

# *„City of Regions“ – Improving Territorial governance in the Zurich „Glattal-Stadt“<sup>1</sup>*

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## *1. Introduction*

Globalisation “hits the ground” in Glattal-Stadt in the form of a growing working and living population, building activities triggered by the demand of international corporations, activities of real estate developers and the overwhelming influence of the international airport on the quality of future urban development and environmental conditions. The challenges that accompany economic growth and social change in metropolitan regions have mobilised politicians and actors towards activities and innovative approaches for improving existing institutions and problem solving capacity in Glattal-Stadt. However, there is a lack of genuine political projects. The shaping of future development requires careful attention and action. New forms of metropolitan governance are necessary.

The central questions guiding our research are: who controls the development of this area, increasingly perceived as an urban conglomeration, but which has neither a city president nor a parliament? How successful are existing governance bodies in solving spatial problems? In what way does the mismatch between spatial and sectoral scope of government bodies and the objectives and functional areas of private sector action networks complicate the political control of problems? Our research on Glattal-Stadt is a contribution to current Metropolitan Governance discourse, laying out perspectives for metropolitan regions in Switzerland.

In the following, we outline the challenges for spatial development in Glattal Stadt, pointing out the need for new forms of metropolitan governance. Building on this background and the findings from the case study in Glattal-Stadt, we elaborate the „City of Regions“ action-oriented model, consisting of the three elements „structures, behaviour and activities“ of governance. We will close the chapter with a perspective on further research that builds on the action-oriented model, combining it with a „regional park concept“ for better control and management of open space.

## *2. Glattal-Stadt as a „City of Regions“*

### *2.1 Challenges for spatial development in Glattal-Stadt*

Glattal-Stadt, the area between Zurich and the Unique Zurich Airport can be perceived in various ways: as a collection of towns and communities in the central Glattal, as part of the inner agglomeration belt around Zurich, as a shopping and leisure paradise, as a hotel and conference city or as the „gateway“ to the biggest metropolitan region in Switzerland. Statistically, Glattal-Stadt with its 170'000 inhabitants (Canton of Zurich 2002; City of Zurich 2001) is defined by eight political municipalities, which are located between the international airport and the city of Zurich, plus the two northernmost districts of Zurich.

The shape of Glatttal-Stadt is not the result of grandly structured urban designs or regional planning visions. It's emergence can be best described through the driving force of economic development in the context of „glocal transformation processes“.

"Glocalisation" (Swyngedouw 1992) denotes the synthesis of global market orientation ("globalisation") and local (or regional) embeddedness ("localisation"). Glocalisation thus describes two sides of the same coin: international competitiveness and the centripetal needs of the local quality of life. The way globalisation „hits the ground“ (Sassen 2001: 345) in Glatttal-Stadt, and attempts on local and regional levels to shape urban realities and life quality may be best described through three complex, intertwined spatial problems (Figure 1):

First, the overwhelming influence of Zurich's international airport along with the land use demands of international corporations has triggered growth of the living and working population and tremendous building development throughout Glatttal-Stadt. While in the hearts of its towns and communities small-town and village structures continue to exist, built-up areas have spread to the edges of their respective municipal boundaries, and open spaces have disappeared or shrunk.

Second, accessing prospective and existing development areas, including land access to the airport, can no longer be achieved in Glatttal-Stadt without an overall concept involving a considerable role for public transport. In order to tackle the urgent problem of increasingly overloaded roads, the project of an urban light railway for Glatttal-Stadt has been launched.

Third, the airport as a motor for the economic development of Glatttal-Stadt is at the same time the cause of serious problems. The air and noise pollution that air traffic produces has massive consequences for the quality of life in the residential, working and local recreational areas of the surrounding towns and municipalities. This can be seen in the extreme case in the concentration of socially disadvantaged population groups in particularly noise-polluted areas (Stieger 2001).

*Figure 1: Spatial problem complexes in Glatttal-Stadt.*

A closer look at the problem complexes aims to shed light on the question of who controls the development of this area, increasingly perceived as an urban conglomeration, but which has neither a city president nor a parliament.

