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**How Students' Voice Can Be Heard in the Finnish Context**

The Case of Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary Schools in Jyväskylä

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<b>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</b> <p>This qualitative multiple case study research investigated how the Finnish school system practices student leadership as a significant dimension of democracy on three school levels: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. The study defines student leadership through the democracy issue, leadership decision making and leadership theories. Semi-structured interviews were applied to collect the data from three school principals, eight teacher supervisors and three groups of student leaders, altogether 33 participants.</p> <p>The thematic network analysis, deductive and inductive thematic analysis were used to answer the three research questions. The results of the theoretical (deductive) thematic analysis mainly correspond to the four-frame approach to leadership (Bolman &amp; Deal, 2008) with two exceptional issues: weaknesses of Finnish school structures and a lack of data about play. According to the inductive data analysis Finnish educators associated student leadership with democratic features in the school society and distributing leadership to students. Student leaders also came up with characteristics of democracy in schools, but on different scales depending on their school age. Students may also participate in the classroom governance through different kinds of classroom decision making possibilities. Additionally, the data analysis interpreted feminine traditions of student leadership and school leadership in the Finnish case schools.</p> <p>It is worthwhile if the same phenomenon could be investigated with a focus on the gender issue, the passivity of students in student leadership, the process of student decision making, the development of youth-adult partnership, and humor. It is also recommended to carry out a similar study in other schools and higher education organizations in the context of Finland as well as that of different countries.</p>	
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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

**MoEC** Ministry of Education and Culture

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

In order to choose the topic of this study, I looked at my own life to explore my own heart's desires. I discovered important ideas about myself. My studies and experience are in the field of education and I love students. My desire is to know more about student leadership and its role within a democratic society to meet important educational needs. This desire soon turned into a passion. Furthermore, I come from a societal system (Kazakhstan) that is different from the Finnish one. I became very interested in investigating this phenomenon in the context of Finnish comprehensive and upper secondary schools to enable me to better grasp and expand knowledge about the student leadership concept as a significant dimension of democracy.

Attention to student leadership, student voice or leadership by children and young people is targeted in numerous research studies (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007, p. 276; McGregor, 2007, p. 86) trying to define the phenomenon. Leadership as a relational process of influence accepts the possibility and potential of students to be leaders. (McGregor, 2007, p. 86). Student participation in school governance is a promotion of democratic values within schools (Duma, 2011, p. 72). Student participation is education for citizenship, which prepares citizens who will increase the quality of democratic processes in a country (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 106). From the childhood, people should have gradually increased opportunities to participate in democracy because practice increases the confidence and competence of being involved. The term "participation" refers to the process of sharing decisions affecting ones' life and the life of the community surrounding one. This approach develops the

right of students and our recognition that they can speak for themselves. (Hart, 1994, p. 4-5.) In other words, student leadership is an exercise of child and youth participation as active citizens in a democratic school society and life.

The student leadership phenomenon and its link to democracy have raised global interests. The international communities of democratic countries accept the right of students to participate in decision making (Carr, 2005, p. 29) to prepare them as active and competent citizens and develop their abilities to make decisions and changes. International interest in the student leadership is signed in the Finnish child and youth policy. This policy is shaped by international commitments, strategies and action programmes of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the European Union (the MoEC, 2012, p. 48). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, p. 4), the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (2000, paragraph 5), and the Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe (2008, p. 1) implement democratic principles prioritizing child and youth participation in the life of society, respect their views, their empowerment and partaking in decision making.

Finland as a democratic country has its own sets and combinations of the chief principles of the democratic ideal that affect an organizing principle of society and organizations, in particular schools. According to the Constitution of Finland (2012, pp. 1-2) the children and young people have the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives, and liberty and social justice. It is evident that the young Finnish generation is an equal part of the Finnish democratic society, which regardless of race, economic status, gender or ethnicity has the right to express freely their opinions, to be involved in decisions influencing their lives and to be treated equally.

Democracy is not only the foundation of the Finnish society, but also of the Finnish education system. The first Finnish national curriculum to democratize the education and school practice was launched in 1970. Chapter 13 (Komiteanmietintö, 1970, p. 236) mentioned about educating students as social and responsible members involved in the school administration through the student councils. Other forms of the modern national education policies and legislations such as the Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012-2015, the Basic Education Act, the Core National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education support the idea of democratization through the establishment of democratic structures of school governance where students are supposed to participate in important school decisions relating to them. All these incumbent official documents are described in the text below.

The Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012 – 2015 is one of the youth policy programmes that the Finnish Government adopts every four years (the Youth Act, 72/2006, p.2). Participation is one of the core goals described in the Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012-2015. The Programme (2012, p. 6) defines participation in a sense of taking part, having an influence and social inclusion in communities of young people and the Finnish society during their studies, work, engagement in hobbies, etc. Participation and social inclusion are built on such strategic goals as growth to active citizens with a sense of shared responsibility and providing equal opportunities to participate in cultural, leisure, physical activities. It demands to promote children and young people with active citizenship and social empowerment. (the MoEC, 2012, pp. 7, 12.)

In order to increase student participation in the democratic school community, students are given the right to take part in student leadership in the form of student associations, unions and councils. The Basic Education Act (1998, p. 22) advises to have student associations composed of pupils in schools that are aimed to promote joint actions, influence and participation in matters relating to students. Otherwise, education providers must offer other opportunities to make the student voice heard about school matters and issues that concern students collectively. The Child and Youth Policy Programme (2012, pp. 18-19) advocates that student councils should be a compulsory structural element in all Finnish comprehensive schools, with relevant corrections to the Basic Education Act to ensure participation and social inclusion of pupils and students. Educational providers of the general upper secondary education have to ensure the involvement of all students in issues relating to them, educational activities and development through the student union (the General Upper Secondary Education Act, 1998, § 27). The same goes for the vocational secondary education.

The study seeks to know how the Finnish school system practices student leadership as a significant dimension of democracy throughout three school levels: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. The research focuses on the following research questions: 1. What is student leadership from adults' and students' point of view? 2. How do student leadership and management function in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary Finnish schools? 3. How are Finnish young people involved in the classroom decision making?

The study is a qualitative multiple case study. Qualitative research was used to investigate and comprehend such a social phenomenon (Creswell, 2009, p. 4; William,

1991, p. 14) as student leadership in the Finnish case schools where students are central participants (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p. 35). Its naturalistic nature was suitable to collect the data about student leadership in the participants' settings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 4; Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The multiple case study design was an appropriate choice to consider lateral replications (Yin, 2003, p. 47) and dynamics simultaneously in the student leadership across the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school levels. The semi-structured interview was applied as the best form of interviewing for the case study research approach (Gillham, 2000, p. 65; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40).

The inductive and deductive thematic analysis and thematic network analysis were applied in the study. The thematic analysis is an independent qualitative descriptive approach (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013, p. 400) "...for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) that are important to describe the phenomenon. The theoretical (deductive) thematic analysis was important for a more detailed and systematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84) of student leadership from the four frames perspective to leadership by Bolman and Deal (2008). The data-driven (inductive) thematic approach provided a rich description of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). This approach is powerful when we deal with issues, which have not been researched much (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 107). The thematic network analysis is a comfortable representational tool that organizes the qualitative thematic analysis by illustrating themes at different levels in a shape of network-maps (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387).

The study comprises six chapters. Chapter one is described above and it presents the motivation, the context of the study, the theoretical background, the research purpose and methodology, and the research schools of the study. Chapter two focuses on the theoretical framework regarding the student leadership phenomenon from three perspectives: democracy as a foundation for student leadership, student participation in decision making and leadership theories. Chapter three is dedicated to the research methodology with a focus on the context of the research schools, the aim and research questions of the study, the data collection and the data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings and the discussion. Chapter five draws the research conclusion. Chapter six makes recommendations for further studies arising from the research findings.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Chapter two addresses a range of the core theoretical considerations that I estimate to be necessary in comprehending the student leadership phenomenon. Basically, the language we use to define student leadership governs this concept through the democracy issue and leadership theories borrowed and adapted from the research on both the "adult world" and that of the school age students. Democracy was taken into consideration because the context of the study is the Finnish democratic society. Distributed leadership theory was selected because it is the way how school leadership functions in the Finnish case schools and an environment where student leadership takes place. Moreover, student leadership as a tool to practice active citizenship involves students in decision making within school governance; therefore, it made leadership decision making important to be included in the theoretical background. The four-frame approach to leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008) was used as an analytical tool to study student leadership from different perspectives.

### **2.1 Democracy as a basis for student leadership**

A close interconnection between the student leadership concept and democracy makes it necessary to consider them in more details. The chapter contributes to a fundamentally important discussion – the interrelation between student leadership, education and developing a democratic society.

In order to achieve the objectives of the chapter, we should understand and discover the fundamental assumptions of democracy. Originally, the term *demokratia*

means the rule (kratos) by the people (demos) (Crick, 2002, p. 14). It signifies that democracy is a form of government by people and for them. Finland as a democratic country has its own sets and combinations of the chief principles of the democratic ideal that affect an organizing principle of society and organizations, in particular schools.

The Constitution of Finland is the official comprehensive document which addresses the fundamental democratic principles, three of which I will discuss. First, the Finnish children and young people have the right to be heard and involved in decisions that affect their lives. Second, the Finnish Constitution protects the freedom of opinions, of choice, of convention etc., which refer to personal liberty. Third, Finnish democracy advocates social justice based on the principle of equality in economic, religious, gender and social issues and by ensuring the human rights (the Constitution of Finland, 2012, pp. 1-3). Hence, it is justified to claim that democracy in the Finnish context is about citizens' participation based on liberty and social justice where the young generation is an equal part of the Finnish democratic society.

### **2.1.1 Role of education for a democratic society**

*Education's highest aim is to create moral and civic habits of the heart  
(Haynes, 2009, p. 6).*

Many authors are followers of the idea to call schools to be more democratic than they are, to incarnate democratic principles for students and to extend them in schools (Crick, 2002, p. 92; Haynes, 2009, p. 6; Levin, 1998, p. 57; Wallin, 2003, p. 55). There are different reasons explaining a rising importance of using the democratic work style with students. Levin (1998, pp. 61-62) writes about external changes occurring in society such as easier and quicker communication, a higher level of education, the importance of scientific and other expert knowledge requiring the development of the following democratic skills: discussion, negotiation, understanding each other, etc. According to Kreisberg (1992, p. 221) antidemocratic teaching creates an atmosphere of passiveness, conformity, obedience and acquiescence. Without a doubt, this type of atmosphere fills the antidemocratic schools in general, not only the classroom. Moreover, Manville and Ober (2003, pp. ix-x) discuss the increasing "democratization" of the workplace where the workers expect the right to take their responsibilities and where the core values of freedom and equality are taken into consideration. The

democratization of schools is not less important than that of the workplaces for the employees these days.

One of the potentials of education is its possibility to create a suitable atmosphere to learn about democracy and a governance system. Education is an opportunity to learn about decisions made by power holders and their effect on human life (Mwollo-Ntallima, 2011, p. 18). There is an interdependence between the increasing awareness of people about the world around them and the improvement of their abilities to produce opinions in politics and economics. On the contrary, the lack of education results in the inability to express opinions (Mattes & Bratton, 2007, pp. 200, 202). Poor democracy and governance awareness decrease the human ability to link their interests with public affairs (Mwollo-Ntallima, 2011, p. 18).

Another possibility of schools is gaining democratic capacity and citizenship knowledge by practical experience. "Democracy in practice is the best way to learn how it functions" (Chomsky, 2000, p. 28). Effective active citizenship is not only about will and skills, but also about practical knowledge to be competent enough in identifying relevant levels of power for particular intentions (Boisvert, 1998, p. 106). Education as an access to governing politics, rules and regulations shows democratic values and the process empowers people to behave democratically (Mwollo-Ntallima, 2011, p. 19). Effective education for democracy and citizenship includes genuine experiences of democratic participation, civil duties, responsibilities, rights, and a serious attitude from individuals and from the community (Crick, 2002, p. 113).

Several authors note the key role of school administration and teachers in the democratization of their schools where students are able to participate in school governance as future representatives of the democratic society. The main principles of the democratic ideal and their realization depend so much on school administrators and leaders who are able to design appropriate habits, sentiments and tastes of the democratic style (Schutz, 2001, pp. 294-295; Slater, 1994, p. 100), implement and develop student leadership by empowering students to become collaborators to contribute in changes relating to schools (Mitra, Serriere & Stoicovy, 2012, p. 109). In order to develop student leadership and to grow the student voice, adults are supposed to implement special activities and structures that ensure student participation in schools. Moreover, this student space helps to define the school culture where student participation is valued (Mitra, Serriere & Stoicovy, 2012, p. 109). Democratic schools are highly responsible for raising the desire and capacity of students to be committed to

the democratic ideal (Slater, 1994, p. 100), developing the character of students as citizens and, as a result the character of the nation and policies in a country (Frank, 2005, p. 1; Haynes, 2009, p. 6).

The engagement of students as active partners in school changes is one of challenges for school administrators and teachers. The main reason behind that is the dramatic inequality between the youth role and the role of adults who have a higher authority, power and status in schools. Adults in schools without an intentional building of the strong youth-adult partnership cannot hear the student voice. Appropriate norms, relationships, ways of working together and an organizational structure are the basis for the youth-adult partnership. (Mitra, Serriere & Stoicovy, 2012, p. 109.) First of all, adults should step aside of the "adultism" that spreads skepticism about intentions of young people. Youth have a need for adult partners who can interpret and share knowledge about a system, present opportunities and based on their experience make students' ideas feasible (Cervone, 2002, p. 13). In other words, adults are guides in the realization of students' ideas within the practical world of schools.

When collecting the data it was discovered that in the Finnish context not only the schools, but also the Nuva association and the Children's Parliament are educational environments practicing education for democracy and citizenship.

#### *Finnish Youth Councils Association – The NUVA Association*

A youth leadership system functions both inside the schools and outside the schools in the Finnish democratic society. This side of youth participation means "the ability of young people to impact and make differences in their home, school or community by taking on roles of responsibility or meaningful decision making" (Paul & Lefkowitz, 2006, p. 3).

The Nuva association is one example of the Youth Leadership pyramid model in Finland (see Appendix 1). An abbreviation of "Nuva" is a shortened form of the original Finnish name "*Suomen Nuorisovaltuustojen Liitto*" where "*Nuorisovaltuusto*" is equal to "Youth Councils" in English (Nuva, 2014).

The Nuva association was founded in the spring of 1998 as an umbrella for the municipal youth councils. It is the government funded organization that provides opportunities for the Finnish young people to participate in and influence the international, national and local decision making without the right to vote in the political and religious decision making bodies. The Nuva association is a national youth

consultation tool through the representatives of local Youth Councils. One member from each Youth Council forms this national body to raise topical issues and affect young people widely by giving opinions, pointing out new ideas and making statements. (Mellin & Similä, 2010.)

The Nuva association works with the eight district member organizations that were established in 2009-2010. They are links between the Nuva association and the municipal youth councils, and they ensure proper operating conditions for the local youth councils and increase cooperation relations between them and the regional level. (Nuva, 2014.)

The Finnish Youth Councils are also named as Youth Parliament, Youth Voice, Youth Forum, etc. At the present time, about 70% of Finnish municipalities have the Youth Councils or other influential groups and their number is growing. The City Council of Jyväskylä decided to set up the Youth Council in 2009 as a messenger between the young people and the decision makers. The Youth Council elects 20-40 council members between 13-20 years old from lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools and vocational schools and a part of them form the board. (Nuva, 2014.)

#### *The Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä*

The Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä is the project of school democracy run by the Youth Organization of Central Finland and founded by the Educational sector of the city. The Parliament is an opportunity for children (5-6 grades) to participate in and influence important social decisions concerning them and make their voice heard. The Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä works with pupils from the nine areas of Jyväskylä called Little Parliaments. (Jyväskylän kaupunki, 2014.)

Both The Youth Councils and the Children's Parliaments organize a variety of competitions between school projects and the winners receive money prizes, and they arrange different kinds of events for the young people like child and youth fairs, concerts, discos. (Jyväskylän kaupunki, 2014; Nuva, 2014.)

### 2.1.1.1 Definition of student leadership

There is no one way to finish the sentence “student leadership is...”. Researchers define student leadership as empowering students to transform social norms in schools (Weissbourd & Jones, 2012, p. 28); as student involvement in processes producing institutional change (Thomson, 2012, p. 96); as student voice that provides many ways of youth participation in school reforms (Mitra, 2006, p. 7); as student voice for better decision making in schools (Brasof, 2011, pp. 22-23). Dempster and Lizzio (2007, p. 280) summarize that mostly the student leadership idea has been considered “as intrinsic to student engagement”, whereas McGregor (2007, p. 86) recognize the student voice and involvement activities as leadership.

In sum, based on the literature review and my own view the concept of student leadership or student voice is student participation in school governance for more accurate decisions and changes. Real changes are associated with meaningful impacts and transformations in our lives, but not with simplistic goals (Burchard, 2008, pp. 39-40).

Participatory school governance offers functions and opportunities to educational stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, etc.) to participate in planning, budgeting and management of schools. School governance is a process of decision making and processes leading to implementations (or not) of decisions (Nandago, Obondoh & Otiende, 2005, pp. 10, 13). School governance decision making focuses on (Nandago, Obondoh & Otiende, 2005, p. 13) “goals, aims and objectives, management strategies – how things should be done, formulation of policies, plans and budgets, accountability and reporting mechanisms, information sharing systems, power relations in the running of the school, allocation, utilization and generation of resources, determination and reinforcement of rules, procedures and guidelines, stakeholders’ participation and community-school relations, curriculum content and delivery approaches, learning and teaching resources”. Stakeholders’ participation might be direct or through representatives (Nandago, Obondoh & Otiende, 2005, pp. 14, 66-67; Mirta, 2006, p. 7).

Student leaders are different from peer students. Burchard (2008, p. 36) found out that “a leader is a person engaged in, and who intends to consistently engage in, a leadership process”. Student leaders are engaged students at the leadership level when they are elected or appointed to formal positions and roles in student organizations, but

only in those. They may be called also government officers or residence hall advisors. (May, 2009, pp. 14-15.)

From the study perspectives there is a double research gap regarding the definition of student leadership. The definition of student leadership is unknown to both the Finnish educators and to the Finnish students. The study primarily takes into account the Finnish context, but there is no theory about student leadership in Finnish schools. The Finns might perceive this phenomenon differently than the Anglo-American theorists. Moreover, according to Dempster and Lizzio (2007, p. 279) most of the research studies present the definition and significance of student leadership from the adults' point of view. As a result, there is a research gap between the adults' common view about student leadership and the students' comprehension of this phenomenon. Therefore, it is topical to fill these two research gaps and to find out Finnish adults' and students' perceptions of the student leadership phenomenon.

### **2.1.2 Student leadership and democracy**

Student leadership is a manifestation of democratic participation and representation. There are several crossing points between student leadership and democracy interpreting this extent of their closeness to each other. First of all, both deal with collective efforts rather than individual. Collective capacity of leadership is discussed for example by Lambert (1998, pp. 5-6) who states that it is learning together, collective and collaborative generation of ideas, meanings and actions in the light of shared beliefs. Second, participation is a central idea for both concepts. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship, the essence and measurement of democracy and sustained society (Crick & Lockyer, 2010, p 26; Hart, 1994, p. 5). Crick and Lockyer (2010, p 26) claim that participation, engagement with the world around and acceptance of responsibility for themselves and interests in others are quite a natural aspect of the human being. According to the above (see chapter 2.1.2) definition, student leadership is about student participation in school governance for more accurate decisions and changes. Moreover, in both cases citizen/student participation is for the sake of a better governing system in countries/schools. The participative theory of democracy claims that participation plays a great role in producing and implementing things that are acceptable for all, it ensures good governance (Michels, 2006, pp. 326).

Third, mutual communication is a central issue of democracy as well as student leadership when people interact with each other, exchange opinions and choices. Communication with the other is the main tool of leadership (De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld, 2010, p. 367) or as Dewey (1916, p. 87) defines, “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (cited in Brooks & Kensler, 2011, p. 61).

Fourth, social justice as a dimension of the Finnish democratic ideal in a shape of equality (The Constitution of Finland, 1999 p. 2) is an element of student leadership when participation and involvement in school governance are available to all student community members. In this regard, inclusive education has its role. It is a key human rights-based approach seeks to address the individual learning needs of all children with a specific goal on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It focuses on modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies in education, responds to and appreciates diversity among human beings and removes barriers to learning, promoting the engagement, empowerment and participation of learners, teachers, principals, communities, schools, implies social inclusion (access to basic social services and learning opportunities), brings profound and progressive changes in education with respect to the curriculum objectives, content, schools’ vision, etc. (UNESCO, 2009, pp. 14, 67-68).

Fifth, active citizenship is a common point of student leadership and democracy. Active citizenship is a fundamental feature of the democratic society, otherwise democracy does not have any sense and it is what students learn being involved in student leadership. Active citizenship is a central component in the democratic society (Hart, 1994, p. 5). The degree of democracy as the chief organizing principle of the society, organizations directly depends on people and their commitment to that (Slater, 1994, p. 100). Leadership activities gain knowledge how to be an active participant in democratic society, investigate problems, debate solutions, create projects and plans, make collective decisions (Thomson, 2012, p. 97). Student leadership, in turn, is a way to develop active citizenship skills of students because participation has educative and integrative characteristics. It educates individuals into public citizens and makes people feeling that they belong to their community (Michels, 2006, pp. 326).

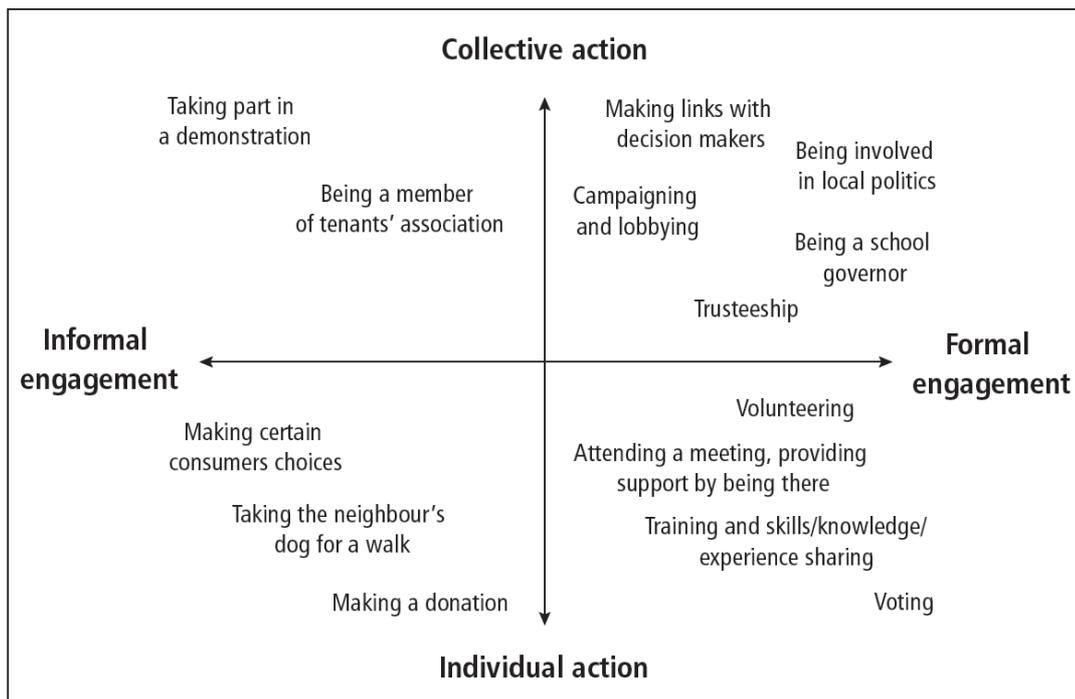
There are various definitions of active citizenship. Packham (2008, pp. 4, 149) associated active citizenship with people taking the opportunity to be actively involved in decisions to change things around them and benefit or help other people. Crick and

Lockyer (2010, p. 28) define active citizenship as a kind of glue that holds society together because it complements necessary actions established at the top from the bottom up by utilizing human talents and motivation. According to the Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012-2015 (2012, p. 15) active citizenship in a broad sense is about "social and civil activity, responsible consumer citizenship, self-development, non-discrimination, protection of human rights and environmental responsibility". In sum, active citizens are people who hold society together and enhance their self-development through engagement in social and civil activities, take care of their communities with a shared sense of responsibility and protect human rights.

The "moral compass" of active citizenship is about using the individual rights of freedom with care and caring toward others. Freedom or liberty involves the moral factor because people have different interests to the same event; therefore, there is the requirement to tolerate diversity. Besides, the freedom to choose for the public good or general interests is a serious approach to liberty in democracy (Crick, 2002, pp. 66, 113, 120).

Crick and Lockyer (2010, p. 85-86) note that students may be involved in a huge variety of activities aimed to increase students' knowledge and skills of what being an active citizen means. For, example, student government, temporary working groups, participation in class decision making and school decision making (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 108); children and young people can be active actors of schools, youth councils, etc., but if their participation and influence are treated seriously (the MoEC, 2012, p. 15). Jochum, Pratten and Wilding (2005, p. 27) describe different types of citizenship involvement based on connections between individual and collective action and formal and informal engagement. Some of them provoke volunteer involvement (Figure 1).

Some activities mentioned in the diagramme (Figure 1) may be associated with civil engagement or civil participation. Civil participation is engagement in community activities and in less formal types of associations that leads to strong shared values and positive outcomes regarding the quality of life (Jochum, Pratten and Wilding (2005, pp. 13, 20). However, civil engagement is ensuring involvement of people in decision making and enhancing their contribution in a governance system (Mohammadi, Norazizan & Shahvandi, 2011, p. 212). In sum, civil engagement is beyond in its meaning than civil participation; moreover it empowers people to make changes



**Figure 1. Active citizenship involvement**

Researchers outline several rationales for student engagement in leadership activities: recognition of the student rights to have their opinions in decisions concerning them (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 105), improving quality of education by meeting needs of students (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 106), making more accurate decisions based on necessary information through participation (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 106; Morgan, 2006, p. 76). Crick and Lockyer (2010, p. 87) assert that most writers believe that active student participation in decisions concerning school and classroom life makes students more effectively active citizenship. A real decision making process builds up a set of skills and knowledge that equip students for the life and enables understanding of political and civil power by students because it requires making a choice among alternatives and predicting consequences, negotiating with people to accept the rightness of decisions. Schools which introduced different forms of students' participatory decision making cover education for citizenship and prepare citizens who will increase the quality of democratic processes (Crick and Lockyer, 2010, p. 87 – 88; Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 106).

## **2.2 Student participation in decision making**

The chapter is a continuation of the previous one where it was concluded that student leadership involves students in the decision making process. It aims to look at decision making in the light of various perspectives: leadership decision making, the eight level model of student participation in decision making (Hart, 1994, p. 8), student decision making in the classroom and features of children's and teenagers' decision making.

### **2.2.1 Leadership decision making**

One significant aspect of the organizational processes is decision making (Laroche, 1995, p. 72) and skilled decision makers are an irreplaceable part of success in organizations (Johnson & Kruse, 2009, p. 5). Such arguments as leadership and decision making are synonyms and "leadership is decision making in action" support the idea that decision making is the heart of leadership in organizations expressed by many researchers from different decades (Johnson & Kruse, 2009, p. 5). Therefore, the significance of decision making in leadership is not an exception in the student leadership behavior.

Individuals and groups deal with decision making and problem solving on a daily basis. These processes are reasonable things for people to have a meeting with their group members (Hackman & Johnson, 2004, p. 196). Problem solving and decision making are ingredients of one process. Problem solving is the foundation for decision making and aims to discover solutions and alternatives, while decision making focuses on choosing solutions. The interchange between these two processes within groups leads to the identification of problems and making optimal decisions. (Burgoon, Frank & Edwin, 1994, pp. 249, 251-252.) Groups deal with a wide range of decisions, from a simple one about time and day of meetings to more complex regarding group policies or activities. Generally, meetings are the second name of decision making sessions. (Ruben & Stewart, 2006, p. 279.)

Researchers describe different kinds of group decision making techniques. Decision making by majority votes is the most frequent method by which democratic groups settle a difference of views. Making a majority decision establishes equal opportunities for everyone to influence the group decision and in a quicker manner.

(Galanes & Adams, 2012, p. 253.) This method contributes to group decisions mathematically when the majority of members support a decision (Ruben & Stewart, 2006, p. 280).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a catalyst of citizens' participation. Hague and Loader (1999, p. xii) discuss that ICTs have the potential to facilitate "strong democracy". For example, the internet unites citizens in community networks to discuss with each other and the government people. The term "digital democracy" connects to a wide range of technological applications like televised "people's parliaments", e-mail access to electronic discussion groups, etc. (Hague & Loader, 1999, p. 3).

Social networking applications are examples of recent ICTs and personal mediums through which individuals and group members contact with each other. Nowadays, it is common in the daily practice of many people to use such social networking sites (SNS) as Facebook, MySpace and etc. Various technological features of SNS support the interaction between members of groups as well as individuals sharing common interests or activities. SNS are Internet-based services that provide people with an opportunity to create public or partly public profiles and their own lists of other profiles with whom they have connections. (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, pp. 210-211.) Nowadays, SNS are used by educational facilities, government agencies, business, etc. as a way to connect with others from the similar social networks (Yonan, Bardick & Willment, 2011, p. 311).

Not only SNS has become popular among people all over the world but also mobile computing devices as significant development in the field of communication such as information dissemination and collaborative decision making (Elmore, Das, Agrawal, & El Abbadi, 2012, p. 1998). Along with mobile devices social network applications are also getting famous among individuals as well as group participants. The WhatsApp Messenger is one of popular among them that make communication and distribution of multimedia messaging easier and faster through the mobile phones (Yeboah, & Ewur, 2014, pp. 157-158).

