JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL RESEARCH 243

Kati Närhi

The Eco-social Approach in Social Work and the Challenges to the Expertise of Social Work

Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston yhteiskuntatieteellinen tiedekunnan suostumuksella
julkisesti tarkastettavaksi yliopiston vanhassa juhlasalissa (S212)
kesäkuun 30. päivänä 2004 kello 12.

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by permission of
the the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Jyväskylä,
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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Publishing Unit, University Library of Jyväskylä

Cover picture: Timo Kallio

URN:ISBN 9513918343
ISBN 951-39-1834-3 (PDF)

ISBN 951-39-1806-8 (nid.)
ISSN 0075-4625

Jyväskylä University Printing House, Jyväskylä 2004

ABSTRACT

Närhi, Kati
The eco-social approach in social work and the challenges to the expertise of social work
Jyväskylä, University of Jyväskylä, 2004, 106 p.
(Jyväskylä Studies in Education, Psychology and Social Research
ISSN: 0075-4625; 243)
ISBN: 951-39-1834-3
Yhteenveto: Ekososiaalinen viitekehys ja haasteet sosiaalityön asiantuntijuudelle.
Diss.

This research examines the way that Finnish community based social workers constructed eco-social social work in an action research context in the Jyväskylä region during 1995-2000. Eco-social social work was constructed during the study in a dialogical process between social workers' practical action and practical knowledge. Eco-social social work, as constructed by the social workers in this study, aimed to exercise an influence by structural means at various levels of social work and to give a voice to and act as a voice of marginalised groups. Additionally, eco-social social work seemed to be horizontal, participative and participatory, including an important element of reflection upon eco-social self-understanding. This research consists of five articles and a summary article. The first article introduces social impact assessment (SIA) as one of the tools of structural and preventive social work and concentrates on describing SIA and its relationship to eco-social social work as it was applied in the study. The second article provides a conceptual and historical overview of German, Anglo-American and Finnish discussions on ecological social work. The third article studies the strategies and roles of community based social workers in questions related to the relationship between the living environment and human welfare in a context of spatial marginalisation. The fourth article focuses on how community based social workers conceptualise the relationship between the local living environment and social exclusion and inclusion processes. The fifth article analyses what kind of knowledge base the social workers used in constructing their expertise concerning spatial marginalisation.

Keywords: Eco-social social work, ecological social work, social work expertise, action research, spatial marginalisation, environmental sociology

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My research interests in eco-social social work first began to take shape during my master's studies when in addition to studying social policy and social work at the University of Jyväskylä I was also doing regional studies and environmental policy at the University of Tampere. My master's thesis dealt with the themes of expertise and environmental sociology. However it was not until 1995 when Aila-Leena Matthies and Marja Järvelä hired me to study social impact assessment and eco-social social work at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy in Jyväskylä that I myself began to see the true focus of my own research interests. I was offered the unique opportunity to explore, together with community based social workers, the 'mystery' of eco-social social work, first during 1995-1996 in a national preventive social policy project funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and then during 1998-2000 in an international EU-funded (TSER) research project.

First of all, I am ever grateful to the subjects of my research, i.e. all the community based social workers from the city and the Rural Municipality of Jyväskylä who in 1995-2000 took part in various field projects, seminars and discussion forums – all in addition to their day job. Without their effort this research would not have been possible. In particular, I thank Eija Hiekka and Ansa Leinonen for their co-operation and tireless desire to develop social work practices. I am also grateful to the city planners who took part for the cooperation and for exploring the criteria of sustainable living environment with us. In addition, I wish to thank all those social work students who contributed to this study in the form of project studies or seminar papers.

Professor Aila-Leena Matthies has been my primary source of support in its many meanings throughout my short 'research career'. It was mostly thanks to her that I got into my first research project and that I have been able to pursue the same theme ever since. Her spontaneity, persistence and joy of life both in and outside of academic life have never ceased to amaze me. Professor Marja Järvelä believed in me and supported me in spite of her very busy schedule from the earliest stages of my master's thesis. It was on her encouragement that I ventured to write my doctoral thesis in English. Professor Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski has also given me important direction with various versions of my articles. All three have supported me with many useful comments and positive encouragement over the years. Thank you all.

I also thank all my anonymous referees for their constructive criticisms and commentary on my articles, as well as Sophi, the European Journal of Social Work and the Journal of Social Work for publishing my articles. Thanks are also due to Anneli Pohjola and Rauno Sairinen who reviewed my summary article and gave important and valuable feedback.

I am grateful for the opportunity I was given to participate in the national graduate school of social work and social services during 1999-2001. Thank you for interesting discussions and important questions. Further, I have really

enjoyed the good spirit and humour of the staff at the Unit of Social Work at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy here in Jyväskylä. Being able to share every day work and life in general with you has released some anxiety in making a doctoral thesis. Thank you all.

Finally, last but not least, I wish to thank my closest family, relatives and friends for their support during these years. Timo, I am grateful for your patience and support and for being my 24-hour-a-day PC support. In particular, I want to thank you for sharing with me the chaos of everyday life. Oona, I thank you for creating that chaos and for making academic life seem less serious and important.

Jyväskylä, April 2004
Kati Närhi

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

Thesis is based on the following articles which are referred to in the text by their numbers.

1. Närhi, Kati (2001) Social impact assessment - New challenges for social work?, in Matthies, Aila-Leena, Närhi, Kati & Ward, Dave (eds.) *The Eco-social Approach in Social Work*, Jyväskylä, Sophi, 54-83.

2. Närhi, Kati & Matthies, Aila-Leena (2001) What is the ecological (self)consciousness of social work? Perspectives on the relationship between social work and ecology, in Matthies, Aila-Leena, Närhi, Kati & Ward, Dave (eds.) *The Eco-social Approach in Social Work*, Jyväskylä, Sophi, 16-53.

3. Närhi, Kati (2003) Sosiaalityöntekijät paikallisen tason vaikuttajina, in Satka, Mirja, Pohjola, Anneli & Rajavaara, Marketta (eds.) *Sosiaalityö vaikuttajana*, Jyväskylä, Sophi, 57-81.

4. Närhi, Kati (2002) Social workers' conceptions of how local living environment is related to social exclusion, *European Journal of Social Work* 5(3), 1-13.

5. Närhi, Kati (2002) Transferable and Negotiated Knowledge. Constructing Social Work Expertise for the Future, *Journal of Social Work* 2(3), 317-336.

Copies of the articles are included in the report as attachments.

1 INTRODUCTION

This research is located at the intersection of two ongoing discussions in the social sciences and in social work. The first concerns transitions and challenges of expertise in late modern society and comprises the discussions about the nature of knowledge and different ways of knowing in social work, for instance. The second line of discussion concerns environmental issues arising in both the social sciences in general and in social work in particular.

Expertise has come under mounting challenge in the conditions of late modern society as a result of the living structures of industrial society being eroded by the processes of modernisation. Due to the rapid economic, political and ecological changes of recent years, it has been claimed that earlier industrial society which required cultural coherence and uniformity is being replaced by late modern society. Rather than simple principles and rigid authority structures, this kind of society can be described by diverse and individualised ways of life and constant choice-making. (E.g. Beck 1994; Giddens 1994; Mutka 1998; Eräsaari & Jokinen 1997.)

Indeed, the discussions about the actual transitions related to expertise and further, the discussions about reflexive modernisation and expertise are interwoven with the more general tendency of increasing complexity in late modern society (Beck 1994; 1997; Giddens 1994). As Beck (1994, 2) has argued: "if simple modernization means first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of traditional social forms by industrial social forms, then reflexive modernization means first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of industrial social forms by another modernity". There has even been discussion about a reflexive turn in the social sciences (e.g. Delanty 1997, 135-143) that is thought to have influenced not only our perspectives on modernisation but also our thinking about expertise (also Mutka 1997, 26-27; Karvinen 2000, 10; Satka 1999a, 373). Beck's (1994) central thesis is that the legitimacy of science has come under serious challenge in late modernity. New critical publics are arising that are calling into question the authority of science and its claims to truth. (See also Delanty 1997, 119.) Beck's critique of science raises two issues: the question of the status of knowledge and the delegitimation of the culture of expertise. For

Beck, the reflexivity of risk society[1] opens the category of knowledge to new definitions. Knowledge is no longer defined by the culture of expertise, but instead everybody becomes an expert. (Beck 1994; 1996; also Delanty 1999, 154.) Therefore, the discussions that question professional and scientific legitimacy and certainty have added strength to the idea that not only some professions but rather the whole structure and system of modern professionalism is under pressure of change (e.g. Beck 1994; Giddens 1994; Konttinen 1997, 55-60; Mutka 1998, 14). According to Eräsaari (1998, 99), we have indeed moved into the era of 'negotiated expertise', where judgements are reached through a process of negotiating shared meanings (also Jones & Joss 1995; Parton 2003; Fook et al. 2000).

Social work has also had its share of the transitions affecting modern society and modern professionalism (e.g. Parton 1996, 12-18; Howe 1996, 77-82; Parton & Marshall 1998, 240-244; Karvinen 2000, 9; Mutka 1998, 15; Satka & Karvinen 1999, 121-122; Fook 2002; 4-18). According to Karvinen (1996a, 33; 2000, 11), social work expertise has pursued a path from modern professionalism that believes the world can be controlled towards a new concept that acknowledged uncertain, flexible, multiprofessional and alternative approaches. Increasingly, social work expertise is seen as being constructed in relation to time, place and various local contexts and situations. This also implies a different understanding of the relationship between knowledge, practice and expertise when compared to modern professionalism. (Karvinen 1996a, 63; 2000, 9-11; Fook 2002, 33-37; Parton 2000, 460-461; Fook et al. 2000, 241-246.) In fact, it has been proposed that in late modern society it will be necessary to acquire a new kind of expertise which requires a new kind of reciprocal, evaluative and communicative relationship between different ways of knowing and different types of knowledge (e.g. Satka & Karvinen 1999, 122). This will require a redefining of the relationship between research-practice, service user-citizen, social worker-expert, and researcher-expert with respect to both knowledge production and understanding knowledge. Besides traditional scientific-based knowledge, a model of producing heterogeneous knowledge has been put forward. (E.g. Karvinen 1999b, 383; Gibbons et al. 1994.)

The other line of discussion informing my research is concerned with the emergence of environmental issues and challenges in the social sciences in general[2] (e.g. Hajer 1995; Eder 1996; Spaargarden et al. 2000; Massa & Sairinen 1991; Massa 1998; Haila & Jokinen 2001; Haila & Lähde 2003) and in social work in particular (e.g. Matthies 1987; 1993; Opielka 1985; Hoff & McNutt 1994; Ungar 2002; Coates 2003; Besthorn 2003).

Environmental issues can be approached from the vantage-point of different disciplines. Furthermore, they can be understood as questions between science and practice. (E.g. Massa & Sairinen 1991; Haila & Jokinen 2001.) From a technical point of view, environmental problems can be seen as technical issues that can be solved and managed by means of technical solutions. Among natural scientists, environmental problems are understood as 'critical points' and problems of the nature that can be measured with objective

and scientifically proven methods. The point of view of this research is that of the social sciences. In the field of social sciences environmental issues are understood as problems between human and nature, often as a crisis in that relationship (e.g. Beck 1992; 1994; Massa & Sairinen 1991; Doyle & McEachern 1998; Haila & Jokinen 2001). In fact, Allardt (1991, 15-16), for instance, has argued that environmental problems cannot be adequately resolved by means of technology and biology alone, but we need changes at the societal level as well.

As well as transforming the modern understanding of society, the recognition that culture and nature are inseparable from each other has very much influenced the close connection between humans and nature (e.g. Beck 1992; 1994, 1997; Hajer 1995; Eder 1996; Spaargarden et al. 2000; Massa 1998; Haila & Lähde 2003). Indeed, it has been suggested that the key question raised by environmental issues is no longer whether climate change, for example, really is happening; the substantive question we need to ask is to what extent the Earth will remain capable of sustaining the modern world as we have come to know it. (E.g. Coates 2003, 44-45.) This being the essential question, and knowing that modernity's assumptions and beliefs are strongly embedded in social work theory and practice (e.g. Parton 1996; 2003; Howe 1996; Raunio 2000a), we also have to ask how social work and the concept of sustainable development and environmental issues are connected with one another. We often find a link between environmental problems and social problems, inequality and social crises at both the local and global level (e.g. Beck 1996; Järvelä 1999; Redclift 2000; Helne et al. 2003). In the social sciences there has been some tendency to look upon ecological and social perspectives as mutually exclusive, but the challenge we have today is precisely how to bring them together (Ferris 1993; Helne et al. 2003, 31). This turns our attention not so much to the destruction of the environment in itself as to the underlying causes of that destruction, i.e. modern culture and the modern way of life (e.g. Beck 1994). In other words, environmental questions are very much social questions as well (e.g. Beck 1996, 14-15; Freudenburg 2000). This is also the reason why the social sciences, including the field of social work, cannot afford to look the other way when environmental issues are discussed in either local or global contexts.

All in all, the penetration of environmental issues into public knowledge has made it apparent that nature, however it is understood, has never been beyond the influence of human impact. Instead, nature is everywhere. (E.g. Haila 2003, 194.) Traditionally, social work theories have had quite a narrow understanding of the human-nature relationship (Coates 2003, 45; Ungar 2002, 480; Article 2). Nevertheless, in order to promote a topical self-understanding in social work, we also need to take seriously the relationship of environmental issues and social work so that we can understand and react to different phenomena in late modern societies. Furthermore, social work needs to be aware of its *own* ecological traditions in an era when environmental issues have

become the focal point of extensive public debate and discussion and take a stand on these issues from its *own* viewpoint.

1.1 Locating the research in the traditions of social work

This research aims to locate the connections of social work to the discussions on an ecological or eco-social approach in social work. It examines these already mentioned two lines of discussion, i.e. those of environmental sociology and expertise in the social sciences, from the point of view of eco-social social work.

I understand eco-social social work to emphasise the reciprocal relationship between the living environment and human welfare from the point of view of eco-socially sustainable development (Matthies et al. 2001; Matthies & Närhi 1998; Närhi 1996). Further, I understand eco-socially sustainable development here as a path or trend in development in which ecological and social sustainability are taken into account in the assessment of the direction of current developments. There is by now a fairly broad consensus of opinion that the reasons behind ecological issues often have to do with social development, and sometimes vice versa. The primary question in the eco-social approach has to do with the connections between ecological and social aspects and their sustainability in relation to the concept of sustainable development (see Chapter 3.2). Because of this connection between ecological and social aspects, I have chosen in my work to use the concept of eco-social social work instead of ecological social work. Its purpose is precisely to emphasise the importance of the connection between ecological and social dimensions of sustainability. In the text I use the concept of eco-social social work to refer to the various traditions and discussions of social work that aim to integrate social and ecological aspects in social work. If social policy can be understood as making social aspects political (see Anttonen & Sipilä 2000, 40), then the eco-social social work could be seen as making the connections between social and ecological dimensions more visible and even political.

The theoretical, national and historical contexts of the ecological discussion of social work vary widely and approach the issue in different ways. In Finland, a rather unknown ecological or eco-social theory formation and the practical projects and innovations (e.g. Matthies & Närhi 1998) are not new ideas comparing to the international social work traditions. According to some interpretations the interdependence between ecological and social issues was first recognised more than 100 years ago by the pioneer of social work, Jane Addams, who proposed her own solutions to these interwoven problems in urban contexts (Staub-Bernasconi 1989, 296; Matthies 1993, 240-241; Article 2). Mary Richmond's constellation of human-in-environment can also be considered to lie at the roots of ecological social work traditions (also Article 2). More recently, one can trace two rather different understandings of the meanings of ecology and environment in the social work literature. The first

and more typical one is related to systems theoretical thinking, in which the main emphasis is on the social environment (e.g. Germain & Gitterman 1980; Meyer 1983; Wendt 1994) and which can therefore be called *systems theoretical thinking.* The other view has its roots in the ecological criticism of modern industrial society and in ecological movements; this is called *the eco-critical approach*[3]. It aims to combine ecological and social questions (eco-social question) and asks what kind of social work can be considered sustainable (e.g. Opielka 1985; Opielka & Ostner 1987; Blanke & Sachsse 1987; Kuchhermann 1994; Hoff & Mc Nutt 1994; also Article 2).

Systems theory was a major influence in social work in the 1970s. Two interpretations of the application of systems theory (Goldstein 1973; Pincus and Minahan 1973), both influential in the United Kingdom, had the greatest impact. The later development of ecological systems theory by Siporin (1975) and Germain and Gitterman (1980) gained ground especially in the United States. (Payne 1997, 139.) Barber's (1991) phase of expanding social work and Meyer's (1983) eco-systems perspective also contributed to the impact of systems theories on ecological social work (Karvinen 1993a, 148-149). The general systems view draws an analogy between the way society operates and the way biological systems operate. The interdependence or interaction between the different parts of systems constitutes the basic insight of general systems theory. The system view ensures that people are not thought of as isolated individuals, but as elements within a social system which both includes and excludes them. (Barber 1991, 5.)

When first introduced, the systems approach was understood not just as a conceptual framework, but also as a symbol of unification that was expected to promote the power and influence of the social work profession (Payne 1994, 8). According to Meyer (1983, 27-28), the awareness of rapid social change, the new and multiple demands of the profession, and the availability of new knowledge regarding general systems theory, ego psychology, and ecology all helped to bring about a new era in social work practice. It was at this point that the biophysical environment was omitted from understandings of systems theoretical thinking in the social sciences and social work. The social sciences developed a systems theory which emphasised the social environment in order to distinguish itself from other disciplines. (Payne 1994; also Massa 1990, 221.)

The other line of discussion on ecological social work, the eco-critical approach, has been influenced by environmental movements and environmental sociology. In the 1970s Germany in particular saw the rise of strong ideological movements, alternative movements commonly known as the ecological or green movement (e.g. Opielka 1985). Through modern environmental consciousness[4] (see Massa 1993), the eco-critical approach has also been influenced by environmental sociology and by the concept and idea of sustainable development (WCED 1987). Awareness of ecological crises and risks began to spread from the 1970s onwards, leading to ecological discussions in the social sciences and various public arenas. In social policy and social work, particularly in Germany, this paradigm shift was embodied in the

transformation of the 'social question' into the 'eco-social question' (Opielka 1985; Matthies 1990; also Massa 1992). The eco-critical approach searches for models of ecologically and socially sustainable social policy and social work (Matthies 1987; 1990). One of the characteristics of the eco-critical approach is its critical analysis of the whole process of industrial modernisation from the ecological point of view. Beck's theory of risk society (1992) advanced this thinking in the social sciences (see also endnote 1).

During the 1990s these two lines of discussion have retained their position as distinct traditions within social work, in spite of some measure of convergence which is presented more closely in my second article (also Hoff & McNutt 1994). At the beginning of the 21st century the idea of ecological social work has continued to strengthen and expand, and new perspectives have emerged (e.g. Ungar 2002; 2003; Coates 2003; Besthorn 2003; Bartlett 2003; Keefe 2003). These ideas of ecological social work are mainly based, on the one hand, on deep ecology (Naess 1989) and on the other hand, on social ecology (e.g. Bookchin 1991). The main focus of these discussions is on such themes as ecological activism and the bio-psycho-social-spiritual origins of environmental and social justice. In this research, I locate the roots of eco-social social work on one hand in environmental sociology and on other hand in social work's own eco-systemic thinking (Article 2; see also Chapters 3.1; 3.5).

For my own studies of eco-social social work I have adopted an action research type of approach (e.g. Carr & Kemmis 1986; Hart & Bond 1995; Heikkinen et al. 1999; Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001). My overall aim in this research has been to analyse how community based social workers[5] constructed eco-social social work in dialogue between everyday knowledge and practice, encouraging them during the research process to define eco-social social work within their practice and on the basis of their practical experience and knowledge. One basic hypothesis in action research is that people are indeed capable of learning and creating knowledge by observing their own concrete experiences and by reflecting upon and conceptualising these experiences (e.g. Carr & Kemmis 1986, 186-187; Kiviniemi 1999, 66). Secondly, my aim in this research has been to analyse what kind of challenges the eco-social social work constructed by social workers brings into the discussions about social work expertise in a situation where transitions concerning expertise in general are seen to be taking place in society.

1.2 Composition of thesis

This thesis consists of five published articles and the present summary article. The published articles are numbered and presented here in the same order as they were written[6]: This way the reader can follow how the researcher's thinking and ideas about eco-social social work have evolved during the course of the action research process (e.g. Kiviniemi 1999, 76-80).

The first article *'Social impact assessment – New challenges for social work?'* introduces social impact assessment (SIA) as a tool of structural and preventive social work and describes its relationship to eco-social social work. The article is based on an action research project conducted in the Jyväskylä region that made use of social workers' know-how in community planning processes. It introduces two case studies and drafts a list of criteria for identifying eco-socially sustainable living environments. Article analyses the challenges presented by SIA for social work practice and expertise. SIA requires reflective expertise that emphasises such elements as a holistic perspective, multi-professional networks, and service-user and citizen-oriented approaches. It also requires of social workers to become political as well as common knowledge formation of the relationship between the local living environment and human welfare. SIA implies an understanding of knowledge that involves service users and local actors in the production of knowledge. During the research SIA was in fact seen as a tool with which social workers can collect service users' and residents' knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare and further use this knowledge in order to influence local policy making concerning eco-socially sustainable living environments.

The second article *'What is the ecological (self)consciousness of social work? Perspectives on the relationship between social work and ecology'*presents perspectives on the relationship between social work and ecology. It provides a conceptual and historical overview of the roots of ecological social work in German, Anglo-American and Finnish discussions concerning ecological social work by asking: How has the connection between ecology and social work been understood in the social work literature? And how have the concepts of ecology and the environment been understood? First, the article looks at the classics of social work and studies their commitments in the discussions on the environment vs. social work. It divides the roots of ecological social work into two dimensions: the systems theoretical approach and the eco-critical approach. Further, the article analyses the tasks and roles that the different discussions attribute to social work, offers some conclusions as to what the ecological orientation in social work means, and asks what social work could learn from that orientation in general. The article aims to identify and describe the context of eco-social social work on the basis of the literature as well as examples of social workers' local field projects in the Jyväskylä region. It is argued that the essence of eco-social social work lies in integrating the two traditions of ecological social work into one holistic perspective where the different traditions are seen as forming a continuum. The article comes to subscribe the idea of the politicisation of ecology according to which social work has to understand its role as an actor in either destroying or promoting eco-social sustainability.

The third article *'Sosiaalityöntekijät paikallisen tason vaikuttajina'(Social workers as local policy makers)* studies the strategies and roles of community based social workers in questions related to the relationship between living environment and human welfare in a context of spatial marginalisation at the

local policy level in three residential areas in Jyväskylä. Spatial marginalisation is understood as a concept that aims to open up the complex relations and connections between space and marginalisation. The article addresses the following question: What strategies and roles did social workers adopt as local level actors and policy makers in working to prevent the spatial marginalisation of residential areas and in developing those areas towards the direction of eco-socially sustainable development? Influencing local policies was understood in line with the social workers' own interpretation in terms of horizontal activities in various service user situations and in the networks of residential areas and further in activities concerning city policies. It was suggested that eco-social sustainability is created through cooperation and round table negotiations between various local actors, that is, through horizontal community empowerment.

The fourth article '*Social workers' conceptions of how local living environment is related to social exclusion'* is concerned with how community based social workers conceptualise the relationship between the local living environment and social exclusion and inclusion processes in an action research process. It provides a brief overview of general urban theory concerning the significance of the local living environment in a globalised world and looks at how social workers understand the mechanisms of spatial marginalisation and urban segregation. In addition, the article examines social workers' views on sustainable living environments that support inclusion. It is argued that through their daily work, social workers have a special yet restricted view on social exclusion and inclusion processes. Their knowledge could contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of spatial marginalisation because they work in a position from which they can see the consequences and interdependencies of multiple issues between structural changes and individual survival in the context of the local living environment.