#### *Deficits in the control of development of built-up areas*

As a result of their planning autonomy, towns and municipalities in Glatttal-Stadt play a dominant role in administrating building development. In this their goals are community-oriented and competitive despite the need for intercommunity coordination of planning issues. Eight municipalities in Glatttal-Stadt have joined together into the "glow. das Glatttal" organisation. The organisation's aim is to work on joint projects in the areas of economics, traffic, sports, culture, location marketing and design of living space. However, the development of built-up areas continues to be seen by the actors in "glow.das Glatttal" as the responsibility of the individual towns and municipalities; municipal autonomy is not to be encroached on.

With the instrument of the cantonal structure plan (Richtplan), the cantonal planning authority has laid down core development areas as focal points for future building activities in Glatttal-Stadt. This is intended to ensure development areas in appropriate locations at the same time as achieving the goal of an economical use of space. Sceptics, however, maintain that the core development areas do not have any strong administrative effect, but merely represent planning approval of development which will take place in any case. Also, the Zurich planning group Glatttal (ZPG) as regional planning institution between the municipalities and cantonal planning has been criticised as being a committee without any decision-making authority (Neue Zürcher Zeitung 17.4.02: 47).

#### *Inter-municipal cooperation for an urban traffic system*

In order to tackle the urgent problem of the increasingly overloaded roads, at the beginning of the 1990s the eight municipalities of Glatttal-Stadt formed an "Interest Group for the Future of the Glatttal" (Interessengemeinschaft Zukunft Glatttal), the precursor of the "glow. das Glatttal" organisation, in order to push forward the idea of an urban light railway for Glatttal-Stadt. The interest group was successful in obtaining a hearing at cantonal level for its inter-municipally developed proposal. The government of the Zurich canton assigned the project management to the Glatttal Transport Authority (Verkehrsbetriebe Glatttal, VBG). The project management from the start involved administrators and politicians at all levels in the working and decision-making process. In spite of various hurdles, the cantonal parliament approved the financing of the project in September 2002. The first stage is to be brought into service in 2006. However, cantonal structure planning played a subdued role, there was hardly any opportunity for decision making in sounding out alternatives to the urban light railway. Neither a simplified option nor more complex solutions for a transport system with a larger perimeter were brought up for consideration.

#### *Deficits in control of airport - and building development*

The negative influence of the airport on live quality and development perspectives in Glatttal-Stadt was by no means inevitable, but is the result of political, economic and planning decisions over decades. As the highest authority, the Federation in its Sachplan Infrastruktur Luftverkehr (SIL) (UVEK 2000) has for years neglected to make binding stipulations for the downstream levels and actors. Thus, there is a lack of usage restrictions for the airport's noise impact zone. At the municipal level, construction continues in the airport's pollution zone for the period of the missing operating rules. Utilisations with detrimental consequences for quality of life and investments continue to be created in pollution zones. The protracted negotiations on a new international treaty with the German government on the number of arriving flights and the ban on night flights over southern Germany are a cause of further uncertainty for future development.

Not only because of the lack of guidelines from the Federation, but also due to its own misjudgement and lack of political drive, the canton of Zurich as the level between the Federation, municipalities and the operator Flughafen Zürich AG has for a long time neglected to regulate the correlation between settlement and airport development.

In spite of the current state of problems, neither the "glow. das Glatttal" organisation as supra-municipal committee, the regional planning of the Zurich planning group Glatttal (ZPG) nor the umbrella organisation Zurich and district regional planning (RZU) have incorporated the question of aircraft noise pollution in their problem portfolio. Also, the Greater Zurich Area (GZA) marketing cooperative has largely excluded the negative aspects of airport development in spite of the fact that the perimeter of the GZA and its location quality is closely linked to the problems created by the effects of the airport.

Prudent solutions geared to the overall situation can only be obtained with difficulty out of this initial situation characterised by vested interests and "material constraints". The debating of solutions to problems with representatives from municipalities, cantons, the Federation, neighbouring Germany and with organisations and affected citizens at open forums has taken place decades too late.

#### *Deficiencies in governance capacity to handle spatial problems*

The governance bodies from municipal to federal levels show deficiencies in governance capacity for inter community or even intercantonal problems of spatial development. The problem complexes presented here illustrate first, that they cannot be treated separately from each other. Secondly, that there are deficiencies in vertically and horizontally coordinating cooperation of institutions towards a sustainable spatial development.

