Thinking as a sensor of reality

The new thinking behind the Three Urban Fabrics model is based on a highly practical approach, which, however, differs from conventional thinking. This new thinking recognises the old urban systems – such as the walking city and the transit city – not only as historical development stages of a city, but as valuable overall systems whose recognition and development has been severely neglected.

An approach that recognises the systems has previously been narrowed down to models used to illustrate the essence and dialectics of urban systems.

Meanwhile, the new thinking and models provide a strong foundation for theoretical discussions which, in turn, add more depth to the thinking and models.
Tested models

This study innovatively combines two novel approaches and urban models, which have been used and tested for more than two decades in dissimilar cities and city-suburban conglomerates.

*Peter Newman* in Perth, Australia, has made active efforts to regenerate Fremantle's pedestrian city, to restore the old mass transit rail connection between Fremantle and Perth, and to reduce car traffic by building new light rail connections. He has also studied major cities worldwide and written several definitive works on international urban research. In his work, he has applied the approach and model of cities that recognises different urban fabrics.

The work of *Leo Kosonen* in Kuopio, Finland, is similarly based on an approach that recognises urban fabrics and a model of cities that has been applied to the multifaceted analysis and follow-up of the town in question, and to target-setting and project implementation. The new thinking and the new model have given way to new practices and theoretical discussions, thereby providing a strong foundation for the construction of a new theory, once the findings of the two models and the experiences gained in their application have been combined.
Thinking – Model - Theory

Combination

Three Urban Fabrics is a whole made up of a way of thinking, models and a theory – all different levels of approach on the same thing.

It is an approach applied in this study to the identification and assessment of other approaches, models and theories of cities. This assessment reveals that not every approach offers the tools for forming a workable, holistic model of city, nor for theory formulation.
Theory

The diagram shown here illustrates a whole that combines thinking, model and theory.

The arrows represent the dynamics between different levels, and their relationship with the way the physical and functional structures of the city are implemented and maintained. A holistic theory needs firm, experience-based thinking as a foundation, and models that clarify it. Conversely, theoretical findings and a strong theoretical platform will, as they evolve, clarify and reinforce the models and the thinking behind them.

The diagram also illustrates the role of planning vis-à-vis the big picture. This study focuses on a model of three urban fabrics, which serves as a planning tool; therefore the theoretical approach covers the area marked with a dotted line (UF).