The fifth article '*Transferable and Negotiated Knowledge. Constructing Social Work Expertise for the Future'*aims to find out what kind of knowledge base is needed so that social work expertise can respond to the challenges and the uncertainty of late modern society by exploring the knowledge and expertise of community based social workers concerning the relationship between living environment and human welfare in a context of spatial marginalisation. The article studies social workers' commonly produced knowledge by asking: On what kind of knowledge foundation do social workers base their expertise about spatial marginalisation? What does the use of certain types of knowledge mean from the point of view of social work expertise? The key finding as far as knowledge production is concerned is that social workers draw on many different types of knowledge and ways of knowing in constructing their own theory of practice. The article also introduces a type of 'negotiated knowledge' in which expertise is seen as being negotiated in public with service users. It is shown that by reflecting upon and sharing knowledge about the relationship between living environment and human welfare, for instance, social workers can instead of using universal knowledge transfer knowledge and expertise

into various local contexts by emphasising the local characteristics of each particular context.

In sum then, the first and third articles are mainly concerned with the action of social workers during the research process, while the second article takes a more conceptual approach to ecological and eco-social social work. The fourth and fifth articles describe and analyse the social workers' knowledge and ways of knowing concerning the relationship between the living environment and human welfare in the context of spatial marginalisation.

2 DATA, METHODS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter I describe the data collected for this research, describe the framework of action research, raise some points about reflexive, constructive and political social work related to my study, and finally introduce the research questions of this summary article.

2.1 Data and data collection

The first article is based on a data I collected in an action research framework during 1995-1997. In this research project (which was part of the national 'Preventive social policy' project financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; see Pajukoski 1998) the participating social workers were to apply the social impact assessment procedure (SIA) in field projects within their own districts. (Närhi 1995a; 1996.) I collected the data by means of participant observation. I met the social workers in various situations: at seminars, out in the field and in their offices. The social workers also collaborated with social work students to write reports about their field projects. In addition, I interviewed eight social workers during the project (Närhi 1996). The first article is based on my observations as well as on documents and reports produced by the social workers during three-year process (Närhi 1996; Matthies & Närhi 1998).

The second article written with Aila-Leena Matthies is an analysis of the concept of ecological social work, based primarily on the German and Anglo-American social work literature. We explored this literature in order to find out what is meant by ecology and environment in social work and to identify the roles and tasks of social work in relation to the environment. Our goal was not to provide an exhaustive analysis, but rather to focus on the most widely used and best-known publications concerning the ecological traditions of social work. In addition, part of the data collected in 1995-1997, i.e. the social workers'

descriptions of their projects were also used as illustrations of the eco-social social work traditions applied in the Jyväskylä region.

The third, fourth and fifth articles are based on data collected in the second action research type of framework during 1998-2000. This research was based on a three-year EU-funded (TSER) action research project 'New local policies against social exclusion' in which my contribution was to explore the activities and the knowledge of Finnish community based social workers in a process which concentrated on the issues of spatial marginalisation within a few residential areas in the city of Jyväskylä (see e.g. Matthies et al. 2000a, b; Matthies et al. 2001; Turunen 1999). The social workers had the role of both researchers (knowledge producers) and actors (creating and supporting concrete action) in the field.

We had various strategies of data collection. First, relying on participant observation, I collected data on the social workers' actions and activities in three residential areas (for a description of these areas, see Turunen 1999) in six field projects, meeting social workers and other local actors in various situations (see Article 3). The social workers also wrote short descriptions of their field projects. For the analysis of these data I extracted from the texts all those parts that referred to the themes of participation and influencing: this was for purposes of categorising these data and for analysing the logic on the basis of which the social workers sought to prevent spatial marginalisation in local living environments (seminar paper on data analysis, Närhi 2000a). These data were complemented by research done by social work students in the residential areas. Secondly, I had monthly meetings with the social workers to talk about their knowledge of the relationship between the local living environment and human welfare and how it related to the issues of social exclusion and inclusion in residential areas, that is to the phenomenon of spatial marginalisation. Using the methods of open conversation and shared knowledge formation, my purpose was to find out how the social workers understood the relationship between living environment and human welfare in a context of spatial marginalisation. During the three-year research process some 20 social workers took part in the discussion forum. For the analysis I extracted from the recorded and transcribed texts all those parts that referred to the issues of space, locality and social exclusion and inclusion processes: my purpose was to form a holistic view of how the social workers conceptualised the relationship between living environment and human welfare in a context of spatial marginalisation (seminar paper for analysing data, Närhi 2000b). The third source of data, collected by the social workers themselves, consisted of interviews with 20 service users in two residential areas about their views on the relationship between their living environment and welfare. Furthermore, one social worker interviewed members of the local school's parent-teacher association, and another interviewed a group of long-term unemployed people on a rehabilitation course. Through these interviews, the social workers tried to gain a more holistic view about the significance of the local living environment to people's experienced welfare. The group interviews conducted by the social

workers were recorded. I gathered these data to some extent and they were discussed at meetings at the social offices and also in the social workers' discussion forum. I did not, however, use the social workers' interviews in my analysis and in the articles directly because they were results of their own research. Therefore, the social workers' analysis about the interviews rose up and was seen, for instance, in the discussions at the social workers' discussion forum and in other situations out in the field. The social workers used interviews from the service user and resident perspectives as tools in trying to better understand the relationship between the living environment and human welfare in their own districts and in their everyday practices and further in order to use the knowledge in local policy making. One problem with this data was that even though the group interviews were recorded and partly transcribed, no systematic records were kept of the analysis mainly due to the boundary conditions of social work described in the third article (see also endnote 13). The interviews with service users and the group interviews were both based on the same framework of questions developed by the social workers and the researcher during the research process (see Appendix 1).

The main emphasis in the third article was on the texts written by the social workers as well as my own observation notes. In the fourth and the fifth articles I mainly relied upon the social workers' recorded and transcribed group discussions.

In other words then, community based social workers were the main source of information in my study. During 1995-1997, some 25 social workers who worked either in the city of Jyväskylä or in the Rural Municipality of Jyväskylä took part in the research project. Sixteen of them also took a study course on 'Eco-social approach in social work' at the University of Jyväskylä (see Matthies & Närhi 1998). For reasons that had to do with the nature of the EU research project during 1998-2000, all community based social workers were from the city of Jyväskylä (Matthies et al. 2000a; b). Of the 15 social workers who started the research process, three were senior social workers, eleven basic community based social workers and one project social worker. During the three years workers' activity and turnover varied. All in all some twenty community based social workers participated in the research process. Table 1 summarises the data used in the different articles.

TABLE 1 Summary of the data used

Article	Data
1	'Preventive social policy' project -Documents and reports by social workers -Observation
2	-Social work literature (Anglo-American, German and Finnish) -Data from the first article
3	'New local policies' project Mainly: -Social workers' texts about their field projects -Observation
4	'New local policies' project Mainly: -Social workers' recorded discussion forum
5	'New local policies' project Mainly: -Social workers' recorded discussion forum

In this summary article my intention is not to re-analyse the data described above, for instance from a different point of view; in this sense they do not form a primary source of analysis. Instead, what I propose to do is elaborate upon my earlier analyses in relation to the research questions set out for this summary article (see research questions in Chapter 2.4).

2.2 Action research as a framework

In four of my five articles the data were collected in an action research framework. Action research is a useful approach for studying something that does not yet exist but that is just emerging and is therefore an issue of development (e.g. Carr & Kemmis 1986; Hart & Bond 1995; Heikkinen et al. 1999; Reason & Bradbury 2001). In this study the approach was used for exploring practical and theoretical applications of eco-social social work from the community based social workers' perspective.

Action research is not a research method in the strictest sense of the word, but rather a loose research strategy or an approach. Indeed it is not based on any single theory or school of thought, but more a special way of understanding the relationship between research and the research subjects. Nonetheless there are some common characteristics that various action research orientations share in common, i.e. the aim of producing change, the direct and active involvement of research subjects in the research process, an orientation towards practice and reflexivity towards one's own action and thinking during the process. (E.g. Kuula 1999, 10; Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999, 36; Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001, 5.)

Basically, action research can be understood as a "study of a social situation carried out by those involved in that situation in order to improve both their practise and the quality of their understanding" (Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001, 8). Kuula suggests that in fact all research can to some extent be

regarded as action research in that it usually engenders some sort of change, whether bigger or smaller, in its research 'objects' (either when collecting the data for the research or when publishing a report). However in action research the change itself and the goals of achieving change have a strong presence from the early stages of research design. Very often the researcher and the research subjects will themselves set specific goals of change. (Kuula 1999, 219.) Part of the goals of change in this research were defined in advance (see Chapter 3.1), but some were created by the social workers and negotiated with the researcher in the early stages of the study. During the research process the goals of change unfolded as follows: Its aims were, first, to achieve a better understanding of and to improve the use of social workers' knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare; and second, to develop 'new' ways of working, i.e. 'new' local policies in residential areas with a view to creating eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments.

Action research also includes the idea of dialogical knowledge in which the researcher and research subjects participate equally in the research process (Huttunen & Heikkinen 1999, 165). The basic idea is that everyone is the best expert of her/his own work. The line of action research which emphasises equal participation is typical of the Scandinavian model of action research in which the central philosophy of development is based on Habermas's idea of the possibility of democratic dialogue aimed at developing one's own work. (Kuula 1999, 221.) Action research is then also a participatory process. In this study the aim was indeed to inspire collaboration between social workers, the researcher, and in some cases even service users and other local actors in order to be able to produce heterogeneous knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare and further to create eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments in residential areas (see Articles 1, 3 and 5). Even so the social workers were the main agents and subjects of the study.

Action research is concerned with studying practices, and it includes various emancipatory aims (e.g. Carr & Kemmis 1986; Hart & Bond 1995; Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999; Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001; Reason & Bradbury 2001). In this study the aim was to explore social work practices in everyday situations and to encourage social workers as well as service users and residents to make their voices heard in local policy making and in that way to try to change the practices of social work.

One important element in action research is also reflexivity towards one's own action and thinking during the process. My role in the process was to support the social workers and be a partner in cooperation. The action researcher is supposed to participate in the activities of the community concerned and to work closely with the community in resolving its problems. This implies an inductive rather than a deductive logic of research. Nonetheless the relationship between the perspectives arising from practice and the theoretical perspectives applied in conceptualising the phenomena concerned can be seen as interactive. (E.g. Kiviniemi, 70-71; Kuula 1999, 219.) My aim was to describe and analyse how social workers themselves constructed their

activities, knowledge and logic of action in constructing eco-social social work in and from their practices. At the practical level I participated in various kinds of social worker meetings where we in various actor combinations (social workers, other local actors, e.g. citizens, city planners, land owners, youth workers etc., social work students and myself) discussed and planned the field projects and data collection. I also talked with social workers and tried to encourage them to write about their field projects. Some of these texts were published in the journal of the local social and health care organisation. I also organised a social workers' discussion forum that sometimes was arranged at the social offices and sometimes at the university. Although I considered my role to be that of a partner in cooperation, the action researcher is thought to possess some elements of power in conducting research. I am referring here to the empirical data and written reports that she/he receives or writes during the research process, for instance. Kuula (1999, 228) says that all issues concerning the researcher's action and power can be crystallised into one question: How does the researcher meet her/his research 'objects' on an equal footing as research subjects? Indeed, the question that the researcher should ask is this: On whose side is she/he and what position should she/he take up during the research process? In many cases it is not even possible for the researcher to take up any particular position even if she/he wanted to, but she/he has to slide in-between different positions. I identified myself very much with the roles of social workers and with their aims of change. In this sense it can be questioned whether I was capable of acting as a 'neutral' researcher, or whether I brought forward more positive than critical points about social workers' activities and knowledge formation. On the other hand, my primary goal was indeed to highlight the social workers' potential with regard to their knowledge production and action without neglecting the problems during the process.

There is no way the action researcher can tell in advance how her/his action will influence the research subjects. This is because the researcher is always an outsider in the community; she/he does not usually have a history or future in the organisation. (E.g. Kuula 1999, 223.) I, too, had to carefully explore how far I was able to influence the decisions of the local social and health care organisation, for instance concerning the specialisation process of social work that took place at the end of the study and that could be seen as a tendency opposite to the understanding of eco-social social work as a holistic approach to community based social work[7]. Looking at this process from outside the organisation, I really felt like an outsider. It was also a careful balancing act between withdrawing oneself from and participating too closely in the social workers' activities. Sometimes I felt they were distressed by my presenting challenges and concrete proposals to them concerning the development of field projects. In these situations I probably involved to do things perhaps too much for them, for instance when I took some responsibility in preparing the management system of environmental issues within community based social work. I experienced the same kind of ambivalence in relation to academic discussions. The social impact assessment project (see Chapter 3.1) was a

practical development project in which administrative and academic discourses were clearly identified. In the 'risk' discussions that are an integral part of SIA, the administrative discourse is based on the assumption that risks can be evaluated and defined in advance, whereas some discourses in the academic community call into question the ability of modern society to control and manage risks. In order to find one's own position between these discourses, one has to take distance from both these institutions and discourses. Partly because of these various conflicting interests, I withdrew during the study from the role of a social agent of change and leaned more towards the roles of expert and consultant. This withdrawal was perhaps also seen in the social workers' lack of commitment to the research process and in their comments about "Kati's project": sometimes I felt the only reason the social workers were participating was to contribute to "Kati's project". On the other hand, the research was closely linked to the social workers' practical field projects, which must have strengthened their motivation to participate in the action research.

As was the case in our research project, action research rarely proceeds according to a set plan through specific phases. Instead, it is typically an open and reflective process that ideally responds and reacts to changes taking place during the course of the activities. (E.g. Kiviniemi 1999, 67.) In this study most problems with data collection stemmed from the action research type of frame of reference in the sense that it proved difficult to inspire the commitment that is needed in action research to the common learning process (e.g. Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001, 42-44). It was not always easy to get the social workers to produce and deliver their reports and participate in the discussion forum. Although both management and community based social workers in the Jyväskylä region were committed to participating in the research, the social workers received no support in the form of extra staff or other recourses but participated to the research project in addition to their normal work. Working as they did under constant time pressure, and sometimes having to invest their free time, it was clearly difficult for the social workers to fully commit themselves to the process. Another source of difficulty was the large number of field projects that were going on: this meant I was unable to participate in all of them at the same level of intensity, and therefore decided to use the observation data only for purposes of backing up the other data collected during the research process. On the other hand I did not want to cut down the number of field projects because the social workers had themselves chosen those particular projects as their 'own projects' in the research.

Action research has been categorised in various different ways (e.g. Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001, 27; Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999, 51-55). Hart and Bond (1995, 38-48) divide action research into four traditions or ideal types: experimental, organisational, professionalizing and empowering. The experimental type is associated with the early days of action research and the scientific approach to social problems that characterised Lewin's (1946) change experiments and his goal of discovering general laws of social life to inform policy-making. The organisational type represents the application of action

research to organisational problem solving in order to develop more effective working conditions, while the professional type focuses on professional practice and also reflects an attempt to form new professions, although it is also about developing research-oriented practice. The empowering type, then, is linked to the community development approach, and one of its main features is working with marginalised groups of people (anti-oppressive stance).

This study primarily represents professional action research in that its main focus is on social workers' action and knowledge in and from their practices. On the other hand, at some stages of the research there were also features of the organisational type of action research (the aim to develop more effective practices) as well as the empowering type (the aim to emancipate both social workers and other local actors to influence local policies). This kind of overlap is not at all uncommon (e.g. Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001, 27; Hart & Bond 1995, 38-48).

Compared to traditional academic research, action research is more practice-oriented. Traditional views on objectivity do not apply here because the researcher is clearly and unequivocally part of his/her own research. (Eskola & Suoranta 1996, 96-97.) In action research the researcher participates closely in the process, monitoring and observing situations that develop in the process and trying to analyse them. The results of action come from the collaboration between the researcher and the group he/she is researching. The main aim in analysing data in action research is to find key concepts, categories and dimensions which best describe the practice concerned (Kiviniemi 1999, 77.) The action researcher is accountable both to the norms of the scientific community and to the research subjects who often expect practical results from the research (Kiviniemi 1999, 80). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend a procedure in which the results and interpretations of the study are evaluated by the research subjects themselves ('member checking analysis'). During the study I wrote a number of texts, both in Finnish and in English, on the research process, submitting them for comment to the social workers. During our group discussions I also tried to make sure I had properly understood the social workers' ideas. Some social workers also participated in the seminars of an EU research project in Jyväskylä and abroad where they had the opportunity to comment on my presentations and bring forward their own views about the study. It can be argued that during the course of the research process we used what has been described as member checking analysis (also Kiviniemi 1999, 80). My interpretations, then, can be described as the outcome of our common negotiations - although in the final analysis they are still my interpretations about the research process which reflect my previous knowledge and ideas (see Chapter 3.1).

Karvinen argues that social work research should focus on exploring the basic practices and processes of social work in which the essence of social work is constructed. It is particularly important to identify these practices in late modern conditions where social workers are flexibly creating new structures and practices in their everyday work. (Karvinen 1999, 291.) From this point of

view action research might have a lot to offer to social work research in that it places particular emphasis on the temporal and local characteristics of knowledge. Knowledge collected by intervention is considered to be valid at that specific moment in time and place within which it is collected. The same 'result' can therefore never be produced again after the intervention because the baseline situation has by then already changed. (Huttunen et al. 1999, 114.)

It can be argued then that action research in general, and in this research in particular, was an important approach for purposes of studying a fragmented and a more contextual reality in late modern society. Combined with group discussions and participant observation, action research served in this study as a specific research strategy in which the social workers' activities, the group process and the shared reflection produced interesting information about social workers' logic of action and ways of knowing about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare at a particular time and in a particular place.

2.3 Reflexive, constructive and political social work research

Some social scientists have used the concept of reflexive modernisation referring by this term to the growing interdependence of different societal processes (e.g. Beck 1994; Giddens 1994; Beck 1996; Beck et al. 2003). For Beck, reflexive modernisation means "self-confrontation with the effects of risk society that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society" (Beck 1994, 6). Beck takes the view that reflexive modernisation is about the self-confrontation of modern society's invisible and unintended side-effects and that reflexive modernisation is accelerated by 'not-known' rather than by scientific knowledge. However, Beck's theory of risk society and reflexive modernisation is not only about a society that produces new kinds of dangers, but also creates opportunities for emancipation of agency from previously constraining structures (Beck 1994; 1996; 1997). Beck (1994, 28-31) argues that the process of emerging sub-politics calls into question the concept of expertise and expert knowledge in general, and he predicts this will encourage the development of a form of discussion society. He regards round table negotiations as one solution to the problems present in late modern society.

The theory of reflexive modernisation is also seen to be connected to the more general discussion in the social sciences concerning knowing and expertise characterised as reflexive and discursive turn (Delanty 1997, 135-143; also Satka 1999a, 373; Karvinen 1999b, 379; 2000, 10; Mutka 1997; 26-27). Delanty (1997, 136), for instance, argues that "the fact that nature for late modern society is seen to exceed its carrying capacity – a situation that has given rise to new questions about the democratization of sciences and technology – points to the broader issue of the public role of all of knowledge".

It has been argued that this kind of reflexive turn appearing in social sciences has also opened up new opportunities for social work to re-evaluate its own practices and the relationships between knowledge and society and knowledge and social agency (Karvinen 1999b, 379; 2000, 10; Satka 1997, 36; 1999a, 373; 2000a, 184; Parton 2000, 452).

According to Karvinen (1996, 32-34, 65-66), modern social work in Finland has been dominated by the idea of using professionally controlled methods which was replaced during the 1990s by the idea of reflexivity. In her analysis of Finnish social work in the late 1990s, Satka suggests that even though there has been talk about various crises in social work ever since the 1970s, the crises that happened during the 1990s created a new kind of uncertainty which affected both practitioners and researchers in the field of social work. Satka argues that in earlier transitions, solutions have been sought more from research and scientifically based interventions, i.e. from more rational practices. By the end of the century it has been questioned whether knowledge brought in from the outside or imposed from above to practitioners can resolve the problems of everyday social work. (Satka 1997, 27.)

There has been quite a lot of discussion in social work about what kind of knowledge and understanding about knowledge and ways of knowing late modern expertise of social work should be based on (e.g. Fook 2002; 2001; 2000; 1999; Fook et al. 2000; Parton 2000; Parton & O'Byrne 2000; Karvinen 1999a; 2000). A common feature in these discussions, according to Satka, is the understanding of knowledge as socially constructed in social relations and as relational truth. She argues that when structures of action and relations are understood as socially constructed and as being constructed in practice, they also become amenable to change through action. (Satka 2000a, 186-187.)

This kind of understanding about the nature of social reality and about knowledge is characterised as social constructionism. There are many arguments for and against constructivism in social work (e.g. Houston 2002, Parton 2003; Fook 2002; Peile & McCouat 1997; Parton & O'Byrne 2000; Karvinen 2000; Satka 2000a; Raunio 2000b). Houston (2002, 848) argues that social constructionism has replaced the traditional, received ideas of social work and become what Rojek et al. (1988) describe as the new orthodoxy in social work theorising. Even so, there are many attempts to avoid strict constructionism and naïve realism in these discussions (Peile & McCouat 1997, 356; Raunio 2000b, 328-330; Karvinen 2000, 12; Satka 2000a, 187). According to Satka the constructionism of many researchers is more or less practical rather than theoretical or philosophical: "It might be described as an awareness about the uncertainty in the late modern world and accepting that professional expertise can no longer be static space, but rather it has to be produced all over again in negotiations with various stakeholders". (Satka 2000a, 187; see also Jones & Joss 1995; Parton & O'Byrne 2000.)

Satka's idea about the surrounding social reality is constructed both communicatively and causally. Satka takes it that agencies' action is constructed on the one hand in societal relations, and on the other these same relations are

the preconditions for their action. This is why action cannot be explained simply by suggesting that actors construct their own worlds, as many constructionists believe. Although Satka favours social constructionism, she understands action and reality as social constructions that may also have their existential side. (Satka 1999a, 375-376; 1999b, 23-24.) "It is not contradictory to understand situations, activities and institutions to be, on the one hand, social constructions and, on the other, to see their own existential reality: They have finally constructed in certain ways, in a certain time and in certain places" (Satka 2000b, 40-41; also Karvinen 2000, 13; Heiskala 1999, 199).

Beck (1996) for his part, when considering his theory of risk society, argues that realism and constructionism do not have to be mutually exclusive, but feels that 'realist constructionism' might be possible. Naive constructionism, he says, tends to be blind to the dangers of risk since it reduces everything to a construction, whereas naive realism fails to see that risks are mediated by social actors. Beck argues that the nature of industrial production, the social organisation of technology and the institution of science all bring about risk, while social actors construct risk in various ways. For Beck then, risk is a cognitive category in politics, but it also refers to an objective reality. (Beck 1996, 4-7; Delanty 1999, 158; 1997, 133.)

This research is based on an understanding of social reality that follows the views of 'realist constructivism' (Beck 1996) and of Satka in the sense that I understand that social workers produce and change reality by means of language and interaction. On the other hand, although the reality of human beings is interpretative reality, one can find in many respects the limits concerning the structures of nature and the structures of humans as biological beings (see also Heiskala 1999, 199).

Further, I also take the view that since language is not only considered to represent the 'real' world, the idea about objectivity and the 'ultimate meanings' of concepts is called into question. When we study 'reality', we not only describe our research object but also create it and change its meanings. Therefore, different discourses with various constructions may also lead to different actions and different policies. (Helne 2003, 19-20.) I understand that the language social workers use changes their practices. How social workers understand, know and share their meanings about the relationship between living environment and human welfare, for instance, based on their practical experiences has an impact on how they work in practice. In this sense the discussions and different traditions of ecological social work have also had an impact on various discussions, which have then developed in certain directions (see Article 2). In this research process, too, eco-social social work was understood through certain discussions and traditions which further developed and directed social workers' action and the logic of their actions (see Chapter 3.1). Still, I also believe that the practices and action of social work have an effect on social workers' ways of understanding social situations and on their analysis and conceptual understandings of those situations. Action influences knowledge and vice versa.