The current deficit in building adequate institutions with problem solving capacity is outlined in the following quotation: "Technically speaking this policy deficiency does not exist, since there is no institution responsible for it. None of the various political levels has been given the job or the competence to create new, innovative structures" (Behrendt and Kruse 2001: 202).

From the examination of the three problem fields it can be concluded that Glatttal-Stadt as an area of complex governance levels needs institutional reforms.

#### *2.2 Regarding Glatttal-Stadt as a „City of Regions“*

A look at the functions of institutions and actors of the three problem complexes of building development, Glatttal urban light railway and airport development shows that Glatttal-Stadt is not a homogeneously distinguishable "region". The problem fields are, in fact, part of diverse institutional spheres of operation. The institutions cover operational areas of varying perimeters with different, partly overlapping responsibilities and functions. Experts refer to the overlap of operational levels and functions as "multilevel governance". In order to explain Glatttal-Stadt as an area consisting of overlapping "regions" or "operational spheres", we refer to it as a "City of Regions" (Figure 2).

*Figure 2: Glatttal-Stadt and its „multilevel governance“ situation.*

Based on the description of the "City of Regions" we are developing an action-oriented model in order to approach the complex issues of capacity and deficiencies of governance bodies.

The development of Zurich airport and its function as an international hub is an example for functional relations exceeding community, cantonal and even national borders. Evidently, problems of urban areas like Zurich are not confined to the core-city and its environs or an area statistically defined as the agglomeration of Zurich. Behrendt and Kruse (2001) propose a "polycentric metropolitan region of Zurich" as a spatial dimension defined by functional interrelations which includes the cities of Basel, Lucerne and St. Gallen as well as the southern German border (Figure 3). The European Metropolitan Region of Zurich (EMRZ) is proposed as a potential operational level capable to meet the challenge for an efficient metropolitan governance spanning more adequate spatial dimensions. Thus, with the EMRZ we define a metropolitan level for the development of the "City of Regions" action-oriented model.

*Figure 3: The polycentric European metropolitan region of Zurich and its functional interconnections including nodes and corridors of development, municipalities within 60 minutes by car from Zurich and arrows symbolising the large user area of the Zurich International Airport (Behrendt and Kruse 2001: 210, adapted).*

### **3. Improving Metropolitan governance**

#### **3.1 Metropolitan governance discourse**

The problems and deficiencies pointed out for Glatttal-Stadt need to be reflected in front of an international discourse on new forms of „metropolitan governance“.

The term „governance“ was originally exclusive to the classical sense of government. Today governance describes the organisation and administration of regional authorities and institutions on different levels as well as processes of decision-making, cooperation, and exertion of influence (OECD 2001). The governance discourse debates innovative forms of governance based on new spatial alliances and partnerships between central government, territorial public authorities, the private sector and civil society. In Switzerland, a debate on the conditions of future governance of urban regions has evolved in the past decade. A lack of genuine political projects for metropolitan societies has been stated, however, there are several initiatives and programs for improving metropolitan governance (Bassand and Kübler 2001). The principle of vertical and horizontal function fulfilment and competence distribution also characterises the efforts towards spatially-related administration which have been under way since the mid-1990s (Schenkel 2001). The Federal Council founded the Tripartite Agglomerationskonferenz (TAK) in 2001 as a political platform for the promotion of vertical cooperation between the Federation, cantons, towns and municipalities. The Federation's 2001 agglomeration policy complements these steps. Its aim is to support the cantons and municipalities in their activities and improve horizontal cooperation within agglomerations. In an initial phase the Federation supports and encourages innovative model projects. It promotes projects for cooperation within the agglomerations or between towns and agglomerations (Federal Council 2001, ARE 2002).

### *3.2 Institutional change needs „awareness, products and processes“*

An inevitable change in the political system to deal with the problem solving deficit of existing government bodies will involve a change in our understanding of democracy and the will to rethink the essence of existing federal democratic political structures (Michalski 2001). The OECD (2001) maintains that improved metropolitan governance would not result solely from the reform of institutions and finances. It was rather a question of changing behaviour and governance culture as well. As a guidance for the member countries, the OECD elaborated eleven „Principles for Metropolitan governance“ in order to define adequate systems of governance in the 21st century. With reference to the OECD principles and the requirements arising from globalisation, metropolitan governance aims to achieve mutual improvement of international competitiveness and local quality of life, creating „more livable and competitive cities for citizens“.

