PRINCIPAL SELECTION PROCESSES IN EIGHT FINNISH MUNICIPALITIES

Master's Thesis

Saku Tihveräinen
May 2009

Jyväskylä University
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Sciences
Institute of Educational Leadership

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Faculty of Education	**Laitos – Department** Department of Educational Sciences/ Institute of Educational Leadership
Tekijä – Author Saku Tihveräinen	
Työn nimi – Title *Principal Selection Processes in Eight Finnish Municipalities*	
Oppiaine – Subject Education, with a Specialization in Educational Leadership	**Työn Laji – Level** Master's Thesis
Aika – Month and Year 14.5.2009	**Sivumäärä – Number of pages** 118, 4 appendices

Tiivistelmä – Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide an account of principal selections in Finland. Research questions aim at understanding 1) the premises for principal selections and 2) the dynamics that influence the selection process.

The data consists of 13 interviews and three phone interviews with municipal education administrators (superintendents) and chairs of education committees in eight different municipalities. Qualitative methodology in the form of cross case analysis and grounded theory is used for inductive analysis.

The main findings imply that municipalities mostly select principals by traditional method. In these cases the selection comprises in fact two processes of which the first is about selecting a suitable candidate and second about the interaction between the administrator and the final decision maker, the committee. Some municipalities have delegated the selection decision to administrators simplifying the selection process. Yet the main selection procedures in municipalities subject to study are similar to each other. The principal selection criteria vary only marginally and emphasize organizational fit. The emerged underlying dynamic is organizational trust within the municipal decision making organization.

Säilytyspaikka – Depository
University of Jyväskylä, Department of Educational Sciences/Institute of Educational Leadership

Muita tietoja – Additional information

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty	Laitos – Department
Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta	Kasvatustieteiden laitos

Tekijä – Author
Saku Tihveräinen

Työn nimi – Title
Rehtorinvalintaprosesseja kahdeksassa suomalaisessa kunnassa

Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tuottaa tietoa rehtorivalinnoista Suomessa. Tutkimuskysymyksissä pyrkimys on ymmärtää 1) rehtorivalintojen perusteita ja 2) valintaprosesseissa piilevää dynamiikkaa.

Tutkimusaineisto koostuu 13 haastattelusta ja kolmesta puhelinhaastattelusta kunnallisen opetuspuolen virkamiehen ja opetuspuolen lautakunnan puheenjohtajan kanssa kahdeksassa kunnassa. Tutkimuksessa käytetään laadullista metodologiaa, erityisesti "cross case" analyysiä ja aineistolähtöistä tutkimusotetta.

Päälöydökset viittaavat siihen, että rehtorit valitaan kunnissa usein perinteisellä tavalla. Näissä tapauksissa valinta koostuu itse asiassa kahdesta prosessista, joissa ensimmäisessä on kyse sopivan kandidaatin identifioimisesta, ja toisessa virkamiehen ja lopullisen päätöksen tekevän lautakunnan välisestä vuorovaikutussuhteesta. Eräät kunnat ovat delegoineet valintapäätöksen virkamiehelle yksinkertaistaen samalla valintaprosessia. Huolimatta prosessien välisistä eroista itse valinnantekotavat ovat samankaltaiset kaikissa tutkimukseen osallistuneissa kunnissa. Rehtorivalintakriteerit vaihtelevat vain vähän, pääpainon ollessa hakijan sopivuudessa ko. organisaatioon. Analyysissä nousi esiin organisaatioluottamuksen dynamiikka, jolla tarkoitan virkamiesten ja luottamushenkilöiden välistä luottamusta tai sen puutetta. Aineiston perusteella tällä dynamiikalla on merkityksellinen rooli kunnallisissa päätöksenteko-organisaatioissa.

FIGURES AND TABLES

CONTENTS

1 Introduction

Selecting someone for a job is a process, which is close to recruitment. But recruitment is a broader concept and refers to the whole spectrum of activities that aim at obtaining both the number and quality of staff needed to sustain the work effort (Castetter 1996, 86). Often macro perspective is of particular interest when recruitment is studied and had I approached this research in similar fashion, the focus could have been in identifying the broad perspective by, for example, analyzing how many principals' posts were filled in 2008, how long these selections in general took time and were there provincial differences (compare Hynninen, Kangaslahti & Pehkonen 2006). However, this study is not concerned about the macro perspective. Rather, the attempt is to investigate principal selection processes at the individual municipal level. This decision has consequences to the methodological choices, as does the following: Roe (1991, 121) maintains there is lack of research on selection processes in general. When the process of selection is relatively unstudied, it implies I need to select a method that is appropriate in such circumstances.

Naturally, I have different approaches to take in this study. Selection can be viewed as a fairly linear process, which starts from the retirement or quitting of the present office holder and finishes at the selection of a new office holder. This is the point of departure on selection in this study. Two alternative perspectives are differentiated by Herriot (2002, 385) who notes that classical view on selection process simplifies it to a data collection exercise that leads to a decision, whereas selection as a social process emphasizes the selection as an interactive process which is only a start of an employment relationship. These perspectives complement the understanding of selection in the present thesis.

The challenge then is to find an applicable method and theoretical framework in this study context. Harisalo, Rajala and Ståhlberg (1992, 30) suggest three different approaches to the field in which the principal selections take place, municipal politics and administration. First approach emphasizes decision making theories, which would describe the selection as a municipal decision making process that is depicted as a rational process. Second alternative is group and interest theory which describes municipality as a mixed field where lobbying takes place. Third perspective is

organizational theory that identifies municipal organization as a unit which in contact with environment evolves (Harisalo et al 1992, 30). Different perspective could be an administrative one that would emphasize the role of leading municipal education administrators who work in conjunction with the elected municipal politicians and aim at securing the objectives of the education (compare Björk & Gurley 2005, 174-176). Although the aforementioned and many other perspectives possess interesting possibilities, the methodological choices I need to make to allow the study and data "to speak for itself" restrict deductiveness of the thesis.

Thus, as I have highlighted above, the substance of this study has not been subject to extensive investigation. Equally Finnish research on municipal personnel selection, never mind the principal selection, is limited. From this point of view I viewed inductive qualitative methods, and in particular grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967) to be relevant for this thesis.

My broad aim in this thesis is to understand *how* comprehensive school and general upper secondary school principals are selected in Finland. This is based on a data which consists of 13 interviews and three phone interviews with municipal education administrators (superintendents) and chairs of education committees in eight different municipalities.

1.1 Research Purpose

High majority of Finnish comprehensive and upper secondary schools are provided by municipalities. In fact, in 2004 there were over 3400 municipal comprehensive schools, in comparison to 27 private and 5 state schools in Finland (National Board of Education 2006). Thus, municipalities provide high majority of education. Part of the provision is to take care of the funding and to oversee the appropriate running of the schools. This includes the selection of principals. In line with the municipal legislation, principal selection is the responsibility of municipal education committee, which consists of elected municipal politicians. Municipal legislation allows delegation of the selection implying that the existing selection processes can vary depending on individual municipality.

Following a literacy review, there appears to be little existing Finnish research on principal selection process. The strategic purpose of this research is to fill this apparent gap in knowledge through providing information on principal selections in Finnish municipalities.

1.2 Thesis Organization

In the introductory chapter I present the overview of the thesis. Subsequently, in the second chapter I look at the background factors that are relevant for the present study. I begin by presenting a background of Finnish municipalities and decision making structures. I follow this by looking at Finnish educational system and the development of principalship over time. Prior to finishing the second chapter by looking at the international research on principal selection, I highlight the guidance the municipal legislation provides for the municipal decision makers on principal selections.

In the third chapter I concentrate on qualitative methodology and grounded theory. I put particular emphasis on the practical implementation of this study and the methodological questions. I discuss the nature of the present study also as a multiple case study before touching upon the main requirements for inductive analysis.

In line with the research purpose and the inductive analysis, the research aims consist of understanding the principal selection processes in more detail. The first research aim is to understand the selection criteria. Here the differences regarding educational insight between education administrators and political chair persons need to be emphasized. Administrators are in fact leading the municipal education organizations, which include principals, whereas politicians are elected on the basis of popularity and representativeness. As the first research aim consists of understanding the education specific selection criteria, it means this aim mostly pertains to the education administrators.

The second research aim is to understand the whole process involving the Finnish municipal proceedings and dual municipal governance model and what dynamics or patterns can be identified in it. The dualistic nature of municipal governance is understood traditionally to mean a division between administrative work, which consists of preparatory work and implementation, and political trusteeship which encompasses the actual decision making. This translates to a scenario where administrators prepare the principal selection and recommend a principal-to-be to the committee, which then decides who is appointed. As this is the setting in which the selection of the principal takes place, the second research aim consists of understanding this decision making process.

The diagram 1 presents three factors. Two of the factors, principal competence and dynamic in decision making, are present in the research aims. Principal competence stands for my

understanding of municipal administrators' perceptions on what skills and abilities are required for a candidate to be selected. Dynamic in decision making refers to the underlying factor that affects the municipal decision making. The third factor, time, is present due to the developing nature of principals' work (competence requirements are also changing), and the developing nature of municipal decision making shifting away from administrative-legislative emphasis of the 1980s towards managerial efficiency discourse (Heuru 2003, 261). This move is affected by the municipal decentralization that took place in 1990s (see for example Ryynänen 2004, 29; Mustonen 2003, 91). The municipal decentralization has affected the work of principals, thus, time is included as a cornerstone factor in the triangle representing key factors in the present study. The three factors do not function in separation but they influence each other and in reality the factors cannot separated.
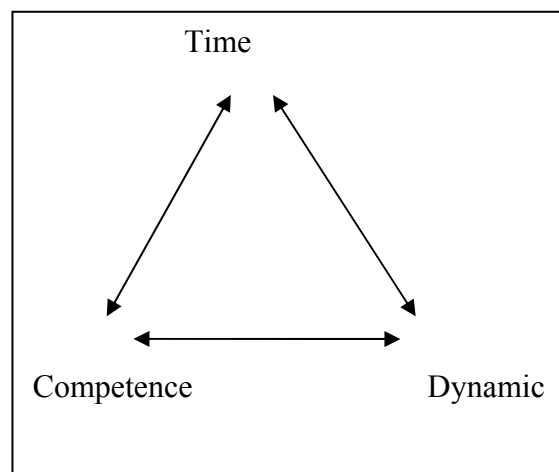
Figure 1: Interlinked factors

In the fourth chapter I present accounts of the eight cases (municipalities) and analyze the eight cases subject to study. I form cross case analysis in order to identify common factors across cases and analyze the decision making cultures.

In the fifth chapter I look at the categories that emerged through the use of inductive grounded theory method and establish the core categories relevant to the data at hand. The core categories, decisive aspects in principal selection and dynamic of trust in decision making, are linked to existing theories and research in organizational trust and Finnish principalship.

In the concluding sixth chapter I point out the research findings, discuss implications and recommend future research. I finish by looking at the study limitations.

1.3 Key Concepts and Terminology

The language of this thesis is English, yet the study context is Finland, interviews were conducted in Finnish and the most context relevant information is in Finnish. This has practical implications for use of terminology, which I need to define accurately. Local Government Vocabulary Finnish-English-Finnish (Suomen Kuntaliitto 2000) is of particular importance in this process.

In Finland education is organized into a compulsory nine-year-long basic education and then into upper secondary or vocational education. In this study I scrutinize how principals are selected to *primary* (grades 1-6), *lower secondary* (grades 7-9), *comprehensive* (grades 1-9) and *upper secondary school* (equal to American high school, post-compulsory academically orientated school). This decision is based on the similar educational foundation of basic education and general upper secondary schools –for example, many teachers teach both lower secondary grades 7 to 9 grades and upper secondary school.

Further, in this thesis I study how *principals* (head teachers) are *selected* to their posts. Firstly, by principal I refer to the "leading teacher" with a formal role of a director and less or no teaching responsibility in comparison to teachers. In Finnish context the bigger the school, the less there is teaching responsibility. By law a principal can be appointed to tenure only when the applicant has teacher's qualification at the particular school level and conducted studies (25 credits) in school administration (Peruskouluasetus 95-96 §). Secondly, by selection I refer to the process that begins when the principal's post is opened and finishes when a principal has been selected from the applicants by the education committee or the leading education administrator.

Finland is governed at a local level by *municipalities*, which provide education among other public services. Municipalities come in all sizes and shapes; for example, the capital of Finland has a population of more than half a million but counts as a municipality equal to a small archipelagic municipality with a population of a few hundred.

Municipalities are governed by elected local politicians that are selected every four years. Municipal governance is organized into a municipal council and specific committees directing municipal services, including education. The committees are formed by politicians according to the share of votes in the last election. Committees responsible for education are called by variety of titles ranging from education committee to committee of learning and culture depending on the

formation of the governance and the size of the municipality (Suomen kuntaliitto 2000, 55, 63). For reasons of clarity in this study I use the word *education committee* for all the varying formations of committees that exist in the municipalities subject to study, which are responsible for governing education and hence select principals.

The *education committee* is led informally by a *chair* person, who is, in line with the other committee members, a local politician. The chairs come with all kinds of backgrounds, including lawyer's and engineer's, yet local principals cannot be in the committee due to conflict of interest.

The municipal public officers in tenure, which assist politicians by implementing the decisions made by the council and committees and who prepare presentations for the decisions-to-be-made, also come under different names. The public officers of particular significance to the present study are the leading education administrators, which in larger municipalities are also known as directors of education, superintendents, or chief education officers (Suomen Kuntaliitto, 40). In smaller municipalities the organization is less stratified and respectively the officers' role is broader. The titles mostly in use are "director of education and cultural services" or the "chief municipal officer responsible for educational and cultural functions within the community" (ibid, 63). What is characteristic to these officers is that they are organizationally superior to principals and play a substantial role in selecting them. For the purpose of this study the title in use for these varying office holders is *education administrator*. The municipal education organization is summed up in diagram 2.
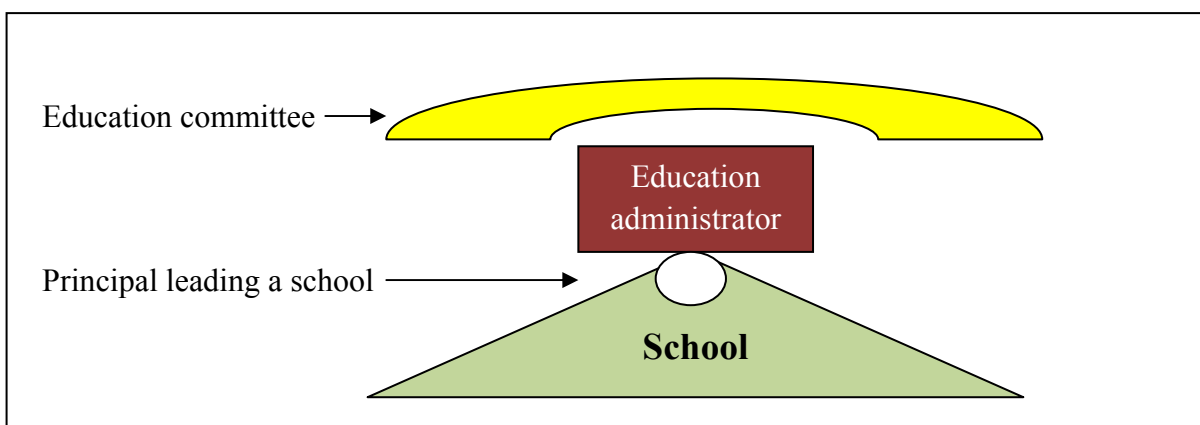
Figure 2: Municipal education organization

2 Literature Review

In the literature review the aim is to form firm understanding of the background in which the principal selections take place. In addition, some relevant aspects influencing the selection are looked at.

2.1 Municipalities: Existence, Legislation and Governance

Municipality as a term refers to the per se artificial concept of a self-governed area or region with population anything between a few hundreds to over half a million. In Finland a municipality is traditionally considered to stand for an organization that produces public services, implying that the implemental level of welfare state takes place through municipalities (Ryynänen 2005, 264).

Another perspective on municipality emphasizes municipality as a collective that comprises citizens and organization members, has an autonomy to decide for own matters but has to produce certain set of services as legislated (ibid, 265). The purpose of a municipality in this view is to improve the welfare of municipal citizens and to increase the sense of societal belonging.

A third point of view emphasizes the governance within the municipality, the municipal decision making and office holder organizations which enact a defined role –in total the execution of municipal power (ibid). These power enactments take place in the form of, for example, inspections in variety of public services and office holders' law-based roles such as child welfare services.

Of the public services provided in Finland, two thirds are produced at a municipal level (Ryynänen 2003, 24). This public service production is both produced and managed at the local level. Municipally produced public services can be divided into three groups: 1. compulsory services as defined by legislation, 2. voluntary services, and 3. contractual services (Sallinen 2003, 48-51). The compulsory services include providing education. Education is part of services that fall under the term "welfare services", which are consigned to production at municipal level as it is viewed that

municipalities form the most suitable instance to ensure the responsibility of education providing is enacted (KM 1993: 33 182-183, in Sallinen 2003, 54).

The foundation for present municipal service production lies in the legislation from the 1960s and 1970s, when also the present basic education system was founded (Ryynänen 2003, 28). The legislation from this time was characterized by national steering. The most important development of the recent years is from 1993, when municipalities were allowed by law to decide *how* they produce the services (ibid, 29). The decentralized service production has implications also for education sector, although municipal service production needs to be in line with the basic education law.

During the first half of 1990s Finland experienced severe recession that did not leave municipalities or educational sector untouched. Municipalities were forced to evaluate their personnel levels, rationalize organizations, and transform municipal thinking towards viewing the staff as a strategic resource (Rajala 2001, 225). In effect, the leadership discourses in public sector have closed with private sector as the service production paradigm has expanded (ibid, 229). Similar and related themes have been noted in research on perceptions of teachers on school ethos (for example Kujala 2006, 58), municipal research noting changing discourse towards service orientated efficiency (Ryynänen 2003, 32), and municipal legislative research identifying managerialist principle of efficiency as problematic if sternly applied to democratic municipal decision making in light of present legislation (compare Heuru 2006, 159).

This shift in the national municipality discourse is reflected in the basic education law amendment in 1991, which provided more flexibility for municipalities to decide on principal's role (Isosomppi 1996, 106). The decrease in norms, new foundations for curriculum, municipality level work role delegations and distribution of decision making power have made the principal's work both more diverse and independent (Mustonen 2003, 91). Thus, the nationally centralized education administration was decentralized quite effectively from the late 1980s to early 1990s (ibid, 93).

Education administration is part of municipal organization, which includes the political decision makers, administrators and the municipal processes (Haveri & Rönkkö 2003, 56). The municipal organization is conceptualized through four functions in table 1.

Table 1

Four functions of municipal organization

■ Political process → To ensure democracy takes place
■ Economic process → To fund the functions
■ Governance process → To recruit, decide, lead
■ Service process → To take care of welfare tasks

Haveri & Rönkkö 2003, 57 (translation by ST)

In this study the processes that are explicitly touched by principal selection are the political and governance. Nevertheless, it is clear that principal selection has wider implications that are not restricted but also affect economic and service processes as education needs funding and provides municipal service. What is unclear, however, is what the current trend of efficiency emphasis, for example in the form of delegation of responsibilities from politicians to administrators, does to political process.

Municipalities function officially in a binary mode, meaning that the political decision making and administrative sector are separated (Heuru 2000, 58). In theory the absolute decision making power is held by the elected council of municipal representatives, whereas the administrative work that includes preparation of political decisions to-be-made, implementation and other related work get done by administrators.

There are only three compulsory municipal political bodies: Council, municipal board and inspection committee. Otherwise the municipal law allows the political decision makers to set the governance of the municipality, which is the case with the formation of administrative organization (Haveri & Rönkkö 2003, 60).

What is of importance is to realize the development of ethos and characteristics of municipal organizations. Ryynänen has argued for two themes, bureaucratic municipality and service municipality, to be the main ones during the last forty years (2003, 32). The change appeared from the late 1980s when the "service municipality" developed. Although the name implies servicing would be central aspect, Ryynänen views the emphasis to have been in reforming the municipal organization and to underline efficiency (ibid). He analyses that the "service municipality" will be followed by "civil municipality" where it will not be enough that municipality acts for the people but the aim is to act also through the people and, thus, to found decision on people's views (ibid, 33).

Heuru views the aforementioned "service municipality" to point a departure from government-legalistic administration towards more of a managerial administration where efficiency values are more important than democratic values (Heuru 2000, 259-272). Another view on the same phenomenon is through comparison between Nordic countries: It appears that lately the development of administration has been lost under variety of efficiency values, when the development of system towards addressing questions on democracy and societal future have been put aside (Borg 2005, 83). Jalonen (2007b, 364) links the aforementioned, what he calls the most significant problem of the municipal preparation, with the dual value of municipal administration: Democracy versus efficiency. Basic notions here is the democratic and wise innate value of preparing a case thoroughly and valuing people's opinions, whereas efficiency emphasizes that the preparatory plans are relevant, which can imply that less the people involved the better the preparation (ibid). This, I believe, can be interpreted as valuing expertise: The more expertise present, the better the preparation –value does not fall upon less informed but larger representation of the people.

The theoretical notions of politicians deciding and administrators implementing indicate a view that these two parties are expected to lead the municipalities at different levels. Political bodies are to ensure strategic and political leadership is in place, whereas operative and professional leadership is implemented by administrators (Haveri & Rönkkö 2003, 60). However, in practice these are intertwined and existing leadership practices are municipality specific. For example, political decisions are made already at the preparatory stage by the administrator when preparing a decision to present to the committee or council, or in some municipalities politicians can have a hold of operative leadership through, for example, power obtained in personnel selection processes (ibid).

Jalonen (2007a, 47) argues that the whole preparatory process leading to decision making should be understood as a multi-dimensional, complex process in which there is no singular, administrative preparation element but an appearing, interlinked web of actors and parties resulting in a versatile and creative preparation. Key in understanding the complexity and dynamic of the preparation is in its subjectivity; the circumstances do not open equally to different persons but the complexity of the scenario develops through increase of information, interrelated actors and emergence of self organization (ibid, 43-45). This perception is not entirely relevant to preparation in principal selections because administrative preparatory work includes everything that takes place in municipal decision making. Yet, it does highlight the tendency of preparatory work to not be

predictable or stable. Although principal selection is not perhaps the most everyday aspect of preparatory work, it is part of it.

Keeping in mind the topic of the study, principal selections, the intertwined aspects of municipal administration and politics raise a question: Whose job is it in fact to choose a leader to a municipal school? Municipal legislation in chapter 2.4 identifies the limited information that law provides to the municipalities.

2.2 Development of Finnish Education System

Finland has received extensive positive feedback on its educational system from the recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies (conducted in 2000, 2003, 2006) organized by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The analysis of the success mostly reflects two notions: The Finnish education manages to provide very egalitarian results in comparison to other PISA tested countries and the highly qualified and respected teachers have been of particular importance (for example, Välijärvi et al 2007, 31-33, 48-49; Simola 2005, 456-458). The attention that Finnish education system attracts presently is resulting not from the most recent reforms but from a long history constructing educational system and developing teacher professionalism.

The basis for schooling was laid in the late 17th century when the local clerics were required to know how to read and write in order to teach the basic skills for the local children (Raivola 1989, 95). A different form of schooling was formed amongst the public in village schools in the18[th] century (ibid, 96). In the 19th century the school network was extended and the teacher professionalism develops (ibid, 100). Still in 1880 80% of Finnish children did not attend educational institution (ibid, 109).

A law on common obligation to attend a school was set in 1921, although it was not until after the Second World War that all children attended a school (Johnson 2007b, 15). In spite of the apparent universalism of education, Finnish children still led separate lives from an early age: until the 1970s children had to decide at the age of ten which two realms of education –vocationally and academically orientated– they attended. This meant that two separate teaching cultures existed and teachers of academically orientated were more highly educated (Niemi 2005, 171). This was changed in the 1970s when the basic education was formed to form a single strand of compulsory

education for all children from the age seven. This became known as basic education and it comprised six-year primary school (taught by class teachers) and three-year lower secondary school (taught by subject teachers) as a matter of compromise after debates over the new school system (Johnson 2007b, 21).

The legacy of the division of education after age of ten had resulted in two separate and unequal, if measured through public status and pay, cultures of teaching. This was addressed by moving class teacher education into universities leading to Bachelor degrees at the same time as basic education was formed (Niemi 2005, 171-172). A White paper maintained in mid-1970s that both class and subject teacher education should be based firmly on academic principles and this was realized 1978 and 1979 when all teacher education was set to lead to Master's degree in the university reform where Bachelors' degrees where mostly advanced to higher level (ibid 173).

Despite the newly found equality in terms of academic status between the class and subject teachers, the established basic school functioned as divided primary and lower secondary units all the way until 1999 when the educational legislation was changed and the "whole" basic education (grades 1-9) were unified administratively (Johnson 2007a, 10). Johnson argues that the leap forward regarding the unity of the basic school structure did not actualize –majority of the schools carried on their existence the same way since the 1970s (ibid, 11). The notion of unity of basic school is starting to get recognized by the teacher education programmes, yet the division between former primary and lower secondary teacher qualifications still provide an obstacle to reaching more flexible and unified basic school (Johnson 2007b, 30-32). Nevertheless, as the data of this study suggests, more and more unified school units are formed through merging of primary and secondary schools.

2.3 Finnish Education Management over Time

The era after 1940s was characterized by centrally led steering system where the municipalities' administrative role was very limited – in fact it could be seen as part of national administration because small municipalities did not form an effective regulator (Mustonen 2003, 79-80). On the other hand, the curriculum of the public school that was set up by teachers of the institution (Isosomppi 1996, 90), which was based on educational policy tradition (ibid, 93).

Teaching at the school was assessed by school inspectors, which were required concurrently to guide teachers and school boards (ibid).

The principal of a public school was chosen for four years in post by school board after consulting teachers (Isosomppi 1996, 94). Principal's post was not sought after due to inadequate time frame given for administrative tasks (ibid). According to the public school act from 1958, the principal was expected to, for example, observe teachers' teaching, design a curriculum with teachers, and assess the condition of school building and furniture (Mustonen 2003, 87). An amendment to the aforementioned act warned the principal from interfering in teachers' work's privacy (Isosomppi 1996, 95). Simply put, principal was not leading the school per se but mainly observing to ensure things were done adequately (ibid). The basic school reform of 1970 witnessed the role of the principal to not change much; independent decision-making possibilities were limited and as the administration was still rather centralized the opportunities for influencing were still at a relatively low level (Mustonen 2003, 88)

 The basic education reform in the 1970s aimed at forming a school system that promoted equality and that aim was supported by detailed structures from the state to school level in order to make sure everything was executed accordingly (Mustonen 2003, 81). Resulting from the detailed structures, national education bureaucracy expanded and central steering was reinforced (Isosomppi 1996, 101-102). Demonstrating the centralization of the system, the basic education curriculum covered almost a thousand pages (Johnson 2007b, 23). During the 1970s as the basic education reform was gradually implemented, the principal's role progressed to bear less responsibility as the individual school's board duties were mostly translated to municipal education committees (Isosomppi 1996, 102-103; Mustonen 2003, 89).