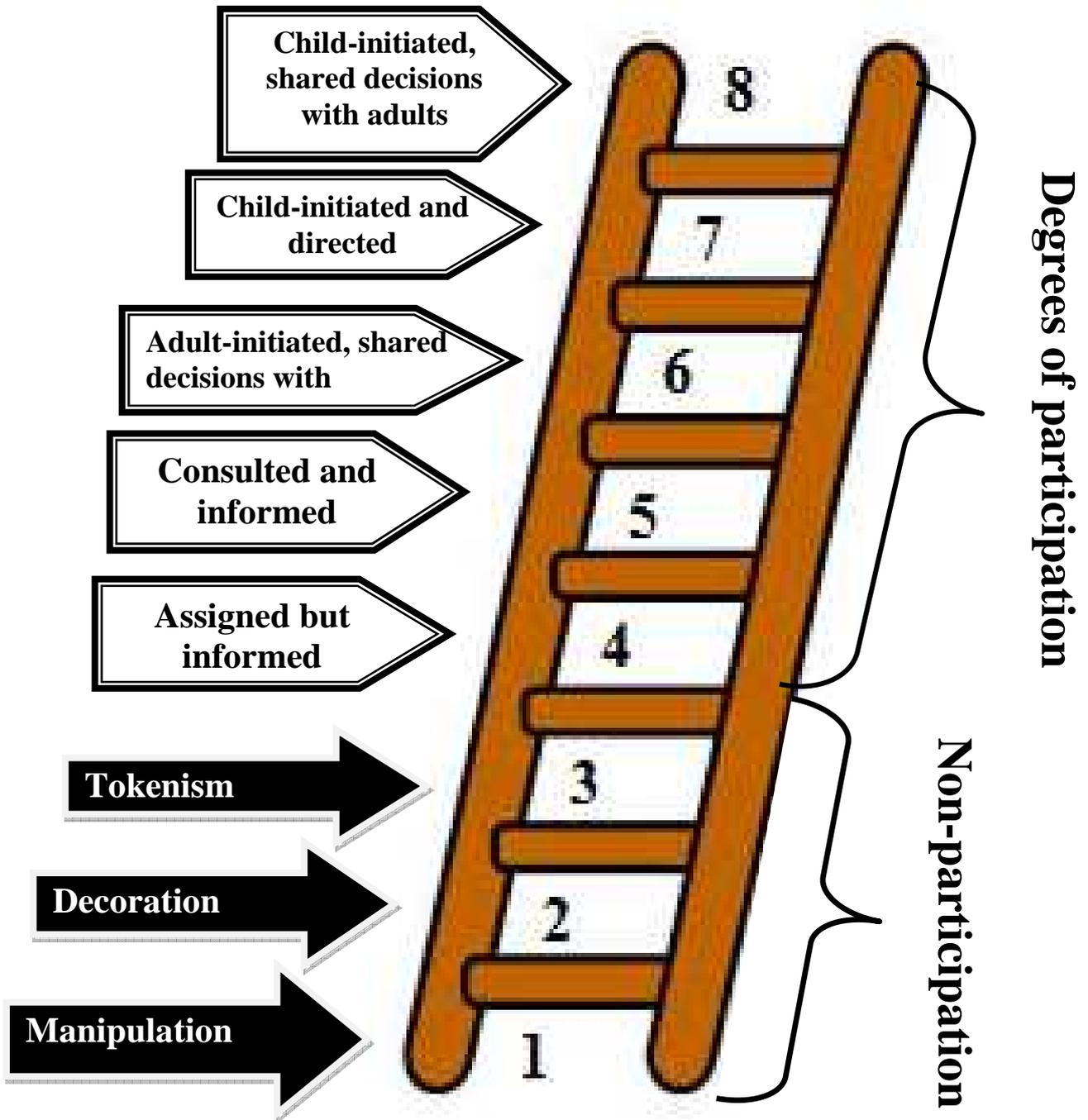
The recent development in information and communications technologies is another light to understand group decision making. As it was discovered from 1992, ICTs are a factor that modifies the way people exchange information, communicate and make decisions (Burgoon, Hunsaker & Dawson, 1994, p. 256; Kiesler & Sproull, 1992, p. 96). ICTs facilitate people to hold discussions cross physical, social and

psychological boundaries (Kiesler & Sproull, 1992, p. 96; Ruben & Stewart, 2006, p. 292). ICTs relating to social networking are great tools to enhance discussions on mutual topics and interests, share information, promote collaboration and active participation (Yeboah, & Ewur, 2014, pp. 158-159) and keep in touch between meetings by a quick contact (Galanes & Adams, 2012, p. 410). ICTs lead to more equal participation and outspoken advocacy (Kiesler & Sproull, 1992, p. 96). In this sense, ICTs assist people in the decision making process, for example, help to manage ideas and information to make the best decisions, but they do not come up with the ideal solutions to problems or make decisions for groups (Burgoon, Hunsaker & Dawson, 1994, p. 257.) Generally, final decisions are made at meetings (Galanes & Adams, 2012, p. 410).

### **2.2.2 Levels of student participation in decision making**

Hart (1994, p. 8) presents the eight levels of young people's participation model called "The ladder of student participation in decision making" (Figure 2 ). The model reflects two parts: student non-participation and participation. The level of non-participation includes manipulation, decoration and tokenism. Manipulation is the lowest rung of the ladder of participation, which characterizes students who do not understand an issue and consequently do not understand their actions. Decoration is one rung up from manipulation when adults use children just to bolster their cause in indirect ways. Tokenism is an appearance that students are given a voice, but in fact they do not have an opportunity to formulate their own opinions. (Hart, 1994, p. 9.)

The second part of the ladder includes the levels of genuine participation. The fourth rung of the ladder of participation is "assigned but informed". At that stage a project maybe truly labeled as participatory when children understand the intensions of the project; they are aware who decided to involve them and reasons behind it; they play meaningful, not "decorative" roles; they are volunteers when they receive a clear picture of the project. The "consulted and informed" rung categorizes students as consultants expressing opinions in projects run by adults that are treated seriously. The sixth rung of the ladder is "adult initiated, shared decisions with children". At this level young people share decision making with adults in projects initiated by adults. It is the stage when students are involved in true participation. The seventh rung of the ladder of student



**Figure 2. The ladder of student participation in decision making**

Adopted and modified from Hart, R. (1994). *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. New York: UNICEF.

participation -"child initiated and directed" is about young people's initiatives and proposals that meet the responses of the adults and are carried out by individuals or groups of students. The last and highest rung of the ladder of participation is "child initiated, shared decisions with adults". It is practically a rare one. It is not because an absence of desire from students, it is rather a lack of good attention and response from the side of adults. (Hart, 1994, pp. 11-12, 14.)

### **2.2.3 Student decision making in the classroom**

Student involvement in the classroom decision making is a branch of citizenship education. The classroom is also a powerful place for students to follow principles of the democratic society and practice responsible decision making, active citizenship. Student participation in the classroom decision making develops their abilities to control his or her own behavior. (Metzger, 2000, p. 21.)

Classroom decision making by students changes the relationship between students and teachers. It builds partnership between them, develops a positive learning community and student commitment to their personal success and to success to the classroom community. The partner role of students in managing their learning process and classroom behavior shapes the new role of teachers. They should support the spirit of democracy and still to be in charge. (Metzger, 2000, p. 23.)

Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio and Turner (2004, p. 105) look at student participation in the classroom decision making from the perspective of autonomous supportive practices offering students a choice in terms of the procedural and organizational matters within the classroom. The autonomous support does not emphasize only opportunities of student decision making, but also supports independence in their thinking (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio & Turner, 2004, p. 105). This approach, in turn, requires respect for student decision making capacities and involves them in the classroom decision making.

The support for autonomy as a way to ensure student participation in the classroom decision making produces a number of outcomes. Practices which support autonomy facilitate teachers' contribution to the development of student autonomy within the classroom. The support for autonomy in the classroom may be organizational, procedural and cognitive involving students to make a choice in

procedures, activities within the classroom and deep-level thinking. The support for the organizational autonomy is helpful in maintaining the well-being and comfort that accompany the way of classroom functions. The support for the procedural autonomy improves engagement with learning activities. The support for the cognitive autonomy encourages student ownership of learning. (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio & Turner, 2004, pp. 97, 101, 105.)

Teachers can offer students different kinds of choices from the classroom to curriculum management issues. Every teacher defines his or her own level and degree of student autonomy in the classroom decision making (Metzger, 2000, p. 23). Teachers are free to apply various strategies promoting the student voice in the classroom. Richardson (2001, pp. 101, 103) underlines such strategies as summarization of lessons, discussions, the design of lessons, etc.

#### **2.2.4 Children's participation in decision making**

Lansdown (1995, p. 1) notes a huge progress in the acceptance of children's rights to participate in decisions concerning them. Since 1980 adults have demonstrated an increasing interest in listening to children's viewpoints. This change recognizes the tendency of moving away from the idea that children are passive receivers of adults' socialization. The right of children to participate in decision making underlines their abilities to be social actors in their own lives. Power and status' inequality between adults and children lead researchers to find the ways to break down this imbalance. Balancing the relationship between adults and children creates a space for children to talk about important issues which affect them. (O'Kane, 2000, p. 136.)

Children's participation in decision making means their involvement in the shared decision making process which affects the lives of all who are involved in this decision and the life of the community surrounding them. As a result of their participation, they have a great chance to learn responsibility, citizenship and respect for others that cannot be covered by any curriculum in a lesson shape. The degree to which students participate in decision making vary according to age, maturity, the nature of decisions and the interests of involved parties. (Lansdown, 1995, p. 17.)

Children's decision making capacities are present-focused rather than focused on planning the distant future. Children aged between 8-12 years have the same importance

for daily decision making like where to go and what to do, in comparison with their life – long future decisions. Consequently, children have more capability to take risks than adults do (O’Kane, 2000, p 145). In many cases, parents make decisions taking into account the future of children. Similarly, children also agree with these decisions in their lives at their present time without a deep understanding of the future (Hood, Kelley & Mayall, 1996, p. 319). Children at this age have their own important areas of decisions, which they experience to be relevant to them. They were sorted from the most common to less general ones (O’Kane, 2000, pp. 145-146):

1. Where I go (80%)
2. What I do (73%)
3. School, play (47%)
4. Contact with families (44%)
5. Where I live (40%)
6. Times to come in (38%)
7. Clothes, food (33%)
8. Times to go to the bad (29%)
9. Sport (27%)
10. TV, what activities (24%)
11. Home/house work (22%)

According to this ranking list of children’s decisions, the top two are self-oriented ones, and then on the third place is children’s concern about school issues. Boys placed more emphasis on activities, play and sport, while girls were interested in relationships, family contacts, school matters (O’Kane, 2000, p. 146).

### **2.2.5 Teenagers and decision making**

Adolescence is ambiguous time of being a child and adult at the same time. Sometimes teenagers behave and act spontaneously like children without consideration of potential consequences, other times they take responsibility for one's own decisions like adults. (Ladd & Forman, 1995, p. 333.) It is a common fact that decision making capabilities of adolescents are low than that of adults. The nature of teenagers leads them to make different and more risky decisions from what adults would choose for them. (Kambam & Thompson, 2009, p. 187.) Ladd and Forman (1995, p. 339) state that adolescent

age-specific values are changeable because they are still not stable and permanent; therefore, teenagers make risky decisions that are not accepted by adults as reasonable ones.

Values and specific features of the psychological development at the adolescence age gain their satisfaction through participation in decision making. A close interconnection between the adolescent age-specific values and their developmental tasks might be explained in a way that valuable things follow from the psychological and developmental tasks of the age and the need to fulfill them. These needs and values should be taken seriously, otherwise it may cause different adverse psychological effects when teenagers are prevented to realize various developmental tasks. Teenagers without opportunities to take part in decision making have a strong feeling of "insult to injury", which increases their psychological damage. (Ladd and Forman, 1995, p. 342.)

Children and young people due to their nature of their ages face a lack of abilities to look ahead of their decisions regarding the future. "Children have more sensitivity to the future time perspectives as they cross the childhood line into adolescence, and adolescents as they transform into adults" (Kambam & Thompson, 2009, p. 175). Children and young adolescents below 14 years are less capable to develop more options, realize possible risks and profits, process consequences of their decisions (Mann, Harmoni & Power, 1989, p. 265). Students may develop their abilities to anticipate future outcomes of their decisions before they reach the late adolescence (Kambam, P., & Thompson, 2009, p. 176; Crone & Van Der Molen, 2007, p. 1299). Students aged 15 years have a high level of competence in creative problem-solving, correctness of choice, commitment to a course of action, etc. (Mann, Harmoni & Power, 1989, p. 265).

In addition to the above mentioned factors, emotions play a not less important role in teenagers' decision making. Teenagers are also susceptible to emotions that greatly influence their decision making (Kambam & Thompson, 2009, p. 175).

Adults are supposed to treat teenagers and their participation in decision making in certain ways. It is necessary to give weight to the adolescent values during decision making, even if it is an opposite to reasonable standards. It is not less important to re-evaluate choices of adolescents in the most extreme cases with help of adults when they go against permanent values. Adults are supposed to share decision making to the greatest extent with teenagers through discussion, reasoning, challenge, etc. Decisions that may threaten the future should be overridden to show adolescents' incompetence,

not with reference to their age, but to the similar criteria that are used to judge the competence of adults. (Ladd and Forman, 1995, p. 343.)

The development of the ability to make reasonable decisions decreasing risks is a slow process. Consequently, students from the late childhood until young adulthood must learn to make these decisions relying on their own judgment in risky situations. (Leijenhorst, Moor, Macks, Rombouts, Westenberg & Crone, 2010, p. 345.) Schools which apply the student leadership idea are the right places to give an experience to deal with different types of decisions and their consequences under the supervision and guidance of adults.

## **2.3 On leadership**

The chapter is addressed to: 1. the conceptual discourse of distributed leadership because student leadership is one of its manifestations. Student leadership is distributed leadership roles to students that increase their participation and choice at every opportunity; otherwise there is no other ways to implement student leadership; 2. the four-frame lenses to leadership of Bolman and Deal (2008). It is the analytical tool to study student leadership from four perspectives.

### **2.3.1 Distributed leadership – conceptual discourse**

In recent decades, distributed leadership is an emergent leadership concept that provokes much attention in the field of school leadership. Distributed leadership restructures educational organizations. Distributed leadership is a way to discover leadership activities, to reorganize the relationship between power, authority and influence (Harries, 2005, pp. 166, 169). The shift to distributed leadership moves away from the traditional "top-down" approaches to school governance focus on the single leader in favor of more democratic and participatory school governance models (Harris, 2009, p. 3; Menon, 2005, p. 167). Moreover, it has increased the interest of organizations to use teams to accomplish their work (Hoch, 2013, p. 159). Distributed leadership is not rooted in actions of individuals, rather it is a result of interpersonal relationships, a property of groups (Woods et al., 2004, p.449). Mainly, the team-based work structure practices shared leadership (Hoch, 2013, p. 160).

Distributed leadership is "...different things to different people" (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons & Hopkins, 2007, p. 338). Besides, Duignan and Bezzina (2006, p. 3) claim that "distributed leadership is a form of shared leadership that is distributed to key stakeholders throughout the organization". Researchers distinguish distributed leadership from shared leadership

Distributed leadership is about the distribution of leadership roles hierarchically with vertical influence. Formal vertical distribution of authority and responsibilities makes it different from shared leadership. "The 'distributed leadership' model goes some way further than 'shared leadership' along the continuum towards fuller group engagement in leadership in specifying the distribution of tasks and responsibilities, though not necessarily knowledge, power and authority...it does not imply people necessarily work together to share the knowledge, power and authority of executive leadership" (Jameson, 2007, p.11). The following researchers such as Collinson (2008, p. 2) and Evans (2008, p. 8, 23) claim similar views about distributed leadership. Expanding member participation in organizations makes distributed leadership the groundwork for democratic leadership (Gronn, 2009, p. 211).

There are differences between working groups and teams (Hackman & Johnson, 2004, p. 217; Robbins, 2000, p. 105; Tiffan, 2014, p. 799). The main distinction between them is that working groups is mainly about individual performance and accountability while teams focus on collective efforts and group accountabilities to achieve goals (Tiffan, 2014, p. 799). Usually, teams are more productive and initiate personal growth and changes in organizations. Shared leadership roles in teams explain their advantages because they activate participation of team members in the work and initiation in areas of their expertise (Hackman & Johnson, 2004, p. 217).

Distributed leadership takes place in both working groups and teams. Distributed leadership as vertical distribution of authority roles and responsibilities may include collaboration of multiple leaders or may not. Distributed leadership as the form of shared leadership may include its team characteristics if it applies collaborative relationships between people. Galanes and Adams (2013, p. 200) define the idea of distributed leadership in groups in a way that leadership is spread among their members and each of them should perform appropriate communication behaviors moving them toward group goals. These authors (2013, p. 201) explain that group members are "the bricks" holding the group, and the leader is "completer" who observes and monitors the group's process to note missing things and to provide needed ones.

Collectively and collaboratively learning and working teams with horizontal influence characterize shared leadership. Shared leadership is displayed as joint leadership by more than one person without a necessity of formal hierarchical sharing of power, authority and responsibility. It implies advanced development as in collaborative leadership. Collaboration is a process of working together and sharing power, authority, knowledge and responsibility. (Jameson, 2007, p.10-11.) Peer or lateral influence in addition to top-down and bottom-up hierarchical influential practices are a prominent distinction of shared leadership from other leadership forms. Shared leadership takes place through horizontal dimensions of authority and responsibility. (Collinson, 2008, p. 2.) The collaborative approach is a reflection of shared leadership, but not surely of distributed leadership. Shared leadership belongs only to working teams without distribution of official roles and responsibilities to act as leaders. Shared leadership and distributed leadership increase commitment and expand decision making (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006, pp. 5-6; Harris, 2005, p. 166).

Shared leadership is shared power and decision-making based on partnership among people involved in the work team. It ensures shared purposes or goals, shared responsibility and accountability, respect to the differences in groups and morality. Equality between partners is a platform for partnership (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013, pp. 2-3). Diversity of people with varying perspectives and degree of knowledge with a group or a number of stakeholders takes away group think and helps to make more intelligent decisions rather than by one person or a group of experts. It is in a positive side of shared leadership. (Surowieski, 2005, p. 29, 31.)

From a distributed perspective, leadership practice is a product of the interaction between three organizational components over time: situation, school leaders and followers (Brooks & Kensler, 2011, p. 58; Spillane, 2005, p. 144). Situations (contexts) are important in the practice of leadership in a sense that the situation offers particulars (e.g. tools of various kinds, organizational structures, routines, language) that contribute to defining leadership practice as an interaction with people (Spillane, 2006, p. 8). Formal and informal routines are tools in situational aspects through which people act. Organizational schedules, meetings, assemblies, etc. belong to formal routines. Greeting people in a particular manner, eating lunch in certain spaces, interacting informally with peers are examples of informal routines. (Brooks & Kensler, 2011, pp. 58-59.)

Leadership and followership are fluid concepts because they are manifestations of formal and informal leadership practices enacted at various times by many people

despite their official positions in organizations (Brooks & Kensler, 2011, p. 60). Besides, distributed leadership is interdependent interactions among two or more multiple leaders in particular situations and in a unique manner. Followers are distinguished from leaders in that they do routine work influenced or established by leaders. (Spillane, 2006, p. 386.)

### 2.3.2 Four-frame approach to leadership (Bolman & Deal)

This chapter introduces the theory applying four different frames to analyze leadership, developed by Bolman and Deal (2008). Therefore, only the page numbers are referenced.

First, Table 1 below integrates main ideas of the four frame leadership approaches (pp. 18, 356).

Frame	Core focus of leadership
Structural	Structural design: work division, coordination, goals, rules, policies
Human resource	Human motivation, need, skills; workplace interpersonal relationship; support, empowerment and serving
Political	Organizational politics
Symbolic	Vision, values, inspiration, creating symbols, rituals; meaning-making

**Table 1. Summary of central leadership ideas from each frame**

#### 2.3.2.1 Structural frame

Structural leadership plays a decisive role in designing and building effective organizations. The structure refers to a foundation that identifies certain units and subunits with their rules, aims, importance, relations, limits, etc. In other words, the structural leaders should be able to understand “the social architecture and its consequences”. (pp. 21, 44, 356.)

Structural leadership focuses on two central issues: how to divide work (differentiation) and how to coordinate this diverse allocation of responsibilities (integration). Division of labor is the cornerstone in the design of organizational structures because specialized roles get important work done. Roles prescribe behavior to accomplish certain tasks. (p. 52.)

There are vertical and horizontal ways to coordinate individual and group efforts and connect them with wide organizational goals. It is important to use vertical and horizontal coordination procedures together. The superiority of vertical coordination is needed in stable and predictable environments. However, dominant lateral communication (horizontal) works well in fast-changing environments. (pp. 54, 60.)

Vertical coordination is a suitable way to control and coordinate work of followers through top-down command and control authority, rules and policies, planning and controlling systems. Authorities like executives and supervisors direct the behavior of lower levels by making decisions, solving problems, rewarding or punishing. Rules and policies set work conditions and regulate ways to complete tasks. Bolman and Deal introduce Mintzberg's two approaches (1979, pp. 153-154, cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 56) to control and planning: performance control enforcing certain outcomes and action planning specifying methods and time frames for actions. (pp. 54-56.)

Formal and informal meetings, task forces, coordinating roles, matrix structures and networks belong to lateral coordination. Flexible lateral techniques are simpler and quicker than authority based systems. Formal and informal gatherings are core forms of lateral coordination. Regular formal meetings are a huge part of lateral harmonization within simple and stable organizations. Informal exchanges are important to glue things together in the changeable and fast-paced environments. New problems and opportunities require task forces in a shape of collaboration of diverse specialists or functions. People under coordinating roles are key persons who persuade and negotiate with others and help to complete their tasks. In addition, information technology from the 1980s developed network structures locally and globally. (pp. 56-57.)

Information technologies make information easily accessible and communication immediate within an entire network. The flow of information decreases uncertainty and moves decisions close to actions. As a result, structural leadership pays attention to flatter communication because "the information-based organization needs far fewer levels of management than the traditional command-and-control model" (Drucker,

1989, p. 20, cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 67). Nowadays, the globalization process, dramatic technological and environmental changes, competitions, etc. make it necessary to design structures toward flexibility and participation to get the best out of people. (pp. 51, 66-67.)

### *Team structures*

It is also necessary to settle work distribution within groups and link individual efforts together. Every group arranges own roles and synchronization approaches. Group structures supposed to maximize contributions of every group member and to make group work done. A variation of group tasks in predictability and stability are factors behind structure relationship and leadership within groups. (pp. 52, 102.)

Different structural configurations of teams serve a variety of needs. A one-boss arrangement is efficient and fast communication of group members with the official leader rather than with each other in simple and straightforward situations. A simple hierarchy with a middle management limits access to the top because the middle operational level reports to the top and supervises lower levels. Another group arrangement is the all-channel network. It is multiple connections where each person may talk with anyone else; therefore, decisions touch a multiple basis and high morale. This arrangement suites complex tasks, but it is inefficient for simple ones. (pp. 103-105.)

### **2.3.2.2 Human resource frame**

From the human resource leadership perspectives people and their needs are at the heart of organizations. Openness, caring, mutuality, listening, coaching, empowerment and participation are central ideas of the human resource framework. Human resource leaders play the role of facilitators and catalysts. They motivate and empower the followers. Leaders get power from caring, sensitivity and service rather than from their positions. The core human resource leadership processes are support and empowerment. The main challenge of this leadership is to equalize goals of organizations and people. (pp. 354, 361.)

People should have enough interest and motivation to do their best in organizations and go there with a good mood and pleasure. This is the core point of the

human resource frame because it is not only about organizational productivity, but also about a reputation of organizations and their attractiveness for people around. All these arguments emphasize the importance of people in organizations and demand to behave with them in a particular way. Human resource leaders do not exploit people, rather they serve their needs because people and organizations need each other. People need career growth and salaries, organizations need people's ideas and talents. (pp. 21, 121-122.)

The theory of Maslow says important key ideas regarding a way of getting the full energy and talent of people in organizations. In 1954, Maslow presented human hierarchy of 5 emotional needs from the lowest (physiological, safety) to the highest ones (social belonging, esteem, self-actualization). When the basic lowest needs are fulfilled, it leads to the activation of the higher ones. (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 124-125; Maslow, 1943, p. 174, 176.)

Bolman and Deal discuss McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y from 1957. According to McGregor leaders take a high risk when they classify subordinates in two groups, active and lazy and then based on this type of perception they decide how to treat them in organizations. Leaders believe that followers dislike work when they are lazy and they apply either "hard" (control, punishments, threats) or "soft" approaches (keep happiness without conflicts). (pp. 125-126.) However, Theory Y claims that "the essential task of management is to arrange conditions so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing efforts toward organizational objectives" and underlines self-interest, self-control and self-direction (McGregor, 1957, p. 183). Basically, Theory Y explains human behavior based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It is a mistake if leaders refer a passive behavior to human laziness because blocked human needs for safety, independence, etc. directly affect behavior in a negative way. (p. 126.)

According to Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 362-363) there are criteria of effective human resource leaders: they communicate their strong belief in people in both words and actions, the Waterman's (1994, p. 89, cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 362) philosophy "People-Service-Profit..." increases productivity of follower's performance, they are visible and accessible by spending time with followers and asking their thoughts and opinions about operations and possible improvements, they empower others and see followers as "partners". It is clear that followers have the right to participate in decision making and a stake in organizational success. Effective human resource leaders listen well and communicate their personal warmth and openness.

Human-oriented leaders imply a variety of strategies for productive human resource management in order to help people to find satisfaction and meaning of their work and, as a result, benefit from human talent and energy. According to Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 142) there are basic human resource strategies: building and implementation a human resource strategy, hiring right people, keeping people, investing in people, empowering people and promoting diversity. Human resource philosophy provides certain direction. It makes core beliefs about managing people clear. They in turn, get transformed into a concrete management system. Besides, human resource leaders select right people by following special principles. To keep people means rewarding them, protection of their job and promotion them from within towards their high commitment. Human resource leaders should offer attractive benefits and rewards to followers. Followers need job security in the highly competitive world. Growing specialists within organizations without hiring them from outside keep people for long-term commitment. (pp. 141-146.)

Human resource leadership enables followers to perform well. Investing in the development of followers is one example of that. Only a few organizations invest time and other resources in the training of people who contribute to common organizational success. As a result, these organizations have a skilled and motivated workforce that brings huge benefits. Investing in people produces a greater return than investments in machinery, but it demands time and persistence before getting rewards. Investment in people makes organizations strong and competitive. (pp. 135, 140, 141.)

Leaders empower followers when they keep them informed, encourage autonomy and participation, foster self-managing teams and promote egalitarianism. "Open-book management" provides information and support to do a better job. Followers are trusted to know important information and think like owners what they can improve. Without a doubt, information is important, but not enough to influence. Followers need opportunities offering autonomy and participation to influence on decisions. Teams are effective when they function in their own rights and connect with other teams through team leaders. Self-managing teams are truly autonomous teams that can solve not only problems, but also implement solutions and take responsibility for outcomes. (pp. 149-150, 154-155.)

Self-managing teams have certain characteristics. Such teams are given autonomy and responsibility for "a meaningful whole". They have regular meetings to determine collectively work tasks, schedule and production. Supervision is in the hands of team

leaders either chosen or naturally emerged. Such teams access resources and facilitators to make their complex decisions. (pp. 113, 155.)

Egalitarianism is a matter of the democratic style and climate in organizations. This idea is beyond participation. It changes the level of decision making authority extended to followers. Human resource leaders should be serious to support diversity by treating everyone well without concentration on gender, nation, positions, etc. (pp. 155, 157.)

Formal roles with titles and job descriptions are important for the structural frame, but from the human resource point of view individual roles in groups and teams are more informal and implicit. The right structure of task roles uses human resources optimally and makes for each member his or her duties understandable. Groups do better work if task roles match individuals' features and personal satisfactions. (p. 181.)

The question of navigation is a weak side of every group and leadership is a powerful solution in the issue. Developments of direction, team energy, collective motivation, management of external components are results of leadership. Leadership increases team performance, if all team members are ready to share the leadership. Effective leaders unite groups in communication and work, rather than dominate over them. Group productivity and morale are affected by leadership styles. The democratic leadership style has a powerful impact on higher productivity and a more positive climate within groups. (pp. 186-187, 177-178.)

### **2.3.2.3 Political frame**

The political frame emphasizes the five core political assumptions. First, organizations as coalitions deal with a diversity of individuals and interest groups. Second, coalition members are different in their values, beliefs, information, interests, etc. Third, scarce resources and their allocation is a central focus of most important decisions. Fourth, scarce resources and individual differences are reasons of conflicts, which increase the importance of power. Fifth, bargaining and negotiation are main tools of competing stakeholders to make decisions and establish goals. (pp. 194-195).

The political view basically operates with two key concepts such as power and organizational politics. Authority is one form of power. Individuals and groups compete

about scarce resources, and as a result, it creates oppositions. Organizational politics is power in use, how competing groups mobilize power to get what they want. (p. 201.)

Organizational politics might be developed in two opposite directions. In this issue, Bolman and Deal refer to Gamson (1968, p. 76, cited in Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 201-201) who states about the relationship between partisans and authorities where authorities are targets of influence and initiators of social control, and partisans are initiators of influence and targets by social control. Authorities make decisions relating to their followers - top-down political initiative. On the other hand, partisans use bottom-up pushing. (p. 201-202.)

According to Bolman and Deal (2008, pp. 203-204) power is based on a variety of sources: authority, control of rewards, coercive power, information and expertise, reputation, personal power (charisma, energy, vision, etc.), alliances and networks, access and controls of agendas, framing (control of meaning and symbols).

#### **2.3.2.4 Symbolic frame**

The symbolic frame is built on ideas from several disciplines such as organizational theory, sociology, political science, magic and neurolinguistic programming. There are five assumptions of the symbolic frame: 1. meaning of events is more important than events themselves, 2. there is a close bond between meaning and actions because different human life experience opens various views on activity, 3. symbols help to establish direction, certainty, hope and faith in ambiguous world, 4. events and their expressions is the most valuable aspect in creating myths, heroes, heroines, rituals, ceremonies, stories to establish for people purpose and desire, 5. culture unites organization, people and helps in achieving organizational desires. (p. 253.)

Symbolic leaders are prophets and poets. Their primary task is to inspire people and create a meaningful workplace through both actions and words. People are loyal to organizations if symbolic leaders make them feel their importance. Leaders whose leadership is symbolical are often transformational leaders getting the best out of their followers and moving them toward higher and universal needs and purposes. Effective symbolic leaders follow a consistent set of cultural rules and practices: they lead by example demonstrating commitment and inspire others, they use symbols to capture attention, they frame experience by specious and hopeful interpretation of experiment,

they communicate a vision as a powerful way to interpret experience in hopeful image of the future, they tell stories about "us" and about "our" past, present and future, they respect and use history when link their initiatives to the values, stories, heroes of the past. (pp. 356, 367-368.)

Culture in organizations and groups may be disclosed through its symbols. The main advantage of the symbolic frame is that it opens a window to human meaning and belief and do not portray things under rules, rationality or certainty. Symbols affect both the human mind and the heart because they identify intellectual and emotional contents. Therefore, the symbolic frame tells about sense that the humankind makes regarding an uncertain world. People produce such things as meaning, belief and faith that take a central part of the frame. Symbols as bricks build our cultures and make them invisible, because we are habitual to do things in certain ways and it is not easy to see them in new shapes. (p. 248.)