Change of government institutions needs to be based on an evolutive and not a deterministic understanding of spatial development. In order to describe and develop this circumstance, we use the terms of “awareness, products and processes” as a “key to insight”. Static "products" such as too rigidly determined operational areas and transport infrastructures or inflexible developmental and procedural organisations will not attain their objectives; indeed they are inconsistent with the open goal horizon of sustainable development. In the same way, one-sided focusing on quickly attainable results will not be far-reaching enough. People "still think and plan far too often in terms of products instead of processes" (Thierstein 1999: 27). In order to implement new forms of governance, there has to be a process rather than formal measures to create new government forms. "Products" often become future-viable only when they are "produced in a socially robust way" (Nowotny 2000:1).

In policy and planning practice, the importance of creating awareness in change processes has often been underestimated (Minsch et al. 1998). Insufficient awareness of problems and by actors often leads to inappropriate or tardy action. The reform of federalist institutions requires corresponding learning processes between the democratically legitimised decision-makers (the electors), the users and those who pay. “The future development of urban regions needs policy learning. It is a process of collective learning geared to a strategy of regional development with those actors participating who contribute to regional development” (Benz and Fürst 2002: 22).

Governance of urban regions according to the key to insight “awareness, products and processes” involves learning, both by actors and institutions. At the same time it is essential that awareness-raising for efficient cooperation, between the levels of state politics and between spatially relevant fields of activity, be linked with new administrative forms and economic equalisation instruments.

### *3.3 „City of Regions“ action-oriented model*

As we transfer the three-part key to insight “awareness, products and processes” to tasks of spatial development and control, applying elements of the St. Gallen management concept (Schwaninger 1997), we create the "City of Regions" action-oriented model (Fig. 5).

The model views institutional change in a comprehensive way, dividing it into three interconnected areas:

The “structures” denote relatively stable arrangements in time and space. This means both information and management systems in the sense of sets of rules which support the fulfillment of functions, and also developmental and procedural organisation. We speak of the governance structure of the action-oriented model.

The “activities” describe the tasks, which arise from a region's conception of itself, including the functions, which the region fulfills in its wider spatial and functional context. Here we speak of the governance activities of the action-oriented model.

The “behaviour” means behaviour patterns, especially cultural attitudes, values, principles and norms, the recurring routines and trusted forms. We speak of the governance behaviour of the action-oriented model.

*Figure 4: The "City of Regions" action-oriented model. The governance structures, activities and behaviour are continuously and mutually reviewed and adapted.*

Our “City of Regions” action-oriented model can be understood as an evolutive system that is open in its development: multilevel governance adapts itself to the times and the changing problem areas as a process of discovery. Improvement of metropolitan governance means a simultaneous and mutually coordinated development of structures, activities and behaviour.

The framework for future governance needs to consider the premises of the “City of Regions” action-oriented model and be oriented towards the OECD’s “Principles of Metropolitan Governance” (OECD 2001: 18). On this foundation “action principles” can be derived with varying degrees of relevance for the three governance aspects structures, activities and behaviour (Table 1).

*Table 1: The Action Principles for Metropolitan Governance and their Importance for the Three Governance Aspects of the "City of Regions" action-oriented model.*

<i>Action Principles</i>	<i>Structures</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Behaviour</i>
Socially robust searching, learning and creative process	•	•	•
Evolutive governance	•	•	•
Transformation of urban areas from the viewpoint of glocalisation	•	•	•
Complex "City of Regions"	•		
Reference size of a functional metropolitan region	•		
Subsidiarity	•	•	•
Horizontal and vertical coordination	•	•	•
Coherence in policy		•	•
Endogenous development		•	
Efficient financial management		•	
Flexibility		•	•
Participation		•	•

Particularity		•	•
Social cohesion		•	•

#### 4. Metropolitan governance in Glattal-Stadt and the European Metropolitan Region of Zurich

##### 4.1 Precondition: institutional learning within a coherent framework

The “drama” of Zurich airport development and insufficiently controlled growth of built-up areas is an expression of too much fragmentation and a principle of subsidiarity applied too linearly. Although the operating competencies of the actors involved are defined, their individual activity fails to result in an integrated whole. The incentives for orientation towards a superordinate spatial development advantageous to most of those involved are insufficient. Also the existing framework is not coherent or binding enough. In complex problem situations, solutions can neither be achieved by a single politically/administratively defined regional institution.

