own work. In this respect we seem to be alike. The Greek deputy head was interested in working for the social welfare of the students. Today she is the head of the school.

Role of the students

When Greek students learned about the other case schools they told that they wanted to adopt the daily organisation of their studies from the North European countries which represented the ideal for them. They told me that they dreamt of a different lifestyle, but admitted that they don't really know about real life. This is what they concluded in the final meeting in 2008:

“We want to learn about other cultures but not to lose ours. We want a better organisation of traffic and better opportunities for people, more work.”

After the exchange programme in Germany the students noticed that there are differences between schools and systems but they came to the following conclusion of school education in their discussions:

”We learn about the same things but we are unique in all countries”.

Students told me that they could participate in the decision-making process in their school through the student board. The leader of the student board was a senior student, a girl who eagerly spoke with me. She told that the others sent her to discuss things with the head because they trusted her. The girl told that she, in turn, trusted the head and was confident that the head had the students' best interests as her guiding principle. The school culture seemed to be full of mutual trust, with students and parents included.

Role of the parents and the community

Parents in the Greek school cooperate with the teachers and support the school. They participate enthusiastically in out-of-school activities and happenings and want to assist and support the teachers and the school. When the students get their marks the parents are invited to the school. Normal classes are not held but teachers meet with the parents and students for evaluation discussions. In Greece, it is normal that parents can come in the middle of the day to these discussions and are allowed to do so by their employers.

Parents' role is strong in education. They trust the teachers and work together with them and demand them to push their children in order to get good results. Parents pay for the evening classes of their children in a hope for better marks which will later lead to a place in a university. The interviews with teachers, students and parents reveal that a lot of the students want to have academic careers in the future (e.g. lawyers and doctors).

In the Greek partner school, the significance of the community is great, too. It is like a big family all together. They prepare events together and discuss things together. The system resembles the German one with the frequent meetings between the staff and the board and the administrators. The relationship between the school and the community seems to be open for discussions. The community takes many decisions together. Outside the school community, however, the political decision-makers do not always support the aims of the schools and there is a gap between the two sides.

Greek school culture summed up for the aspect of shared leadership

The Greek school shows a great willingness to build partnerships with other European schools. As there is no official training or preparation for teachers in the school administration in Greece, the head noted that the Comenius project had also worked as a training course in administration for the two deputies who became later deputies in the Greek school. *Shared leadership is defined by the head as a group function.* The head also finds that shared leadership adds to the commitment and support of everybody in the staff. She also sees shared leadership as a means of making the right decisions and establishing good cooperation. In her opinion, it also strengthens the idea of community in school. Here is my SWOT for the development of shared leadership practice in the Greek school (Table5.):

Table 5. A SWOT analysis for the development of shared leadership practice in the Greek School:

CASE4.		
NOW	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is a culture of cooperation - the school has several development programmes - traditions are maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - controversial meanings of the term 'shared leadership' - shared leadership is not culturally accepted - teaching needs modernisation - ineffectiveness of school education (private lessons are popular)
FUTURE	OPTIONS	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shared leadership is practised with partners, which will strengthen the sense of community - shared leadership can work as practice for administrative procedures - experienced pedagogues will renew and modernise school education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contradictions due to different views or micro-politics at school - political decisions are a threat to sustainability - decrease of funds - loss of national culture due to the EU

There seem to be many contradictory demands for leadership in the Greek school. Preserving the traditional subjects, such as ancient Greek, in the curriculum and renewing school education at the same time is challenging from the point of view

of school leadership. There are also divided opinions about belonging to the EU and fears of losing the national culture.

However, shared leadership can be connected with the need of modernisation of the Greek school, too. One of the challenges for the development of the school was the attitudes. Teachers are demanded by the parents to give an extensive amount of homework to students. Although they are in close contact with parents, teachers are not trusted.

The teachers would need to trust their own expertise more. However, it is a position that they have been deprived of by the highly centralised school system. My conclusion is that shared leadership will be needed in the future especially for joining the pedagogical forces in the school for the development of the teaching and learning.

4.5 Learning for a Change

In the joint forum the heads held their own discussions on differences and similarities in work. We were sitting in the German head's office around the table discussing similarities and differences and the issues requiring attention on the basis of the one-week diaries that we had written and copied for each of us. In the following we discuss whether we can change the culture in our schools:

(From our group discussion taped in Cologne on 7 November 2006)

E: Are we late now?

K: These three ones we have: basic differences and similarities and what is better and what is it that we can't change? We can't change the system, I think.

E: No, we can't change the system or the culture.

K: Yes, the two ones. But we could find out differences and similarities.

E: I wrote here what is astonishing. Long working days depend on what is going on at school.

El: Not only long, but intensive? Is that the correct word?

K: Intensive is the correct word.

El: Too many things going on at the same time.

E: Intensive work.

J: I don't know how to express it in English. It's not intensive only, hectic. It's hectic.

E: You know the word?

E: Hectic?

J: Hectic. I don't know what 'hectic' means.

E: Happening very rapidly.

J: Different things, you can't work two hours on one thing.

E: No, never.

El: No, never.

J: Only one thing and then another. You have to react. You don't act, you react.

El: You react.

J: Yeah.

El: As K. said: like a fire brigade.

J: Yes, like the fire brigade, you react! You should practise communication and realise a vision, but you react.

In the discussion with other heads I say that we cannot change the system or the culture. I made my statement because I think that in school systems we are used to certain cultural behaviour. But as I have said before, we have also inherited the culture of leading. Now I have grown to understand that we can change the system. I do think we can lead schools to change by building a new school culture in dialogue with other schools. In other words we can learn how to change through participation in the process of the meaning-building.

Case schools are more similar than different as work organisations. In that way school cultures are not that different from each other. Maybe this was the reason why the work with the partners from different countries worked so surprisingly well after some practice. I think that we all knew how to work at school. Values of working were common to us all in different schools e.g. *encouragement, responsibility, creativity, cooperation and humour*.

In the beginning our joint work was teacher-centred I noticed that our manner of working changed little by little. The change was due to the students. It was first in Germany that students participated in the discussions, but later we continued to take the students along in the discussions in other countries, too. And then they started to work with the other students doing project work together. In a discussion with students in Germany I took up the question of cheating as it was shown in the German presentation as a normal way of doing in the school:

(From our group discussion taped in Cologne on 7 November 2006)

Eija: Can I ask something? There was one thing that struck me, when you said that cheating is normal. Do you really think so? That it is the usual way of doing things to cheat if nobody sees it.

F. German student: I think it's not normal but for the pupils it's normal to cheat.

Eija: It is an interesting question. Okay.

My question was meant to be an ethical one but since cheating was culturally 'accepted', no real discussion or dialogue could be conducted. The head and teachers recognised the same cheating in society but they said that we Finns had become cultural learners. How could honesty be taught if cheating is considered normal? However, this sample shows that our values and interesting cultural points could be raised to discussions. Heads and teachers are pedagogical leaders and learners at the same time.

Heads from different cultures could also share similar experiences of their work. The need of being available for everybody all the time was seen

burdensome. A lot of the heads' work is reacting to different things that happen. The question of time was also raised in several discussions. The heads concluded that more time was needed for building a vision and human relations. Instead of reacting like in a fire brigade, one should have time for communication and planning. A lot of time goes to routine work, which everybody wants to share with deputies. Comparing is normal with colleagues:

(From our group discussion taped in Cologne on 7 November 2006)

K: I think we have more deputies than you have.

E: More deputies?

K: Yes, who are responsible for some branches?

E: You have the most.

El: How many deputies do you have?

K: I have three.

J: Yeah, I think it's our problem, not our problem but the shared leadership problem. And sometimes I have written to the head of the department what they need to do. (Sorry, JA wir kommen doch. A comes to the door.)

E: This is hard work.

J: Honest work!

A: We have to stop now.

J: Yeah, I think we should go there.

Why is the discussion of comparing the number of deputies important in sharing leadership? A lack of human resources seems to burden the heads who would like to share more of their leadership. On the other hand, *if the shared leadership work is distributed in the whole school, how significant would the number of deputy heads be?* Teachers and students, too, can share the leadership roles in their learning community if it was culturally accepted. As a learning for a change in practice I found out that we have to overcome the problems of human resources and time by different ways of working with the people in the community.

Lack of time is another burden where the heads are not alone. When gathering in the next room for a session the German teacher B. says:

(From our group meeting taped in Cologne on 7 November 2006)

B: We just have to remember that next year we are going to send our heads to Hoff words for one week to make you learn the magic and then you come back and bring every one of us six more lessons per day so that we could finally get more time to do things.

More time is desperately needed for all school work to be done. Teachers expect their heads to learn the magic of making more time for them. And everyone has a good laugh:

(From our group discussion taped in Cologne on 7 November 2006)

J: I don't understand. (Everybody starts laughing loudly.)

E: Very good J., very good!

A.: That's Sauer land.

B: And you found out what I just said and what I am going to say now: that time is always the problem. No one, not even the heads, I think, did have enough time to go through this to the end completely. We just had time, well; to scratch at some things, but nevertheless, maybe this will help us to get some basic ideas for ourselves.

My idea of school leadership emerges from having more time for discussions. Time must be made if there is none. Accordingly, I think that less important issues can be left for someone else to do. As the heads have to balance between a multiplicities of various tasks they find it hard to find enough time for discussions with the staff. More time would also be needed for the development of the vision.