After the previously dualist school system was reformed in the formation of basic school education, principals recognized that the legislation was not up to date with the latest developments and the permanent tenures of principalship were assigned in 1978 after heated debate (Isosomppi 1996, 103-104). According to the decision, lower secondary school principals were always signed to permanent tenures but primary school principals only if the school had at least 12 classes. Otherwise the principal was a teacher with formal administrative role and decreased teaching responsibility according to the school size. Principal's role was strengthened modestly in the 1983-1984 school act amendment, which expanded the responsibilities to act as the chairperson for teacher workforce and deciding for teacher's post leave for maximum of a week (Mustonen 2003,

90). Additionally, principals were expected for the first time to participate in some leadership training (ibid).

Long before the PISA tests, OECD had conducted national education reports on Finland. The first one of them in 1982 scrutinized Finnish education policies. The report highlighted the consistent and practical implementation of basic school reform, yet criticized centralized administration that should not limit flexible participation to education with excessive bureaucratization (OECD 1982, in Rinne, Kallo & Hokka 2004, 42-43). This critique was answered in the beginning of the 1990s.

As touched upon in chapter 2.1, during the late 1980s and 1990s municipal circumstances developed rather drastically. This affected consequently the schools through decentralization of power, which has relegated many of the state dictated municipal bureaucratic roles into principal's role that increased in responsibility. In particular, this change was marked in the 1991 law which declared all the officially defined principal roles of 1984 as superseded – instead, principal's job was defined at municipal level through different statutes and other decentralized rules (Pesonen 2009, 18-19). Ahonen has noted during his consultancy and principalship years that during the 1990s principal became more clearly the representative of the employer, the municipality, and this included also delivering negative messages (Ahonen 2001, 71).

The diversity in municipal expectations on principals' work is well demonstrated by Mustonen (2003, 118-119) as he lists 59 different tasks named to principals in an explicit form in municipal statutes in the Savo region. The proportion of 24 municipalities that had named same tasks varied enormously, as only seven of the tasks were named by more than half of the municipalities. In addition, it must be acknowledged that some municipal education managers have sub-delegated certain aspects of their traditional work to principals (ibid, 119). Thus, this diversity of expectations and tasks in principals' work can create contradictory wishes and anticipations on principals, which then can lead to excessive work load (Vuohijoki 2007, 169).

Research in theorized educational leadership is a relatively new research field in Finland (Värri & Alava 2005, 17-18). Pesonen (2009, 3) identifies three clusters of research since the early 1980s: First studies investigated development of schools and leaders' perceptions on their work. Subsequent studies in 1990s concentrated mainly on pedagogic leadership and research on principals' own work, whereas the third cluster in the new millennium has focused on scrutiny over new leadership models. Although this view can be argued to oversimplify the research field, it is clear that the Finnish school leadership holds still quite a number of topics that are not investigated

adequately. Some of the latest approaches to research are the practicalities that principals face in everyday work (Mustonen 2003), the gendered experience of working as a principal (Juusenaho 2004), many faceted reality of principals' work (Pennanen 2006), and the excessive job requirements of principal's post (Vuohijoki 2006).

In other words, majority of research is concentrated in forming a picture of what the principal actually experiences in a day's work in the office. As above was highlighted, principals' work expectations and content vary depending on the municipality. Equally do municipalities' principal selection processes vary. This aspect has been subject to little research. At the end of the day, the municipal legislation provides some guidance on how principals can be selected. Yet the legislation is not exact in the guidance as is demonstrated next with regards to the decision making role regarding principal selection.

2.4 Present Municipal Legislation Relevant to Principal Selection

The present understanding of the topic is mainly based on legislative documents and explanatory texts using a few examples of complaints from the regional court as explications (Harjula & Prättälä 2007, 372-377). These texts form the foundation for how the selection process is formed.

The legislation gives the executive decision making power regarding selection of office holder in tenure, such as principals, to municipal councils which keeps the selection processes local (Harjula & Prättälä 2007, 190). The legislation guides the municipal decision making bodies such as the council to select and hire the applicants to public tenures on the basis of *skills*, *abilities* and *tested citizenship*. Skills refer to skills gained through accessing education or work experience, whereas abilities point towards traits such as natural talent, initiative, or other abilities relevant for the job, and tested citizenship means recommendations received from general civic activity (Harjula & Prättälä 2004, 356). Typically the council selects only the public servants highest in the municipal organizational hierarchy and delegates other appointment procedures to specified bodies or leading municipal administrators (ibid, 367).

The decision-making power is based on legislation and delegations follow the principle that the council sets in municipal statute what aspects of its power is delegated. For example, the delegation of selecting the principal is rarely the responsibility of the council but in practice it is delegated to

the education committee. The body that has received the decision making power can delegate it further more flexibly. Thus, the council does not decide per se who is the final acting body or administrator but only through delegation gives the option to implement the power or further delegate it. But law 14.2 § limits the delegations in such a way that the decision making power cannot be further sub-sub-delegated. When the decision to be made concerns forming a new civil servant vacancy or terminating one, then the power can only be delegated to a municipal body, not an administrator. (ibid, 188-192, 364-365)

Once a principal position has been opened, the municipality is required to advertise it. After the applicants have applied to the position by a given appropriate deadline and the selection power is not delegated to a single administrator, then the position is filled upon the notion of office holder tenure ballot. It is an election based on a majority vote and is guided by legislation that states that the selection. It must be based on a number of aspects. Firstly, the candidate needs to demonstrate key three properties (skills, abilities and tested citizenship). Secondly, the candidate must qualify the minimum qualification criteria, which in the case of principalship is qualified teacher status in Finland and appropriate linguistic proficiency. In addition, either appropriate principalship preparation education needs to have been gained, or alternative method to demonstrate needed knowledge for principalship (Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista 2 §). Thirdly, the employer cannot discriminate against age, health, ethnicity and sexual orientation to name but few aspects, without an acceptable reason to do so. Fourthly, gender equality act (609/1986) states clearly that when a more qualified applicant is not selected that is not same gender as the chosen one; there is a clear possibility for discrimination. (ibid, 368, 370-373)

When the selection is delegated to the committee and a ballot is held, the legislation states that factors affecting the selection of the applicant can be left undisclosed due to the nature of the decision making process. This is based on the notion that when the office holder selection is in fact an election, comparison of qualities consisting of personal details, education, work experience and personal abilities should be in principle measured and reported. Problematically for the question of transparency, often the crucial differences are identified in the personal abilities that are based on former employers, candidate interviews and candidate application tests. This means that due to questions of privacy the rationale for selecting the candidate cannot be disclosed. An appropriate response to a query from an unselected applicant can be something as simple as referral to interviewing process or application tests, raising then the question of who interviews and how the decisions are made. (ibid, 374)

Highest Court orders demonstrated that in a case where three applicants have had similar educational background but applicant A had 20 years of experience of leading a school, B 13 years and C three months. By choosing candidate C on the basis that the school needed a developer of school culture, expert on school leadership and social skills in collaborative work, the municipal decision was not based on discriminatory practice or against the law ruling on civil servant appointment requirements. (ibid, 375) This example demonstrates how difficult it is both to identify the selection and justify it. By identifying the aspects, developer of school culture and particular expertise, arguably the emphasis is on selecting the most suitable person.

The above description of municipal legislation provides some important information how the selection process should be conducted and what principles it should follow. Nevertheless, it does not provide explicit norms to the principal selection process because to a degree the process is left open for the municipal committee to decide, and with, per se, scarce concrete guidance. Also, the scant possibility of political decision making in the selection process needs to be acknowledged as the municipal councils and committees are in fact politically elected. But as the Highest Court orders have stated that the selection of office holders other than the highest ones in the municipal organization chart on the basis of political agreement is not acceptable (ibid, 376-377).

2.5 International Research on Principal Selections

Although principal selections has been subject to little studying in Finland, this is not the case internationally. Already in early 1980s Baltzell and Dentler (1983) conducted a two-fold investigation how in fact principals are selected in American districts. The cases of the second part of the research consisted of interviews of 25 to 30 involved in each of the districts. The cases demonstrated that through equity and merit committed principal selection is possible, even in contexts where school leadership is subject to different but strong interests from stakeholders (Baltzell & Dentler 1983, 5).

The study by Blackmore, Thomson and Barty (2006) addresses the principal selection process in two Australian states where localization of principal appointment places the decision-making power to the panels. The authors raise a number of issues that can be problematic in a selection process (ibid 302-309): Firstly, to provide a written application where an applicant squeezes everything one knows and should be known for in a few pages is problematic due to frequent lack of sophistication

amongst the readers. Secondly, the question of experience and how to measure it in relation to potential of the candidate is challenging. Thirdly, the undisclosed premade decision for an incumbent applicant leads to a perception of principal apprenticeship discourages new applicants. Fourthly, the panels were often found to shortlist applicants in an uninformed manner and on the basis of irrelevant characteristics. Lastly, the principal appointments came frequently down to inconsistent decisions that were occasionally influenced by the, assumedly non-participating, District Director. The concept "merit" is questioned on the grounds of preconceived inequity and linked to reproduction of homosociability, questioning the objectivity of the selection process (ibid, 311-314). The study manages to address the underlying tendencies in decentralized principal selection process. The question of sophistication amongst the selectors is of importance to the present study because of traditional municipal decision making role of education committee.

Another study in Australian context highlights equally problematic aspects. The main argument is that education organizations emphasize loyalty over expertise, even if a public commitment demonstrates otherwise (Gronn & Lacey 2006, 107). In effect a challenging question is raised: should leaders of school organizations be chosen on the foundation of universalism or particularism (ibid, 116)? In other words, should the emphasis be on the "best" candidate, according to which ever criteria, or the most suitable for the organization? If such dichotomy is created, we can also ask what would differentiate the "best" based on a given criterion from the most suitable one for the organization?

Dillon (1995) studied Indiana state superintendents' perceptions on relevant criteria with regards to school leadership. The findings suggested superintendents differentiate little between necessary criteria when comparing selections of principals for elementary and secondary principals –although people skills were deemed even more important in the case of secondary school leadership (Dillon 1995 in Drake & Roe 2002, 37).

Reardon (2003) researched the perceptions of public school superintendents on principal selection in Massachusetts. Superintendents viewed "candidates' professional and personal skills and abilities" to be "more relevant than their professional and personal backgrounds and experiences when forming criteria upon which selection decisions are based" (ibid, 81). Significantly, gender of the superintendent influenced responses on principal relevant aspects such as collaboration and team work (ibid, 82). Regarding the running of the selection process, the aspects considered of

importance are: "Development of district-wide procedures, superintendent control over advertisement of the vacancy, and superintendent control over the selection process" (ibid, 76).

Interview process is viewed important in a study on principal selection and Iowan superintendents (Muhlenbruck 2001, 106-110). But careful contemplation is held worthwhile as interview is only a single contact with the interviewee (ibid, 106-110). Thus, to found a selection of external applicant solely on this contact would be rather risky. Connecting with the need to decrease the risk, informal networking appears to be very much in existence in Iowa (ibid, 113-117), as the most practical way to ensure the candidate's background is to contact someone that knows the candidate. The typical hiring process involves a team or teams who participated with the superintendent to the interview, yet the final recommendation to the school board who should be selected for employment is made by the superintendent independently (ibid, 123).

Winter, Partenheimer and Petrosko (2003) have studied the interest amongst teachers to apply for assistant principal vacancy. Some important differences between Finland and the context of the study, American Kentucky, must be identified: for example, professional Finnish assistant principals are at the moment rather a rare phenomenon. In addition, administer certification programmes in Finnish context are diversified and only the legislation-orientated administrative course is mandatory and it is not provided for free, which is a peculiar detail in the land of free education (Alava 2007, 231, 233-234). This partly unlinks the article's notion of multitude of "administer-certified personnel" not drawn toward the administrator positions from Finland (Winter et al 2003, 302). Although this does not correspond entirely to the Finnish context, the suggestion of principal vacancy characteristics varying and affecting the interest levels of potential applicants (ibid, 301) is little researched in Finland and would be worth an investigation, if not possible within the constraints of the present study. An important identification in the study is the equal interest from both genders towards the administrative vacancies (ibid, 309), which is another not much studied aspect in Finnish literature and bears significance due to the present contradiction in the gender ratios of female-majority teachers and male-majority principals (Juusenaho 2007, 154).

The study by Winter and Jaeger (2002) asks do teachers make well-informed decisions when involved in the principal selection process? The findings make rather clear a point that the teachers of the factorial experiment failed to choose consistently the most experienced principal candidate, raising significant question for the context of the study where teachers and parents attend the principal selection boards only for a year's tenure, leading to ongoing inexperience amongst the

decision-making board (Winter & Jaeger 2002, 21-22). Although the study acknowledges its most obvious limitations, namely the testing experience and the sheer fact that the teacher participants were unrepresentative of the whole Kentucky state (ibid, 27), the researchers are still positive they have contributed to new knowledge on the principal selection processes (ibid 28). The important question is do people that are inexperienced in human resources management and personnel selection make a worthwhile contribution to actual selection process? This is a fundamental question and must be addressed in my research as well, as the municipal boards are elected persons who do not hold necessarily any experience from the field of education, or from personnel selection.

McGuinness (2006) identifies issues for recruitment a bit differently. He views the big picture control as more important through recommending data bases on principal age profile trends and retirement rates, succession of principalship through grooming and preparation of newcomers by existing principals and highlighting the headhunting possibility for new principals as a possibility (McGuinness 2006, 14).

International research highlights some issues that are of concern in Finnish principal selections as well. The circumstances and legislation are naturally context specific.

3 Methodology

Methodological questions to an extent state the direction the study ends up taking. Taking a quantitative approach would have constructed a completely different kind of study. Even selecting another qualitative approach instead of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967) or case study approach would have had repercussions. The selected methods allowed for a deep understanding of the municipal principal selection process to evolve.

3.1 Qualitative Methodology - Research Questions

Initially, whilst constructing my vision of the study and the methodology to be used I contemplated upon both quantitative and qualitative approach to the study, using surveys and/or interviews. The reason for the selection of method lies in three aspects: At the time of planning the interviews I cannot say to have been aware of the process in complete. I knew Finnish municipalities are different, the existing law paves way for different measures regarding principal appointment in different municipalities, yet I cannot say I knew to what extent the leading administrators influence the process or the municipal politicians in fact decide who to appoint. This relative unknowingness pushed me towards qualitative approach. Secondly the topic is not extensively studied in Finland; Kangaslahti (2007, 197) suggests that present lack of attempts to do educational study of societal phenomena is linked to the difficulty to accomplish successfully such a synthesis. I connect this perception to the, arguably, marginalized area of education research in larger societal context -education research eventually lives and breathes through schools and education administration at municipal level is aside from the municipal administrative research that has been sighted in this research. This portrays the phenomenon as a sort of a mystery to me. As Alasuutari (2001, 32) has compared quantitative methodology to testing a hypothesis and qualitative methodology to solving a mystery, it seemed relevant to be mainly concerned about qualitative methods. Lastly, qualitative methods such as interviewing provide an opportunity to learn within the situation, form new theories, identify new questions and pose them to the

interviewees (Watling 2001, 263). Without learning *in* the situation, possibility for digging deeper and the interaction with the interviewees, there would be only a superficial study on hand. Thus, qualitative method it was to be.

Choosing qualitative methodology created new questions; which qualitative line of thought should I select? Again, principal selection process is not a single-sided phenomenon. With an undecided objective of the study and lack of apparent comparative studies, I was inclined to generate theory relevant to the data-to-be, grounding theory in research itself (Glaser & Strauss 1967, viii). What grounded theory means in brief is collecting data in an area one wishes to study and coding it openly without prior concepts or hypotheses (ibid, 2). The mandate Glaser has reiterated again later is that "the analyst starts with conceptual nothing" (1992, 39). This is rather difficult an ultimatum that seen reasonably challenged for example by Gummesson (2000, 127-8) by asking is not there a considerable risk that if the researcher does not know the existing institutional conditions, naive solutions can be generated. As researchers face methodological choices not regarding the right choice but the *optimum* choice in particular circumstances, the key issue for me was to go forward planning the study and make decisions that I can justify in the context of the study (Watling 2001, 264).

The optimum choice in the present study is to both map existing selection processes in the participating municipalities *and* form theory based on the actual data. The first step means opening the data on the municipalities regarding the principal selections and a multi-case analysis. The second step, forming theory involves using the abovementioned grounded theory approach. This entails a split between chapters four and five due to aforementioned binary analysis. Thus, in line with my already stated strategic purpose of this research, I want to map the processes through accounting for eight cases. Concurrently, I set the research questions.

According to Glaser (1992, 4) the logic of grounded theory allows for very core questions to be asked: "What is the chief concern of the people in the substantive area and what accounts for most of the variation in processing the problem?" Aiming at following this logic I want to understand through answering the two research questions:

1. On what premises is the selection made?

2. What underlying dimensions are identifiable in the principal selection processes?

To map the selection processes influences the study with a different undertone than what the research questions do. I will interview relevant persons with binary perception, as Alasuutari (2001, 100) has identified the source paradigms, of interviewees as informants: On the one hand interviewees serve as indicators providing me evidence of how principals are in fact selected, what procedures are followed. To increase the validity I could mechanistically gather more data from different perspective, to triangulate the data. However, it is clear that this perception is not applicable to grounded theory methods or to the second or third research questions.

3.2 Epistemological Consideration

In comparison to the mapping of selections, in finding the answer to the research questions I must pay attention to my informants that provide me with a testimony what aspects they emphasized when they selected a principal from the applicants. My attempt to increase validity is rather humanistic; I need to develop a degree of trust between the informants and me. (Alasuutari 2001, 100) Moreover, the two different dimensions raise some epistemological considerations to the methodology.

Propositional knowledge is explicit, can be expressed aloud and others can be informed with it. As already Plato theorized, knowledge is the right perception that can be explained. Equally I am informed by my interviewees about the procedures in each municipality with regards to principal selection and I can confirm these procedures and, arguably, form propositional knowledge in this thesis. When it comes to collecting interviewees' perceptions on *why* they selected the particular candidate, or chose to recommend the person as an administrator to be selected, we are balancing on a fine line between explicit and tacit knowledge. What tacit knowledge is then about? It is about the interviewee's internal and unsaid understanding, a belief, why an applicant was selected to the principal's post. I use the word belief because of the relative difficulty to answer the seemingly simple question "how did you know who to select". As two of the interviewees tried to answer why they ended up preferring one of the candidates over the other experienced ones, it appeared that it is far from simple to give an explicit outline of a decision made:

> "...It's not good to use the word feeling, but when you have a certain factual basis, you look at the
> education, what they have done during the career, work experience, what has been done in what school,   what
> are the investigated backgrounds... ...When everything is put on the same scale, everything is on   the table, you
> start to consider, it is, as it is that principal candidates are so good that it always turns out   this way, you find
> the pinnacle quite easily, but then you have two three good ones to ponder upon.   Then it is, I don't know

how you call the emotional state, when the hard facts are pretty much the same,   then probably individual

points (influence the selection), how you succeed in the interview as a persona, that's how it must be."

Koski, administrator

"What are the real criteria (in selection)? It is a really good question what should and what I have contemplated

upon a lot, you have the facts that you can put on table and count merits and qualities and demonstrated skills

and this and this and this, this much. But in spite of everything there is still, no matter how good the structures

(of principal selection) are, the human characteristics prevail: That one likes of particular type of an applicant

and another one of another type. When I think about my own presentation (of who to select) through my own

expertise, professionalism and know-how, without consciously thinking about these issues, which of these

persons is going to succeed the best in the job, with whom am I going to work most effectively. There, at that

level it is at such imaginary level that you don't say aloud to the committee or anywhere else. But you this, such,

I'm sure all the others have it as well, such psychological eye or instinct in use. Such, I don't know if it is a good

thing or a bad thing, but it is something that you need to understand and recognize and it is that human factor,

which can lead to failure sometimes, when that impression you get is not the same than the truth. After all."

Valkama, administrator

According to correspondence theory, a belief is true if and only if it equals to the truth. Considering my odds to get close to some form of truth, perhaps with careful investigation the chances exist. Yet as the chances are arguably uncontrollable, coherence theory is closer to the necessary understanding of knowledge in this context. Coherence theory states belief equals truth if and only if the belief is coherent with other beliefs. Considering I ask 13 interviewees' perception on why they chose the person they did, I might have an opportunity to identify some form of knowledge on what are the premises the interviewers believe they select the principals to the post. (Lammenranta 1993, 73-83)

But this is rather afar from "truth". An anti-positivist stance on truth in the field of human affairs, which emphasizes "perceptions and understanding that come from immersion in and holistic regard for the phenomena" (Stake 2000, 21) is much closer to the understanding of *truth* needed in this study. Due to the expansive nature of the study on hand, mapping the selection processes in the eight municipalities really sets the scene for the answering for the second and third research question to take place in.

Usually case studies are seen as research on just one, or a few cases, in reasonable depth (Hammersley & Gomm 2000, 3). The mapping exercise involves really a mini case study with multiple cases. I need to be concerned not only about the relationship between the presented cases and the selection process in general but also about the relationship between different testimonies,

the heterogeneity of the testimonies and the differences between testimonies (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 138-9).

This brings me back to the question of knowledge. Following Nonaka's and Takeuchi's (1995, 62-69) SECI model on knowledge conversion, the most important aspect of both the whole interview, and in particular to understand the second research question, is to get the interviewees to verbalize their experiences. According to the model, the words said and opinions changed between the decision makers in the selection process constitute explicit knowledge and then the experiences and perceived circumstances constitute tacit knowledge.

The challenge in interviews is concrete in the sense that to identify explicitly the reasoning behind a selection is not simple. For example, Möttönen (1997, 362-363) has noted that decision makers have problems in separating formal and informal information in municipal decision making processes from each other.

SECI model has been contested and many researchers view it practically impossible to identify or express all tacit knowledge in explicit form (Gourley 2006, 1422). It appears that in answering questions there is a limit to which one can get deeper than to the level of articulating common sense beliefs (ibid, 1428). Beyond this point it takes reflection, which can be taken rather far but only through selective action (ibid).

Thus, in the study context this notion actually emphasizes the moments prior to reflection takes place. For example, asking a direct question from the interviewee who is not content about something in the situation with regards to me, the study topic, or the weather outside the window can result in a superficial reply with little genuine consideration. Although non-reflected answers were equally important, I sensed the replies that are of particular importance for the present study are the one that through contemplation led to reflection and tacit knowledge.

3.3 Towards Grounded Theory

Key aspect of the grounded theory analysis is joint collection, coding and analysis, which should be done together as much as possible (Glaser & Strauss 1967, 43). In the present study, formal coding and analysis took place after collecting the data. This is connected to the relatively clear focus of the study, namely how principals are appointed, and a specific context of eight

municipalities that form the eight cases. Intuitive analysis took place during the transcription and informed the areas of interest worth an insight for later interviews. These potential areas were the dialogue in the group of interviewers that took place after conducting the interviews and the apparent discordance between some administrative and political parties. These came to construct part of the final category trust.

Despite the intuitive analysis, the whole 13 transcribed interviews were subject to one time open coding. I approached analyzing the interviews unbiased and with keenness to question my intuitive findings. The transcribed interviews covered approximately 200 slides with Times New Roman font 12 with line space one. The open coding of the data produced 46 pages of one to three lines long descriptions of properties. These descriptions covered altogether 1630 lines.

Although constant comparative method was utilized in ensuring the relevance of the properties (Glaser & Strauss 1967, 101-106), the mini case study and processional nature of the data inflicted the need to maximize the information produced by the interviews. The descriptions were then summarized to established properties. Properties at this point ran for six pages on three columns on widespread Word documents in font 10. The properties were grouped under emerging categories, named to form substantive theory (compare Glaser & Strauss 1967, 32). The emerging categories are broken down to open their foundation with additional notes (see appendix 4).

Substantive theory is formed to get closer to the core category, and to finally establish it. For quite some time my work felt like there was not going to be a core category that would be relevant to the data. Yet it was found in a way that was more similar to the descriptions by Glaser (1992, 42) ("the concepts emerge as one studies, codes and analyzes his data") than I could expect. Having dreaded a prolonged analysis would be my fate, I started to open up the existing emerging categories as above is demonstrated. This led to understanding that the grounded theory this study would produce would not explicitly link with the original two research questions, although an indirect linkage exists. But the emerging core category, which was labelled at an early stage as "seeming randomness in selection criteria", and developed towards organizational element trust, proved to be a fruitful moment in this study. The links towards the professionalism represented by administrators, the municipal democracy represented by the layman education committee members and the trust between the two instances were crucial to the final analysis.

In line with grounded theory, and more broadly qualitative methodology, I have coded and analyzed the data using myself as a tool. This process has developed through a fairly meticulous

contemplation upon what constitutes a category, and more specifically, what makes up a core category. .

Siitonen (1999, 53) found in his dissertation that core category is central to other categories and it has a meaningful link to other categories, it is consistently present in the data, many of the problematic situations can be explicable with it, and it is of substantive nature but through theoretical integration it form formal theory. This is implemented in detail in chapter 5.5., but table 2 presents a conceptualization of the categories. The categorical dimensions are not explicitly linked apart from being founded in the same data. Rather, they are representing different levels from macro level to more practice orientated levels "trust" to "selection criteria". If the macro level would change, then this would have repercussions in the other two dimensions. The two dimensions trust and selection criteria are practical dimensions of the decision making and to an extent interact. Selection criteria as perceived by administrators do not form valuable information if committee does not trust the perception. Committee needs to be convinced by the administrator to make a sensible selection and trust in administrator's own work assists in this process. Committee members' perception to selections and candidates is affected in group discussions held after interviews.

Table 2

Conceptualization of categories

Dimension	Categories in data
Administrations' perception of what matters in principals' work - explicitly influences the principal selection	**Articulated selection criteria**: -work experience -principals' developmental path -people leadership -question of persona -organizational fit -principal is a public administrator
If trust is not in place, administrator's perception can be overruled by decision making authority: Committee	**Trust as a factor in decision making** -administration vs. committee -administration's role essential -articulated trust -importance of group interviewing
Not clearly visible in data, yet the large scale factors that affect the decision making and selection procedures	**Macro trends in municipalities: Developing principal selection** -varying and changing selection process -selection from seniority to merit

3.4 Data Collection

My logic of choosing who to interview was based on the notion "who is most influential in the municipality regarding principal selection process?" The number of municipalities participating to this study is eight. Initially, I aimed at a fairly representing random sample of municipalities.

However, the reality dictated that to learn about the principal selection process I needed to have municipalities that had appointed a principal within the last few years. As there are different roles for principals depending on the school size, I was initially concerned about the selection of principals in tenure. Nevertheless, I chose not to contact municipal administrators demanding to know "when you have last time hired a principal" but by sending neutral emails, which explained the foundation of the thesis, asking about their interest to participate to the study. These emails were sent to six municipalities in late March 2008. An identifiable bias towards large municipalities already existed at this point: two out of six contacted municipalities had population of more than 70.000. Rational behind this is that the bigger the municipality, the more likely it is they have selected principals in the recent times.