In planning practice, the conviction is slowly growing that overall responsibility can only be exercised through concerted action of various institutions. This orientation can be observed in new cantonal structure planning in the canton of Zurich. With improved metropolitan governance, regional development administrators and planners, such as "glow.das Glattal", the Zurich planning group (ZPG) and the Glattal Zurich and district regional planning (RZU), would accomplish more than handling issues of spatial development “remaining” from cantonal planning. Rather, for problem complexes in Glattal-Stadt like building development, an urban transport system or the development of the Airport City, the various levels of actors would work on the same subject matter according to a negotiated subsidiarity scheme.

This observation is not a rejection of subsidiary function fulfilment in the Swiss federal system. However, subsidiary function fulfilment can only lead to the development goal of "more competitive and liveable cities" when governance in Glattal-Stadt and the Zurich Metropolitan area is a coherent institutional framework, which comprehensively covers the multi layered political sphere. Improved governance in Glattal-Stadt and in the Zurich metropolitan region requires municipal autonomy to advance and take into account the widely spreading spatial linkages in the context of globalisation.

A coherent interplay covering several spatial levels, in addition to awareness and the will for multilevel cooperation, requires new forms of relationships between the levels as well as a robust mutual accountability (Sabel 2001). We call this form of institutional innovation "mutual participation and accountability ". This mutual accountability is a part of regional knowledge management and helps in early identification both of innovative ideas and areas where coordination is needed, in supplying the results of an independent evaluation and promoting them more vigorously by publishing "best practices". This again gives a firm base for a multilevel institutional learning process improved over a series of stages.

One example of the application of "working with mutual participation and accountability" is provided by the model projects of Swiss agglomeration policy. The Federation and cantons are obliged to change their structure, activities and behaviour. The multi-faceted agenda of the model projects (ARE 2002) could be the beginning of a lasting experimental and exchange phase with gradually growing content, leading to



improved horizontal and vertical coordination in urban areas. Beyond any project the "competition for good ideas" would promote the discovery of promising governance structures, activities and behaviour patterns.

#### *4.2 Permanent Institutions and Ad-Hoc Institutions*

The "City of Regions" action-oriented model is based on the present institutional complexity of Swiss spatial organisation (Federation, cantons, municipalities; regions, partially state-run or private institutions). There is no actual local government reorganisation at the forefront of the governance reforms, where formerly independent regional authorities would be compelled by law to merge. As described, our governance model is based on a multilevel system of permanent institutions. These would be complemented by problem-oriented ad-hoc institutions.

The situation of the "City of Regions" shows the complex issues of multilevel governance and deficiencies of governance bodies in handling complex problems. It becomes clear, that a congruence of operational levels of institutions on the one hand and functional areas of ever changing spatial problems complexes will not be achieved.

Thus, complex problems like the airport development or a solution for an urban traffic system need situation-oriented project organisation of a limited time-span. Ad-hoc institutions form a framework in which otherwise vertically linked organisations, from the Federation down to private actors, are organised horizontally and work together on the common issue. It is of central importance that the results achieved are transferred to the democratically legitimised developmental and procedural organisation of the state system.

#### *4.3 Area-wide metropolitan structure*

Which institution might be a candidate for metropolitan knowledge management and long-term spatial development strategy? As mentioned before, the European Metropolitan Region of Zurich (EMRZ) qualifies as a suitable spatial unit to tackle even complex and cross-border questions, such as airport development, properly. Schamp (2001: 177) defines European metropolitan regions as node regions important Europe-wide and sees them "in the current globalisation debate as decision-making, control and coordination centres of international importance". Behrendt and Kruse (2001: 202), however, point out the "emergence of a sub-political sphere" and "politics without policies". The trend towards a loss of democratic legitimisation in multilevel governance must be taken very seriously. It is precisely because of de facto existing "sub-political spheres" extending beyond political borders, that efficient governance structures and activities and corresponding governance behaviour should be developed at the metropolitan region level. As one example the EMRZ could take on the function of a coordinating hub, together with the cantons for the above mentioned model projects of Swiss agglomeration policy. This joint exploration could be described as "experimental democracy" (Sabel 2001).