The lack of time can also be a threat to building shared leadership. It seems that not having enough time for discussions often ruins the whole development of shared practices of leadership. The differences in the heads' work had to do with the size of the school, the number of deputies sharing the work with the heads, the location of the school, the socio-economic backgrounds of the students in the school area, cultural differences of the students and differences in the school systems. As a conclusion, however, it was stated that despite the different school cultures our work as heads seems to be more alike than different. In our school leadership, we share problems similar to those of our partners.

In the following table I have gathered some representations of the school cultures to see where we are different and where similar. I have made comparisons of the values seen in practice, number of deputies that schools or heads have in sharing leadership in administration, what came up with the roles of the teachers, students, parents, and community as regards to the decision-making in the school (Table 6.):

Table 6. Differences and similarities in the case schools

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES /SIMILARITIES	FINNISH SCHOOL	GERMAN SCHOOL	ESTONIAN SCHOOL	GREEK SCHOOL
VALUES	COMMUNITY SPIRIT SOUND SELF-ESTEEM	SOLIDARITY, TOLERANCE	ACADEMISM INNOVATIVENESS	AESTHETICS RESPECT OF TRADITIONS
SHARED LEADERSHIP	DIVIDED MEANINGS FOR SHARED L.	SHARED MEANINGS DEALT IN DISCUSSIONS	SHARED MEANINGS BUILT IN DISCUSSIONS	DIVIDED MEANINGS FOR SHARED L.
HEADS` ROLE	HEADSHIP WITH (2) DEPUTIES	HEADSHIP WITH (2) DEPUTIES	HEADSHIP WITH (3) DEPUTIES	HEADSHIP WITH (3) DEPUTIES
TEACHERS` ROLE	TAYLORING FOR WELLBEING PEDAGOGICS	GOOD PLANNERS HARD WORKERS VIVID DISCUSSIONS	COMBINING TRADITIONS WITH PEDAGOGICS	COMBINING TRADITIONS WITH PEDAGOGICS
STUDENTS` ROLE	OUTSIDE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS SEPARATE BOARD	INCLUDED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS THROUGH A BOARD	OUTSIDE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS SEPARATE BOARD	INCLUDED IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS THROUGH A BOARD
PARENTS` ROLE	INVISIBLE	ACTIVE	INVISIBLE	ACTIVE
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMMUNITY	IMPORTANT PARENTS OUTSIDE	IMPORTANT PARENTS INSIDE	IMPORTANT PARENTS OUTSIDE	IMPORTANT ALL INSIDE

What did we learn? As our homework before the last meeting we had discussed in each school what we had learned from the project generally and found the following aspects:

- a) School culture (organisation) and (identity)
- c) Cultural differences + similarities (general, professional, individual)
- d) Collaboration (between schools, project groups)
- e) Communication
- f) Impact on the school community (teachers, students, parents)

The uniqueness of each culture is something we all learned. Whereas globalisation aims at sameness, international school projects and experiments

show us the need to learn about diversity and differences in order to be able to understand and respect diversity and cultural differences. I have written down little episodes in my diary during the visit.

At the meetings I found it rather amusing when people were asked to speak up whereas in Finland other people are expected to keep quiet when someone else is speaking. I guess that my comment can be understood as an expression of other culture. However, I have written down in my diary this cultural difference and some other conclusive thoughts during the final meeting in Athens:

(From my diary in Athens on 26 March 2008)

I am back in our Greek partner school in Athens. A. welcomes us at the stairs of the school. E. is waiting inside the school building and the new principal is standing in front of the staff room. It is a friendly welcome with a lot of kissing and hugging.

A lovely smell of freshly baked bagels meets us again in the hallway. The lady in the school kiosk is smiling. No teachers are seen smoking in the cafeteria area. Hurray, the EU!

Now it is time to start working. Speak up is often demanded! (In Finland other people are expected to keep quiet!). A microphone is brought to the meeting. The German teacher A. finishes his presentation of the results from the student questionnaire of the meanings of being a European (Appendix 8):

The Greek teacher I. starts to speak in the first session and tells about the changes in the programme. The German teacher A. continues with the questionnaire that the 9th-graders in each school answered. It is explained that Greek dances are taught now because there is a fear that they would otherwise disappear. It is not part of the school's programme but the teachers teach them. The Greek teacher answers the questions P. poses to the Greek students. After she and the students have talked, one of the Greek students speaks up:

"We want to learn about other cultures but not to lose ours. We want a better organisation of traffic and better opportunities for people, more work."

Students want to adopt the organisation of their daily life from the North European countries which represent the ideal picture for the students. They are dreaming of a different life style, but admit that they don't really know about real life. In Germany students noticed that there are differences. We learn about the same things but we are unique in all countries. (Appendix 8/1, 8/2). Then a German student with foreign looks stands up and concludes what we can all learn from each other:

"The uniqueness of each culture; you learn to respect your own culture when you get to know other ones!"

School culture changes slowly. Although possibilities for cultural learning are still dawning in the school students realise that learning about the other cultures is a way to learning to respect your own culture. But there are also some events that will cause the school to change forever and can make us wonder:

(From an e-mail 25 September 2008): Dear Eija and friends,

We are really sorry about what has happened in that vocational school. It was awful. We listened to the news yesterday evening and we were shocked too. We wonder how it is possible to have such terrible incidents in a country like Finland where things seem to be so beautiful and peaceful compared with our way of life here in Athens. Is the city close to Nokia? We learned that one of the kids died in Tampere hospital. It's so sad! Please be careful, all of you. We miss you. We wish you could be here with us tonight. Our love to everybody from all of us,

Your Greek friends

5 DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the research project I discussed different leadership theories in order to describe what kind of leadership for change is needed for a change in practice within the school context. I defined leadership as a tool *for change in practice* when I listed *effective leadership, sustainable leadership, ethical leadership and pedagogical leadership*. I will list some of the results below.

Beginning with effective leadership I introduced shared leadership as a form of distributed leadership that emerges from team functions. As regards the Finnish and German schools I noted that they have pooled leadership on the top to lead the others in the organisation whereas smaller schools the Estonian and the Greek schools have a flatter organisation. The empirical findings from the Finnish and German schools show that shared leadership indeed has a strong impact on perceived team effectiveness. Finnish case school and German case school teachers are used to taking on team responsibilities in the project work tasks. Moreover it was found that despite cultural differences and different languages not only team building and discussing teaching was inspiring for the teachers but also teaching in the other case schools was welcomed, especially by the Finnish teachers. In pedagogical matters all case school teachers could form a professional learning community around pedagogical matters quite naturally without any great efforts.

Sustainability in leadership was manifested in several ways in the findings from the German school. Leadership was shared and distributed throughout the school organisation and in the decision-making processes. With the German case school I have also drawn a picture of sustainability when describing the leaders leading the school in the European dimension. Leadership is shared and distributed on the system level. The head is also the link to nurturing the growth of all participants and their commitment to shared goals in the community. Sustainability in leadership can also be manifested in the system cohesion. However, in his letter the German student reminds us of what is worthwhile in a school. Encouragement and positive atmosphere in the school make a difference in a student's life and sustainability is a worthy aspect in education: a human identity needs a safe context for growing favourably. Students seem to be aware of good education having a value of its own.

Estonian students also express their respect of traditions and the teachers' joint effort towards academism as lasting values in the Estonian case school. Earlier on p. 48 I cited Hargreaves & Fink (2006) who state that *sustainable*

leadership matters in connection with learning and integrity. Values of the heads and teachers are also crucial in sharing leadership in the learning community.

I dealt implicitly with the different perspectives of ethical leadership typical of multicultural schools although our Finnish and Estonian schools in this research were not representatives for multiculturalism. In our Greek partner school, however, multiculturalism was eagerly discussed especially due to the growing number of Romani students and their coming and leaving the school. This aspect of multiculturalism gave us all interesting discussions on the needs of arranging special education for students that arrive from cultural backgrounds unfamiliar to us.

In the German school it was found that ethical problems and adjusting different cultural views to the practice of teaching and learning was everyday work. In the introduction of the case school I described multiculturalism in Germany as a cause of the main problems for education, but I did not point out that a clear benefit of multiculturalism for society is intercultural learning. This became, however, obvious in several ways when we visited the German school and saw their ways of working with students from different cultural origins, and saw the parents being treated as members of the school community whose contributions are recognised and respected.

5.1 Main Findings

The aim of the research was to understand the participation of the different agents in decision-making in culturally different school contexts. My personal interest in this research is crossing the cultural and organisational borders and learning more about leadership and cultural diversity. For the development of shared leadership in a school community the aim of the research was also to understand the processes in decision-making in a school community.

First I will answer the main research question:

How is shared leadership understood in the case schools?

Thereafter I will answer the questions:

- a. *How do principals understand and practise shared leadership?*
- b. *How can teachers, students and parents participate in the decision-making?*
- c. *How is shared leadership connected to learning?*

In this research I have answered the first research question *how shared*

leadership is understood in the different case schools through e.g. interviewing the heads and by forming metaphors of the identity and values of the case schools. In my own school I described my own role in the school and the culture. In the other schools where I have a spectator's role I have included in the metaphors my view of how shared leadership is implemented in the case school. I have also added a SWOT analysis of each case school to show what kinds of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the common meaning-building I see in the school community. They are metaphorical constructions and were formulated before I understood that they are only parts of the picture. I have also written my personal understanding and learning of the phenomenon of shared leadership in the form of a poem in the end as an aesthetic description of my understanding of the research process. My main result expressed on a general level is that school leadership is a community process in which sharing or distributing leadership is the main perspective or approach that the school leaders apply.

a) *How do principals understand and practise shared leadership?*

When shared leadership was discussed with principals it was understood as sharing tasks between the head and the teachers. Some heads thought that international cooperation between schools worked, however, as leadership training in shared leadership. With my personal experience I realised how we can change the existing system: it is through active participation in the meaning-building processes that we can create new meanings and change the system. Therefore I claim that international cooperation can open new paths for developing school leadership practice and training. Leading a change is a process of learning what and how to change.