Additional to the likelihood of principal selection, the six municipalities were chosen to be contacted on the following criteria: Convenient public transportation connections from my place of stay, possible connections I had through the university or other people I knew, and somewhat different types of municipalities. The response rate in this round, what was to be first of two rounds, was surprisingly good; all contacted education administrators were happy to be interviewed during summer 2008. Out of these six, I had vague contacts connecting me to three administrators. I had met two of these very briefly in an administrator seminar where I asked for voluntary administrators to participate to the thesis. A third person I had spoken to about my study recommended me to one municipal administrator, who agreed to participate.

I went forward and sent out another six emails aiming to reach ten municipalities in late April 2008. In the second round I sent emails mainly to smaller municipalities. Only one of them agreed to participate, the largest municipality of that batch. Later on I agreed with an interview with one more municipal administrator through an intermediating acquaintance. Thus, I ended up with eight municipalities.

For the reason of having to collect data from different perspectives I had to look for education committee chairpersons for an interview as well. Out of these eight municipalities, I agreed with five chairs for an interview. Chairs of the remaining three municipalities participated through the method of phone interview. The phone interviews were organized in place of actual face to face contact because of the following reasons: Firstly, in two municipalities the principal appointment is delegated to the leading administrator and the political body receives only a note to a meeting a principal was selected. Therefore, I chose only to interview the chairpersons briefly to gather some

information from a different perspective to add to the understanding how delegated selections appear to politicians who have in fact decided to delegate them to administrators. Secondly, one of the municipal administrators was not from Finnish educational department but from Swedish speaking one. As the interview disclosed, the context is fairly different in the participating Swedish speaking educational sector, and the glitches between the committee chair and administrator appeared nonexistent and therefore I concluded that a phone interview would be sufficient.

The three phone interviews were organized after the interviews with the municipalities' administrators had taken place. I wanted to hear their perspective on the municipality specific themes and these phone interviews lasted ten to 15 minutes. The purpose was to hear an alternative and enriching perspective to the administrators' words. This was met rather well as the phone interviews gave succinct evidence about the existing practice in place was rather congruent from the political perspective to the administrative perspective.

The actual interviews, in total thirteen of them, lasted between 45 and 80 minutes and took place in the time span ranging from June 2008 to December 2008. As an interviewer I experienced a steep learning curve from a fairly nervous interviewer with an urge to make sure everything is asked to a more relaxed interviewer with more skilful an eye to seize momentum for leading the interview to an emerging interesting theme. From the transcripts I can identify some moments especially in the initial interviews where I would now act differently: I would enact upon an opportunity to deepen an aspect subject to discussion, or simply let the interviewee finish the sentence in time without accidentally cutting in.

In the interviews I primarily was after concrete examples: How the selection process has progressed in the municipality from the interviewee's perspective? Secondarily I had a list of aspects and questions to cover (see appendix 3), yet I kept the options open whether to follow logic of a loosely structured interview or more of a structured interview. The total number of 13 interviews involved 13 different people from 8 different municipalities from different parts of Finland. This is the reason flexible strategy was used, to ensure case appropriate degree of structuralism in the interview was demonstrated (Alasuutari 2001, 27). In practice, some of the interviewees had clearly thought about what to tell me about their municipal appointment process, in other cases I needed to do more probing. This is partially linked to the fact that out of the final thirteen interviewees, five did not receive introductory letter (see appendix 1 and appendix 2 for English translation) as an email

attachment –because I contacted the informants via phone. They were informed similarly about the process, but they did not have a written document to look at prior to the interview if they wished.

3.5 My Positioning as a Researcher

I first became interested about the topic principal appointment process whilst studying a course in Edinburgh University called Gender and Primary Education. During the three month long course I learned many new aspects of education in general, but also about glass ceiling preventing women's promotion to managing posts among other gender specific issues. Studying in Scotland and learning about the local not-so-good situation regarding the matter in hand, I presumed Finland –as part of Nordic countries with a strong history on gender equality- to be a different case. I was surprised to learn from the Finnish official statistics (Tilastokeskus 2003) demonstrate that approximately 73 percent of compulsory education teachers are women, yet men constituted 64 percent of the compulsory school principals. As there appeared to be no acute information on the topic "why men end up leading schools" available, I thought it might be a feasible topic for my own study one day. A few months later, as I realized Jyväskylä University offered a Master's Programme of interest to me, I drafter my first version of what would become, through a number of developments, the present study. After receiving an acceptance letter to study in the Master's Programme in Educational Leadership, I had the opportunity to start considering for implementing an independent investigation on the topic.

The principal selection process is not the most studied phenomenon in the field of education or social studies in Finland. Whether this is due to the intrinsically administrative nature of the process that influences educational sector, the illusive nature of the characteristics the selection process is settled on, or the process' appearing inadaptability to suit an academic study, I have no clear view on it. Nevertheless, the apparent lack of research on the actual process and the apparent lack of public attention on principal appointments ensured me that not only this topic would be applicable to be my Thesis topic, but that in fact it *might* produce a decent study.

Over the two years (see table 3) that I have held the idea of studying principal selection processes I have developed the study topic and the area of interest quite extensively. Most important point was that I had to learn to look the issue more broadly than from only one aspect, gender. After all I had no idea why men end up leading more often than women do, all I knew was that they do. Thus, I

could not approach the topic with a clear-cut vision when I cannot be sure of the different insights studying the selection processes could give me. Keeping gender as one of the many aspects in the topic seemed like the best option, whilst recognizing other aspects such as municipal democracy, candidates' age or what kind of school the principal is needed for. Clearly, I had to keep my eyes open and through approaching the study with grounded theory methodology this would be possible. The aim is to ensure I can manage to recognize perhaps only barely distinguishable, yet important and informative aspects that influence the municipal selection procedures.

Table 3

Thesis development over time

Time	Phase in thesis construction
Oct 06 – Dec 06	Initial consideration
Dec 06 – Jun 07	Proposal in application, consideration
Jun 07 – Oct 07	Topic in hold prior to starting M's program
Oct 07 – Dec 07	Topic reconsideration
Dec 07 – Feb 08	Planning
Feb 08 – May 08	Planning / emails to interviewees
Jun 08 – Dec 08	Interviews / transcription / intuitive analysis
Jan 09 – Mar 09	Formal analysis
Feb 09 – May 09	Actual writing

I approached the study from a position of a student, who is keen to learn new, to question existing practice, demonstrate understanding of the proceedings, and highlight possible problems. As I came to think of it, my positioning as a researcher has both positive and negative implications. Positively I was clearly an outsider to the field I was about to study and I had clearly good possibilities to study and potentially identify themes and possible issues of concerns quite objectively as I did not know the people involved prior the study. For the negative part I was not experienced in educational administration, never mind municipal decision making instances. Although my Master's Programme in Educational Leadership had provided me clear insights to the educational leadership through theoretical know-how in educational leadership and organizations, municipal decision making had not been explicitly touched upon leaving me to my own wit to an extent. Yet, this

further allowed me to work independently and form my own thinking autonomously. My own process is in line with inductive grounded theory research, which often leads researcher to directions that are not necessarily familiar beforehand.

3.6 Limitations

With grounded theory approach, Duffy, Ferguson and Watson (2004, 74-75) inform that it is of particular importance that analysis follows data collection soon after the interview, and that the time constraints must be kept in mind when planning the timetable. Although I do not question the value of the immediate interview-analysis process, I had to make a choice whilst collecting the data: To qualify for Glaser's (1992) list of necessary conceptual skills (absorb data, distance from it, conceptualize) I could not proceed to the analysis straight away after the interviews (see Glaser 1992, 10). This is mainly due to my gradual growth as a researcher during my studies. Secondly, in collecting the data I had responsibilities from daytime work, which dictated I had limited time to either interview participants or to transcribe per day. What resulted was a scenario where I had agreed to hold five interviews in three weeks, leaving inadequate time to analyze (or to just transcribe) between interviews. Thus, formal analysis was in a small role until a point when I took the time to analyze formally the data.

If my data analysis did not follow a typical suite, then similar critique can be formed on my data collection method, as Glaser (1992, 25) has highlighted likelihood of problems with interviews. The main issue is that interviewer leads the interviewee to answer in a particular way upon the question. With a topic such as principal selection processes, the opportunities for witnessing principal candidates' application weighing procedures, interviews on number of occasions, or decision making discussions in the political body are not self evident. If I had had the opportunities, in all honesty, they would have been rather cumbersome to act out at this stage of my academic career. In the future more insight can be developed through meticulous study of different selection processes that can involve variety of methodological choices –more about this in chapter 6.4 in recommendations for future research.

In the present study interviews are seen as the most optimum methodological choice to gather enough data in order to ensure creation of some understanding to what extent selection processes vary and the selection criteria vary in the Finnish municipalities. On the other hand, the

interviewees are municipal administrators and political body chairpersons inflicting a degree of self-consciousness and acknowledgement of the responsibility and professionalism their positions entail. Thus, it is a different scenario to, for example, Glaser's and Strauss' field of expertise (sociology of gerontology) where the interviewer is arguably more likely to lead the participants with particularly phrased questions.

The leading administrators and chairpersons of the political bodies chose to dedicate some of their precious time to my study. The subject of the study is not the easiest one from their perspective. The topic is two-sided as there are the clear existing procedures, but in addition I was after elusive nature of the decisions made to appoint a candidate. This really translates in some actual hard thinking taking place in the interviews where my informants tried to identify the strategic point that made the difference. In addition, the interview was not entirely risk-free as some of the comments made about whom to choose were not entirely, what can be perceived, politically correct and some inner municipal criticism posed would receive plenty of heated debate if made public. Most importantly for me, I believe I would not have received as genuine responses from the interviewees as I believe I did had I not emphasized the study is anonymous. Thus, all the names of the municipalities used in this study are pseudonyms.

Grounded theory asks for theory that is grounded on the data. In the strictest sense there should be no preceding conceptual thinking, for example, the gender perspective from which I have looked at principalship can be seen problematic. Siitonen (1999, 41) asks how can we form categories from the data when even the simplest notions do in fact involve pre-established knowledge? As I understand it, critical self reflection in conjunction with initial "assumptionless" analysis of the data should be appropriate in line with methodologically transparent report document. But this does not remove the key factor in accomplishing this study.

It is clear that the present research would not have been necessarily conducted in the present manner had someone else planned and executed it. My experiences and learnt knowledge, attitudes and values all influence strongly my way thinking. This unavoidably influences this study. The choices made, the interviews conducted, the themes arising are all aspects that could have been done or, perhaps, interpreted differently if the researcher had not been me. On the other hand, I have acknowledged as many influencing factors as possible and approached interviewees with open mind. My questions have surely led the interviews to a particular direction, importance laid on the whole selection process from the moment when the prior principal informs the administration that

either resignation or retirement takes place soon, to the point of selecting the new principal. The additional separate questions addressing influence of candidates' age, gender, possible lobbying for candidates, criteria for successful applicants or developmental ideas for the municipal principal selection process, of course, have influenced the study. Regardless of the persuaded themes, the actual analysis is conducted on the basis of open coding in order to establish context relevant theory on principal selection processes. Chapter four provides case studies on the municipalities.

This study is limited to the eight municipalities. The data was collected in 2008. Due to the start of a new political term (and the newly formed education committees) in the beginning of 2009, the data is already historical.

4 Data

I investigated eight municipalities: How principals selected and on what premises? In order to understand the principal selection process and the reasons behind the actual selection, I interviewed eight leading education administrators and five municipal chairpersons of education committee in 2008. In addition, I phone interviewed the remaining three municipal educational board chairpersons (see table four).

Table 4

Municipalities subject to study

Size of municipality	Investigated municipalities	Interviewed administrators	Interviewed chairs of education committee	Chairperson phone interviewed (Selection decision delegated)	Chairperson phone interviewed (Swedish sector)
70.001-	4	4	2	1	1
20.001-70.000	2	2	2	-	-
-20.000	2	2	1	1	-

Reasons for conducting phone interviews were the following: In two out of the three municipalities the decision making with regards to principal selections is delegated to leading educational administrators. In the last one of the three municipalities, the educational sector under scrutiny is Swedish speaking with rather atypical challenges to the rest of the municipalities. These eight municipalities form in total eight mini case studies of how principals are selected in Finland in 2008 and on what premises the selection is made. The geographical location of the participating municipalities according to Finnish provinces (maakunta) is: Varsinais-Suomen maakunta one municipality, Pohjois-Pohjanmaan maakunta one municipality, Pirkanmaan maakunta one municipality, Päijät-Hämeen maakunta one municipality, Kymenlaakson maakunta one

municipality and Uudenmaan maakunta three municipalities. One of the total of eight scrutinized municipal education sectors is Swedish-speaking whereas the rest of them are Finnish.

4.1 Typical Characteristics of Selection Processes

The selection of a principal is an important decision in all the municipalities that participated to this study. These municipalities want to invest time and money on the process. The persons I interviewed felt principal selection holds the key to providing successful schooling. The selection process investments –time, effort, and money– are made to ensure the best candidate for the particular school is chosen.

The actual selection process varied to an extent in different municipalities. For example, certain decisions within the selection process were done by different persons in different municipalities. Nevertheless, the main characteristics were clear (see diagram three): When a principal's post is decided to be opened for external selection (instead of an internal selection), the routine appeared very similar in the municipalities.

First, after the present principal announces retirement or other reason for departure, a decision is made to open the post for external selection by the education board or the administration. The administrative sector advertises for the vacancy at least in the regional main newspaper, national teacher magazine and the job centre web site. Applications are expected to be received by a certain time in variety of formats. After the set time the applications are compared in minimum by the administrators but in some instances by chair of school board, the selected education committee members, or the whole education committee. Beyond this point, the practice is more distinct in each municipality.
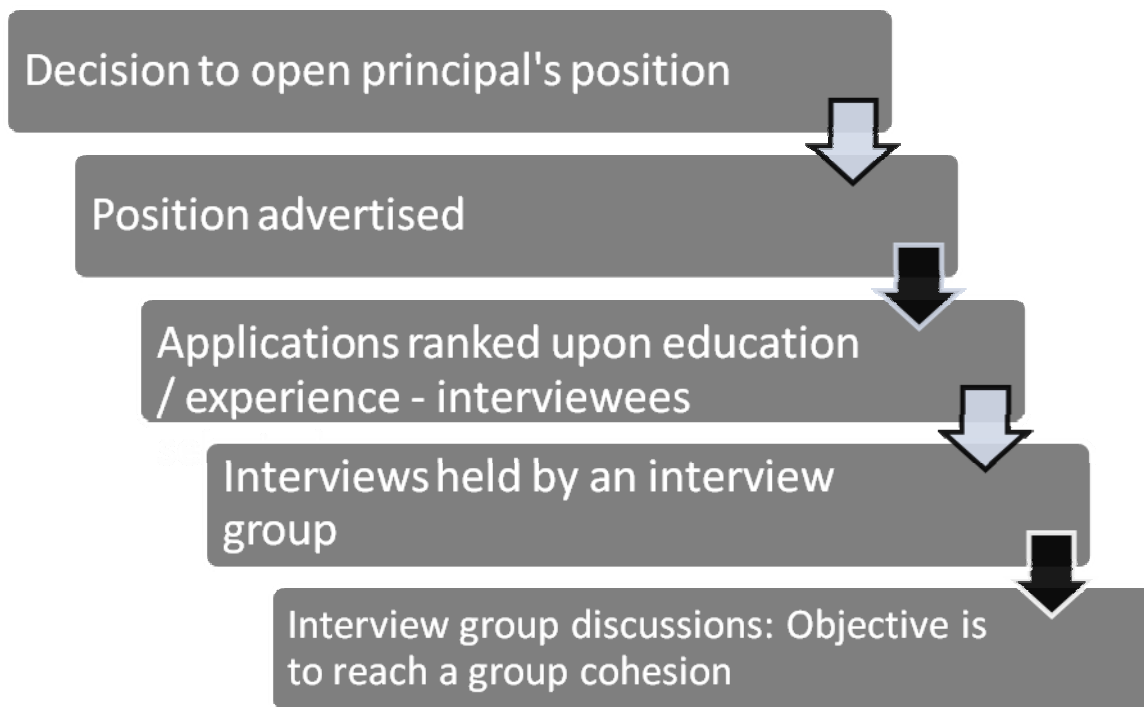
Figure 3 – Similar principal selection proceedings

In all municipalities subject to study an aim is for an organizational fit with the candidates: First the school is analyzed; what experience is preferred for the candidate to have? Applications are ranked on the basis of experience and education, yet internal applicants with minor assistant principal or temping principal experience represented an exception.

Main characteristics of the rest of the process are as follows: the most potential applicants with appropriate education and experience are interviewed. Interviews are conducted by a group of people including in all municipalities at least the leading education administrator(s).

After the interviews an emphasis is put on the discussion in group, in which group cohesion on the most potential applicant is aimed at.

4.2 Case Reports

Next, I will look at each municipality separately. In the first part of each case I present the proceedings before identifying municipal characteristics regarding principal selection. For the last note in each municipality I present the administrator's perception on required principal characteristics and/or skills.

4.2.1 Koski, More Than 70.000 Inhabitants

Koski is a city that selects quite a large number of principals each year. For each of the principals' posts in larger schools twenty to thirty applications are received. Koski is the only municipality where the administrator I interviewed was head of educational personnel, not leading administrator of education sector per se and did not have history in educational sector. Equally Koski was the only municipality where principal selection process involved an actual assessment day when candidates were required to be present.

In Koski the selection process is started by the education committee, which decides to open the principal's post. Applications are received and the head of personnel in collaboration with education administrator works to rank the most suitable candidates for interviews. Administrators present the interviewees to the education board, which can disapprove the list or add more names. More names are mostly added.

Interviewees attend to an assessment day. The day comprises, firstly, an interview where the applicants face administrators and committee members that were capable of attending. Secondly, a group simulation is held where the candidates work in cooperation in front of the committee members and the administrators, aiming to solve a school specific task, such as forming a fusion plan for merging schools. Important aspects emphasized are demonstrated through interaction and behaviour that indicates leadership character. Third part of the assessment day is the psychologist tests implemented by a consultancy firm. Fourth part is a visit to the school where the applicants meet briefly the teachers. The activities do not take place necessarily in the stated order.

Afterwards, the selection is prepared by the administrators. Prior to the decision making committee meeting, the psychologist from the consultancy firm provides assessments of the candidates. In the

actual meeting the administrators present their proposal of the principal-to-be. Committee members discuss if they agree and discuss in general of the candidates. A selection follows or a ballot is held.

The biggest investments are made regarding the principal selection in Koski. It takes both time and resources to set up an assessment day. On the other hand, committee members participate to the assessment day sporadically. The committee holds the decision making power and uses it as is appropriate. Administrators appear to have less power in practice than in many other municipalities. This could be different if a selected group was selected from the committee to participate to the selection panel, as the circumstances subject to study appeared to allow favouritism for local applicants.

4.2.1.1 Principal selection themes. Committee members participate to the assessment day according to their availability. If they are not present, they are still making the decision of whom to select. In such a scenario they rely on the verbalized opinions of other committee members, administrative presentation and psychological assessment. Possibly this is linked to the chair's identification of preference of local and known candidates in fairly close and challenging decision makings.

In Koski applications from female candidates are received less than from male candidates. This has been brought up in the committee meetings. Interviewees felt a slight increase in applications from female applicants had taken place during the last years.

Consulting teachers' perception who to select is worded formally in the municipal statute. Although this was part of the practice, interviewees did not feel the teachers' perception influenced the selection much, if at all.

The statute has been changed since the interviews and selection of principals is now delegated to the administrators.

4.2.1.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. The administrator has a competence based view on selecting principals. Both advertisement of the post and selection need to emphasize the skills that are needed in leading a particular school. In general the themes that were emphasized in the interview were effective communications, suitable character, in case of large schools the capacity to lead the big picture and the persona that comes across in the interviews.

4.2.2 Järvenselkä, 20.000-70.000 Inhabitants

Järvenselkä is a large municipality and principals are selected on an annual basis. Less than ten applications to principals' posts are typically received. The education committee has nominated the chair, assistant chair and committee member to participate to principal selection, yet only chair tends to take part. Two education administrators and the chair rate the applications and decide on the interviewees. Part of the procedure is that the chair consults the teachers of the school of the type of principal they would prefer.

The interviews are led by the same group. The administrators lead the interview on the basis of a question list generated by the personnel department. Chair asks questions as feels necessary. After the interviews the aim is to discuss openly about who to select. These discussions either lead to an agreement of the candidate to get selected or not reaching a group consensus. The leading administrator present their perspective of the principal-to-be in a committee meeting and either this is agreed upon or a counter presentation is made and a ballot is held.

4.2.2.1 Principal selection themes. It appears that the influence from the teachers has produced selections where the chair has decided to recommend different candidate than the administrator. Also, the committee members have almost managed to vote against the interview group's presentation (without seeing the candidates apart from the school's internal applicant) demonstrating inclination to respond to influence from schools.

A small gap appears to exist between the perceptions of administrators and the chair in Järvenselkä of the foundation for selection making. The chair's personal career in educational sector as a principal appeared to be an influential aspect that seemed to distance the chair from the administrators. Järvenselkä was the only municipality where the chair deemed administrators not understanding the life at schools. Demonstrating the rift, administrator on the other hand perceived the chair to emphasize the opinion of teachers in mundane matters over school developmental issues.

The lack of male teachers is viewed an issue by the chair, who also viewed men to be better school leaders for the same reason. Administrator felt that in the case of smaller schools with a risk of subject teaching, such as boys' physical education, becoming difficult to implement, in such a scenario applicant's gender can slightly influence the odds to get chosen.

4.2.2.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. Once the interviewee selections have been made on the basis of education and work experience, the personal abilities come into play. The administrator values leadership abilities, courage and responsibility, not only to be able to excel in management tasks such as timetable creation. In particular, vision for the school on hand and understanding of the human mind are valuable.

4.2.3 *Sinijoki, Less Than 20.000 Inhabitants*

The number of principals appointed in Sinijoki during recent years is low. Leading teachers, in other words principals of a school with few teachers, have been selected alongside with teachers. Yet two principals in tenure will be selected within the next few years.

With the selections already taken place, the education committee has named a selection group in the beginning of the political term. This group has been formed from the biggest political parties. The group works in collaboration with the education administrator.

At the time of officially opening the principal's post at the committee meeting, there has been a habit of the administrator seeking for the perception of the committee members to know what kind of a person should be looked for. As the municipality is small in population, the members know background of the potential and the local neighbourhood.

During the interviews the administrator is ensuring the appropriate questions are asked by stating what questions are not allowed to be asked by the law. The conversation after the interview is quite exact as the administrator tries to perceive what the interview group has thought of the interviewees. At this point potentially unjustified emphasizes on candidates are countered by the administrator.

In the actual decision making meeting the meticulous work by the administrator and the informal collaboration between the committee and the administrator have paved way for agreeable presentations.

4.2.3.1 Principal selection themes. Principals in tenure had not been selected in Sinijoki during the recent year. In selecting teachers the habit of administrator seeking the committee's perception had assisted the successful selection without committee having to create a counter suggestion in selection.

4.2.3.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. Administrator views interviewees who "keep the ball to themselves" to stand on high ground. Administrative skills are appreciated as understanding of the running of the school in terms of school time plan and contracts make a big difference. Vision for the school is important, similarly is the demonstration of "three fold" leadership: Management, information technology and leading people.

4.2.4 Kannas, More Than 70.000 Inhabitants

In Kannas a number of principal selections take place every year. Number of applications received varies according to the type of the school and the popularity of the school. Small schools can receive only one application for the school leader's position, whereas a particularly popular large school can attract even thirty applications.

In Kannas the school board, which consists of parents of pupils and other municipal citizens, plays a role in principal selections. The role of the chair of the school board is to participate to the selection of interviewees after receiving the list of applicants and their background from the administrators. This list also includes the suggested interviewees and a request to add names if felt necessary. This opportunity is not often utilized. More substantial role of the chair is enacted in participating to the actual interviews. Administrator interviews the candidates with personnel developer and board chair, which then together form an opinion about who should be selected, and presents the case to the education committee who mostly agrees with the proposal. This is the case in open selection of principal in tenure. As the school board supports the work of the principal, chair's perception or preference over a particular candidate can be decisive. After the identification of a principal candidate in the discussions after the interviews, the proposal is created and taken to the education committee meeting.

The aspect that sets Kannas aside regarding the participation of education committee is the purely decision making role it has. This means in practice that although every principal selection is brought to the education committee, neither the chair nor other members of the committee have met the applicants. Thus, the committee faces a proposal of whom to select purely on the basis of the proposal and opinions of administrator and committee chair. Committee will either decide to agree with the proposal and select, or alternatively to disagree and select someone else. By far a great majority of the proposals are agreed upon. Especially when a temporary principal has appeared to

do a good job, there is a tendency for the tenure to be assigned for her/him. Main sources of information for the committee to contemplate upon the proposed selection are messages from the school in hand and possibly conflicting messages from the school board chair and the administrator.

4.2.4.1 Principal selection themes. Although the chair of school board participates to the selection, the role is inevitably limited in the overall selection as the administrators have both the experience in selections and a considerable role in developing the personnel dimension in general.

The selection of assistant principals, temporary principals, principals to lead the merger of two schools, and small school leaders is by statute made by the administrator –although agreement with the school board chair is sought for in these instances. As assistant and temporary principal roles provide the most suitable stepping stone to the actual principal posts, the actual power of the administrator appears to be at a much higher level regarding selections than what on first glance would appear.

4.2.4.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. Perhaps the most decisive aspect in the interview is whether the interviewee demonstrates "mature leader talk". This should demonstrate healthy self esteem, without unnecessary need for emphasizing oneself. The administrator views that leading work communities cannot be based on dictating leadership. Personal stress control is important. Applicants that educate themselves further can demonstrate potential. At the end of the day principal can grow in leadership

4.2.5 Valkama, 20.000-70.000 Inhabitants

In Valkama principals in tenure are selected at times, although not necessarily every year. More applications are received to bigger schools, which receive between ten and twenty applications.

For principal selections education committee names a working group (chair, assistant chair and a member) to collaborate with two education administrators, growing the number of persons working with the selection to five. Upon arrival of the applications the group works to name the interviewees. The interviews are led by administrators, yet all group members ask questions. The discussions after the interviews are important in aiming to reach an understanding. The understanding is reached invariably as personal networks of internal applicants have influenced the process. To ensure adequate degree of objectivity is reached, applicability testing is utilized.

The interview group forms a proposal – if unity of mind is not reached, then administrators form their perception of the best applicant and present it to the committee. During the committee meeting questions are asked by the committee members about the background of candidates, ask about something they have learnt about candidates, or a countering presentation is made and ballot is held.

