

Karl W. Weiss '87 Faculty Lecture Series

2016-2017

Brian JK Miller

Envisioning a Turkish Miracle: The 1960s Turkish Guest Worker Initiative and the Making of a “New” Europe

In the early 1960s, Turkish state planners promoted the idea of workers temporarily going abroad to gain both financial and experiential capital to infuse into Turkish society upon their return. This attempted development through migration was informed by US developed modernization theory born in the early years of the Cold War. I critique the implicit assertion, present in much of the present historiography, that Turkey went into the guest worker program almost willy-nilly and that the subsequent failures of the program were largely due to their actions during the first years of the program. Modernization theory held a special appeal to Turkish scholars dedicated to fulfilling Ataturk's vision and seemed to offer a path to fulfilling his modernization goals articulated in the 1920s and 1930s. It is not my intention to demonstrate causal linkage between the dissemination of modernization theory and its uptake by Turkish state planners but, rather, demonstrate how “knotted intellectual itineraries” of modernization and development, newly formulated in the Cold War terrain, moved through intellectual communities and across national borders.

Wednesday, September 14th at 7:00 pm
Campus Center 301 & 302