Although we noticed cultural differences, which worked as spices in our cooperation, it was surprising to find that there are more similarities than differences in European schools. One of the greatest cultural differences was the languages that we spoke. Although English was our working language, our mother tongues and other languages were also needed for making sure that everybody understood what was being discussed. And misunderstandings were learned to be everyday practice.

Despite the differences in systems and structures, on a joint schoolwork level we could form a professional learning community built on universal values that we had in common as heads and teachers. I take safety as an example. When we discussed for example safety in schools the Germans thought that the Finnish school authorities had given them ideas for how to protect the students in the cases of school shootings. We also found that the Germans had joined the project because they had heard much about the success of Finnish education in the PISA and wanted to learn how the schools work in practice. The Greeks who joined the project for the same reason wanted to start in their school special needs education as they had seen it functioning in our Finnish school.

However, when the students got involved in the project they also wanted to organise their own learning projects with the students from the partner schools, and the perspective of shared leadership got a totally new meaning. With the international Comenius teams implying the participation of the heads, teachers, students and occasionally parents and administrators, too, school leadership and shared leadership turned to more innovative work practice.

As a conclusion, I would like to state that although there are different cultural interpretations of how school leadership is understood in different cultures, international partnerships and networks can work as learning communities for the development of new fruitful ideas in practice.

At the beginning of our joint work it was learned that school leadership is a culturally bound phenomenon restricted by the values and beliefs constructed through practice. A school culture actually sets the conditions for leadership practice. The context of school makes leadership a special kind of expert work where conditions for change have to be known and understood from the perspective of the respective history and culture. The identity of a school is formed during a certain period of time through people and their experiences and their lives lived in the school. This identity formulates and influences the practice of school leadership in no small way. Nurturing the growth of a student's identity needs to have a solid ground and sustainability. Changes in the school culture are possible only through negotiations and with the agreement of all partners. This is also why some changes in school are slow or even unsuccessful.

Practising shared leadership and different roles in the project work brought new understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership. However, the most important finding is that although a culture sets restrictions on implementing new models of leadership, new meanings for the phenomenon of shared leadership can be reflected on and learned in collaboration with other schools.

b) How can teachers, students and parents participate in the process of decision-making in the school community?

Teachers had their teachers' conferences in all the case schools but how people could participate and how much participation was expected of everybody was depending on the culture. Finnish teachers felt that the head had decided many of the issues beforehand. In Germany the system in the school was based on vivid discussions: all partners were accepted in the discussions as full companions. The head wanted to talk with the staff first and make decisions afterwards at least in most of the cases. In Greece shared leadership could be culturally understood either as a weakness of the head or a sign of a progressive way of leading the school. In Estonia the head wanted to discuss the things with the teachers as much as possible as she understood that as a way to enhancing the teachers' commitment to their work.

In the case schools there were student boards. In Finland the student board was working separately on its own whereas in other countries the students had their representatives in a forum that included the adults, teachers and parents. In Greece the leader of the student board had talks with the head. In Estonia the students, the teachers, the parents and the local community seemed to respect their school and its academic values. Participation in the decision-making was made possible for all partners.

The role of parents was the most significant difference in the decision-making in the schools. In Germany and Greece parents had a strong presence in the decision-making in the school whereas in the Finnish schools the parents are invisible and the local community does not always support or trust the teachers or the school. In Estonia parents trust the teachers and the school and the community supports the school. To gain more of positive acclaim the Finnish school would need more cooperation with the local community.

In answering the research question *how both adults and students are included in the process of decision-making in the school community* I found out that school leaders develop and lead the processes of participation in school. Therefore I claim that shared leadership is about leading processes at school where the challenge of the head is to be a system leader. In this research, the following leadership processes that a school head needs to enhance were found through the mapping of the themes featuring in the case schools (Figure 4.):

LEADERSHIP PROCESSES IN A SCHOOL COMMUNITY

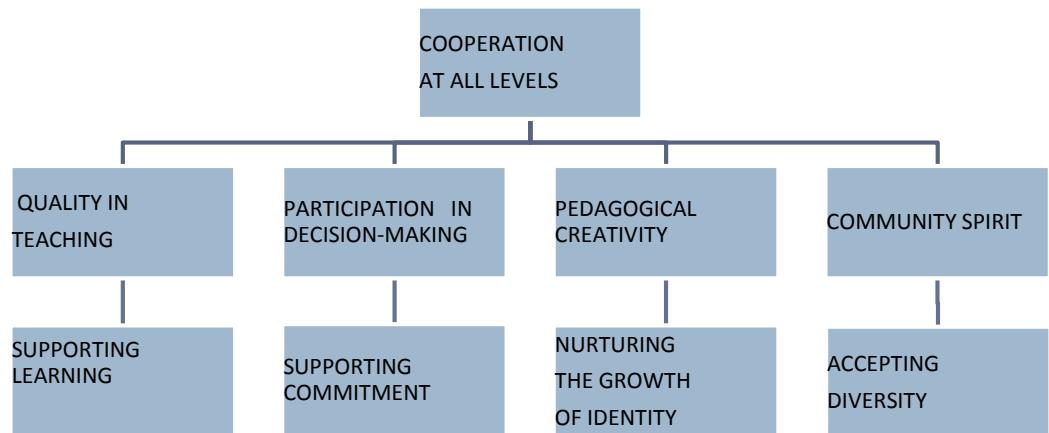


Figure 4. Leadership processes in a school community

There are differences in how the leadership processes are emphasised in the case schools. This is also manifested in the values in the school culture.

In the Finnish school supervising the quality of teaching and learning and evaluation is the most important task of the head as a system leader. Supporting teacher commitment is carried out through individual planning for teachers who

are seen as leaders of pedagogy. However, it is worth noting that although the wellbeing of teachers is eagerly discussed in the school, the support systems for teachers e.g. in disciplinary problems are found insufficient. For instance, the school still lacks sufficient, multiprofessional systems for treating bullying. Despite the aims of democracy education, in sharing leadership there is little participation of students in the decision-making processes and parents have hardly any say in the school. There is little time for nurturing the growth of the identity of individual students. Support systems are insufficient for enhancing the learning of all students. However, support systems for teachers' in-service training are strong and helped by several agents.

In the German school participation of all partners in the decision-making processes is considered normal. There is a strong tradition of building consensus through discussions in the school culture. Nurturing the growth of a teacher's identity is seen as an important task for the support of commitment. Accepting diversity is common and is helped by all the processes in the school. Both internal and external partners are important in the German school. Parents and politicians are also included in the discussions and decisions. Supporting the learning of all students is seen as crucial and the head works for the inclusion of the immigrant students, too. Tolerance of diversity was obvious in the daily work of the school.

The Estonian school excels in developing the quality of education on the basis of traditions and through inventing innovative ideas and building on them. Sharing the processes of leadership is carried out on a daily basis with academism and quality in teaching as the backbone. There is a good community spirit which the leader supports with negotiations with the staff. The community supports the school and participates in the negotiations. The parents appreciate school education and also work for its aims. There is a good balance between the traditions and the orientation towards the future in the Estonian school.

In Greece supporting the pedagogical creativity is emphasised as a common task in the school culture. There is also a good community spirit with everybody as a member in the family. However, there are mixed ideas of whether sharing leadership suits school at all. Sharing leadership is not a traditionally accepted way of organising school leadership. It can be taken as a sign of weakness or inability of the head, which is perhaps a cultural reflection from the society. The head is supposed to be a strong leader in the Greek school. Teachers are not trusted to exercise their true efforts in their work if they are not pushed and controlled. Sadly, the system does not support the teachers. Neither do the parents nor the politicians. The Greek head and the school try to find the support through national and international projects because changes are difficult to make in the school culture. This is the negative side to having a strong school culture where traditions are respected. Understandably, the school culture and change in school are closely related.

Fullan (2008) names 'connecting peers with purpose' as one of his secrets of change. In human systems it is 'the social glue' that holds things tight. Fullan

(2008, 43) talks about the head teacher's responsibility to help the system cohesion, which a head can do in three ways:

1. *through links to other schools*
2. *through building relationships with district leaders*
3. *through connecting to the goals of the system as a whole*

For the heads Fullan's message (Fullan 2008, 51) is: *Lead the change you want to see* by doing the following: de-privatise teaching, model instructional leadership, build capacity, educate other leaders, divert the distractors, be a system leader. Fullan's ideas describe school leadership in Anglo-American circumstances, but they can be applied to school leadership in other cultures as well.

For shared leadership, too, a principal needs to manage the processes, both internal (in the community) and external (outside the community) and create a learning environment as a consensus where all partners are equally represented, which seems to be the most difficult task of a school head. I also noted the following aspects in a school working with partners from different cultures:

1. *participation of heads, teachers and students creates ownership, commitment and wellbeing at school*
2. *learning about your own culture helps you to appreciate the other cultures*
3. *working with cultural values gives one roots and wings*
4. *a personal relationship to change grows through active participation*
5. *collaboration with people from other cultures expands the visions*
6. *collaboration with people from other cultures is beneficial for the growth of the personal identity (students: educational, and teachers and heads: professional)*
7. *the meaning of school and education: true educational values are resistant to change*

Understanding the complexity of school makes the main findings of this research finally take the shape of a theory of school leadership practice as follows:

My theory of school leadership practice emerges from a school culture where all partners are equally represented in the decision-making, where working with cultural values is part of education, and where diversity and nurturing the growth of the identity are respected in the community. The meaning of education and the need for a change are discussed and built in a dialogue. There is a good atmosphere for everybody to learn and work. As a head, my main task is to see that this is possible. Change in the school culture is possible when all the parts and processes are equally considered and in good balance.