4.2.5.1 Principal selection themes. What is unique in Valkama in comparison to the other investigated municipalities is the degree of interest committee members appear to hold for school leadership. This might be connected to the representation of the politicians; approximately half are employees of the municipality. Although the committee has named a group to participate to the selection process, committee members that do not participate to the selection process have been at times active in questioning the proposed selection.

Administrator's role appears to be critical in selecting the principal. Opposing views of who to select have existed and administrator's conscious work to promote the selection of a potential, in the view of the administrator, candidate appears to have been important. This applies equally in ensuring an objective selection process is followed.

4.2.5.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. Administrator views principal to be an ethos creator through vision development. Concurrently, the interviewee needs to demonstrate patience, consistency and ability to sustain performance under distress. Also, administratively and pedagogically leadership should be enacted. The key aspect decisive for selection might be a sense of authority and charisma held by the interviewee.

4.2.6 Ahvenlahti, Less Than 20.000 Inhabitants

In Ahvenlahti the municipal statute delegates the principal selection to the education administrator. Due to the size of the municipality, the municipality does not select principals often. Within the last few years principal for the main lower secondary school was selected. Although the administrator could have selected the principal alone without interviewing anyone, a selection group was formed from the chair of the education committee, a job counselling consultant and an experienced principal from a neighbouring municipality.

Prior to the initiation of selection process, the administrator encouraged teachers of the school to apply. Two internal applications were received. Altogether five candidates applied. The interview

group interviewed all of them. The consultant was partly brought to the group to lead the interviews and the rest of the group complemented by asking questions relevant for them. After the interviews open discussions were held about the candidates and during these conversations group consensus was reached. Selection was based on work experience, appropriately demonstrated leadership and organizational fit.

4.2.6.1 Principal selection themes. The administrator collaborated with the chosen group members. The statute, indeed, does permit the administrator to select the principal alone. However, what the administrator did was he involved the chair of education committee in the interview group alongside with other interview group members. This had been important to decrease the likelihood of making a misjudged selection.

4.2.6.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. After the applicants' background has been checked, the administrator views that principalship boils down to the actual persona. Leadership entails a certain degree of distance needs to be kept from the teachers. Principal as one of the teachers is inadequate. The bigger the number of teachers is at the school, the larger needs to be the distance between the principal and the teachers. This means in practice leadership that is impartial. The principal needs to master three different types of leadership: People, economic and pedagogic. Authority must be held, yet communicative diplomacy should be demonstrated.

4.2.7 Siimala, More Than 70.000 Inhabitants

Siimala is a large city with a big number of schools. However, as I investigated the Swedish sector of education, I faced an educational organization comparable to average sized municipality. Thus, the selection of principals is not a monthly phenomenon; more likely an annual selection takes place.

The selection is initiated by the education committee, which grants the release of the current principal. The position is advertised in the national newspaper and teacher magazine in Swedish alongside the typical job centre website. A selection group is formed by the chair of education committee and the administrator in collaboration with the school board chair. The committee members are invited to join the interviews on the condition of attending every interview, yet little interest is demonstrated. The selection group aims at reaching a group consensus of the principal to

be selected, or not to select anyone. During the recent years, this decision has been not to select anyone. This decision is presented to the committee, who has agreed with the presentations.

The particular characteristic of the Siimala Swedish education sector is the lack of applicants. The applicant number has varied between none and three, including qualified and disqualified applicants. Smaller schools have attracted fewer applications, but also bigger units have suffered from lack of applications.

4.2.7.1 Principal selection themes. The decision most often made in recent years has been not to select a person to tenure. The decision is prepared by the administrator in collaboration with the committee chair. The presentations have been approved. Afterwards, the administrator names a person to lead the school for the academic year.

It appears that part of the difficulty in receiving applications to larger school units is the close relatedness of the linguistic minority. The potential applicants and possible temporary principal know each other. Informal phone calls can lead to many potential candidates not to apply. This apparent "gentleman's agreement" decreases the number of applications. This suggested phenomenon is a vicious circle as a school must have a principal, if not one in tenure, then a temporary one. Thus, there is always someone already in place at the school and next principal selection has the potential to suffer from the same phenomenon.

4.2.7.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. The principal must be able to lead the school pedagogically through developing the school curriculum, which entails understanding both child's and system perspective. The principal should be a patient and independent character with strong imperatives on values and attitudes. Information technology is more and more important. Social skills need to translate into skilful leadership of people. The interviewee needs to demonstrate visionary thinking through articulating possibilities for future school development.

4.2.8 Suvanto, More Than 70.000 inhabitants

The number of selected principals varies according to the year. The number of applications appears to vary depending on which school level the position is for but, for example, two quite large schools attracted both around fifteen applications – although some of them came from the same

candidates. Smallest schools are in the process of unifying administratively to allow for each principal position to lead a number of small schools. When a bigger and more challenging school is going to lose a principal, the existing principal contract allows for the transmission of a principal from another school to the more demanding unit, leaving the principal gap to a less challenging school.

In Suvanto the statute states that the principal selection is the responsibility of the education administrator. The administrator creates a selection group around him, which consisted in 2008 of two regional middle management principals (in between of ordinary principals and the administrator) and the development planner, who has the background of a principal as well.

When the advertisement is published and the applications have been received, the selection group assesses the applications on the basis of education and experience. In interviewing the candidates the experienced interviewers aim to gain an understanding of who will survive in the job, yet with more experienced candidates the differences are less important. Nevertheless, quite an inexperienced a candidate was chosen to a school on the basis of providing opportunities also for known character, which seemed to be of suitable nature. The ultimate decision was made by the administrator, although discussions were held with the interview group after the actual interviews and psychological tests supported this. The best applicants were subject to applicability testing, which was in the end to support the decision making.

4.2.8.1 Principal selection themes. In Suvanto the administrator definitely controls the principal selection. The question of how much attention should be put on experience, and how much on potential is a difficult one. The selection process was done by a selection group, to ensure no disqualified or personal preference influenced selection would take place. Administrator briefed the education committee about the selection, which in fact is on the other side of the municipal organizational model. The administrator has established a link with the chair of the executive council to ensure communication is in place. The administrator receives feedback on selections made.

The interview group here was the only one in all municipalities that only comprised persons with a principals' background.

4.2.8.2 Administrator's perception on required principal characteristics. After gained experience, main differences are between different types of characters – some are more task and

some more people orientated. Impartiality and strong educational values are crucial. Self esteem needs to be healthy, not overt but on a stably balanced foundation. The selection process aims at finding a person who survives in the job: Every teacher through finishing Master's degree has a potential to be a principal, yet the persona needs to be adaptable and applicable.

4.3 Decision Making Analysis

Decision making theories and models vary from what can be described as normative models recommending appropriate process to choose the most potential option in a given scenario, and decision making theorizing that mostly can be connected to a particular principle.

The models portray the process that is involved in making a decision. The classical decision-making models involve at least six stages from identifying the problem to evaluating the decision made assuming that the foundation for this process is entirely rational (Lunenburg & Ornstein 2003, 184-187). According to the model making, a decision to select a particular candidate boils down to careful consideration and contemplation upon the available candidates. For example, a selection of a basketball coach involves comparing different options available and estimating who would produce best results for the team (ibid, 186).

What then differentiates the decision making from thorough rationality to something of more limited perception is in understanding that not all aspects can be known, bounded rationality is closer to reality than absolute rationality. Simon calls this difference a change from maximizing to satisficing (Simon 1976, xxix), implying that good enough is... good enough. Applying this to the subject of this study, it could be seen that principal selection boils down to selecting a principal that does not do mistakes but rather a decent job, instead of finding the best of the best. This is linked with what Simon argues of people making decision: "The pattern of human choice is often more nearly a stimulus-response pattern than a choice among alternatives" (ibid, 108). What follows then is to emphasize the quality of the process leading to the decision making, as is suggested in highlighting "procedural rationality" (Simon 1978, 9). It is obvious that, for example, Koski through spending a full day assessing candidates by different people is aiming at this. Suvanto uses another method through not involving politicians in assessing candidates but only persons who have a principal's background. Arguably, all municipalities have applied notion of procedural rationality

as they rely in interview assessments on multiple of persons to decrease the likelihood of subjectivism or personal preferences.

Pfeffer (1981, 366) has linked Simon's work with what he calls bureaucratic models of decision making. The key in difference between rational and bureaucratic models of decision making lie in bureaucratic model having less centralized power and control with more reliance on rules, and decisions following in rational model "value-maximizing choice" in comparison to bureaucratic emphasis on following programs and routines (ibid, 371). Whilst understanding the connection of procedural rationality to follow from routines, what appears to be of particular influence in the rational is the emphasis on value-maxim. Considering principal selections, is the aim to find the, by a given criterion, the "best" or perhaps the person that is most suitable to the organization? It seems that the emphasis is on the latter. This topic is further discussed in the fifth chapter.

Alongside with rational and bureaucratic models, decision making models can be categorized as "organized anarchy" and "political power". The decisions in the former are not linked to intention but rather are resulting from "intersection of persons, solutions and problems" whereas in the latter decisions are based on "bargaining and interplay among interests" (Pfeffer 1981, 371). The four models and key dimensions are present in table 5.

To apply the dimensions I need to keep in mind they are case specific and the applicability of one dimension does not necessarily exclude the concurrent applicability of another. The cases present in the data, the individual principal selections in the eight municipalities could be located in one or more of the decision making models. Nevertheless, I analyzed the cased and form a perception that emphasizes the appearing traditions or municipal decision making behaviour that were discussed in the case accounts.

In Suvanto and Ahvenlahti the delegation provides administrators possibility to concentrate on the selection, not on creating arguments to the committee proposal. Yet group work in candidate assessment was deemed invaluable. The selection in the present format is resulting from rationalization of the selection process. Although the two municipalities do not follow the thinking behind rational model rigidly, they are closer to it than any other model.

Table 5

Municipal decision making models

Dimension	Rational	Bureaucratic	Organized Anarchy	Political power
Goals, preferences	Consistent within and across social actors	Reasonably consistent	Unclear, ambiguous, may be constructed ex post to rationalize action	Consistent within social actors; inconsistent, pluralistic within the organization
Rules and norms	Norms of optimization	Precedent, tradition	Segmented and episodic participation in decisions	Free play of market forces; conflict is legitimate and expected.
Beliefs about action-consequence relationships	Known at least to a probability distribution	Consensually shared acceptance of routines	Unclear, ambiguous technology	Disagreements about technology
Decision	Follow from value-maximizing choice	Follow from programs and routines	Not linked to intention; result of intersection of persons, solutions, problems	Result of bargaining and interplay among interests
Ideology	Efficiency and effectiveness	Stability, fairness, predictability	Playfulness, loose coupling, randomness	Struggle, conflict, winners and losers
Municipalities' decision making culture	Suvanto, Ahvenlahti	Kannas, Siimala, Sinijoki	Koski	Valkama, Järvenselkä

(Pfeffer 1981, 371 [Adapted by ST])

Kannas, Siimala, and Sinijoki selected the principals in a traditional method, committees selecting on the foundation of administrative proposal. These municipal decision makings were not too far from Suvanto or Ahvenlahti. The routines in the selection process appeared stable and the principal selection was, thus, based on fairly firm grounds. Kannas and Siimala consulted the school board and in Sinijoki the contribution of committee members was viewed relevant, forming a picture of fairness and predictability. Bureaucratic model appeared to be the foundation for selections in these three municipalities.

In Koski selections had an impressive assessment day to support the selection, yet the selection of interviewees and later principals did not appear to be on a stable foundation. Committee members' varying participation to the assessment day, and final decision making that was not necessarily based on administrative presentation. In total, the combination of assessment day, committee members' mundane perceptions and administrators' less influential role appeared to point towards the organized anarchy model.

In Valkama and Järvenselkä the decision making appeared to be the most challenging in all municipalities subject to study. Committee members disagreed with administrators' proposals as a result of lobbying from schools or differing values. In Valkama in a particular case administrator managed to overturn the selection to his presentation in the final vote, but viewed this to have resulted in a fairly lasting memory amongst the committee members, thus casting internal candidates into winners and losers in line with the political power model.

4.4 Interviewing, Psychological Tests, and Gender in Selections

The actual selection process was mainly very similar from municipality to another. Interview took place in all selections. Unstructured interviews are viewed unreliable (see for example Herriot 1989, 434) and in the municipalities subject to study they existed to an extent, yet never as the only form of interviewing. Although a basic set of questions was presented by the administrator or other leading person in most instances, the word was open for the interviewing group and reliability of selection could be affected. However, countering the relative unstructured nature of many of the interviews, situational questions (job specific) that were asked very often are deemed to increase reliability (Latham et al., 1980 in Cook 1989, 498) and were used to separate knowing leaders from ones aspiring to the position. This aspect highlights the importance of administrative expertise. Psychological tests were used often, especially in situations where it was difficult to identify a "better" one of two candidates, in two of the municipalities psychological tests were part of the procedures of selection.

Gender was addressed as a factor somehow influencing in two municipalities by increasing likelihood of selection (the chair in Järvenselkä viewed that children needed role models and male principals could provide them, the administrator said that minor increase in chances could exist if the school needed someone to teach for example boys' physical education) and by lower levels in

applications from female candidates in comparison to male candidates (both the chair and the administrator in Koski said this had been addressed, more applications from female applicants was deemed important). Explicit influence of gender is a topic that is not neutral. As my interest was initiated originally by gender statistics in education, which demonstrate clear job segregation when considering number of teachers to principals based on gender (Tilastokeskus 2003), it seems that to address this issue would require perhaps more sensitive or explicatory approach. In collecting the data I simply asked from all administrators whether gender was perceived to influence the selection process in any way. This might have been perceived as a confrontational question. But even if a trend is identifiable that witnesses women reach less principal vacancies, it does not mean that it is recognizable as a factor at the level of individual selections. But if statistical significance was worth recognition in qualitative methods and grounded theory methodology, gender appearing as a recognized aspect regarding selections in two municipalities out of eight could be worth highlighting. This is outside the potential of this study, yet the two municipalities provide possible themes for future research: Do potential female principal candidates apply in smaller numbers to principalships? Do administrators or politicians view male principal candidates as more ideal for practical reasons, such as better suitability for certain subjects to be taught?

4.5 Summing Up Principal Selection Procedures

The principal selection processes in the eight municipalities can be summarized in two simplified descriptions. They do not capture the complexity of the scenarios, yet demonstrate the actual process to a degree. Key in both descriptions is to understand that the selection processes contain in fact two processes, the "preparation" and the "decision making".

Preparation is the work of administrators, yet in all cases more people are involved in interviewing process. The preparation starts from the point when the applications are ranked, covering the selection of interviewees, interviews themselves and the dialogue within the interview group afterwards, which aims at reaching a common understanding. This process is merit based –who is the most suitable to the school.

Decision making makes up another process. Decision making is part of the role of politically formed committee. This is in place to ensure the autonomous governance of municipalities. What entails is decision making authority that is assisted by the administrative preparation. This

preparation does not limit decision making power. Moreover, after the leading administrator has presented the case, who to select and on what premises, the committee can decide to act according to the preparation, select someone else or return the case to be prepared again. What appears to influence the communication between administrator and committee is trust, which will be opened in chapter 5.3. This description applies to scenarios where principal selection is not delegated but the executive decision is made by the committee.

When the selection is delegated to an administrator, then there is a single process in place that covers both the preparation and decision making processes. The administrator forms an interview group from the persons viewed suitable who participate to the selection process genuinely, although in case there is no group consensus the administrator makes the ultimate decision. This decision is then communicated to the committee chair, which has the right to veto if deemed necessary. What appears to be in place between the administrator and committee chair is trust. But what extent of this trust is part of the organizational model, as in Suvanto, and what simply belief of administrator does a great selection is a different matter. This will be opened and analyzed in chapter 5.3 alongside with other themes.

5 Theoretical Integration

Prior to analyzing the categories identified in chapter four, I present the context in which administrators are forming their opinion of the suitable principal. The context is opened by identifying relevant organizational factors and school organization in Finland, prior to looking at administrative perception of school leadership in principal selections.

Organization is defined by Shafritz and Ott (1996, 1) as "a social unit with some particular purposes" and theory as "a proposition or set of propositions that seeks to explain or predict something". Thus, in principle organization theories relevant to this study need to address school and municipal organizations in a way that possesses bearing and clarification.

As noted in chapter 4.5, the principal selection process encompasses traditionally decision making two separate times for two different reasons. First, the search is on for a suitable principal. Administration is utilizing the expertise to select a principal capable of developing the school. Second, the identified principal candidate is justified to the committee. The committee is ensuring that administrative process is appropriate. In brief, administrators have a responsibility to know the necessary facts relevant for decision making, whereas committee does not have such a responsibility but rather represent the municipal opinions (Heuru 2006, 164).

What Pfeffer (in Shafritz & Ott 1996, 353) states, "power is first and foremost a structural phenomenon, and should be understood as such". The identifiable organizations touched in the present study come in four forms, although these can be analyzed through numerous organizational lenses. These four types of organizations are closely linked with the four main categories (see table 6).

The division of organization into the levels presented in table 6 is inevitably artificial: There is no possibility to separate in practice the levels neatly as is done. In fact the levels are all different parts of the same municipal organization, if the core purposes for their existence can be argued to differ.

Table 6

Purpose of organizations

Organizational level	School (leadership)	Municipal (education) administration	Municipal political organization(s)	Municipal decision making
Purpose of organization (Shafritz & Ott 1996, 1)	Ensure good education for students.	Operative leadership. Preparation of presentations.	Represent the people. Strategic leadership. Decision making.	Ensure municipal autonomy.

The unclear organizational boundaries are well demonstrated by the principal's role. Of course s/he is the leader and leading teacher of his/her school, yet also an office holder that has a role to play as part of the municipal administration. The purposes of municipal administration and political organization are perhaps even more difficult to identify. The trickiest aspect, as was discussed in chapter 2.1, is the division of the tasks, administration as preparatory and political as decision making. But this is not all.

Jalonen (2007a, 364) argues that municipal administrative preparation system that leads to decision making holds polarized aims. On the one hand, the preparation should hold democratic values and hence emphasize how the preparation takes place. On the other, the increasing valuing of efficiency emphasizes the utility aspect of prepared presentations. This means that the presentations are well developed and at a sophisticated level, which can be indicative of less people involved in preparation, the better the preparation. In the same vein Rosenbloom (1983, 446) argues for incompatible values in public administration. The values in managerial line of thought in public administration appear to be geared towards efficiency, in political towards the representativeness of the administrative work force (to the actual population), and in legal towards ensuring the fairness of administrative process (ibid, 446-452).

Linking political organization and administration to stand for municipal decision making, Heuru (2006, 159) perceives the emphasis on managerialist efficiency to not hold root in legislation: To expect municipal decision making to increase in efficiency would require a prerequisite principle, yet democracy does not allow anything else than principles coupled with law -thus, the expectation is impossible.

In this chapter five I scrutinize the emerged categories, link them to relevant literature and form theory grounded on data. I start with looking at the school organization.

5.1 Finnish School Organization

Schools as organizations have been analyzed with a number of different organizational models starting from bureaucracy, which could be a justified analysis on the basis of professionalism, bureaucratic specialization into (subject) teaching and administration, and from the pupils' perspective the compulsory nature of the school (Mustonen 2003, 37-38).

The hierarchical layers in school organization are small in number. Teachers' professional autonomy is a significant aspect of educational institution organization internal structure (Ojala 2007, 137). Following, the practice of teaching is withheld by the teacher profession and the relationship of professional teachers and school management has been termed in research literature as loose coupling (ibid).

Schools are part of the municipal organization; in fact, they are directly under the education administrator as principals are his/her subordinates. Nevertheless, teaching seems to be out of municipal steering apart from budgetary dimension (Ojala 2007, 137). Therefore the link that principal provides is of importance to the running of the school, but also to the education administrator.

> It is very important that even if you don't come from your own staffroom, you can define to yourself the principal's role. You are the employer then, not the employee. And what that then means. And if I carry on it is very important for me that the principal is a leader that knows the Siimala city strategy.
> Although we are a Finnish Swedish school, yet up and down and to the sides we need to remember that this is a Siimala school. What are our values, where we aim and that s/he is a loyal city employee. S/he needs to know that s/he is an employer and is loyal to the role. And that s/he can do this.
> *Siimala, administrator*

> The foundation is that you have internalized what the task is. That you are the principal. That you are the representative of the employer, you have a clear vision how to lead a school unit. It does not need to be one to one with my perception. (…) The leadership of personnel, because it is professional staff with same education as you do, the leading equals is the toughest aspect that I know of.
> *Ahvenlahti, administrator*

63

The aims of basic education according to legislation are to support pupils' growth to humanity and ethically responsible citizenship as well as the relevant knowledge and skills to life (Perusopetuslaki 628 2§). What ties basic education in particular to municipality is the 4§ of the same law, which states the responsibility of a municipality is to provide compulsory education, or agree with a private foundation or municipal cooperation about the provision of education.

> We have a good system in Finland, we have the foundation, we have a very clear municipal curriculum and I want that the principal leads according to these targets and I want that the curriculum is implemented in a method that is in line with these (curricular) objectives. That the child is important here.
>
> *Siimala, administrator*

Finnish schools are in a change process that takes place at different levels and at different pace. The fusion of prior primary and secondary schools into new comprehensive basic school units in line with the 1998 legislation is implemented gradually (Johnson 2007a, 10-11). The steep decrease in actual number of schools, whilst concurrently pupil numbers have stayed rather similar, indicates the evaporation of small "village schools", which affects many small municipalities (Ojala 2007, 141). In the background are the locally decreasing year groups and population movements towards towns and cities.

Whilst the concrete school structures are changing, equally the external circumstances of the school develop. The more complex social relationships, new ways to lead a family, multi-national pupils, more inquisitive and acknowledging parents, and connection of socioeconomic background with school success all imply new know-how is needed at schools (Karikoski 2009, 11). These and other existing factors underline the development of the last two decades when schools have had to open to the existing environment. This entails both more cooperation with other experts in the field but also increasing transparency in the relationship with parents and other stakeholders (ibid, 11-12). Change has meant and means in practice different things for teachers and leaders (Juuti 2004, 9-10).

5.1.1 School Leadership

The Finnish Principal Association received survey data from nearly 600 Finnish principals in 2004 (Surefire). Next to everyone (97,7%) viewed that principal's workload has increased (ibid, 5).The recently established or added aspects of principals' work that received the most answers to an open question are multi-professional cooperation on pupil welfare (118 answers), projects and

networking (95), curricular development process (95), planning and strategy development (61), and economic administration (57) (ibid, 9-11).

 The diversity of principal's work is highlighted in answers where a fifth of the replied principals noted that other posts or duties have been combined to the principal's work such as combination of different school levels (mainly primary to secondary or secondary to upper secondary, but also education administrator's work in addition to principals in 19 cases), and in bigger cities a district principal system is in place where frequent meetings are coordinated by appointed principals who take care of the duty alongside with their own job (ibid, 4-9). The extreme case might be a small municipality where the education administrator leads seven primary schools and the principal leads the secondary and upper secondary schools (ibid, 9).

School leadership can be differentiated from leadership of other fields in a number of ways: For one, schools must be led in a way that takes into account the societal will of the school providers (Mäkelä 2007, 64). On the other hand, the value or the quality of education cannot be calculated through mere numbers. Leading highly qualified teachers that have the same educational background as the principal does, further specifies the role.

Principals' work develops over time. Researchers' understandings of what the work comprises has equally developed (see table 7). Mäkelä notes that in 1980s the functioning of school based on modern societal perspective that emphasized predictability, linearity and strategic planning (2007, 215). It is clear that these aspects are part of the understanding of society as it was still in 1980s prior to increasing globalization, market economy, and post-modernism. The main challenge the changing circumstances propose for administrators is the identification of principals that are capable of leading the schools into the future.

Table 7

Summary of views of different researchers on spheres of principals' work.

Researcher	Principals' task domains			
Vaherva 1984	economic-management	personnel relations	pedagogic leadership	
Hämäläinen 1986	economy and other management	taking care of human relations	pedagogic leadership	
Lonkila 1990	management	pedagogic leadership	teaching work	
Erätuuli & Leino 1993	management work	leadership work		
Ojala 2003	management and development	strategic leadership	teacher's role	
Pennanen 2006	leadership of management	leadership of people	leadership of tasks	
Pirnes 2006	take care of tasks	take care of human relations	mental flexibility	ethics of leadership
Mäkelä 2007	pedagogic leadership	management and economic leadership	personnel leadership	cooperative network leadership

Mäkelä 2007, 129, 200 (translated & adapted by ST)

5.2 Principal Selection Criteria.

In the qualitative analysis on administrators' perceptions I aimed at grounded theory and generated a collection of categories that formed in total principal selection criteria. The sub-categories were "work experience", "principal developmental path", "people leadership", "question of persona", "organizational fit" and "principal is a public administrator". Before examining these further, I look at the capacity of politicians and administrators as selectors.

Quite a few aspects of the principal's job are emphasized by the interviewers and selectors. The division between laymen committee members and administrators was clear because administrators held more and current substance knowledge of principals' work and were capable of analyzing the work requirements considerably more than the committee chairs were. Thus, the focus on selection criteria was not on politicians.

> I don't feel that I have the expertise to select, and rarely people have through their work opportunities for selection. Inexperience does matter and therefore it (selection of principal) would be just a matter of opinion.
>
> *Ahvenlahti, politician*

> Now when the interview jury is formed by experienced principals, I see this as strength. We have district principals, five persons when the municipality is split to districts, district principals have a bit broader perspective than the normal principal. ...I claim this is much better than if you think, in trustee body, party people in some trustee body who interview, they lack the substance in complete. They look only at the type.
>
> *Suvanto, administrator*

It can be viewed that committee chairs utilized strategy similar to signalling theory; the selector pays attention to the candidates' different signs which include education and work experience, behaviour, appearance and gender. With little experience from selections or the actual work of principals, committee members lack the experience that Spence calls for which prevents making "unaided guesses" at the suitability of the candidate to the job (Spence 1973, 8). This perception is echoed by Simon's notion that individuals' attention is limited, *bounded rationality*, and it recognizes the more familiar aspects, which means that inexperienced interviewers might not identify the relevant dimensions (Simon 1979, 79, 82). An experimental research addressed whether teachers can make well informed decisions when they are involved in principal selection. The findings suggested that the teachers' tenures in the board were too short, a year, to gain expertise in selections, and teachers did not manage to select the more experienced candidate (Winter & Jaeger 2002, 21). The notion of short tenures is of concern to the present study context due to political terms of four years. The latter point raised by the study is of great interest as the experience factor as leading to optimal principal selection conflicts with the perceptions of the interviewed administrators.

