



## Public Lecture by Prof. Dr. Takehiro Watanabe

Tuesday, February 25, 2025: 12:45-13:45

Venue: RAK-E-8, University of Zurich

### Cracks in the Concrete: Community, Cityscapes, and the Politics of Naturing Tokyo's Waters

Tokyo's water infrastructure is a feat of engineered resilience, yet beneath its concrete surfaces lie tensions—both physical and political—that shape the city's hydrosocial future. As the Tokyo Metropolitan Government advances plans for an underground detention pond, debates over governance, environmental justice, and public participation expose fractures in dominant flood management paradigms. At the same time, grassroots efforts, nature-based solutions, and the evolving vision of watershed-wide flood management create openings for a more adaptive and community-driven approach—one that allows water, and people, to find new ways to flow through the city.

This talk explores how cities, watersheds, and rivers are shaped by the interplay between large-scale infrastructure and decentralized interventions. By tracing moments of disruption—both literal and figurative—I consider how these cracks in the system create space for rethinking urban water governance in more inclusive and ecologically attuned ways.



**Takehiro Watanabe** is Associate Professor at Sophia University, Faculty of Liberal Arts and the Graduate School in Global Studies, where he teaches anthropology with a focus on natural environments. He specializes in social and cultural dimensions of environmental issues and focuses on industrial pollution, natural resource management, wildlife conservation, and urban ecology. Currently, he is working on a volume on freshwater environments in Japan. His work has been published in English and Japanese, in journals such as *Society & Natural Resources*, *Wetland Research*, *Landscape Research*, and *Gendai shiso*.