As regards this model of practice the main purpose was to understand holistically and cyclically the participants' experiences as in hermeneutics. I posed myself questions like "*How do I understand my own leadership?*" and included my position in the community in the metaphor of the Finnish school. In each metaphor I have a different role being present with my feelings and bodily expressions to show my understanding of different cultures.

Co-constructivism is manifested in this research through subjectivism and highlighting the processes of meaning-building together with the participants and through the method of narrative analysis. To express my own identity as a female school head I also felt it was necessary to include some criticism on the power structures and expectations of gender in connection with leadership and some inner wishes to change and transform the practice. My role as a researcher has been a participant, interpreter and active innovator of the practice. Combining all these roles sets limits for me as a researcher but, on the other hand, other people have been able to participate in the research process.

While studying the phenomenon of shared leadership I needed to describe the participants' life worlds and to interpret the phenomenon of shared leadership as I did e.g. in the discussions and interviews with the heads and the deputy heads and, to some extent, by including some student or teacher comments or letters. Some ethnographical parts were included to describe cultures (e.g. how students describe their school and their culture).

The project has shown that building motivation creates commitment, and that top-down leadership in a school organisation does not work well when something is seen as extra work. These findings seem to apply to a multitude of situations in school. This is equally true of creating a sustainable change in a school community. If something is not accepted as a true part of the practice, it will be opposed to.

To describe the school culture I discussed e.g. *sustainable leadership* in 2.3.2, p. 48 and referred to Fullan (2005) who defines *educational sustainability as the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose*. I also referred to Hargreaves & Fink (2006) who state that *sustainable leadership matters in connection with learning and integrity because it preserves, protects and promotes deep and broad learning for all in relationships of care for others*. Sustainability is a worthy aspect in education: a human identity needs a safe context for growing. What works for the education of human beings has been learned during a long time in practice. However, the beliefs behind the work organisation of schools need to be changed in order to promote learning, a change in practice that can only be done by the heads and teachers themselves. I know that I changed my mind in this during my own active participation in the research process.

c) *How is shared leadership connected to learning?*

School leadership is practice-based work where shared leadership is a process of meaning-building and learning in practice. I claim that for school leadership to become transformational it should be connected to the actual organisation of school as well as to the learning processes taking place there.

I have explicitly answered the second question *how both adults and students are included in the process of decision-making in the school community* by drawing conclusions from the themes that I came across in the data. I have used the conclusions of my discussion on shared leadership to build a model of a school where cooperation is nurtured at all levels, and to build a theory of school leadership or my theory of practice as a head. In this research I have used the study of shared leadership as a keyhole to different school cultures and found that shared leadership and pedagogical leadership are culturally bound phenomena.

Values are the corner stones of education. Many values in school education are universal and therefore suitable for discussion. We found out that some values are, however, culturally bound and appreciated in the school education in some countries more than in the other ones: e.g. aesthetics in Greek education, entrepreneurship in Finland, tolerance in Germany and academism in Estonia. These values were also seen in the school cultures: the Greek school had several educational school development projects where aesthetics was emphasised, the Finnish school showed examples of the entrepreneurship of students showing products of their own design and all kinds of art and crafts projects, the German school culture was full of examples of good practice in the democracy education and integration of immigrant students and fostering the growth of the identity of students whereas the Estonian school excelled with its emphasis on academism and respect of traditions in educating their students for a better future. But as a result of the joint work process we also found values of common interest. Interest in the partners' values also grew during the processes of joint work (e.g. our partners wanted to learn more about our entrepreneurship education in practice while we were interested in learning more about the aesthetics education of the Greeks and the inclusion and integration of foreign students in the German school and the respect of traditions as still seen in the Estonian school).

A student concluded about intercultural learning: "*We learn about the same things but we are unique in all countries*" which is a powerful statement for the European perspective in education. But before we know who we are and what kinds of identities we have, we need to learn about our roots. Being a European is open to discussion and political negotiation only when diversity and culturally unique features can be accepted.

In the international Comenius project the multicultural teams worked using different kinds of methods: e.g. panel discussions, group work, presentations, musicals, plays and dances with the participation of students, teachers, heads, parents and officials from the school administration or municipality. Different roles and combinations of people in teams forced people to change their routines.

The multicultural work setting was a learning experience in itself. Mixed teams and mixed methods seemed to work surprisingly well in multicultural contexts, too. When the setting was far from the everyday routine, new, even creative ideas could be accepted. Heads were also allowed different things from their daily routine, e.g. creative and artistic leadership offered a way out of the administrative school work. We were allowed to exercise some pedagogical leadership while working in the international context.

In project-type working, pedagogical leadership could also be connected to sharing leadership. Teachers' participation in the decision-making process in pedagogical matters can lead to individual growth and membership in the learning community. Cooperative processes can be linked to cooperative models of teaching and learning. The growing of an identity can be linked to growing as a member in the community and society. As a head I can draw the following practical conclusions from the learning in the Comenius project:

- *Teachers` participation in the decision-making processes can promote meaningfulness in their teaching and add to their commitment to their work.*
- *Teachers can activate the students to participate in the decision-making processes.*
- *Pedagogical leadership in multicultural contexts can expand to intercultural learning experiences where shared leadership has a tendency to grow to shared cognitions of learning.*

5.2 From Practice to Theory

How can a theory of practice lead to a theory of school leadership? I turn the question the other way around: Kurt Lewin (1998) has said that nothing is as practical as a good theory. I found phenomenology a practical tool for further developing and understanding and building a theory of school leadership. In terms of shared leadership I had to ask questions like:

- *What kind of phenomenon is shared leadership?*
- *What is other people's experience of shared leadership in school?*
- *What is my own experience of shared leadership and how is it intertwined with the others' perceptions in the community?*
- *What is the connection of shared leadership in a school community to building an identity and in helping people to make sense of their lives?*
- *How is the phenomenological way of knowing in shared leadership different from other leadership theories?*

Leadership in the school community needs to be looked at from several angles. Phenomenology as a branch of philosophy was needed to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership and how it can be connected to pedagogical leadership in schools that have different cultural backgrounds and values. By the use of phenomenology I asked what meanings shared leadership has to the people in the school and what kind of meanings it can be attached to within different school cultures.

According to Ladkin (2010, 29): “*a phenomenological approach demands greater transparency on the researcher’s part about their own positioning to the phenomenon and how that influences their interpretations and theoretical insights*”. In this research, the readers are given some samples of the data together with their analyses to highlight some aspects of and reflections on the variety of identities in the school cultures, and I hope the readers will be better equipped to understand the different meanings behind a phenomenon like shared leadership in school. On the one hand, learning from the experiences of working in an international, multicultural project was the aim decided with the project schools. On the other hand, finding out about my own professional identity as a school head and a researcher of my own work was the personal motivation for the research. Phenomenology could be linked both to the search for meaning and to building an identity in the community.

Phenomena such as leadership have to be studied in the social context where they are experienced and lived, where there is a connection to meanings and where identities are built. In the fusion of horizons of practice and theory I follow the ideas of Ladkin (2010) who uses the concepts drawn from hermeneutics ‘*the Life world, Lebenswelt, fusion of horizons, or attunement*’ that can be used to enrich our understanding of the meaning-making aspect of leadership.

According to Ladkin (2010) a kind of process philosophy can be used as a lens to reconsider organisational change and the role of leadership from the viewpoint of aesthetic philosophy. In my research project school leadership, making sense is needed over and over again. The meanings of *wholes, pieces and moments of social relations* are philosophical concepts, but can be practical as well. For example, metaphors can also be used as tools in leadership. Metaphors, e.g. *the iceberg*, can be used for describing visible and invisible parts in our environment. Invisible phenomena include e.g. feelings, atmosphere, etc. What we understand with these metaphors is interesting. There is not really such a thing as organisational learning, but we use the term to describe how people learn or change their ways of working: some due to learning, others due to common agreements in the community.

On p.59 where I discussed how school development and building a professional identity are interrelated it was stated that in the postmodern production systems it is typical of teaching to use both formal and informal systems, typical of learning to reflect on and learn from informal work skills. As in any work organisation, members in the work community must first accept their work community values for the community to accept them as members who are

allowed to *build their personal identity and speak in their own voice*. School leadership is a job full of action learning where understanding the connection between the community dynamics and the rules of participation in the community can be helped by shared leadership. *Process philosophy could also be used as a lens to reconsider the organisational change and the role of school leadership dynamics from the viewpoint of aesthetic philosophy where e.g. metaphors can be used.* A change in the learning organisation where people work can be a part in meaning-building and could create a change that can be understood as 'a change in the common narrative'. Being a European or Europeanisation could also be understood as the larger narrative or framework for building an identity.