Prior to reaching the actual selection criteria the interviewees need to be selected. Applicants need to possess the bare minimum criterion set in legislation, to hold the teachers' qualification in the level of school and courses in principalship or relevant experience (Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista 2 §). This was taken as an unsaid foundation by the administrators and mostly was explained only if I particularly asked about it. At this stage education is seen to function as a disqualifier for those applicants that do not hold the minimum qualification of a teacher

> The first crude division is between the qualified and unqualified; the qualified applicants remain on the list.
>
> *Sinijoki, administrator*

We can ask if education serves a "determinative function" (Moore 1989, in Silvennoinen & Pirilä 1992, 14), to actually determine which applicant is in the end selected. It is clear according to the data it does not determine the selection, yet signs exist that educating oneself further can assist in the application process through getting yourself noticed. But education does not succeed to determine one a principal's role – an interview at best. It seems that if education does not hold relevance in final selection, the applicants' persona and skills are more important in the selection. This appears to be in line with education having a screening function (ibid). In this scenario only the qualified principal applicants are invited for an interview but the final selection will be based on other than educational criteria.

> The persona tells an awful lot. If the papers are ok, you have appropriately experience, then in the end it's the persona that is decisive. You can't there, for example you can't pay attention to the grades, I don't put any value on them. *Ahvenlahti, administrator*

> If the applicant group has not been particularly bad, the applicants' papers are already at such a level that in the selection weighs mainly the individual abilities, how have succeeded in prior posts, where has been already, what kind of picture can be created in the interview.
> *Järvenselkä, administrator*

> We, would I say, our aim (in ranking applications) is competence based, in capabilities in general. We have started to look at it from the perspective of the school, what kind of school we have, this is obviously done beforehand. We have all sorts of (schools), big, huge in Finnish perspective, then we have three-teacher-schools and in between. Then we start to think who we go for. Then work experience, education experience, and so forth. That way we get to what kind of applicants we are going to select to be interviewed. *Koski, administrator*

It seems that external candidates' relevant experience is essential. Without experience an external candidate would have no chance in applying to a school in another municipality. This is linked to the comprehensive uncertainty the selectors face when trying to decide on an external candidate - the interviewing group is basing their view on the documents on hand and later on the interview, which presents the only opportunity for face to face with the applicant. Selection is risky business and the information that is available about the applicant and his/her suitability to the particular school is unavoidably inadequate, especially when compared to an internal applicant, which explains the inherent problematic of selection (Rantala 1997, 14).

> If (an applicant) has leadership experience and education, then always are invited to an interview.
> *Kannas, administrator*

> From the papers you see, the work experience is quite significant in it, it does not matter what's your background, what subject or other. The grades don't matter at all. Because there we look for a person who survives, that's the aim in the whole selection process that through the interviews you manage to find out from the person such characteristics and features because they are the ones that are decisive.
>
> *Suvanto, administrator*

Relating to the Suvanto administrator's words, with no evidential background in principalship – there is no proof on *surviving* in the job. This is in line with other administrators as the view is clear: With experience the demonstration is in place that the job can be done.

Yet work experience cannot be measured to determine the best of the applicants, rather a few years in principal's post is treated as a basic that allows routine to unleash the innate potential of the individual.

> This number of years (as a principal) is not an indicator. Of course experience brings know-how but in the interview the aim is to map the applicability to lead the particular work community, and motivation.
>
> *Kannas, administrator*

But experience is an aspect that can be negotiated when the candidate is known. A tendency for principals' developmental path appeared in larger municipalities. Internal inexperienced candidates have a potential gateway to principalship once they have gained some experience either in substituting the absent principal or otherwise demonstrating potentiality. The data provided evidence to the existence of such development opportunities, yet this opportunity must be distinguished from the actual principal selection criteria. The reason for this is that there appeared to exist a paradox in selectors emphasizing experience of principalship, yet well known applicants appeared not to need to follow this rule.

An informal social structure appears to exist that I call "principal development path".

> For example last spring we had two temporary principals that were selected. The other one had experience from vice principal's job but during the interview I saw that s/he had done a lot of developmental work and that's the reason why we invited to the interview. And whilst you do this interview work, concurrently you all the time look for next potential principals and especially if they are Kannas vice principals, then we have our own education programmes through which we educate the principals of the future and vice principals. We have more than one such programmes for ones that aim at principalship and in them we try to scan for such potential talents. And if you are in one of these training programme and you deliberately apply for the temporary principalships, we have tried to interview these that in our educational pool.
>
> *Kannas, administrator*

We ended up not selecting an experienced principal, experienced principals were not chosen and we chose this one. There you have a type guess, or such like and that was the testing result as well. That s/he was of suitable type (to be a principal). The characteristics, which came out of the test results were clearly present in the interview and, of course, we could have received informal information as s/he was organization's (municipal) own employee. But that was not necessary, and you can think this way, you need to give some opportunities for persons who are consciously ready to go (and take principalship) and who are known as characters. We didn't withhold unconditionally on the principal experience, after all.

Suvanto, administrator

Those that are interested (in principalship), we try to guide to assistant and vice principal position to grow to become leaders. Then when a position is opened, then to apply these positions. But we always have selected principals through open recruitment.   *Koski, administrator*

We had two internal applicants. They were encouraged to apply. We wanted to compare them.
ST: What did you discuss regarding them?
Regarding them it was brought up, and what they have said afterwards when we discussed with them that we decided to select this whose papers the internal applicants had seen and they agreed that the best man was selected. They wanted, like I said to them that it is not impossible that for example if there's at some point a assistant principal, to show an interest to the job. Not only when you see what kind of a principal has arrived at the school. But you need to be interested in the job. And both of these are potential assistant principals if we end up needing one.   *Ahvenlahti, administrator*

Gronn & Lacey (2006, 102) have noted that selected principals in Australia are often known by the selection panel. This scenario raises a challenging issue: Should the selection emphasize universalism (merit) or particularism (suitability) (Gronn & Lacey 2006, 116). This question is linked with the developmental aims of the organization: To develop a strong unified culture or encourage diversity of perspectives (Herriot 2002, 397)? This issue can be reformulated into a question – is the most merited candidate the "best", according to a given criteria, for any given school? Or is there unavoidable likelihood of emphasis on suitability to yield the most potential results?

It appears that most selections are context specific and emphasize suitability to the particular school. When keeping in mind the above discussed diversity of principal's work in Finnish municipalities, this tendency appears to me as understandable.

That school was in such a situation that it needed a firm and considerate touch to be sure continuity is ensured.   *Ahvenlahti, administrator*

In case of receiving contradictory messages from the school, we go and do a work place audit, because we put a lot of energy into principal selection process as it is a central aspect from the school's perspective what kind of a principal it has.   ***Kannas, administrator***

Then we look at what kind of school it is, if we look for (a principal) to a five hundred, four hundred lower secondary school or to an upper secondary school of two hundred students, then is there experience from similar kind of a school?   ***Sinijoki, administrator***

Then we think about this, wait a moment this kind of a school, who then is suitable for this. When we know the school, schools have their differences, from the pupil, the circumstances, environment is different. In general it is similar, but it is known beforehand that this candidate might be a more suitable type. For example, we might need a clear leader, here should exist precise principles to make sure everything functions. They are these types of differences, they are difficult to write down.

Suvanto, administrator

The school was in a state of turmoil, there had been a certain kind of atmosphere problem, contradictions with the guardians, and I was looking for a balancing, calming factor there who had good nerves and this kind of administrative skills. But also there was, the unit longed for pedagogic leadership, renewal, certain kind of visionary, it's one of our biggest schools, vision on how you can develop a unit of such size. How could I, frankly speaking, to bring the school from last millennium to the present one. Such aspects I brought up.   ***Valkama, administrator***

The suitability trend that is identified, the move from universality to particularity, is not only positive. The repercussions that can be noted include the importance of the person making the selection. Without expertise it is challenging to judge who have the most potentiality to excel in the job. This was easier to do when the pattern to follow was simply identified in the "measuring" of the education and job experience. This change from "measuring" to "most suitable" has apparently taken place at the same time as administrators' role has increased.

5.2.1 Selection of a Principal: Principalship as a Profession.

Principal's job in larger schools is relatively detached from the everyday teaching. Leadership takes place through middle management, assistant principals, and the actual expectation is such that the principal does not get involved with practice. On the other hand, the smaller schools are also moving towards leadership where small schools are connected to each other through one administrative principal. Some principals view strong teaching identity to be in 2000s a negative rather than a positive point of departure for leadership (Ahonen 2001, 46). Such feelings may

increase as it appears from the data that perception in administration in many municipalities is that leading a school is all about leadership, and very little about teaching.

> Time has passed by these trustee principal schools (small schools). (…) When we talk about pedagogic leadership then in this Suvanto education model where principal has all sorts of responsibility and decision making power, it does not fit any more. It is a side task. If you have a five-teacher-school, one was the leader. Now the administrative aspects are centralized to principals in tenure and there in side units there is someone, say with the assistant principal's title, who is responsible for the everyday life, is the pedagogic leader, is a teacher's tenure and gets then teaching relief (less hours to teach). (…) But a process is ongoing here. Three schools have been unified administratively and next autumn we plan to continue. In the future in Suvanto we should have no more trustee principal schools. Work continues in all schools in a similar fashion. But I have thought that principalship is a profession in the sense that you don't act as a trustee principal but you are then professionally a principal. You are then responsible for a bit bigger unit. The job has changed quite a lot. ***Suvanto, administrator***

> Principals of bigger schools don't teach at all. They are responsible for leadership, decision making in general, networks, relationships to parents, to keep the control in hand. ... (For a unit that including the comprehensive school grades 1-9, library, youth services:) We discussed do we look for a principal for a school or a leader for a school? We concluded in the analysis that the only option is to hire a principal, who is concurrently the leader of the unit. ***Koski, administrator***

> The developmental idea that I look for is that the principal's role needs to be big enough that it is inspiring and we can require know-how from the one in the position. When someone is selected to lead or be a principal of a small school just because someone needs to be there (as a leader), it is a very weak foundation today. Productivity pressures, they require know-how. If we as a small municipality have a lot of small units then we need to train a plenty of people to do miserably small decisions, which they in the end cannot make. Why shouldn't we centralize them? ***Ahvenlahti, administrator***

> If you don't have leadership vision but have substance knowledge, then when leadership is a separate profession and the leader needs to be capable of leading the group (of teachers) and to be able to use the staff, the teachers and other members of staff are there the experts and principals need to lead the expertise and not necessarily be in action her/himself. ***Kannas, administrator***

What are the implications of such development then for schools? The main issue is the developing field of school leadership. The change does not take place only through changing population and other socioeconomic factors that are external to schools but also within the school.

5.3 Trust in Municipal Decision Making

As was identified in chapter 3.4 (see also appendix 4), the core category of this thesis is trust in decision making leading to principal selection. The sub-themes were "administration vs. committee", "administration's role essential", "articulated trust", and "importance of group interviewing". These have been in theoretical integration developed further and grouped sensibly.

The centrality of trust became clear when I reviewed the accounts of interviewees, relating to the perception of how a good selection took place, what happened in relation to less good selection, and risks that the selection process was perceived to encounter. All can be seen to have trust as the underlying and interlinking element: Trust at personal, interpersonal and interorganizational levels.

5.3.1 Municipal Administration

Weber highlighted the importance of impartiality of administration (Weber 1946, 95). Legislation states that the office holder, administrator, is subject to ensure official responsibility, which means that the official holder is held responsible if his/her work is not lawful (Harjula & Prättälä 2007, 367). Administrative responsibility is stricter than in ordinary responsibility in private life, which in general requires that office holder's action using official power needs to have a clear legislative foundation (Heuru 2006, 174). Administrative responsibility covers preparatory role prior to decision making process, which means that the preparation has been appropriate including the consideration of purposefulness of the decision to be made (ibid, 175).

In this scenario, administrators are from the beginning of selection in an official role. Theoretically a clear division exists between the political actors and municipal officials: Politicians decide and administrators prepare and implement (Leinonen, Vakkala & Juntunen 2007, 191). The existing practice of decision making by trustees upon administrator's presentation was made possible in 1976, which meant that in practice "both municipal managers and other leading office holders gained a role in the category of political leadership within their municipalities" (Heuru 2003, 261). Thus, in spite of the official decision making role of municipal elected representatives, administrators' hold significant amount of power through their expert knowledge and role. The power is often implicit, as is the case with Kannas administrator preparing the selection and politicians making the decision on the foundation of the presentation, or in Siimala where administrator names the temporary principals if selection is decided not to be made.

> The whole principal selection comes (to the committee) only at the point when the education bureau proposes a person to the tenure.
>
> ***Kannas, politician***

> If we (chair of committee and administrator) have decided that we will not take anyone, then we prepare a presentation that says the committee decides not to select a person to the office. It is a decision also, then they have decided this and we act according to the instructions and I take a (temporary) person for a year.
>
> ***Siimala, administrator***

In these instances the principal is arguably selected by the administrator. How can the committee select anyone else than the one that is proposed, when the committee has not seen the candidates? Or once a temporary principal has been in the role of a principal for a year, it is fairly likely that s/he will be selected later on. So in these instances the importance of the administrator's quality selection and work is of significance.

New organizational models that have been suggested to municipal administration are founded upon the principles of new public management (NPM) and public private partnership (PPP). NPM emphasizes that public sector should practice private sector leadership knowledge, functions and market mechanism; thus, privatize, outsource and tendered (Uski, Jussila & Kotonen 2007, 128-129). PPP emphasizes collaboration of public and private interests (ibid).

The main organizational models in use are called "orderer-supplier" and service voucher system (Uski, Jussila & Kotonen 2007, 131). In orderer-supplier private and third sector compete for jobs tendered by public sector (ibid, 129). This entails creation of quasi-markets, which stand for a situation where market circumstances are created within public sector by using limited market mechanism and by partly following market direction (ibid). Service voucher system offers opportunities, as vouchers are given to people, for municipal citizens to decide on where and from whom they receive their services.

It is said that private sector enterprises and organizations increase economic efficiency, flexibility, customer focused action, quality and freedom for customer choice (Uski, Jussila & Kotonen 2007, 139). Yet public services, such as education, which are part of welfare services are of particular nature and the hierarchical production model is used in even most strictly market based societies (ibid 130). Perhaps this is linked with the risk of asymmetrical information and the ethical problems of maximizing profits, which are deemed problematic when considered the context of welfare services (ibid, 139).

In two municipalities the decision making regarding principal selection was delegated to the administrators some years earlier. This is in line with New Public Management ideology, which "emphasizes strong principles of efficiency and accountability of the municipal official/manager" (Leinonen et al 2007, 195). Delegation forms a clear departure from the earlier decision making paradigm, which kept political actors firmly in the decision making role even if administrators did prepare the cases.

> *ST: And the final decision is made by... you? You are responsible?*
> Yes, it is office holder's decision. In other words the education administrator selects principals. And then principals select their subordinates. ***Ahvenlahti, administrator***

> Over here in Suvanto systematically for 10 years we have had a model for teacher selections that principals prepare the teachers' selection ballot. From applicants they interview a certain number of teachers, and present (…) a new subordinate for him/ herself. Also carries the responsibility. (…) Now with this selection process (of a principal) has practically no difference. This is bit more flexible regarding timetable as I can make decisions when they are ready, not to wait for committee meetings.
> ***Suvanto, administrator***

5.3.2 Micropolitics / Lobbying

Jalonen (2007, 43) states preparatory work can be considered complex when it consists of multiple interlinked actors and where the interactional relationships between actors are based on choice. Importantly, "when information is added to a system, new alternative developmental paths will be opened for it" and change the system's internal situation causing improbability (ibid, 44). This can be the case when more information is provided to the decision makers, the education committee. This information, for example from lobbying teachers, can influence the end result of the selection process substantially.

When looking at politics in general, it can be expected that the people try to influence state of affairs at the time when something of particular interest will be decided. The municipal politics does not represent an exception – but instead of average municipal citizens influencing the selection, in the municipalities subject to study the teachers of the school missing a principal appeared to be the most potential group to try to influence the selection process. Jalonen (2007, 362) has highlighted that the municipal preparation process leading to decision making is prone to external influence attempts. The action that has taken place follows Blase's (1991, 11) definition of micropolitics as

"the use of formal and informal power by individuals to achieve their goals in organizations". Apparently, teachers have some degree of chance to influence the process by contacting the committee members.

Degree of influence in the municipalities subject to the present study ranged from no attempt to individual selection processes where the selection decision was changed from the presented selection to someone completely different by the education committee, based on external lobbying.

> They (administrators) tell more broadly about the three best applicants and explain why they have chosen this particular one to be proposed (for selection), and let's say that in 85 percent of the cases it is approved. There is nothing. But then there are cases, for example, message is coming from the field, from teachers. ...In one case we decided otherwise (from the proposal). That was based on a strong message coming from the teachers at the school that a certain person should be selected.
>
> *Kannas, politician*

> The discrepancies (between chair and administrators) appear when the school tries to, the teachers of the school try to influence strongly. (…) Sometimes it's become evident that when the principal to leave the job is retiring and s/he has been very stable. There have been no problems yet there has been no development either and teachers want to maintain the stable and relaxed situation. So they are afraid that some other type of principal comes to school. Then there was this one case where this lobbying was very fierce. And it went to the point, that there was an internal teacher applying and two other top candidates. This interview group turned to the external and proposed this to be selected. But teachers had lobbied their applicant so strongly to the committee members that in the committee (…) the situation was very even. Was it 6-5 or 5-5 with the chair's vote that the external was selected. Then the school's candidate was on second place. The situation progressed and the selected candidate felt that s/he was opposed and s/he did not accept the office. Then the school's own teacher from the second place got selected.
>
> *Järvenselkä, administrator*

In two municipalities no lobbying from external parties was mentioned in the interviews. Although this would indicate the data does not demonstrate lobbying to be part of all municipalities and since not significant in grounding theory on data, what is important for the formation of categories is that the *degree of* external influence is linked to the core category, the dynamic of trust especially between administrators and politicians.

When paying attention which two municipalities demonstrated the neutrality of the selection process regarding micropolitics, it is of interest to note that those were the municipalities that have delegated the principal selection to the education administrator, Ahvenlahti and Suvanto. Is this telling of the effects of the organizational structures, the delegations? Or is the lack of micropolitics

the case because of the originally calm organizational culture, which made it possible to rationalize and think efficiently and delegate the selection process? For example, Valkama voted on changing their organizational model, which would have indicated the delegation of principal selection but the municipality declined that option. And apparently the culture in Valkama is very different from the two municipalities where the delegation has been made. This is crucial in connecting delegations with trust in the selection process, as it is relevant considering the present legislation. No matter how much the selection is delegated, the political body has a veto right if deemed necessary to use. Thus, although the decision making power is assigned to the administrator, it still remains under the watchful eye of the municipal politics. This emphasizes the importance of trustful relations between the political body and administrator.

5.3.3 Organizational Trust

In order to further analyze trust in this thesis, I need to review some key studies in organizational trust in order to form a balanced picture of the relevant dynamics of the theme. The evasive nature and constant need for its presence is captured by Arrow (1974) in stating that "the more complex and dynamic social and economic relations and exchange arrangements are today, the more trust is needed as a lubricant to keep the motor running" (Arrow 1974 in Bachmann & Zaheer 2006, 2).

Trust is viewed to be indefinable due to its complex, evolving and imprecise nature (Laine 2008, 17). This in practice means that trust exists at variety of levels, is dynamic and thus changes over time, and is intangible in essence. This does not mean that trust has not been subject to defining attempts, quite the contrary starting from over four decades ago (Cohen 1966, 4-5). Trust is identified in literature to hold dispositional, situational and relational factors that can increase the likelihood of trust (Gargiulo & Ertug 2006, 167). Different authors have created lists of characteristics what trust is, for example, interorganizational trust based on reliability, predictability, and fairness with an explicit recognition of trust being relational and based on expectation rather than belief (Zaheer, McEvily & Perrone 1998, 143), an actor's willingness to be vulnerable to other actor on the conviction that the latter party is "competent, open, concerned, and reliable" (Mishra 1996, 265), or a continuum of trust from faith through predictability, dependability, and elementary trust to advanced trust -the last being the one to aim at (Bibb & Kourdi 2004, 5). In addition, trust has been challenged not to be an inevitably positive and

beneficial construct by a suggestion that too much trust can lead to, for example, sloppiness in monitoring or complacency in inadequate results (Gargiulo & Ertug 2006, 177-181). With excessive trust it can be asked if this is similar to laissez faire leadership that is characterized by delegated decision making and little apprehension over the subordinates' work (Lewin, Lippit & White, 1939). These notions are useful for the category trust, the field in which most of the research has been made is in economics. However, this does not mean careful applying is not possible to the present study.

Harisalo and Stenvall (2001, 41) describe the degree of internal and external trust in Finnish municipal council to depend on the internal culture of the council, the political party activity, and human relations. Internal culture of council is made possible by the quality of preparation, actualizing work of council chair, code of conduct and political dialogue (ibid, 47). Quality of preparation increasing trust is based on preparing administrator's open preparatory work, open communication with council members, open dissemination of information, demonstrated professionalism, work following the political based strategic vision and independency of the preparation process (ibid 56-58). Applying these notions to the core category, with the understanding that trust is power of power, or power over power, as without it decisions are made with the use of coercive power or less honest measures (ibid, 137), explains part of the trust category. In addition, it is important to note that distrust can exist without explicit reason, for example, through two parties understanding the organizational goals differently or having different knowledge foundation for decision making (Harisalo 2009, 54).

Trust as a core category in this study is based on trust being a dynamic factor. Instead of trust being essential in being naturally present in municipal administration and politics, it is something that needs to be worked for. Initially trust emerges in practice in politicians trusting the administrator's work. For example, in Sinijoki the administrator has been in his/her position for less than a year at the time of the interview and meticulousness is an identifiable factor for agreeableness between the administrator and the committee.

> Then it comes to the committee meeting as my presentation and the committee can do many things, to leave it untouched, to put it subject to a new ballot or then agree the presentation is approved.
> *ST: And what typically happens?*
> Typically in these selections, if they (presentations) are well justified and according to the original advertisement, if you don't justify them nowadays... But I haven't had a problem here, I am very meticulous.
> **Sinijoki, Administrator**

What is clear in the data is that trust is in this context partly a one way element. This is linked with the dual nature of municipal organization as administrators have a role of an expert and demonstrators of professionalism. They are required to be on guard to unsatisfactory rationalization from the committee that represents the ordinary view in selection process.

> (After the interviews) when we started to form justifications (for ranking interviewees), I have once been told by a layman committee member that s/he had such a good golf record. With a straight face. I have had explain that it does not have any influence on this tenure.
>
> **Sinijoki, administrator**

> There were big risks, you needed to emphasize quite extensively to the politicians that, for example, test results are not public. (...) We could have easily got beyond the limits, made even unlawful decisions. It's good that we have law and when we have good principles and structures in the recruitment, you can in a way protect and secure the organization.
>
> **Valkama, administrator**

In other municipalities the role of administration to politicians was seen less dramatic, yet similar tendency for committee to get potentially carried away with the decision making was sensed and also experienced.

> It is definitely, what I first said (committee members select interviewees on apparently random basis), it is the worst scenario of head of personnel's analytical work, you work hard analytically (to name suitable interviewees) and the committee would say we don't take anyone but we take these.
> *ST: Yes, in theory.*
> It is at worst a work done for nothing and still it is right. From the perspective of municipal democracy. These are the dark sides. Of course like I said, such a discussion does not exist but instead is asked could we add (interviewees). The administrators are trusted quite well.
>
> **Koski, administrator**

> When we have these politicians selecting (...) we have noted his (chair's) criteria are -what kind of a principal is successful and who is not- different than ours who need to look at them (principals) on a daily basis. We have had to have a conversation what kind of a *type* we want.
>
> **Järvenselkä, administrator**

> We administrators viewed that temporary principal's personnel leadership should be looked at. S/he was very systematic but small messages were received that there might not be enough maturity to lead people, in order not to have only ordering. We ended up presenting another person who came from outside but a few strong teachers collected an address and sent emails (to the committee members). There the administrator's talks didn't help. No matter how much I tried to say this is an unfair comparison (...) no one is defending her/him. (...) But this is the nature of the game in this kind of trustee based selections, the coin has always two sides. **Kannas, administrator**

79

In Siimala there appeared to be no particular strains between the committee and the administration. This appeared to result from welcoming of the committee members to the interview process, close working between the chair of committee, chair of school board and the administrator, and the particular scenario: lack of applicants. The last one might be the most influential aspect as it unifies and sets the municipality to face a particular challenge.

> We have all sorts of applicants but we need a qualified one. But they don't appear to exist. (…) Because committee selects the principals, committee chair and any one from the committee can participate and then we have invited the chair of school board to the interview, and I play the main role in interviews.
> *ST: So from three upwards are present in interviews?*
> Yes, but mainly just three. Interest of most (of committee) has not been adequate.
> *ST: An opportunity has been offered?*
> Yes, yes, an opportunity has been offered. Of course. **Siimala, administrator**

> Committee members need to commit to interviewing process (...) They cannot just show up once or twice.

> When we don't select a principal (to tenure), information is sent to the committee meeting. This has been agreed with beforehand with the administrator. **Siimala, politician**

Trust exists not only between people or organizations, but also within a person. This means that interviewees, and in particular administrators, demonstrated reflective and self critical trust in their own actions and this is of particular importance in the case if lobbying takes place. At the end of the day both municipal and constitutional legislation clearly expect administrative preparatory work to be objective (Heuru 2006, 175). Objective work will not take place without self assurance.

> *ST: Does any lobbying take place from parents or politicians?*
> Yes, they take contact. They wish that principals are sacked for different reasons. It does not affect me. Yes, they can contact me and tell me what they have to say but I have a very clear own line. It does not affect me. Of course, if there's a complaint (...) then we investigate it. (...)
> *ST: Is there any lobbying from the side of teachers?*
> They would like to influence the selection if they know a person and want her/him but this is pretty difficult situation for me too, because it is not the teacher that selects a principal. They need to be heard, of course. But somehow, I think this is part of my leadership and the leadership of my superior that Siimala municipality can decide what kind of principals are wanted. **Siimala, administrator**

> *ST: Do you perceive that external persons try to influence the selection process?*
> Yes, I do, always. We probably haven't had such a process (without influencing attempts), relating to this principal selection municipal citizens and politicians and all sorts of people were running here to speak for whomever candidate.   (...) Teachers came, then people from two main political groups, the

leading men and women to speak for candidates. Then colleagues of these heads, then from local associations, for example who I know through my hobbies. That way I was tried to be manipulated. (...) All possible methods, this one knows this one and he has connections -these are tried to take advantage of. But you need to acknowledge and recognise in this position, that's the way it is. You sustain the consistency in spite of it all.   *Valkama, administrator*

Over the years I have done all sorts of interviews and I have created my own way to interviewing and with a pretty good success. Perhaps one or two bad selections have come across with over the years. I have learnt to beware of them when I listen with "that third ear". What in this situation is not real? This sounds like it's rote learnt.   *Ahvenlahti, administrator*

With this experience that I have, already after identifying interviewees from the job applications, there doesn't come too many surprises. The psychologist's assessment mainly strengthens my own view.
                                                                                                                                                        Koski, administrator

The experience that I have from selecting temporary and other leaders, there is always that, in a way it is good there are the personnel developer and school board, as there is always that risk that my personal preferences become influential. And especially if you know the applicant well. And for that reason, the fact that we have a committee that takes the responsibility, it requires the process to found the selection very thoroughly.   *Kannas, administrator*

ST: Who selects the interviewees in the end?
The administrator selects the interviewees at least over here and it is an office holder responsibility in a way. They have tried to at least, in every place some strong politician comes to me and says that interview at least him/her and I reply that if s/he does not reach our criteria, I am sorry but I will not.