Payne (1997, 1-25) argues that the development of practices and theories of social work is also a political question in the sense that these are constructed in dialogue between actors (social workers, service users, teachers and researchers). This is why, according to Karvinen (2000, 22), the formation and character of knowledge and theory has to be located in the processes where the conditions for action are constructed. It has been argued that theory formation in social work is based not only on conceptual knowledge systems, but rather theory and practice are seen as being integrated in practice (e.g. Karvinen 1999b, 296; 2000, 25; Raunio 2000b; 335-337; Drury-Hudson 1999, 149-150; Article 5). This is why crucial interpretations about how to direct practices are seen to take place in processes and in changes in practice where, for instance, partnership between practitioners and researchers is possible. (Karvinen 1999b, 296; 2000, 26.) The purpose of this research was indeed to study social workers' actions and understandings about eco-social social work in their own everyday working environment at social work offices and out in the field where social workers produce their 'own theory' about the relationship between living environment and human welfare in and from their practices with various local actors.

Further, Leonard (1997) argues that the knowledge of social work and social policy should be also political in the sense that it should allow for the construction of various voices and perspectives. Apart from top-down expertise, there is seen as constituting a kind of horizontal expertise in which partnership between practitioners, service users and researchers is crucial. Horizontal in this sense means the reconstruction and redefinition of the relationships and ways of knowing between service user-citizen, practitioner-expertise and researcher-expertise. (Karvinen 2000, 25.) This also involves redefining knowledge production and ways of knowing in social work. Karvinen (1999b, 295; 2000, 24) talks in this connection about the model of producing heterogeneous knowledge (also Gibbons et al. 1994). This was indeed the setting that this research aimed for by engaging social workers and service users and other local actors as knowledge producers, to help form together knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare. (See more Articles 1, 3, 4, and 5.) Therefore, it can be suggested that the social workers in this study understood their expertise as being based not only on a 'top down' or 'bottom up' type of expertise, but rather as a horizontal activity.

2.4 Research questions for the summary article

This summary article aims to bring together the main results of my study, focusing on the relationship between eco-social social work as constructed by the social workers taking part in the study and the discussions concerning

social work expertise. Leaning on my five earlier articles, I will here be addressing the following questions:

1. What kind of eco-social social work did the social workers construct during the research process (in dialogue between practical knowledge [knowledge] and practical projects [action])?
2. What kind of challenges does the eco-social social work constructed by the social workers present to the discussions about social work expertise?

3 CONSTRUCTING ECO-SOCIAL SOCIAL WORK

My earlier articles include no detailed description of the research process because the main purpose in those articles was to locate specific themes concerning my research questions. This is why I shall spend here some time illuminating the process and the starting-points from which the social workers constructed eco-social social work. For reasons of credibility, too, is it considered desirable to report on the processes of action research that form the basis of the interpretations of the results (e.g. Kiviniemi 1999, 79). The research spanned a five-year period from 1995 to 2000, with the conceptuality arising from the communication and negotiation between the social workers and the researcher. Nonetheless, it must be noticed that there is nothing factual as such that could be presented as a research description. Research report is always in some sense the outcome of the researcher's own interpretations. (E.g. Kiviniemi 1999, 77; Eskola & Suoranta 1996.)

3.1 The construction process

The research process got under way in autumn 1994 when Aila-Leena Matthies launched a project called 'Eco-social approach in social work': the work was to be carried out as part of a national preventive social policy project at the Department of Social Policy, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. I myself joined the project in 1995. The project was planned and developed at the Centre of Teaching Social Issues in Jyväskylä (Jyväskylän opetussosiaalikeskus [JOSKUS]), a forum of cooperation concerning social work practice and research issues for partners from the university and practitioners from the field of social work. This kind of cooperation has long-standing traditions in the Jyväskylä region (e.g. Tuikka 1992; Hiekka 1993). The project's aim was to deepen social workers' understanding about how the living environment and human welfare are connected and to encourage social workers to bring forward their expertise concerning this relationship. Furthermore, the aim was to bring this knowledge

forward in a preventive sense and to develop practices in which social aspects would be taken into account in local policy making. (Närhi 1995a; 1996.)

In particular, the project's aim was to identify social impacts by means of social impact assessment (SIA). In general terms, SIA is seen as a process of identifying the future consequences of current or proposed action concerning individuals, organisations and social macro-systems (Becker 1997). It usually concerns itself with the effects of changes such as the construction of a new road or power station, and it typically concentrates on the local level. Finally, SIA is about examining who 'wins' and who 'loses' in the planning process, which means it is also about equality and justice concerning the costs, risks and benefits to different groups in society (e.g. Wolf 1983). Our main concern was to apply and develop SIA processes from the point of view of social work. These types of assessments conducted by social workers were aimed at bringing forward to local policy making concerning eco-socially sustainable living environments. Social work was understood in the project as a practice that influences structures and aims to change them. The social workers who took part were engaged in field projects they had set up themselves: the idea was that through these field projects, it would be possible to define eco-social social work practices and social workers' roles in making SIAs. The criteria for eco-socially sustainable living environments were developed by the social workers together with social work students and city planners in the first phases of the project. (Närhi 1995a; 1996; Article 1.)

The definition and understanding of the concept and practices of eco-social social work by Aila-Leena Matthies (1987; 1990; 1993) had a major impact on how the project took shape. For her, ecological social work was on the one hand a critique of alternative and ecological movements; on the other hand, she saw it as a holistic perspective on the relationship between the local living environment and human welfare through systems theoretical thinking, the main emphasis being on the former (Matthies 1993). My own understanding of the research theme was influenced not only by my social work education, but also by sociological discussions concerning questions of the environment and expertise in which environmental questions and transitions of expertise are seen as an integral part of the critique of modern society (Närhi 1995b).

These were among the elements that led us to search for eco-social social work in the direction of structural and politically oriented social work (e.g. Viirkorpi 1990). Social impact assessment was seen as one of the tools with which that kind of social work could be concretised. This orientation also created specific expectations with regard to the nature of eco-social social work and in this way narrowed our perspective somewhat. At this point our work became perhaps too heavily project- and method-oriented, instead of our trying to broaden the perspective and see eco-social work as an approach; and on the other hand too authority-based, instead of our looking upon eco-social work also as a grassroots movement (e.g. Okulov 1998; Närhi 1996; Matthies & Närhi 1998).

However, the practical experiments of social workers and social work students diversified and expanded our notion of eco-social social work. At the time we also began a more intensive study of the literatures related to ecological and eco-social social work (Matthies & Närhi 1998; Article 2). The social workers themselves wrote articles about how they applied in practice the ideas of eco-social social work. In these articles they located various discussions and dimensions of ecological social work traditions. Eco-social social work was seen as a socio-political approach (Salpakoski 1998; Luomala 1998), which was concretised for instance, in an SIA of a shopping centre, and as systemic and holistic thinking, which was concretised in holistic analyses of local living environments (Kumpulainen-Väistö 1998; Hietaharju 1998; Nirkkonen 1998; Lummukka 1998; Leinonen 1998; Mäkinen-Kanerva 1998). The eco-social social work was also acknowledged as life-political and action-oriented practice (Jukkala 1998; Keränen 1998; Hiekka 1998).

The concept and perspective of spatial marginalisation was introduced as a concrete example of the relationship between living environment and human welfare in connection with the three-year (1998-2000) EU-funded research project 'New local policies against social exclusion'. This concept and perspective well concretised the complex relationship between living environment and human welfare and was therefore adopted for use in this study. The partners in this research project were the universities and cities of Jyväskylä in Finland, Leicester in the UK and the university of applied sciences in Magdeburg and city of Magdeburg in Germany. The British partners' emphasis was on a social action type of emancipatory orientation. The German partners aimed at developing eco-social theory. (Matthies et al. 2000a; b.)

The research in Jyväskylä was concerned to explore the strategies developed by community based social workers with a view to preventing spatial marginalisation[8] in residential areas and to promoting eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. The main focus was on the relationship between the living environment[9] and human welfare[10]. In other words, spatial marginalisation[11] was seen as a problem or crisis related to the relationship between one's living environment and welfare. It was assumed that if this relationship could be improved, that would help to lessen spatial marginalisation. If people are content with their living environment, then their welfare will also increase, which in turn will reduce at some extend the risk of spatial marginalisation. This understanding of the concept of spatial marginalisation emphasises the individual's subjective experience of the relationship between living environment and human welfare. It was assumed that this subjective information would be conveyed, at least in part, to social workers through their contacts with service users and other local people in residential areas. Therefore, it was expected that social workers would have substantial knowledge that they could bring into round table negotiations about eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and sustainable city policies. (Matthies et al. 2000a; b; Närhi 2000c.)

The British partner's ideas of social action (Ward & Boeck 2000; Boeck et al. 2001) had a major impact on the thinking and activities of the Finnish social workers involved in the project. They began to talk about questions of power and the working methods of emancipatory social work. This brought forward a strong emancipatory nature to social workers' action and thinking. (Närhi 2000.) The social workers' discussion forum made their discussions and knowledge formation about the relationship between living environment and human welfare and various practical action strategies (e.g. social action and local policy making) important elements in the construction of eco-social social work. These included concrete proposals on how to make social work a more influential and citizen-centred practice by taking into account the criteria of an eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environment (see Appendix 2) (see also Närhi & Hiekka 2000).

Figure 1 illustrates the main steps and stages involved in an action research study. Figure 1 illustrates two separate action research projects and their main perspectives. A key factor that to a large extent made possible the close cooperation between research and practice in this setting was the framework provided by the JOSKUS organisation. Its long traditions of cooperation were also part of the reason why some social workers took such an active part in the research (see Matthies & Närhi 1998).

Still it has to be stated that the cooperation between social workers and city planners, for instance, that was in some extend explored in this study (e.g. Article 1 and 3), is not at all common in Finland, even though social work does have its own roots and traditions in community work and community development in Finland (e.g. Lahti-Kotilainen 1985; Harju 1988; Mikkola-Henttonen 1989; Vinnurva 1991; Mikkola 1996; Bäcklund & Schulman 2000; Karjalainen et al. 2002; Roivainen 2002). It is for this same reason that the results of this action research cannot be generalised to all Finnish community based social workers. Nonetheless eco-social social work, as constructed by the social workers, did seem to have a strong connection with the concepts of community based social work, structural social work and community work; in fact, all of them were in some sense starting-points at the beginning of the research project. All in all, the ways in which eco-social social work was understood in this project were to an extent determined in advance by its starting-points. Initially, the understanding of eco-social social work was too heavily project- and method-oriented and social workers' knowledge formation too authority-oriented, i.e. the perspective taken on eco-social social work was too narrow. This was partly due to my own lack of experience as a researcher, and partly to the lack of any advance knowledge as to what exactly social workers knew about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare, and further what kind of action would be possible on the basis of that knowledge. During the social workers' knowledge production it became clear that it was more a matter of not-knowing (Parton 2003)[12] and knowledge based on service user experiences rather than pure authority-oriented and vertical knowing and action (see Articles 4 and 5). In addition, the project- and method-orientation

expanded during the process into an approach type of thinking about eco-social social work, and various eco-social dimensions were created and experimented in social work practices. Still, it is important to stress that Figure 1 simply highlights the most important steps and stages of the process, as I have understood and interpreted them: the research process was certainly not as straightforward as this Figure gives to understand. Instead, it involved various steps forward and backward, for instance with regard to the social workers' action and motivation to participate. The process was also very much shaped and influenced by the boundary conditions of social work that define social work in a very limited sense.[13] (See also Närhi & Hiekka 2000.) In action research there are no 'vacuums' anywhere, but all discussions and discourses during the research process had an impact on how the project unfolded.

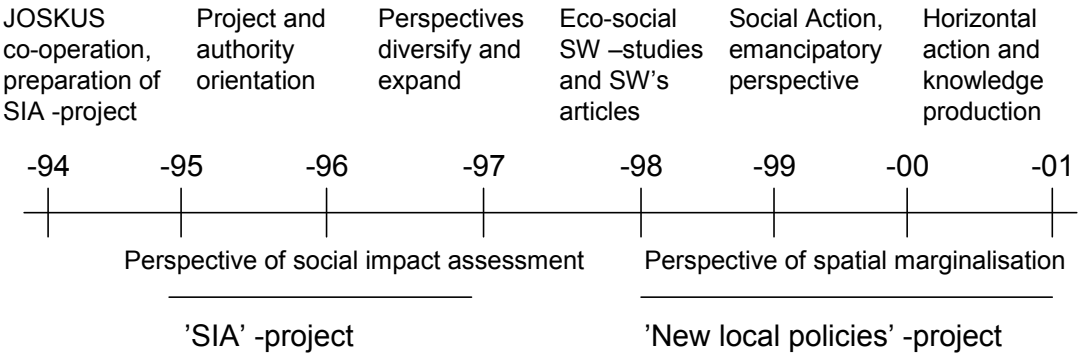

FIGURE 1 Main steps and stages of the action research

3.2 Eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments as a goal for eco-social social work

For Matthies (2001), the eco-social approach in social work is an umbrella concept that provides a useful vantage-point for studying the interface of ecological and social issues. In Jyväskylä, eco-social social work has been based on the idea that social work and social workers have evidence about problems in the relationships between human communities and the living environment (Matthies 1993, 247). The baseline hypothesis in research has been that social workers have special knowledge about how ongoing changes in welfare society are affecting people's everyday life. In their capacity as local welfare providers and street-level intellectuals[14] (for this concept see Ife 1997; Satka 1999c), social workers can see the consequences of social marginalisation in local communities, for instance. Being in this position, they also have a duty to make sure service users' voices, points of view and 'weak signals' are heard; i.e. they should become active policy makers. (See also Matthies et al. 2000a; b.) In this

sense social work was seen in this study as a practice that should also aim to influence the course and direction of policies.

In this study the content of local policy making was linked to the idea of eco-social sustainability (Matthies et al. 2001; Matthies & Närhi 1998). It is not easy to offer an exhaustive definition of eco-social sustainability or development. The concept ties in closely with the concept of sustainable development, which has been at the centre of much interest and debate since it was coined in the mid-1980s (WCED 1987). The concept of sustainable development has been criticised on various accounts. It has been said, first of all, that the concept promises changes without defining those changes in details. Likewise, it has been pointed out that the concept is politically easy to accept because it has been understood not to require any real changes in existing power structures. (E.g. Helne et al. 2003, 110-114.) There are counterarguments as well, though, which suggest that sustainable development does require a substantial rethinking of the terms of policy calculation and policy making (e.g. Doyle & McEachern 1998, 35, 140). Nevertheless the concept of sustainable development has been widely accepted and adopted in Western industrial societies as a catchphrase in the ongoing efforts to resolve environmental problems and issues. It has been suggested that consensus has been possible because the concept is so vague and because it so neatly wraps together environmental protection and economic growth, both of which are considered necessary for a successful campaign in solving these issues (e.g. Sairinen 1994, 31; Doyle & McEachern 1998, 35, 140). Therefore, the concept is best to be understood as an administrative and political compromise (e.g. Helne et al. 2003, 110-114). In any event the spread of the concept of sustainable development has been thought to reflect the global growth of environmental consciousness (e.g. Sairinen 1994, 31; Doyle & McEachern 1998, 35, 140).

In spite of all the criticism then, there is broad agreement that sustainable development is a diverse concept that includes both ecological, economic, cultural and social dimensions. Aimed at a compromise between economic efficiency and social and ecological sustainability, the concept of sustainable development is widely acknowledged as being important in planning ecologically and socially sustainable living environments. The goal is not to offer just one theory or model as to where we should be heading, but rather to see sustainable development as a general and normative goal the attainment of which can be evaluated with criteria that are specified and updated through practical experience. (E.g. Haila 2000.) Therefore, sustainable development comes back to the question of how to strike a balance between nature and humans (Beck 1992; 1994). Initially the emphasis in discussions and action concerning sustainable development was indeed on ecological sustainability and its economic impacts, but later on as the attention has turned to the key themes, dimensions and substance of sustainable development, growing importance has been attached to social and political institutions and power relations as well as cultural dimensions (Helne et al. 2003, 95-96). In fact nowadays it is recognised that the solution of environmental issues and

problems is closely interwoven with the elements of social and cultural sustainability (e.g. Sairinen et al. 1999, 146-147; Rannikko 1997, 142-146). At the 2002 UN conference on sustainable development in Johannesburg, for instance, the most important theme was the reduction of poverty (Helne et al. 2003, 95-96). All in all, sustainable development should be understood as an ongoing process geared to finding the ideal balance and combination of ecological, social and economic elements (ibid., 119).

The concept of sustainable development has also been used for purposes of describing and justifying certain features of the local living environment. However, there has been only very little discussion as to what the concept actually means in practical terms. In Finland some researchers have studied the ecological sustainability of suburbs (e.g Lodenius 1995), the utopias of the ecological city (e.g. Koskiaho 1997) and even tried to find models of ecologically sustainable residential areas (e.g. Harmaajärvi 1992) – although these models are rarely used in today's planning that is geared to ever greater efficiency and economy. The principles of sustainable development have also been largely ignored in the renovation of suburbs built during the 1970s (e.g. Viirkorpi 1997).

In what sense did then the social workers accept the goal of sustainable development during the research? Initially the idea to promote eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments was the aim of the SIA project and adopted in the JOSKUS organisation (see Chapter 3.1). Still the basic idea of sustainable development and the search for social workers' role in this context was given to the social workers 'top down', presented to them as a kind of visionary and even normative idea and concept with the support of legislation (e.g. EIA) and general environmental and political agendas (e.g. Local Agenda 21 etc.). Nevertheless, even though the goal was given in advance, it was the social workers who chose the path they should follow in pursuing that goal and who in this sense 'filled' the concept and goal concerning eco-social sustainability. The discussion about structural social work[15] in the Finnish context also helped to make the idea and goal more understandable to the social workers at the beginning of the research process (see also endnote 17). Figure 2 illustrates the frame of reference in which the social workers taking part in this study constructed eco-social social work. The main focus of research was on the relationship between the built local living environment and human welfare and its eco-socially sustainable development. As can be seen in Figure 2, during the course of the research process in dialogue between knowledge and action the social workers turned their attention to promoting eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. On the basis of the research data collected and my earlier articles, I argue that eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments were promoted both through social workers' practical knowledge and by means of structural and emancipatory social work. All the corners of the triangle in Figure 2 were seen as important elements in constructing eco-social social work. The numbers in the Figure locate the places of the published articles in the dimensions of the concepts. These dimensions

did not emerge in a linear time sequence, but unfolded during the course of the research in an interactive process.

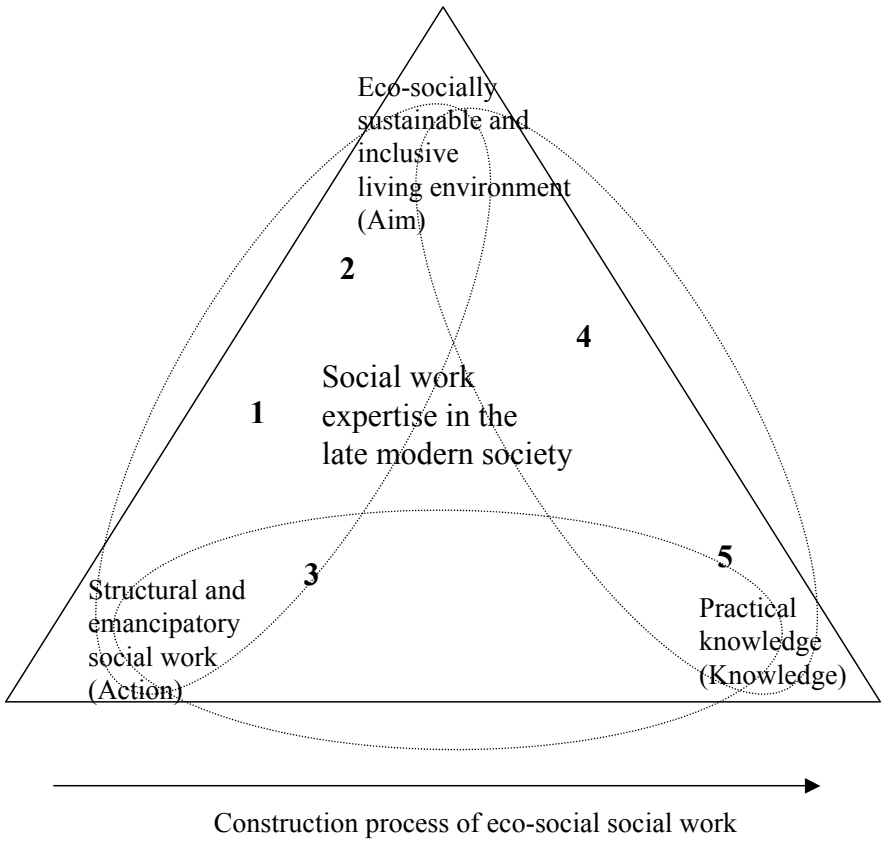

FIGURE 2 How did the social workers construct eco-social social work?

Next, based on my earlier articles, I will proceed to reconstruct and summarise the social workers' construction of eco-social social work by asking the following questions:

1. What kind of knowledge did the social workers have about eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and spatial marginalisation (the conditions of eco-socially sustainable living environments) and on what kind of ways of knowing this knowledge was based (knowledge)?
2. What kind of concrete action did the social workers pursue in order to produce eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments (action)?

In other words:

3. What kind of eco-social social work did the social workers construct during the study?

3.3 Practical knowledge about eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments

In this chapter I address the question as to what kind of knowledge the social workers had about eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and spatial marginalisation (the conditions of eco-socially sustainable living environments). Furthermore I am interested on what kind of ways of knowing was this knowledge based.

Recently there has been much discussion within the field of social work as well as on its fringes about the kind of knowledge, knowledge base and ways of knowing on which social work expertise should be grounded in late modern society (e.g. Fook 2000, 2001; Fook et al. 2001; Parton & O'Byrne 2000a, b; Parton 2000; Satka, 2000). Rather than being based on structural and universal knowledge, the expertise is thought to be created in a process of dialogue (e.g. Fook 2000, 106). Recently the emphasis in the search for social work expertise has been on practical knowledge and on the everyday wisdom of practitioners. The understanding of knowing has now been changing, moving in a direction where it is recognised that knowledge and the subject cannot be detached from each other. In the current discussion on the knowledge base of social work, reality is recognised as a context-related and knowledge as a socially constructed phenomenon. (E.g. Fook 2002; 2001; 2000; 1999; Satka 2000a; Parton 2000; Parton & O'Byrne 2000; Karvinen 1999a; b; Raunio 2000b.)

I argue that the ways in which knowledge is constructed and the question of what kind of knowledge base lies behind expertise have important implications with regard to how expertise is understood. This is why it is important to study the elements of the knowledge base on the strength of which social work expertise could respond to the challenges and the uncertainty of the late modern world.

My research idea (Närhi 1995a; Matthies & Närhi 1998; Matthies 1993) was based on the hypothesis that community based social workers possess special knowledge about human communities and their relationship to the environment. Matthies (1993) suggests that social workers have micro-level practical knowledge about the sustainability of residential areas.

During the research process knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare was crystallised into a list of criteria. Referring to these particular criteria, the social workers aimed to identify the main features that should be taken into account as minimum requirements in planning and constructing sustainable living environments. The main quality factors consisted of three aspects (Närhi 1995a, 1996) that were described in my first article:

1. Social and ecological diversity of the environment (including criteria like diversity of the population structure and diversity of the community structure).

2. Coping in everyday life and access to activities (including criteria like sense of community and access to social networks, the availability of services, and the minimisation of physical and social risks in the living environment).
3. The quality and state of the environment in a broad sense (including criteria connected to the physical, psychosocial and cultural living environment).

