

Migrants from Turkey in Athens: Between national narratives and ambiguous encounters

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A century after the Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey and Turkish speaking Rum Orthodox migrant communities taking form in Greece, the two countries are once again witnessing people on the move. This time, Turkish citizens are emigrating as a response to democratic backsliding and rising authoritarianism since the Gezi Uprising of 2013, and particularly after the coup attempt of 2016. The Majority being ethnic Turks, the migration to Greece is unique in many ways as it is composed of people with different political and socio-economic backgrounds, including, among others, upper-middle class secular investors, leftist and Kurdish activists, members of the politico-religious Gülen

Movement, and white-collar workers. Thus, for the first time we are witnessing a Turkey-origin diaspora taking form in Greece. But what does it mean to be a migrant from Turkey in Athens? I approach the topic in a dual context: namely that of the Greek and Turkish national identity formation and the Mediterranean migration unfolding since 2015. To answer the question, I draw on interviews conducted with 60 immigrants from Turkey and ethnographic participant observation carried out in their communities between 2018 and 2021. Based on my findings, I discuss the meanings of Turkishness and migranhood experienced by Turkish nationals in Athens, their view of the national 'Other' prior to migration, and their meetings and interactions with Greek nationals.

Gül Üret is a PhD candidate in Law and Politics at the University of Graz. Her doctoral thesis empirically explores contemporary migration from Turkey to Greece with a focus on the meetings between Greek and Turkish nationals, and the meanings of Turkishness and migranhood in Athens. Gül Üret's research interests include the history, politics, and modern societies of Greece and Turkey, and broadly span the topics of migration and minorities, nationalism and ethnicity, identity politics, and political activism in the transnational space between the two countries.

