Building one Space for Action: City-Regional Imaginaries and the Reduction of Net Land Take

Call for Papers – International Workshop at the University of Kassel

As part of the RSA Research Network *Bridging Governance Gaps in City-Regions*, an international workshop on land take and city-region building in comparative perspective will be held at the University of Kassel, Germany, from 4–6 November 2026.

About the Workshop

The workshop brings together research addressing the institutional, spatial, and discursive challenges involved in perceiving and shaping the city-region as a shared space for action. It contributes to current debates in regional and planning studies by examining how city-regions are constituted and governed through the interaction of territorial imaginaries, governance arrangements, and material spatial processes.

Particular attention will be paid to the role of regional visions, narratives, and planning approaches in supporting more sustainable forms of spatial development and reducing net land take. The workshop is guided by the overarching question:

- How can the reduction of net land take be supported through city-regional imaginaries and governance processes of city-region building?

Confirmed keynote speakers:

- John Harrison, Loughborough University, on regional design and city-regional imaginaries
- Marco Pütz, Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL, on land use and regional governance

Themes

We particularly welcome contributions from on:

- city-regional imaginaries and regional visions, including *Leitbilder*, soft spaces, and processes of city-region building;
- instruments, strategies, and practices used by different actors to address sustainable planning challenges at the city-regional scale;
- governance arrangements and actor constellations shaping city-regional cooperation;
- methodological challenges and approaches in comparative research on city-regional imaginaries and city-region building;
- comparative and international perspectives on land take reduction and sustainable spatial development.

The workshop welcomes interdisciplinary contributions from geography, planning, regional studies, political science, and related fields.

Workshop Format

The event is designed as an intensive, discussion-oriented workshop with a limited number of participants. Keynotes, thematic sessions, an excursion, and a podium discussion will provide opportunities for in-depth academic exchange and networking.

Participants will also have the opportunity to engage with the ongoing agenda of the RSA Research Network.

Workshop contributions may form the basis for submissions to a planned **special issue** related to the network's thematic focus. Further information on this publication opportunity will be provided separately.

The workshop language will be English.

Cost and accomodation

Participation in the workshop is free of charge. However, participants are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.

Venue

The workshop will take place at the University of Kassel, Germany. Further practical information regarding the venue, accommodation, and programme will be circulated after acceptance.

Organisers

Prof. Dr. Anna Growe (University of Kassel)
Dr. Simin Yan (Chongqing University)
Lukas Häfner (University of Kassel)

Submission Guidelines

Please submit:

- an abstract of approximately 300–500 words,
- the paper title,
- author name(s) and institutional affiliation(s),
- and a short biographical note (max. 100 words).

Submissions should be sent as a PDF file to: lukas.haefner@uni-kassel.de

Extended submission deadline: 10 August 2026

Authors will be notified about acceptance by the end of August 2026.