To re-conceptualise school leadership I could ask: "*How might we rethink school leadership in a school community where leadership and the participation in the decision-making processes would be connected to the processes of meaning-building of the identity?*"

Rethinking school leadership could be based on philosophical and social constructional grounds, i.e. the phenomenological notion of 'the Lifeworld' (applied by Husserl, further developed by Heidegger, Merley-Ponty, and Sartre; in Ladkin 2010, 18-21). Making sense within the phenomenological notion of 'the Life world' of people and the meanings they hold for the humans who interact with them could lead to different kinds of understanding of the aspects of school leadership and shape our understanding of the role of leadership. With the phenomenological concepts of *side, aspect and identity* there can be several understandings of the phenomenon.

Choosing a different standpoint gives a different angle to understanding the phenomenon. In rethinking school leadership in the phenomenological way I can go on to construct a theory of school leadership where the different meanings are created in the 'Life world' with sides, aspects and identities, and where processes with wholes, parts and moments can be seen as reflections of the entity. With the help of these phenomenological concepts we have a possibility to reach some relational and invisible aspects of phenomena like leadership.

5.3 Credibility of the Research

As a head and a researcher of my own work I am a part of the research. Since I am the narrator my voice is heard all over the research. My knowing is not based on a distance, but knowing in practice. This kind of knowing can be called '*inspective knowing*' (Varto 2000; Kukkonen 2007, 126).

I have also wanted to enlarge the answers from shared leadership with the narratives that I have constructed both from the data and from my own thoughts. As told before, the data for the narrative was mostly based on the products of the

joint work in the Comenius project. Narratives are used to refer to the process of knowing and the nature of knowledge. My own participation in the research and the participation of the others is a prerequisite for understanding shared leadership in school practice. With my understanding I present not just mine but the experiences of other people from this phenomenon as in *heuristic* research (Patton 2002: in Kukkonen 2007, 127).

As I mentioned earlier on p.78 Lyytinen (2004, 179) discusses the nature of narrative knowing in teachers' action research which is often used as a tool for professional development, and notes that this form of research enables teachers to bring the theory and practice of education closer to one another. This credibility can be secured according to Lyytinen (2004) by the following principles:

- *the historical continuity principle (the analysis of the context and action in an historical perspective)*
- *the reflectivity principle (the researcher's understanding of the meanings and adequacy of subjectivity)*
- *the dialectical principle and how understanding came about with those who are in the research, different voices and simultaneous interpretations, authenticity)*
- *the workable principle (good action research aims at good practice: what works is true)*

(Lyytinen 2004, 185).

The research has been nailed to several *historical perspectives* through methodological commitments and choices of analysis. Membership in the European Union gives a time perspective of development within the last sixty years. There is an *historical continuity perspective* included in the presentations of the case school countries. There is a 'bounded' system chosen for the research through the three-year-long Comenius/SOKRATES Project in 2005-2008 and the analyses made of the cooperation and joint work with the partners.

The *reflectivity principle* works on several levels in the research: my understanding of different meanings is written as a narrative where the reader can follow my understanding and form an interpretation of my understanding. In teachers', and as I see it, in principals' professional development the reflectivity principle is a gateway to researching and thinking. Or as Lyytinen (2004) puts it: "*For growing to become a researcher, a teacher needs to become a thinker*" Lyytinen (2004, 190).

From this reflectivity principle there is a final link to *bricolage* which I also needed as a research design in the formation of this research report. Bricolage was handy in sampling the analyses of the data to a new entity or a collage. Reflecting and doing research in my own work has opened a path for building my identity as a professional and a human being. In narrative research,

knowledge of the world and concepts of identity are understood to be under continuous construction, change and development.

The *dialectical principle* was in this research taken into account by authenticity and different voices in the narratives. The narrative that the researcher and the subject construct in the dialogue to a linguistic form is in turn an autonomous unit, which allows an interpretation of meanings from several standpoints.

I have made an *autobiographical statement* (p.84 and onwards) where I write about my pre-understanding of the theory of practice as a head of school (*Mimesis 1*). There I link my personal experiences as a principal with the aims of the research. In that way my own experiences are part of the research as I am part of the culture that I write about.

I have also constructed a narrative of each case and used a narrative analysis of the data in answering the research questions. The process of a narrative analysis is the synthesising and configuration of the data into a whole. This is how I constructed the cases and the metaphors that are also narratives (*Mimesis 2*).

This level of the research is also about building an identity as a head. A narrative identity is a result of a process where an interpretation of the self is formed by means of narratives, symbols and signs. A narrative identity is constituted in a narrative that has a plot. This narrative identity is open for cultural interpretations of others (*Mimesis 3*). In the end of this study there is also a poem that I wrote of what I learned of the research project (Appendix 12).

In schools the role of principals is crucial in building a common narrative in the community. Moreover they can assist others in the forming of their personal, autobiographical and professional narratives in relation to the common narrative. However, as I am part of the research, there are limitations to me as a researcher. Distancing is difficult when one is doing research in one's own work. As a researcher and an interviewer I also found the ethical perspective somewhat difficult in some dialogues and discussions. I solved the problem by passing the leadership conclusions on to my partners when I sent them their interviews by e-mail to be checked. I left out some parts of the interviews because I did not want to reveal anybody's confidential thoughts. I also used myself as a mirror: if I had been hurt myself it was a clear sign to leave a certain part of the text out. But to make sure, I had to ask. On the other hand, credibility in this research is reached through knowing in practice. Experience as a head and a teacher gives me credibility as a researcher of practice, too. It is also easy to understand what works in school and why and why some ideas are not approved. As a researcher I think it is much harder to accept that we cannot change the systems even if we want to.

When I collected the Swots I noticed that I can only look at the partner schools as an outsider and with my own cultural lenses. I can understand my own school and culture much better than that of the others. Therefore my Swots are creations, narratives of their kinds and reflect my own thinking and subjective

understanding as a cultural outsider rather than an objective picture of the status quo. I can defend the Swot on my own school on firmer and more convincing grounds since I am the head there. But that is my restriction as a researcher, too. Swots were, however, needed for the understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership in the other school cultures. Here I focused on processing the wholes, parts and moments of shared leadership.

Finally, credibility can be reached in action research through *the workable principle*. When working together with partners our common theme was developing our schools and ourselves. For example when finding out about our values and how they work in practice, we listed similarities and differences that we saw in practice and discussed them later in groups. We found new solutions to problems together. Teachers could see how teachers work in other countries and discuss their work with them. Teachers could also teach their subjects in the case schools in other countries and learned valuable lessons of cultural differences. I personally found that using other ways of working can add to my pedagogical leadership and open new paths to more creative school leadership.

5.4 Rethinking School Leadership

In practice-based communities we are used to looking for solutions that are applicable and quick-at-hand. The easy way of making sense of shared leadership would have been making a list of all the possible answers that were given to questions of the type '*What is shared leadership?*' and '*How is leadership shared in school to promote learning?*' or '*What does the leader do to share leadership?*'.

However, I was interested in finding out what kinds of meanings can be attached to shared leadership that would urge us to favour participation in the learning process. There I had the role as a change agent in mind. Using the phenomenon of shared leadership as a tool in practice I could create a new forum of learning for schools as professional learning communities, as referred to earlier on p. 21. We did not aim at correct answers when working together. Instead our aim was to learn more by sharing ideas, practices and methods. Expanding school leadership beyond the borders of one's own school area is an attempt to broaden the scope of school leadership of today.

Our interest in the phenomenon of shared leadership brought us heads and teachers together from different countries. In this way, I see the head's different role to resemble Socrates' way of posing questions that lead to a dialogue with the others, which I also see as an important step to change in practice. The narrow role of the head as an implementer of orders and restrictions is not sufficient for bringing about change in school.

Surprisingly perhaps, I realise that a lot of my conclusions of the research project go well together with the recent writings of Fullan & al. (2014) who see three major keys to maximising the impact of school leadership: *leading learning, being a district and system player and becoming a change agent* (Fullan et al. 2014). According to Fullan et al. (*ibid.* 106), however, these factors need support in several ways. At the school level the heads are responsible for promoting the learning of their staff, teachers and students by arranging the school organisation to favour the learning of all participants. The head is responsible for building a system in the school in several ways. (Fullan et al. 2014).

As I presented with the research project I have also gone through the leadership processes and participation in the decision-making in my own school (p. 161). Bearing cultural differences in mind I have also stated that school leadership can benefit from different views and theories dealing with organisational structures even when they are derived from contexts other than school itself.

When effectiveness was discussed with distributed or shared leadership I referred (p. 46) to recent studies of Goldhaber (2002) and Harris (2004) who claim that distributed leadership could yield a higher impact on student achievement than what yet shown. Later, I continued to discuss plural leadership (pp. 45-46) and perceived effectiveness in the school organisations in the results of the case schools in chapter 5.

Sustainability was discussed (p. 48 and onwards) as an important means of creating good grounds for lasting education. School leadership needs sustainability as well. Leaders need to achieve the trust of their staff. Heads have to be raised. Credibility is an outcome from the process of maturing as a leader. In this way school headship is a craftsmanship which has to be learned in practice but which can surely be helped by training and suitable education.

It is also a fact that school leadership has a clear mission in striving for better learning outcomes of all students in school. Another issue is how to achieve this. How to motivate the digital natives to feel home at school? At the beginning I dealt with ethics (p. 50) suggesting that the roles between adults and children in the school matter. Communication and meeting with people are important elements in building mutual trust and inspiring atmosphere in the school community.

Pedagogical leadership or as Fullan et al. (*ibid.*) says `leading learning` has a lot of unused potential in today´s school. Shared leadership practices can lead to team teaching and sharing the instruction of students in a much greater way than is customary in today´s schools. Shared school leadership can be the starting point of these changes to be realised in practice.