Despite the fact that the human being focuses to find meaning in life, it is still remains mystical. Consequently, people create symbols to maintain hope and faith. This spiritual part of human life modifies thoughts, emotions and finally actions. Symbols usually have shapes of multiple forms, including myth, vision, values, heroes and heroines, fairy tales, stories, rituals, ceremonies, metaphor, humor and play. (pp. 252, 254.)

It is not easy task to distinguish such intangible things as myths, values and vision because they often work together. Usually myths occur in the organizational launching and then undergird values in organizations. Organizational values reveal unique organizational qualities, identity, but they are impalpable. Some organizations make some values more explicit than others. Symbolic leaders have their own visions because it is a vital element of successful organizations. Vision is a shared fantasy regarding the future based on organizational ideology, purposes and new possibilities within myths and values. Shared vision among the staff maintains organizational spirit, determination and impulse. (pp. 255-256.)

Naturally, the human being keeps heroes and heroines in their minds and refers to them in time of unpredictability and stress. They are alive in stories and guide, influence human decisions and actions. Stories and fairy tales are also organizational symbols. The core value of stories and fairy tales is that they provide stability, reassurance, hope and direction for people. These symbols immortalize values and stories of heroes and

heroines, establish traditions, convey organizational values and identity and build support among organizational staff. (pp. 258-261.)

Rituals as symbolic acts may belong to individuals as well as to groups. They give meaning to their days, govern key relationships, unite group members together and originate traditions and values within organizations. Some rituals transform into ceremonies. Rituals happen on a daily basis, while ceremonies are more episodic and take their place in time of special occasions. The process of electing, welcoming events and dinners are examples of ceremonies. Metaphors as organizational symbols influence human attitude and actions because they make complicated issues understandable. Humor increases flexibility, decreases distance between people and bring them together. Play opens space for alternatives, experimentations, flexibility and creativity. (pp. 262-269.)

## **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Background of Finnish schools and the study context**

The Constitution of Finland (1999, p. 4) guarantees the right of citizens to get access to the basic education free of charge. Every child from 7 to 16 who resides permanently in Finland has to acquire basic education schooling (Basic Education Act, 1998, p. 11). Young people are free to choose the preferred secondary education, either general or vocational (General Upper Secondary Schools Act, 1998, § 19).

The Finnish education system does not officially divide nine-year Finnish comprehensive school (Kupiainen, Hautamäki & Karjalainen, 2009, p. 14) into primary education (1-6 grades) and lower secondary education (7-9 grades) according to the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED (2012, p. 30, 33, 34), but these terminologies are used in the study. Besides, lower secondary education may be labeled as junior secondary school, junior high school or middle school and upper secondary education might be called senior secondary school or (senior) high school (UNESCO, 2012, pp. 33, 38).

The Finnish schools described in the text below were used to collect the data for the study. The school background information was retrieved from the school official web-sites.

#### *Primary school*

The primary school offers the lower level education of comprehensive school from grades 1 to 6. The school was built in 1988. It includes 475 students and 33 full-time teachers. The school mission is to educate independent and co-operative learners with a

sense of responsibility. The local school environment provides a safe atmosphere stimulating equality and an individual approach to children.

The primary school is concerned with student participation and includes the student council as a part of the children's and youngsters' democratic culture. The student council activities aim to make the school "our school" - for pupils. They promote student involvement in school matters and work, develop a sense of responsibility, co-operation and negotiation skills, self-reliance, and experience to participate in and influence decisions.

#### *Lower secondary school*

The lower secondary school was opened in 1994. There are 395 students and 51 teachers. The main principle of the school operation is the school development to meet the challenges of the future. The school mission is to help students to find their ways in life.

The school facilitates student participation and the development of the active citizenship skills through a student government body and a student peer support team. The student government members learn operational principles of the school, meeting procedures and plan the realization. Support of student activities, helping other students, control of the special needs of the school are basic ideas of the peer support system.

#### *Upper secondary school*

The upper secondary school was founded in 1995. The school has about 200 students and 20 teachers. This school works in close co-operation with other educational institutions and emphasizes two focus areas: entrepreneurship and sustainable development. The school has its own business company and the entrepreneurship student group. They are natural platforms to incorporate entrepreneurship education and real business practices. Sustainable development studies take place through participation in the "KEKE" (sustainable development) student group.

The development of new ideas and making experiments are main characteristics of the school. New learning environments were tested and implemented into practice like the use of iPads by teachers and students. The school members are active in social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Student opinions are part of the school decision making. The student government is a bridge between the students and the school staff. This element is a co-administrator

in the development of the school spirit, new ideas and old behavioral patterns. Student tutors take care of school comfort for new students and maintain the school spirit when they organize a variety of school events.

These Finnish schools were cases in this study about the student leadership phenomenon and student involvement in decision making across three school levels.

### **3.2 Aim of the study and research questions**

The aim of the study is to get a wide and well-grounded view of the student leadership concept and student involvement in the decision making within the Finnish schools in order to avoid a narrow interpretation of these phenomena.

The main **research problem** is to know how the Finnish school system practices student leadership as the significant dimension of democracy throughout three school levels: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. The study focuses on the following research questions:

#### **1. What is student leadership from adults' and students' point of view?**

The research question aims to study how Finnish educators (principals, teacher supervisors) and student leaders (officially elected in student groups) define the student leadership concept because there is a lack of research regarding the meaning of student leadership from students' point of view (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007, p. 279) and from the Finnish perspectives in general.

#### **2. How do student leadership and management function in the primary, lower secondary and upper-secondary Finnish schools?**

This research question is aimed to study student leadership as a complex phenomenon from four leadership angles: structural, political, human and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

#### **3. How are Finnish young people involved in the classroom decision making?**

The goal of the question is to consider the student participation in the classroom decision making.

### 3.3 Qualitative researching and its rationale

Every one of us knows about qualitative and quantitative methods through television, radio news and print media when they, for example explain dangers of smoking or illustrate graphs, etc. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, pp. 3-4). The purpose of qualitative research is to comprehend social phenomena (William, 1991, p. 14) where people are participants (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p. 35), to discover themes and relationships at the case level, while quantitative research plays a confirmatory role of those themes and relationships in samples and populations (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 29).

To gain a deep understanding about what the participants feel and think regarding the student leadership phenomenon the qualitative approach was used. The qualitative research questions are naturally open-ended and seek to describe the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012, pp. 16, 19, 56). Some rationales of using qualitative inquiry lie under its certain characteristics. It is naturalistic. Qualitative researchers collect data about a phenomenon in its natural settings in which it occurs because actions and words lose their significance out of their context. Qualitative research is descriptive because data may be collected in a form of words and pictures and includes interview transcripts, photographs, documents, memos, etc. Qualitative reports describe particular situations or views in the narrative way. Qualitative research concerns with processes rather than with outcomes or products. Qualitative researchers are interested in the meaning of participant perspectives, how they make sense of their lives and try to capture this aspect accurately. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, pp. 4-7.)

Case study research may be used as an approach of qualitative research, which means that the qualitative research focuses on the study of cases not populations or samples. However, they are not synonyms to each other. (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, pp. 29, 544.) Case study research is an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in a shape of processes, events, persons, etc. in its natural settings (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 545; Yin, 2003, pp. 12, 13) with a contribution of participants involved in the phenomenon (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 545).

Case study research might include more than a single case, which is a multiple case study (Gerring, 2007, p. 20; Yin, 2003, p. 46). The multiple case study research was chosen to understand the student leadership concept and student involvement in decision making in the context of the three Finnish case schools: primary, lower

secondary and upper secondary. Each school is a subject of an individual case study with its own individual characteristics of student leadership.

The last rationale behind the usage of the multiple case study design is a chance to examine whether the findings extend or support the theoretical background of the study. The logic of lateral replication predicts similar results under the developed theoretical conditions across two to three cases (Yin, 2003, p. 47). The lateral replication approach to multiple case study means that I used the same interview questions in all the schools to find out whether there are replications of the student leadership characteristics from case to case. Such replications make findings robust and worthy for the further interpretation, even if conducting of the multiple case study demands more sources and time (Yin, 2003, p. 47). Another rationale to use multiple case study is an opportunity to examine the student leadership dynamics across three school levels.

### **3.4 Selection of case schools**

How researchers select information-rich cases from a huge number of them is a big question. Accidental sampling rarely makes sense; therefore we should pay attention to more purposive sampling strategies (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 294). There are interdependent factors behind the selection of case schools for the study.

First of all, the choice was made in regard to the phenomenon within my interests as a researcher. A discussion with the Program Director Lea Kuusilehto-Awale about the potential topic for my Master's Thesis was crucial in choosing cases for the study when I realized that student leadership is a topical issue from the perspectives of democracy. This happened in October 2012 and made my desire strong to study this phenomenon in the Finnish schools in the context of Finnish democracy.

Secondly, the selection of the case schools was effected by using the snowball sampling technique. Its purpose is to get an increasing number of recommended cases to study by well-situated people as a continuing process (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 234). The snowball started from my supervisor as a well-situated person because of his long experience of being a school principal, knowledge about other schools and connections. The snowball got continuation through other school principals. By this way the choice of case schools was made. The permission to carry out the study was mediated by the

thesis advisor. I submitted the letters of an informed consent to the case school principals describing the research and the conditions of the informants' participation.

### **3.5 Data collection**

Data collection is an integrated part of the research duties that can be realized through the proper methods. Govoni (2004, p. 56) defines the data collection method as a way of getting information in which a researcher is interested. A method simply means tools or techniques that do not only gather information, but also may generalize it (Daly, 2007, p. 129). It is important to mention that researchers are "the recipients of data rather than the creators of data" (Daly, 2007, p. 129).

Documentation, archival records, interviews, participant-observation, etc. are commonly used sources of evidence in case studies (Yin, 2003, p. 84). The minor data regarding the background information of case schools were collected through the official web-sites of the schools. The semi-structured interview was the most appropriate tool to collect the major qualitative data, particularly definitions of student leadership, information about student leadership and student involvement in the classroom decision making

An interview is a directed conversation with one or more participants with a purpose to get needed information for a study (Bogdan, & Biklen, 2003, pp. 94-95). The data were collected through individual interviews as well as group interviews. Group interviews were conducted with the student leaders and the teacher supervisors. Individual interviews were used with the school principals and some teacher supervisors who could not join group interviews with their colleagues or did not have them at all. The total number of interview participants was 33 (primary school: 1 principal, 1 teacher supervisor, 8 student leaders; lower secondary school: 1 principal, 3 teacher supervisors, 6 student leaders; upper secondary school: 1 principal, 4 teacher supervisors, 8 student leaders).

Moreover, the interview as a data collection method is important to observe participants closely. Creswell (2003, p. 206) and Patton (2002, p. 4) state that the interview provides an interactive way of obtaining the data. A face-to-face interview permits a personal contact with participants and enhances the researcher's understanding of participants' viewpoints. They further conclude that interviews enable

the researcher to get the experiences, knowledge, opinions and feelings of the participants. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 28) concur that through this mode “the researcher tries to see through the eyes of the participant – standing in their shoes”. During interviews, observable behaviors (like facial expressions), descriptions of the subject’s meanings, reasons and intentions are duly considered, which is in line with Babbie and Mouton’s (2001, p. 33) and Patton’s (2002, p. 5) understanding that a good interview is not limited to just asking questions.

### **3.5.1 Semi-structured interview**

The semi-structured interview was applied as the best form of interviewing for the case study research (Gillham, 2000, p. 65; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40). The flexibility of the semi-structured interview makes this research tool productive (Gillham, 2000, p. 65). Its “naturalness” (Gillham, 2000, p. 65) helps interviews to be open and free to define the world from the informants’ point of view (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40).

The semi-structured interview approach involves a series of predetermined and flexibly worded questions (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 310; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40). In addition to structured questions, the semi-structured interview allows to ask follow-up questions to obtain issues of interest more deeply (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40).

#### *Factors maintaining the quality of the interview data*

It is necessary to take into account some factors that affect the quality of the data yielded by the interview method. Qualitative researchers interview “right” individuals who personally experienced or are involved in the phenomenon to discover insights of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009, pp. 16, 18; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 39). Everyone can tell a good story, but only some people have better stories to share for the research (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 102). The school principals, the teacher supervisors and the student groups were chosen to participate in the interviews. They are close to the student leadership field and student participation in decision making; therefore they are better informed about the research topic and they are key people to collect rich information and cover research questions.

Second is the ethical approach to the interview participants. At an early stage of the interview process the interviewees were briefly informed about the subject of the study, the purpose of the interview and ensured its confidential character (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 103). The interview data were recorded as the best way to have all valuable information based on the participants' permissions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40). I met the interviewees at the agreed time and in the agreed place.

Third is the creation of an atmosphere where the interviewees feel comfortable to talk freely and openly (Bogdan & Taylor, p. 111). Trust and rapport with the respondents are something that must be developed by a researcher (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 318). I presented myself as a student and researcher at the same time, then I described my personal background briefly. It was one way to establish the atmosphere conducive to openness, trust and rapport (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, pp. 318-319). The first few minutes were used to create a relaxed and open atmosphere. In some situations, when there was enough time to begin interviews with small talk, I searched for a topic that I had in common with the interviewees to build relationship and develop rapport. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 95.) I tried to create a flexible atmosphere by using jokes or sharing my own experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 105).

Fourth, practicing interviewing or a pilot test is an important element of interview preparation to develop questions and format that will be used in the actual interview (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 316; Gillham, 2000, p. 66). The data collection instrument was rehearsed with one teacher supervisor from the case school. It was a useful way to check whether the questions were open and did not indicate preferable answers, to rephrase questions and make them understandable to the respondents, to determine the length of the time, to acquire necessary skills.

Fifth, the length of the interview should be long enough to cover coming up topics, but short enough to avoid the fatigue of interviews (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 109). The amount of time that interviews took was varied from interview to interview. The interview sessions lasted for at least 45-60 minutes.

Sixth, we should remember that the relationship between a researcher and the research subjects is one of give and take (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 117). All interview participants were given small gifts ("screen cleaners" for mobile electronic devices) in the end of the interview sessions.

### **3.5.2 Conducting individual and group interviews**

The interview relationship may be in formats of individual interviews, “paired depths”, groups of various sizes and etc. (Chrzanowska, 2002, p. 19). There are situations when group interviews consist only of two people called as “conjoint interviews” (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p. 98). This two-person variant of the group interviews were successfully used with some teacher supervisors.

Group interviews address questions to a group of individuals united for this purpose (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 307). The group interview brings together 6-8 people to build a group conversation to gain information that cannot be gained through individual interviews. Participants of group interviews listen to each other’s contributions and develop their ideas more clearly. Group interviews should include a number of members to ensure everyone’s participation in discussions and diversity in perspectives at the same time. (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p 98, 100.) Group interviews with student leaders included 8 students in the primary and upper secondary case schools and 6 students in the lower secondary case school.

The role of the researcher in group interviews is less direct than in individual interviews (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p. 101). The group interview requires significant thoughts about the role of the researcher as a facilitator because of some difficulties of this method such as a lack of a desire of individuals to share important experiences, talking too much by individual members, keeping the discussion on the topic, etc. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp. 109-110). My role as a researcher in group interviews was effective because I demonstrated a high interest and incomplete understanding through probes, verbal and gestural invitations to participate in conversations (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p. 101).

### **3.6 Data analysis**

Usually, the case study data work with an amount of and in the case of interviews, the transcripts. All of this data need to be analyzed toward important and telling findings (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 562). A description of the meaning of people’s words and actions (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p. 112) is a fundamental aspect of the qualitative analysis (Sudweeks & Simoff, 1999, p. 33).

Different authors of research books present a versatility of qualitative data analysis. Approaches to the data analysis are different in the level of interpretation and actual analysis procedures (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005, p. 112). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 159) the data analysis is the process when researchers arrange the collected data systematically in a way to reach the findings. In other words, the analysis refers to the work with the data, in a sense of organizing them into codes, synthesis or separate units. Finally, it is worth emphasizing the responsibility of the researcher to understand and realize the data analysis step, which significantly affects the final findings.

### **3.6.1 Thematic data analysis**

The chapter introduces the thematic analysis and thematic network analysis as basic qualitative approaches of the data analysis that was applied in the study. The thematic analysis is an independent qualitative descriptive approach (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013, p. 400) is based on "...identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) that are important to describe the phenomenon. The better comprehension of the research issues may be achieved by the thematic network analysis. The thematic network analysis is a representational tool that organizes the qualitative thematic analysis by illustrating themes at different levels in a shape of network-maps (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387.)

The thematic analysis is worth choosing. This qualitative method of analysis is a fundamental in the qualitative analysis and should be learnt first by a researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78) to develop the core skills and to conduct other forms of the qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013, p. 400). Another reason is its flexibility to use in inductive and deductive methodologies (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013, p. 401). The inductive approach moves from the specific to the general because the process of coding the data emerges from the data itself, also called the data-driven form of the thematic analysis. In contrast, the deductive analysis is driven by theoretical or analytical interests of researchers and moves from the general to the specific (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 83-84).

The study incorporated hybrid approaches of qualitative methods of the thematic analysis: the data-driven inductive and theory-driven deductive approaches. These approaches respond to the research questions. A priori themes of the four-frame approach to leadership by Bolman and Deal (2008) are an integrated part of the deductive thematic analysis while studying student leadership and management in the Finnish case schools. Themes emerged directly from the data for analyzing definitions of student leadership and student participation in the classroom decision making. Even though the deductive form of the thematic analysis does not provide a rich description of the data in general, it is important for a more detailed and systematic analysis of student leadership from the four frames perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). The inductive thematic analysis was used in research areas, which had not been studied much (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 107).

Attride-Stirling (2001, pp. 388-389) outlined the following core steps of the thematic network analysis as: (a) systematizing the extraction of lowest-order premises evident in the text (basic themes), (b) categories of basic themes grouped together to summarize more abstract principles (organizing themes), (c) super-ordinate themes summarizing main metaphors in the text as a whole (global themes). The above described logic of the thematic network analysis may be simply presented as the following formula: Basic themes - Organizing themes – Global themes - Claims. The thematic network analysis splits the text for searching obvious rationalizations and their hidden significance (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388).

The thematic analysis was started from familiarizing with the data. All collected data from individual and group interviews were transcribed. The process of the interview transcription was necessary not only to arrange the data into a clearly readable form and conduct the thematic analysis, but also to start familiarization with and understanding the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87-88). The interview transcriptions were complete when I was sure that I had reached full accuracy of what the informants had said (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88) after listening to the audio-recorded data over again and comparing with the written text. It is not necessary to tackle the data analysis process immediately because it is important to read the collected data several times to know it well (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 172). Repeated reading of the data was active along with searching for initial ideas, patterns and excluding the irrelevant data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Each piece of the information was examined and sorted in the light of the research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 56). The data that were

potentially meaningful to the research focuses were labeled with persons and case schools.

Coding frameworks were devised on the basis of both “data-driven” and “theory-driven” themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p 88). The first coding process involved seeing important moments of the phenomenon, coding them and identifying themes that arrived from the data themselves (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008, p. 83). The second coding framework was based on the deductive “top down” approach. The theoretical thematic analysis was based on the four frame approach to leadership of the Bolman and Deal (2008) theory which was mapped onto the data set. To achieve this, a priori themes were created based on a review of the theory (Table 2).

<p><b>Structural Frame</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Differentiation (work division) and integration (coordination) across school leadership structures</li> <li>2. Goals, rules, policies</li> <li>3. Information technologies and information flow</li> <li>4. Team structures</li> </ol>	<p><b>Political Frame</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Top-down sources of political initiation</li> <li>2. Bottom-up sources of political initiation</li> </ol>
<p><b>Human Resource Frame</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interests and needs of student leaders</li> <li>2. Workplace interpersonal relationship between student leaders and adults</li> <li>3. Human resource management</li> <li>4. Leadership and decision making in groups</li> </ol>	<p><b>Symbolic Frame</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visions and values</li> <li>2. Cultural heroes and heroines</li> <li>3. Humor and play</li> <li>4. Rituals and ceremonies</li> </ol>

**Table 2. A priori themes of the four frame approach to leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008)**

During reading the interview transcripts, the text that illustrated and fit any of outlined themes was highlighted and coded. Similar codes were grouped for the further identification. In order not to lose the context, I always included in the text samples a longer part of the informants’ text (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89).

Sorting different codes into potential basic themes, then grouping them under organizing and global themes were the next step of the inductive thematic analysis after searching them across the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 391; Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). The deductive approach already had predetermined themes (Gale, et ell, 2013, p. 119), therefore, classification of text segments in codes or groups of related codes under the appropriate organizing themes turning into pre-established global ones were the next step in the deductive thematic analysis. I followed an idea of annotated notes alongside the identification and coding of the themes from the lowest order themes to the super-ordinate themes with using color coding for themes to show their importance to each category (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). Red colour coding emphasized the most important global themes, blue colour coding meant organizing themes, grey colour coding was for basic themes (see Appendix 2-7). Next, I went through the selected themes and refined them further into themes that were nonrepetitive and broad enough and covered the set of ideas contained in the text segments (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 391).

The basic themes, organizing themes and global themes outlined in the inductive thematic analysis were organized into the visual network-presentation. In the deductive analysis basic themes were identified under the pre-established organizing and global themes from the theory, and were then organized into the visual network-presentation (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393; Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89.) The chapter presenting the findings and discussion describes the context of the networks in the following order: global themes, organizing themes and basic themes with support of text segments from the interviews (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393).

## **4 RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In order to get an answer to the main research problem, how the Finnish school system practices student leadership as the significant dimension of democracy across the three school levels: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary, the study focuses on the following research questions: 1. What is student leadership from adults' and students' point of view? 2. How do student leadership and management function in primary, lower secondary and upper-secondary Finnish schools? 3. How are Finnish young people involved in the classroom decision making?

According to the ethical considerations, the names of the Finnish case schools were not allowed to be mentioned, nor the names of the interviewees. The semi-structured interview was the most appropriate tool to collect qualitative data through individual interviews as well as group interviews. The total number of the interview participants was 33 (the primary school: 1 principal, 1 teacher supervisor, 8 student leaders; the lower secondary school: 1 principal, 3 teacher supervisors, 6 student leaders; the upper secondary school: 1 principal, 4 teacher supervisors, 8 student leaders). In the study I refer to the interviewees from the different schools as follows: the primary case school: the principal – P1, the teacher supervisor – T1, the group of the student leaders – S1; the lower secondary case school: the principal – P2, the teacher supervisor for the student guides – T2, the teacher supervisor for the student peer support team T3, the teacher supervisor for the student government - T4, the group of the student leaders – S2; the upper secondary case school: the principal – P3, the teacher supervisor for the sustainable development team – T5, the teacher supervisor for the entrepreneurship team - T6, the teacher supervisor for the student government - T7, the teacher supervisor for the student tutors - T8, the group of the student leaders – S3.

## 4.1 Understanding of the student leadership concept

This chapter examines definitions of student leadership through the eyes of the Finnish student leaders and the educators (school principals and teacher supervisors) from the primary, lower and upper-secondary case schools. The central research question is, *What is student leadership from Finnish students' and educators' point of view?* The definitions of student leadership that were given by the informants provide an important insight into how they view the conceptual framework of student leadership.

The findings exhibited that the initial definitions of student leadership fall into several dimensions: 1. Student leadership is a manifestation of democratic participation and equality in the school society. Student leadership is about student participation, representation and involvement in school decisions concerning their lives. This point was emphasized by the student leaders and the educators from the three Finnish case schools. Student participation was categorized as democratic participation because the Constitution of Finland (2012, p. 1-2) guarantees this democratic right of the Finnish children and young people to be heard and involved in decisions that affect their lives.

It is representation of the students...and to make students' voice heard. It is their role to keep this voice to adults and their decisions. – S1. This is the way we can influence decisions...– S2. Student leadership is to affect different school things. And anyone of the students who has something in his/her mind can go to speak to the student government leader and she/he will tell the thing forward. – S3. ...they can give some ideas to all things we have in the school...; It is one way how students can influence in the own school... – (principals, teacher supervisors).

Student leadership focuses on treating students equally. This characteristic of democracy was taken into account in the definitions of the student leaders from the upper secondary case school and the educators. Equality, in turn, is the basic aspect of social justice in the Finnish democratic society (The Constitution of Finland, 2012, p. 3).

To me student leadership is equality. – S3. ...kind of make sure that everybody is treated equally here in the school... - (principals, teacher supervisors).

2) Student leadership is an exercise of active citizenship, while active citizenship is a central aspect of the democratic society as Hart (1994, p. 5) states. All the interviewees underlined that student leadership is to take care of the other students in the schools. It is a “moral compass” of active citizens who in their activities benefit or help other people (Packham, 2008, p. 149).

...they do this job for the students in the school...; We have other students and make them feel good. – S1. ...do some work for other students.– S2. ...ability to improve students' well-being. – S3. ...who can make nice things for the all students in the school - (principals, teacher supervisors)

According to the interviewees, except the student leaders from the primary case school, student leadership reflects activity, being active. Social activity and being active define active citizenship (the MoEC, 2012, p. 15; Packham, 2008, p. 4).

...and make things happen. – S2. ...making something special for the whole school community. – S3. ...active members; It is being active, an active student; ...and practices are various what they can do. - (principals, teacher supervisors).

The student leaders from the lower and upper secondary case schools and the educators interpreted that student leadership is an opportunity to be involved in school decisions to make changes. Active citizens are people who influence decisions to change things (Packham, 2008, p. 149).

...also about developing new and making new things up... – S2. ...and changing things in this school. – S3. ...effect things they really want to change. - (principals, teacher supervisors).

The student leaders and the educators claimed that student leadership makes students responsible. Responsibility is one of the features of active citizens (the MoEC, 2012, p. 15).

It is about taking responsibility of your actions. - S3. Students can take responsibility for our school things... - (principals, teacher supervisors).

The educators and the student leaders from the upper secondary school interpreted that student leadership is a basis for the personal growth and development of students. Self-development as one advantages of active citizenship was mentioned in the Child and Youth Policy Programme (2012, p. 15).

It is also a way to practice social skills and ...it is very important to know how to "read" other people and listen to their opinions. – S3. I think, so they learn some skills how to lead, how society is working. - (principals, teacher supervisors).

3) Collinson (2008, p. 2) refers vertically distributed leadership roles to distributed leadership. The Finnish educators recognized distributed leadership in leadership at the student level: “And they kind of take part of leadership in the school in their own positions of course” (Finnish educators). The distributed leadership to students legitimates them the authority and power to make decisions at their level, participate in and influence school decisions, consequently to behave as active citizens.

The Finnish students and educators depending on their age defined student leadership differently. Student participation and caring as the features of the school society were mentioned by all the student leaders and the educators in their definitions. In addition to these, views the student leaders from the lower secondary and upper secondary case schools and the educators emphasized characteristics of active citizenship such as making changes, social activity and being active. The student leaders of the upper secondary school age and the educators expanded the definition of student leadership till social justice based on equality, responsibility and personal growth and development within the Finnish school contexts. The Finnish teachers and principals also noted that student leadership is the distributed authority and responsibility to the level of students within school leadership.

In conclusion, student leadership may be defined from the student leaders' and the educators' points of views as a manifestation of democratic characteristics in the following ways:

1. Student leadership is student participation in the school decisions where they benefit not only themselves but also other students (according to the students of the primary school age);

2. Student leadership is *active* student participation in the school decisions toward changes that benefit not only themselves but also other students (according to students from the lower secondary case school);

3. Student leadership is *responsible* student participation in the school decisions and social activities that treat students equally, change things and benefit all other students (according to the student leaders from the upper secondary case school);

4. Student leadership means that students are given legitimate authority and power to participate actively and responsibly in school decisions and social activities that treat students equally, change things and benefit all other students (according to the educators).

In comparison with the Finnish educators, researchers define student leadership narrowly. They define student leadership as student voice that provides many ways of youth participation in school reforms (Mitra, 2006, p. 7), student voice for the better decision making in schools (Brasof, 2011, pp. 22-23), "...intrinsic to student engagement" (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007, p. 280), while the Finnish educators associated student leadership with democratic characteristics in the school society, active citizenship and the distributed leadership roles to students. Student leaders also came up

with characteristics of democracy in schools and active citizenship, but on different scales depending on their age.

Additionally, the outcomes presented opinions about the gender issue in school leadership as well as student leadership. One of the most significant current discussions, research and writing is on the predominance of males in leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 351; Northouse, 2013, p. 349). The school principals, teacher supervisors and student leaders pointed to the female tendency in school leadership as well as student leadership in the case schools. Only the student leaders from the Finnish primary case school could not assess the gender issue presumably either based on their young age or the traditional election process that brought an equal number of boys and girls into the student government. The teacher supervisor T1 working with the student government at the primary level noticed that it is easier to find girls willing to be members of that group than boys during the election process.

But in one class I remember there is one boy and three girls were elected... I think, it is a little more girls who willing to be elected. – T1. Girls are dominated. It would be very good if we have more man, more boys... – P1. Males are missing in the school. – P2. ...I would say there are more girls. – T2. In the student government there are more girls than boys. – S2. There are more girls than boys. – P3. There are definitely more girls... and we are more women in the school staff than men. – T6. I think girls are generally more active and boys are not so interested in these things. – S3.

According to the data analysis, student leadership and school leadership linked to the female activity. It supports the statement that male leadership is shifting to the female one in education (Boman & Deal, 2008, p. 351; Northouse, 2013, p. 349).

## **4.2 Four-frame approach to leadership (Bolman & Deal)**

Organizations divide and allocate responsibilities, create rules, policies, procedures, systems and hierarchies to coordinate and unite diverse efforts (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 15). This chapter aims to identify the design of units and subunits, rules, goals and policies, roles and responsibilities of leaders among the school staffs as well as students and synchronization of their effort in the context of the primary, lower and upper secondary Finnish case schools. The research findings showed that the a priori themes presented in chapter 3.6 above were found in the case schools with two exceptions: the

informants speak about the weaknesses of the school leadership structures they do not speak about play.

#### **4.2.1 Structural frame**

##### *School governance and leadership structure*

The data analysis discovered certain characteristics of the school leadership structures at the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school level (Appendix 8). The common administrative “umbrella” including the principals, the vice-principals and the leading teams covered the structural configuration of school leadership across the case schools.

The school principals were at the top of the school leadership structures because as the principals P1, P2 noticed they take a huge responsibility for everything in the schools and keep their eyes on realizing different kinds of school matters according to the official rules, laws, documents, etc.

First of all, my responsibility belongs to nearly to everything in my school... - P1.  
...finally it is me who is responsible for decisions... - P2.

Based on the information given by the school principals it is possible to conclude that the vice principals were the closest assistances of the them and they were chosen from the school teachers. The principals and the vice principals were members of the school leading teams. Other members of the leading teams were elected on a regular basis from the school staffs and their number varied from school to school. The leading teams were central administrative units in the school leadership structures that dealt with all school issues and made important decisions.

