

Abstract

Turkey's demolition waste management is, to a great extent, dependent on *çıkmacı*s (reclaimers) who salvage condemned buildings for raw materials and architectural elements. Its urbanization history is full of key moments marked by building demolitions, which became a necessary material resource for informal urbanization. As early as the 1970s, the *çıkmacı*s helped the *gecekondus* [squatter houses] by supplying second-hand building materials and construction loans. They managed to turn a lack of infrastructure into an advantage and remain very adaptable to the ever-changing conditions of neo-liberalized urbanization. They depend on solidarity networks and other informal resources.

Assemblage thinking helps to redefine the concept of informality, understand the relational dynamics between various actors, and focus on the agency of materials. The empirical data gained from 'follow the thing' ethnographic research in Turkey and Georgia reveals the double lives of *çıkmacı*s who move between village and city. Additionally, by following the example of a reclaimed window frame's journey from Istanbul to Tbilisi, we can more clearly see the second-hand trade network in the context of urbanization and incremental architecture. In the context of waste's materiality, the empirical part of the research shows the symbiotic relationship between *çıkmacı*s and the discarded demolition materials.