As illustrated in the first article, the criteria was based on the social workers' knowledge in which they emphasise the diversity of the living environment in a broad sense and supporting coping in everyday life. It was based on the everyday knowledge and experiences of social workers and on the idea that there does not exist any absolute model of a sustainable living environment because it is based on values and is dependent on the experiences of the person who is evaluating it. Furthermore, different quality factors are emphasised in different residential areas and by different stakeholders. The list of criteria was applied in many of the social workers' field projects in the research. It was also developed and used as a background frame of reference when the social workers carried out service user and resident interviews during the research process.

3.3.1 Perspective of spatial marginalisation

The concept of spatial marginalisation that was taken onboard in connection with the EU research project helped to concretise from one particular angle the question of eco-social approach and the relationship between the living environment and human welfare. On the other hand, it provided a background and a context in which to study social workers' actions and knowledge production. Furthermore, as was pointed out in the fourth article, spatial marginalisation was also considered to define and set conditions for eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. It was understood as a concept that aims to open up the complex relations and connections between space and marginalisation.

Byrne (1999, 110) for instance, points out that spatial exclusion has become the most visible and evident form of social exclusion. A number of urban researchers argue that the only way to reach a proper understanding of contemporary marginalisation is through an analysis of how the structures of social space are related to those of physical space (e.g. Bourdieu 1999, 123; Nylund 2001, 25; see more Article 4). The phenomenon of spatial marginalisation is here taken to mean how space, and locality in particular, affects marginalisation processes (Article 4). There are at least two interpretations about the role of locality. On the one hand, locality emerging through globalisation is considered to have an impact on people's experienced welfare and on spatial marginalisation; on the other hand, there is the view that it has no such impact (e.g. Nylund 1999; Wacquant 1996; Mignione 1996; Massey 1994). There is a long tradition which considers locality to be a significant factor in explaining place-bound identity development, though it has become quite clear that it is difficult by means of empirical research to establish

for instance whether poverty is related to a certain location, to the place, or vice versa (e.g. Nylund 1999; Mignione 1996; Massey 1994). This research opens up one particular perspective on this complex relationship, i.e. that of community-based social workers.

What, then, did my data reveal about social workers' knowledge and their ways of knowing concerning the relationship between living environment and human welfare in a context of spatial marginalisation? Basically, as presented in the fourth article, the relationship of space, locality and social exclusion, that is the phenomenon of spatial marginalisation, appeared to the social workers as a highly complex one in which it was difficult to establish the specific causalities between different elements.

Still, the social workers' conceptualisations of spatial marginalisation made it quite clear that there is no advanced or advancing marginality (concept see Wacquant 1996) in Finland. For example, we do not have areas in which 'no-one-goes', not to mention 'no-one-goes-out-areas' (concepts see Nylund 2000). Social exclusion and marginalisation were understood by social workers as multilayered concepts that referred to the accumulation of social problems, implying a dynamic rather than a static phenomenon (see Närhi 2000; Turunen et al. 2001; see also endnote 8).

During their group discussions the social workers were agreed in their view that the trend of globalisation both accentuates and de-emphasises the significance of the local living environment and spatial marginalisation processes. They underlined the important meaning of the local living environment concerning spatial marginalisation because they saw that certain groups of people were dependent both temporally and spatially on their local living environment. The social workers recognised that for some groups of people, such as families with children, older people, disabled or underprivileged groups, and the long-term unemployed or poor people, the local living environment means more than it does for others who are more mobile and wealthy. Scarce resources were seen to limit possibilities for everyday mobility and moving out of the residential area and, in some cases, accelerate processes of spatial marginalisation. Then again, it was understood that social relations, for instance, are no longer necessarily confined to local living environments. In some cases the social workers felt that scarce resources and local informal social networks also had positive impacts on experienced welfare in serving as stepping stones to positive development circles in residential areas and in this way inhibiting spatial marginalisation processes. (See Article 4.) In this sense the social workers' understanding of spatial marginalisation was based on an idea of positive opportunities. In a sense this understanding was also a somewhat relational in that the social workers appreciated that someone can be marginalised in one place but not in another, and that from one point of view someone can be seen as marginalised from society but from other point of view they are not necessarily marginalised (see Helne 2002, 33-37).

Helne argues that locating and defining marginalisation involves certain risks: one has to be very careful when talking about social question of becoming or transforming into urban question because this might lead to a residential area becoming stigmatised as a spatial projection of marginalisation. This may lead to the thinking that the whole problem of marginalisation can be resolved by managing the problems within one residential area. (Ibid., 35-36.) Roivainen has noticed the same risk in Finland. The discourse on urban underclass and problem suburbs turns the attention away from the economic conditions of poverty and shifts the focus to the victims and street addresses of those people. (Roivainen 1995, 91-92; 1999, 123; also Helne 2002, 35-36.)

This phenomenon was also raised in the discussions during the research process. The social workers understood that it is important for them to try to influence both the living environments directly and the structures and practices that define the quality of living environments. In the social workers' action this was seen as in their various ways of working at various different levels. (See Chapter 3.4; also Article 3.)

By recognising the importance of the local living environment to marginalisation and inclusion processes, the social workers, in fact, identified during the research process the basic elements of inclusion and sustainability in the local living environment. Through their shared conversations and practical knowledge, the social workers redefined what they regarded as the key elements of a sustainable and inclusive living environment that would help to prevent marginalisation in the residential area and enhance sustainability for positive inclusion cycles.

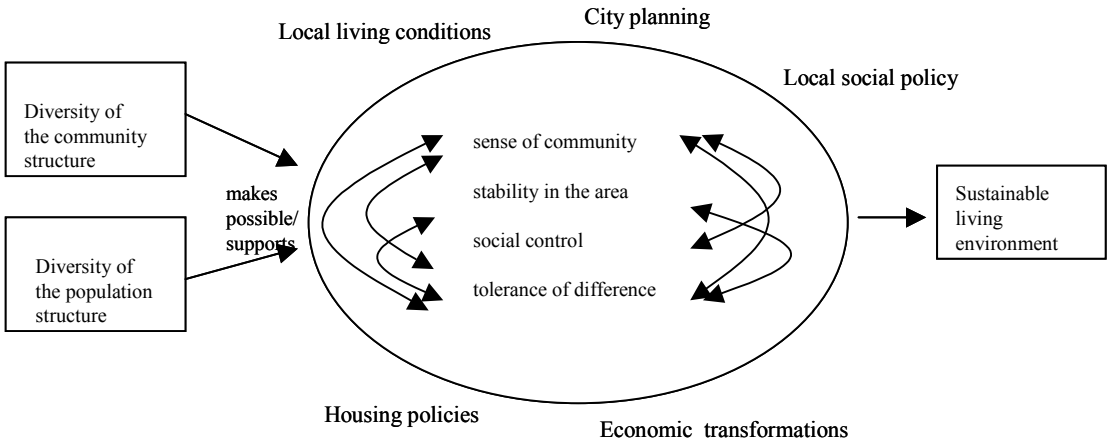

FIGURE 3 Social workers' logic in developing a sustainable and inclusive living environment

As illustrated in Figure 3 and analysed in the fourth article, the social workers took the view that a sustainable living environment which supports inclusion consists of several elements. The diversity of community structures and the population structure was considered to make possible a sense of community, stability in the area, social control and tolerance of difference in the area. These

criteria are closely interwoven with one another and have multiple interdependencies and causalities that are often very difficult to analyse. These interdependencies, together with the local living conditions in residential areas and city planning, housing policies, economic transformations and local social policy, were considered to have an impact on whether or not an eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environment is created.

3.3.2 Social workers' ways of knowing

The concept of knowledge is often used incoherently. In a narrow definition, knowledge is taken to refer to scientifically proven research results. The broader view implies that knowledge encompasses the whole area of human experience, both personal life and work experiences. (E.g. Koivunen 2000.) According to various studies, a social worker uses many different types of knowledge in his/her work. The practitioner's knowledge comprises knowledge derived from empirical research, theoretical knowledge, personal knowledge, procedural knowledge and practical knowledge. (Raunio 2000, 335; Drury-Hudson 1999, 149.) Fook et al. (2000, 9) argue that when professionals learn practice, they must indeed develop knowledge about the phenomenon, i.e. substantial knowledge, and knowledge about how to use that knowledge which they call skills.

Theoretical knowledge has usually been defined as 'knowing that', propositional knowledge, or knowledge of definitions. Practical knowledge, on the other hand, is typically conceived of as maker's knowledge, i.e. technical knowledge and doer's knowledge or user's knowledge, or 'knowing how'. (E.g. Dreifus & Dreifus 1986, 4.) We may also refer to tacit knowledge that is not captured in words, and articulated knowledge that may be phenomenological or objective, formal and empirical knowledge (e.g. Sarvimäki 1988, 25-38). Empirical knowledge is considered to be objective, based on facts, describing and giving explanations to various phenomena. It is also described as knowledge based on scientific research. (E.g. Nurminen 2000.)

Empirical knowledge in the sense of empirically based scientific research was not used as an argument in the social workers' ways of knowing, but empirical data consisted rather of observations collected in and from practice; in this sense knowledge was based on empirical information. In fact, practical knowledge can be seen as a critical alternative to knowledge produced by means of scientific research. Whereas scientific knowledge is collected by applying methods of systematic information collection and analysis, practical knowledge is collected through the experiences of service users. (Raunio 2000, 335; Drury-Hudson 1999, 149.) In fact, the most popular argumentation of social workers was to refer to *the experiences and the case examples collected in and from practice with their service users*. They told about cases that had happened just recently or that they remembered for some reason or other. Using concrete examples, they described some broader observations about the relationship between living environment and human welfare in a context of spatial marginalisation.

As illustrated and analysed in the fifth article, the social workers used various ways of knowing in creating their knowledge about eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and its conditions, that is, about spatial marginalisation. On basis of the fifth article, I argue that the social workers' ways of knowing did not grow out of empirically based scientific studies or theoretical models in the traditional sense, but rather out of knowledge derived from the local and contextual experiences of service users which were created from experience, by doing, in action, together with service users and in cooperation with other local actors in the residential areas. Apart from personal knowledge and knowledge based on values and beliefs, the social workers' knowledge comprised a lot of information and facts about how various systems, processes and policies worked as well as service users' decisions in their everyday lives. Social work expertise concerning spatial marginalisation seemed then to be based on practical knowledge that involved various types and elements of knowledge, such as value knowledge, factual knowledge, and procedural knowledge and, in some sense, silent knowledge[16]. Practical knowledge was shared during the action research process and it became a common body of knowledge shared by all the social workers who took part. Sharing knowledge and reflecting upon it seemed to be a precondition for producing a common body of knowledge.

As illustrated in the fourth article, the social workers' knowledge concerning the relationship between the living environment and human welfare is not necessarily 'new', but based on their knowledge formation, they seem to work in a position from which they can see the consequences and interdependencies of multiple issues between structural changes and individual survival (see also e.g. Kananoja 2000). This means they can see, for instance, that experienced welfare in residential areas may depend on such factors as the level of rents, the standard of equipment in flats, the size of flats available, processes of housing policies, the lack of economic resources or public spaces, and the lack of power and visions in the area. These factors may also push people and communities into negative circles. Therefore, it can be argued that the practical knowledge of social workers does have relevance or at least potential in promoting and influencing eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and local policies. (See Articles 4 and 5.)

As the social workers recognised during their discussion forum and their activities out in the field, there are no universal criteria for eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. In an ideal situation all stakeholders should have the opportunity in each case to define the kind of living environment to which they want *to commit themselves*. This would lead to a common dialogue and interpretations about the qualities and about the significance of the local living environment in the globalised world. This kind of negotiating interaction that allows for many different types of voices and knowledge might also be a step towards more constructive social work (see Parton & O'Byrne 2000) in which all stakeholders are jointly involved in constructing change in residential areas.

It is possible to identify two types of knowledge production in the research process. On the one hand, the social workers' produced knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare in relation to and in negotiation with other actors (service users, residents and other local actors) (see Chapter 3.4; Articles 1, 3, 4 and 5). On the other hand, they also produced knowledge in a process of learning from each others' experiences as well as in and from their practices (Articles 4 and 5).

All in all, during the social workers' knowledge production it became clear that their knowledge base was more about a not-knowing (Parton 2003) type of knowing and knowledge based on service user experiences rather than pure authority-oriented and vertical knowing and action (see Articles 4 and 5).

3.4 Structural and emancipatory social work

This chapter describes the concrete action that the social workers pursued in order to prevent spatial marginalisation and to promote eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments.

The social workers understood the inherent complexity of the relationship between the living environment and human welfare and the phenomenon of spatial marginalisation (see Figure 2, Chapter 3.3). They therefore also understood that in order to have impact on this relationship and on the phenomenon of spatial marginalisation, they would need to pursue various line of action.

3.4.1 Social workers' ways of working

The social workers acted in many different ways and at many different levels. Because the third article is written in Finnish I shall here briefly describe the social workers' activities and projects upon which my analysis and interpretations are based (see more Articles 1 and 3; Närhi & Hiekka 2000). They were:

1. Huhtasuo-forum, a civic programme seen from the point of view of social work
2. Community means of supporting parenthood in the suburb of Huhtasuo
3. A renovation project in the suburb Pupuhuhta and its effects from the point of view of social work
4. Cooperation between the public sector and the third sector in the suburb of Keltinmäki – locating new routes for young people
5. Cooperation between the Social Insurance Institution's local office and community based social work in the suburb of Huhtasuo – social work for individual young people

6. The residents' perspective in the housing project in the Lutakko residential area
7. SIA of a shopping centre in the Rural Municipality of Jyväskylä

Huhtasuo-forum aimed at providing local residents and authorities with a forum for open discussion and cooperation. The purpose was to facilitate the participation and strengthen the independence of local residents in their own living environment. In general, the strengthening of a sense of community through local cooperation and negotiations with local actors was seen as a potential strategy for preventing marginalisation. The social worker involved in the forum played an important role in negotiating the agendas of various groups of stakeholders, such as local authorities, entrepreneurs and citizens, and in concretising the activities arranged in the area. (See more Leinonen & Hiekka 2000.)

In the field project on community means of supporting parenthood, the aim was to prevent the marginalisation of local families in the Huhtasuo area. Social workers encouraged parents to participate in various groups and to discuss the problems and challenges of parenthood. They were also supported in creating peer networks for sharing their problems of coping in everyday life.

In the Pupuhuhta renovation project, the aim was to prevent marginalisation both at the level of the residential area and at the level of individuals. Renovation work was carried out in an attempt to resolve the area's image problems, while residents were encouraged to participate in socio-cultural activities at the local community centre. The social workers wanted to influence the physical renovation project by introducing not only technical but also social aspects into the process. They did this by supporting groups to take a stand on the physical renovation plans and by mediating between different actors in the area. Additionally, the social workers and in some cases social work students interviewed service users and other local residents about the renovation project and about their relationship to their living environment. The interviews and discussions were aimed at gaining a more holistic and systematic view on living conditions in the area. (See more Hiekka & Luomala 2000; Malkamäki & Mattila 2000.)

In the suburb of Keltinmäki, the project on 'Cooperation between the public sector and the third sector in the suburb Keltinmäki - locating new routes for young people', social workers identified through intensive local cooperation a group of young people with whom they wanted to work more individually. They tried to motivate the young, long-term unemployed people to participate in a rehabilitation course and supported them during the course with a project worker. Following the three-month course local social workers interviewed the young people about their life situations and plans. Out of the ten service users who started the course, four completed it. The conclusion drawn by the social workers was that for these particular young people, social work should be able to provide even more preventive individual services and rehabilitation: this would be crucial in helping them find a direction for their lives.

In Keltinmäki the social workers also arranged meetings with local authorities, a local third sector association, entrepreneurs and residents in an attempt to increase cooperation and set up a community centre in the area. Sense of community was also fostered by the local newspaper, first launched by the local authorities and social work students and later picked up by local residents. Local residents and a local third sector association additionally took responsibility for running the community centre.

In the Huhtasuo youth project, marginalisation was prevented by means of rehabilitation courses organised and financed by the Social Insurance Institution's local office. Discussions and interviews were arranged with long-term unemployed young people to find out how they saw their own situation. In addition, two social workers arranged group interviews with young people at a cookery club to gain insights into their views on identity and sense of community in the area. (See more Leinonen & Hiekka 2000; Haikola & Hiekka 2000.)

The youth projects in the Keltinmäki and Huhtasuo suburbs were motivated not only by the interests of social workers, but also by new legislation in Finland which requires that unemployed youths, in order to qualify for welfare benefits, submit written plans concerning their employment or education. If they fail to do so, their welfare benefit may be reduced. The role of social workers was to support young people in preparing these plans.

In the Lutakko residential area the job of social workers consisted mainly of cooperation with other local actors (some of whom were less with familiar with social workers such as land owners, city planners and constructors). Further, the purpose was to contact local residents and talk with them about current issues concerning their living environment in order to encourage them to participate in local policy making. Specific projects included the planning of local services for a residents' meeting place in the area. The social workers also conducted service user interviews and resident surveys with social work students about the meaning of the living environment. Block association meetings arranged by the social workers and a local newspaper launched by local actors were also seen as important elements that were seen to lead to a more reciprocal discussion between stakeholders in order to plan and to construct a residential area by taking into account the questions concerning sustainability. (See more Kojo et al. 2000.)

In addition to the field projects, the social workers provided during the research process social impact assessments for city planners in a planning process of supplementary building within the city (e.g. Leinonen 2000). They also participated in developing the city's management system of environmental issues, including the inner and outer environmental impacts of social work (Ympäristöasioiden… 2000). The management system of community structure that the social workers took part was a planning process comprising the whole city and its various administrative sectors in order to secure the balanced development of different residential areas within the city.

I also used in my overall analysis a case study concerning the SIA of a shopping centre in which community based social workers evaluated the social impacts of a local shopping centre in the Rural Municipality of Jyväskylä by interviewing local residents and authorities and by using their knowledge and practical experience of the relationship between living environment and human welfare (for more details, see Article 1).

As I described in my third article, the social workers' ways of working were crystallised into both *tailored and individual* working methods, including various courses organised for young people and service user and resident interviews. The second type of working took place at the *community and residential* level. This type of working was performed, for instance, in connection with the Huhtasuo-forum and through participating in planning of the Lutakko residential area. The third type of working was understood as *preventive* work at the *city policy* level, which included making social impact assessments for city planners in a planning process of supplementary building within the city and SIA of a shopping centre in the Rural Municipality of Jyväskylä. Structural and influential social work was seen feasible to practice at all these levels.

The social workers' logic of action seemed to be that in order to be able to promote the conditions for eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments, they would need to influence both the subjective conditions of individuals and the boundary conditions of local living environments and society in general. Without tailored and individual services it is not possible to construct knowledge about the lives of service users into preventive community planning. Contacts and cooperation with local actors in residential area are also needed so that the social worker can see more holistic picture of the area and its people. Unless they try to influence community planning, social workers will not be able to prevent the tendencies of marginalisation arising from the city structure. Therefore, without the connection of various ways of working it is not possible to do holistic and sustainable social work in the long run. Additionally, the social workers were agreed in their view that the grassroots level and the authority level, not to mention the policy-maker level, remain wholly ineffective without mutual cooperation and communication at each level. They called this type of orientation '*horizontal work*'. (See Article 3; also Närhi & Hiekka 2000.)

The social worker's success in local policy-making seemed to depend on various factors. As is illustrated in my third article, the boundary conditions of social work and the role one is able to take in everyday practice define the social worker's opportunities to act as a local policy maker. In this study the possible roles were to act as a mediator (e.g. Juhila 1997) in local contexts and in to use indirect ways of influencing (e.g. Banks 1999) (see Article 3).

3.4.2 Questions of power in emancipatory social work

The social workers' actions and aims of influencing horizontally were also about the distribution of professional power and a new kind of understanding of the concept of power in general. In this research our British partner's ideas of

a social action type of orientation (e.g. Ward & Boeck 2000) very much influenced the way that social workers began to question their own as well as other actors' power relations. The questions of power and 'otherness' emerged during the course of the research process, and especially in the discussion forum they were highlighted as important aspects of eco-socially sustainable social work.

There are countless studies in the history of social work that have advocated new views and ideas about more political, influential and horizontal, that is emancipatory social work. In the literature there are references among other things to radical social work, community work, structural social work, advocacy and empowerment (e.g. Pease & Fook 1999; Abramovitz 1998; Leonard 1997; Payne 1997; Mullaly 1998; Fook 1993; Freire 1973; Swedner 1983[17]). In addition to their criticism of traditional social work which it is said has a tendency to lay the blame on the victim and to preserve the status quo, these approaches also share a common focus on the structural determinants of personal problems and on social change (Pease and Fook 1999, 8; also Fook 1993; Payne 1997; Mullaly 1998.)

In recent years these traditional and critical strategies and theories of social work have come under attack from late and postmodern challenges (e.g. Pease & Fook 1999, Fook 2002; Pease 2002). In particular, the new ways of understanding the concept of power has been seen as an important challenge in social work. It is argued that the modernist concept of power can have unintended disempowering effects (Pease 2002, 135). Minow (1985; according to Parker et al. 1999, 150-152) argues that the problems social workers have experienced in defining and applying the concept of empowerment reflect the underlying problem of their understanding of power. Social workers can be seen as being in a position where the very work they are doing to empower people might at once be interpreted as disempowering. In fact, different understandings of power are seen to shape the ways in which the models of social work practices are constructed (Pease 2002, 139).

According to Parker et al. (1999), the modern understanding of the concept of power is that actors can be divided into two groups, the powerful and powerless: "empowerment is done to you by others or done by you to others" (Baistow 1994/1995, 38-39). Foucault (1977; according to Pease 2002, 139) agrees that the traditional dichotomous understanding of power is inadequate, questioning the polarisation of such categories as powerful and powerless. Therefore, the modern understanding of power is seen to lead to the dilemma of difference and to Foucault's (1977) concept of normalising power (Parker et al. 1999, 150-152). For social workers, the dilemma of difference (Minow 1985) is the question of how they can identify and provide services to a group without at the same time labelling and stigmatising that group. Normalising power, in modern society, means separating people from one another, labelling some of them as deviants. (Parker et. al. 1999, 150-152.)

By referring to the principles of classical community work, the position of social workers at the local level can be one in which they effectively support

and work together with residents and/or service users. Ideally, the social worker will withdraw into the background as soon as local actors are able to carry forward the process on their own (e.g. Twelvetrees 1991; Kemp 1995). However, the social worker may also choose to continue to exercise his or her power, in spite of grassroots participation that will uphold the dichotomy between the powerful and the powerless. In this research process the social workers had indeed to face the dilemma of difference. In the youth projects in particular (see Article 3), groups were formed by social workers and individuals were classified in advance by labelling them as unemployed youths. Although the work with young people did involve an element of reciprocal communication, they were required to comply with a specific set of rules in order to make sure they would not lose their benefits. In other field projects the context and approach was quite different: all the actors were on a more or less equal footing and no one was labelled, at least in advance. The overall setting of the EU research project, for instance was of course also open to the criticism that by trying to prevent social exclusion, it supported the traditional notion that there are 'others' and those who are 'different'. However, Hoy (1986) has pointed out that both empowered and disempowered people are part of the same network of power relations. This perspective has it that power is not owned, but rather it is exercised.

So, if we are all part of the same network of power relations, it would obviously be useful to try to overcome the duality of powerful/powerless. This might be possible by allowing service users to articulate their views and knowledge about their life. This would imply not just consulting service users and other local residents, but encouraging them to bring forward a substantial and interpretative framework that is necessary so that proper services can be provided to them. Parker et al. (1999, 153) argue that service user-centredness and contextualisation undermine the traditional hierarchy and in this way allow traditional expertise to be challenged. In this situation it would be important for social workers to reflect upon their own exercise of power and to support horizontal negotiations. Healy (1999) suggests that we need to understand and construct power by negotiating power relations separately in each context.

