

# How to develop a sustainable urban regeneration process? Positioning a suburb into the structural and local development process

Mari Vaattovaara

*Even if much of the debate and discussion about urban development has addressed the role of the city centers in the future, the well recognisable housing stock, built in 1960's and 1970's forms a notable structural element for any kind of change or development in cities. Many questions related to sustainability, social cohesion, wellbeing or even competitiveness are greatly shaped in these suburbs. As in many European countries, also in Finland, which now is known as the rapidly developing, ICT-technology driven, modern knowledge based nation – the role of suburbs is central. One third of all the apartment buildings in Finland locate in the suburbs. In addition one fifth of the total population lives in these suburbs. The image of Finland as the modern Nokia driven knowledge economy with well educated Pisa (the Programme for International Student Assessment) champion population may be true, but the structural elements in terms of housing and urban spatial development are not so exiting or fast changing. Rather, the living environment for the great share of the population consists of very “ordinary suburbs” without any specific drive or shine.*

*Rapid urbanization, economic restructuring, increase in wealth combined with income differentiation - together with changes in the housing market (both in affordability and offer) have positioned the old suburbs differently during the last few decades. The process of regeneration in the suburbs should take these national structural changes as a starting point. This article will show and discuss one possible way to approach and open this challenge. The results are from a project that has been published by Vaattovaara & al. 2010 and Lahti & al. 2010).*

**Field:** urban development and planning

## **References:**

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\*Dr. Mari Vaattovaara, Professor of Urban Geography, University of Helsinki  
mari.vaattovaara@helsinki.fi , Department of Geography and geosciences , University of Helsinki Helsinki 00014 Helsinki, Finland  
tel. +358504154861