...every week we talk together something problems and we make decisions in the leading team all. - P1. It is always the leading team who makes the final decisions... - P2.

The principals P1 and P2 clarified that in some cases school they made decisions alone or with the vice-principals if leading teams requested to do that in the complicated school matters.

Principal and vice-principal also make decisions in the school. Some decisions I have to do. - P1. Sometimes it needs, for example, I need to say ok let's do this, but it is very rare. - P2.

In addition to the principals, the vice-principals and the leading teams, responsibility for school leadership was also assumed by the teachers, students and parents who performed essential task in different teams (Appendix 8). Every teacher in all the case schools belonged to any teams based on his or her own preferences.

All teachers belong to either one of group. In those groups we do not have any students. That is how we lead the school on the teacher level. - T5.

The Finnish case schools dealt with different teacher teams. The student welfare team, the teacher teams (same grade teacher teams, subject teams, the special education team) the parent team belonged to the structure of the primary case school. The lower secondary case school included the student welfare, learning, environmental, evaluation, bullying, ICT, teacher's welfare, etc. teams. The sustainable development, entrepreneurship, security, crises, etc. teams were functioning in the upper-secondary case school (Appendix 8). The teacher teams aimed to improve different aspects of the school systems.

One big thing is that we are all time try to develop things, get something new, and get better. - P2. They (teacher teams) decide in general about the school. What to develop, what to do. - T5.

Every case school had in its school leadership structure the student government team. Other variations of student teams were presented in the lower secondary and upper secondary case schools (Appendix 8). There were two similar roles and their responsibilities in all the case schools. The first was a president (chairman) who led meetings and discussions. The second was a secretary who recorded group memos reflecting important decisions and the content of meetings in Microsoft Word files. A more detailed view of the student leadership features is described in the text below within the contexts of every case school.

The chairman leads every meeting, leads conversations and discussions. The secretary writes what they do every meeting. - T1. Chairman is actually taking care of the meetings. He gives who is speaking now.- T4. There is a president, secretary... - T7. Actually, president when we want to talk he can say you can say, manage discussion and run our meetings, secretary write every meeting down what we talked. - S2.

*Student government in the primary case school*

The primary case school had in its leadership structure one student team called the student government (Appendix 8). The teacher supervisor T1 explained that 24 students from 5-6 grades were grouped through the election process into this working unit. Students in every class elected two boys and two girls willing to get the membership in the student government team. The student government elected the functionaries from its members, and such positions as a chairman, a vice chairman, a secretary, a deputy secretary, and a communication officer were filled. The vice chairman and the deputy secretary performed their duties instead of the chairman and the secretary when they were absent. The communication officer invited the student government members to meetings by the school radio.

Communication officers they go to the microphone and the meeting is coming please come quickly...If the chairman is not on the place, then she (vice-chairman) is the chairman.... - T1.

The school principal P1 mentioned that the goal of the student government was to promote school improvements through student activities and a sense of responsibility. The similar idea was expressed by the students S2 who said that “We want to make this school better. We can change our school and in some ways”. The responsible teacher T1 and the student leaders S1 explained that the student government mainly organized big school events twice a year. In November, they were in charge of the *Nenäpäivä*, a charity day, and they read stories to younger pupils, played games with them and adults, and collected money for charitable organizations. In April, they arranged the talent day where pupils competed in their talents through dancing, singing, playing music, etc. The student leaders also managed smaller school tasks, for instance they played games with younger pupils as free time activities.

The school principal P1 posited that the teacher supervisor was assigned to the position on a volunteer basis and she got additional fees covering 1 hour of supervision per week. The teacher supervisor took responsibility for the student government sector in the school leadership structure for a two year term. The teacher supervisor T1 described the following duties relating to the position: the arrangement of the place and time for meetings, the preparation of the tasks and topics to discuss, taking part in student meetings, the supervision of student discussions, plans and work. The principal P1 noticed that the teacher supervisor did not inform students about their tasks for the

whole academic year, only for the coming 1-2 weeks, because children were more focused on today and they were not able to plan for the future.

The teacher supervisor T1 shared that the primary case school and another primary school are located in a common region and they form the Little Parliament together. The Little Parliament is a part of the Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä. Five students from the student government of the primary case school were members of the Little Parliament in this region. They were elected from the student government group by the student leaders themselves. The teacher supervisor was responsible to gather 5 student members for the Little Parliament, to take them to the place of the meetings and to facilitate the meetings as a supervisor.

O'Kane (2000, p. 136) and Lansdowne (1995, p. 1) conclude about the interest of researchers to balance power and status inequality between adults and children and make the children's voice heard. The student government in the primary case schools is one of the examples where adults listened to opinions of children.

#### *Student leadership in the lower-secondary case school*

Student leadership in the lower secondary case school was presented in the forms of the student government, the student peer support team and the student guide team (Appendix 8). The responsible teacher T4 clarified that the student government's goal was to facilitate students to become active and participative citizens. Moreover, according to the principal P2, these student leaders collected opinions of the peer students and influenced changes in the school. The principal P2 and the teacher T4 also posited that the thirteen student leaders who formed the student government were responsible for the planning and organizing different kinds of school events like competitions among students with small surprises, parties, gala concerts for 9th graders, etc.

The student government included such roles as a president, a secretary, an accountant and media contact persons. As the student leaders S2 said, the accountant was responsible for the financial part of the group and media contact persons took care of the group web page in Facebook. The teacher supervisor T4 added that the new members of the student government got elected at the same time by all the students in the school every academic year. Already the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students had the right to be members of the group if they were elected.

The principal P2, the teacher supervisor T3 and the student leaders S2 emphasized some core characteristics of the student peer support team. This team united students who wanted to support student activities, the friendship and to prevent bullying in the school. These students realized their goals in various events and charitable activities. Twelve students from the peer support team took care of new students: introduced to them the study system, helped them feel comfortable in the unknown place; organized the nälkäpäivä (hunger day), etc. Moreover, this group supported the students having different kinds of personal mental problems. To become a new group member, the student candidate needed to complete successfully the test regarding their social skills.

The teacher supervisors T3, T4 and the principal P2 underlined cooperation between the student government and the student peer support team in several directions. They ran together a small school business kiosk (sell sweets, drinks, etc.), organized the Valentine's Day and disco parties in the evenings for all the students.

The teacher T2 responsible for the student guide team said that the team presented the school to foreigners by visiting lessons, showing the school and telling about it. The team was completely built on the student volunteers from the 9th grade at their free will. Mostly they worked in pairs with 3-5 visitors. The teacher supervisor's duty was to provide the student leaders with the schedule of the lessons available for foreigners' visits.

Each team, the student government and the student peer support team functioned under the supervision of two teachers and only the student guide team was supervised by one teacher. These teachers were responsible for their own student groups and kept their eyes on student discussions and actions. The teachers supervising the student government and the student peer support team T3, T4 noted that they took care of the kiosk system (money accounting, paying bills, and buying sweets for selling), they arranged the schedule and the place for the meetings and important topics to discuss and attended student meetings. They did not have the right to vote or participate in decisions within the student groups. The school principal P2 clarified that the teacher supervisors got paid for their additional job.

We are trying to give timetable of year.. trying to tell what is coming next. I have to do a list about things we should discuss in the meeting and mostly, I give place and arrange everything that students need in their meetings and check out some facts how we can do things in our school. I have no right to vote or something, I am just standing a little bit behind...I am with them on the meetings. - T4.

*Student leadership structure in the upper-secondary case school*

The upper secondary case school involved students in the school governance widely. The following student teams were found from the data analysis: the student government, the sustainable development student group, the entrepreneurship student group, the classroom leaders, the tutors, the forest guides and the student representatives in the parent team (Appendix 8). The student members of these teams were volunteers, not elected with a vote.

The student government did two main things in the school. First, it was a link between the school staff and the students to bring new ideas, to give an impulse to changes of the old patterns and to support the school spirit. Second, this team including the 11 student leaders arranged a diversity of school events: the Christmas calendar, games, parties, etc.

The student government we have two important things. So the first one we arrange events by games and so on, show how to enjoy school and the other one is to tell teachers what we think about things. - S3.

The functionaries in the student government included a chairman, a secretary, an accountant, and media contact persons. The responsible teacher was involved in money accounting matters.

There is a president, a secretary, a person who takes care of money ... They have a person who takes care of information, puts information in the internet... There has to be a teacher who involved in banking staff, that too. - T7.

The student leaders S3 from the student government and the teacher supervisor T7 provided the information about new coming projects. The first one was cooperation between the student leaders from the upper secondary case school with the student government from a lower secondary school. Another project was recording the video news in the light of the school life. Both projects at the moment of the data collection were at the very beginning of their implementations.

The student government, the student entrepreneurship team and the student sustainable development team worked with their own two teacher supervisors who were paid additional money for their job. They took responsibility for their own student teams, attended meetings of student leaders to be aware about their thoughts and plans, but they were not involved in decisions made by student leaders.

What comes to our volunteering is to take the responsibility for these groups. - T5.  
We are looking after them, interested and conscious about their actions all the

time. - T6. They (teacher supervisors) are basically just listen... they are not important in decision making that much. - S3.

According to the stories told by the teacher supervisor T5 and the student leaders S3 the student sustainable development team worked on the development of a positive atmosphere in the whole school where everyone was supposed to find something nice, enjoyable and relaxing. The school provided a possibility to get courses related to the sustainable development studies by being a member of the team. This team implemented a variety of events in the school based on the student leaders' own ideas. For example, they asked all students and teachers to wear woollen socks, instead of shoes on the Wool Sock Day. They also collected bottles within the school for recycling, they baked and sold pizzas in the cafe, they sold second-hand things in the Yard sale cafe, they repaired student bicycles for free, they donated to charity, they made radio programmes about friendship and other topics etc. New students could join the group at any time.

Basically, we try to focus that everyone can find something nice in the school, something that they enjoy... - S3. ...we have morning assembly from the radio, we possibly talk a little bit about the speed of life as these modern days it is very fast... Then we make a little bit food for them to buy from us. ...and every student was able to bring bicycle there and we had some tools. - T5.

The teacher T5 supervising the sustainable development team mentioned their cooperation with the student entrepreneurship team in the common projects. After the data collection I came to know that unfortunately the sustainable development team had been closed because of a lack of money to pay the teacher supervisors' fees.

The goal of the student tutors was to maintain comfort for everyone in the school. The student tutors took care of new students during the first school days and organized welcoming events for them to get to know each other. Also the tutors represented the school in the parent event and participated in a variety of other school events. They had meetings according to their needs, which might be very often or seldom. The teacher supervised the student tutors without getting an extra fees for that. The teacher T8 explained that the student tutors' team existed because the teacher supervisor was the school counsellor who just needed these students as help in the counselling issues. The student tutors earned one tutor course in their diplomas.

... mostly their role is when the first year graders come to school the tutors guide them to know how to act here, how to choose your studies. When the first year students they do not need guidance anymore, so the tutors concentrate on the

events in the school...Tutors are more in charge of atmosphere and put up the good spirit in the school. - T6.

According to the teacher T7 and the student leaders S3, the classroom leaders usually worked in pairs under one classroom supervisor and took care of different organizational issues such as they updated class fellows with information about important school news, gathered them at certain places before actual trips, collected money for charity or trips, etc. The students elected classroom leaders in every class.

When the group leaders like my two boys they are link between me and my group. They are more administrative helping hands. - T6.

The school principal P3 and the teacher supervisor T6 clarified several aspects of the student entrepreneurship team. Basically, the membership in the team provided students with 10 courses of entrepreneurship studies in the three major fields: marketing, economics and content project. In addition to the studies, the team was aimed to organize the school events, in particular they did the school fair to attract new students in the school as well as in the team. The 10 student leaders in the team were divided into three groups based on their personal preferences: the marketing group informed 9<sup>th</sup> graders about coming workshops, the economical group was in charge of the financial matters, and the content group planned workshop events. The low number of students in every group, which was 2-3 students, made an assignment of the official roles among them unnecessary.

The teacher supervisor T5 being a member of the parent team disclosed the role of student representatives in the team. Usually, 1-2 students were full members of the parent team and participated in its meetings 3-5 times per year. These students were a source to get the first-hand information for parents. They had the same right to speak as the adults in the team; consequently, their opinions were taken in account in the school governance.

Every three years students could be in charge of the forest trips. These volunteers called "forest guides" completed special courses about the security and features of the life in a forest. Usually, two forest leaders worked with 16 people in a tent and led them in certain situations. Teachers also took responsibility for the tents.

...forest guides who want to take it, they are in charge of forest trip. They are good at telling now you have to listen, now it is going to be important security information...teachers we have to be still over them. - T7.

According to Nandago, Obondoh and Otiende (2005, p. 13) school decisions regarding power relations in the running of schools is a part of participatory school governance. All student groups exercised student leadership because they involved students in the implementation of school decisions effecting the functioning of the schools.

#### *Vertical and lateral coordination*

The Finnish case schools employed a variety of methods to coordinate the student teams. Vertical coordination in the case schools was based on higher levels of authority that controlled and coordinated work of lower levels by authority and rules (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 54). The principals, the leading teams and the teacher supervisors had formal authority and legitimate power to make decisions, resolve conflicts, solve problems, evaluate performance and outputs, etc. to share and direct student actions aligned with goals and objectives. For example, in the primary case school these adults decided tasks for the student government; in the lower secondary case school the leading team solved the problem that took place in the party organized by student leaders; in the upper-secondary case school adults might cancel student decisions.

I discussed with the responsible teacher. Is it ok if you and your children arrange that kind of day? The teacher said yes, it is ok. - P1. They had sort of parties and it went to a little bit over and bad things happened. Next morning we seat down here with all members of the student body... They took it very well when the school leading group said that it is not allowed to bring outsider anymore...- P2. The principal, teachers' control over the student groups and can use the right to veto. - T5.

The case schools had the similar rules that ensured the predictable behavior of student leaders and specified ways of completing tasks (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 54). Student leaders had the permissions from the school administration to do certain things and actions in the schools.

...the chairman went to the principal's office and asked, if it is possible to get gym for our use and what is the day we can get it, and they got the permission to use the gym. - T2. ...one of them went and asked the principal is it ok if we are trying to get money to buy some sofas in the lobby and she said yes, of course, it is brilliant idea, go ahead, do it.- T4. If I ever have something to ask I just go to him (principal).... - S3.

The coordination of student leaders' efforts also took place through lateral techniques: meetings and coordinating roles that were less formal, more flexible, simpler and quicker than vertical ones (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 56-57). The teacher supervisor T1

from the primary case school claimed that the student government met at varying intervals, but officially once per week for 1 hour, to plan school events.

The data analysis discovered a contradiction between the principal P1 of the primary case school who said that he had meetings with the student government once per year and the teacher supervisor T1 and student leaders S1 who claimed that the school administration never met with them. It is possible to conclude only that the student leaders, in particular the chairman had informal meetings with the principal.

I go to their meetings maybe once a year, I listen to if they have some questions or something problems and I help. - P1. They (principal, leading team) have not attended any meeting at all. - T1. The principal does not come to our meetings. If there is something the principal wants to know the chairman goes to him. - S1.

The teacher supervisors T3, T4 of the lower secondary case school mentioned that both the student government and the student peer support team might meet seldom and more often, it depended on their needs. Moreover, these teams in the beginning of every academic year presented their plans to the leading team and the school principal might invite them for informal meetings or attend meetings of the student leaders.

In the upper-secondary case school according to the information given by the teacher supervisors T5, T6 and T7 the members of the student government met every week for about 30 minutes and longer when they were busy in organizing events; the sustainable development team and the student entrepreneurship team met once a week to plan and realize their plans.

Teacher supervisors also played a coordinating role and used persuasion and negotiation to synchronize efforts of the student leaders in the teams, as indicated by Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 7). The student leaders from all the case schools met each other and organized school events in the presence of their teacher supervisors who might indirectly affect their work.

Always the teacher has to be and discuss and sometimes arrange the way to get the decision and tell adults opinion on different things. - P1. It is very important to be able to just ask question like how do you feel about this, ...what we should do now, is this right path, are you sure, what happens if you do this, what happens if you do not do this. - T6.

Student leadership is a display of distributed leadership in the case school government structures in the way several researchers address it. It is a more democratic and participatory model (Menon, 2005, p. 167). It expands decision making authority and responsibility vertically to the level of students (Collinson, 2008, p. 2; Duignan &

Bezzina, 2006, pp. 5-6; Harris, 2005, p. 166). Student leadership is not about an individual action of the student leaders, but rather the result of their interpersonal relationships (Woods et al., 2004, p. 449).

Distributed leadership roles to students as a form of shared leadership as in Duignan and Bezzina (2006, p. 3) have their horizontal influential characteristics in the lower and upper secondary case schools when some student teams could work on the common projects collaboratively like the student government and the peer support team or the sustainable development team and the entrepreneurship team.

#### *Simple hierarchy with a middle management*

The data analysis uncovered that the teacher supervisors were informational channels in many cases between the school administration and the student leaders. The teacher supervisors were an alternative management level who reported to the administration and supervised and communicated with the student leaders. The model of the simple hierarchy with a middle management was in the fundamental structural configuration of school leadership between the school administration (principals, vice-principals, the leading teams) and the student groups.

If they (the school administration) have something to tell to the student leaders they tell me and I will bring to student leaders. - T1. We will tell on teacher meeting that we are doing this and that. - T8. I have only the duty to report our activities, plans and current situation in teacher meetings. - T5. It is easier if we tell to our teachers and they can tell to the principal. - S3.

As Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 104) state, this middle management layer limited the access of the student leaders to the principals and leading groups, but it did not isolate completely one from the others. The student leaders S1, S2 and S3 communicated directly with the school administration to ask permissions for certain actions and met them officially and unofficially in all the case schools.

#### *Information technologies*

Information technologies, for example e-mails have made communication speedy and information accessible (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 66, 67). The e-mailing system called "Vilma" and the school radio were the main channels of informational flow in all the case schools. In addition to them the student leaders from the lower secondary case schools used Facebook, the WhatsApp Messenger, and the students from the upper secondary case school used Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The teacher supervisor can write down and send e-mails to teachers that the student body has discussed these things. - P1. We have this Facebook group and we post over there the things that now we need this and that. – T4. It is very easy to communicate, we have open communication for example, e-mails through Vilma, we have the Facebook site, Instagram, we have the twitter account..... - P3.

ICTs influenced the way the student leaders and the teacher supervisors exchanged information, communicated and made decisions. The communication of the student leaders with each other and with the teacher supervisors via ICTs did not involve them in digital democracy, but strengthened citizen participation and facilitated strong democracy. The internet-based networking services as Facebook and the WhatsApp Messenger assisted the student teams by making them close to decision making. By this way, they managed ideas and information before their meetings. ICTs and their influence on the interaction between people in organizations, the opportunity to manage ideas and information before meetings, and the way they can enhance democracy have been discussed in the past 20 years. (Burgoon, Hunsaker & Dawson, 1994, p. 256-257; Hague & Loader, 1999, p. xii; Kiesler & Sproull, 1992, p. 96.)

...we post there (Facebook) the things that now we need this and that. – T4. I give some information there (Facebook)... make same agreements when we have meetings... – T3. We can give information via this method (Facebook). - P3

The Finnish case schools were examples of "flatter" or horizontal organizations with a fewer level of hierarchy. They were not "flat" because hierarchy is an evident component that contributes to achieving organizational goals. A certain degree of hierarchy in the shape of the school administration (principals, vice-principal and leading teams) was important to make decisions for others in the case schools. The horizontal leadership structures of the Finnish case schools entailed the idea of grouping teachers and students around the core processes with a set of multiple tasks and under the coordination system. (Ostroff, 1999, p. 59, 63-64.)

#### *Weaknesses of school leadership structures*

This subchapter presents the additional findings emerged inductively under the structural frame. Without a doubt, the existing leadership structures in the case schools are not ideal ones and have their own disadvantages. The interviewees mentioned some of them. The teachers T1, T2 holding the position of the teacher supervisors argued a desire to have co-supervisors.

I have so much to do there, organize the whole school. I want to be with someone.  
- T1. I think, it would be better if you have pair too. Of course if I am ill... – T2.

Moreover, the teacher supervisors T4 and T5 emphasized the disproportion between the work load as teacher supervisors and the amount of the fees for this job.

I paid for 1,5 hour each week not very much, supervise kiosk and do all this kind of work with students... – T4. I get paid a small amount for having the responsibility, but it only covers about 19 hours of work, which covers a small fraction of the real time used for the work. – T5.

The teacher supervisors T1, T5 and T7 stated about the time management challenge. They faced many times conflicts in their schedules where they had teaching and supervision on the same time or they had a long time break between their teaching and supervision duties.

We have some problems who is responsible to teach the class when the teacher supervisor is busy. - P1. I have 4-5 hours in between. I cannot really go anywhere. I have to stay and attend their meetings. - T5. I have my teaching when they have meetings. - T7.

Probably, this work environment where teacher supervisors overwork and have problems in the time management does not allow them to do their best in the work with student leaders.

Sometimes student leaders missed their lessons because of the need to organize big school events. This situation might be attractive for peer students to join the student teams because of the chance to skip lessons.

...if there is a big event or things coming they have to use many time for the planning, conversations or something like that. So, sometimes their study suffers from that. - P2. ...sometimes they have to be away from the classes. - S2.

Teacher supervisors T2, T3 from the lower secondary case school and the principal P3 from the upper secondary case school expressed a common negative view regarding the teacher supervisors holding their positions for several years without trying new leadership roles. Perhaps the teachers supervising similar student teams for many years do not master their leadership skills and abilities to work with student leaders that much as when they would change their positions periodically.

I also have done it for many years. My peer is maybe 20 years. We would like to change that there would be some terms, maybe after three years, maximum six years. - T2, T3....it might be every year that one-two persons go to another team because if they have been five years... - P3.

## 4.2.2 Human resource frame

This chapter aims to present the findings regarding motivation and human needs of the student leaders, the relationships between adults and student leaders, the human resource management, leadership and decision making in student teams.

### *Motivation and needs of student leaders*

Human needs are a central issue of human daily psychology. Everywhere in our life we deal with needs when we as parents worry about the needs of children, as politicians try to meet the needs of citizens or as leaders focus on the needs of followers, etc. We all have them and this fact makes them important (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 122-123). It is possible to conclude that the needs of student leaders and their motivation are not less important in schools.

The data gathered from the interviews discovered that student leadership provided the students with social inclusion and covered their need for belongingness. It is the third level of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 124). The principals P1 and P2 of the primary and lower secondary case schools focused on the idea that the student groups created a feeling of being a part of some school events.

Children feel we made a plan to spend the Saturday. The adults heard us to improve something. - P1. I think this is the most important thing that students can feel to be really part of those things... - P2.

According to the interview data of the student leaders S1, S2 and S3 they wanted to satisfy their self-esteem needs based on a desire of achievements such as to make change in schools, to speak a foreign language, to help others and organize school events, to make things happen, to develop leadership skills, etc. These needs were behind their motivation to become student leaders and to be involved in leadership activities. Their level of human needs is ego needs: self-esteem, self-respect and recognition according to Bolman & Deal (2008, p. 125).

I want to make this school better. - S1. I like to talk in English with foreign people (guide). I want to help others and I want to organize events, and spend sometime to other students. - S2. I like to do with my hands and actually make staff happen.... - S3.

On the other hand, the school administrations and the teacher supervisors satisfied students' desire for recognition, attention, importance and appreciation that is another side of ego needs stated by Maslow (1943, p. 171). The principals P1, P2 and the

teacher supervisors T2 and T6 stressed that they praised and valued a good job done by the student leaders in all the case schools. Perhaps, this behavior of the adults satisfied the recognition needs of the student leaders.

...I said them you made a good job in our school and you are very fine children. - P1. ...we motivate them by telling you did a good job and they are very proud of it. - P2. And also we can discuss about things something like you did very well this evening, this comment. - T2. We could say that this was a good idea. - T6.

The satisfaction of ego needs and social needs are advantages of student leadership. Moreover, it indicates that the lower needs (physiological needs, safety needs) of the student leaders in the schools were satisfied, otherwise the interviewees could not have talked about the higher needs (belongingness, acceptance, self-confidence, achievements) as McGregor (1957, pp. 180-181) clarify.

The teacher supervisors T1, T3 and T5 reported that student leaders advertised their teams to motivate their peer students to join them.

They tell the whole classes what this work kind of is. They make the speech there. - T1. First these students get information about this system from student leaders. - T3. It is a very brief marketing situation made by older students. - T5.

However, the discovered aspects regarding motivation in student leadership did not prevent students from passivity to put in more than minimum efforts. The principal P1 of the primary school underlined the passivity of the responsible teacher, which makes the student leaders passive. The principal explained that the teacher should be interested and active in the work with the students to motivate them to be active as well.

This year that chairman was not so interested to do something and sometimes it depends on a teacher who is responsible for student leaders. - P1.

The passivity of the student leaders was mentioned in the lower and upper secondary case schools as well.

I think students are lazy, they have not done so much: Some years they were really exciting about doing things and then they do more. - P2. Now, they are not such active as it used to be. - T7. In classroom and also outside it regular students tend to be passive and they do not even seem to have an opinion to the simplest issue. There is always the talk among teachers about the passive nature of the youth. - T5.

Besides, the inactivity was followed by the peer students in the upper secondary case school. The teacher supervisors T5, T6 and T7 noticed a decreased number of the students willing to join the student teams within the last 2-3 years. All the student who were volunteers easily got accepted in the student teams without the election process.

There have been election at some point but not lately. I think, it is only a volunteer bases, because there are so a few of them who wants to take a part in the student groups. - T5. I feel a little strongly about this passiveness and laziness that students have. - T6. Well, it is easy in a way that everybody who wants to join joins student teams. - T7.

I may suppose only that the principal P1 presented the right suggestion that teacher supervisors are significant people in motivating student leaders to be more active in their teams. The school administrations and teacher supervisors need to be concerned about the motivation of student leaders to be active in their leadership activities as they relate to them. As Renchler (1992, pp. 3, 17) claims adults should bear responsibility to generate the feeling of value, respect and reward, when students are active in the leadership activities. An active atmosphere and school environment motivate students to be active in this field naturally.

#### *Relationship between adults and student leaders*

It is worth noting differences in treating the student leaders of various school ages by the school administrations and the teacher supervisors across the three case schools. The teacher supervisor T1 in the primary case school perceived student leaders as children who still needed help, instructions, guidance, etc. of adults. This view affected student leaders in a sense that they believed in their verbal power rather than in the power to take actions. They understood the teacher supervisor and the principal as adults having more authority upon them and their actions. Moreover, the chairman called several times his group members as “kids” in the answers to the interview questions.

They are only children, they need adults there too. - T1. We can say what we want, but we cannot do what we want.- S1. The teacher is a conduct person between us and gives us chance to do this job. - S3. He is principal. He is not friend... - S3. The student body we voted chairman, this year other kids voted me to the chairman. - S3.

The principal and the teacher supervisors in the lower-secondary school had an idea that they dealt with teenagers whose age is the most difficult one. The student leaders stated that they could both lead by words and by actions in the school, but they had to get an agreement with adults, for certain things to be done.

If you are with teenagers, so you have to be very sensitive.- P2. Of course they need other to help, to guide and told what to do. We (teacher supervisors) a little bit looking after them, we are assistances...- T4. We can do things, but we always need permission to that and sometimes it does not going work. - S2.

In the upper secondary case school both the adults and the student leaders comprehended each other as partners. The adults saw in the students almost adult people and considered themselves to be at the same level with these mature people. The student leaders S3 felt this attitude and agreed that the school adults talked to them as grown-up students with respect. These student leaders perceived the teacher supervisors and the principals as partners during their student leadership activities.

They are already almost adults, they are very and no problems. – T8. My position is to be one of them. – P3. We use a Facebook where we are both (teacher supervisors) present in that group too only as members like the students. – T6. We are like co-workers, we are like team...- T8. As in general we consider ourselves equal with the students... – T5. As partners they are important, adults follow us. – S3.

The data analysis showed that only the upper secondary case school practiced appropriate norms, relationships, ways of working together, etc. that created a youth-adult partnership between the adults and the student leaders. The teacher supervisors T5, T6, T8 emphasized their equality with the student leaders and it is a core platform of the partnership (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013, pp. 2-3). The student leaders also considered teacher supervisors as partners. Mitra, Serriere and Stoicovy (2012, p. 109) claim that it is the biggest challenge for school administrators and teachers is to engage students in school governance as partners. A lack of partnership between the adults and the student leaders took place in the primary and lower secondary case schools. The student leaders from these case schools did not feel equality with the adults, instead they felt their higher authority as adults. Student leaders in the primary case school possibly heard quite often from the adults that they are children. Therefore, the student leaders might interpret the adults as people who allowed them to do certain things in the school. The student leaders S2 from the lower secondary school felt inequality with adults because they had an obligation to ask permission for their actions and they could get either positive or negative replies to it. In any way, the teacher supervisors in all the case schools stepped aside "adultism" because as Cervone (2002, p. 13) explains, such teachers spend time with student leaders, help and guide them to realize their ideas practically.

All the case schools implemented student teams in their leadership structures. In this way student participation is valued and it is a part of their school cultures (Mitra, Serriere and Stoicovy, 2012, p. 109). In addition to that, the teacher supervisors generated the feeling that student participation was valued. This aspect was mentioned

by the student leaders S3 from the upper secondary case school who claimed that adults wanted them to do things.

### *Human resource management*

According to the data analysis, school conditions and methods of operation in treating student leaders and peer students included such human resource management principles as “keep employees”, “invest in employees”, “empower employees”, “promote diversity”. Examples of these principles were recognized in certain leadership practices.

The school management systems kept student leaders by rewarding them, protecting their positions and promoting them from within. It was mentioned by the teacher supervisor T7 from the upper secondary case school that the principal every six weeks gave gifts to students and teachers who had done a great job. According to Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 144), it is possible to conclude that the principal kept the student leaders motivated to go forward when he rewarded them. As an example, the student leader who had a huge interest in the sustainable development field and had done a lot of work there, was financially rewarded.

Another practice keeping student leaders is connected to the protection of their leadership positions in the student teams after getting elected in the competitive environment in the primary and the lower secondary case schools, or accepted without the election process in the upper secondary case school. The student leaders had the right to hold their positions continuously till their school graduation or leave them at any time based on their personal will. Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 145) believe that this security provides relatively long-term commitment to students without fear to lose it one day.

I work two years because we select in fourth grade and come to fifth and sixth grades. – S1. They can stay here for three years till the end of the study. – P2. In the student government they can be 2 or 2,5 years, if they want. But entrepreneurship team it varies, every year. – P3. They work this year and they also work next year (tutors). – T8. I have not heard any rivalry within 2 and half years that I have been here (sustainable development). – T5.