How, then, were power relations negotiated in the social workers' field projects? All of these projects were geared towards citizen-oriented action. Some projects had better success in this regard than others. One possible explanation lies in the different tools and means that were applied. One might well ask whether there was enough room for genuine discussion, or whether current problems really were defined in common negotiations. Was power really shared, was the dichotomy between the powerful/powerless really overcome? In general, as analysed in the third article, the social workers tried to challenge existing power relations by widening the arena of local stakeholders and negotiations. Through their own involvement in various interactional situations, their aim was to construct new ways of communication and power relations in local policy making processes. They also encouraged residents to

get involved as agents of change in an attempt to change the boundary conditions of their lives and to improve their living conditions. By creating meeting places and local newspapers with local people, they aimed to influence structures between various systems, i.e. stakeholders, by offering new types of interaction and spaces for local actors and this way tried to change the quality of the interaction. Furthermore, by conducting interviews to gather information from residents and service users and by using that information in discussions with other stakeholders and to write articles in journals, the social workers made their action more public. In their discussions with citizens and other local actors, the aim was to construct new understandings about local welfare concerning eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. Changing structures, i.e. interaction between human agencies, was also seen to have the potential to change the existing power constellation. (See Article 3.)

It has been argued that the fragmented, complex and ambivalent reality of late modern society requires of social workers new, special skills and competencies (e.g. Pease & Fook 1999; Mutka 1998). Alongside the top-down type of expertise, there is also need for horizontal expertise, for a mediator or interpreter role in-between different systems and contexts (Beck 1994; Karvinen 1999a). My interpretation of the data collected in this study is that in emphasising the importance of horizontal expertise, the social workers were saying that their work ought to involve more horizontal cooperation with different actors rather than their holding on to their own power positions. I argue that the social workers understood during the course of the research process that if the needs and interests of service users and local actors in general were not taken into account in local policy making processes, then they would have little chance in the long run of promoting eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and further sustainable social work.

3.4.3 Different 'spaces' of power

Raitakari (2002, 53) argues that social practices in social work often place actors either in the role of 'an active maker' or in that of 'a passive taker'. Both practitioners and service users have power of decision over their work and life, but in certain contexts both can be forced into spaces where they have no alternatives or no power.

This idea of different spaces of power emerged in this research process in the sense that it seemed that both efforts to influence local policy making and empowering activities succeeded to different extents in different positions. Both residents and service users on the one hand and social workers, on the other, clearly had various different channels and opportunities to define their spaces of power in order to take part in local policy making processes. In situations where social workers were more strictly bound by legislation, i.e. in tasks that are regarded as 'legislation-based work' (such as granting welfare benefits), they had quite limited scope to define their own work. In this same context the opportunities for service users to get involved were equally limited. In the youth projects, for instance, with the strict controls imposed by general social

policy, social workers had very limited scope in their negotiations with young people.

In social work where there was, as one social worker put it, "greater freedom of movement", i.e. where there was no element of control involved (such as in the Lutakko planning project and in many other field projects), residents and service users were also better placed to participate and influence change on a very different scale. In these situations social workers and residents often felt they were very much 'in the same boat'. Social workers also had greater freedom to define their own actions and were in a better position to negotiate about power-sharing. So, there were on one hand, activities based on the law, such as working with young people, and on the other, activities based on communication and negotiation, such as the Lutakko project and the Huhtasuo-forum. However, as is shown in the third article, the main strategy of promoting eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments seemed to be negotiation and common participation and interaction in an attempt to find solutions to local questions.

Different spaces of power can then be divided into two ideal models as proposed by Saaristo (2000, 81): the model based on law and the model based on communication. In the first model, interaction is defined and determined by administrative rationality, while in the second model solutions are reached via common negotiations. Saaristo further asks whether communicative action always is communicative. He argues that communication can also be used as a strategic tool of goal attainment. (Saaristo 2000, 130.) From one point of view it can be argued that the social workers in this study aimed with their actions and negotiations with local actors to use communication as a strategic tool for achieving their goals, i.e. to use communication and negotiations as ways of influencing to make the matter common. On the other hand, in the Lutakko project, for instance, the social workers addressed the issue of whether the residents had any power over the authorities. Residents were involved in the planning processes in order to commit them to the common goals. As the social workers put it: "Residents are held as 'prisoners' in the meetings". On the other hand, this is clearly a matter of perspective: whether residents are held as 'prisoners', may firstly be about committing residents to the common goals. Or else whether the various and different, perhaps contradictory voices residents might present during the meetings, not always parallel to common goals are allowed. In this case the question is indeed about negotiation and communication, not about administrative rationality.

3.4.4 Reconstructing the relationship between social worker and service user

So, there seems to be a paradox in being a professional and being committed to empowerment. An essential part of the definition of a profession is based an assumption of expert knowledge. (Pease 2002, 137.) Given that one of the ways in which power is exercised, according to Pease (2002, 141), is for some discourses to become dominant over others, empowerment can be understood as producing alternative knowledge rather than seeking to seize or take power.

In this sense emancipatory work would, in fact, be producing a different kind of knowledge (ibid.).

Therefore, Pease (2002, 142) argues for creating a new dialogical relationship between social workers and service users in which alternative forms of knowledge are constructed. This kind of relationship requires social workers to challenge the status of their own professional knowledge and to consider the ways in which it may disempower service users.

As I have understood from the data of the research illustrated in the fifth article, the knowledge of the social workers who participated in the study was mainly based on service users' experiences and accounts of negotiations with service users. This means the question of knowledge does not have to do entirely with traditional professional knowledge, but rather with practical knowledge based on service users' experiences. This type of thinking allows for a more fruitful way of understanding the relationship between social worker and service user as a horizontal rather than a vertical relationship.

All in all, Leonard (1997, 169-175) argues that the strategies of the emancipatory project consist of collective resistance and welfare building. This means bottom-up participation in decision-making and new forms of welfare as defined by a wider circle of stakeholders in society. I argue that the first steps of this kind of emancipatory project can be seen in the social workers' activities and action in their search for eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. During the research project the social workers also took their first steps towards defining and understanding new concepts of empowerment and participation. As described in the third article, they tried to overcome the powerless/powerful dichotomy by sharing opportunities for participation and influence with local actors. The social workers' action was emancipatory in the sense that their aim was to encourage people to make their voices heard and to support them in these processes. They frequently took on the position of discussion and negotiation partner with the local people. All in all, I argue that during the research process the social workers' logic of action developed towards the idea that structural social work cannot be done without emancipatory ways of working and thinking, as presented in the third article. Although the field projects were not as radical as some of the community development projects that have been carried on outside of Scandinavia[18], they were still engaging learning processes for the social workers contributing to this study and revealed many important issues concerning questions of power and the possibilities of local policy making in local contexts.

3.5 What kind of eco-social social work did the social workers construct during the study?

The development of social work since the late 19th century has been accompanied by a variety of ecological approaches (see Article 2; Ungar 2002;

Coates 2003; Besthorn 2003). The way that the environment and ecology have been understood in social work has depended on the context and societal situation in which the concepts have been used and studied. The theoretical, national and historical contexts of the ecological discussion in social work vary widely and approach the issue in different ways.

As was argued earlier in this article (Chapter 1.1) and also in my second article, it is possible to trace from the social work literature two rather different understandings of ecology in social work. The first and more typical one is related to systems theoretical thinking. Its main emphasis is on the social environment (e.g. Germain & Gitterman 1980; Meyer 1983; 1995; Wendt 1994) and it can be called *systems theoretical thinking*. According to this more 'traditional' view, the living environment is seen as an integral part of human welfare. In other words, systems theoretical thinking takes a holistic perspective on the relationship between the living environment and human welfare and views that relationship as interactional. It is believed that this kind of holistic view will help the social worker to perceive the problems, challenges and resources connected to the relationship between the service user's living environment and welfare.

The other, more 'radical' view has its roots in ecological criticism of modern industrial society and ecological movements, and can be called *the eco-critical approach*. According to this view social work should react to environmental questions on its part. It can be argued that the ecological social work tradition from this perspective can be traced back to transitions in modern society in the sense that the deterioration of the living environment has led to a re-evaluation of the relationship between society and nature. The view aims to combine ecological and social questions (eco-social question) and asks what kind of social work can be considered sustainable. (E.g. Opielka 1985; Opielka & Ostner 1987; Blanke & Sachsse 1987; Kuchhermann 1994; Matthies 1987; 1990; 1993; Massa 1998; Hoff & McNutt 1994.)

How, then, did the social workers contributing to this particular study locate their action within the framework of eco-social social work? According to the social workers, eco-social social work has developed from the principles and ideas of community work. In other words, they did not view it as a new approach, but rather as having long traditions in community level social work activities. In other words community work was thought to be in transition because of emerging new questions and challenges, such as those presented by the environmental issue. The environmental question in turn was seen as so-called social issue in the sense that the global environmental problem, for instance, the accelerating greenhouse effect, was not (yet) thought to have been concretised in service users' lives or in social workers' everyday practices. However, because nature and culture cannot be separated from each other (e.g. Haila & Lähde 2003), it can be argued that social and environmental questions are in fact two different sides of the same phenomenon and that way connected to each other. The environmental issue, then, can be ultimately reduced to the question of the modern way of life and whether it is possible to maintain

modern culture as we have come to know it (e.g. Coates 2003). At the residential area level, the relationship between living environment and human welfare or the problematisation of that relationship was concretised to the community based social workers, for instance as long-term unemployed youth who had lost their motivation to live and plan their life ahead in the sense that social workers understood unemployment as having a 'binding' effect in relation to the local living environment. The problematisation of the relationship between living environment and human welfare was also concretised as children having problems at school and as their indecisive parents in some council housing areas in the sense that social workers argued that a difficult living environment where there were for instance alcoholics and other risk factors requires more of parents than a living environment that is more secure from a social relations point of view. Furthermore, according to the social workers many of their service users felt that problematic residential areas had a negative impact on their welfare. The problematisation of the relationship between living environment and human welfare was also seen as an aim to solve social problems by reconstructing physical structures, or in fact, as fears that the same mistakes that were made in building the physical and social living environment during the 1960s and 1970s in Finland with using a 'simple suburb format' are being made again today. Consequently, the social workers emphasised eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments, with the emphasis on the social dimension. In the social workers' knowledge, this was seen in their list of criteria for eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments, in which the emphasis was on social sustainability; secondly, in their action, which was reflected in their setting up a variety of particular round table negotiation positions.

Briefly, negotiating positions appeared in the study at various different levels. These were: an individual and tailored level of work, a participatory residential area level of work, and a preventive city policy level of work. The field projects at the individual and tailored level of work were youth projects in which the social workers had direct discussions and 'negotiations' with long-term unemployed young people about their life situations and their relationship to the local living environment. Field projects at the level of residential area were the Huhtasuo-forum that was aimed at providing local residents and authorities with a forum for open discussion and cooperation; the Lutakko planning project in which various local actors including residents and service users were involved in planning the area; the Pupuhuhta renovation project in which local residents were involved in planning the renovation of houses and the local living environment as well as in the socio-cultural activities arranged in the area; and the Keltinmäki project in which the social workers took an active role with other local actors in producing a local newspaper and meeting place in the area. In the project of community means for supporting parenthood, the social workers supported local families in creating peer networks for sharing their problems and challenges of parenthood and of coping in everyday life. In these projects the aim of social workers was to

discuss and 'negotiate' with various local actors about their views on eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and the ways in which they thought they could realise them. The shopping centre SIA, the Lutakko planning project and even in some sense the Huhtasuo-forum project as well as the supplementary planning process and the development of management systems for environmental issues and community structure within the city of Jyväskylä were seen as work at the preventive city policy level. At this level, the social workers aimed to influence and negotiate with other sectors and authorities within the municipality about their views on eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments.

From the point of view of eco-social social work, in this type of action the question was about an eco-social self-understanding, which according to Aila-Leena Matthies (2001) means for social workers stepping to the round table negotiation of sustainability and, on the other hand, self-reflection upon their own action. During the research process this eco-social self-understanding was concretised in both of these senses, especially in the shopping centre SIA, in the Lutakko planning process, supplementary building planning process in Jyväskylä and in the development of management system for environmental issues, including the inner and outer environmental impacts of social work within the city (see Articles 1 and 3).

For instance, in the case of the shopping centre SIA the social workers stepped to the round table negotiation by claiming the eco-social unsustainability of a shopping centre based on service user and local authority interviews while reflecting upon their own role as being too uninformed and too silent in certain situations and places of cooperation and influence (see e.g. Salpakoski 1998). Also, when developing the management system for environmental issues concerning community based social work, the social workers prepared a document on how they understood eco-social sustainability in relation to sustainable development (apart from recycling office papers, etc.) in a holistic way and reflected upon their own role and ways of working by questioning whether, for instance, the current welfare benefit system leads service users towards an unecological lifestyle and how social workers could help to change the system (see also Luomala 1998). They also discussed the question of whether service users' initiative and empowerment received sufficient support in current practices. In addition, they identified four goals (and the corresponding means with which to reach them) in reflecting upon their own action and knowledge towards sustainability: 1) Increasing awareness about environmental issues and social sustainability among community based social workers, residents and service users. 2) Evaluating case work in community based social work in order to develop more sustainable ways of working. 3) Evaluating community based social work in general in order to develop more sustainable ways of working. 4) Influencing in such a way that the social perspective is taken into account in city policy and city planning. (Ympäristöasioiden… 2000.) With this paper, the social workers took

part in the discussion and definition of sustainable development and also brought forward their own impacts on sustainability issues.

One of the main arguments in Beck's theory of reflexive modernisation[19] is that modern society is consuming too much of its culture and nature basis. He suggests that we are in fact living in-between two realities. The old and familiar reality is related to the 'distributional conflicts over good', such as maintaining the welfare state, wage and labour disputes and the division of consuming opportunities. The new reality, then is connected to the 'distributional conflicts over bad', such as environmental and health risks. (Beck 1994, 5-7; Sairinen 1995, 27; Jokinen 1998, 271-273; Barry 1999, 152-153.) It is important to note that social and ecological sustainability are not always parallel to each other. Therefore it is not always a simple task to take into account both social equality and the best interests of nature (e.g. Helne et al. 2003, 115-116). According to Beck (ibid.), these kinds of conflicts and contradictions appear when old and new realities meet. Sairinen (1995, 27) argues that one typically Finnish example of the conflict between old and new realities is that between forest protection and local employment (also Helne et al. 2003, 115-116; Rannikko 1997, 141). The social workers in this research also had to deal with this kind of meeting of old and new realities, for instance in the case of the shopping centre SIA, in the Lutakko planning process, and in developing the management system for environmental issues including the inner and outer environmental impacts of social work. (See Articles 1 and 3.)

Even though, for instance, constructing a shopping centre was seen from one perspective concerning both ecological and social dimensions as unsustainable to the final decision to, in fact, build the shopping centre influenced also arguments concerning the employment figures and the growth of consumption in the area which can be seen as presenting so-called old reality about 'distributional conflicts over good' (see Article 1; Salpakoski 1998). In the case of Lutakko, applying Beck's idea loosely, one can claim that the old reality was represented by city planning practices and the employment impacts of the Schauman sawmill factory moving from Lutakko to Säynätsalo within the city, and by the city of Jyväskylä then signing a contract with the local landowners to develop a high-density residential area in Lutakko (see also Article 1). The new reality, then, was represented by the plans to develop the residential area in an interactional process together with local actors, taking into account the questions of sustainability and inclusion. The social workers also had to face two different realities when they were developing the management system for environmental issues. As far as the social workers were concerned, traditional community based social work, as part of the 'division of good' within the welfare state, was an old and familiar reality and indeed work where they 'divided good'. The new reality, i.e. the 'division of bad' was seen to be related to inequality in living environments and in general in understanding the connection between ecological and social sustainability. The new reality was also related to social workers' self-reflection about how social work as an

institution of 'dividing good' may or may not have an impact on eco-social sustainability and on processes of spatial marginalisation.

Eco-critical aspects in the social workers' actions can further be located into aiming to influence and question existing structures and policies, not just adapting to them. The eco-critical tradition is both about questioning the ideas of modern society and bringing nature to the round table negotiations of sustainability[20]. One of the solutions proposed in environmental discussions to the relationship between humans and nature has been so-called nature contract (Serres 1994; 1990; also Järvelä & Wilenius 1996; Haila 2003). Haila argues that a nature contract is only possible in so far as we realise our engagement to context, situation and locality: "People live in a situation produced by (natural) history and outside this situation is nothing that is significant to our existence" (Haila 2003, 197). He goes on to argue that the ideal of the modern human being has been to reach a status that would make possible absolute neutrality by controlling the surrounding world.

In fact, Haila (2003, 188) suggests that the ideas concerning both marginal people and nature have developed side by side. 'Other' nationalities, marginal people, and nature have been closely connected to one another in the subject-object relationship that has led to the development of 'otherness' in modern European culture. Haila (ibid., 188) argues that the close connection of nature and 'natural cultures' has not been accidental, but has rather belonged to 'the order of being' (concept, see Foucault 1980, according to Haila 2003, 188). In other words, while the control of people in modern culture has taken place by normalising marginalised, other people, into the centre of society, the control of nature has taken place by separating nature from culture[21].

The question of 'otherness' regarding both people and nature has come more and more into focus as we have moved towards late modern conditions. From this point of view one may argue that just as nature and culture cannot be separated from each other, there are no borders in being in a marginal position. Nature and marginal people can be understood as social constructions that are culturally defined. In this sense the matter is about pulling down the object-subject relationship of the modern way of thinking. Just as nature should be brought along to the round table negotiations as an actor defining the possibilities and conditions of societal actions, also marginal people should be involved in defining the limits and borders of their own lives and society. In this sense the social workers' attempts to increase the number and range of actors involved in the local round table negotiations on the criteria of eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments and to act horizontally so as to prevent spatial marginalisation, can be seen as attempts to resolve the object-subject relationship and to question the ideas of modern expertise and society. One of the roles of the social worker could be, and indeed was in this research process, to give a voice to and to act as a voice for marginalised in its many aspects (Articles 1 and 3).

The systems theoretical dimension of the social workers' actions was the holistic perspective in which humans are seen as part of their living

environments. This was the overall perspective in all the social workers' field projects (see Article 3). The systems theoretical view may also be seen as a perspective or way of working which goes beyond the individual perspective into the societal dimension, yet without forgetting the people in-between these processes[22] (e.g. Karvinen 2000, 23). In this sense the social workers' actions can be understood as an attempt to integrate systems theoretical and eco-critical perspectives in that although the systems theoretical approach does not take a stand in the normative discussion (unlike the eco-critical tradition), it can still promote a holistic view from within it is possible to explain the complex interconnections between the systems. Therefore, the systems theoretical perspective can be considered to have the potential to steer developments according to the demands of social change and sustainable development, as was shown in the second article.

The integration of different traditions means that their different strengths are also brought together. One of the strengths of the eco-critical tradition is the fresh perspective it opens up by asking: What does it mean for social work practice to view the human being not just as part of the social environment, but as part of nature? From one point of view, this means the recognition that nature has to be admitted as an actor to the round table negotiations (e.g. Haila & Lähde 2003). On the other hand, it means that social work itself should reflect upon its own action in relation to eco-social sustainability (Matthies 2001). The strength of systems theoretical thinking lies in notion of non-causal explanation, which fits well with the late modern understanding of reality. Systems thinking accommodates multiplicity, complexity, and uncertainty. In exchange for lack of certainty, we get various options to think about and to choose interventions. (E.g. Meyer 1995, 20-21.) By bringing together both these strengths, we are in fact asking the key question: What kind of challenges does eco-social social work bring into the discussions about social work expertise? What does it mean for the social worker's everyday practice? Does it mean a kind of practice which takes account of holistic non-linear thinking, a late modern type of understanding about reality, and a practice which invites to the round table negotiations not just many types of (marginal) actors but also nature in forming human opportunities and finally a practice which reflects upon the actions of its own eco-social sustainability?

All in all, based on the data of the study and on the articles, eco-socially oriented social work that searches for eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments seemed to be based in this study, on the one hand, on social workers' local and shared practical knowledge and, on the other hand, on dialogue and on 'negotiation' with other local actors' knowledge about the relationship between living environment and human welfare. Eco-socially oriented social work was realised as a practice that understands the living environment in a very broad sense as including not only the 'social' and 'built' living environment, but also nature as an important element in promoting human welfare. Eco-social social work, as constructed by the social workers in this study, was further aimed at influencing local policies by structural means

at various levels of social work and at resolving the object-subject relationship, i.e. at giving a voice to and acting as for voice of the marginalised in its many aspects. Further, eco-social social work seemed to be horizontal, participative and participatory, including an important element of reflection upon the social workers' eco-social self-understanding.

In some sense then, eco-social social work, as it was constructed by the social workers, seemed to tie in closely with community work traditions (e.g. Twelvetrees 1991; Kemp 1995; in Finnish context; e.g. Mikkola 1996; Roivainen 2002) and the ideas of structural social work (e.g. Viirkorpi 1990). Indeed to me the best way to understand the ways of working that are aimed at developing local living environments and communities is to see them in terms of a continuum in relation to previous ones, for instance the various community work and participatory planning traditions and projects in social work (in the Finnish context, e.g. Lahti-Kotilainen 1985; Harju 1988; Mikkola-Henttonen 1989; Vinnurva 1991; Mikkola 1996; Bäcklund & Schulman 2000; Karjalainen et al. 2002; Roivainen 2002). Having said that, it is important to note that these concepts and traditions cannot be considered 'the same' as or equal to eco-social social work because eco-social social work adds yet another dimension and 'demand' to the discussion, that of enabling the preconditions for sustainable development and that of social work's self-understanding and self-reflection towards eco-social sustainability and further understanding the complex and close connection between humans and nature.

4 ECO-SOCIAL SOCIAL WORK AND THE CHALLENGE TO SOCIAL WORK EXPERTISE

According to Julkunen (1994), research of professions has often shown a liking for great narratives and great historical stories, paying only some attention to less glorious professional practice. This research has been interested in the everyday practice of social work and in the expertise they have constructed through their own 'stories' in and from their practices. What kind of 'eco-social expertise' did the social workers in the study construct on the strength of their knowledge and action? What kind of challenges do they bring to the expertise in social work?

The essential question concerning the eco-social construction process is the self-understanding of social work which means that social work is part of a process in which it either destroys or promotes eco-social sustainability and welfare by its actions. The politicisation of nature (e.g. Haila 2000, 90) can be understood in the sense that also social work as an institution is part of cultural construction processes which promote either human survival or exploitation. Concerning the social workers' knowledge this self-understanding was seen as their questioning their own knowledge in the discussion forum and at various round table negotiations. Concerning action, their self-understanding was seen in their questioning whether their actions were horizontal enough and what kind of relation social workers' own and other actors' action had towards eco-social sustainability.

The human-in-environment perspective that has been established ever since the early days of social work, has lost none of its currency with the emergence of environmental issues; on the contrary. This self-understanding of social work's own action ties in closely with the holistic perspective from systems theory and with the reconstruction or expansion of the human-in-environment perspective in the sense that the living environment can be seen as an continuum, with the living environment, as an object of social work, perceived as a larger entity extending into nature. The human being is then just part of the holistic system, the planet Earth. Therefore, the expansion or extension of the holistic human-in-environment perspective means seeing

different ecological traditions as a continuum including the possibility to integrate them creatively and reflectively (Article 2).

The eco-social self-understanding also brings forward political and structural challenges to social work. The political challenge in stepping to the round table negotiations of sustainability is social workers' precondition and obligation to bring out their knowledge as a voice of marginalised people. On the other hand, the question is also supporting local knowledge in the sense of heterogeneous knowledge production. Therefore, the political challenge emphasises the importance of local knowledge, action and decision-making and further using local recourses as an engine of local development. However as Beck (1994, 30) has argued, negotiation forums do not guarantee consensus. Round table negotiations cannot do away with conflicts, but what they can do is to make sure that 'the unavoidable sacrifices' are equally distributed. Furthermore, they can reveal the 'winners' and 'losers' of modernisation processes, make them public and thereby facilitate political action. (Ibid.) From this point of view the social workers, through their presence at the round table negotiations, can bring forward their views and make visible the 'winners' and 'losers' of the modernisation processes of everyday life.