5.5 Proposals for Future Research

Developing school is a cooperative process. The findings of this research can be used for the further developing of school leadership in the case schools. To find out how the phenomenon of shared leadership has been developed it would be interesting to continue cooperation with the same case schools. On the other hand, schools have already widened their cooperation between each other e.g. with teachers and student visits.

Furthermore, research on school leadership in Europe is expected to meet a variety of challenges present in today's schools and in society at large. School leadership practices and integrating the training of future school leaders in Europe are themes that we can share and where we have a lot to learn from each other. International research in the area could strengthen the cooperation in practice.

Cooperational development programmes are one way of crossing the boundaries between schools. However, school leaders would need more of practical school leadership training in international matters and pedagogical training in combining the strategies of the school with the project-type learning that they, their students and staff get involved with. School leaders would benefit from the practical 'know-how' of how to combine pedagogical leadership and distributed leadership and the ideas of future learning.

Safety in schools is one example of the common themes in developing future schools and school leadership programmes in Europe. Whenever schools need to tackle unfamiliar phenomena there is a clear mission for research in the area.

In designing future education and training programmes for school leaders the needs of future learning cannot be stressed enough. Developing the praxis of school leadership is intertwined with the development of school as an organisation and as a learning community.

School life and school leadership reflect the cultural changes in society and in the world. The gap between the practice and the theory is one that the school heads themselves can bridge by active participation in the discussions on developing the praxis and research in their work area.

With my own research project I wish to participate in the research of school leadership carried out on the international level. As a follow-up research project, in order to gain more knowledge of school leadership practice across cultures several schools from different countries could build new networks of learners on themes of common interest.

The following practical questions could also be raised for follow-up research:

- *How to promote the learning of school leaders?*

- *How can we develop and sustain a school-based professional community where a reflective dialogue can be used for improving teaching and learning?*
- *How could we expand the social context of participation and learning of the students?*
- *How could schools work as communities for the wellbeing of the youth and staff in the changing circumstances?*
- *How could cultural differences be used for nurturing the growth of a personal identity in school?*
- *How could we have more time for the meaning-building in the school community and the forming of a common understanding of what is valuable in school?*

Learning should be the main aim in schools. With the visions of shared leadership, learning could be made into a process of the participants at all levels in schools. In a community-based school, values are shared and action planned together with the students for better learning achievements. For better learning and integration into the community, students should therefore be included in the discussions on the meaningfulness of their own learning. Participation could be encouraged through pedagogical leadership. One of the leadership challenges in contemporary school leadership is that the norms of the school and some of the expectations concerning the work of the teacher and the head contradict. A consensus is hard to reach because there are mixed ideas of what should be shared. A shared understanding of the vision, the aims and the values needs, however, to be built in the work community, and shared decision-making needs to be developed with the focus on student learning. An educational change can be implemented only when the teachers are involved. This could be made to a pedagogical model of practising shared leadership in schools.

But what kind of a place is school if there is not enough time for people? The lack of time appeared to be a common problem in the discussions on leadership and building a vision for the school. Likewise, students would need to be connected to the leadership processes in the schools.

In the future, I propose further studies to be established in culturally rich contexts, preferably across cultures, for the purpose of carrying out more extensive and in-depth research in the phenomenon of shared leadership within the context of cultural diversity.

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APPENDIX LIST

- APPENDIX1. Questionnaire of shared leadership (leaders)
- APPENDIX 2. Values of the school (students, teachers, leaders)
- APPENDIX 3. Values in action (bench-marking values in partner schools)
- APPENDIX 4. Identification with the school (students)
- APPENDIX 5. Values by German parents
- APPENDIX 6. Values in practice (Comenius teachers in groups)
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- APPENDIX 8. European perspective (students in partner schools)
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APPENDIX1. FEBRUARY 2006
A QUESTIONNAIRE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP AT SCHOOL
FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND OTHER PARTNERS

Background information:

a) age
b) sex
c) years in service
d) years at your school
e) nationality
f) profession

1. How does a school leader share leadership?

Make a list of occasions at your school where you share leadership.

Who are your partners on those occasions?

What are their roles in the process?

Who comes up with the ideas that are shared?

Who usually makes the decisions?

What kinds of decisions are made together?

2. How is shared leadership seen in the school culture?

How do you see your role as a leader at your school?

How would you describe shared leadership at your school?

3. What is the meaning of shared leadership in the school context for you?

Do you expect yourself to participate in decision-making?

4. How would you develop your school if you could start from the beginning?

Feel free to change anything that you see that could be developed.

5. How would you like your school to be in year 2010?

Describe any of the processes of decision-making that you listed before and tell how this will look in 2010.

6. What else would you like to say about shared leadership and this project?

APPENDIX2. /p.1**SEPTEMBER 2006****A TASK PAPER FOR THE STUDENTS IN THE FINNISH SCHOOL****COMENIUS TEHTÄVÄ 1****Taustatietoa**

- Koulumme on mukana Euroopan komission rahoittamassa Sokrates-ohjelman Comenius-koulun kehittämисprojektissa, jonka nimi on ***Developing our school in a European perspective.*** What can we learn from each other?
- hankkeessa ovat mukana yhteistyökoulut Ateenasta Kreikasta, Kölnistä Saksasta ja Rannusta Virossa
- hanke toteutetaan vuosina 2005 – 2008
- tavoitteenaamme on oman koulun kehittämisen lisäksi oppia ymmärtämään myös muita kulttuureja
- aluksi tutkimme omia arvojamme, omaa koulua, omaa ympäristöä ja kulttuuria
- sen jälkeen vertaamme niitä yhteistyökumppaneiden vastaaviin
- tarkoituksesta on tehdä tämän vuoden loppuun mennessä näistä juliste, jossa oman koulun arvot ovat esillä
- keväällä oppilaat tekevät kuvaksen omasta päivästään ja toisena tehtävänä on esitellä omaa ympäristöä, molemmista kevään tehtävistä kerätään Cd-rom
- nämä tuotokset kierrätetään maiden kesken
- helmikuussa 2006 saamme kouluumme vieraita yhteistyökouluista

Comenius -kysely

- ensin oppilas täyttää tämän kyselyn
- muodosta ryhmät ja ryhmä keskustelee asiasta
- ryhmä muodostaa yhteenvedon kaikkien mielipiteistä
- luokka valitsee keskuudestaan ryhmän, joka kokoaan luokan arvoista yhteisen julisteen, joka toimitetaan Comenius-ryhmälle
- samaan aikaan muut voivat havainnollistaa tärkeimmäksi kokemansa arvon piirtämällä kuvan

APPENDIX 2./p.2 Ryhmätyöskentelyn pohjaksi: 1. Mitkä arvot vallitsevat koulussa?
(Listaa 10 asiaa, jotka ovat mielestäsi arvoja koulussamme)

Arvo+Mitä tarkoitatte arvolla?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

2. Jos saisitte päättää, mitkä olisivat tärkeimmät arvot ryhmänne mielestä koulussamme?

Arvo+Mitä tarkoitatte arvolla?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

APPENDIX3. SEPTEMBER 2006
A TASK PAPER FOR THE STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN THE FINNISH SCHOOL

COMENIUS TEHTÄVÄ 2

Taustatietoa

- koulumme on mukana Euroopan komission rahoittamassa Sokrates-ohjelman Comenius-koulun kehittämисprojektissa, jonka nimi on *Developing our school in a European perspective. What can we learn from each other?* Koulun kehittämistä eurooppalaisessa hengessä: Mitä me voimme oppia toisiltamme?
- hankkeessa ovat mukana yhteistyökoulut Ateenasta Kreikasta, Kölnistä Saksasta ja Rannusta Virostä
- hanke toteutetaan vuosina 2005 – 2008
- tavoitteenamme on oman koulun kehittämisen lisäksi oppia ymmärtämään myös muita kulttuureja
- aluksi tutkimme omia arvojamme, omaa koulua, omaa ympäristöä ja kulttuuria
- sen jälkeen vertaamme niitä yhteistyökumppaneiden vastaaviin
- tarkoituksesta on tehdä tämän vuoden loppuun mennessä näistä juliste, jossa oman koulun arvot ovat esillä
- keväällä oppilaat tekevät kuvakseen omasta päivästään ja toisena tehtävänä on esitellä omaa ympäristöä, molemmista kevään tehtävistä kerätään Cd-rom
- nämä tuotokset kierrätetään maiden kesken
- helmikuussa 2006 saamme kouluumme vieraita yhteistyökouluista

Comenius – kysely vanhemille

- oppilas haastattelee vanhempaansa arvoista, jotka näkyvät koulussa ja joita toivotaan näkyvän
- oppilas tuo monisteen kouluun luokanvalvojalle

APPENDIX 4.

SEPTEMBER 2006

English version of a speech at the 50th anniversary of the the Herder-Gymnasium, Köln-Buchheim – a 18-year-old- student

Today we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our school and so I am supposed to talk of how great our school is. But let me first try to find an answer to the question "What, basically, is school?"

Most of you will say “ I do know what school is”, but there is no general answer to that. On the one hand school is an institution which helps and enables students to step into “ real life”. But on the other hand students will say as well that their life takes place outside school and you must admit that there are more influences which shape a student.

Moreover what do you really learn at school that is useful for your life? Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American philosopher in the 19th century, once said, "Education means to learn things of which you did not even know that you didn't know them".

Even if there are objections to this sentence one nevertheless must agree that referring to school- The Herder School included- he is right. Who really needs to know- be honest- how to calculate the capacitance of an electric capacitor if he is going to study pedagogics?