The student leaders were promoted from within. New inexperienced students started their leadership activities in the student teams with older members. Both of them invested their time in upgrading knowledge and skills from each other. Possibly, as Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 146) say that this condition built trust and loyalty in the student groups and powerful incentives to perform.

There are always ones who are elected and I think a half of them stay and a half of hanging every year through election. – P2. Then our old students teach the new ones who are going to do. Old students teach new ones. - T8.

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Municipality of Jyväskylä invested money and resources in the development of leadership among children and young people and provided training opportunities for them. First of all, the teacher supervisors were paid for their supervision of the student teams, except the teachers supervising the student guides, and the tutors because they had these student groups as an additional help.

Responsible teacher has 1 hour per week to that kind of system and she get extra money for that. - P1. If you are a leader in the student body or peer support as a teacher you should get paid for that. - P2. We (supervisors of the student government, sustainable development team and entrepreneurship team) get paid for one course... Money comes from the municipality. - T5.

Secondly, students from the primary case school taking part in the Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä received different kinds of trainings.

Some city council members attend regional meetings to give ideas to kids about democracy, how meeting techniques works something like that, they train them, like coaches. – T1.

Thirdly, the students of lower and upper secondary case schools might get trained in the Youth Council where representatives of the Nuva Association offer the training services. These training opportunities are necessary and highly important investments to develop leadership skills, capabilities, talents and commitment of children and young people.

We have some days where they can go and they have special trainings organized by Nuva where they learn how to be good leaders.– T4.

The emphasis of the case school management systems from the human resource perspectives was the principle of empowerment by both the adults and the students. Specific practices such as providing information, encouraging autonomy and participation, fostering self-managing teams, promotion of egalitarianism made this principle evident and strong. These practices have been described in the text below.

The currency of the modern world is information. Therefore, teacher supervisors and student leaders in the case schools used different ways to keep people around them informed regarding their work in the student teams. The teacher supervisor from the primary case school provided the principal and the teachers with information about the

students' decisions and activities. The student leaders, in turn, were responsible to inform the latest news regarding their work to the peer students and to write memos of every meeting.

Sometimes I asked the teacher what happens in this body... Teacher can write down and send e-mails to teachers that the student body discussed these things..- P1. Each of these 24 student leaders they have own named classes there. They are like responsible for own classes. – T1.

There were other ways of informational flow in the lower and upper secondary case schools. The teacher supervisors spread news regarding the work and decisions of the student leaders in official meetings with the school staffs. The student leaders kept the peer students informed through Facebook groups. In addition to that, the student leaders used an announcement board in the upper secondary case school. Besides, the student leaders of the lower secondary school age informed the school administration about their plans in the beginning of every academic year and by the group memos.

...usually we have memos from the meetings. - T3 We are writing the Facebook page we have in the internet and kind of advertising, inform about things that are coming – S2. So we have meeting and we tell them (school administration).– T4. I have only the duty to report our activities, plans and current situation in teacher meetings. – T5. We have an announcement board, we have Facebook. – T7.

The student leaders in the lower secondary case school kept the peer students informed by giving presentations about their work.

...they made this power point to show that your money came here. There were pictures from the hospital. - T4.

Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 150) claim that spreading information shares ownership and trust among people in organizations. Information makes everyone in schools linked to the student teams to think about their work as owners who could give advice to improve it. The access to information signals that the student leaders trusted to the adults and the peer students in the schools and any of them could give feedback to correct their actions. There are some examples of feedback that the student leaders received from the peer students in the lower and upper secondary case schools and from the school administration in the primary case school.

Maybe, I heard something, they are going to make new ideas. If they are dangerous, I say no. - P1. They gave critiques about events...- S2. ... they may say... like critic could you do this instead of this. – S3.

Distributed leadership authority and responsibility to students in the case schools is a sign of democratic leadership. Student empowerment gives an opportunity to influence important school issues like modification of school rules. This determines student roles like being student leaders and accomplish meaningful work like organizing school events based on their power and authority, which is one variation of democratic leadership. For example, Gronn (2009, p. 211) and Yukl (2006, p. 98) address the similar components of distributed leadership.

Adults and students as democratic leaders adopted a democratic communication style to encourage others to participate in specific decisions. They followed the motto of democratic leadership that is “two heads are better than one” and possibly assumed that involvement of others in decision making improves their overall quality as Hackman and Johnson posit (2004, p. 38). The following examples of democratic communication behavior were found in the case schools:

1) The planning group of the new Finnish Curriculum asked opinions of students about the learning process in all schools.

We have questioning students about the new curriculum that is going to be in Finland. How they like the school today and what kind of ideas they have for the new one. – T4. They organize questionnaire, because they are doing new curriculum what should be important part in this curriculum through eyes of students. – T1.

2) The school administrations asked opinions of students in some school matters either through teachers as it was done in the primary school or through meetings with leading teams in other case schools and within the parent team in the upper secondary school.

I can say to the responsible teacher to discuss with children about, what is the good for Saturday to spend day. – P1. Our leading group meets the student body many times minimum twice a year and we discuss what is going on in school and if there are subjects they want to give us to improve something. - P2. I was president, I visited meetings of leading team. We like if they want students opinions on things like tell them directly on the meetings. – S3.

3) The peer students participated in certain decisions when the student leaders collected their views.

I go to ask the other classes what they want to do in here? What you want to do in our school and what you want to change in our school. – S1. Sometimes we make any kinds of questionnaire to ask something students. About music at the disco, parties. Music thing was the one. – S2. If there is 9<sup>th</sup> grade gala thing that is a big thing in our school, then they ask peer students do they like build a new group for that particular event. – P2. ...sometimes did questionnaire to all students. – S3.

These examples dealt with the procedure of democratic leadership called “consultation” (Yukl, 2006, p. 82). The adults and the student leaders collected the students’ opinions and suggestions to make the final decisions, but separately from those who were asked by them. Participation gives students more opportunity to influence decisions regarding school rules, events, the learning process etc. which enhances morale, performance and organizational learning (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 150, 151-152).

The student teams may be called self-managing teams having authority with a narrower scope of decision making. They do not have an extreme authority to hire or fire team members and pay rates (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 154). In decisions, student teams (student government, peer support, sustainable development team) focused on action planning and even planning. As stated by Nandago, Obondoh and Otiende (2005, p. 13), participatory governance is about involving stakeholders in decision making and implementation of decisions. Student leaders of these teams participated in the school government via their involvement in formulating school plans for each academic year. Moreover, they were involved in the realization of school decisions because they implemented those planned school activities.

And the student body and peer support tells what they plan to do and we discuss together if it is ok. ... they are mostly have parties, these have own Valentine’s day organized by themselves (student body and peer support). - P2. They (student government) plan their actions for academic year by themselves. They themselves had organized the whole things. - T7. They (sustainable development) plan their actions for academic year by themselves. It is just up to them. - T5.

The student government in the primary case school, the student guides in the lower secondary case school and the classroom leaders, the tutors and the entrepreneurship team in the upper secondary case school planned school events while the action plan of their work was in the hands of adults. In this case, student leaders were involved in the school governance through processes leading to implementation of school decisions regarding their tasks (Nandago, Obondoh & Otiende, 2005, p. 13).

They planned the activities. - T1. The teacher gives us schedule for the day what we can do, but we can decide where to go. - S2. I can decide what I need to do with them ...now you have to plan that kind of happening. - T8. We told them you should do something which is marketing for our school... they do the whole things. - P3. ...then the principal told that we (classroom leaders) have to do something collect the money and that we have to give money and take care of everybody remembers that and if there is something. - S3.

The teacher supervisors are important people in student teams because they developed the teams into self-directing ones. All student teams were supervised and connected to other teams, in particular to leading teams by teachers who according to the structural frame of Bolman and Deal (2008, pp. 154, 155) were team leaders and “linking pins”. Additionally, they scheduled the meetings and the work of the student teams.

In rare cases, the student leaders from the student government and the peer support team in the lower secondary and the student government in the upper secondary case schools managed their meetings without teacher supervisors.

Is they want, they have to ask permission from us to have meetings on their own. Sometimes it happens, if they are planning some parties something like. - T3. They can meet without us, teachers, even without us...- T7.

Student leaders in all case schools assigned jobs among each other within the teams. They might performed different kinds of jobs during the organization of school events; therefore they were able to do each other's work.

The student government first thinks what do they need jobs they need then they share and divide job. - S1. ...they think about how we could do this and that. - T4. All time their positions are different in student teams, depends on event. Sometimes we have to decide, now it is your turn to be a leader now and they choose you take care of the food, you take care of ...they just discuss and decide. - T8. They can have different positions in different projects. For example, somebody is responsible for the food and to bring something, the other one for the money or timetable or something like that, but still they are all equal and make decisions as a group. - T5.

According to the definition of self-managing teams given by Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 155), the student teams and the teacher supervisors were self-managing teams where all of them were collectively accountable for their work and results. They were truly autonomous teams because it was in their hands to solve problems and implement solutions (Robbins, 2000, p. 107). From the human resource point of view, it is obvious to conclude that the case schools were egalitarian educational organizations.

Trust is a foundation of the autonomy of teacher supervisors' and student leaders' actions. It leaves strong control and orders out of the school systems.

I just believe them. No special control. I can rely on them. They are very fine boys and girls. When I said them do that and so it will happen...This is very important and he is man who rely (trust) on children. - T1. Trustiness to my teachers is the key word. I just looking and checking what they are doing, but do not be very action in there happenings or something like that. - P1. We do not have special control system. I trust them (student leaders and teacher supervisors). - P2. I can give just job and I know that they will take care of it. I have learnt to trust them. - T2. I have learnt to trust to students and trust to them and their thinking. - T6.

These democratic schools demonstrated that student participation in decision making was supportive to the school climate and style. Student involvement in school decision making was expected and encouraged by adults who fostered self-managing student teams in their school structures and asked their opinions in certain school issues, even when they complained and felt annoyance if students expressed their views passively.

Students tend to be passive and they do not even seem to have an opinion to the simplest issue, which is frustrating the teachers. – T8.

Student participation in school decision making was promoted not only by school administrations, but also by other educational executives like the planning group of the new Finnish curriculum and student leaders who wanted to know and include other students' views in their decisions. These are examples of empowerment, which were discussed under human resource management above.

Another argument supporting a democratic climate within the case schools was that students elected student leaders and student leaders reached a consensus on major decisions with their group fellows in a democratic way by voting as Galanes and Adams (2012, p. 253) state.

Children inside one class vote for two leaders. – P1. We vote what we (student government) should have to do...- S1. They (student government, peer support team) have the meetings and then they discuss and then they vote if there is something disagreement, they just vote what to do. - T3. There were elections one day and then they voted. – T2. If there is more than one (classroom leader) we can vote and they vote on papers and then we count the votes. – T6. It is just discussing the facts, they (student government) are voting for whatever it is. – T7. They were elected to be project managers in that evening by voting (entrepreneurship team). – T6.

Even though, the school administrations made the key decisions, the students had a diversity of variations to be involved in them: the student teams, participation initiated by adults and student leaders, suggestion boxes (as teacher supervisors T1, T4, T7 mentioned), student proposals, the student representatives in meetings of leading teams (lower secondary and upper secondary case schools) and the student representatives in the parent team (upper secondary case school). All of these options made student participation in school decisions expected, respected and transferred into school democratic styles. In other words, it democratized the schools and fundamentally changed the level of the decision making authority extended to students within the school leadership structures.

In general, the case schools did not work with any kinds of disabled children, but they worked with immigrants and exchange students. This type of students were allowed to be members of student groups and to participate in school decision making if they wished in all the case schools. These students integrated into student leadership though the Finnish culture and language were the main barriers. It says about human resource management that promoted diversity and treated everyone well. Besides, it is an evidence of social justice and inclusiveness treating all students equally despite their nationality.

Sometimes we have these immigrant children here and of course sometimes they are very kind and pleasant and they can do everything good. – P1. Other nationality they have been elected at the moment there are immigrants in student body and peer support and in guide group. – P2. We have only two exchange students. One is from German, one is from Australia. There could be anybody in our groups. It does not matter. – T5.

#### *Leadership and decision making in student teams*

As it was mentioned in the findings of the structural frame, some student teams, in particular student governments and the entrepreneurship team chose functionaries, whose status was determined by special roles and responsibilities, but not authority. These roles are social labels telling who those students are in comparison with others and with their duties and rights as Trenholm and Jenses state (2008, p. 180).

The chairman is not more important than me, we are equal. - S1. Positions do not make big differences between us, if you are a president in the student government you just lead conversation in your own and so on. And of course. a person who leading for money, kiosk they are not a lot of things about that... They can help us and they are kind of professionals in that theme. - S2. They are at the same level, they are students despite they are on leading positions. - P3.

These teams functioned through distributed leadership inside them. They represented hierarchical distribution of roles and responsibilities where chairmen, secretaries, media contact persons, accountants, peer members, etc. were supposed to perform appropriate communicational behavior toward their common goals as “bricks” connecting the teams (Galanes & Adams, 2013, p. 200; Jameson, 2007, p. 11). As students S2 said that the chairman led the meetings and discussions in the team, the accountant was an expert of the financial side in the team, etc. Teacher supervisors and chairmen according to Galanes and Adams (2013, p. 201) were “completers” who monitored and supervised to come up with missing points and to keep teams in a shape. Teacher supervisors and

chairmen were referred to the category of completers because usually they prepared and knew in advance the topics that were necessary to discuss in teams; therefore, they were able to catch the missing points in the meetings. Moreover, it was the direct duty of teachers to supervise meetings and actual events organized by students according to T1, T4, P3 and T6.

Before the meeting begins I discuss with him (chairman) what kind of subject they should talk. I look that everything is going fine. - T1. The teacher just supervises. - S1. Sometimes I have to do a list about things we should discuss in the meeting...and arrange everything that students need in their meetings and check out some facts how we can do things in our school. We have to take care of this things, next is coming this and that. - T4. Well in the student body I usually do the list by the things that we should go through and then I share the list and we a meeting and then we discuss these things. - S3. ...the teachers need to be aware of the decisions the student government is making. - T5.

It is necessary to note that distributed leadership in the student government teams and the entrepreneurship team comprised characteristics of shared leadership. They worked together collaboratively as teams when they organized school events, decided plans for the academic year or the context of events. It made them equally responsible for their work based on shared authority and power to make decisions and realize them into practice (Jameson, 2007, p. 11). Togetherness was a similar "symptom" of shared leadership in all other student teams (student peer support, student guides, student sustainable development team, student tutors, classroom leaders). Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 217) claim that the of shared leadership roles activate students to focus on their work on areas of their expertise. Possibly, as a result, the students increased team productivity.

When they organize something there are no special roles, they share responsibilities and one for example takes care of microphones, speakers... - T1. They are doing work together. - T4. It is about team work (entrepreneurship)...- P3. They (student government) basically work together. - T4. There is more like team workers. They (peer support) can do it together. - T3. Mostly they (student guides) work together in pairs, they are always two. They have the timetable ...and they discuss before starting ...- T2. They (sustainable development) work as a group. And they make decisions as a group. - T5. Every group has a chairman or classroom leader, but mostly it is like team. - T6. They (student tutors) as team plan and organize together...- T8.

Shared leadership is basically built on partnership among people involved in the team work where everyone is equal (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013, pp. 2-3). Equality among the student leaders of the teams was discovered because they shared power and decision making in all the teams. Additionally, equality in student teams refers to social justice

and it is an important condition for children and young people in decision making (O’Kane, 2000, pp. 149-150).

All the student teams of this research were working teams, not groups. Nobody in them performed and took responsibility individually. Even though some of them worked in pairs, they were still accountable for the common goals and worked collectively (Tiffan, 2014, p. 799).

The collective work of the student leaders toward common goals gives them a chance not only to share leadership roles, power, accountability, etc. but also their knowledge with each other (Jameson, 2007, p. 11) and increases a sense of community (Zhao & Kuh, 2004, p. 116). According to Himmelmann (1994, p. 28), integrated efforts and collective accountability of the student teams that bring changes in the schools are characteristics of learning communities. The student leaders from the case schools had a chance to work in teams, take responsibility, manage financial matters, and take care of others.

We learnt helping each other, making decisions, encouragement, taking responsibility. – S1. As I think also, that you learn to discuss in a group and decide together things, you are not just deciding something on your own and you learn responsibilities if you applying for job. – S2. We can learn something about that how to lead others and how to take care, peer responsibility, kind of things. - S3.

The productive and positive climate of the student teams was due to the democratic leadership style as Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 178) highlight. None of the student leaders had more influence on team decisions among themselves. They had meetings to discuss important issues and to make decisions together – “joint decisions” (Yukl, 2006, p. 82). Everyone was encouraged to be heard and to participate in the group decision making. This policy Galanes and Adams (2013, p. 189) call “what ideas do you have for organizing our tasks?”

They vote, they make proposals and then they vote. – T1. Usually, we get all ideas on the paper and decide what is the best idea. Like that. We vote. – S2. It is about there are new ideas some things that coming from students and they discuss and then they vote...- P2. There are some things that they discuss and agree about guiding together...they discuss subjects which are able and then they decide and ask where the visitors would like to go and they take them to different classes.- T2. If there is something to be decided, for example if we (student leaders) would want to buy chairs in the school or not, I would tell about this and ask their opinion and we vote. – S3.

Distributed leadership to students in the structure of school government is a product of interaction between situation, student leaders and student followers (Brooks & Kensler, 2011, p. 58; Spillane, 2005, p. 144). Student leaders dealt with official routines (Brooks & Kensler, 2011, p. 58) like meetings, discussions, action planning event planning and organizing. Student leadership is the collaboration and interdependent interaction among multiply student leaders (Spillane, 2006, p. 386). The student leaders were leaders and followers at the same because they did routine work that was planned in the meetings.

The human resource management of the Finnish case schools arranged organizational conditions and methods of operation along with Theory Y by relying on self-interest and self-direction as Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 126) emphasize. The student leaders could achieve their own ego needs and social needs by directing their efforts toward school objectives. They were free from too close a control and were given a degree of freedom to direct their own activities, such as in action and event planning. According to Galanes and Adams (2013, p. 189) the adults and the student leaders accepted assumptions of Theory Y by behaving democratically and allowing students to participate in decision making.

### **4.2.3 Political frame**

From the political point of view the case schools are coalitions. Those consist of assorted individuals and interest groups living in an environment of deficient resources power and conflicts take a central place in the decision making process. The case schools are also arenas with certain settings for internal political interplays of diverse interests. (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 194-195, 246.)

The outcomes of the data analysis showed two sources of political initiation: top down where the school administrations influenced the student leaders through their authority, and bottom up when students mobilized their power to claim their interests.

#### *Top down political initiative*

As it was concluded in the findings of the structural frame, the case schools were organizations that comprised the principal, the vice principals and the leading teams as the dominant units based on their legitimate authority (position power). Consequently,

they were entitled to make decisions binding on teachers, students, etc. The teacher supervisors also had their positional authority and they might initiate top-down politics affecting the student leaders. Samples of top down initiation were found in each case school. In the primary and upper secondary case schools the principal and other teachers decided tasks for the student leaders.

If our headmaster or some teachers have something what we should do, I will tell to the children there. - T1. Is it ok if you and your children arrange that kind of day? The teacher said yes, it is ok. - P1. We told them you should do something which is marketing for our school. - P3. I can decide what I need to do with them (student tutors)... You have to make a plan of the event. - T8.

In the lower secondary case school the leading team had meetings with the student government and the student peer support team to approve their plans for the academic year. Another example is that the leading team might change rules regarding the work of the student leaders, like they did not allow the student leaders to invite the young people outside of the school to school parties.

And the student body and peer support tell what they plan to do and we discuss together if it is ok. ...the school leading group said that those parties are over with outsiders... - P2.

The position power of the student leaders to decide action plans for events, event plans, and purchasing (in the lower and upper secondary case schools) was behind their top down political initiative. Their position power affected the peer students who participated in the school events organized by the student leaders. The student teams and their activities belong to the seventh rung of the ladders of student participation in decision making “child initiated and directed”. The student leaders’ proposals and plans were monitored by the teacher supervisors, leading teams or principals and were finally carried out by the student leaders as Hart (1994, p. 14) states.

They plan and organize so called nenäpäivä...- T1. They plan those days and make some activities for the students. - T4. ...they themselves decide what they want to do...- T7. For example, next Friday this sustainability group invented woolen socks Friday. - P3. They can decide where to spend money. - T7.

The top down political initiative of student leaders relied not only on their position power and capacities in their work, but also on their personal power. The individual characteristics of potential student leaders willing to be chosen in the election process influenced other students to vote for them. This idea was expressed by the adults working close to the student leaders in all the case schools.

If a child is very pleasant for others and he has some ideas he/she is great for that, I think these things are more important things when they vote. - P1. ...somebody who is very popular in the school and they elect them. - T2. ...there might be stronger person who talks more than others...Quite naturally, they were elected to be project managers in that evening. - T6.

### *Bottom up political initiative*

The student leaders as well as the peer students may be called potential partisans who play political games with authorities when they want to exert bottom-up pressure (Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 201). Even though, the leading groups had more legitimate authority, the student leaders as well as the peer students were able to influence their decisions and provoke changes in the schools. Student influence depended on how well they argued their ideas and negotiated with adults: “They have to say why they want something.”- P1. In this case, according to Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 201) school administrations as authorities are targets of influence in students’ eyes and initiators of control, and students are initiators of influence and recipients of decisions and control.

The student groups were not only the official way of student authority and power in the schools to make decisions at their level. The students had extra leverages to build their power and influence the minds of adults, in order to bring changes in schools. First, students were free to express their ideas and initiate changes in written forms through suggestion boxes, letters to principals and proposals with innovative ideas to the meetings of the leading groups. These ways were accessible and useable by both the student leaders and the peer students. They represent the last highest rung of the ladder of student participation in decision making called “child initiated, shared decisions with adults” when adults satisfied students’ ideas and proposals (Hart, 1994, p. 14).

They wrote me a letter and it said that in the evenings there are so many rubbish in our yard...They suggested me to lock the school gates...- P1. There is box in the school to collect student opinions it can be anonymous...They made proposals on that...in the spring time when there is no lessons we could have hats on and when we come to classes we can take them off. – P2. They have a small box for all students and anybody can come up with the idea, initiatives, proposals written on the paper and just put it there and then we deal with in the meetings of leading team, and they will decide whether it will be fulfilled or not. – T6.

Second, the students’ proposals and ideas were also a way to realize student leadership because the students participated in the school governance. The students might affect school decisions and bring changes if their proposals were received a positive response from the school administrations. Nandago, Obondoh and Otiende (2005, p. 13) posit that student influence on the formulation of school policy and determination of school

rules are elements of participatory school governance. In the primary case school students wanted to affect the formulation of school policies regarding the locking of the school yard in the evening. In the lower secondary case school the students participated in the determination and reinforcement of school rules about wearing hats inside the school building, etc. Similarly, the representatives of the student government team in the upper secondary case school might attend the meetings of the leading team and present ideas on behalf of the other students.

...one or two personas are part of the student government comes to our meetings and other students give ideas via this person. – P3.

Third, the students had network source of power to make changes in daily routine life within the case schools. There was a strong network between the Finnish case schools, the Youth Councils and the Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä because some students were members of these units and could bring their own ideas or ideas of their schoolfellows there and initiate changes in schools. This power allowed the students to participate in the school governance by effecting school decisions in formulating policies, for example for school food, books, etc.

If they (members of Children's Parliament from the school) want to say something about school food, school health or books, or money they make some proposals to Children's Parliament. They (peer students) can make some proposal to student leaders from Parliament that is the way – P1. One from the student body member was elected in that Youth Council who may present our problems. – T4.

Every year the student government teams could change the physical environments of the case schools because they might get the financial support provided by the Youth Council and the Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä in competition with the other schools. They were able to redesign, for example, the school yards if they prepared an attractive and strong enough project reflecting their intentions. In this way they participated in the school governance decisions about the allocation and utilization of resources, which is also discussed by Nandago, Obondoh and Otiende (2005, p. 13). As all the other tasks, working on these projects happened under the supervision of the teacher supervisors.

In that meeting they had to apply for organizing nenpäivä and banking machine...and they got money. - T1. They can give money for different projects like we got money for rebuilding of garden. - T4. Last year we were a part of building project, we build some skate park there and we were given very much money for this project. - S3.

Moreover, the students from the case schools who participated in the Youth Council and the Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä had an access to the political side of the Finnish society through the representatives from the City Council. The data analysis did not include any practical examples of student involvement in politics of the primary school age. However, there will be a chance for the young Finnish people to deal with politics if their right to participate in different kinds of committees in the City Council of Jyväskylä will be accepted in the future.

Children's Parliament sometimes holds meetings in presence of representatives of the City Council who may ask opinions of pupils in certain issues about parks, traffic, safety, school buildings, etc....- T1. Representatives from the City Council sometimes call to the president of Youth Council to bring opinions of youth in certain questions. Nowadays, youth leaders concentrate on getting an opportunity to take part in the social service and health committee, education committee, culture and sports committee, etc. - T4.

The classroom supervisors (teachers) brought ideas of their students to the student government through its teacher supervisor. This is another example of network source power in the primary case school.

.. my children in my class have good idea and then they tell situation to the teacher supervisor, is it possible you can discuss with children in the student government. – P1.

Even though, the school administrations have position power, but they faced other forms of the power leverage mobilized by the students. The students who had power to influence and make changes were political leaders. These students could evaluate reality and clearly knew what they wanted and what they could get. They assessed the distribution of power and interests because they knew which leverage would be more suitable in certain issues. The findings regarding the political frame showed not only students' top-down and bottom-up political initiative, but also the students' freedom to express their opinions and ideas, which is an element of the Finnish democratic society (The Constitution of Finland, 1999, p. 3).

#### **4.2.4 Symbolic frame**

The symbolic frame highlights that organizational symbols show the cultures of the organizations because they make the meaning of the work visible. These symbols might be shaped in different forms like visions, values, heroes and heroines, ritual,

ceremonies, humor, etc. as claimed by Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 254). This chapter looks at each of these symbolic forms in the context of the Finnish case schools.

### *Vision and values*

During the interview sessions none of the student leaders could say anything about their visions. The student leaders could formulate only the functions and goals of the student teams in the school life. We live in a time of uncertainty, unpredictability and rapid changes. Visions that give a hopeful image of the future and covers our hopes and values (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 369) are highly necessary to find our way at work, in study, in family, etc.

The principal P1 of the primary case school clarified that the students in the student government “they have some thoughts how we can do the school more better and useful. They focus to make the school ”their school”. It makes sense that the school development according to the needs of students was a core value of the primary student leaders.

Visions of the student leaders from the lower secondary case school were mentioned by the adults regarding ideas showing their hope for the future. According to the principal P2 “basically, the student government team is a tool to grow participative and active citizens”. Citizen participation and active citizenship were values in the school activities, team meetings, money planning, etc. for the student government team. The teacher supervisor T3 shared that the student peer support team looked to maintain the school spirit. Support, the friendship, prevention of bullying, etc. were core values on the way to an emotionally positive spirit in the school. The principal P2 emphasized that the student guides were a way to enhance trust and respect between the students and the adults in the school. Therefore, the real opinions of student guides during their guidance presentations were the values of this team.

In the upper-secondary case school the student teams had their own different goals and values. The goal of the student government was to establish the bridge between the students and the school staff to bring innovations into the old behavioral patterns. Therefore, the student voice and changes were values of the student government.

The student government tends to be a link between students and the school staff to come up with new ideas for school life and develop old patterns of behavior. – T7.

The sustainable development team and the student tutor team were similar in their goals, but considered different values. The responsible teacher T5 said that the goal of

the sustainable development team was to develop the school spirit. The students S3 added that relaxation, nice and enjoying things were fundamental values in the team. The student tutors also moved toward the development of the school spirit, but they took care that nobody was left alone.

I think the point of this group is to develop the school atmosphere. – T5. Basically, we try to focus that everyone can find something nice in the school, something that they enjoy and have at least one day at school that is fun, different and relaxing. – S3. They are creators of such school spirit that no one feels alone. – T8.

The goal of the entrepreneurship team was more implicit. As we know already, in addition to the studies the team advertised the school to attract enough new students. Creativity was an important value in this case.

They had a goal to put up this evening, this project and the goal of the evening was to present our school to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders at the behind this evening the big vision is that these 9<sup>th</sup> graders would elect, chose this school, prefer this school to the schools of Jyväskylä. – T6. When they started think, what is substance of the workshop (for new students), what do we do there. They came up with ideas that team work of the workshops is one of our values of our school. - P3.

In conclusion, the student leadership sector in the case schools functioned based on their own values. Their values, in turn, distinguished the student teams from one another because they were the unique distinguishing character, which the student leaders stood up for. Also, Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 255) state that values are unique features of organizations.

#### *Cultural heroes and heroines*

There were also heroes and heroines among the student leaders in the history of the case schools. These students were important because they had made a huge contribution to the school betterment and development and reinforced the core values for the sake of other students. Besides, they were great examples and a source of inspiration for the new student leaders. In other words, these famous students from the past and present embraced their symbolic role as cultural heroes as posited by Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 257).

The principal P1 of the primary case school told the story about one girl. Several years ago she was a chairman of the student government. The energetic feature of her character and intelligence and participation in different kinds of school activities memorized her as a good example of a leader who united people to do things together.

She was very interested to do something and she was that kind of girl come with me and do this all together. She was very interested and she thought this is a good thing, lets do together, she was very powerful to do and children said yes it is wonderful idea, come on. - P1.

The teacher supervisors in the upper-secondary school introduced the former heroines who developed their leadership careers to a higher level outside the school. Their lives and achievements were attractive for the new student leaders. Personally, I met the heroine of the sustainable development team from the present. She was graduating at the time of the data collection.

There have been some successful stories actually. A few girls in our school they ended up to be in the board of the national student body organization...- T6. She is very, very dedicated to what she does. She is basically alone she formed this group. And she is the spirit of sustainable development group. - T5.

Heroes and heroines in the history of the student leadership were sources to keep the traditions alive and provide examples of certain standards of behavior and encourage others to perform beyond themselves. The adults also paid attention to the present student leaders who were great examples for the peer students. From the symbolic frame perspectives the student leaders in the primary and lower-secondary case school conveyed a special meaning about their positions. These students were more visible and effective to other students around as a sort of examples or models of being good leaders and human beings.

They (student leaders) can show to other children that they are brave and they can discuss different things and take responsibility, improve school...- P1. ...if you are part of student groups, you are sort of expected to behave to be a good example for other students. - P2.

In the lower secondary case school these present "heroes and heroines" were not allowed to keep their positions if they lost their face as leaders because of smoking, missing lessons, etc.

There has been talking a few times if there has been students in the student body which like have many absences in the school or does something really bad, then we can discuss whether he earns to be in the student body anymore. – P2.