Heterogeneous knowledge production and the negotiating tables of sustainability therefore bring forward not only the political challenge but also the emancipatory challenge of social work. This means using various ways of knowing and various actors' knowledge at various levels and with various actors. Both the political and emancipatory challenges are about developing horizontal expertise in which traditional knowledge and expertise is questioned.

Figure 4 illustrates my interpretation of the challenges that eco-social social work as constructed by social workers brings to the discussions about social work expertise.

The essential framework upon which these challenges are based is eco-social self- understanding and self-reflection about social work's relationship to eco-social sustainability. This idea of self-understanding and self-reflection requires emancipatory and political social work leading to structural social work, i.e. influencing structures at various levels in practice. It also means understanding various tensions and power constellations between practitioners, service users, residents and policy makers. The idea of self-understanding and self-reflection also requires heterogeneous knowledge production in order for social workers to gain holistic and contextual knowledge about the sustainability of local living environments. Further, an expansion of the holistic human-in-environment perspective which integrates different ecological traditions is needed in order to understand the close connection between culture and nature and further to understand that social work expertise has to be constructed on the basis of this 'new extension' of seeing the relationship in order to be able to practise social work towards eco-socially sustainable development.

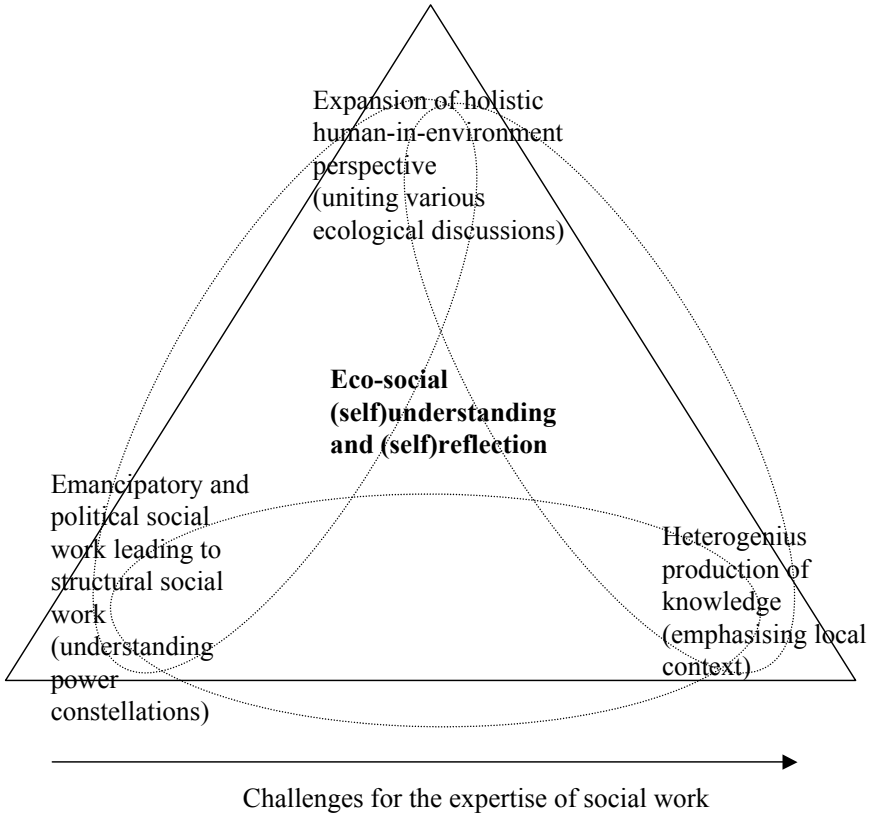

FIGURE 4 Eco-social social work and challenges for social work expertise

The basic question of social work concerning the relationship between living environment and human welfare has not changed as such but rather society as a whole, its living environments and the way that people perceive and construct nature, has changed over time. It is important for social work to move along with these changes. Although the eco-social interpretation developed in this research does not necessarily bring anything radically new to the discussions about social work expertise, I still argue that the elements mentioned earlier reconstruct the old question in social work about the relationship between living environment and human welfare and provide useful tools for understanding and exploring this relationship in new ways. Eco-social social work theory, thinking and action are not developed in a vacuum; on the contrary these efforts share much in common with the critical, feminist, and post-modern developments in the profession, which themselves reflect an evolving understanding of the person-in-environment and the dynamics of power in transactional processes (e.g. Ungar 2002, 480).

4.1 Challenges to social work expertise

In this research I have been interested in the kind of challenges that social workers' knowledge and action concerning eco-social social work have introduced in relation to the existing discussion on social work expertise. My intention has not been to locate social workers' action, knowledge and expertise concerning living environments in relation to those of other experts, such as city planners. Instead, my aim has been to locate and study the potential of social workers to act as one actor and source of expertise in questions related to eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. Further, rather than studying individual social workers and their characteristics or trying to establish whether the social workers who took part in the research process were experts or novices, or whether experienced social workers always are experts (e.g. Fook et al. 2000, 178-180), I wanted to identify the knowledge base and action through which the social workers constructed their expertise concerning eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments, in and from their practice. To me, the elements upon which social workers base their expertise provide valuable clues about the kind of challenges that modernisation processes present to social work and about how social workers try to tackle these challenges in their everyday work. Can their solutions then be described as 'more the same', (simple modern) (Beck 1994), or do social workers' attempts to resolve these questions reflect something else, alternative ways of acting and thinking?

Traditionally, modern expertise has been constructed on the basis of science, profession and institution (e.g. Saaristo 2000, 31-32; Konttinen 1991, 217-218; 1993, 9; 1997, 50; Fook et al. 2000, 2-3). When an expert is defined based on science, he/she is considered to have expertise that is based on certain scientific foundation. Furthermore, expertise may be understood in terms of being a professional actor, such as a doctor or a lawyer, which is also associated with a long education and special knowledge. Sometimes expertise is also defined on an institutional basis in the sense that a person practising certain tasks is considered to possess certain expertise. (Saaristo 2000, 31-32.)

There has been some discussion in the social sciences regarding the transition of modern professions (e.g. Beck 1994; Giddens 1994). Giddens, for instance takes a positive view on experts as organisers of modern reflexivity. He argues that trust in expertise is a precondition for social relations to dissembed from the time-place continuum of traditional society. This, he continues, is why experts are becoming 'consultants' instead of 'guards'. Responsibility for life choices is being shifted to individuals. (Giddens 1994.) Expertise, according to Beck (1992; 1994), has a dual role. On the one hand, experts serve as 'gatekeepers' of the monopoly of knowledge, on the other hand they are also the 'breakers' of that monopoly. The accent on locality in late modern society implies a real possibility that the boundary line between experts and lay people might be pulled down. For Giddens, then, reflexivity in modernity involves a

trust in expert-systems, while for Beck reflexivity in modernity entails growing freedom from and critique of expert-systems (Lash 1994, 116; Delanty 1997, 122).

In the context of social work expertise, Karvinen (1996a, 64) argues that the understanding of social work expertise has been trapped by positivist ideas in two ways. On the one hand, according to the positivist view of science social work has been interpreted as non-scientific and non-professional practice; and on the other hand, through the criticism of the ideas of positivist science, social work has been understood simply in terms of professional scientification. (Also Satka & Karvinen 1999, 120-121.)

Modern science and technology have indeed been based upon the idea that human beings can control nature and society systematically and rationally. The primary task of modern professionals has then been to apply universal knowledge in order to solve practical problems; they have not been afforded a role in the production of that knowledge. (Satka 2000a, 185; also Jones & Joss 1995, 20-25; Fook et al. 2000, 241.)

Karvinen (1996a, 64) argues that the paradigmatic shift in understanding the nature of knowledge towards heuristic and hermeneutic thinking and further seeing expertise and the nature of knowledge in relation to late modern understanding has made it possible to interpret the social work tradition from the point of view of its own origin and traditions (also Parton 2000). The understanding and interpretative perspective that can be identified from the early stages of the tradition has turned out then to be theoretically meaningful. While in this kind of situation "social work does not have to prove as being a 'real' profession, it means a stricter evaluation of expertise which is measured as action in practice, as relations towards power, and as service users' and social workers' own understanding of their qualifications as experts". (Karvinen 1996a, 64.) Expertise is then evaluated in the negotiations between various stakeholders.

According to Karvinen (1996a, 63; see also Fook et al. 2000; Fook 2002), the breaking down of institutional practices, fragmentation, the multiplicity of alternative practices, temporal and spatial specificity and interpretation that late modern society is seen to bring along are combining to open up new future visions for social work. One possible future vision is the discussion concerning reflective expertise and reflexive society (Karvinen 1993b; 1996a; b; for the concept, see Schön 1983; Launis 1994; Jones & Joss 1995; Mutka 1998; Fook et al. 2000; Fook 2002; see also endnote 19)[23]. Karvinen (1993b; 1996a; 1999a) takes the concept of reflective expertise to mean a consciousness about the elements that guide our action and a constant evaluation and reflection of our skills. This kind of reflective perspective aims to go beyond the border between theory and practice by taking into account not only theoretical thinking but also everyday practical knowledge in which the core of professional action is interaction with service users. "This kind of knowledge is procedural rather than predetermined and it includes besides careful thinking experience based on action and learning from experience based on realizing the opportunity to act differently". (Mutka

1998, 46-47; also Karvinen 1993b, 26-28.) In other words, social work knowledge is not given in advance, but rather understood as being constructed in action and based on dialogue, not on universal knowledge. The emphasis on dialogue means also giving up strict boundary lines and definitions of expertise. Service users of social work as well as other actors in civil society are also seen as important producers of local knowledge. (Juhila 2000, 151.) In this sense reflective expertise and reflexive social work could also be seen as one solution to the challenges that this research presents to social work expertise. The emphasis on emancipatory work, heterogeneous knowledge production and the extension of the holistic human-in-environment constellation (see Chapter 4, Figure 4) all require a reflexive, reflective and horizontal stance rather than withdrawal to universal knowledge and to the separation of 'knower' and 'knowledge', elements which are seen as typical of modern expertise.

Fook shares the view that transitions in late modern societies are leading to a fragmentation of traditional modern expertise. She is interested to identify the implications of these transitions for professional social work practice that is contextualised, transferable, flexible and uncertain. (Fook 2001, 241.) In this framework Fook et al. (2000, 245-247) call their understanding of professional expertise a type of model in which the emphasis is shifting from protecting elite domains of knowledge to the transferability of this knowledge in holistic and contextual ways. Therefore, it can be claimed that social work practices in the late modern world and the theory production concerning those practices both seem to be bound to processes in local contexts. Practices in late modern society are then more context-based and practical theory less generalising than in the era of strong modern professionalism. (Fook et al. 2000, 198; Fook 2002, 28.)

In fact, Fook (2000, 118) argues that "we need to frame professional expertise as grounded and contextual, involving transferable knowledge and the ability to create this through reflective and reflexive processes". Saaristo, in turn, argues that while the three basic elements of the traditional profession have been science, professionalism and institutions, it seems that in late modern conditions, professions may require other types of basic elements. He (2000, 139) suggests that these could be publicity, communication and trust. Expertise can be seen as being negotiated in public, and as being based on communication and trust. As a consequence, expertise becomes something that is open rather than being fixed in advance. (ibid.) [24]

Launis (1994, 6-18; also Saaristo 2000, 33) makes a distinction between three ways of understanding expertise. The first is a traditional view of profession research in which expertise is understood in terms of defining power relations. Secondly, expertise can be understood as an individual feature in which the focus is on the individual's cognitive characteristics. Thirdly, expertise can be understood as an ever-developing interactional relationship rather than a fixed individual characteristic. Saaristo takes Launis's (1994, 6-7, 11-16) idea of expertise as an interactional relationship even further. He states that expertise can be viewed from the contextual perspective, in which case expertise can be seen as being constructed always in a certain situation, in

public: expertise requires an audience or community in which the special knowledge and skills of the expert is recognised and identified. (Saaristo 2000, 33-34.) Then, expertise becomes a result of negotiation and knowing becomes a process rather than a product. This means understanding knowledge and expertise as something that is never complete and that is constantly being modified through practice, reflection and negotiation. (E.g. Jones & Joss 1995, 32; Fook et al. 2000, 190; Fook 2002, 39.)

4.2 Boundary negotiated knowledge and expertise

If expertise is understood not as something predetermined, but rather as contextually relativistic, it can also be studied as a position constructed by boundary work; expertise in relation to something (Saaristo 2000, 67). Thomas Gieryn (1983) defines the concept of boundary work by reference to the demarcation between science and non-science, to how the distinction between scientific knowledge and other intellectual action is made (Saaristo 2000, 67). Saaristo (2000) and Väliverronen (1996) are among those who have used the idea of boundary work. Väliverronen has studied boundary work and ways of presenting science in forest research, while Saaristo has studied the expertise produced by environmental authorities in relation to lay people. He understands "boundary work as a rhetoric means with which the actor produces him/herself as an expert" (Saaristo 2000, 67.)

I use the idea of boundary work simply to illustrate and understand the social workers' dual process of knowledge production during the research. As was pointed out earlier (in Chapter 3.3), the social workers' knowledge about eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments was not only constructed on the basis of their own and shared knowledge, but also in dialogue with other local actors. It is possible to identify two types of knowledge production in the research:

1. Social workers' knowledge formation about the relationship between living environment and human welfare in relation to and in negotiation with other actors (residents, service users and other local actors) that has been documented in the first, third, fourth and fifth articles.
2. Knowledge formation which took place between social workers in the sense of learning from others' experiences and knowledge production in and from their practice, as documented in the fourth and fifth articles.

My argument is that the social workers' knowledge production, which in this study consisted of two parallel processes, was about some kind of *boundary worked knowledge* in which the social workers constructed their expertise. One might even talk about *boundary negotiated knowledge and boundary negotiated expertise* in which social workers 'work' or 'negotiate' especially with the

knowledge and experience of their service users, and then at the same time take distance from this knowledge and experience. Sometimes during the study the social workers created or 'negotiated' their own knowledge and expertise concerning the relationship between living environment and human welfare by making the knowledge and experiences of service users, for instance, relational, i.e. by putting that knowledge and experience into their context and by shifting out 'significant' knowledge from 'insignificant' knowledge in their shared discussions and in this way making their expertise visible. On the other hand in some other situations the social workers told how they listened very carefully their service users and took their views about their experienced welfare in relation to their living environment very seriously. In this sense it can be argued that the content of eco-social sustainability was not just a matter of 'pure' negotiation. Rather, the issue at stake concerns the way how expertise, knowledge and experiences can be linked together in various round table discussions for them to become more understandable. In this process experts such as social workers can also have a certain role, for instance in acknowledging and producing the preconditions for citizens' welfare in residential areas together with various stakeholders, bringing forward the 'winners' and 'losers' of modernisation processes of everyday life (Beck 1994, 30), even though the power and status of these experts' 'authoritative centres' have perhaps changed (e.g. Giddens 1994, 85; also Saaristo 2000, 71). Eco-social sustainability is not purely a matter of negotiations either in the sense that even though the problems and issues in the relationship between the living environment and human welfare are produced in social relations, these problems can also to some extent be seen to have an existential basis (e.g. high levels of traffic noise and pollution in residential areas). However the identification and definition of problems always takes place in societal processes, and solving those problems requires societal action (e.g. Haila 2001, 261).

Boundary negotiated knowledge and expertise has then both its positive and negative sides. On the one hand, local actors are involved in the process of negotiating about expertise and knowledge, but on the other hand there is an attempt to make a distinction from them. Knowledge and expertise is boundary negotiated also in the sense that the boundary conditions of social work constantly define everyday practise, the ways of working and finally the expertise of social work, as was illustrated in the third article (see also endnote 13).

In addition to boundary negotiated knowledge, was there any evidence in this study of '*boundary negotiated action*'; and if so, what could that action consist of? According to Pease (2002, 141), empowerment can be understood in terms of producing alternative knowledge rather than seeking to seize or take power. In this sense emancipatory work could in fact be understood in terms of producing a different kind of knowledge (ibid.) (see also Chapter 3.4.4). Therefore social workers' attempts to produce boundary negotiated knowledge

could also be seen as an attempt to produce boundary negotiated action, i.e. to move towards horizontal action and further horizontal expertise.

Since social work can be understood as a socially constructed professional practice, the questions related to people's everyday life, and indeed to the relationship between living environment and human welfare, are so diverse and varied, and based not only on traditional expert knowledge but also on the experiences of lay people, that it is extremely difficult to establish a monopoly over social work expertise. In this study the social workers' insecurity about their expertise was seen especially in their questioning and reflecting about their knowledge concerning the relationship between the living environment and human welfare (Article 5) and in their activities concerning whether they were horizontal enough (Article 3). Therefore, based on this study it seems to be more fruitful to understand the expertise of social work as an open and negotiated process and to lean towards the ideas of reflective expertise and reflexive social work (e.g. Jones & Joss 1995; Karvinen 1996a; Fook et al. 2000; Fook 2002; Parton 2003).

5 CONCLUSION

This research was concerned with the way that community based social workers constructed eco-social social work through their action and knowledge production during an action research process in the Jyväskylä region in 1995-2000. Although eco-social activities have often been associated with alternative movements or alternative ways of working (e.g. Matthies 1987; 1990; Okulov 1998; Helne 2003), the main focus in this research was on the construction of eco-social social work from the point of view of professional expertise.

The research was located at the intersection of two ongoing discussions in the social sciences and in social work. The first concerns the transitions taking place in and the challenges presented to expertise in the late modern society and comprises the discussions about the nature of knowledge and different ways of knowing in social work, for instance. The second line of discussion concerns environmental issues arising in both the social sciences in general and social work in particular.

Both of these discussions show similar features of what has been described as a reflexive and discursive turn (Delanty 1997, 135-143) which concerns a debate about the nature and production of knowledge and which questions expertise based on traditional objective knowledge and further focuses on new ways of understanding the relationships between knowledge and society and knowledge and social agency (also Karvinen 2000; 1999a). Research was also located by both discussions into the dimension or area of reflexive modernisation in which interpretation of modern society and its development is based on the concepts of reflexive and late modern society (e.g. Beck 1992; 1994; 1997; Beck et al. 2003). The data of the study fit well into this context in the sense that both old and new realities (Beck 1994) were simultaneously present in social workers' practices, as was described in Chapter 3.5. The challenges of eco-social social work constructed in the study also introduce the possibility or even 'demand' for reflexive and reflective expertise and social work.

This research was based on action research type of frame of reference in which the basic idea is to study "a social situation carried out by those involved in the situation in order to improve both their practise and the quality of their

understanding" (Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001, 8). How, then, was these social workers' practice improved or how did it change, and how did their knowledge formation develop? The purpose of my study was not to evaluate the long term impacts of projects on social work practices. In fact, it can be argued that action research places particular emphasis on the temporal and local characteristics of knowledge in the sense that knowledge collected by intervention is considered to be valid only at that specific moment in time and place within which it is collected (e.g. Huttunen et al. 1999, 114). Therefore, the aim was to see to what extent social workers had the potential through their knowledge and activities to prevent spatial marginalisation and to promote and define eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. During the research process the goals of change took shape as follows: Its aims were, first, to reach a better understanding of and to improve the use of social workers' knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare; and second, to develop 'new' ways of working, i.e. 'new' local policies in residential areas with a view to creating sustainable and inclusive living environments.

On the basis of all the data collected in this research, I argue that the changes that happened during the study were related to changes in the social workers' ways of thinking about social work practice in general. During the course of the study the social workers adopted more holistic and citizen-oriented ways of working and thinking about social work which they called 'horizontal work'. Furthermore, they realised during the process that their knowledge production position (in which they were able to see the consequences and interdependencies of multiple issues between structural changes and individual survival concerning service users' living environments) and their role as a mediator in local contexts offers indeed the potential for them to take part in local policy making concerning eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. Still, the boundary conditions of social work (see Article 3) seem to have a major effect on how social workers are able to define their work and use alternative ways of working in their practice. Those boundary conditions therefore also had a crucial impact on the social workers' commitment to the research process. My role in the study was predominantly that of a researcher rather than that of a social agent of change. Nonetheless I did identify very much with the social workers' roles and their aims of change. In this sense it can be questioned whether I was able to be critical enough in presenting the results of this study and the social workers' potential for change with respect to eco-social social work. Bearing this potential criticism in mind, my aim in this summary article was precisely to describe the most important processes and concepts lying behind our action research and my analysis. Nevertheless, my purpose in this study was, specifically to highlight the social workers' potential with regard to their knowledge production and action without neglecting the problems and difficult points during the process.

The eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments promoted by the social workers were crystallised into the idea of sustainable development

and into their list of criteria that was based on that idea. Because of the nature of that list, the social workers' action and thinking could be seen as being based on modern rational thinking. The concept of sustainable development can indeed be criticised on account of its attempt to produce yet another new grand narrative (Spaargaarden et al. 2000, 11). This narrative boils down to the need for all social systems to reflexively take into account and reorganise their relationship with the environment. However, this 'universalistic' claim does not imply that socio-environmental arrangements must assume a similar shape all over the world. The universal need for sustainability does not imply a uniform solution. Rather, it means increasingly diverse local-global arrangements. (Ibid.)

The social workers understood the criteria of eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments as being reflexive in the sense that they were being negotiated and were seen to be different in different local contexts. Knowledge about eco-social sustainability can then be understood as reflexive in the sense that it was being negotiated between different actors. On the other hand, it has to be noticed that eco-social sustainability concerning living environments is not just a matter of interaction, a social construction, but it also has its existential basis (see e.g. Beck 1994; 1996; also Chapters 2.3; 4.2). Still, it can be argued that just as natural scientists can locate the problems and 'critical points' of living environment by using their scientific methods, so social workers have local practical knowledge about eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments which in the light of the present findings seemed to be constructed by two parallel knowledge production processes. Nevertheless, knowledge is not always enough, but social workers also have to act in various situations in local contexts.

In what sense then was the social workers' action reflexive? Jones and Joss (1995, 23-27) have proposed a distinction between practical, technical and reflective professionals[25]. The knowledge base of practical professionals consists of practical knowledge generated from situations at work. Practice theory is seen to be based upon the concept of know-how, but it lacks a theory of process by which professional knowledge and understanding is deepened and redefined since the learning is based on trial and error. There is also little reflection or abstraction to different practice situations. (Ibid., 23-24.)

The knowledge of technical professionals is based upon esoteric knowledge. In this frame the practitioner is seen as the sole possessor of relevant knowledge, which is that of a rational expert's. The theoretical orientation is one of espoused theories derived from systematic knowledge. The value base is considered problem-centred rather than service user-centred because relations with the service users are governed by the objectivist approach due to the practitioners' superior knowledge. This is why the relevance of dialogue and service users' knowledge is denied. (Ibid. 24-25.)

Jones and Joss understand the reflective practitioner as a facilitator whose role it is to help find an optimal course of action to problems in an uncertain world where there are no single right answers. The theoretical orientation includes espoused theories of social relations as well as systematic knowledge,

and recognition that theories may be incomplete or deficient. Knowledge is seen to be modified by interactions with the service user. Therefore the practitioner uses all possible sources of relevant knowledge, including the service user's knowledge. Professional development comes through analysis of observing, reflecting, experimenting and conceptualising. (Ibid. 26-27.)