(*in a prior position*-) I have been pressurized in principal selections, I have been pressurized even in teacher selections. But I have never taken that route, I have thought that I won't survive with myself. I won't live with myself if I allow lobbying to influence.   *Sinijoki, administrator*

I have said many times that in the interview situation the interpretational possibilities and mistake possibilities are rather big and like I said, interviewee might give a different kind of a picture of him/herself or try to give, so I have said it's more important how they respond than what they respond.(...) Over here administrators have emphasized that a leader must lead. S/he is the manager of teachers. The role must be taken and handled and an applicant did not demonstrate these aspects in the interview, also we knew they haven't been demonstrated in prior jobs.
                                                                                                                                                Järvenselkä, administrator

ST: Interviewees are selected by you?
To the interview, yes. We looked at them in the interview group when we thought about it, they had the lists of applicant backgrounds. But it was quite easy to find, yes, the interviewees. But in the end I would have decided, but in these (principal positions) interviewees can be found. Easily. (...) Interview

group consisted of experienced principals, I see this as strength. (...) The interview was a lot more effective and that was planned beforehand, we had a unified pattern, we made it to help us to get these aspects (essential for selection) out. But of course, the problem these days is that when people go to interviews so much, they learn to play the game. But certain themes still arise and we know how to read the interviewee.   *Suvanto, administrator*

The trust of administrators in their own work when assessing through their own activity fluctuated. In some municipalities the administrator appeared to be a particularly active negotiator, although a part of this role is explainable by the circumstances.

I was bullheaded in keeping my own presentation , or let's say consistent might be a better term, but it required bullheadedness and the committee meeting was quite interesting. There were big risks. I had to emphasize quite strictly to these politicians that for example (applicability) tests are not public and so forth.   *Valkama, administrator*

Interpersonal trust as between administrator(s) and chair does not imply that interorganizational trust, between administration and committee, necessarily takes place. Education committee is a municipal unit that can leave behind the democratic fact that committee members represent different political parties. In Valkama the consensus between administrator and committee chair did not necessarily translate to whole committee agreeing, even if the committee was represented in the interviews.

Often we have a number of applicants that are qualified. Have similar kind of experience. Then step in personal factors when you know, if we think of individual schools and we know that there are some problems, then we think how... And I trust in administrators, they do have the will to have as good a person as possible. Committee steps in when it is about bigger schools, say, comprehensive schools. When the selection is for them then there is an economic risk what sort of person is leading the school.
ST: True
Then we have typically (interviewing) head of teaching, director of education and cultural services, committee chair, committee vice chair and a member of committee.
ST: So five people.
Yes. There's always discussions about these (interview groups). In committee there is people that think politically different. Some can think that here is some sort of a plot or something, so with a coalition we get a certain security that if everyone agrees on a person, s/he is the best for it (principal's job) (...) We have noted that in the bigger schools, when the position is more challenging, what has provided us good experience is to interview with a larger group. If only administrators interviewed, or chair and administrators, then suspicions could arise. But when people from different parties are interviewing, it ensures the committee more easily that we have really pondered upon it (selection).

> ...a member has heard something about this particular candidate and asks for if it can be investigated further, or thinks that this candidate is better and if someone agrees with this. These kinds of issues can influence in the committee. And it feels silly, it is a matter of jobs and people apply and someone might let something to influence in such a way that people's future and careers are put to risk, when you feel you are being important in the committee, now there's an opportunity to ask and question and that is not right in my mind. ***Valkama, politician***

This tendency for the committee members to question proposed selections to which the committee representative group has participated through interviewing can be telling of a particular culture in the municipality. In such circumstances individual chair might not have much influence over the group cohesion, or lack of such. What matters is the long-term political culture in the committee and the municipal politics.

> It is quite hard the political game, we have such a culture in Valkama that the politicians have a lot of urge to chip in to human resources leadership and that makes leadership work at all levels pretty challenging. (...) It is, partly, characteristic of the nature of the game in this kind of small municipality. In this kind of organisation there, typically in municipal council there at least half of the people are municipal employees. Same issue with committees. In this kind of a municipality it is very challenging to keep the political organisation and personnel leadership in separation. Such themes. It requires from us leaders a lot of work at all levels. ***Valkama, administrator***

In such circumstances as in Valkama, the culture of municipal decision making can dictate the state of affairs. This implies that strong presence from the politicians is viewed preferable by the municipal citizens. Possibly to the extent that politicians that actually agree with administrators' presentation might prefer not to disclose it openly. Doing that would not appear demonstrating initiative or other locally appreciated aspects.

> I made my presentation (who to select in a committee meeting) in writing and then someone in committee asked for word and suggested someone else and that was supported and that is followed automatically by a ballot. Luckily what happened, actually what happened was the members who supported (counter suggestion) ended up voting my presentation. ***Valkama, administrator***

In Järvenselkä the committee members were contacted by the school teachers. Again, even if the committee was represented in the selection group, the committee members ended up selecting without seeing all the applicants.

> There is one case where this lobbying (of committee members by teachers) was very intense. And the situation progressed: There was a teacher applying from the school and thus we had two most potential candidates. The interviewing group ended up preferring the external applicant and presented her/him to

be chosen. But the teachers had lobbied their own candidate so strongly to the committee members that it went in the committee. (...) and the external was (by small margin) selected. And the internal applicant was then put on second place. The situation resulted in that the selected experienced there was opposition at the school and decided not to accept the tenure. Thus, the secondly positioned internal applicant was chosen.   *Järvenselkä, administrator*

In the municipalities where the selection was delegated, the municipal statute would have allowed for the administrator to select without any consultation from anyone. The key is in considering what is the extent of trust that present. Is the question about excessive trust that can imply complacency or laissez faire strategic leadership from the political party (Gargiulo & Ertug 2006, 177-181)? It seems that this is not the case. The overseeing committee was not detached in complete, from the administrators even if selection was delegated. Rather, the administrators viewed the connection to political element important and committee chairs viewed the essential. But the watershed between trust and blind trust is likely to be closer here than in the instances where committee, at least formally, makes the decision.

> I spoke with the chair of executive board of nursery and comprehensive education after I had made my decision. I explained to him that so and so are the selections. There was no disagreement as he agreed.
> *Suvanto, administrator*

> The administrator has a lot of pressure to take care of the whole work. The principal selections of last summer the administrator took care well. (...) I have discussed twice with administrator about the foundation for selections. He has wanted to keep me updated. The executive board has a veto option but that has not been necessary to use.
> *Suvanto, politician*

> If you do it (selection) by yourself, the risks are high.
> *ST: yes, if completely alone.*
> Yes, although I have the full authorization. I don't need to interview. I don't need to ask anyone.
> *Ahvenlahti, administrator*

> I was asked to participate to the selection of the principal, otherwise the administrator would have had to face the decision by himself.
> *Ahvenlahti, politician*

In Sinijoki the chair discussed about the same phenomenon, blind trust, to administrators from the side of politicians.

> I lived prior to Sinijoki in [a municipality with more than 70.000 inhabitants] and I was also there involved in municipal decision making. (...) I remember when I was representative of [X] in the local

joint municipal council. Before every meeting I received the opinion of [X] via mail -what did the municipal decision makers think of it. Full stop. There was no discussion. But here still a mentality prevails that when you have received office, then you have also received common sense, meaning that when someone is named somewhere s/he can do whatever s/he likes. There simply is no such thing as consortium direction and when we are involved in pretty large intermunicipal authority. (...) In them the thinking has been that we don't have to think about it here. We have chosen someone to be involved, s/he'll probably take care of the duties. *Sinijoki, politician*

The trust element is not unproblematic. The blind trust as explicated by the chair of Sinijoki, is at a level that is not any more useful for the purpose of quality municipal decision making. Of course, it does not mean automatic problems in practice; yet strategic decision making should be led by the politicians. Distrust as present in diagram 4 sums up the excessive trust as identified in the chair's comment and stands for lack of overseeing and complacency with no connection to the undertakings of the administration (Gargiulo & Ertug 2006, 177-181).

Distrust
- No trust present between persons/organisations, additional effort needed to reach basic consensus between administration and committee.

Trust
- Trust present between persons/organisations, work of administrator valued, coordination and overseeing of administrator by committee executed sensibly.

Excessive trust / Laissez Faire
- Administrator is allowed to act as wishes as s/he is trusted 100% . No supervision.
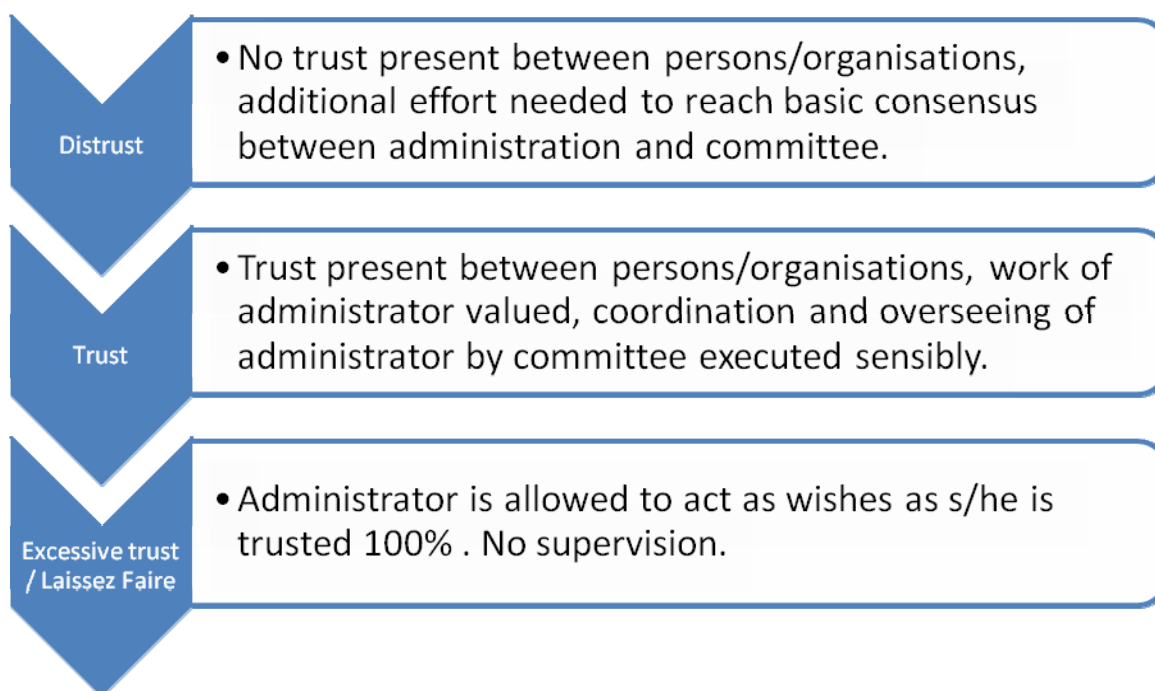
Figure 4: Continuum of distrust-trust-excessive trust

Trust in the municipal decision making leading to principal selection, in the municipalities subject to study is depicted in diagram 5. It can be divided upon two notions. It presents the municipalities where the selection is not delegated to the education administrator. What is important to understand is that two situations are in place in diagram five and they are selection specific. These are demonstrated through the use of transparent arrows and thought bubbles. This means that a committee that after critical thinking and questioning agrees with administration's presentation and trusts the rationale behind the selection during one selection can view the situation different in another. In both diagrams the large white arrows illustrate the agreeableness of the administration and the committee: the more they are heading towards the same direction, the closer are the viewpoints. On the other hand, as is the case in top of the diagram, the more they are against each other, the more the perspectives of administration and committee differ. Now, to underscore an important aspect, at times disagreement and lack of trust stems from something concrete and it is the job of the committee to be alert to possible, if rare, misconduct of administrator's position or a job done half heartedly.

When we consider the two municipalities were the selection is delegated, then the diagram 5 is simplified and the preparation process already comprises the decision making.
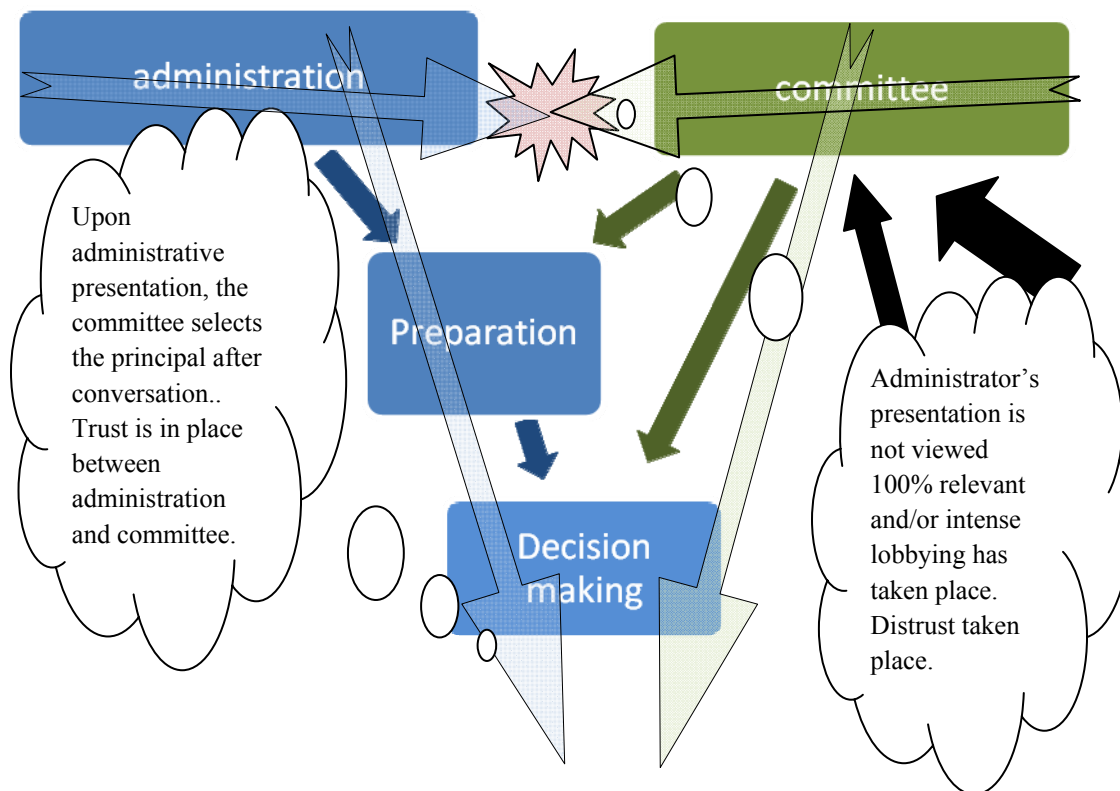

Figure 5: Principal selection in municipalities

5.4 Developing Selection Criteria and Processes.

Principal selection has developed a long way since the days of early 1970s, when teachers voted for one of them to "lead" the school. After the principals of larger schools were made office holders in 1978, the selections made by municipalities were confirmed in the provinces. The selection criterion appeared to have been based on "measuring" experience and education leaving little or no space for considering individual's applicability to lead a school. Mäkelä (2007, 156) describes his experience in 1980s working in a province government where candidates had received a score according to their education, number of courses and graded teaching skill – at times this was all that was needed, as interviews were not always conducted. The differences to the present selections are vast.

> We don't measure any more with a measuring stick, say in 1980s the situation was such that all the tenures went through the province, the province confirmed the (tenure) ballot. Then everyone selected to tenure had two years of trial time and only then the province sent the confirmation paper. That time, if you complained, the province did react, say a teacher complained, they would check s/he had more courses, they were converted to scores, the more you had courses done the more you had score. Then the work experience, they pretty much measured with a stick that also. At that time personal abilities didn't mean a thing. If you had good papers, you could complain and change selections. But today you can't. And the everyday teaching, no matter how many courses you have from the subjects you teach, if the work is not under your control, you do nothing with them. You need to look at more than that. In that sense situation is better now.   ***Suvanto, administrator***

> Education has been traditionally such that you always get to the next step. And when you start implementing a practice where you select the most suitable person from the qualified, and not the one that has been there for the longest time, then you as a leading administrator will need to face criticism. When people say why you selected such and such, our friend didn't get now anything. And you need to know that if you aim to get the best possible leaders.   ***Kannas, administrator***

Since the 1990s decentralization and the trend emphasizing efficiency, some of the municipalities, such as *Ahvenlahti* and *Suvanto,* have started to delegate the selections from education committees to administrators. At the time of writing, in *Koski* the selection is now delegated to administrators. In *Valkama* the delegation of principal selection was subject to scrutiny in mid 2000s but was postponed. The criteria for selecting a principal is now different from the "measuring" of the 1980s but emphasizing the capabilities of the applicant – trying to choose a suitable principal according to the school instead of necessarily the one with the best CV.

What has been witnessed in the course of this study is the tendency for increasing administrative control over, among other things, principal selection. This trend stems from the municipal reforms of the 1990s, which resulted from the severe recession in Finland and an apparent need to make the welfare society structures more efficient (Leinonen & Juntunen 2007, 12-13). This links with the centrality of the administrators' role.

Diagram 6 depicts the categories trust and selection criteria within the context of time. Trust is important in selections, yet it depends completely on the current circumstances, which is a many-faceted phenomenon. For example, delegation of decision making was allowed in 1976 (Heuru 2006, 135), yet it was not put into practice regarding personnel selection until 1990s when the new public management related efficiency discourse started influencing in Finland.
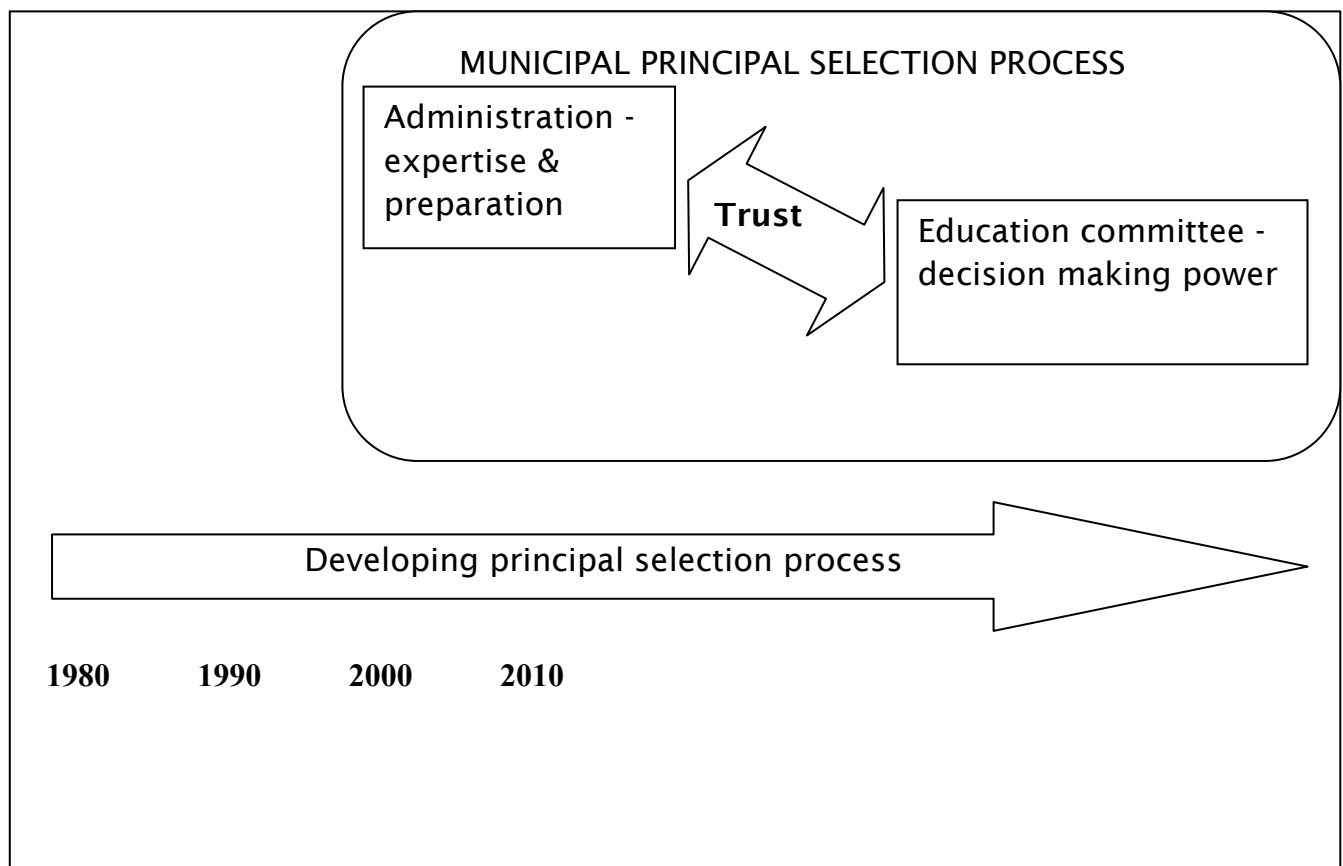

Figure 6: Principal selections in macro perspective

6 Results

The strategic purpose of the study was to shed more light on how principals are selected in Finland. Research questions comprised understanding the selection premises and dynamics affecting the selection process. Next I present the results of this Thesis.

6.1 Implemented Research

In this study I have constructed an understanding of how principal selections are implemented in Finland on the foundation of eight municipalities. The principal selection processes vary to an extent and are different according to the municipality where they are enacted. The multi-table 1 provides an overall picture of the different selection processes.

Multi-table 1

Summary of principal selections per municipality

Kannas >70.000	Administratives involved	Committee members involved	External
Ranking of applications	Education administrator, personnel developer		Chair of school board
Interviews	Education administrator, personnel developer		Chair of school board
Testing			Only if chair and education administrator disagree
Decision making		The proposal is presented to committee. Committee hears the groundings of selection. On these premises either approves selection or a member suggests some other applicant and a ballot is held.	
Developmental thoughts	Develop the process. No need to delegate it to administrator, the committee	Either delegation to administrators or involvement of committee in	

	decision making provides a backbone	interviews – at present difficult to take a stance without having access to interviewees.	
Unique	Committee makes the selection without having access to interviewees.		
Statute on selection of principals, school leaders, assistant principals, temporary principals, selection of principal in case of fusion	Administrator selects the leaders of small school leaders, assistant principals, temporary principals, selection of principal in case of fusion. Administrator presents the selection of principal in tenure to committee.	Committee decides on selection of principal in tenure.	School board is official part of principal in tenure selection. Invited to other selections, also.
Decision making model	Bureaucratic model.		

Koski >70.000	Administration	Commmittee	External
Ranking of applications	Education administrator with head of personnel.	Committee receives applications, hears proposal of administrators who to interview, decides who are interviewed.	
Interviews	Education administrator with head of personnel.	Committee members, who manage.	Teachers' opinion is heard.
Testing			Psychological testing.
Decision making	Education administrators propose who should be selected.	Committee approves selections or proposes another – then a ballot is held.	Prior to meeting psychologist disseminates results of tests on a scale of -1 – (+3).
Developmental thoughts	Selection decision from committee to administration. Official opinion seeking from teachers away from statute.	Selection decision from committee to administration.	
Unique	The participation of the whole committee to an assessment day, which is a collection of versatile testing procedures. Consultation of teachers' opinion.		
Statute on selection of principals.	Selection is made by the committee. Teachers' opinion needs to be consulted prior to making a selection.		
Decision making model	Organized anarchy.		

Siimala (Swedish sector) >70.000	Administration	Committee	External
Ranking of applications	Administrator decide.		
Interviews	Education administrator	Chair of committee (all committee members are invited, yet only on the basis of participation to all interviews)	Chair of school board
Testing			In unclear cases a possibility.
Decision making	Education administrator presents the selection to the committee.	Committee hears the selection presentation and either approves or proposes another – then a ballot is held.	
Developmental thoughts.	Principal selection could be delegated to administrator.		
Unique	Apparent lack of applicants		
Municipal statute	Temporary principals are selected by the administrator.	Committee selects the principal	
Decision making model	Bureaucratic model		

Suvanto >70.000	Administrators involved	Committee members involved	External
Ranking of applications	Education administrator		Principal group
Interviews	Education administrator		Principal group
Testing.			Psychological testing.
Decision making	Education administrator makes the decision.	Briefing is sent to the executive board meeting that a principal was selected.	
Developmental thoughts	Make the selection more time efficient.		
Unique	In interviewing only principals.	Committee in the other side of organization, in the orderer side whereas administration is in the supplying side. Contact between administrator and politicians through executive board which are in the same of the organization.	
Statute on selection of principals.	Selection delegated: Education administrator selects subordinates - principals. Selection of teachers further delegated to principals.		
Decision making model	Rational model.		

Järvenselkä 20.000-70.000	Administration	Committee	External
Ranking of applications	Two education administrators participate to an interview group.	Chair of committee, and possibly assistant chair, participate to an interview group.	
Interviews	Interview group	Interview group	
Testing			In unclear cases is used.
Decision making	Education administrator presents a selection presentation.	Committee hears the selection presentation and either approves or proposes another – then a ballot is held.	
Developmental thoughts.	Principal preparation training should become more substantial.	Principal selection needs to be committee based.	
Unique		Part of tradition, committee chair consults the teachers.	
Municipal statute		Committee selects the principal.	
Decision making model	Political power		

Valkama 20.000-70.000	Administration	Committee	External
Ranking of applications	Interview group consisting of two education administrators	Interview group consists of committee chair and committee member.	
Interviews	Interview group	Interview group	
Testing			If deemed necessary, psychological testing.
Decision making	Education administrator presents a selection presentation.	Committee hears the selection presentation and either approves or proposes another – then a ballot is held.	
Developmental thoughts.	Decrease the opposing perceptions of administration and committee through internal development and training of committee.		
Unique	Appearing distrust between committee and administration.		
Municipal statute		Committee selects the principal.	
Decision making model	Political power		

Ahvenlahti <20.000	Administration	Committee	External
Ranking of applications	Education administrator	Chair of committee invited to the	Consultant and

	Administration	Committee	External
		interview group	local principal in interview group
Interviews	Education administrator		Interview group
Decision making	Interview group contemplates, administrator makes the decision.	Briefing sent to committee about the selection decision.	
Developmental thoughts	Administrator's decision requires clear procedures – should not decide alone even if statute allows.		
Unique	Administrator decides.		
Municipal statute	Selection of personnel in education department made by administrator.		
Decision making model	Rational model		

Sinijoki 20.000	Administration	Committee	External
Ranking of applications	Education administrator		
Interviews	Education administrator	Interview group (on the basis of political representation)	Possibly another principal from the school
Decision making	Education administrator presents the selection.	Committee hears the selection presentation and either approves or proposes another – then a ballot is held.	
Developmental thoughts	Selection could be administrator's, yet interview group is essential.		
Unique	Principal in tenure has not been selected within the last few years.		
Municipal statute		Committee selects the principal	
Decision making model	Bureaucratic model		

On the basis of the eight cases, municipal principal selections differ to an extent. In other municipalities the selection is separated from politics completely by delegating the selection to the administrators. In another municipality the committee holds a strong role in principal selections, and to a degree the selection is politicized. Other municipalities implement the principal selections through traditional procedures, where political committee is overseeing the process. In total, the selection processes differ. Yet administrators play an integral role in all of them.