Finally, according to Bolman and Deal (2008, pp. 278, 367) the mentioned student heroes and heroines are symbolic leaders who led or still lead by their examples. An interesting fact is that the adults mentioned all of them. It raises a question: Do students notice and know these heroes and heroines from the past and present? It might be one of the solutions against the students' passivity in leadership if they got inspiration from the

student heroes and heroines. Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 367) claim that heroes and heroines demonstrate their commitment and encourage others to carry out similar actions.

### *Rituals and Ceremonies*

Deep meaning of the visible behavior is the most important aspect from the symbolic point of view (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 286). The data analysis included arguments to conclude that there was a special ritual that took place in the beginning of the student government meetings in the primary case school. The teacher supervisor opened their meetings by giving topics and tasks necessary to discuss. This symbolical act messaged to the chairman and the rest of the students that it was time to start.

The teacher gives topics that we supposed to discuss. The teacher says like hi students and says the things we have to do. – S1.

Meetings were not less important rituals in the performance of the student leaders. They could be improvisations where the students tried to find ideas for what to do and to test them, and to seek answers for problems, etc. These meetings maybe do not produce always effective discourse towards improvements, but they serve better collective connections (Bolman & Deal, 2008, pp. 301-302).

The idea is to discuss on meetings, the things kind of that children together without the teacher discuss and make a decision. – P1. ...they can discuss before starting the class, they discuss subjects which are able and then they decide where the visitors would like to go...- T2. I think is about there are new ideas some things that coming and they discuss and then then make decisions together. – P2. ...they just discuss and decide on meetings. – T8.

The election process of students in the student government groups in the primary and lower-secondary case schools were momentous ceremonies for both candidates and students who voted. The potential candidates in the lower secondary case school prepared the speech to prove their importance in the life of all students and the school. Possibly, the students who voted in the elections experienced a sense of social involvement.

In every class, every volunteer who wants to come they put the name, from each class 2 boys and 2 girls. Applicant put names on blackboard and then they vote. – T1. And they also make sort of advertisements, posters about themselves who want to be elected. It used to be a big sort of happening where all the school went to the auditorium and the once who wanted to be in the student body government they introduced themselves, they made a little speech. We had a voting box...- T2.

As it was mentioned in the findings of the human resource management, some student teams (student governments in the lower and upper secondary case schools, student peer support team, and sustainable development team) planned both their actions for the academic year and the context of the events while other student teams planned only the events. Action planning and event planning conducted periodically were essential ceremonies of student leadership in all case schools. Maybe they did not always produced accurate versions for their future actions, but they increased the interest and modified views to do things differently, compare Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 303).

### *Humor*

During the interviews it was possible to observe humor and its place in the communication of the student leaders and the teacher supervisors. In the lower secondary and upper secondary case schools both the teacher supervisors and the students were open and free in communication, smiled and did jokes in the interviews. Seriousness was balanced with humor, but jokes were not used so much at the same time. It contributed to a free, open and friendly communication atmosphere. Joking and playful banter created team spirit and togetherness among the student leaders as presented in Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 268).

A completely opposite situation was observed in the primary case school. The serious and official atmosphere accompanied the interview meeting with the student leaders in the presence of the teacher supervisor. They did not use any jokes and did not smile from the very beginning until the end of the interview session. It caused a feeling that they were highly careful in every word in their replies and a feeling of the distance between the interviewer as a stranger and the interviewees. The lack of humor reminded of the position and authority of the teacher and kept the children's tension to control the context of their speech or even sometimes to be silent. It took extra efforts to make them talking.

Lastly, the ways the student leaders did things in the schools were built over time and effected cultures within the case schools. The student leaders are those people who developed beliefs, values, practices and transferred them to the new generation of students. (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 277-278.)

### **4.3 Student involvement in classroom decision making**

All the Finnish case schools indicated that their teachers incorporated ideas and opinions of student involvement in decisions affecting them within the classroom. The school principal P1 emphasized that an exemplary teacher considers students' opinions, consequently involves them in decisions: "...a good teacher hears opinions of pupils what they would like to do in different meetings, evenings or celebrations..."

#### **4.3.1 Teacher autonomy regarding student involvement in classroom decision making**

Teachers did not have commonly accepted rules or standards forcing them to involve students in the classroom decision making. It is the autonomy of teachers to decide how and to what extent to promote student participation in the classroom decisions. The teachers could not give a lot of information about their colleagues and their attitudes to student participation in the classroom decision making. The teachers T1 and T2 underlined differences of teachers as personalities who decided independently on their own to involve students in decisions regarding classroom issues or not. The autonomy of Finnish teachers whether to allow student participation in the classroom decision making or not made them free to choose ways of student involvement, classroom decision making possibilities and methods of the classroom decision making.

The teachers' choice regarding the degree of student involvement in the classroom decision making might be driven by their personal views and opportunities. The teacher profession is the busy one, especially when the timetable of a teacher is full of lessons. The school teacher T1 gave an example of other teachers who had four classes and they did not involve that many students in the planning of the lessons to avoid chaos.

The autonomy of teachers led to different and sometimes opposite attitudes to the issue. The school teacher T3 explained that in some classes students have more chances to affect things, in others less because it depends on the teachers.

On the one hand, there are examples of positive attitudes toward getting student opinions in the classroom matters in all the case schools. The teacher T1 emphasized that "in my class we discuss with students very often" The teacher T3 clarified that "for me it is easier to give more options to students..." The teacher T7 stated that "...we try

to give the students the responsibility to speak for themselves...” The students S3 felt their importance in the classroom decision making because “every teacher always asks...”

On the other hand, there are less positive views to activate student decision making in the classroom. The teacher T1 informed that “some teachers do not ask that much student opinions, they do not have that much to say”. The students S2 claimed that “...a teacher he or she decides what we do in classes”.

### **4.3.2 Passivity of students in classroom decision making**

Teachers and students are two sides of the same coin, both equally important in the promotion of the student classroom decision making. The school teacher T7 affirmed the idea of student freedom and power to affect a wide range of decisions in the classroom as well as outside of it. The teacher argued that a problem came from the students who demonstrated a passive attitude to even elementary issues; and as a result, teachers were those people who had to take initiative to involve them in many places. According to the practice of the teacher T7 only about 50% out of 100% students in classes took part in the classroom decision making. The passive nature of students was a familiar topic among the colleagues of the teacher T7 and they were many times disappointed after their efforts to get opinions from the students.

### **4.3.3 Mechanism of student involvement in classroom decision making**

Most of the teachers and students mentioned class discussion as a common method to involve students in the classroom decision making. Initiatives to discussion might come from both teachers and students. Primarily, teachers took actions to get students' views and ideas about classroom matters to reach common decisions. The school principal P1 and teachers T1, T7 asserted the leading role of the teachers to involve students in discussions by asking their opinions to choose solutions from students' suggestions or from teachers' readymade options. According to Galanes and Adams (2013, p. 189), Hackman and Johnson (2004, p. 38) in this way, teachers demonstrated democratic communicative behavior because they encouraged student involvement in decisions in the classroom. Also the teachers T1 and T2 mentioned about the freedom of students to

make offers regarding the classroom matters. The opinions and proposals of the students on different classroom questions were potential motors for the class discussions and the teachers warmly welcomed them. Finnish teachers are supportive of autonomy because they asked students' wants and reply to student proposals as Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio and Turner (2004, p. 99) state.

According to the ladder of student participation in decision making student classroom participation is at the sixth rung "adult initiated, shared decision with children" when teachers as democratic leaders involved students in decisions by asking their opinions. In this case, teachers were initiators who shared decision making with students, as it was explained by Hart (1994, p. 12). It is possible to predict because of a lack of concrete practical examples, that student participation in the classroom decision making in some cases is at the highest rungs "child initiated and directed" and "child initiated, shared decisions with adults" when students expressed their opinions and made proposals. Their initiatives might meet responses from teachers and be carried out by the students themselves at the seventh rung or by teachers at the eighth rung as Hart (1994, p. 14) states.

#### **4.3.4 Classroom decision making possibilities for students**

According to the data analysis, there were diverse options to involve students in the classroom decision making. Classroom possibilities for student decision making reported by the interviewees from the case schools included: student participation in the creation of classroom rules, student partaking in the planning and organization of class events, student involvement in improving of the learning process and its modification (giving feedbacks to teachers' performance, choosing learning methods and learning materials), student election of representatives in the student governing groups, the student freedom of choice in the evaluation, assessment, tests and examinations, participation in planning the schedule for deadlines of home tasks, exams and breaks, student involvement in the adaptation of subject contents.

People follow certain rules in certain places and at certain times. Classrooms are not exceptions from that. Student involvement in decisions about classroom rules was one way to incorporate opinions and ideas of students in decisions affecting them within the classroom in the primary case school.

...teachers have own rules in their own classes and they discuss with all children what are our rules in our class... - P1.

Another way to integrate ideas and opinions of students to classroom decisions in the primary case school was to involve them in the planning and organizing classroom activities. The example with discussion and planning of the traditional classroom events was given by the teacher T1.

Next week we are going to have so called pikkujoulu. What they want to do in three hours I will ask. – T1.

Student involvement in decisions toward improving of the learning process and its modification took place through giving feedbacks to teachers' classroom performance, choosing learning methods and learning material. The Finnish lower and upper secondary case schools provided a system where the students got involved in sharing their concerns and suggestions to the teachers with an intention to improve their classroom performance. The mechanism in which the teachers received feedback from the students was varied. The principal P2 and student leaders S3 gave examples of the feedback system in their schools.

...there are some questions to give feedback for teachers about their teaching. – P2. I received an e-mail from our school ...they asked just what was the lesson like and then we answered on the internet how it was like, I like or I do not like. What could the teachers do, or we would like to do better. - S3.

The teachers asked students' preferences in learning materials and methods. Teacher T1 from the primary cases school informed that students could choose learning methods: "...do you want now to play this game or we are going to do like this..." The teacher T2 from the lower secondary case school noted that students' could offer learning methods: "they can propose how they want to learn things". The teacher T4 of the art subject said that her students were free to make individual decisions within the classroom regarding types of learning material to work with during lessons. The principal P3 and teachers T5 from the upper secondary case school reported that they involved students in decisions about the sorts of essays and homework tasks.

Usually, student leaders were assigned to their positions through the election process within the primary and lower secondary case schools. Teachers played a supporting and guiding role to collect votes and present results. Every student made an individual decision in choosing potential student leaders.

Processes of evaluation and assessment were also based on students' opinions in the primary and upper secondary case schools. The teacher T1, the principal P3 and the teacher T5 involved students in decisions about sorts of examinations, essays and homework tasks.

For example, I ask do you want to do science project to show what you have learnt, or do you want do power point presentation or you want to regular test as you have. - T1. If I have four different home tasks for students, they choose two...- P3. We have sort of essays and they can choose which one to have...- T5.

The students participated in planning the schedule for the deadlines of home tasks, exams and breaks within the classrooms of the lower and upper secondary case schools. The teacher T2 and student leaders S2 said that they decided in the classroom the date of tests: "I try to let the pupils decide the date of the word tests"; "we can vote when there is a test". Breaks and their planning between two hour lessons was also a significant element of the productive learning process and the students S2 decided this issue: "when we have the subjects two hours arrow we can choose do we have a break in the middle of these hours". The teachers T5, T6 from the upper secondary case school involved students to decide deadlines for home tasks and also exam days: "I can ask them for example, when would you like to have word test day"; "I many times ask my students that, ok you have deadline coming up, would you like it to have then or then or then".

At the upper secondary school level it was reported that students were able to affect the contents of their studying. This effect varied in relation to the categories of school courses. Teachers involved students in partial adaptation of obligatory subject contents. The principal P3 worked with students on the context of the history book and they discussed and partly participated in settings themes and directions of the subject. The principal P3 added that student input to subject study contents was not widely accepted in the practice of the school and it would take time to make it common among teachers and students.

The teachers T3 and T8 explained the significance of the course classification between the obligatory and optional ones. Students had more influence on the learning content of the optional courses. Student input in this case was huge because teachers might plan course contents completely based on the desires and wishes of the students. The teacher T8 shared her experience in organizing and planning a volunteer based course together with students. The students discussed and decided what they wanted to

study during the course. This freedom of choice was not acceptable in such obligatory courses as the Finnish language, literature, etc.

According to the data analysis, the Finnish teachers who involved students in the classroom decision making shaped the classroom environment, which was supportive to autonomy in two main ways. First, they implemented organizational autonomy support and offered student ownership of the environment, which included students' opportunities for choice over environmental procedures such as developing classroom rules together, planning classroom events, planning schedules for deadlines of home tasks, exams and breaks and the adaptation of subject contents. Second, the behavior of teachers provided procedural autonomy support when student ownership let them to choose classroom activities, for example student involvement in improving of the learning process and its modification (choosing learning methods and learning material) and student freedom of choice in the evaluation, assessment, tests and examinations. As a result, these two ways of autonomy support create a sense of well-being, comfort in the classroom work and improve student engagement in learning activities (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio & Turner, 2004, pp. 97, 101).

Student participation at the classroom level is also an exercise of student leadership. It involves them in classroom governance toward accurate decisions and changes, which are similar to school governance. Some examples of these, as discussed by Nandago, Obondoh and Otiende (2005, p. 13) include: determination and reinforcement of rules, adapting curriculum content, the student freedom of choice in determining procedures in the evaluation, assessment, tests and examinations, planning schedules for deadlines of home tasks, exams and breaks, learning and teaching resources, improving the learning process and its modification by giving feedback on teachers' performance, stakeholders' participation through the election of representatives to the student governing bodies, etc.

Moreover, student participation in the classroom decisions is not a less powerful educational branch in citizenship education to learn democratic principles, to experience being active citizens in practice (Crick & Lockyer, 2010, p. 88; Metzger, 2000, pp. 21, 23) and to build partnership between teachers and students (Metzger, 2000, p. 23). Student classroom decision making is a ground for learning knowledge and skills to be active citizens because they make choices from opinions, predict consequences and get acceptance of others regarding the decisions (Crick & Lockyer, 2010, p. 87).

Citizenship education prepares citizens who will increase the quality of democratic processes (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 106).

#### **4.3.5 Methods of classroom decision making**

Individual choice and voting based methods (majority decision) were the most common and acceptable ways to use the above mentioned classroom decision making possibilities in the case schools. Individual decision making was a less usable method. For example, the students made individual choices regarding the kinds of essays they wrote as home assignments. While decision making by a majority vote was used in all other classroom decision making possibilities. Galanes and Adams (2013, p. 253) consider this method as a way to arrange the diversity of opinions in democratic groups.

...maybe three proposals, then we vote. Everyone elects student in the student government inside classes. – T1. ...they decide what kind of material they are going to work with so all students do not have the same way. – T4. We discuss with teacher and if we have two opinions with students then we can vote like with hands. – S2. They elect student leaders inside classes. – T5. ...we can vote. – T6.

According to Jochum, Pratten and Wilding (2005, p. 27) voting is formal civil engagement of students in the classroom decision making. This engagement ensures students' contribution to the classroom governance.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Summary of the results**

The study aimed to get a wide and well-grounded view of the student leadership concept and student involvement in the decision-making within the Finnish schools in order to avoid a narrow interpretation of these phenomena. The study looked at the Finnish school system and their practices of student leadership and student involvement in the decision making process across three school levels: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary.

The analysis of the data showed that all the Finnish case schools are democratic places where three democratic principles: student participation in school decisions concerning them, freedom of student opinions and equality are incorporated parts of the school governance. It means that the Finnish schools work in line with the increasing requirement for “democratization” of educational organizations (Haynes, 2009, p. 6; Levin, 1998, p. 57; Wallin, 2003, p. 55). Moreover, democracy is a part of the Finnish school climate. Even though decision making is at the heart of leadership (Johnson & Kruse, 2009, p. 5), the student leaders did not speak much about decisions, rather they called it discussion. It illustrates democratic awareness and atmosphere within the case schools where students participate in and influence decisions through communication and discussion. They are main tools to share decision making. In other words, according to Dewey, (1916, p. 87) students practice “...a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (cited in Brooks & Kensler, 2011, p. 61).

The Finnish case schools realize their educational potential for democracy and active citizenship in two major ways. First, their democratic school governance systems

are visual examples of democracy and its functioning. This environment is suitable to learn interplays of power and their effect on students' lives (Mwollo-Ntallima, 2011, p. 18). Democratic awareness in turn improves student abilities to generate their own opinions in school politics and later on in the politics and economics of the country (Mattes & Bratton, 2007, p. 200). People who can link their interests to public affairs are able to use their fundamental right of citizenship to participate (Hart, 1994, p. 5) and to make democracy stronger.

Second, the Finnish case schools provide students with practical knowledge and skills of active citizenship and democracy. Student leadership is one of the practical ways to move toward active citizenship education and prepare the future citizens who will increase the quality of democratic processes in the country (Griebler & Nowak, 2012, p. 106). The practical knowledge of being an active citizen in the democratic society is more effective in comparison with the theoretical one. "Democracy in practice is the best way to learn how it functions" (Chomsky, 2000, p. 28). Students being involved in the leadership activities gain knowledge how to be active citizens in the democratic society, to investigate problems, to debate solutions, to create projects and plans, to make collective decisions (Thomson, 2012, p. 97), to take responsibility and respect for others (Lansdown, 1995, p. 17), to predict consequences in decisions (Boisvert, 1998, p. 108), and to participate in and influence decisions.

The study revealed that student leadership is student participation in school and classroom governance including participation in decisions and/or processes of their implementation for more accurate decisions and changes. Finnish educators associated student leadership with democratic characteristics of the school society, active citizenship and distributing leadership roles to students. The student leaders also came up with characteristics of the democratic society in schools and active citizenship, but on different scales depending on their school age. Besides, the study discovered feminine traditions of student leadership and school leadership in the Finnish case schools as confirmation of the statement that male leadership has been shifted to a female one in education (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 351; Northouse, 2013, p. 349).

Active citizenship in the Finnish context might be done through formal civil engagement, which ensures students' contribution in the school governance system (Mohammadi, Norazizan & Shahvandi, 2011, p. 212) based on collective and individual

actions of the volunteer character such as being school governors (student leaders), student proposals and voting (Jochum, Pratten and Wilding, 2005, p. 27).

According to the data analysis student leadership was practiced in several ways. The Finnish case schools included in their school structures distributed leadership roles in the shape of different kinds of student teams. The most common student leadership team in the Finnish case schools was the student government. The others were the student peer support team, the student tutors, the student guides, the student entrepreneurship team, the student sustainable development team, the classroom student leaders, the forest guides, and the student representatives in the parent team.

Additionally, the students had more variations to exercise student leadership and their participation in the school governance. Student participation in decisions might be initiated by adults and student leaders, through suggestion boxes, through student proposals, through student representatives in meetings with leading teams (in the lower secondary and upper secondary case schools), through inclusive student leadership, and through the Youth Council and the Children's Parliament of Jyväskylä. Students could participate in the classroom governance and there were certain classroom decision making possibilities. All these options fundamentally change the level of decision-making authority extended to students within the school leadership. Student participation in school and classroom decisions conveys that students have the right to express their ideas and opinions freely through different forms of communication: speech and writing, otherwise student participation in decision making is impossible.

Passivity as an illness of student behavior to join student teams, to be active inside student teams and to participate in the classroom decision making was not managed well. Possibly, some conditions of the case schools did not let students to achieve their own goals through the direction of their own efforts along with school objectives (McGregor, 1957, p. 183). Maybe children and youth regardless of their age have their own needs, which are unknown within the study. People expressing in their behavior laziness, passivity, lack of responsibility, etc. do not have an opportunity to satisfy needs important to them as McGregor (1957, p. 182) claim.

Student leaders shared leadership roles and power to make decisions within teams and they were equally responsible for their work (Jameson, 2007, p. 11). The equality of student leaders within the teams is a sign of the partnerships among them (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013, pp. 2-3) and democratic leadership style when everyone is heard (Galanes & Adams, 2013, p. 189). Some student teams built their work through a

distributed leadership role like a chairman, a secretary, etc. with the characteristics of shared leadership. The interviewees did not tell a lot of stories about the collaboration relationships between student teams, student teams and peer students, student teams and teacher teams. Consequently, there is a lack of collaboration between different groups in the school governance of the case schools.

To consider students as partners involved in school governance is the most difficult step for school administrators and teachers (Mitra, Serriere & Stoicovy, 2012, p. 109). The study discovered the youth-adult partnership among the student leaders and the adults in the upper secondary case school. In contrast, the student leaders from the two other case schools felt a higher power and authority of the adults. Possibly, this type of relationship where student leaders feel their inequality with adults misrepresents democracy in the students' eyes.

The age of students affects the degree to which they participate in decision making (Lansdown, 1995, p. 17). Decision making of children aged between 8-12 years is more self-oriented and present-focused rather than future-oriented. Therefore, they are capable to take risks. (O'Kane, 2000, p 145.) This nature of decision making by children signals their inability to plan for the future, take others into consideration and predict consequences of their action. Consequently, the student leaders from the primary case school were more dependent on the adults who filled their natural weaknesses of decision making power. This fact makes the degree of student involvement in school decisions and behavior of adults reasonable in the primary case school. The teacher supervisor and the school administration were in charge of action plans for the student government. The teacher supervisor arranged the time and place of their meetings, spent time with student leaders on meetings and events that they organized, and prepared important topics to discuss.

The students from the lower secondary case school belonged to the category of young adolescents (12-14 years), while the students from the upper secondary school are the late adolescence age (from 15 years). The student leaders of the lower secondary school age had less capability to develop more options, realize possible risks and profits and consequences of their decisions (Mann, Harmoni & Power, 1989, p. 265). These are the reasons why these student leaders and their decisions were not yet independent from the teacher supervisors and the school administration who prevented them from making dangerous decisions. The adults kept their eyes on students' decisions and actions by attending student meetings and events. Only student leaders of the late adolescence age

can anticipate future outcomes of their decisions (Kambam & Thompson, 2009, p. 176; Crone & Van Der Molen, 2007, p. 1299), but still their future time sensitivity is not equal to adults (Kambam & Thompson, 2009, p. 175). Even though, the student leaders from the upper secondary school had relatively developed abilities of decision making and the future orientations, the teacher supervisors attended their meetings to listen to their discussions to make sure that everything was going well without possible risks.

The insensitivity of student leaders to the future time perspectives in all the case schools made them unable to build and communicate their visions. “Children have more sensitivity to the future time perspectives as they cross the childhood line into adolescence, and adolescents as they transform into adults” (Kambam & Thompson, 2009, p. 175).

The development of the ability to make reasonable decisions decreasing risks is a slow process. Consequently, students from the late childhood until young adulthood should learn to make these decisions relying on their own judgment in risky situations. (Leijenhorst, Moor, Macks, Rombouts, Westenberg & Crone, 2010, p. 345.) Student leadership across different school levels is the right way to get an experience and develop skills in decision making and the future sensitivity of students from the children age to the late adolescence through involvement in and influencing the school and classroom decision making processes under the supervision and coordination of adults.

## **5.2 Significance of the study and its implications**

The preceding scientific contributions conclude that student leadership is becoming to be in greater demand of the school leadership structures because it is the way to hear the students’ voice in order to prepare active citizens (Brasof, 2011, p. 24); therefore we should gain knowledge in this field. The research can help readers and practitioners sharing the similar interest to expand their knowledge and understand how the Finnish school system practices student leadership and student involvement in the decision making process across the three school levels: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. Hopefully, the study has a potential to increase the interests of people in the field who have not paid any attention to the issue before.

An intention of the present study is to provide educators with research findings presenting the student leadership phenomenon widely from different perspectives.

Finnish educators are able to have a look at the student leadership situation and its strong and weak sides from the perspectives of the three case schools. Probably, they might find and discover for themselves new interesting aspects for further improvements and developments in the field within their schools. Foreign educators may enhance their knowledge in the issue through comprehension of the student leadership phenomenon in the Finnish context and compare it with the student leadership reality of their local schools. Moreover, they may adapt some elements of the Finnish student leadership system which are suitable to their environments and culture.

This research would not have been possible in the practical life of the young people in my home country Kazakhstan because of old traditional school leadership structures do not include distributed leadership roles to students. Nevertheless, the research findings will be welcomed back there by educators, since school teachers and principals are responsible for implementing innovations and improving school outcomes.

The value of the study is its contribution toward expanding literature resources on the topic of the student leadership in Finland. According to Northouse (2007, p.1), the number of published books and publications in the research literature has grown exponentially because people are fascinated by the idea of leadership. Despite an abundance of information in the leadership area, there is a lack of sources concerning the student leadership. Dempster and Lizzio (2007) explain this difficulty by a wide interest mostly on the adult leadership. This fact offers a new aspect for further research work in the student leadership field. The study followed this idea.

### **5.3 Review of the ethics and quality of the study**

This chapter concentrates on reliability, validity, ethics and multiple ways to establish truth and maintain the quality of the study. Reliability, validity and how they can be tested are common issues in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003, p. 597). In order to understand the meaning of reliability and validity, it is necessary to look at their definitions.

The terms validity and reliability initiated discussions about the quality of qualitative study (Golafshai, 2003, p. 601). Basically, quality is associated with a degree of reliability and validity of the collected data and its analysis. Accurate data recording

and logical data interpretation increase the reliability and validity of qualitative studies (Franklin & Ballan, 2001, p. 273). Reliability is a consequence of validity because "since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability]" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Golafshai (2003, p. 604) define reliability and validity as "trustworthiness, rigor and quality" of the qualitative inquiry.

The test or evaluation quality of qualitative research is the proof of reliability (Golafshani, 2003, p. 601), while the accuracy of the findings defines validity (Rafuls & Moon, 1996, p. 77). "Data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 191). Validity refers to judgments about the credibility of findings (Franklin & Ballan, 2001, p. 273; Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 572). Researchers point out different methods to increase reliability and validity in qualitative studies.

In order to establish the internal reliability of narrative data, qualitative researchers stay close to the empirical data when they support their conclusions about the studied social phenomenon by quotations of the research participants and provide a chain of evidence, for instance a path analysis diagram (Franklin & Ballan, 2001, p. 277.) Every aspect of the data analysis of this research can be traced, verified by others and checked for the logical validity of conclusions because the study includes interview quotes and summaries of the thematic analysis for every research question (see Appendices 2-7).

Researchers may achieve validity and reliability, increase truthfulness of their propositions about the studied social phenomenon by using triangulation (Golafshai, 2003, p. 604). According to Creswell and Miller (2000, p. 126) triangulation is "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study". Triangulation is an important methodological strategy to increase the validity and reliability of the study. Reliability, validity and triangulation are core concepts of qualitative research that should be seen as diverse ways to ground trust (Golafshai, 2003, pp. 603, 604).

The trustworthiness of the data collection in this study was gained by two methods of triangulation out of four. They are called theory triangulation and data triangulation. The first type of triangulation is reflected in the use of multiple theories to interpret the data (Denzin, 1994, p. 97) about the student leadership reality in the Finnish schools. The study deals with confident study conclusions based on data

collected by individual and group interviews from Finnish educators and students that converge and support each other (Franklin & Ballan, 2001, p. 284).

The following ethical principles were used during the research. All the school participants were informed in advance about the duration of the interviews (McKnight, McKnight, Sidani & Figueredo, 2007, p. 77) and the intended use of the collected data (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 88). The letters of an informed consent were distributed to the case school principals describing the research and the conditions of the informants' participation. The permission to carry out the study was mediated by the thesis advisor. The anonymity of the information was promised and guaranteed as an essential basis of confidentiality (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996 p. 92; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40). The interviewees had the right to withdraw from participation at any stage and get their reward in this case (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996, p. 88). Practically, only one student did not have an interest to contribute to the research and was rewarded with a small gift ("screen cleaner" for mobile devices) as the other interview participants.

The study has added credibility in the debates of the research seminars with peers and the supervisor, and knowledgeable people in the student leadership area. The interview questions were reviewed by peers, a teacher and the supervisor. Moreover, the interview questions were pilot tested by a teacher supervisor from the lower secondary case school in order to better understand the difficulty of the task and clearness of the interview questions. The main focus was to ensure that the research instrument was built based on the range of vocabulary familiar to Finnish students and educators as it was advised by my supervisor who has a rich experience of being a school principal. The designed interview questions allowed gaining insights into the fundamental research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 39) and collecting rich and appropriate information.

The semi-structured interview was the main method consisting of open ended questions that were developed with an input of my supervisor, a teacher and the teacher supervisor from the lower secondary case school (see Appendices 9-10). The structured interview allows independent researchers to check the reliability of the study. Whether other inquirers would discover the outcomes if they reiterate to repeat the study and enhance the study is a question of reliability (Franklin & Ballan, 2001, p. 277; Yin, 2003, p. 37).

## 5.4 Limitation of the study

Every study has its own limitations because it might have access to only certain people, organizations, documents and etc. This multiple case study is an empirical inquiry that investigated the student leadership phenomenon within its real context across the three levels of the school system: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools in Jyväskylä. In spite of the fact that the case study is more robust for the evidence of the phenomenon from multiple cases and increases the generality of the data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 172), but it is still limited. Each school is the subject of an individual case study and bounded to its own organizational context at each school level. Consequently, it is impossible to apply the findings regarding student leadership to other Finnish schools. However, it is a great contribution to the validity of the research if similar studies could be repeated in other primary, lower and upper secondary schools to verify whether the findings would be generalized somewhere else. The difficulty of generalizing the findings to other situations is the main disadvantage of the case study (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 586).

A second limitation concerns the language accuracy. The language barrier existed between the researcher and the interview participants, in particular with the student leaders from the case primary school and to a smaller degree with the students from the lower secondary case school. The language barrier was mediated through the teacher supervisors as translators and interpreters. They were an important component of the research process and their role affected the data collection and the degree of my bias in the results (Squires, 2099, p. 279). Besides, some informants made an effort to express their stories completely in English. Similarly, my own problems with the English language might have affected the understanding of the informants. Consequently, there are possible risks that some information, facts and details might be missed or replaced by inaccurate wording.

The Finnish language was an obstacle to observe and interpret the interaction and humor between some student leaders, the decision making process of students, their meetings and events in their particular context, which formed part of the study's limitations. Another important limitation of the study related to the language barrier is the lack of access to official summary records of the decision making meetings of the student leaders. From the triangulation point of view, it could be an additional source of the data collection to ensure and enhance confidence in the findings.

Finally, the last limitation connects to leadership theories oriented on adults, which were adapted in the study because the lack of theory on student leadership. Probably, these theories do not cover specific features leadership by children and young people.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study focused on the student leadership phenomenon from only the three Finnish school perspectives in Jyväskylä. However, the student leadership in other parts of Finland might be different. Therefore, future studies on the same phenomenon could be conducted in other Finnish schools to confirm or disconfirm research discoveries of the present study. Moreover, further studies of the leadership phenomenon among students in Finnish higher educational organizations would significantly expand the picture of student leadership throughout the Finnish education system. It is also highly recommendable to other researchers who share similar research interests to investigate the student leadership and its definition in other countries.