Based on this categorisation of ideal type professionals by Jones and Joss (1995), we may argue that one of the social workers' aims was parallel to technical expertise in that they used their 'inside', 'special' or 'superior' knowledge about the relationship between living environment and human welfare in local policy making to develop their expertise at the same time. In her analysis of the culture of silence in social work, Metteri (1995) argues that social workers should learn to put their practical knowledge into words and make themselves heard. However, according to Saaristo it seems that legitimate language is always occupied by somebody. Somebody always has the right to speak while others are silenced. Since not all speakers are equal, the person who is identified as an expert makes things happen through his/her words, whereas the talk of lay people is not taken seriously, or at least no one acts upon that talk. (Saaristo 2000, 130.) Saaristo (2000, 111) argues that the most important question in this connection is whether one feels one has the right to speak at all, and even if one were able to speak, is anyone listening. One explanation for the culture of silence (Metteri 1995; Mutka 1998) could be then that the local and practical knowledge of social workers has not been considered convincing or usable at round table negotiations. Social workers do not necessarily feel they have the right to speak on the strength of the kind of knowledge they possess. Since no one takes the opportunity to speak, social workers are not defined as experts in the round table negotiations.

One of the key issues with regard to the new knowledge base of social work, according to Fook (2000; 2001), is whether situated and localised knowledge can be conceptualised in a way that has more generic significance. Instead of generalising and universalising, she suggests transferability as a tool for formulating concrete experiences in such a way as to give them broader meaning. The concept of transferability implies the reinterpretation of meanings in new contexts, rather than imposing one truth across all contexts. It means the ability to extract new contextual meanings out of old ones (e.g. Fook 2000; Fook et al. 2000).

Based on this research, I suggest that one way to promote transferability is to share individual social work knowledge, both 'knowing that' and 'knowing how', with other social workers and to reflect together on the knowledge and traditions that social workers carry with them. This kind of transferability could take place in various discussion forums, or even by social workers writing about their experiences, as was explored to some extent in this study. I suggest that by reflecting upon and sharing one's knowledge about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare as well as spatial marginalisation, for instance, it is possible to transfer knowledge into various local contexts by emphasising the local characteristics of each context

individually. Sharing practical wisdom in various social work discussion forums is one way to produce, study and define common and shared knowledge and the borders and challenges of future social work expertise. (E.g. Juhila 2000, 162.)

On the other hand, besides technical expertise, the aim of the social workers in this study also seemed to include a reflective understanding of expertise because they also sought to bring the voices of service users and residents into local policy making concerning eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments. The social workers attempted to share meanings with service users and other local actors about the knowledge concerning the relationship between the living environment and human welfare for instance by doing service user and resident interviews and by acting in various negotiation positions[26]. This required of the social workers a more emancipatory and political stance and led during the course of the research to an attempt to horizontal action and heterogeneous knowledge production with local actors. The social workers' action and knowledge could in some sense be located into the practical professionals' ideal type (Jones & Joss 1995, 23-24) - because sometimes their work seemed to be based on a trial and error type of working and because their views on various interdependencies in residential areas were not particularly analytical (see Article 4). Nevertheless in considering their aims to reflect upon and question their own power positions and their knowledge and trying to conceptualise their practical knowledge concerning the relationship between the living environment and human welfare, the social workers' construction process of eco-social social work was definitely that of reflective practitioners.

All in all, the social workers in this study seemed to be working at once towards a 'modern technical professional project' and on the other hand towards a 'late modern type of reflexive and emancipatory project'. These aspects were indeed parallel rather than mutually exclusive 'projects': elements of both of them were used by the social workers in their knowledge production processes and in their activities. So, on the one hand the social workers aimed at open and negotiated expertise, on the other hand they tried to make a distinction between service users' and residents' point of views in order to be taken seriously, as experts who have a right to speak. Both of the 'projects' and dimensions thus co-existed at the same time. In this sense the concepts of *boundary negotiated knowledge* and *boundary negotiated expertise* illustrate the social workers' aim of becoming both *'an identified expert'* and *'a reflective listener'* at the round table negotiations where eco-socially sustainable and inclusive living environments were defined.

In an eco-social context, reflexivity would then also mean that besides understanding reflection as 'working differently' instead of 'more of the same' (Beck 1992; 1994), it is broadened into reflexivity about one's own action towards eco-socially sustainable development and towards understanding the complex and close connection between human and nature.

There are various actors with different views at the round table negotiations of sustainability. Based on the data collected for this research, social workers have the potential to become one expert in defining eco-social sustainability: they have a unique knowledge base to do that, i.e. multiple ways of knowing in and from practice, as well as a firm foundation through their action as mediators in local contexts. The duty and obligation of social work in defining sustainability is indeed to step forward to the actual round table negotiations in order to bring forward the diverse knowledge possessed by actors out in the field about the relationship between the living environment and human welfare and further to reflect upon its own action towards eco-social sustainability. In this study, the social workers took the first steps in both these directions.

The basic question of social work concerning the relationship between living environment and human welfare has not changed as such but rather society as a whole, its living environments and the way that people perceive and construct nature, has changed over time. It is important for social work to move along with these changes. Although the eco-social interpretation developed in this research does not necessarily bring anything radically new to the discussions about social work expertise, I still argue that this interpretation reconstructs the old question in social work about the relationship between living environment and human welfare and provides useful tools for understanding and exploring this relationship from another perspective.

All in all, the discussions about the transitions of expertise, understanding the nature of knowledge and reconstructing the close connection between humans and nature can be seen as being connected to more general transitions in late modern society. Like all other professions and disciplines, social work should also take account of these transitions and changes in searching for its place in the 21st century.

NOTES

[1] Beck argues that traditional industrial society is shifting towards a risk society characterised by global and local risks and one where the legitimacy of politics, administration and science, for instance, is increasingly called into question. For Beck, risk society refers to the recent transformation of Western societies especially with respect to environmental issues, i.e. the health, socio-economic, cultural and environmental effects of social progress in general and scientific and technologically based production in particular. Located in-between the industrial and 'post-industrial' stages of social advancement, the politics of risk society is predominantly focused on the distribution of the 'costs' and 'risks' of socio-economic development, which is dominated by the emergence of unexpected ecological and health hazards. However, risk society also offers a positive opportunity, which is known as the second modern or reflexive modernisation. This kind of reflexive modern society will be realised if the structures of industrial society are replaced by the structures that take into account the various risks present in society. (Beck 1992; 1994; also Barry 1999; see also endnote 19.)

[2] It was not until the 1960s that awareness of the consequences of modern society gave rise to modern environmental consciousness. A major influence in this regard was Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962) which examined the consequences of toxic waste. (Wahlström 1994, 10.) In the 1960s the focus was on local problems: the contamination of air, water and land. Limits to growth (Meadows et al. 1972) brought a growing recognition of environmental problems as global issues. During the 1980s the concept of sustainable development was put forward by the Brundtland Committee. Since then it has been criticized for various reasons (see more Chapter III, 2). Alongside the concept of sustainable development, there has been increasing debate in Western Europe on ecological modernisation, which has been defined in various different ways (Mol 1995; Jokinen 1998, 274-275). Ecological modernisation may refer to a sociological theory concerning modern society's structural environmental problems. This theory aims to describe what kinds of institutional changes are needed in industrial society so that environmental issues could be resolved. (Jokinen 1998.) On the other hand, within the field of environmental policy research, ecological modernisation may mean a new paradigm of environmental policy (Massa & Rahkonen 1995). It may also refer to the strategic goals of concrete agendas of environmental policy (Jokinen 1998, 274-275). According to Hajer (1995) the discourse of ecological modernisation has in fact dominated strategies of environmental policy since the early 1980s. Joseph Huber is considered the father of the sociological theory of ecological modernisation (Spaargaarden & Mol 1992). According to Huber (1985) the two most important elements in this theory are ecologisation of economy and economisation of ecology. These processes should impact changes in production and consuming. Sairinen (1994, 32-33) argues that in discussions on ecological modernisation, great faith is placed in the institutions of modern society, despite all the problems they have been thought to have caused. Jokinen (1998, 274-275) maintains that the theory of ecological modernisation actually challenges the theory of risk society (Beck 1992; 1994) in that its project of industrial society is not questioned when searching for solutions to environmental issues. The way out of the ecological 'crisis' is thought to lie in the regeneration of industry, which can be seen as the exact opposite conclusion to that offered in Beck's theory of risk society. (Jokinen 1998, 275; see Chapter 3.5.)

[3] By the eco-critical approach, I refer to the environmental critical orientation towards the whole development of modernisation. This line of thinking has promoted awareness of ecological and environmental issues. The increasing gravity of the environmental situation has led to the environmental discussion touching upon the very foundations of society: its structures, ways of life and values. (See also Massa 1990, 217; Article 2.)

4 Massa divides the environmental consciousness into so called 'new' and 'old' environmental consciousness. Unless one understands the different phases one can not analyse the ecological tradition and history of social policy and social work. The old environmental consciousness existed before the Second World War. Afterwards, the environment was seen almost solely as the object of natural protection. The new themes regarding the environment arose during the 1950's and 1960's during the revolution of environmental consciousness. The revolution means, according to Massa, the era during which the environmental questions quickly became the focus of public discussions. The revolution of environmental consciousness created a radical environmental movement in which environmental questions became connected to visions of a 'greener' society. The most important message was that an environmental crisis can only be avoided if the values and institutions of the industrialised societies are changed. (Massa 1993; 1998, 76.)

5 Social work is understood here as referring to work that is done primarily at municipal social offices in residential areas in Finland. In residential areas social workers engage in so-called community based social work, which in the Finnish context means re-organising services from the centralised office to the local level. The main tasks of community based social workers are counselling, welfare benefit work and child protection work. Community work is also seen as part of the community based social worker's tasks. In Finland social workers are also academically trained, having a master's degree with an education of a researcher in social science. For simplicity I use in the text the concept of social worker.

6 In the process of writing an article-based doctoral thesis it is necessary to work on several articles at the same time in order not to overstretch the timetable. Articles are then here numbered in according to which article has mainly been under a process of writing.

7 During the research process in autumn 2000, the social work organisation in the city of Jyväskylä was divided into two specialised groups: social work, including welfare benefit and rehabilitation, and social work with families. The latter group works with families with children, the former with adults who do not have children. The aim of this new way of working was to bring quality and specialised expertise to community based social work offices. (Keskisuomalainen 23.8.2000). At the same time, however, the understanding of community based social work also shifted towards a narrower perspective and understanding of the role of social work in society from a holistic expertise to specialised expertise.

8 Helne argues that marginalisation can be understood differently depending on whether it is interpreted as marginalisation or exclusion. Helne prefers to use marginalisation because she argues that no one can reach the 'other side' of society implied by the concept of social exclusion. Being an outsider is always relational and can also offer positive second changes. The concept of social exclusion is nonetheless often used in Finnish discussions. (Helne 2002, 33.) In this summary article I use both the concepts of marginalisation and social exclusion, depending on how they have been used in the discussions to which I refer. I do, however, prefer the concept of marginalisation when talking about the phenomenon of spatial marginalisation.

9 The living environment is understood as a holistic human environment which in addition to physical and social environments comprises cultural-historical and societal elements (see also e.g. Aura et al. 1997).

10 Welfare can be defined on the basis of Allardt's classification (1976) in which quality of living is recognised as an important element of standard of living.

11 For more on the concept of spatial marginalisation and social exclusion in the research project, see Turunen 1999; Närhi 2000c; Matthies et al. 2000a; Turunen et al. 2001.

12 Talking about constructive social work (Parton & O'Byrne 2000), Parton (2003) points out that we need to reconsider the traditional position of social work expertise in the sense of trying to "develop a stance of 'not knowing' and not being seen as the expert on a problem. (…) This is not to say that the practitioner does not bring uniquely valuable skills to the work but it is to say that such skills are not simply derived from the mastery of understanding. They are primary skills in knowing how as opposed to knowing that – and moving fluidly in relationships and of collaborating in a mutual generation of new futures and which explicitly values the views, experiences and voices of service users" (Parton 2003, 10).

13 By the boundary conditions of social work, I mean the issues that define the everyday practice of social work and the possibilities to practice influential and structural social work (e.g. Raunio 2000a; Kemppainen et al. 1998). During the study the social workers defined current community based social work as being characterised by constant time pressure and service users' more problematic and complicated life situations. Especially the overwhelming volume and pressure of case work was seen to prevent social workers from taking on the role of an active policy maker. (See also Article 3.)

14 Ife (1997) states that defining social workers as street level intellectuals instead of street level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1980) emphasises the importance of the analysis of and critical reflection toward current policies and practices in social work (also Satka 1999c).

15 In the early 1980s in Finland besides individual and family centred social work a broader view began to gain ground in Finland on the role of social work in society (Rakenteellisen... 1985). The concept of structural social work was mentioned for the first time in Finnish social care legislation in 1984. At the end of the 1980s there was a lot of discussion for and against the usefulness of the concept in social work practice. Since then the discussion about structural social work has shifted towards such issues as preventive action and social work.

16 As stated in the fifth article I am well aware of the difficulties involved in drawing sharp boundary lines between different types of knowledge. The reason why I consider these illustrations of various types of knowledge justified is that they illustrate the immensely complex and multifaceted picture of the knowledge that social workers use and produce in their practice.

17 In Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden and Finland, emancipatory, radical and influential social work has been channelled into the tradition of structural social work (e.g. Swedner 1983; Viirkorpi 1990). Although structural social work has been understood as work aimed at societal change (Swedner 1983) it has in fact been developed within the Scandinavian welfare system. In Finland, the methodological aims of social work towards societal activities and influence during the 1970s were channelled into community work. However, the Finnish application of community work has been rather modest. Instead of focusing on societal conflicts and structural inequalities, community work has concentrated on cooperation between the authorities and on developing neighbourhood activities in residential areas. (E.g. Viirkorpi 1990; Roivainen 2002.)

18 Siegirst's (1990) categorisation of professionalisation from below and professionalisation from above is helpful in studying social workers' activities. The difference between these traditions lies in how much importance is attributed to the role of the state. Research on professions in Finland (e.g. Konttinen 1991; 1993; 1997) has attached much importance to the state's role and consequences this has for the development, independence and power of professions has also to be taken into account in understanding and viewing the social workers' action and knowledge in the study (see also Närhi 2000c).

19 The distinction that Beck (1994, 5-7) makes between reflection and reflexivity has important implications to the whole theory of reflexive modernisation. According to

Sairinen (1995, 25), Beck argues that the tendency of individuals to free themselves from the structures of society can be seen in both the theories of reflection and reflexivity. The difference between these theories lies in their understanding of the possibilities of reflexivity in the process of reconstructing structures and politics. The theory of reflection is optimistic in that it expects to see in the future more self-criticism and consciousness, more science and expertise, and more publicity and transparency. The theory of reflexivity, by contrast, is neutral and ambivalent towards future. Therefore, it is possible that reflexivity will help to produce good solutions, but the other extreme is also possible. The theory of reflexivity is not about saving the world, but rather it is a description of the transition dynamics of late modern society. Still, although Beck takes the position that reflexivity may not have to do anything with conscience self-critics i.e. reflection, these concepts may sometimes be understood as overlapping. In fact Beck notes that the concept of reflexivity is more general and can be understood to include the concept of reflection. (Beck 1994, 5-7; Sairinen 1995, 25-26; Barry 1999, 151-155.) To me, the discussions in social work about reflexive modernisation, including the concept of reflective expertise, contain features of both these theories. On the one hand, the discussions emphasise the good sides of reflection, i.e. the possibility of self-criticism in forming a new kind of social work expertise, for instance, but on the other hand the future is seen as ambivalent and uncertain (e.g. Parton 1996; 2000; Satka 2000; Karvinen 1999a;b; 2000; Mutka 1998; Fook 2001; 2002). In this summary article I use both the concepts of reflection and reflexivity, depending on how they have been used in the discussions to which I refer. I use and understand the concepts in this summary article in both sense of Beck's theory of reflexive modernisation.

20 The politicisation of nature (e.g. Haila 2000, 90) can be understood in the sense that nature is involved in creating the opportunities of human communities. In fact nature in general is not involved in this but rather certain creatures and processes in relation to certain functions in certain communities. This kind of strict participation by nature in creating human opportunities of action urges us to widen the traditional ideas of stakeholders. (Haila & Lähde 2002, 10.) To say that the 'conditions are determined by nature' is in fact misleading because the impact of every natural catastrophe, for instance, depends crucially on the kind of nature that human communities have shaped (ibid., 9.) Therefore, there cannot exist any holistic theory of the relationship between nature and culture because there does not exist any relationship as such, but rather they are closely connected to each other (ibid., 32-33).

21 Haila (2003, 197-198) suggests that instead of trying to control nature, we should adapt ourselves to more modest and more differentiated goals. Human culture should find its own place in the world from the direction of its own historically formed position. People could find culture's most important preconditions of nature both by relying on their experiences of practical actions and by leaning on systematic science. (Ibid., 199.)

22 Referring to Meyer's eco-systems analysis (see Meyer & Mattani 1996), Karvinen (2000, 23; 1999b, 294) writes in this connection about perceiving people's life situations and conditions through the holistic perspective of eco-systems or the eco-social view.

23 Karvinen (1996b, 44-45) distinguishes between two main lines of discussion on the future of social work. On the one hand, competency-based approaches to social work expertise aim to define expertise more and more in terms of descriptions and lists of tasks and competencies of the individual social worker. On the other hand, the discussion on reflective expertise understands reflection as an important element in directing social work towards an uncertain and ambivalent future. (See also e.g. Fook et al. 2000; Juhila 2000.)

24 The question that arises in this context is: How do you know when you are open enough and have included enough people? Saaristo (2000) has explored the problematic of open expertise. He claims that reflexive modernity also brings along 'reflexivity losers'. He asks: "How do those who have been left out of the information

society participate in the negotiations of expertise? How can the right to speak be guaranteed to those who are not able or who do not even want to speak? Indeed, should they be guaranteed that right?" (Ibid., 156-157.) Juhila (2002) has also written about whether action related to strengthening citizenship can be normative. A 'good' citizen is seen as one who is active and who is keen to influence his/her issues and agendas. "What happens to those people who do not want to participate? Are they to have a voice who does not want to participate in improving their life situation?" (Ibid., 17.) As far as I am concerned the basic principle in social work is that social workers should side with the marginalised groups in its many meanings. For this reason they should also take into account those who are unable to participate in matters concerning their life situation or in negotiations concerning the understandings of expertise. From this point of view the aims of the social workers in this study to become, on the one hand, *'an identified expert'* and *'a reflective listener'*, on the other, at the round table negotiations of sustainability, make sense concerning the discussion about open expertise (see Chapter 5).

25 These are ideal types: indeed the authors emphasise that all these categories or ideal types can exist and do exist parallel in time (Jones & Joss 1995).

26 Because knowledge in the data seemed to be based in large part on 'negotiations' with service users, it can be considered a result of common negotiations anchored to a certain time and place. However, in socially constructed professional practice such as social work, one must always be able to reflect upon and be aware about the possible power structures involved in the practices and negotiations with service users.

YHTEENVETO

Johdanto ja tutkimuksen tarkoitus

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee suomalaisten aluesosiaalityöntekijöiden ekososiaalisen sosiaalityön rakentumista toimintatutkimuksellisessa viitekehyksessä vuosina 1995-2000 Jyväskylän alueella. Ekososiaalinen sosiaalityö rakentui tutkimusprosessissa sosiaalityöntekijöiden toiminnan ja tiedonmuodostuksen vuoropuheluna. Vaikka ekososiaalinen toiminta usein assosioituu vaihtoehtoliikkeiden toimintaan tai sosiaalityön vaihtoehtoisiin toimintatapoihin (esim. Matthies 1987; 1990; Okulov 1998; Helne 2003), tämä tutkimus keskittyy ekososiaaliseen sosiaalityöhön professionaalisen sosiaalityöntekijän ja sosiaalityön asiantuntijuuden näkökulmasta.

Tutkimus paikantuu kahden keskustelun risteykseen, joita käydään niin yhteiskuntatieteiden kuin sosiaalityönkin piirissä. Toinen on asiantuntijuuden murros ja haasteet myöhäismodernissa yhteiskunnassa (esim. Beck 1994; Giddens 1994; Mutka 1998; Eräsaari & Jokinen 1997), johon liittyvät myös keskustelut tiedosta ja sen uudenlaisesta ymmärryksestä (esim. Beck 1994; Delanty 1997; 1999; Karvinen 1996a; 2000; Fook 2002; Parton 2000; Fook et al. 2000). Toinen keskustelu tarkastelee ympäristökysymyksiä yhteiskuntatieteissä yleisesti (esim. Hajer 1995; Eder 1996; Spaargarden et al. 2000; Massa & Sairinen 1991; Massa 1998; Haila & Jokinen 2001; Haila & Lähde 2003) ja sosiaalityössä erityisesti (esim. Matthies 1987; 1993; Opielka 1985; Hoff & McNutt 1994; Ungar 2002; Coates 2003; Besthorn 2003). Molemmat keskustelut liittyvät myös ns. refleksiiviseen ja diskursiiviseen käänteeseen yhteiskuntatieteissä (Delanty 1997, 135-143). Tämän käänteen nähdään olevan osa muun muassa asiantuntijuuden ja siihen liittyvän tiedon luonteen ja tiedon tuottamisen tapojen kyseenalaistamista sekä uutta tapaa ymmärtää tiedon ja yhteiskunnan sekä tiedon ja toimijan välisiä suhteita (esim. Karvinen 2000; 1999a).

Tutkimus pyrkii paikantamaan sosiaalityön yhteyksiä ekologisen ja ekososiaalisen sosiaalityön keskusteluihin. Suomessa vielä melko tuntematon ekologinen tai ekososiaalinen teorianmuodostus ja sen rinnalla kulkevat käytännön projektit (esim. Matthies & Närhi 1998) eivät ole sosiaalityön kansainvälisessä traditiossa kovin uusia. Joidenkin uudelleentulkintojen mukaan jo sata vuotta sitten sosiaalityön pioneeri Jane Addams tunnisti ekologisten ja sosiaalisten ongelmien sekä ratkaisujen välisen monimutkaisen suhteen urbaaneissa slummeissa (Staub-Bernasconi 1991; Matthies 1993). Mary Richmondin ajatus ihmisestä ympäristössään voidaan myös paikantaa ekologisen sosiaalityön juurille (artikkeli 2). Sittemmin sosiaalityön kirjallisuudesta on löydettävissä kaksi erilaista ymmärrystä ekologisesta sosiaalityöstä. Ensimmäinen ja yleisempi ymmärrys liittyy systeemiteoreettiseen ajatteluun, jossa korostetaan erityisesti sosiaalista ympäristöä ihmisen hyvinvoinnin keskeisenä viitekehyksenä (esim. Germain & Gitterman 1980; Meyer 1983; Wendt 1994) ja jota kutsun tutkimuk-

sessa systeemiteoreettiseksi ajatteluksi ja lähestymistavaksi. Toisen näkemyksen juuret paikantuvat modernin yhteiskunnan ekologiseen kritiikkiin ja ekologiseen liikkeeseen. Tätä näkökulmaa kutsun tutkimuksessa ekokriittiseksi lähestymistavaksi. Se pyrkii yhdistämään ekologisia ja sosiaalisia ulottuvuuksia (ekososiaalinen kysymys), ja kysyy minkälainen sosiaalityö voisi olla ekososiaalisesti kestävän kehityksen mukaista. (esim. Opielka 1985; Opielka & Ostner 1987; Blanke & Sachsse 1987; Kuchhermann 1994; Hoff & Mc Nutt 1994; myös artikkeli 2.) Systeemiteoreettinen lähestymistapa 1970-luvulla ja ympäristöliikkeiden vaikutus 1980-luvulla voimistivat ekologista keskustelua sosiaalityössä. 1990-luvulla nämä keskustelut ovat pysyneet omina sosiaalityön traditioinaan, vaikka tietynlaista näkökulmien lähentymistä onkin tapahtunut (esim. Hoff & McNutt 1994; artikkeli 2). 2000-luvun alussa idea ekologisesta sosiaalityöstä on voimistunut ja laajentunut sekä uusia näkökulmia on tuotu esiin (esim. Ungar 2002; 2003; Coates 2003; Besthorn 2003; Bartlett 2003; Keefe 2003). Nämä 2000-luvun ekologisen sosiaalityön ideat perustuvat toisaalta syväekologiaan (esim. Naess 1989) ja toisaalta sosiaaliekologiaan (esim. Bookchin 1991). Paikannan tämän tutkimuksen ekologisen sosiaalityön juuret toisaalta yhteiskuntatieteelliseen ympäristökeskusteluun sekä toisaalta sosiaalityön omaan ekosysteemiseen tarkastelutapaan ymmärtää ihmisen ja ympäristön välistä suhdetta.