In the first research question I tried to understand the principal selection criteria. Due to the expert knowledge held by the education administrators, their perceptions were subject to grounded theory analysis with this regard.

Principals work especially in large schools as professional leaders. In this role they are detached from the everyday teaching. The leadership is partly delegated to assistant principals meaning that the principal's role in such circumstances bears little connections to the teacher's role. The role of pedagogic leadership is logically in this context limited. Small school leadership is following this line of thought: One and more small schools are led administratively by a single principal with an assistant principal at the school.

Principals need to be skilful with people and not to cut corners too straight. Yet the democratic approach to leading staffroom is not one-sided, on the other hand the principal is expected to make decisions and be in concrete connection with the municipal education administration. Being one of the teachers is not viewed acceptable.

Understanding the aforementioned school context, it is not surprising that leadership element is emphasized. School principal candidate is not expected to demonstrate teaching but leadership through demonstrating realization of principal's role and the work included. What then sets the principal candidates apart? In the beginning of the principal selection process, what matters are the "papers". With principal's work experience and adequate education a candidate seems to deserve an interview. A candidate with little experience, the potential route to an interview is through the school's or the municipality's hierarchy. Organizational suitability is deemed relevant especially regarding the correspondence between school stage and candidate's experience.

In the actual interviews the candidates are skilled professionals. The question is then about the candidate's persona and skills, how well do them match the particular organizational challenges?

In the second research question I aimed at understanding the whole principal process and possible dynamics or patterns that might be present in the data. Certain aspects emerged that were grouped under the core category, trust. This is of relevance at the personal level and decision making work between committee and administrator. What is important to realize is that the latter does not simply come to exist. Rather, it requires openness, reliability, collaboration and professionalism. The logical consequence of the trust dynamic is the proposition of a grounded theory that trust affects positively administrators' work for the principal selection through self assured presentation, equally as it affects positively the collaborative work of administrator and committee through trusting working relations aiding committee's decision making. Trust here does not imply criticism is nonexistent, yet it does imply relevant criticism is relevant.

The other factors closely tied with "trust" and "principal selection criteria" emphasize the developing nature of both work of principal, but also the selection process. Selection process depends on a number of aspects, mainly on the existing municipal legislation that presently allows for the delegation of selection and, accordingly, municipal statutes that identify the selecting party. An emerging trend of delegation of the responsibility appears to exist, although is this phenomenon relating mainly to larger municipalities, is difficult to say. Ahvenselkä speaks against this, as it is a small municipality.

Quality principal selection is based on various aspects at diverse levels (see diagram 7). Firstly, administrators need to possess knowledge on the developing work of principals. Secondly, principal selection criteria should be in line with work realities and look for principals that possess skills that are needed in the job. Thirdly, in municipalities where the committee makes the selection decision, administrators should trust in themselves in coming forward presenting the principal to be selected. Evolvement of trusting relationship between administrator and committee assists the selection of a suitable candidate. In municipalities where principal selection is delegated to the administrator, trustful and reflective selection process is essential. Trustful relationship to the chair of the political body is of significance as the overseeing of administrative work remains to be part of the work of political bodies. Fourthly, principal selection takes place at a certain time and in a particular place. Finnish municipal legislation states the possibilities for municipalities regarding the selection, which presently allows for delegation of principal selection.
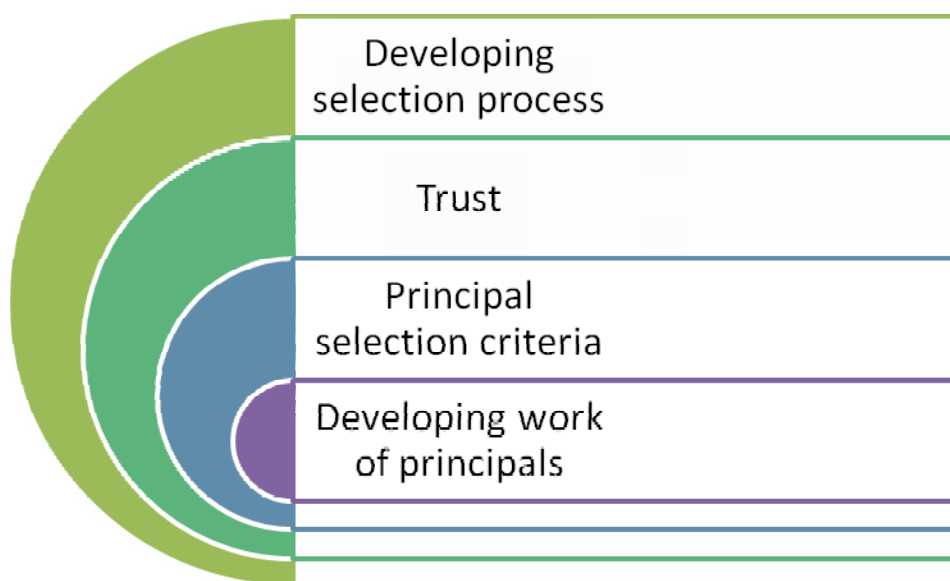
Figure 7: Themes within principal selection process

6.2 Discussion

I started the work for this thesis thinking I could highlight the one way how to select the best principal. This initial admittedly positivist thinking of mine quickly faded to cherish the more relational understanding of the selection process in different municipalities.

Trust emerged as a core factor that was linked to support the administrative work towards preparation to be presented to the committee. Administrators that trusted their case and viewed their work towards selection particularly essential for the future of the particular school were not hesitating in promoting the candidate of their choice to the committee even if the committee did not appear to agree.

The element of administrators as experts of leading schools is a dimension that can be taken on face value, or alternatively it can be looked at critically. In this thesis I have not studied the work of administrators per se, yet it is obvious that as people are different, similarly administrators differ and so do their working habits. A more distant, bureaucratic, office based leadership style of an administrator could be viewed potentially problematic when the aim is to select the most suitable candidate for a particular school. The administrators in this study did not distant from the life of schools to me, if such an expression is adequate in this context, although this subjective and intuitive opinion was never put to a test or analysis over the course of this study.

The developing natures of school leadership and principal selection process that emphasize leadership and suitability can have repercussions in the schools. The question then is what kind of consequences they can have? Mainly I come to think of school ethos, as decisions to be made in the school are distancing the school leadership from teachers' level. It might not be encouraging to the unity of the school staff.

The trusting relationship between administrator and committee were viewed to be particularly trusting in the municipalities where the selection was delegated to an administrator. But is this really the case? Is the selection delegated chiefly because the administrator is viewed to be up to date with the job, or is it done because it saves the time of the committee? If it is delegated because administrator is viewed trustworthy, this would implicate that in the changing of the administrator the committee would take the active decision making role again at least for a small period of time. This does not appear likely, although the data does not allow for investigation of this aspect. But the discussion of organizational models as divisive, for example, committee is in the ordering side and

administrator in the supplying, this does not indicate likelihood for selection becoming an active role of the committee easily. If the selection is delegated to save time, then the selection of a new education administrator is of massive significance. Of course, these two aspects can be present at the same time.

When the selection is delegated it appears that explicit link between principal selection as part of political process is detached, as selection is even more firmly part of the governance process (see table 1). Thus, it can be viewed that the selection takes place only within one municipal process in comparison to the committee making the decision where the governance (selection) process is explicitly put to a new decision making process, which really is the political process as is identified by Haveri & Rönkkö (2004, 57).

Table 1

Four functions of municipal organization

■   Political process → To ensure democracy takes place
■   Economic process → To fund the functions
■   Governance process → To recruit, decide, lead
■   Service process → To take care of welfare tasks

Haveri & Rönkkö 2003, 57 (translation by ST)

A question can be raised; what does this tell of selection of Finnish principals? Perhaps more tellingly, we can identify some aspects in the work of the administrators. It seems that Finnish municipal education sectors are increasingly led in different methods. Arguably, administratively led has the potential to be more analytical and consistent. On the other hand, political process through the work of committee can imply democracy, perhaps naively put "the will of the locals", takes place within the allowed scope of the legislation. What seems to be a logical question to follow with is, is it really the role of the municipal democracy to select the leaders of the school? And even further, should education be organized at a municipal level? Is it still the best level to organize the education at as was, for example, viewed in the early 1990s? These questions spark immediate thoughts and feelings, yet cannot be discarded instantly, although it is not within the scope of this thesis to study these themes. This study does not imply that municipal organization of

education should not take place. The principal selection processes demonstrate municipal decision making is a phenomenon that is implemented variably and at times it can be influenced.

Although it is clear that administrators do not make strategic decisions, the administrators' perceptions on selections was in six municipalities on the lines that they could decide for the decisions. The words of Siimala's administrator raise an important question:

> Does the selection of a principal belong to a political body when the committee serves for four years and a principal can serve for 40 years.   *Siimala, administrator*

6.3 Further Research

The present study has managed to form an understanding of how municipalities in Finland select principals. On the basis of the presented grounded theory, importance of trust in principal selections, there are opportunities to form further research. Trust influencing the decision making is closely connected to organizational culture, organizational behaviour, and to a degree empowerment. An option to further open this dimension could utilize quantitative methods and study different municipalities and the administrations and politics –what is the organizational climate, what is the dynamic trust in the municipal organization? Presuming, lack of trust could indicate a more difficult environment for decision making, either seen from the perspective of administration, politics or even the legislation. This element has been studied qualitatively by Harisalo and Stenvall (2001), yet the topic is still rather little known.

Organizational decision making that was analyzed in 4.3 can be subject to further study. The links between the models and organizational culture could provide the theoretical framework foundation.

Regarding principal selection criteria there are many different options to further study the theme. Most importantly they involve gathering more different kind of data on the selection criteria. This involves both different kind of qualitative data, as well as from different participants. Observational data would be of particular interest in the form of witnessing the principal selection, where interviewing could be possible after the selection took place. Informative interviewees could include the decision makers, all interviewers, selected principals, unsuccessful candidates and, possibly, stakeholders of the local school.

On the other hand, the theme principal selection can be scrutinized by using a survey instrument, and thus collect data that can be potentially generalized. On the foundation of the existing study, some aspects worth studying with a large data base include: Who applies to the principal's position and who does not? How many principals are, in fact, selected informally and how many through external selection process? What aspects do principals themselves view influential in determining their selections?

Further, the principal selection research could be made into an international comparative investigation. The study would need to be founded upon culturally sensitive knowledge and perhaps a good way to do this would be to utilize informal informants from each country to provide insights into the local context. The actual study could be a multi-method scrutiny to allow for development of perceptive, yet significant results. The informants could be successful and unsuccessful applicants, decision makers (both local administrators and school boards), and national administrators.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

All scientific research has limitations and this study is no exception to this rule. Next I present the explicit and implicit areas of concern in this study to the extent that I am aware of them. Every problematic notion cannot be identified due to inevitable subjectivism, yet my aim is to disclose the major ones.

In this Master's Thesis I have studied principal selection processes. My methodological orientation could be described by the word "applicable", as I combined case study analysis in the form of multiple cases with grounded theory. I chose multiple case study orientation to provide an account of how principals are selected in more than one Finnish municipality. I believe this has allowed for information accumulation and was an appropriate decision in order to highlight different practices in use. Yet the implementation of research has been one-sided as the informants have provided me the selectors' accounts from selectors' perspective of what takes place. Also, the fairly large number (for a Master's Thesis) of municipalities I studied limited the depth of this study. The accounts were presented in interviews which I cannot say were equally implemented, instead the interviewees took their place and position in the interviews in different ways. Here my lack of experience influenced the research perhaps the most, although I view it natural that meetings of two human beings are inevitably unpredictable.

Grounded theory methodology provided an opportunity to explore the dynamics of the principal selection. Using grounded theory methodology in this study has both positive and negative implications. For the positive, the above mentioned understanding of dynamics of the whole selection process within the municipal context was of particular use. Trust as an important underlying factor could have been missed using another methodology. On the other hand, the implementation of analysis was very heavily dependent on me and my ability to identify themes and patterns. Although consistent and meticulous analysis assists in this work, additional challenges I faced was the foundational incompatibility of plain interview data and grounded theory methodology, large case study base at this level of Master's Thesis, and analysis that took place only afterwards -not during the process of conducting interviews. I believe the understanding grounded theory analysis process yielded, trust, is both plausible and valuable an insight to the municipal decision making. It results of "conceptualizing a pattern among many incidents" (Glaser 1992, 42). This implies to me that the methodological shortfalls discussed here would not disadvantage the contribution of this study.

Neither case studies nor grounded theory methodology produce results that can be generalized. Yet, they can produce understanding of what takes place in the municipalities subject to study and what are some of the factors in place.

References

Ahonen, J. (2001). *Ammattina rehtori*. (ENG: Principalship as a profession) Helsinki: Kirjapaja.

Alasuutari, P. (2001). *Laadullinen tutkimus. 3. painos*. (Qualitative research. 3. ed.)
    Jyväskylä: Vastapaino.

Alava, J. (2007). Koulutuksen käytäntö.(Practice of Training) In Pennanen, A. (Ed.) (2007) *Koulun johtamisen avaimia*. (Keys to leading school.) Jyväskylä, PS-Kustannus.

Anttiroiko, A-V, Haveri, A., Karhu, V., Ryynänen, A. & Siitonen, P. (2005). *Kuntien toiminta, johtaminen ja hallintasuhteet. 2. painos.* (Action, leadership and management   relations. 2. ed.) Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Arrow, K. (1974). *The Limits of Organization*. NY: Norton.

Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista. (Parliamentary statute on education staff qualifications). (1998) 2 §. Available at   http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/smur/1998/19980986 (Retrieved at 9.5.2009)

Bachmann, R. & Zaheer, A. (2006). *Handbook of Trust Research.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Baltzell, D. & Dentler, R. (1983). *School Principal Selection Practices: Five Case Studies*.
    Cambridge: Abt Associates, Inc.

Bibb, S. & Kourdi, J. (2004). *Trust Matters for Organizational and Personal Success*. Basingstoke:
    Palgrave Macmillan.

Björk, L. & Gurley, D. (2005). Superintendent as educational statesman and political strategist. In
    Björk, L. & Kowalski, T. (Eds.) (2005) *The Contemporary Superintendent. Preparation, Practice, and Development.* Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Björk, L. & Kowalski, T. (Eds.) (2005). *The Contemporary Superintendent. Preparation, Practice, and Development.* Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Blackmore, J., Thomson, P. & Barty, K. (2006). Principal selection: homosociability, the search for
    security and the production of normalized principal identities. *Educational   Management Administration & Leadership*, 34, 297-317.

Blase, J. (Ed.) (1991). *The politics of life in schools: Power, conflict, and cooperation*. Newbury
    Park: Sage.

Borg, (2005) Kansalaisena Suomessa. Kansalaisvaikuttaminen Pohjoismaissa ja European Social
    Survey 2002. (As a citizen in Finland) *Oikeusministeriön julkaisuja* 3/2005.

Castetter, W. (1996). *The Human Resource Function in Educational Administration. 6. Ed.*
    Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Cook, M. (1989). Selection of operatives, manual, casual and seasonal workers. In Herriot, P. (Ed.) (1989) *Assessment and Selection in Organizations. Methods and Practice for Recruitment and Appraisal*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Dillon*, W. D. (1995). *Public school principal selection by Indiana public school superintendents*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ball State University

Drake, T. & Roe, W. (2002). *The Principalship. 6th Ed*. Pearson.

Duffy*, C. Ferguson H. and Watson, H. (2001). Data collecting in grounded theory-some practical issues. *Nurse Researcher* 11 (4) 67–78.

Eskola, J. & Suoranta, J. (1998). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. (Introduction to qualitative research.) Jyväskylä, Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy.

Gargiulo, M. & Ertug, G. (2006). The dark side of trust. In Bachmann, R. & Zaheer, A. (Eds.) (2006) *Handbook of Trust Research.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Glaser, B. (1992). *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative research.* NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. and Foster, P. (Eds.) (2000). *Case study method : key issues, key texts.* CA: Sage.

Gourlay, S. (2006). Conceptualizing knowledge creation: a critique of Nonaka's theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43: 1415-1436.

Gronn, P. & Lacey, K. (2006). Cloning their own: Aspirant principals and the school-based selection game. *Australian Journal of Education*, 50 (2) 102-121.

Gummesson, E. (2000). *Qualitative Methods in Management Research*. London: Sage.

Hammersley, M. & Gomm, R. (2000). Case Study Method: Divergent Interpretations. In Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. and Foster, P. (Eds.) (2000) *Case study method : key issues, key   texts.* CA: Sage.

Harisalo, R., Rajala, T. & Ståhlberg, K. (1992). *Kunnallispolitiikka*. (Municipal politics.) Helsinki: Vapk-kustannus.

Harisalo, R. & Stenvall, J. (2001). *Luottamus ja epäluottamus kunnanhallituksen päätöksenteossa*. (Trust and distrust in municipal council's decision making) Suomen kuntaliitto: Acta   nro 151.

Harisalo, R. (2009) Epäluottamus organisaatiossa. (Distrust in organization) In Huotari, M-L & Lehto, A. (Ed.) (2009). *Johtamishaasteena muutos -kirjasto akateemisessa yhteisössä.* (Change as a leadership challenge -library in academic community)   Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Harjula, H. & Prättälä, K. (2004). *Kuntalaki: Tausta ja tulkinnat (6. painos).* (Municipal law:

background and interpretations.) Jyväskylä: Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy.

Harjula, H. & Prättälä, K. (2007). *Kuntalaki: Tausta ja tulkinnat (7. painos). (*Municipal law: background and interpretations.) Jyväskylä: Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy.

Haveri, A. & Rönkkö, P. (2005). Kuntaorganisaatio ja sen johtaminen. (Municipal organization and its leadership) 56-64. In Anttiroiko, A-V, Haveri, A., Karhu, V., Ryynänen, A. & Siitonen, P. (Ed.) (2005) *Kuntien toiminta, johtaminen ja hallintasuhteet. 2. painos.* (Action, leadership and management relations. 2. ed.) Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Herriot, P. (1991). The selection interview. In Herriot, P. (Ed.) (1991) *Assessment and Selection in Organizations. Methods and Practice for Recruitment and Appraisal.* 433-438 Chichester: John Wiley & Sons..

Herriot, P. (2002). Selection and self: selection as a social process, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 11 No.4, pp.385-402.

Heuru, K. (2000). *Kunnan päätösvallan siirtyminen: oikeudellinen tutkimus kunnanvaltuuston vallasta suomalaisen kunnallishallinnon demokraattisten arvojen ja tehokkuusarvojen ristipaineessa*. (Power shift in municipal decision making) The Acta Universitatis Tamperensis ; 760.

Heuru, K. (2003). Development of municipal administration in Finland. *Finnish Local Government Studies* 4/03.

Heuru, K. (2006). *Perustuslaillinen kunnallishallinto*. (Constitutional legislation based municipal administration) Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy.

Huotari, M-L & Lehto, A. (Eds.) (2009). *Johtamishaasteena muutos -kirjasto akateemisessa yhteisössä.* (Change as a leadership challenge -library in academic community) Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Hynninen, Kangaslahti & Pehkonen (2006). *Regional Frictions and Aggregate Unemployment*. VATT-keskustelualoitteita 383.

Hämäläinen, K. (1986). *Koulun johtaja ja koulun kehittäminen*. (School leader and school development.) Suomen kaupunkiliitto Julkaisu D: 32. Vantaa: Kunnallispaino.

Hämäläinen, K., Lindström, A. & Puhakka, J. (Ed.) (2005). *Yhtenäisen peruskoulun menestystarina.* (The success story of unified basic education) Helsinki: Yliopistopaino Kustannus.

Isosomppi, L. (1996). *Johtaja vai juoksupoika? Suomalaisen yleissivistävän koulun johtamiskulttuurin ja sen determinanttien tarkastelua*. (Leader or busboy? Scrutiny of Finnish general school leadership culture and its determinants.) Acta Universitatis Tamperensis, ser. A, vol. 514.

Jalonen, H. (2007a). Kuusi teesiä kunnallisen päätöksenteon valmistelutyön tehokkuudesta ja luovuudesta. (Six theses on efficiency and creativity in municipal preparatory work.) *Kunnallistieteellinen Aikakauskirja* 4/2007.

Jalonen, H. (2007b). Kunnallisen päätöksenteon valmistelutyö kompleksisuusteorioiden valossa. (Municipal preparatory work leading to decision making in light of complexity theories.)

Hallinnon Tutkimus, 26 (3) 35-59.

Johnson, P. (2007a). Johdanto. (Introduction) In Johnson, P. (Ed.) *Suuntana yhtenäinen perusopetus: Uutta koulukulttuuria etsimässä.*(Heading towards unified basic education: Searching for new school culture.) Jyväskylä, PS-Kustannus.

Johnson, P. (2007b). Perusopetus – nykypäivän kansansivistystä. (Basic education – present civilization of the public. In Johnson, P. (Ed.) (2007) *Suuntana yhtenäinen perusopetus: Uutta koulukulttuuria etsimässä*. (Heading towards unified basic education: Searching for new school culture.) Jyväskylä: PS-Kustannus.

Juntunen, P. & Leinonen, J. (Eds.) (2007). Exploring Finnish Local and Regional Administration – Some Current Perspectives. Lapin yliopisto, yhteiskuntatieteet B51.

Juusenaho, R. (2004). *Peruskoulun rehtoreiden johtamisen eroja – sukupuolinen näkökulma.* (Differences amongst principal leadership styles – gendered perspective.) Jyväskylän yliopisto, Jyväskylä. Studies in Education, Psychology and Social Research 249.

Juusenaho, R. (2007). Korkokengät kansliassa. (High heels in the school office.) In Pennanen, A. (Ed.) (2007) *Koulun johtamisen avaimia*. (Keys to leading school.) Jyväskylä, PS- Kustannus.

Juuti, P. (2004). *Toivon johtaminen.*(Leading hope) Aavaranta-sarja. Keuruu 2005: Otavan kirjapaino oy.

Kangaslahti, M. (2007). *Kunnan opetustoimen strateginen johtamisen käytäntöjä ja dilemmoja kartoittamassa.* (Mapping the strategic leadership practices of a municipal educational organization) Academic PhD Dissertation. Turku University.

Karikoski, A. (2009). *Aika hyvä rehtoriksi - Selviääkö koulun johtamisesta hengissä?* (Good enough as a principal - how to survive leading a school). University of Helsinki: Research Report 297.

Kunnalliskomitean mietintö. (1993) 33. Kunnalliskomitean mietintö, Kunnallislaki. (The Consideration of Municipal Committee, Municipal law)

Kramer, M. & Tyler, T. (Eds.). (1996). *Trust in organizations. Frontiers of theory and research.* London: Sage.

Kujala, T. (2006). *"Ei pirise enää koulun kello" –Kerronnallinen tutkimus opettajien ikääntymiskokemuksista*. ("Bells ring no more" –Narrative research on teachers' experiences of growing older. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Laine, N. (2008). *Trust in Superior-Subordinate Relationship.* Tampere: Acta Universitatis Tamperensis, 1338.

Lammenranta, M. (1993). *Tietoteoria*. (Theory of knowledge) Tampere: Tammer-Paino Oy.

Latham, G., Saari, L., Pursell, E. & Campion, M. (1980). The situational interview. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 65, 422-7.

Leinonen, J. & Juntunen, P. (2007). After the Reforms of the 1990s in Finnish Publich Administration. In Juntunen, P. & Leinonen, J. (Eds.) (2007) *Exploring Finnish Local and Regional Administration – Some Current Perspectives*. Lapin yliopisto, yhteiskuntatieteet B51.

Leinonen, J., Vakkala, H. & Juntunen, P. (2007). Local leadership in a state of increasing complexity. In Juntunen, P. & Leinonen, J. (Eds.) (2007) *Exploring Finnish Local and Regional Administration – Some Current Perspectives*. Lapin yliopisto, yhteiskuntatieteet B51.

Lewin, K., LIippit, R. and White, R.K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behaviour in experimentally created social climates. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *10,* 271-301

Lonkila, T. (1990). *Koulun pedagoginen ja hallinnollinen johtaminen*. (The pedagogic and administrative leadership of school.) Oulun yliopisto. Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta. Opetusmonisteita ja selosteita Nro 31.

Lunenburg, F. & Ornstein, A. (2003). *Educational Administration: Concepts and Practice. 4th Ed*. Wadsworth Inc. Fulfillment.

McGuinness, S. (2006). *The recruitment and retention of school principals: the view from research*. Retrieved from: www.ippn.ie/assets/34/2634F765-3101-4BE3 925584E9DC30234_document/McGuinness%201.doc

Mishra, A. (1996). Organizational responses to crisis: The centrality of trust. In Kramer, M. & Tyler, T. (Eds.) (1996) *Trust in organizations. Frontiers of theory and research.* London: Sage.

Moore, R. (1989). Education, Employment and Recruitment. In Cosin, B., Flude, M. & Hales, M. (Eds.) *School, Work & Equality*. London: Open University.

Muhlenbruck, T. (2001). *Through the eyes of school personnel administrators: What matters in selecting elementary school principals*. A Dissertation presented to the School of Education, Drake University.

Mustonen, K. (2003). *Mihin rehtoria tarvitaan? Rehtorin tehtävät ja niiden toteutuminen Pohjois-Savon yleissivistävissä kouluissa*. (Where is principal needed? Tasks of principal and their actualizations in Pohjois-Savo district schools.) Acta Universitatis Ouluensis E 63.

Mäkelä, A. (2007). *Mitä rehtorit todella tekevät*. (What principals really do.) Jyväskylä Studies in Education, Psychology and Social Research 316. Jyväskylä.

Möttönen, S. (1997). *Tulosjohtaminen ja valta poliittisten päätöksentekijöiden ja viranhaltijoiden välisessä suhteessa. Kunnallisen tulosjohtamisen poliittisten päätöksentekijöiden ja viranhaltijoiden välistä tehtävänjakoa koskevat tavoitteet, niiden merkitys osapuolten väliseen valtasuhteeseen sekä tavoitteiden toteutuminen ja toteuttamismahdollisuudet valtasuhteen näkökulmasta*. (Management by results and power in the relationship between political decision makers and office holders.) Akateeminen väitöskirja. Helsinki:

Suomen Kuntaliitto.

National Board of Education. (2006). Statistics of Basic Education. Available at: http://www.oph.fi/page.asp?path=1,438,4171,4198 (Retrieved 9.5.2009)

Niemi, H. (2005). Rinnakkaiskoulun puurtajista koko ikäluokan opettajiksi. (From hard worker of binary school to teachers of whole age group) In Hämäläinen, K., Lindström, A. & Puhakka, J. (Eds.) (2005) *Yhtenäisen peruskoulun menestystarina.* (The success story of unified basic education) Helsinki, Yliopistopaino Kustannus.

Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H. (1995) *The Knowledge-Creating Company*. Oxford University Press.

Ojala, I. (2003). *Managerialismi ja oppilaitosjohtaminen*. (Managerialism and school leadership.) Univeristas Wasaensis. Acta nro 119.

Ojala, I. (2007). Johtajien roolit suurten ja pienten koulujen johtamishaasteena. (Leader's roles as the leadership challenge of large and small schools) In Pennanen (Ed.) (2007) *Koulun johtamisen avaimia*. (Keys to leading school) Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus.

Pennanen, A. (2006). *Peruskoulun johtaminen. Modernista kohti transmodernia johtamista*. (Leadership in basic education. From modern to transmodern leadership.) Oulun yliopisto. Scientia Rerum Socialium E 82.

Peruskouluasetus 12.10.1984/718. 95-96 § (27.11.1992/1174) Available at http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/smur/1984/19840718 (retrieved 5.5.2009)

Perusopetuslaki 21.8.1998/628. (Basic education law) Available at http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1998/19980628 (retrieved 25.3.2009)

Pesonen, J. (2009). *Peruskoulun johtaminen - aikansa ilmiö*. (Leadership of basic education - phenomenon of the current times) Joensuu: Joensuun yliopiston kasvatustieteellisiä julkaisuja N:o 132.

Pfeffer, J. (1981). Understanding the role of power in decision making. In Shafritz, J. & Ott, S. (1996) *Classics of Organization Theory. 4th Ed.* NY, Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Rajala, T. (2001). Henkilöstö kunnan voimavarana. (Personnel as the strategic resource of municipality) In Hoikka, P. (Ed.) (2001) *Kunnat 2000-luvun kynnyksellä. 3rd Ed*. Tampere, TAJU.

Raivola, R. (1989). *Opettajan Ammatin Historia: Opettajuus ja Professionalismi*. (The history of teacher's profession: teachership and professionalism.) Tampere, Tampereen Yliopisto.

Rantala, J. (1999). Toimipaikkojen rekrytointikäyttäytyminen: Analyysi toimipaikkojen rekrytointikäyttäytymisestä Suomessa 1997. (Recruitment behaviour of work places: An analysis of work place recruitment behaviour in Finland in 1997.) *Työpoliittisia tutkimuksia 208*. Helsinki: Työministeriö.

Reardon, S. (2003). *The processes and criterion employed by superintendents in the recruitment and selection of principals*. Purdue University Graduate School.

Rinne, R., Kallo, J., Hokka, S. (2004). Liian innokas mukautumaan? OECD:n koulutuspolitiikka ja Suomen vastauksia. (Too eager to adapt? OECD educational policy and Finland's answers.) *Kasvatus*, 35, 34-54.

Roe, R. (1989). Section 2: The selection process - Introduction. In Herriot, P. (Ed.) (1989) *Assessment and Selection in Organizations. Methods and Practice for Recruitment and Appraisal.* Chichester, John Wiley & Sons.

Rosenbloom, D. (1983). Public administrative theory and the separation of powers. In Shafritz, J., Hyde, A. & Parkes, S. (2004) (Eds.) *Classics of Public Administration. 5th Ed*. London: Thomson Learning.

Ryynänen, A. (2005). Kunnallinen itsehallinto. 24-44. (Municipal autonomous governance) In Anttiroiko, A-V, Haveri, A., Karhu, V., Ryynänen, A. & Siitonen, P. (Eds.) (2005) *Kuntien toiminta, johtaminen ja hallintasuhteet. 2. painos.* (Action, leadership and management relations. 2. Ed.) Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Ryynänen, A. (2005). Kunnallisoikeuden tutkimus. Kunnallisoikeudellisen tutkimuksen asema. 258-276. (Municipal justice research. The position of municipal justice research.) In Anttiroiko, A-V, Haveri, A., Karhu, V., Ryynänen, A. & Siitonen, P. (Ed.) (2005) *Kuntien toiminta, johtaminen ja hallintasuhteet. 2. painos.* (Action, leadership and management relations. 2. ed.) Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Sallinen, S. (2005). Kunnan tehtävät. (Functions of municipality) 45-55. In Anttiroiko, A-V, Haveri, A., Karhu, V., Ryynänen, A. & Siitonen, P. (Ed.) (2005) *Kuntien toiminta, johtaminen ja hallintasuhteet. 2. painos.* (Action, leadership and management relations. 2. Ed.) Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Schlueter, K. & Walker, J. (2008) Selection of School Leaders: A Critical Component for Change. *NASSP Bulletin*, 92 (1) 5-18.

Shafritz, J., Hyde, A. & Parkes, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Classics of Public Administration. 5th Ed*. London: Thomson Learning.

Shafritz, J. & Ott, S. (1996). *Classics of Organization Theory. 4th Ed.* NY, Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Siitonen, J. (1999). *Voimaantumisteorian perusteiden hahmottelua*. (Conceptualisation of empowerment fundamentals) Akateeminen väitöskirja. Oulu: Oulun opettajankoulutuslaitos.

Silvennoinen, H. & Pirilä, A. (1992). Lattiatason ideaalityöntekijä -Työn vaatimusten, työntekijän ominaisuuksien ja rekrytointistrategioiden yhteensovittuminen. (An ideal employee at the bottom level -the combination of work requirements, employee abilities and recruitment strategies.) *Työpoliittinen Aikakauskirja*, 1992 (4) 13-25.

Simola, H. (2005). Finnish miracle of PISA: historical and sociological remarks on teaching and teacher education. *Comparative Education*, 41, 455-470.

Simon, H. (1976). *Administrative Behavior. 3ʳᵈ Ed*. NY: The Free Press.

Simon, H. (1978). Rationality as process and as product of thought. *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 68, No. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the Ninetieth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (May 1978) pp. 1-16.

Spence, A. (1974). *Market signaling : informational transfer in hiring and related screening processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Stake, R. (2000*)*. The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry, in R. Gomm, M. Hammersley and P. Foster (Eds.) *Case Study Method*. London: Sage

Suomen Kuntaliitto. (2000). *Kunnallishallinnon sanasto -suomi-englanti-suomi. Local Government Vocabulary Finnish-English-Finnish*. Helsinki.

Surefire ry. (2005). *Suomalaisen rehtorin työtodellisuus rehtorikyselyn valossa*. (The work reality of a Finnish principal in light of a principal survey) Retrieved on 24.4.2009 from http://www.surefire.fi/tiedostot/reksikysely04.pdf

Tilastokeskus (2003). *Opettajat oppilaitosryhmittäin 2003*. (Teachers categorized by education level) Retrieved 22.4.2009 at http://www.stat.fi/til/ope/2003/ope_2003_2005-05-03_tie_001.html

Uski, T., Jussila, I. & Kotonen, U. (2007). Kunnallisten hyvinvointipalveluiden tuottaminen: Organisaatiotyyppien etuja ja haasteita. (Producing municipal welfare services: benefits and challnges of organization types) *Kunnallistieteen Aikakauskirja* 2/2007.

Vaherva, T. (1984). *Rehtorin ammattikuva ja koulutustarve*. (Professional picture of a principal and training needs) Jyväskylän yliopiston kasvatustieteen laitoksen julkaisuja. A5/1984.

Vartela, J. (2006). *Näkökulmia byrokratiaan*. (Perspectives to bureaucracy.) Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Vuohijoki, T. (2006). *Pitää vain selviytyä. Tutkimus rehtoreiden työstä ja työssä jaksamisesta sukupuolen ja virka-aseman suhteen tarkasteltuna*. (You only need to survive. Research of principals' work and well-being at work -scrutinized upon gender and office status.)Turku: Turun yliopisto / Rauman opettajankoulutuslaitos.

Vuohijoki, T. (2007). Pitää vain selviytyä. Rehtorin työn vaatimusten ja voimavarojen välinen epäsuhta. (The mismatch of principal work requirements and resources.) In Pennanen, A. (ed.) (2007) *Koulun johtamisen avaimia*. (Keys to leading a school.) Jyväskylä: PS- Kustannus.

Välijärvi, J., Kupari, P., Linnakylä, P., Reinikainen, P., Sulkunen, S., Törnroos, J. & Arffman, I. (2007) *The Finnish success in PISA – and some seasons behind it 2*. Jyväskylä: Kirjapaino Oma Oy.

Värri, K. & Alava, J. (2005). School management training. Country report: Finland. *Studies in Education Management Research, No. 15 CEM 2005*.

Watling, R. (2001). The analysis of qualitative data. In Coleman, M. & Briggs, A. (Eds.) (2001) *Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Paul   Chapman Publishing.

Weber, M. (1946). *Essays in Sociology*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Weber, M. (1946b). Essays in Sociology. In Shafritz, J. & Ott, S. (1996) (Eds.) *Classics of Organization Theory. 4th Ed.* NY: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Wilson, V. (1887). The Study of Administration. In Shafritz, J. & Ott, S. (1996) (Eds.) *Classics of Organization Theory. 4th Ed.* NY: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Winter, P. & Jaeger, M. (2002). *An Experimental Investigation of Principal Selection Decisions Made by Teachers Serving on School Councils.* Paper presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration   (NCPEA). Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Winter, P., Partenheimer, R. & Petrosko, J. (2003). An experimental approach to evaluating the viability of potential applicants for assistant principal vacancies. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 17, 299-315.

Zaheer, A., McEvily, B. & Perrone, V. (1998). Does trust matter? Exploring the effects of interorganizational and interpersonal trust on performance.. *Organization Science*, 9   (2) 141-159.

APPENDIX 1 Email for interviewees in Finnish

Lähtökohdat Pro gradu –tutkielmalle

13.5.2008

<u>Rehtorinvalintaprosessi suomalaisissa kunnissa</u>

Tutkielman lähtökohtana on selvittää miten kunnissa valitaan rehtorit virkoihinsa ja mitkä ovat valintakriteerit. Tärkeinä seikkoina tulee nostaa esille Suomessa tapahtuvien valintaprosessien eroja, ketkä valitsevat, miksi valintaprosessi on sellainen kuin se on ja millä perusteilla valitut rehtorit tulevat valituiksi. Prosessia ei ole juuri tutkittu suomalaisessa kontekstissa, saati Euroopassa isommassa mittakaavassa, mikä nostaa tutkimuksen tarkoituksellisuutta.

Tutkielman tekoon osallistuvien henkilöiden ja heidän edustamiensa kuntien anonymiteetti säilytetään ehdottomasti.

Kiitokset mielenkiinnostanne,

Saku Tihveräinen

sapetihv@jyu.fi
BA (Education)
Opiskelija (Master's Programme in Educational Leadership)
Rehtori-instituutti
Jyväskylän yliopisto

Starting point for a Master's Thesis

13.5.2008

Principal selection process in Finnish municipalities

The starting point for a Master's Thesis is to investigate how principals are selected to their posts in Municipalities and what is the existing premises for selection. Important aspects worth emphasizing are the differences between appointment processes in Finland, who select, why the selection process is the way it is and on what decisive factor are the principals selected. This process is little studied in Finnish context, equal to European environment, thus uplifting the meaningfulness of this study.

The participating interviewees and their represented municipalities will be kept anonymous unconditionally.

Thank you for your interest,

Saku Tihveräinen

APPENDIX 3

Guiding interview questions:

Would you tell me who you are and how have you ended in you position?
Describe from your own perspective a selection process from as early stage as possible.
      -what is done when the temporary principal is in position?
      -who writes the job advertisement?
      -where the position is advertised?
      -is the selection open or internal?
      -what position do the referees play?
      -how are the applications ranked?
      -does age or gender play influence the process?
      -who selects the interviewees?
Tell me about some interview situation? And decision making process?
      -who is present?
      -what is discussed?
      -your role vs. the administrators'/politicians' role?
      -what causes discordance in the interviewers?
      -where do the actual decisive points appear? The selection criteria.
      -do you feel that external parties try to influence the selection? Who? How?
      -who makes the final decision/presentation to the committee? What if there is
       a counter presentation?
      -how sure you feel in the interviews about the candidates?
      -what about the applicability of the candidates?

What is you perception of the disappointments that the unlucky candidates experience?
      -complaints to court?
      -what are the procedures regarding complaints?

What are your perceptions on the positive and negative aspects of the selection process?
      -developmental ideas?

APPENDIX 4 - Emerging Categories

ARTICULATED SELECTION CRITERIA (administrators)

-**Work experience**.
*Beyond 5 years of experience, does not matter (55, 231)
*Inexperienced are interviewed if perceived potential (80)
*Experience is important (206)
*In the application experience and education are most important (323)
*How has performed in previous jobs (333)
*Basics: Education and experience (573)
*With a few years' experience can be sure survives (936)
*Into a big challenging school with minimum of 5y experience from teaching and some insight in leading (944-6)
*Experienced teachers survive, differences in leadership style identifiable (940-3)
*Experience is important (1204-5)
*Experience from similar school, experience altogether (1092-3)
*Ideal 10y experience of which 5 from leading position (1336-7)

Work experience is very often mentioned, without it one cannot get to an interview -at least if there is no relationship to the school on hand. Yet work experience appears to be no indicator of a particularly good applicant. Rather, it seems that principals' work experience is a guarantee that leadership perspective is held by the applicant. Smaller municipalities seemed to value more stability in working history. Once a principal, always a principal?

-**Principals' developmental path**.
*Municipal assistant principal can be educated (76)
*Teachers-in-principal-training are likely to be interviewed (77-8)
*In a sudden situation assistant principal will receive the job (190)
*School leadership or assistant principalship is required to make it to principal (207, 236-7)
*Assistant principals often selected as principals (238, 269, 740)
*A good number two applying is often encouraged to apply again (258)
*Best chance to become a principal is for internal candidate with principal's experience (269)
*An assistant principal demonstrated can do the job – was named (315-6)
*Teachers interested in principalship are aimed to be guided into assistant principals (547-548)
*Assistant principals are recommended to apply for posts – open recruitment still (549-550)
*Potentials are asked if they want other posts (716)
*Younger principals are school leaders to gain credential (739)
*Temporary principal's job road to tenure (1314)
*Inner candidates are potential for future assistant principalship (1382)
*Inner candidate demonstrated potential through sensible union work & other developmental tasks (1395)
*Small school leadership is ideal for development (1488)
*Instead of holding onto experience, an opportunity was given to someone who's character is known (953-4)

Although work experience appeared important in administrators' words, experience was not necessarily held on if an internal applicant appeared capable of doing the job. In such an instance more experienced applicant might not be selected. In addition, when committee was making the final decision, the likelihood of local candidate appeared to increase. Principal's developmental path means starting from assistant principalship and then looking for tenures in the school and municipality?

-**People leadership**.
*Authority without crushing others' opinions, staffroom not hierarchical (1375)
*Decisions influencing everyone must not be top-down but more elaborated process. Principal make the big decisions (928-932)
*How you utilize as a principal YT (mutual collaboration) time (917)

*People leadership is important- can decide how well is adaptable to lead the school in hand (56-58, 63)
*Teachers cannot be led by ordering (72)
*What has the candidate learnt from his former bosses? As many carry experiences with them (120)
*Is more task or people leader? (115)
*Due to lack in people leadership admin recommended another (133)
*Social understanding important – principal needs to support teachers if necessary (482-3)
*Needs to be independent decision maker, still consulting teachers (463-4)
*Principal must be impartial (525, 919)
*Selection established in the interview – needs to have three fold perspective of student and teacher, leadership, and accountancy (1055-6)

Principals-to-be-selected are expected to make impartial decisions, although communication with teachers is expected to be of highest importance. This means in practice style of negotiating, instead of ordering. But negotiating in conjunction with making important decisions - any sense of talking about tokenism?

-**Question of persona.**

Applicable character is important – does candidate have required characteristics (904-5)
Selection is based on character differences (820)

Principals' work appeared to require certain kind of character to reach the successful finishing of the job. These included braveness, ability to act immediately when need to, and balanced self-esteem with no need to "shine". Reminds of servant leadership. Can anyone become a principal? Apparently not.

-**Organisational fit.**

*A suitable person is looked for (631)
*Applicable applicant to lead the work community (58)
*Applicable experience to lead the school (56)
*Relevant special field experience important (62)
*After testing contemplation upon adaptability to the given school (99)
*Relevant experience to the school is important (271-3)
*Who gets chosen – applicability to the school (412)
*The most applicable one needs to be selected (521)
*Competency list formed on the basis of the size of the school (574)
*In general similar schools but some may need clear leader and elsewhere different (933-5)
*School relevant criteria constructed upon the leaving principal's perspective-not too strict (1045-7)
*Experience from leading a similar school (1092)
*School based needs taken into consideration (1190, 1198, 1204)
*Candidate needs to be both qualified and applicable (1256)
*Another applicant had more vocational education background, not chosen (1353)
*School's needs: Was for 35y same principal – firm, safe leadership needed (1359-1360)
*School is stagnated, needing ethos, vision, leadership (1429, 1459-1462)
*Candidate applicable to the school is preferred (1566)
*Selection is strictly school-based (1585)

Schools have particular needs and the aim for the administrators is to find a principal that fulfils these needs. School relevant experience is preferred.

-**Principal is a public administrator.**
*Admin responsible for his principals as is principal for his teachers (887-8)
*Leads individually or in collaboration with the admin (1057-8)
*Principal needs to be the representative of the employer (1069-1072
*Admin leading principals, discuss about cost-efficiency (1247-9)
*Principal as representative of the employer – and loyal to this role (1270-2)
*Principal representative of administration at school (1368)

TRUST

-Administrators vs. politicians.
*politicians' perspective on schools distorted, yet decide (344, 368-382)
*politicians may emphasize being nice (345)
*politicians hesitate to support internal candidate that lacks experience or skills -is chosen but school is led from the administration (368-379)
*leadership skills should be emphasized *over* ability to please every teacher with the schedule (423)
* (chair's) personal experience from administration dreary (437-8)
*administrators don't ask relevant questions in interviews (465-8)
*administrators don't understand the life at schools because haven't lived it (477-9)
*a great mistake if the admin selects his friend (536)
*committee is problematic in terms of jeopardizing longitudinal work (551)
*Committee names additional candidates to be interviewed on seemingly random basis (553)
*Presentational work could be theoretically swept aside and that would be ok in the present statute (559)
*in the interview members receive lists of questions and highlighted notion of aspects not allowed to be asked in the interview (1038)
*Political bodies have been educated – still opinions "choose because is nice" appear (1142-1150)
*Administrator's role is to justify a good selection to the committee to ensure the debate is relevant (
*Committee questioned testing results, prefer internal political candidate whilst administrator preferred experienced principal (1467, 1452)
*The selection of the best candidate is unsure and admin needs to work for it (1442-5)
*Bureaucracy provides certain limits and rules to secure justifiable selection process (1476-7)
*Committee was undecided which one of their favorites to choose – administrator's preferred candidate was selected (1478-9)
*Committee members receive notions of what cannot be asked (1499)
*Committee members wanted to split the municipal area & principal posts according to political representation (1515-1519)
*Regarding the best for the school - is it not the best for the committee as well? (1538)
*Based on random rumor, interview group's presented candidate can be questioned in committee (1614-6)

In every municipality the likelihood of disagreement between the administrator(s) and politician(s) was acknowledged, if not referred to in particular. Some of the municipalities had, what appeared to be, a conflict ridden decision making culture that influenced the decision making. Administrators appear to have the potential to influence the selection extensively if appropriate vocabulary is used and enough stubbornness is in place. Passive administrative work will not take the initiative. What is administrator's role? In some municipalities there appears to be big differences between opinions. Administrators need to work on ensuring appropriate selections. Politicians seem to lack trust in administrators in some municipalities. Or is it political culture of the municipality that influences in the background?

-Administrator's role crucial.
*school leader, temporary principals, assistant principals, leader for merging two schools selected by administrator (12-14, 22-23)
*selects the interviewees and presents her take on who to choose (15, 11)
*mainly the presented is selected (19, 202)
*political body making the official selection on tenured principals do not meet the interviewees at all (19, 200)
*It's ok that admin is so influential in selections – after all principal is under him (263)
*without interviewing difficult for the committee to take a stance (214),
*rarely straight into a tenure – first temporary principal (administrator's selection) (20-1),
*temporary principals often are selected to lead the school over an experienced outsider principal (252)
* administrator selects an outsider principal over temporary ones for a particular reason (255)
*political body selects, in practice administrator influences (259)
*only when there is something (problematic), decision might be made over admin's presentation (260)
*on the tenure responsibility the administrator selects principals (838)

*selection by administrator on the tenure decision making power, but the interviewing group agreed (1400)
*little interest from the committee to participate to interviews, so far committee has agreed with the admin with the decisions not to select (1308-1313)

In every municipality the administrator played a crucial role through being involved in selections from the very beginning, whereas committee chairs' involvement varied extensively, partly due to municipal statutes delegating the selection. The centrality of administrator depends on municipal statute delegations and persona of the administrator. In some municipalities administrators do not appear to influence the final decision making process in the committee, in other they do. Innate, self-reflected trust needed in the work of the administrator? To what extent should administrators try to influence? Even when they feel they are "right"?

-Articulated trust.
*Administrator is trustworthy (219)
*If the admin recommends someone else than temporary – this is for a reason (255)
*Mainly no reason for the committee to intervene (288)
*Enough people participate to the interview through the board and administration (291)
*Administration has done the job well (299)
*Political body is conscientious (142)
*Principal selections have been honest and open processes (515)
*When administrator from other municipalities contact and recommend, trusted (807)
*Administrators are trusted and psychologist tops it up (826)
*Established link between committee chair and administrator (846)
* Administrator has discussed and agreed with chair upon candidates (981)
*Things have progressed – now clear minimum requirements (1142-3)
*Habit has been that the administrator consults the committee's take on the school (1192-3)
*Inner applicants said they didn't expect to get chosen (1385)
*Committee chair trusts the administrators (1569)

In some municipalities trust was articulated through identifying administrator trustworthy or committee reliable. In other instances trust was between the lines, for example, in demonstrating that administrator and chair discuss about the selections even though the selections have been delegated to the administrator. Administrators appeared to be a well trusted bunch of staff, clearly treated as professionals and education leaders. The trust is surely not instant but takes time to build in. Experience is key, in newcomers the consultation helps to build the trust in. What is the role of office holder's responsibility? Legislatively based role of administrator must influence.

-Importance of a group interviewing.
*Important to discuss from different perspectives after interviews (96
*Discussion after interviews aims at unity of opinion
*Opinions of many people always more reliable than single view (154)
*Reflection is possible in a group (156)
*Non-verbal behaviour can be followed in a group (157)
*A versatile team in the process – can indicate strong process (684-6)
*Professional team of four, all with principal background (857-8)
*Even in an admin based decision, versatile interview group is needed (1165-7)
*Experienced, versatile group with chair, consultant, principal and admin (1341-3)
*Opinion is created whilst involved to a dialogue with group members (1592-4)

Group interview that had many interviewers -varyingly from the administrators, politicians and outside experts- was viewed to be particularly important in order to minimise individual preferences. Equally importantly was viewed the discussion after interviews. Critical reflections also from administrators that had the power to select on their own perception -did not selection by themselves. Group process that involves committee members adds to the trust between politicians and administrators? Although the municipal culture seems to influence this process.

-Possibility for lobbying.
*If the teachers send message, discussion takes place where administrators justify their views (216)
*teachers of the school lobby politicians for internal candidate (353-4)

*teachers' lobbying make the selected principal to choose another school (357-8)
*due to lack of people leading skills, administrator presented external candidate, part of teachers lobbied and internal got selected by the political body (133-136)
*If teachers send a lot of information the presented candidate may not be selected (203
*Teachers' attempts to influence typically separate cases but addresses are also sent occasionally (245-6
*Based on lobbying admin and board views are scrutinized (247-8)
*Mainly outsiders don't interfere (249)
*Teachers are not supposed to select who leads them (262) – KPJ asks for opinion from teachers
*Influential lobbying opportunities need to be limited (298)
*Committee can be influenced, counter presentation based on lobbying teachers (363-7)
*Committee members are lobbied (506)
*According to statute, opinion of the teachers is still requested (might change!) (637-8)
*Problematic that the start of the principalship could be from negation (642-3)
*Lobbying takes place to dismiss someone (770)
*Teachers visit with applicants is not fair as internal candidates are already known (776-8)
*Committee receives general lobbying – administrator from parents, teachers, and applicants (1315-1320)
*Lobbying heavy – people running in and out of the office, even aimed at influencing through hobby pals (1524-28)
*Lobbying on everyday matters takes place often (1562)
*Lobbying takes place regarding principal selection but must be overlooked (1609)

When decision making power is held by the committee, lobbying from the side of teachers can be rife. However, administrators appear to experience less lobbying, yet municipal cases vary. Lobbying was viewed as an issue not to touch the administrators -administrative responsibility guiding at objectivity seemed to guide very well. Politicians viewed contacting as a way to get information - reacted to it at times. Influencing trust probably mainly through adding information sources to politicians.

DEVELOPING PRINCIPAL SELECTION

-**Varying & changing selection processes.**
*Change in statute needed to prevent committee from interfering with longitudinal work (551-2)
*Relic municipal statute will be changed (831-2)
*Political bodies lack substance understanding, admin selection much better (925-7)
*Selections so long-term decisions that should be committee decisions (1224)
*Should the committee choose when they sit for four years and the principal could sit for 40years?
*Admin could choose (1323-4)
*When the committee is involved, choosing the best cannot be taken for granted (1443-5)
*through the change in municipal statute a professional process is achievable (554-5)
*Administrative selection would be perfectly ok. According to organization model committee should not select (826, 830)
*Administrative selection is a bit quicker – committee process does not bring a better result (1016)

The principal selection is delegated varyingly in the municipalities subject to study. In two municipalities where principals are still selected by the committee, teacher selections are delegated. In the only municipality where both teacher and principal selections are still made by the committee, both chair and administrator had experienced delegated principal selections elsewhere. Changes to existing statute were welcomed particularly by the administrators. Selection process is not stable process but is changing. Considering municipal efficiency discourse, an emerging trend identifiable?

-**Selection foundation from seniority to merit?**
*Traditionally leadership upon seniority, selecting most adaptable attracts criticism (174-5)
*Before there were clear criteria to compare years of experience – now after five or ten does not matter (53-54)
*Back in 1960s and 70s principal elected for 4y from teachers (441-5)
*In 1980s every tenure was verified in Province, then the years of experience was criteria – not personal abilities (986-990)
*Administrator has worked in a municipality where/when committee pressured administrators (1109)

Two of the administrators refer to prior times (1980s) when selection was "measured" according to educational grades, work experience and additional education -this measurement was confirmed in the province. Present emphasis is on identifying the most merited, most suitable, applicant. But here is a trend identifiable: Move from universality to particularity, in other words a selection used to emphasize the best on the basis of papers whereas it appears now more to appreciate the most suitable person. Grades were not looked at. Work experience was needed only to prove there is "enough" experience.