It is advisable if further studies would focus on the gender issue in student leadership to find out reasons behind its female feature. Boys should also be involved in citizenship activities to learn democracy and their opinions are equally valuable in the school governance; therefore, it is necessary to review possible solutions on changes in the feminist tradition of student leadership.

Further research could be conducted to determine the process of student decision making and its characteristics such as stages, strategies, role of adults, etc. Other recommendations for further research include the following: student motivation and passivity in the classroom decision making and student leadership; humor and its role in student groups of different age, effect of student participation in classroom decision making on peer interaction, motivation and learning; youth-adult partnership and ways toward its development with students of primary and lower secondary schools. Finally, the fact that the research is mainly based on leadership theories from the “adult world” makes it topical to develop a theoretical background for the “student world”.

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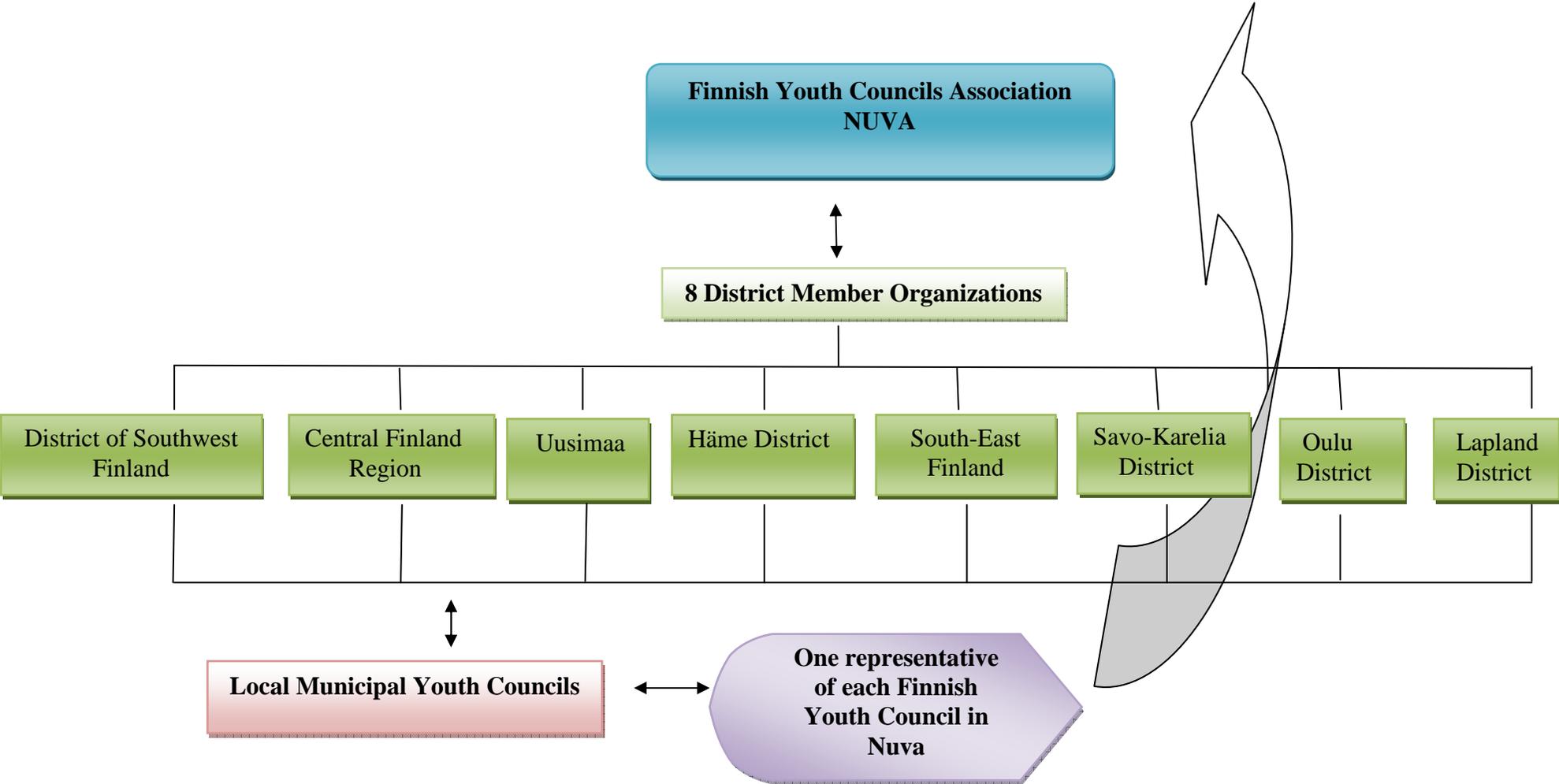
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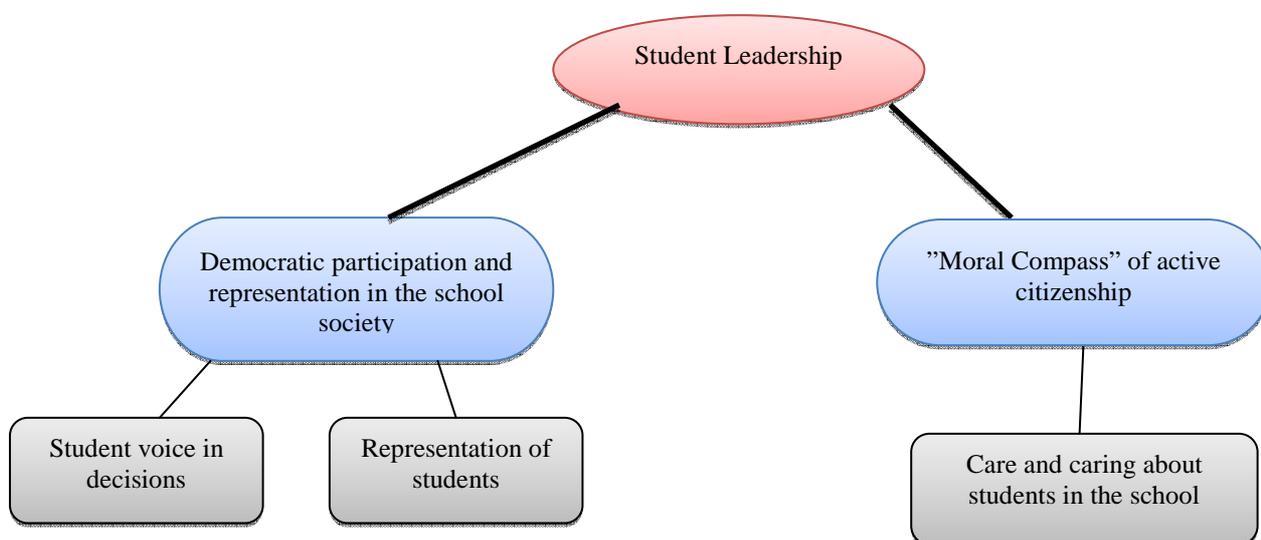
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. The Youth Leadership structure in Finland

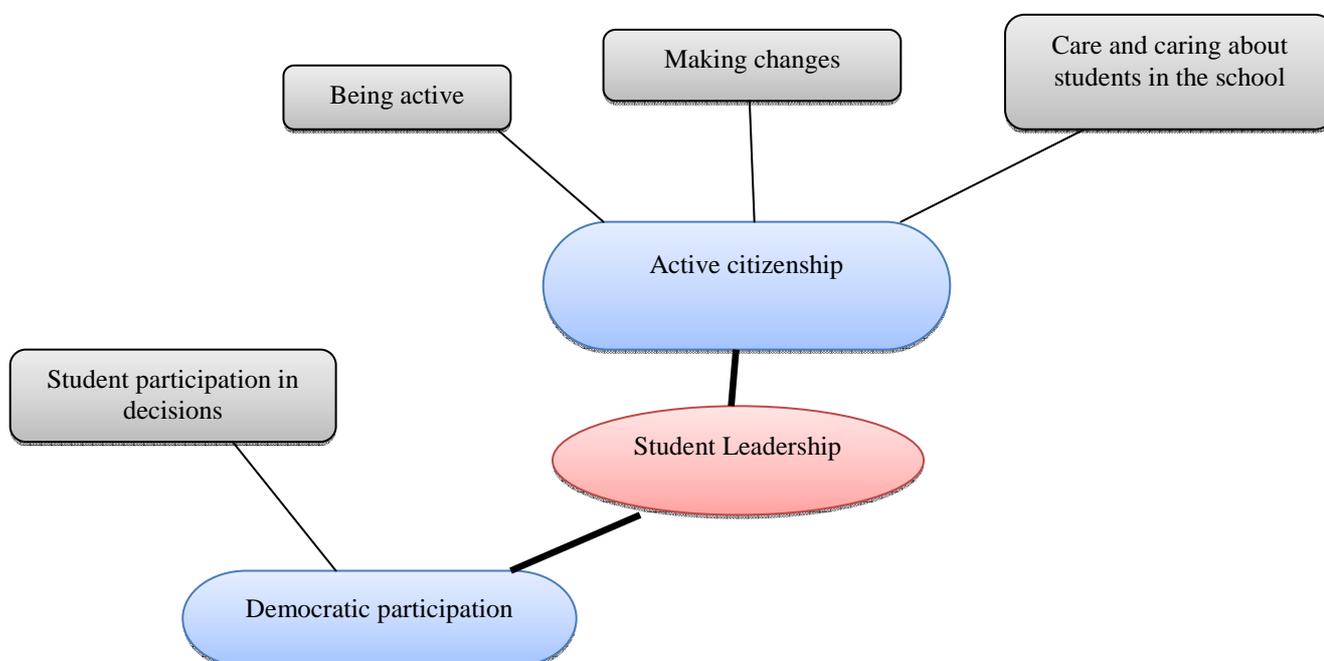


## APPENDIX 2. Definition of student leadership

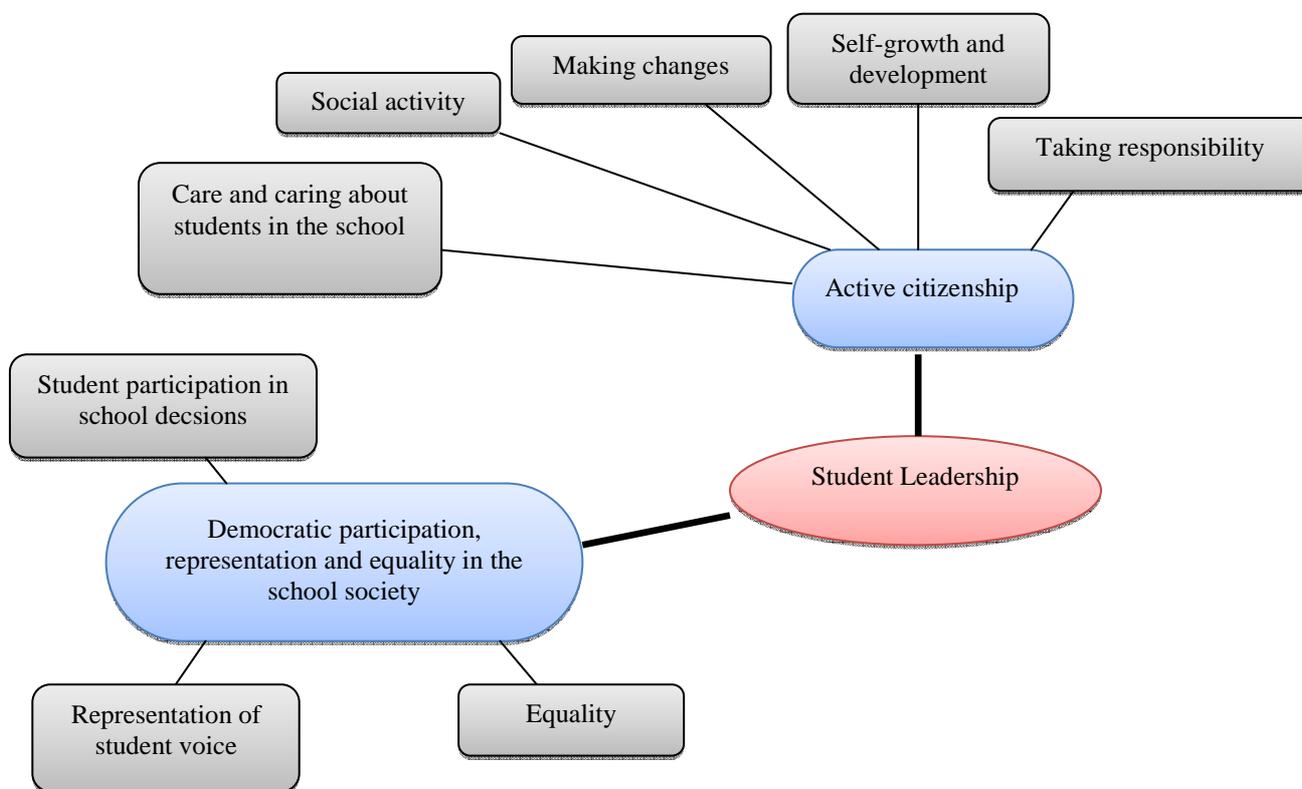
### A) Student leaders from the primary case school



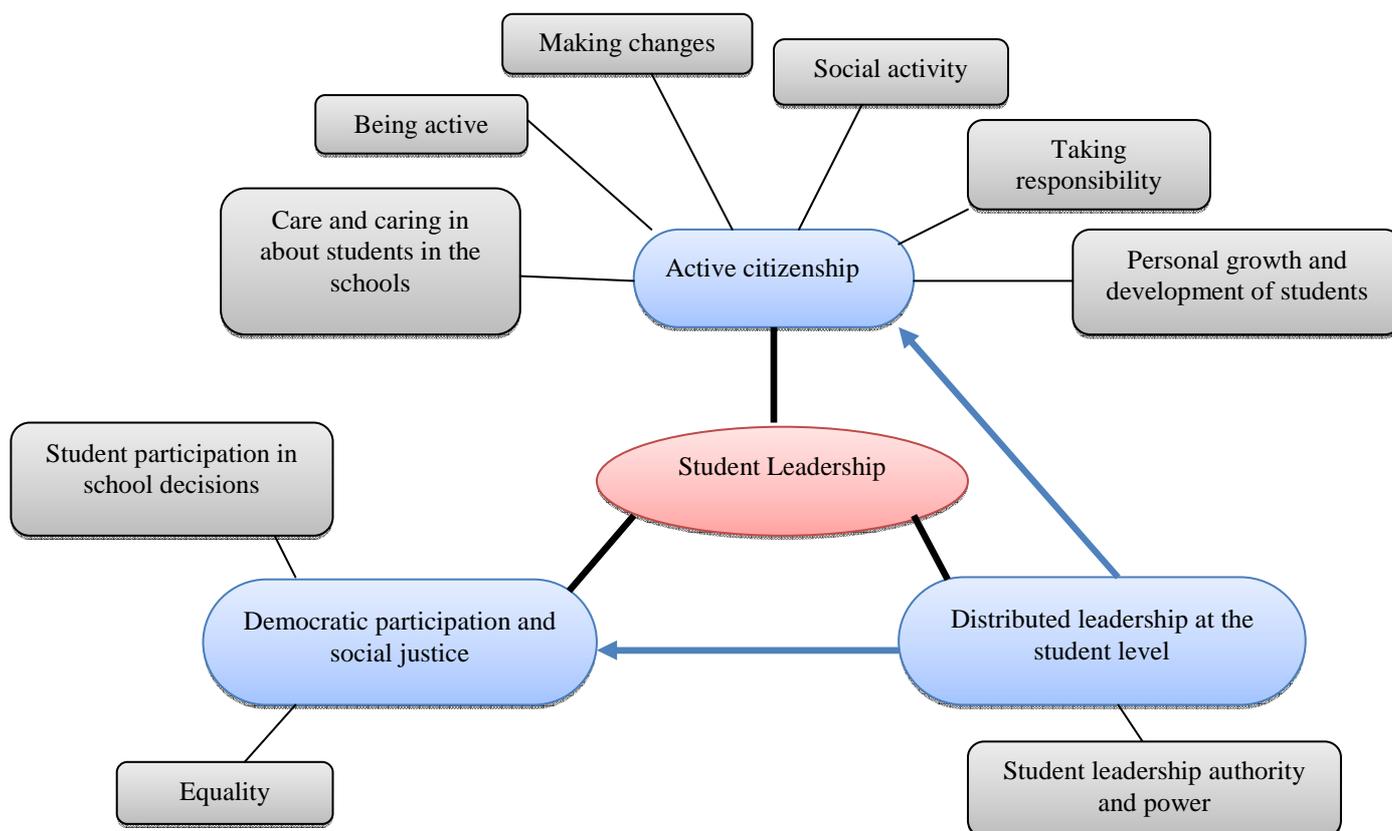
### B) Student leaders from the lower secondary case school