Omassa ekososiaaliseen sosiaalityöhön liittyvässä tutkimuksessani olen käyttänyt viitekehyksenä toimintatutkimuksen periaatteita (esim. Carr & Kemmis 1986; Hart & Bond 1995; Heikkinen et al. 1999; Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001). Ymmärrän toimintatutkimuksen väljänä tutkimusstrategiana sekä erityisenä tapana ymmärtää tutkijan ja tutkittavien, tutkimussubjektien, välistä tasa-arvoista suhdetta (esim. Kuula 1999; Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999; Winter & Munn-Giddings 2001). Tutkimukseni ensisijaisena tavoitteena on ollut ymmärtää ja analysoida miten aluesosiaalityöntekijät rakentavat ekososiaalista sosiaalityötä jokapäiväisessä työssä toiminnan ja tiedonmuodostuksen vuoropuheluna. Yksi toimintatutkimuksen perusväittämistä on, että ihmiset kykenevät oppimaan ja tuottamaan tietoa havainnoimalla omia konkreettisia kokemuksiaan ja reflektoimaan niitä sekä edelleen käsitteellistämään näitä kokemuksia (esim. Carr & Kemmis 1986, 186-187; Kiviniemi 1999, 66). Toisena tutkimukseni tavoitteenani on ollut ymmärtää ja analysoida millaisia haasteita aluesosiaalityöntekijöiden rakentama ekososiaalinen sosiaalityö asettaa sosiaalityön asiantuntijuudelle tilanteessa, jossa asiantuntijuuden murroksen nähdään laajemminkin tapahtuvan yhteiskunnassa.

Artikkeleiden yhteenveto

Tämä tutkimus koostuu viidestä aiemmin julkaistusta artikkelista ja yhteenvetoartikkelista. Ensimmäinen artikkeli, *'Social impact assessment – New challenges for social work?'*, esittelee ympäristövaikutusten arviointiin (Yva) liittyvää sosiaalisten vaikutusten arviointia (Sva) eräänä rakenteellisen ja ennaltaehkäisevän

sosiaalityöhön välineenä ja kuvailee sen suhdetta ekososiaalisen sosiaalityöhön. Artikkeli perustuu Jyväskylän alueella toteutettuun toimintatutkimusprojektiin, jossa pyrittiin hyödyntämään sosiaalityöntekijöiden tietämystä yhdyskuntasuunnittelun prosesseissa. Artikkelin aineisto koostuu sosiaalityöntekijöiden raporteista ja teksteistä käytännön työssä valitsemistaan kenttähankkeista sekä tutkijan osallistuvasta havainnoinnista näiden hankkeiden tiimoilla. Artikkelissa esitellään kaksi kenttähanketapausta ja luonnostellaan ekososiaalisesti kestävän elinympäristön kriteeristölistaa. Artikkelissa analysoidaan sva:n haasteita sosiaalityön käytännölle ja asiantuntijuudelle. Tutkimuksen aineiston perusteella sva:n hyödyntämisessä tarvitaan refleksiivistä asiantuntijuutta, jossa korostuvat elementit kuten kokonaisvaltainen näkökulma, moniammatilliset verkostot sekä asiakas- ja kansalaiskeskeiset lähestymistavat. Sva:n perusidea viittaa tiedon ymmärrykseen, jossa asiakkaat ja paikalliset toimijat otetaan mukaan tiedon tuottamisen prosessiin. Tutkimuksessa sva osoittautuikin välineeksi, jonka avulla sosiaalityöntekijät voivat kerätä yhdessä asiakkaiden ja asukkaiden kanssa tietoa elinympäristön ja hyvinvoinnin välisestä suhteesta sekä tuoda tätä tietoa päätöksentekoon ja paikallisiin toimintakäytäntöihin.

Toinen artikkeli, '*What is the ecological (self)consciousness of social work? Perspectives on the relationship between social work and ecology*', analysoi ekologisen sosiaalityön käsitteitä ja historiallisia juuria pohjautuen saksalaisiin, angloamerikkalaisiin ja suomalaisiin ekologisen sosiaalityön keskusteluihin, kyseessä on siis kirjallisuuden sekundäärianalyysi. Aluksi artikkelissa tarkastellaan lyhyesti, miten sosiaalityön klassikot jäsentävät elinympäristön ja sosiaalityön välistä suhdetta. Artikkelissa ekologinen sosiaalityö jaetaan kahteen, systeemiteoreettiseen ja ekokriittiseen näkökulmaan sekä analysoidaan sosiaalityön tehtäviä ja rooleja, joita nämä näkökulmat ja traditiot sosiaalityöntekijälle asettavat. Artikkelissa esitetään, että ekososiaalisen sosiaalityön jäsentyneemmän ymmärryksen kannalta on tärkeää eri näkökulmien integrointi yhdeksi kokonaisvaltaiseksi näkökulmaksi, jossa nämä traditiot nähdään toistensa jatkumona. Artikkelissa yhdytään myös näkemykseen ekologian politisoitumisesta, jossa myös sosiaalityön on ymmärrettävä roolinsa joko ekososiaalisesti kestävän elinympäristön edistäjänä tai tuhoajana. Siten sosiaalityön kannalta tärkeäksi ulottuvuudeksi muodostuu kysymys sosiaalityön omasta ekososiaalisesta itseymmärryksestä.

Kolmas artikkeli, *'Sosiaalityöntekijät paikallisen tason vaikuttajina'*, tutkii aluesosiaalityöntekijöiden paikallisen vaikuttamisen toimintamalleja ja rooleja tilalliseen marginalisaatioon liittyvissä kysymyksissä kolmella jyväskyläläisellä asuinalueella. Tilallisella marginalisaatiolla tarkoitetetaan artikkelissa sitä monimutkaista ilmiötä, miten tila vaikuttaa marginalisaatio- ja syrjäytymisprosesseihin esimerkiksi asuinalueilla. Artikkelin aineisto koostuu sosiaalityöntekijöiden raporteista ja teksteistä käytännön työssä valitsemistaan kuudesta kenttähankkeesta sekä tutkijan osallistuvasta havainnoinnista näiden hankkeiden tiimoilla. Artikkelissa kysytään: Millaisia olivat tutkimukseen osallistuneiden sosiaalityöntekijöiden toimintatavat ja roolit paikallisen tason toimijoina ja vaikuttajina, kun he pyrkivät ehkäisemään asuinalueiden sosiaalista syrjäytymistä ja

kehittämään asuinalueita ekososiaalisesti kestävään suuntaan? Vaikuttaminen ymmärrettiin tutkimukseen osallistuneiden sosiaalityöntekijöiden oman tulkinnan kautta monitasoisena horisontaalisena toimijuutena sekä erilaisissa asiakastilanteissa että paikallisissa asuinalueiden ja kaupunkipolitiikan verkostoissa. Sosiaalityöntekijän paikallisen vaikuttamisen onnistuminen näytti riippuvan monesta tekijästä. Sosiaalityön tekemisen reunaehdot ja se, minkälaisen roolin näiden reunaehtojen puitteissa kykenee itselleen ottamaan, määrittävät osaltaan sosiaalityöntekijän mahdollisuuksia toimia paikallisena vaikuttajana. Tutkimuksen hankkeissa tämä mahdollinen rooli paikantui pääasiassa yhteyshenkilönä toimimisena ja epäsuorien vaikuttamisen toimintatapojen käyttämisenä. Tutkimuksen perusteella näyttää siltä, että sosiaalityöntekijöiden ei tarvitse olla jatkuvasti toiminnan keskiössä pystyäkseen toimimaan paikallisena vaikuttajana tilalliseen marginalisaatioon liittyvissä kysymyksissä. Sen sijaan heidän tulisi ymmärtää olennaiset osallistumisen ja vaikuttamisen paikat ja foorumit sekä rohkaista myös muita toimijoita kuten paikallisia viranomaisia ja asukkaita ottamaan vastuuta elinympäristön kestävyydestä.

Neljäs artikkeli, '*Social workers' conceptions of how local living environment is related to social exclusion*', keskittyy analysoimaan aluesosiaalityöntekijöiden elinympäristön ja ihmisen hyvinvoinnin välistä suhdetta käsitteellistäen sitä tilallisen marginalisaation näkökulmasta. Artikkelin aineisto perustuu pääasiassa nauhoitettuun sosiaalityöntekijöiden keskustelufoorumiin, joka kokoontui tutkimusprosessin aikana säännöllisesti. Artikkelissa esitetään lyhyt käsitteellinen yhteenveto paikallisen elinympäristön merkityksistä globalisoituvassa maailmassa sekä tuodaan esiin miten tutkimuksen sosiaalityöntekijät ymmärtävät ja käsitteellistävät tilallisen marginalisaation mekanismeja. Lisäksi artikkelissa esitetään sosiaalityöntekijöiden näkemyksiä 'inkluusiota' tukevasta ja ekososiaalisesti kestävästä elinympäristöstä. Artikkelin aineiston perusteella väitän, että sosiaalityöntekijöillä on työnsä kautta erityistä tietoa syrjäytymis- ja inkluusioprosesseista. Sosiaalityöntekijät työskentelevät näköalapaikalla, jossa he näkevät rakenteellisen muutoksen ja ihmisen selviytymisen välisiä monimutkaisia syy-seuraus-suhteita. Näin ollen heidän tietonsa voi syventää ymmärrystä tilallisen marginalisaation ilmiöstä paikallisissa elinympäristöissä.

Viides artikkeli, '*Transferable and Negotiated Knowledge. Constructing Social Work Expertise for the Future*', tuo esiin aluesosiaalityöntekijöiden tietopohjaa ja tietämisen tapoja, joita he käyttivät muodostaessaan asiantuntijuuttaan tilalliseen marginalisaatioon ja ekososiaalisesti kestäviin elinympäristöihin liittyen. Artikkelin aineisto koostuu pääasiassa nauhoitetusta sosiaalityöntekijöiden keskustelufoorumista. Artikkelissa kysytään: Minkälaiseen tietoon sosiaalityöntekijät perustavat toimintansa ja asiantuntijuutensa elinympäristön ja ihmisen hyvinvoinnin välisestä suhteesta? Minkälaisia erilaisia tietämisen tapoja sosiaalityöntekijät käyttävät jäsentäessään tätä tietoa? Tutkimuksen aineiston perusteella sosiaalityöntekijät käyttävät hyväkseen monenlaisia tiedon tyyppejä ja tietämisen tapoja muodostaessaan omaa käytännön teoriaansa elinympäristön ja ihmisen hyvinvoinnin välisestä suhteesta. Sosiaalityöntekijöiden tieto näytti artikkelin aineiston pohjalta perustuvan pääasiassa asiakkaiden kokemuksiin ja

tapausesimerkkeihin. Tietoa tuotettiin myös sosiaalityöntekijöiden aikaisemman kokemuksen ja toiminnan avulla. Tieto oli paikallista ja kontekstiin sidottua sekä jossain määrin 'hiljaista', mutta kuitenkin tutkimusprosessin aikana sosiaalityöntekijöiden kesken jaettua tietoa. Tieto ei perustunut empiiriseen tieteelliseen tutkimustietoon sen perinteisessä merkityksessä vaan pikemminkin sosiaalityöntekijät käyttivät hyväkseen käytännön tietoa sen erilaisissa muodoissa. Artikkelissa esitellään idea avoimesta asiantuntijuudesta ja neuvotellusta tiedosta, jossa asiantuntijuus ymmärretään neuvottelun tuloksena ja tietäminen neuvottelun prosessina. Artikkelissa esitetään, että reflektoimalla ja jakamalla tietoa esimerkiksi elinympäristön ja ihmisen hyvinvoinnin välisestä suhteesta sosiaalityöntekijät voivat universaalin tiedon sijasta välittää (transfer) tietoa ja asiantuntijuutta paikallisiin konteksteihin korostamalla kunkin paikallisen kontekstin erityispiirteitä.

Ensimmäinen ja kolmas artikkeli keskittyvät pääasiassa sosiaalityöntekijöiden toiminnan analyysiin tutkimusprosessin aikana. Toinen artikkeli on käsitteellinen yhteenveto ekologisen sosiaalityön perinteistä. Neljäs ja viides artikkeli kuvaavat ja analysoivat sosiaalityöntekijöiden tietoa sekä tietämisen tapoja elinympäristön ja ihmisen hyvinvoinnin välisestä suhteesta tilallisen marginalisaation näkökulmasta.

Yleisiä johtopäätöksiä

Tutkimukseen osallistuneiden sosiaalityöntekijöiden rakentama ekososiaalinen sosiaalityö asettaa monia haasteita sosiaalityön asiantuntijuudelle. Ekososiaalinen sosiaalityö, joka tavoittelee ekososiaalisesti kestävää ja 'inclusionia' tukevaa elinympäristöä perustui tutkimuksessa toisaalta sosiaalityöntekijöiden paikalliseen ja jaettuun käytännön tietoon sekä toisaalta dialogiin ja neuvotteluun, jota sosiaalityöntekijät kävivät muiden paikallisten toimijoiden elinympäristön ja hyvinvoinnin välisen suhteen tiedon kanssa. Toiseksi ekososiaalisesti orientoitunut sosiaalityö nähtiin käytäntönä, jossa elinympäristö ymmärretään laajassa merkityksessä sisältäen sosiaalisen ja rakennetun ympäristön lisäksi luonnon tärkeänä elementtinä ihmisten hyvinvoinnin edistämisessä. Kolmanneksi sosiaalityöntekijöiden rakentama ekososiaalinen sosiaalityö pyrki myös vaikuttamaan rakenteellisesti sosiaalityön eri toiminnan tasoilla sekä antamaan marginalisoituneille, sen monissa merkityksissä ääni sekä toisaalta toimimaan heidän äänenään paikallisen vaikuttamisen tilanteissa. Lisäksi ekososiaalinen sosiaalityö ymmärrettiin horisontaalisena, osallistuvana ja osallistavana käytäntönä sisältäen sosiaalityön oman toiminnan reflektoinnin suhteessa ekososiaalisesti kestävään kehitykseen.

Kaiken kaikkiaan tutkimusprosessien kuluessa sosiaalityöntekijät pyrkivät rakentamaan samaan aikaan sekä 'modernia teknisen asiantuntijan -projektia' että toisaalta myöhäismodernille tyypillistä 'refleksiivistä ja emansipatorista -projektia'. Nämä aspektit olivat samanaikaisia pikemminkin kuin toisiaan pois-

sulkevia projekteja: sosiaalityöntekijät käyttivät molempien 'projektien' elementtejä toiminnassaan ja tiedonmuodostuksen prosessissaan. Toisaalta sosiaalityöntekijät pyrkivät siis avoimeen ja neuvoteltuun asiantuntijuuteen eri toimijoiden kanssa ja toisaalta he tekivät eroa esimerkiksi asiakkaiden ja asukkaiden näkökulmiin, jotta heidät otettaisiin vakavasti, asiantuntijoina, joilla on oikeus osallistua keskusteluun ja määrittelyyn 'inkluusiota' tukevasta ja ekososiaalisesti kestävästä elinympäristöstä. Tässä mielessä käsitteet *'rajaneuvoteltu tieto'* ja *'rajaneuvoteltu asiantuntijuus'* kuvaavat sosiaalityöntekijöiden tavoitteita tulla sekä *'indentifioiduksi asiantuntijaksi'* että *'refleksiiviseksi kuuntelijaksi'* pyöreän pöydän neuvotteluissa (ks. käsite Beck 1992; 1994), joissa määritellään ekososiaalisesti kestäviä ja inkluusiota edistäviä elinympäristöjä. Refleksiivisyys laajenee ekososiaalisessa kontekstissa tarkoittamaan 'toisin toimimisen' (Beck 1992; 1994) ohella myös oman toiminnan refleksiivisyyttä suhteessa ekososiaalisesti kestävään kehitykseen.

Tämän tutkimuksen perusteella aluesosiaalityöntekijöillä on potentiaalia toimia erityisen tietopohjansa perusteella yhtenä asiantuntijana määrittelemässä ekososiaalisesti kestäviä elinympäristöjä. Sosiaalityöntekijöiden erityinen tietopohja pohjautuu heidän moniin tietämisen tapoihin käytännöissä ja käytännöistä sekä toimintaansa yhteyshenkilönä paikallisella tasolla. Sosiaalityön paikka ja velvollisuus kestävyyttä määriteltäessä onkin osallistua pyöreän pöydän neuvotteluihin tuodakseen esiin moniäänistä tietoa elinympäristön ja hyvinvoinnin välisestä suhteesta. Lisäksi sosiaalityöntekijöiden tulee reflektoida oman toimintansa vaikutuksia kestävän kehityksen viitekehyksessä. Tässä tutkimuksessa sosiaalityöntekijät ottivat ensiaskelia molemmissa merkityksissä.

Sosiaalityöntekijöiden rakentamalla ekososiaalisella sosiaalityöllä näytti olevan vahva yhteys yhdyskuntatyön traditioihin (esim. Twelvetrees 1991; Kemp 1995; suomalaisessa kontekstissa esim. Mikkola 1996; Roivainen 2002) ja rakenteellisen sosiaalityön ideaan (esim. Viirkorpi 1990). Näen, että erilaiset toiminnan tavat, jotka pyrkivät kehittämään paikallisia elinympäristöjä ja yhteisöjä, on selkeintä hahmottaa jatkumona suhteessa aikaisempiin elinympäristöjä tarkasteleviin työskentelytapoihin ja traditioihin, kuten erilaisiin yhdyskuntatyön, yhteissuunnittelun ja erilaisten osallistuvan/osallistavan suunnittelun hankkeisiin (suomalaisessa kontekstissa esim. Lahti-Kotilainen 1985; Harju 1988; Mikkola-Henttonen 1989; Vinnurva 1991; Mikkola 1996; Bäcklund & Schulman 2000; Karjalainen et al. 2002; Roivainen 2002). Silti väitän, että nämä traditiot ja käsitteet eivät ole 'yhtä kuin' ekososiaalinen sosiaalityö, koska käsite sosiaalityöntekijöiden rakentamana tuo keskusteluun erään tärkeän ulottuvuuden, toisin sanoen vaatimuksen kestävän kehityksen edellytysten mahdollistamisesta sekä sosiaalityön ekososiaalisesta itseymmärryksestä.

Ymmärrän, että sosiaalityön peruskysymykset ihmisen ja ympäristön välisestä suhteesta eivät sinänsä muutu vaan pikemminkin yhteiskunta, elinympäristö ja ihmisen muokkaama luonto muuttuvat ajassa ja paikassa. Sosiaalityön tulisi pysyä mukana tässä muutoksessa. Ekososiaalinen sosiaalityön keskustelu sekä sen erilaiset konkreettiset rakentamis- ja määrittely-yritykset eivät välttämättä tuo esiin mitään radikaalia uutta keskusteluun sosiaalityön asiantunti-

juudesta, mutta ne terävöittävät ja muotoilevat uudelleen sosiaalityön klassista ymmärrystä ihmisen ja ympäristön välisestä suhteesta sekä antavat välineitä jäsentää tätä suhdetta uudesta näkökulmasta.

Kaiken kaikkiaan näen, että keskustelut asiantuntijuuden, tiedon ymmärtämisen sekä luonnon ja ihmisen välisen suhteen murroksista ovat ilmiöitä samasta myöhäismoderniin liittyvästä yleisestä yhteiskunnallisesta murroksesta. Kuten muidenkin ammattikuntien ja tieteenalojen myös sosiaalityön on otettava nämä tekijät ja murrokset huomioon etsiessään omaa paikkaansa omista lähtökohdistaan jäsentyvänä tutkimusperinteenä ja ammattikäytäntönä 2000 - luvulla.

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APPENDIX 1.

Service user interview
(Service user interview about the relationship between the living environment and welfare)

Background information:
Family situation/Gender/Clienthood and its duration

Themes of the interview:

1 Living

- When have you moved into the area/apartment?

- Why did you move?

- What kind of house do you live in (apartment, terraced house, detached house)?

- Street address

- Size of house/apartment

- Modern conveniences in the house/apartment

- Do you like your house/apartment? If not, why?

2 Physical living environment

- How do you describe the condition of your house/apartment?

- Do you have a nice courtyard (play grounds, yards etc.)?

- Is the area/neighborhood too 'densely' or too 'loosely' built?

- Do you think there is enough 'nature' in and around the area and what does 'nature' mean to you?

3 Services

- What local services do you use?

- What services do you not have in your local residential area (which you would need on a daily basis)?

4 Leisure
- Do you spend time in your own residential area? What do you do?

- Are there enough leisure opportunities in your neighbourhood/local residential area?
- If not, what kind of services would you like to see?

5 Mobility
- Mobility within the residential area -> What do you think about local traffic arrangements?

- Do you feel the local traffic arrangements are safe enough?

- Mobility from the residential area -> What kind of transportation do you use when you travel outside the area?

6 Identity
- What kind of image do you have of the residential area in which you live?

- Is it safe to live in the area?

- Does it make any difference to you where (within the city) you live? Does this (or in general) residential area has a certain meaning to you?

- Do you think you will still be living in this area five years from today? If not, why?

- Do you feel there are problems/defects in the residential area? Would you want to influence these issues? Do you feel this is possible?

7 Social relations
- Do you have relatives/friends living in the area? Do you have relatives/friend living somewhere else in the city?

- Do you know if there are any neighbourhood activities within the area? Are you interested in any common activities in the neighbourhood? If not, why and if yes, what kind of activities?

8 Economic and mental resources
- Are you happy with your current life situation?

APPENDIX 2.

Social workers' criteria for sustainable and inclusive living environments and strategies for how to create them.

Criteria	Indicators	Assessment of residential area	Strategies
1. Diversity of the community structure	Types of housing, number of jobs in the area, public spaces, cultural layers	Present situation/ Future	Producing knowledge from service users' and residents' experiences (interviews, etc.), influencing in various situations related to city planning and housing policies, etc.
1.1. Local services or easy access to services	Access to services (quantity/quality)		Influencing "market forces", emphasising the importance of local services, bringing forth service user experiences
1.2. Secure and functional traffic and physical environment	Service users' and other residents' experiences about safety and local environment in general		Producing knowledge, informing city planners, bringing forth the social aspect
2. Diversity of the population structure, 'tolerance of difference'	Population structure, family types, socio-economic information, percentage of refugees in the area ,etc.		Influencing housing policy in cooperation with the housing office, private constructors and local social offices
3. Stability in the area	Levels of rent and standard of living, life situations, mobility		Influencing constructors (convertibility of flats, standard of equipment)
4. Social control	Residential activities, contacts with social workers (negative/positive control)		Residential meetings, supporting individual, family and residential level activities
5. Sense of community			
5.1 Loose familiarity, recognising neighbours	Service user experiences, social workers' observations and experiences		Encouraging service users and residents to act at the local level, promoting local possibilities of different activities
5.2 Neighbourhood-help, self-help	Service user experiences, social workers' observations and experiences		Creating networks, supporting various groups and projects around different issues (recycling, child care, etc.)
5.3 Functional local co-operation relationships	Meeting other local partners (quantity, quality, learning from each other)		Intensifying cooperation between local citizens and authorities
5.4 Interest in local living environment and its development	Residential activities Common spaces (community centre) for discussion and meetings Common meetings about local issues Local newspapers		Encouraging service users and residents to act at the local level, prohibiting local possibilities of different activities, bringing forth service users' and residents' views in various meetings and situations