Anglo-Turkish Society online lecture, 20 June 2023, 7.00 pm (UK time)
Speaker: Sera Tolgay
Platform: Zoom with link provided to those who register
Title: 'Challenges of Land Use Planning for Disasters and Long-Term Resilience Building in Istanbul and the Marmara Region'

Satellite images reveal a profound transformation taking place in Istanbul and the wider Marmara Region, with rapid land use change, dwindling natural habitats, and increasing urbanization in high-risk areas such as floodplains. This presents a growing concern in the aftermath of the Kahramanmaraş earthquake of 2023, raising questions about vulnerability to other hazards in addition to earthquakes such as flooding, sea level rise, and environmental degradation. Since 2009, Istanbul has not had a high-level strategic land use plan and development has followed an ad hoc process. We undoubtedly live in "Risk Society", defined by sociologist Ulrich Beck where we have to live with "the hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself".
This talk will examine the long-term resilience of the Istanbul metropolitan area and the broader Marmara region in the face of these challenges. Beyond building code enforcement and reconstruction schemes, we will explore the role of land use planning and regional environmental planning to support a multi-hazard approach to build resilience in our communities and cities. Can proactive environmental planning and conservation efforts restore critical ecosystems such as floodplains, wetlands, and coastal areas to reduce exposure to disaster risk? By preserving 30% of the region by 2030 and establishing ecological corridors, we can also support biodiversity and preserve carbon sinks while building resilience against future disasters.

Booking essential: https://sera-tolgay-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk

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Sea of Marmara NDVI Satellite Image



Sera Tolgay is a specialist in resilience planning and climate adaptation projects. Her urban design projects range from city-scale masterplans for coastal resiliency to the adaptive reuse of infrastructure. Sera has also worked as an independent consultant to the World Bank on urban regeneration and resiliency projects in Cyprus and Turkey and as a researcher at MIT's Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism on disaster-resilient housing and urban design guidelines. Prior to her studies at MIT, Sera worked on the pedestrianization of Istanbul's Historic Peninsula at WRI's Ross Center for Sustainable Cities (formerly EMBARQ) in collaboration with Gehl Architects. Sera has a dual degree in Master of City Planning and Master of Science in Architecture Studies in the Aga Khan Program from the MIT School of Architecture and Planning and received her B.A. from Yale University.

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