Structural innovations such as this area-wide metropolitan structure are part of institutional reforms in favour of a future-viable development of urban areas. In concrete terms this objective can only be achieved if there is a close linking between the political planning of a metropolitan area (long-term

analyses, legislative goals and programmes), metropolitan spatial development planning and financial planning (inter and intra-cantonal fiscal equalisation; settlement of social-economic benefits).

Only an optimal linking of financial policy and governance will achieve this objective. An initial, although not sufficient instrument exists in Switzerland with the upcoming "intergovernmental equalisation" (Neuer Finanzausgleich).

The implementation of the proposed changes come up against obstacles which in Glatttal-Stadt stem from municipal autonomy and in the Zurich metropolitan region from the "canton centered spirit". How can one persuade the Glatttal municipalities or the "glow.das Glatttal" organisation to be accountable to the Zurich and district regional planning (RZU) or to the canton, and vice versa? The precondition for this must be a composite of intellectual, financial and normative incentives, which will lead to function-oriented performance and settlement agreements and mutually implemented controlling.

### *5. Perspectives for research on „Metropolitan Governance“ in Switzerland*

Consideration of Glatttal-Stadt and the Zurich metropolitan area has brought forth proposals for concrete action in the urbanised landscape of Switzerland by working out a description of the "City of Regions" situation. "City of Regions" is a metaphor for an urban area made up of unequally wide-ranging, overlapping regional operational areas with different responsibilities and functions. The "City of Regions" action-oriented model, based on the three elements "structures, behaviour, activities" has been drawn up. It may be generalised and thus offer opportunities for specific solutions for an individual urban area. There is no such thing as the ideal spatial boundary or the ideal regional institution. Thus, "governance" is becoming a complex continuous function, although not as a disquieting improvisation, but as strategic consideration of institutional answers tailored to needs. The "City of Regions" action-oriented model is a part of this answer. It includes the local, regional and metropolitan spatial dimension; it is evolutive, process-oriented and promotes experimental policy; and it regards governance as a mutual development of structures, activities and behaviour patterns.

Internationally, governance has become an important field of research (OECD 2002). At Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, this will be reflected by one project within the research programme „The future of urbanised landscape“, at the „Urban studies and landscape planning and design network“ (NSL), submitted to the research commission for grants. The interdisciplinary research programme, aside from socio-economic aspects, will cover ecological, engineering, architectural and landscape development and planning issues of urbanised landscapes such as Zurich's Glatttal-Stadt. We will take a closer look at the research project within above mentioned programme, which is going to combine the "City of Regions" action-oriented model and a "regional park concept": The concept draws from the example of "Regionalpark Rhein-Main", initiated in the Frankfurt metropolitan region in Germany (Rautenstrauch 2001). The relevant idea is to create an interlinked system of open spaces connected by paths within the urbanised landscape, extending beyond existing communal borders. The regional park includes elements

such as designed parks for recreation, former industrial sites, historic monuments as well as natural elements as rivers and forests and protected habitat areas. The research project will investigate the hypotheses that a „regional park concept“ is an effective policy, design, and planning instrument for control and revaluation of open space in the densely urbanised region of Glattal-Stadt. Also, the regional park project is stated to be able to serve as a mobilising concept to support a collective learning process towards new forms of governance. According to the hypotheses, the “City of Regions” action-oriented model will be the suitable basis for a strategy to implement the regional park project in planning and policy practice. „Structures“ are represented by the physical shape and design of the regional park as well as planning instruments and regulations and the organisational body put in place for the management and planning of the project. Activities“ are to be described as the interactions of actors, actor groups and institutions who are shaping the process to design and implement the regional park project. „Behaviour“ describes the climate, routines and will in local and regional policies, administration, private and semi-private actor groups and population to support and put forward the vision. The strategy for a regional park system throughout Glattal-Stadt will be a step towards a regional initiative capable to improve the quality of urban life according to the principles of sustainable urban development.

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