**Spaces of capital, religion and ideology: Fundamentalist housing enclaves in Istanbul**

Meltem Al, McGill University

My PhD project examines how urban space produces—and is produced by—capital, religion and ideology, through the investigation of fundamentalist housing projects in Istanbul, Turkey. Among many other geographies that have been subject to the new modes of neoliberal and fundamentalist urbanization, Turkey deserves attention with regard to the relationship between economic, ideological and religious systems and production of urban space. While not unique, Turkey is significant in that the marriage between neoliberalism and Islam has caused serious transformations in the built environment as well as the economic, political and social spheres for the last four decades. I will focus on selected residential projects constructed in Istanbul since the late 1980s, when neoliberalism and political Islam started to intervene in the production of the built environment in Turkey.

In Istanbul, the majority of the conservative housing projects are located in Başakşehir that emerged as a low-income conservative mass-housing area in the 1990s, but soon turned into a hub of luxe housing projects addressing upper class conservative families. I will focus on the state funded housing projects that increased the property values and triggered the emergence of many rant-seeking private projects for conservative elites in Başakşehir district. I will investigate these housing projects’ architectural and social features, explore their dialogue with urban space, identify their investors and their addressed audiences, observe the organization of the daily life there, and explore their construction processes (design, production, and promotion). I will clarify what makes these projects fundamentalist in formal, social, and economic means, and how they differ from other contemporary housing projects in Istanbul and other large cities.