## C) Student leaders from the upper secondary case school

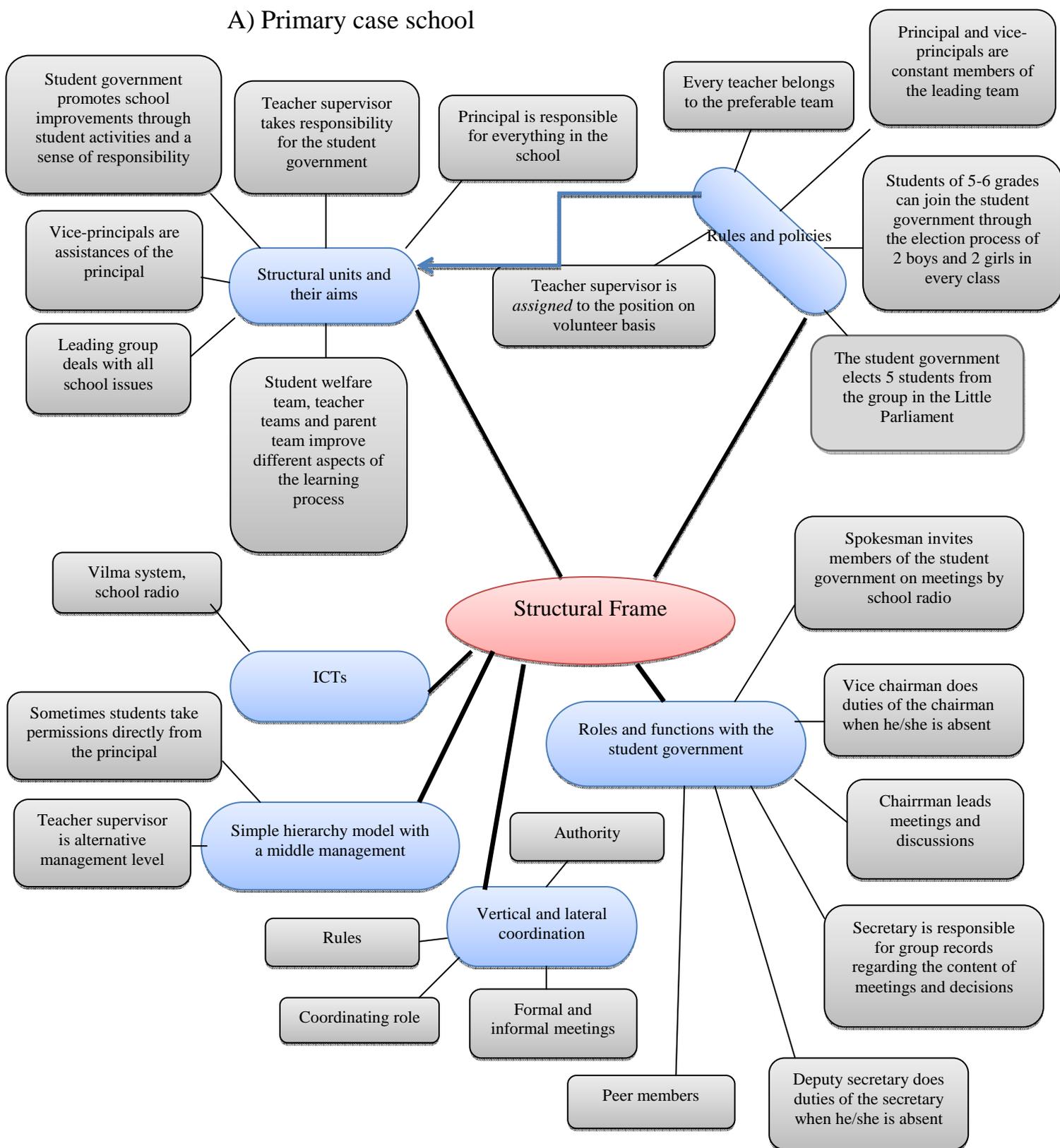


D) Finnish educators from the primary, lower and upper secondary case schools

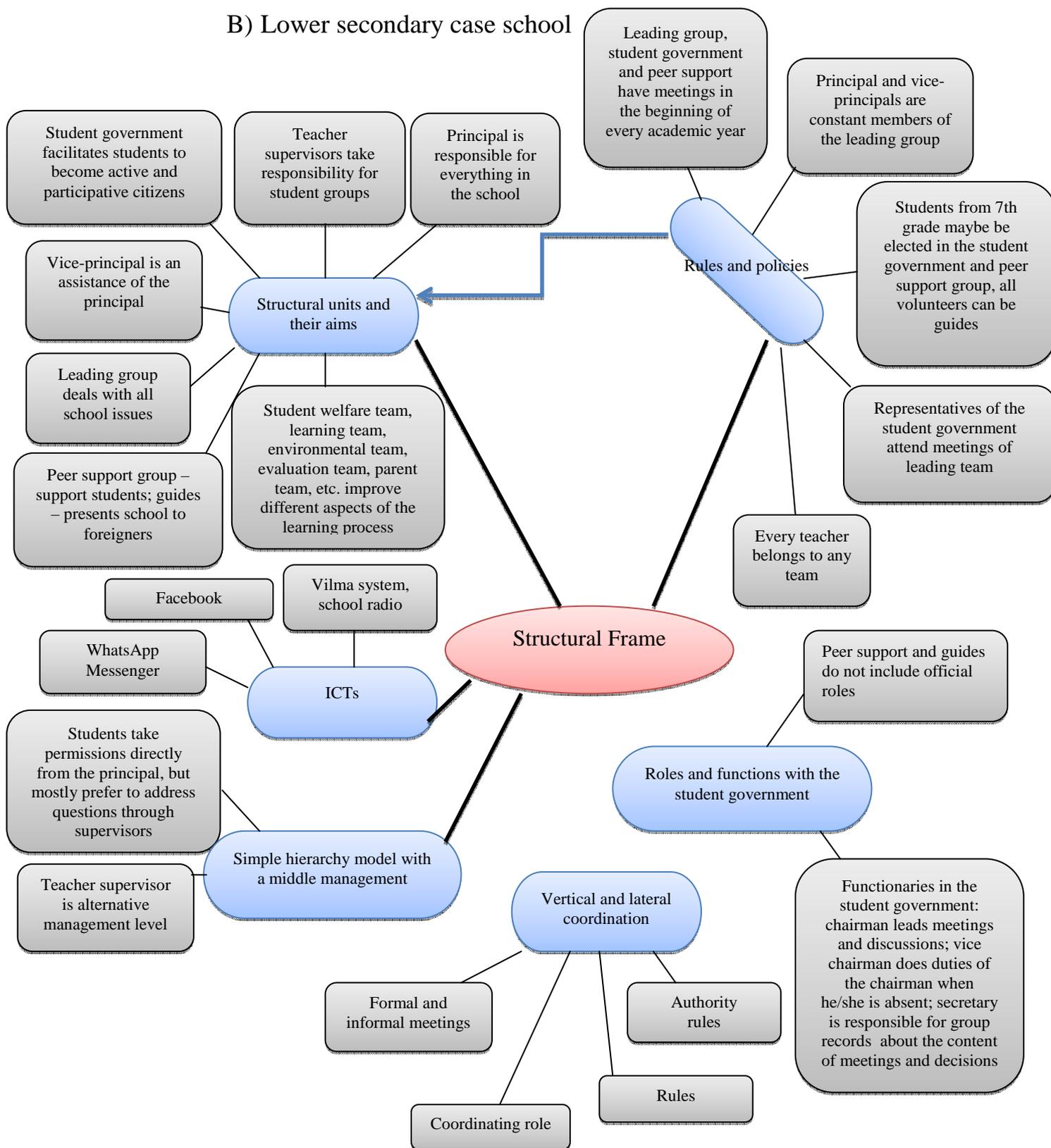


### APPENDIX 3. Structural frame

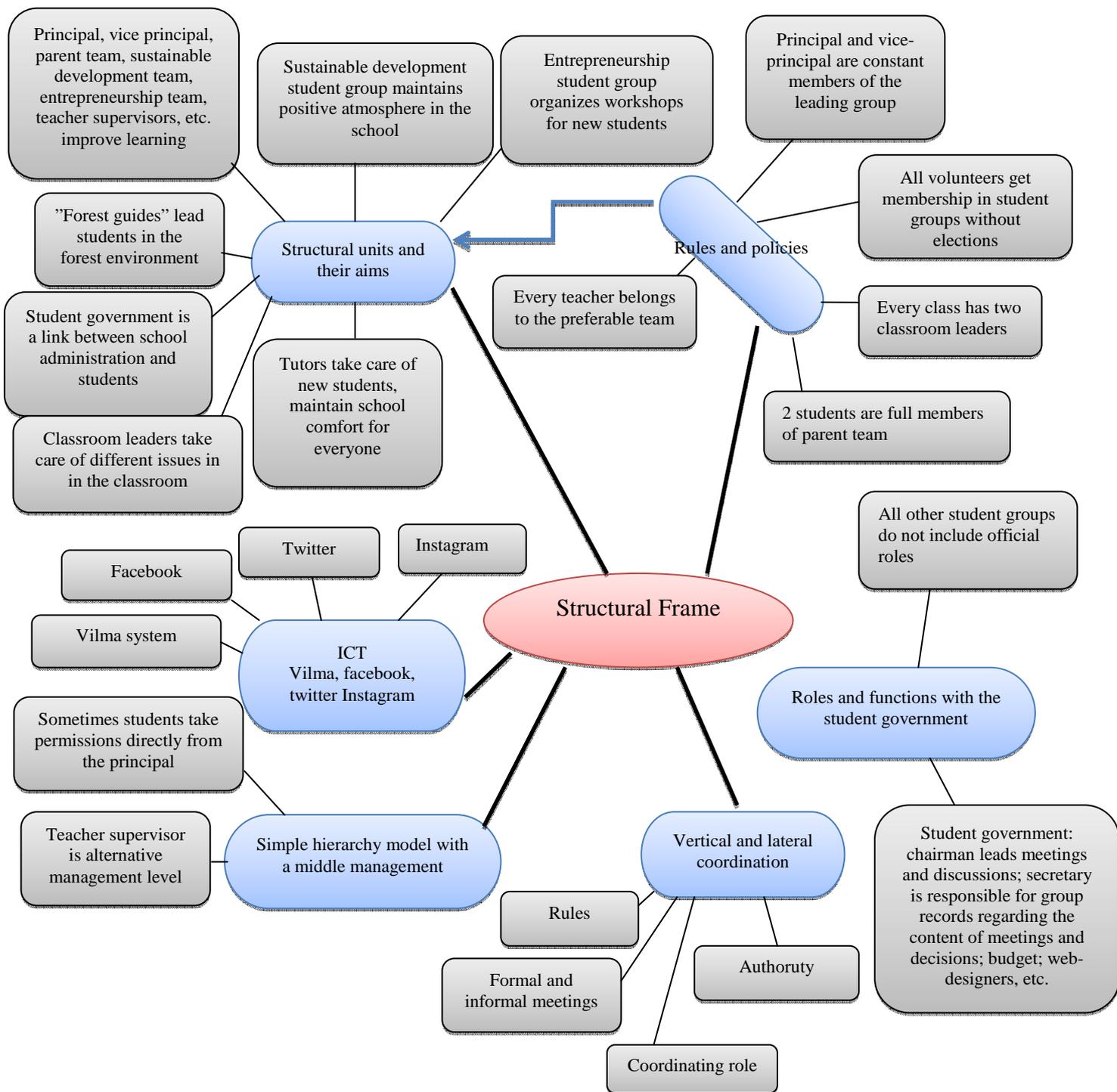
#### A) Primary case school



B) Lower secondary case school



C) Upper secondary case school



## APPENDIX 4. Human resource frame

### A) Primary school



## B) Lower secondary case school

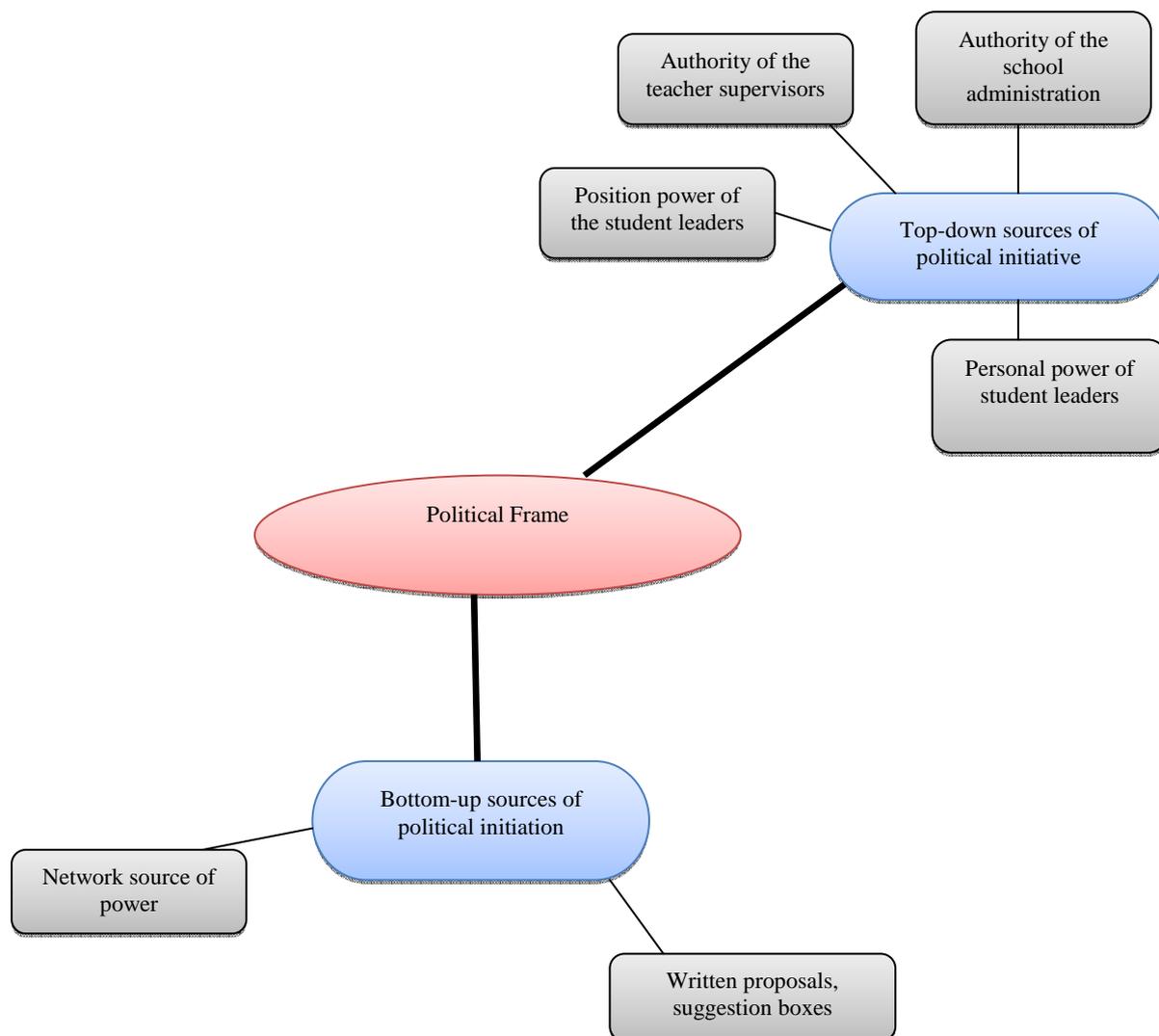


C) Upper secondary case school



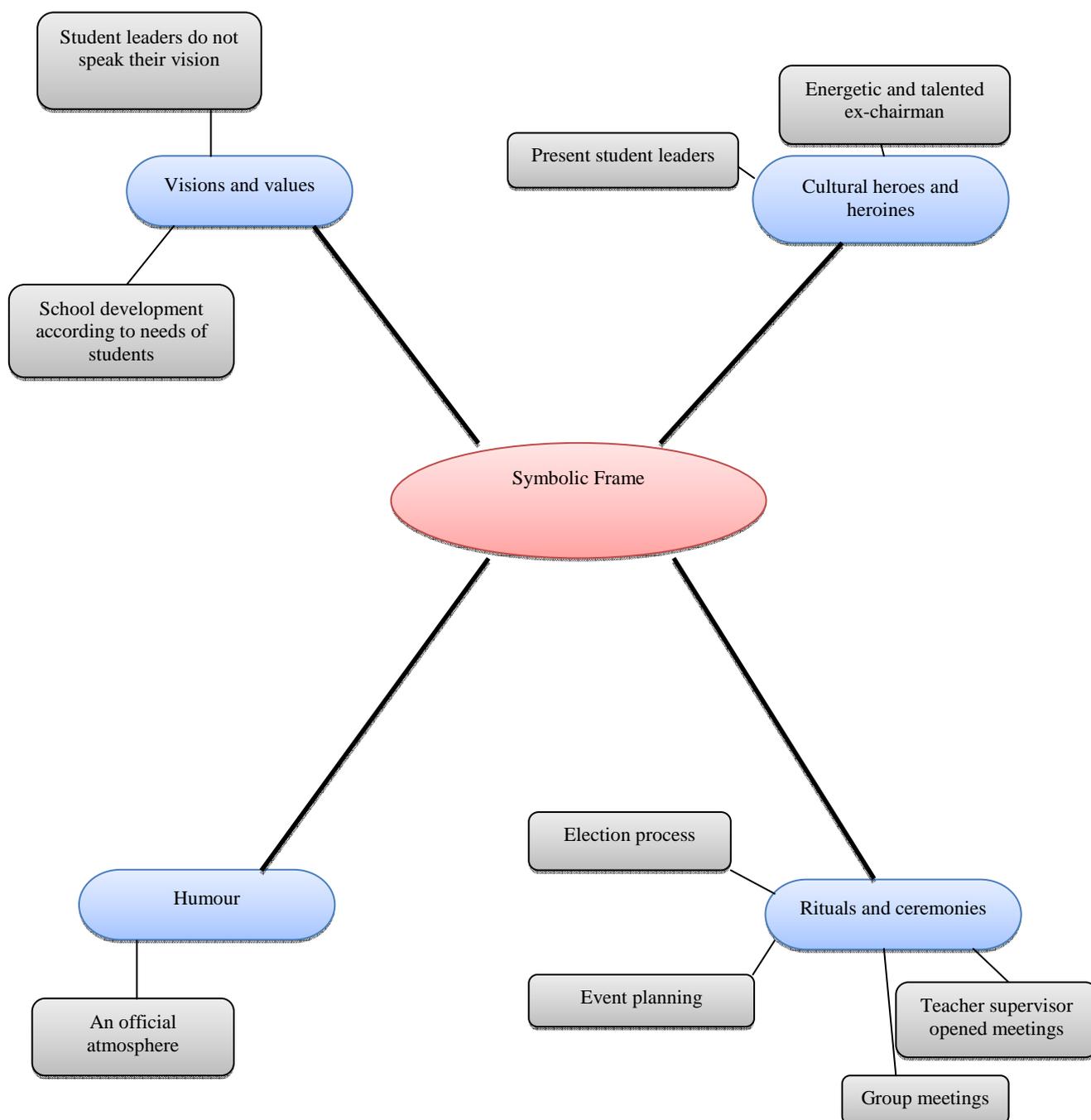
## APPENDIX 5. Political frame

### A) Primary, lower secondary and upper secondary case schools

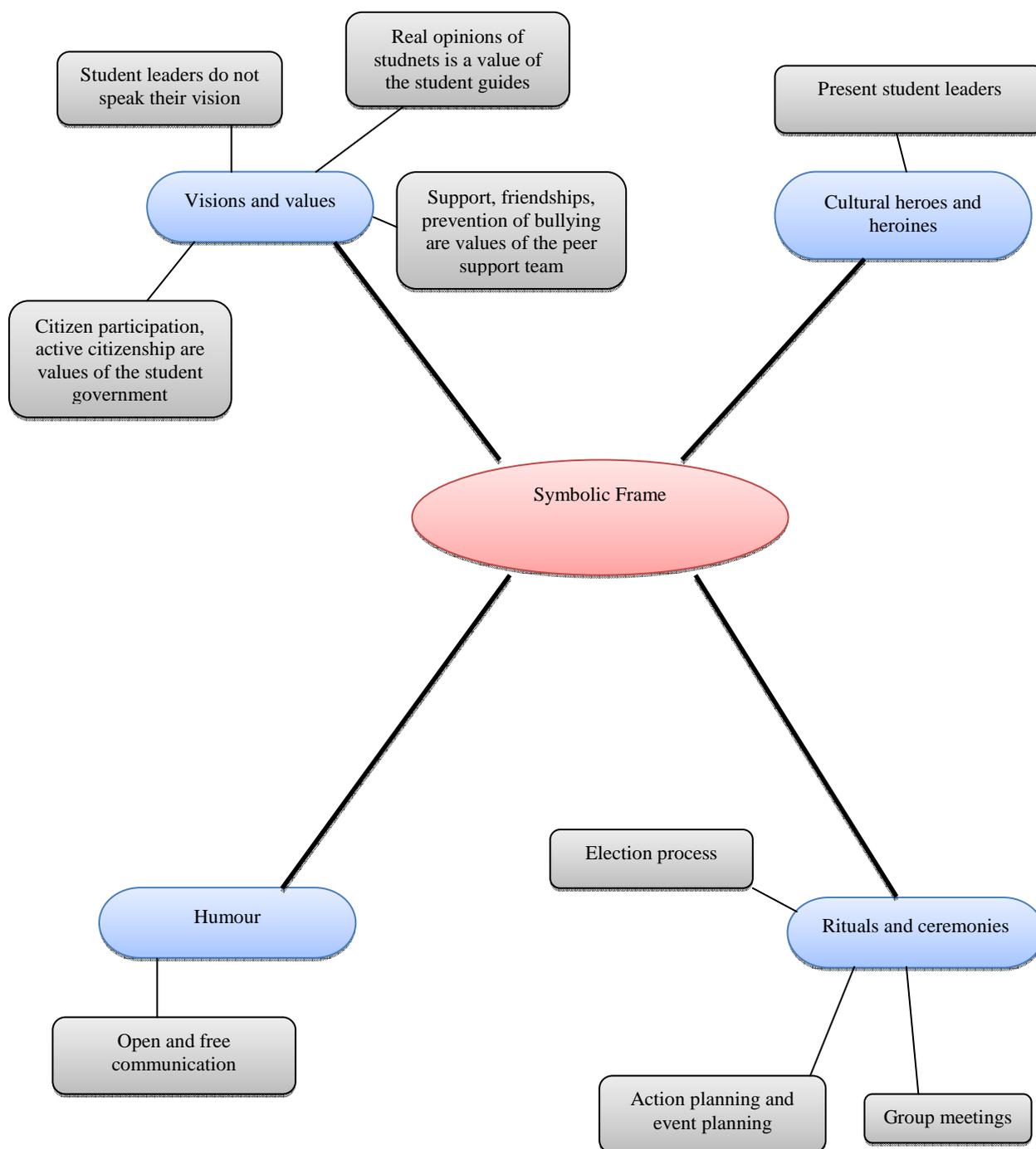


## APPENDIX 6. Symbolic frame

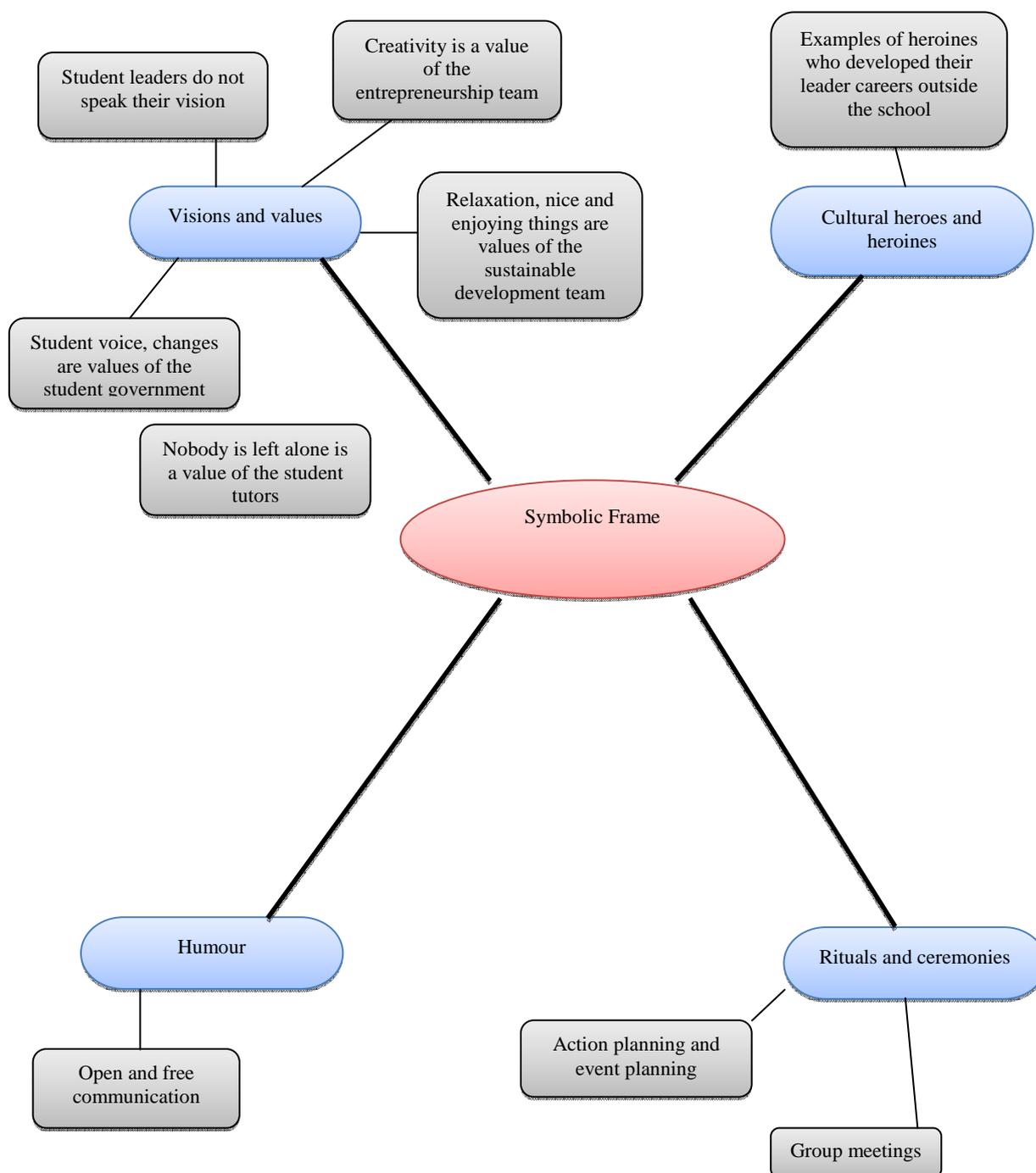
### A) Primary case school



## B) Lower secondary case school

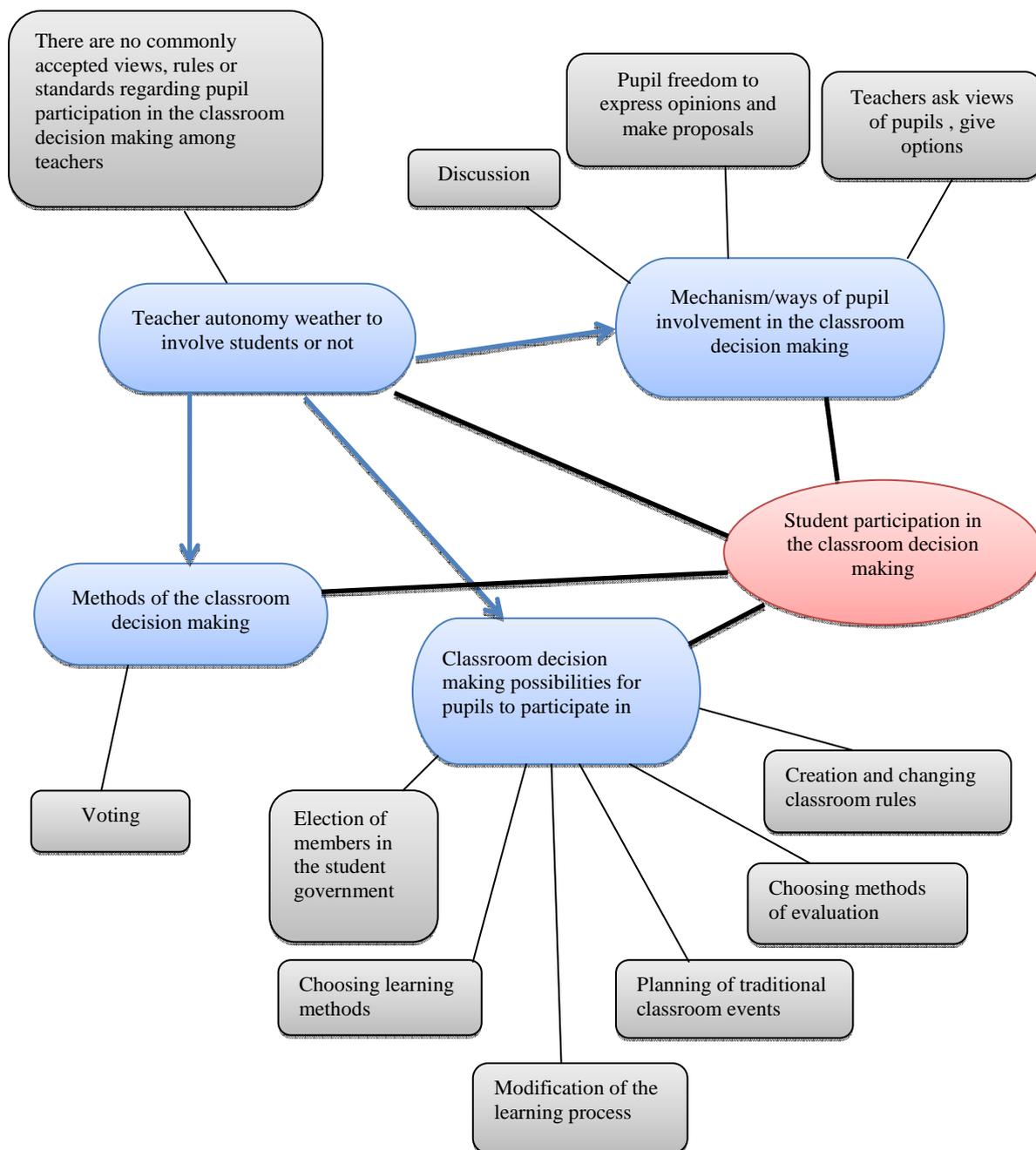


## C) Upper secondary case school

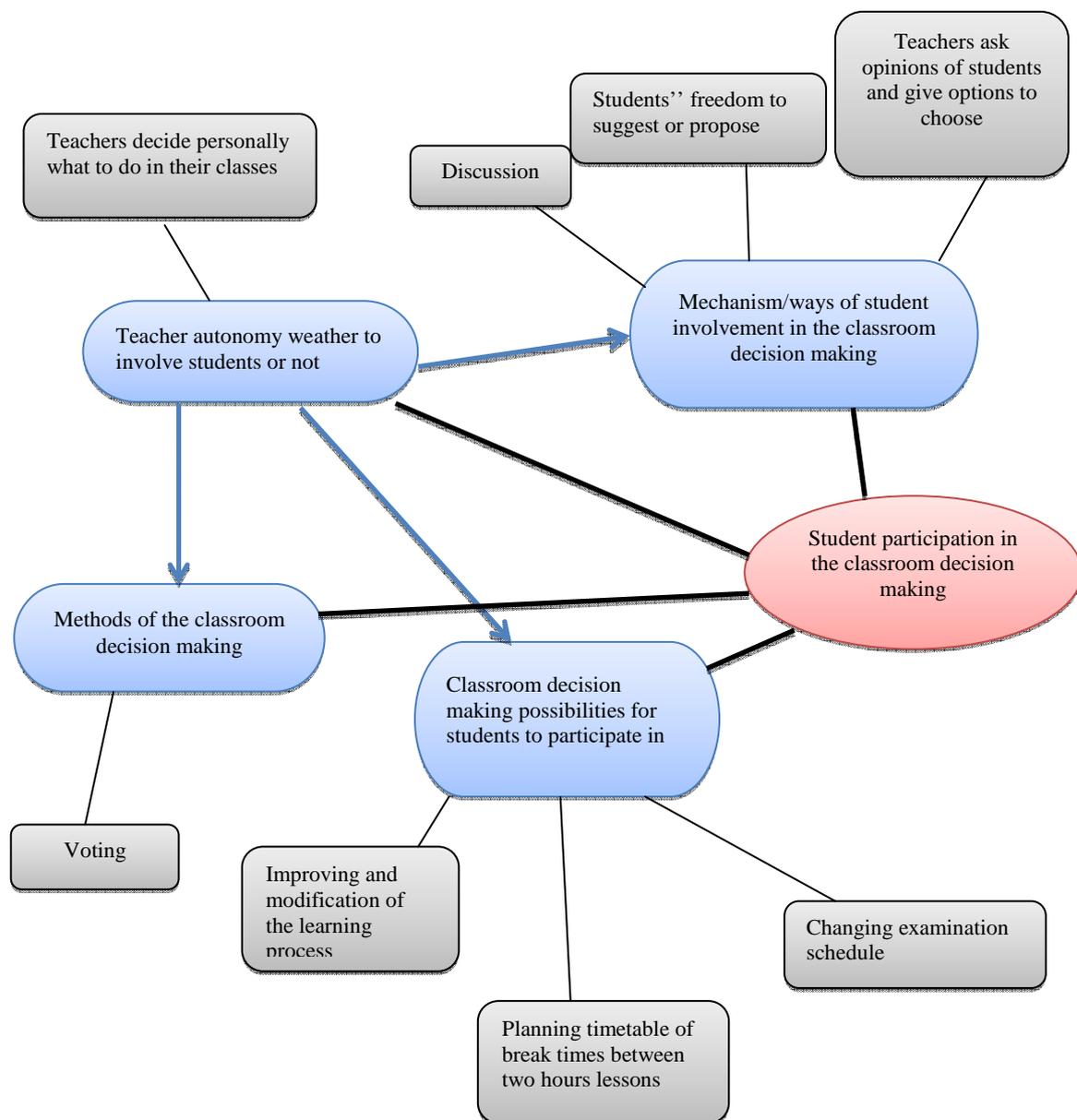


## APPENDIX 7. Student participation in the classroom decision making

### A) Primary case school



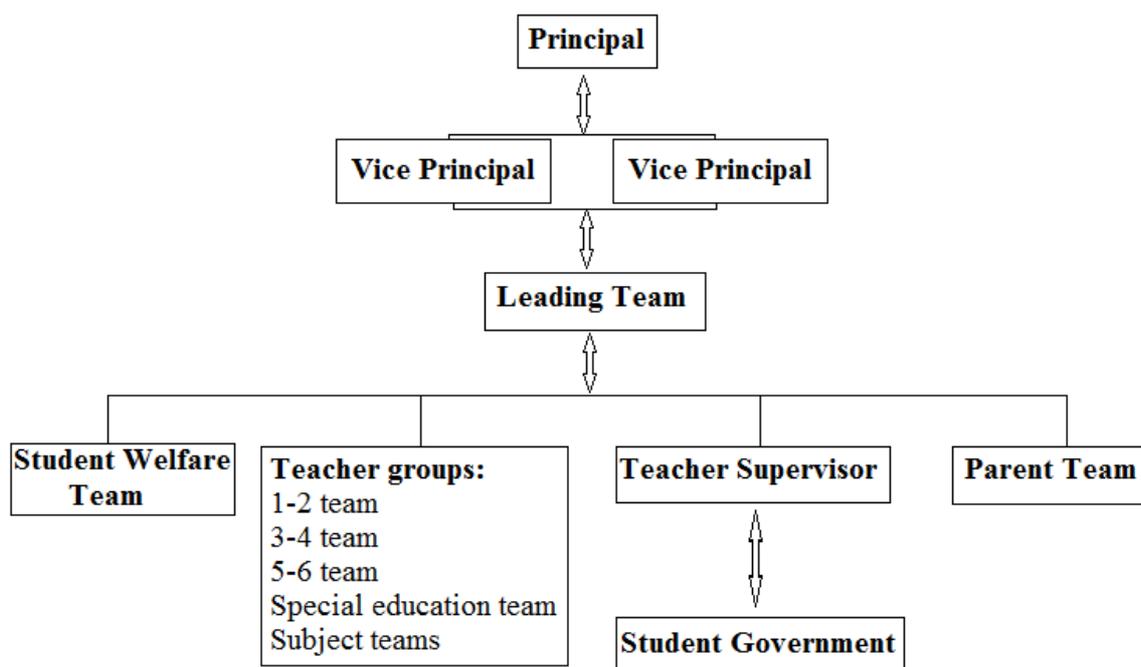
## B) Lower secondary case school



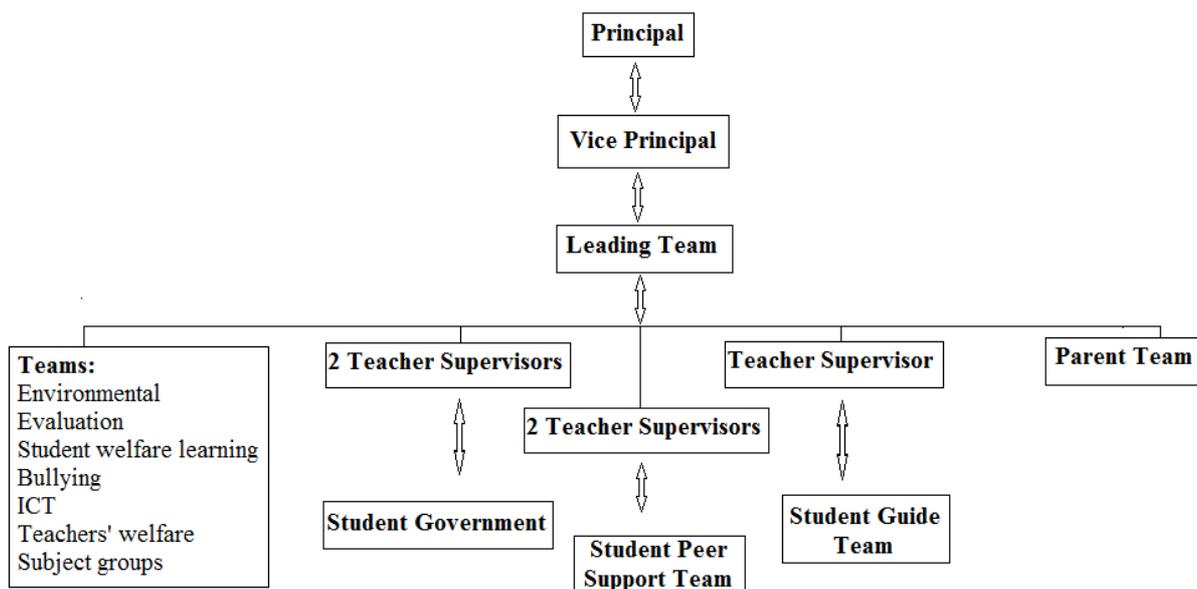


## APPENDIX 8. School leadership structures of the Finnish case schools

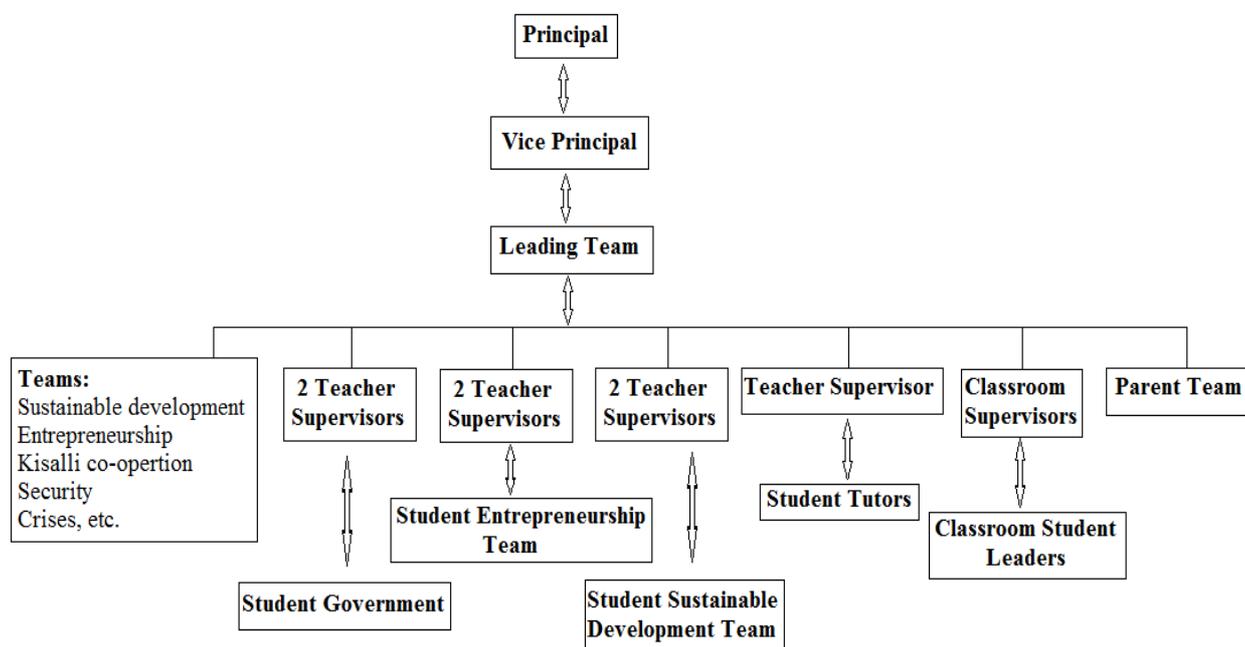
### A) Primary school leadership structure of the case school



### B) Lower-secondary school leadership structure of the case school



## C) Upper secondary school leadership structure of the case school



## **APPENDIX 9. Data collection instrument for interviews (school principals and teacher supervisors)**

1. What is the leadership structure of the school?

**Following up questions:** What are duties and responsibilities of teacher supervisors? How does information flow through the leadership structure?

2. How can students' voice be heard in the school?

**Following up questions:** What is goal, vision, values of student leaders? What is leadership and decision making inside student teams? What is the ratio of males to females in the school leadership structure of adults / students?

3. What kind of decision making do student leaders participate in?

**Following up question:** How and when do student leaders communicate and cooperate with the school principal, the leading team, other teams, peer students? How do student leaders make decisions?

4. How are the peer students involved in keeping school?

**Following up question:** How do student leaders and peer students communicate and collaborate with each other?

5. How do students participate in the classroom decision making?

**Following up questions:** What kind of classroom decisions do students participate in? How do teachers involve students in the classroom decision making? How do students make classroom decisions?

6. How does the school environment support students' participation and involvement in school keeping?

**Following up questions:** How do you motivate students to be leaders and how do student leaders motivate peer students? What kind of trainings does school provide to develop student leadership skills?

7. How would you define student leadership?

8. Is there something you would like to add?

## **APPENDIX 10. Data collection instrument for groups interviews (student leaders)**

1. How can students' voice be heard in the school?

**Following up questions:** What is goal, vision, values of your teams? What kind of positions and responsibilities do you have in your teams? How do you make decisions in student teams? Are there equally presented boys and girls in student teams? How do you spread information about your decisions? What have you learnt being student leaders?

2. What is the role of the teacher supervisors/principal/leading team in your leadership activities?

**Following up questions:** How do you effect their decisions? How and when do you communicate with the principal, leading team, peer students?

3. What kind of decision making do you participate in?

**Following up question:** What kind of issues, things do you touch being student leaders?

4. How are the peer students involved in keeping school?

**Following up question:** How do peer students communicate and collaborate with student leaders?

5. How do you participate in the classroom decision making?

**Following up questions:** What kind of classroom decisions do you participate in? How do teachers involve you in the classroom decision making? How do you make classroom decisions?

6. How does the school environment support students' participation and involvement in school keeping?

**Following up questions:** Why have you decided to be student leaders? How do adults help and motivate you? How do you motivate peer students to join your teams? What kind of trainings does school provide to develop your leadership skills?

7. How would you define your leadership activities?

8. Is there something you would like to add?