One has to admit that school offers a wide range of basic knowledge. Even a physician or IT specialist should know about German history of what Enlightenment meant for literature. And you need knowledge acquired at school to get fundamental knowledge to judge on politics.

Society needs people who have enough knowledge to commit. Not only those, knowing little, who only spread prejudices when uttering their opinion.

Education should not only be teaching subjects but should help us students to learn how to apply it. Consequently one should learn how to transform knowledge into practice.

In so far Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher, was absolutely right when he said, " The great aim of education is not knowledge but action". How to teach this ability has often been discussed among scientists. Let's quote Goethe: " For we can't shape children as we want to. As God gave them to us, we should take and love them, teach them as well as possible but let them be the way they are".

You see, education is not that easy to define. The notorious PISA study is the best example. Not only politicians argue about reforming school and sponsoring students even the Herder does. For example teacher trainees as well as young and committed teachers use a variety of new methods which leave us students sometimes helpless as to what they are really good for. Otherwise we are not content either if a teacher does nothing else but talk. I admit teaching is as hard as learning.

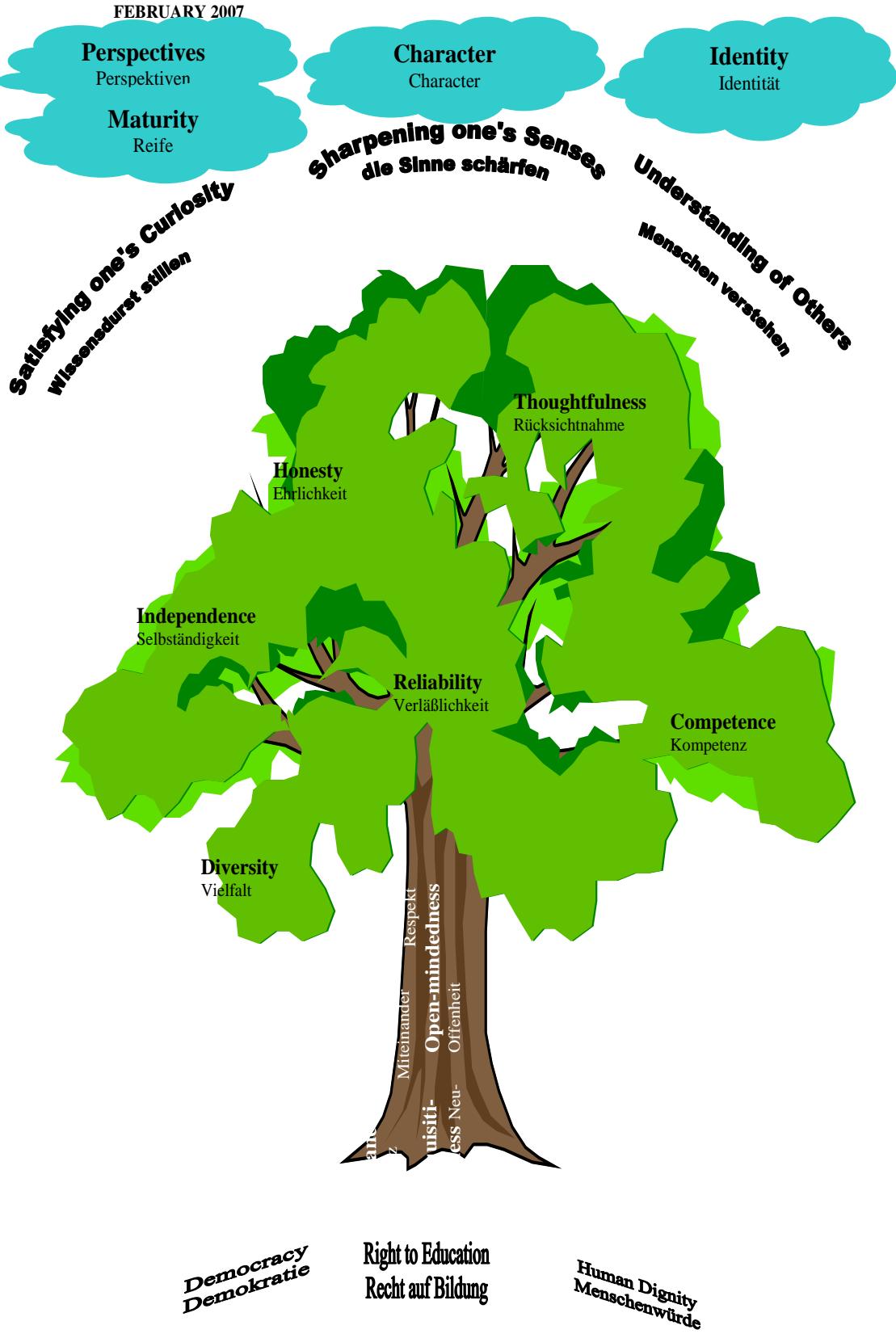
There are people like former students or teachers who really like to remember the time they spent at the Herder School. I ask myself why?

There are students who are looking forward to going back to school when the six weeks of summer holiday are over. When being asked why they might answer: happy to meet my friends again or something like that, but I'm convinced that there is more.

Well, for sure the Herder is something special. Not only the number of students or the competition with the Hölderlin school or any other such things play a role. There is more! Let me compare it with something like national pride on a lower level: pride to be a Herderianer! Even if no one can say exactly where this feeling comes from.

Being proud of the Herder, the feeling of identification and familiarity play a decisive role. If we are able to implement these feelings into what we will do with our education when school is over then school will really have been successful. So, I do hope that the Herder School will continue to educate students in such a positive way, and; I'm sure it will!

APPENDIX 5. VALUES BY
GERMAN PARENTS
FEBRUARY 2007



Democracy
Demokratie

Right to Education
Recht auf Bildung

Human Dignity
Menschenwürde

APPENDIX6.**FEBRUARY 2007**

DISCUSSIONS IN GROUPS OF TEACHERS:
Wednesday 14th of February, 13.30-15, Emäkoski School

VALUES IN EMÄKOSKI SCHOOL:

TOLERANCE	(suvaitselaisuus)
DEMOCRACY	(demokratia)
SAFETY	(turvallisuus)
RESPONSIBILITY	(vastuuntunto)
CREATIVITY	(luovuus)
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	(yritysjyys)
EQUALITY	(tasa-arvo)
COMMUNITY SPIRIT	(yhteisöllisyys)
SOUND SELF ESTEEM	(terve itsetunto)

A. VALUES IN PRACTICE (käytännössä näkyvät arvot)

1. WHAT HAVE OUR PARTNERS SEEN IN OUR SCHOOL? (mitä vierailijat ovat havainneet koulussamme)
2. WHAT IS SUPRISING, AMAZING, WONDERFUL, WORTH CRITICISM? (mikä yllättää, hämmästyttää, ihastuttaa, kirvoittaa kritiikkiä...)

B. IDENTIFICATION

1. HOW DO WE IDENTIFY WITH OUR WORK? (kuinka opettajat kokevat oman työnsä)
2. HOW DO WE IDENTIFY WITH OUR SCHOOL?(kuinka opettajat kokevat oman koulunsa)

Questions for partners (teachers):

- 1. WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE AT YOUR WORK?**
- 2. WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL LESS COMFORTABLE AT YOUR WORK?**
- 3. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO YOU GET FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES?**
- 4. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO YOU NEED?**
- 5. WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO YOURSELF?**

NOVEMBER 2007

APPENDIX 8. / p.1

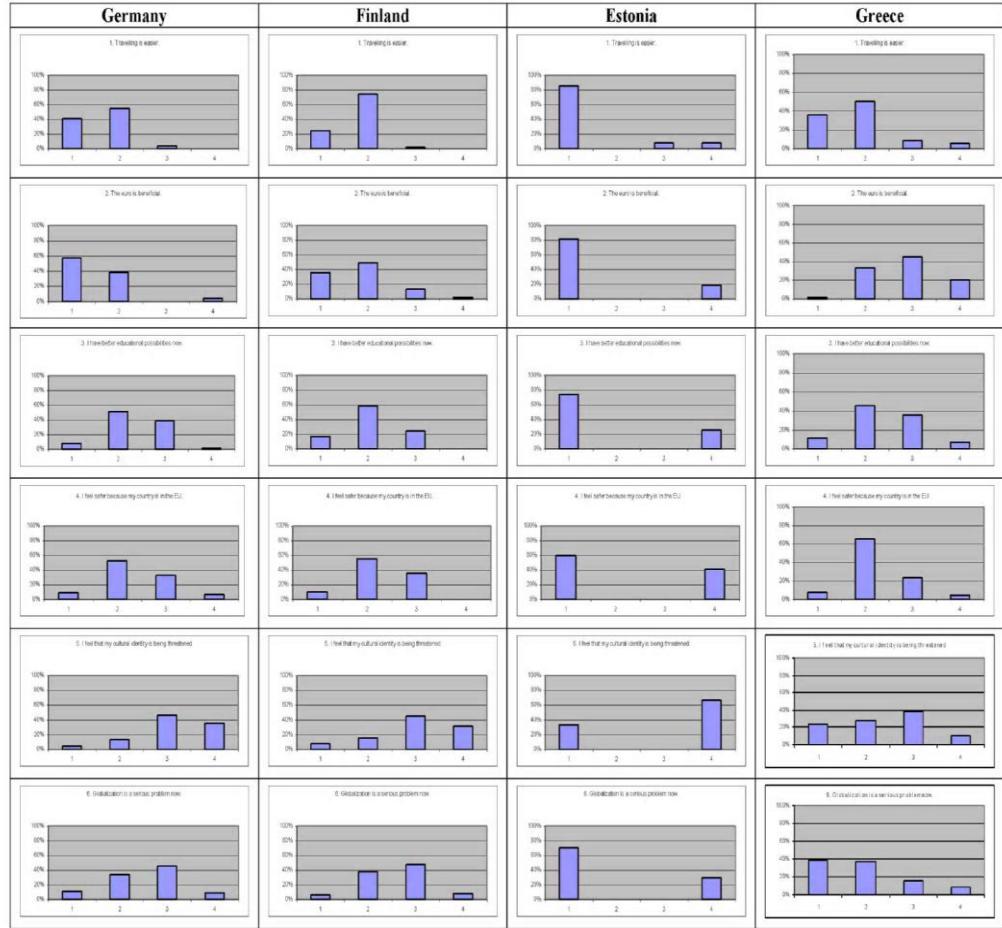
**Comenius questionnaire for students:
What does it mean to be a European in your everyday life?**

	I fully agree	I agree	I disagree	I fully disagree	Comments
1. Travelling is easier.					
2. The euro is beneficial.					
3. I have better educational possibilities now.					
4. I feel safer because my country is in the EU.					
5. I feel that my cultural identity is being threatened.					
6. Globalization is a serious problem now.					

- 1. Do you feel European and why?**
- 2. Do you find the EU is an important organization? Put down Pros and Cons!**

Pros.	Cons.

APPENDIX 8. /p.2 NOVEMBER 20007/MARCH 2008



Comenius meeting Rannu 7 November 2007

What do we have to prepare for the Cologne meeting?

1. Write down impressions on the three other schools regarding some of the values of the first posters.

2. Collect pictures

- For the background quarters of the four countries

- Pictograms/pictures for the dominating values

3. Collect typical examples for weekly time-tables (in the native language AND in English).

The poster will be designed as a square of 100x100 cm.

The outline is formed by a "ticker" which says "Comenius Project 2004-2008: What can we learn from each other?"

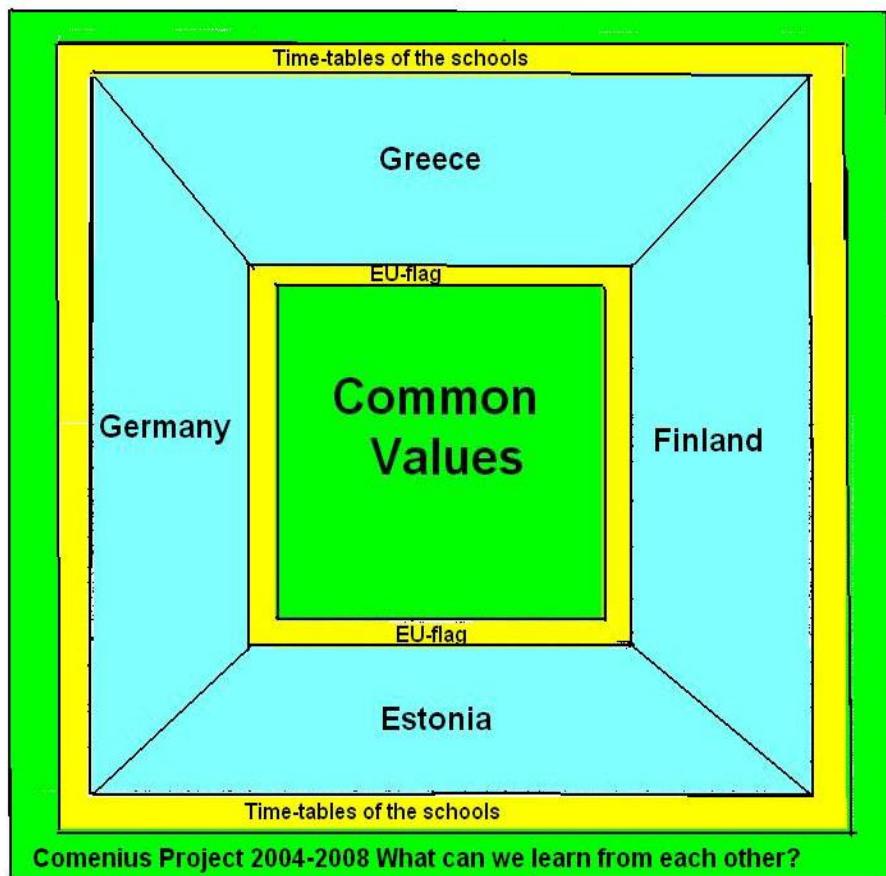
The next frame will be formed by the different time-tables of the schools.

The next inner frame is formed by four fields for each country. Each field contains the impressions of the other schools.

The frame of the inner square is formed by the EU flags.

The inner square is filled by the common values represented by symbols, pictograms or terms.

Please pay attention to the deadline to send the proposals to **B. 25. January**





MARCH 2008

5th

High School of Alimos

**Developing our school in a European perspective:
What can we learn from each other?**

Programme

OF THE 3rd INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN ATHENS

24 – 29 March 2008

	Activities
Monday 24/03/2008	<p>Arrival of the German teachers and students, we meet and welcome them at the airport.</p> <p>Arrival of the Finnish and Estonian teachers and heads.</p> <p>First visit at school-attendance of the celebration for Greek National Holiday of 25th of March (if possible).</p>
Tuesday 25 / 03 / 2008	<p>National Holiday.</p> <p>Teachers can attend the big parade of students in Athens.</p> <p>Afternoon free for your own plans (shops are closed)</p>
Wednesday 26 / 03 / 2008	<p>9.00a.m. Mr. P. will pick you up at the metro station of Daphni (on the platform)</p> <p>9.15 arrival at school</p> <p>9.30a.m. – 11.30a.m. Group work: teachers and students discuss the questionnaire</p> <p>11.30a.m. – 12.00 coffee break</p> <p>12.00 – 14.00p.m. Group work: ‘What have we learnt from each other?’ Mapping of similarities and differences between schools in the four countries. Ideas- suggestions for improvement – feedback from partners - proposals.</p> <p>14.00p.m. Light lunch at school.</p> <p>Afternoon free for your own plans</p>
Thursday 27 / 03 / 2008	<p>9.00a.m. We will pick you up at the metro station of Daphni</p> <p>9.30a.m.–11.30a.m. Group work: preparation of the final report</p> <p>11.30a.m – 12.00 coffee break</p> <p>12.00 – 14.00p.m. Group work: teachers and students debate the influence of the program on school life. Presentation of each country’s songs.</p> <p>14.00p.m Light lunch at school</p> <p>Free afternoon for shopping or sightseeing</p> <p>19.00 – 21.00 pm We attend a theatrical performance organized by teachers and students of the Greek school at a theatre near our school</p> <p>22.00 p.m. Farewell lunch at a restaurant</p>
Friday 28 / 03 / 2008	Short trip around Attica county
Saturday 29/03/2008	Departure of the Comenius groups

APPENDIX 11. List of partnership activities in the Comenius project,

Final report August 2008

AUGUST 2008

Date	Activity description	Actors involved
9/2006	Values at our school: collected to a poster	Students, teachers, heads, parents
11/2006	My school day: a description made in a story or a comic strip: collected to a booklet	Students, teachers
2/2007	My environment: a video made of the school area and surroundings	Students, teachers
2/2007	My school week: a diary of one week: discussions in the meetings	Teachers, heads
4/2007	Music, clothes and hobbies: a power point presentation or a video	Students
5/2007	Developing our school: a questionnaire for teachers for improving the school	Teachers, heads
9/2007	How to meet a foreigner: a manual of guidance to students in partner schools	Students
10/2007	Student exchange: German students in the Emäkoski school for 5 days	Students, teachers, parents
11/2007	What consequences does the EU have for us? A questionnaire for 9 th graders	Students
2/2008	Student exchange: Finnish students in Herder- Gymnasium, Cologne, for 5 days	Students, teachers, parents
3/2008	Happy birthday song in each partner's own mother tongue: a video	Students
3/2008	What have we learned from each other: common values that we share made to a poster and the evaluation of the project by the group at the final meeting	Heads, teachers, students
5/2008	Evaluation of the Comenius project at the Emäkoski school level	Heads, teachers

APPENDIX 12. After the joint project I wrote a poem where I summarised my own ideas of learning leadership:

*IN THE BEGINNING I believed like Robert Fulghum
All I really need to know
How to live and what to do and how to be
I learned in kindergarten.
Wisdom is not at the top of the graduate-school mountain
But there in the sand pile at Sunday School where
I learned:
Share everything.
Play fair.
Don't hit people.
Put things back where you found them.
Clean up your own mess.
Don't take things that aren't yours.
Say you are sorry when you hurt somebody.
Wash your hands before you eat.
Flush.
Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
Live a balanced life.
Learn some and think some and draw
And paint and sing and dance and play a little every day some.
Take a nap every afternoon.
When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic,
Hold hands and stick together.
Wonder.
Remember the little seed in a jar;
The roots go down and the plant grows and nobody knows how and why,
But we are all alike.*

*AND IN THE END
As a head I found out that
All I really need to know
How to live and what to do and how to be
I learned with other people.
Wisdom is not on the top of a leadership exam
But in a lot of sharing and caring
And having time to listen
In school, as in the kindergarten sand base
All we really need is to understand
That we are all alike.
Therefore I needed to go away.*