

BOOK REVIEW

CONFLICTS IN URBAN FUTURE - MAKING

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(Editors)

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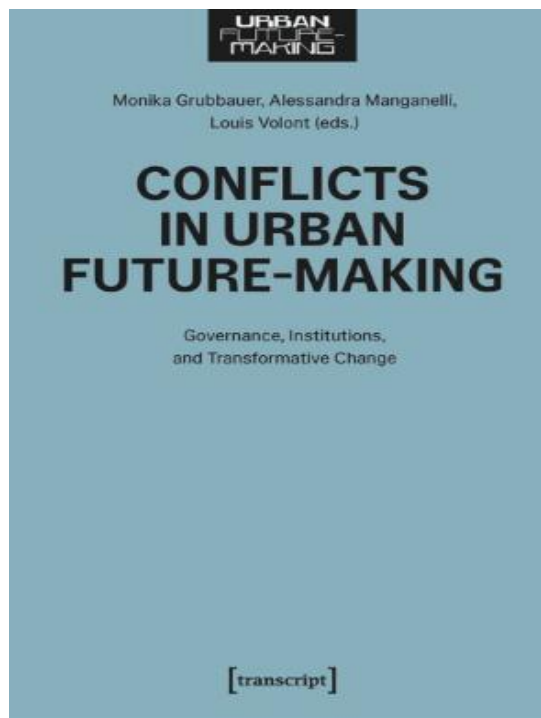
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In the book *Conflicts in Urban Future Making*, the authors aim to understand the conflicts that arise around planning projects and interventions in the built urban environment, particularly those that threaten the shaping of the urban future. They view the process of shaping the urban environment as involving decision-making and intentional actions that affect the built environment in order to bring about transformative change.

The book is structured into four parts, each containing several chapters.

The **first part**, entitled "*Urban Future-Making as a Lens*", contains two chapters. The authors suggest that this conceptual lens opens new perspectives

from theoretical, empirical, and practical-political viewpoints. From a **theoretical perspective**, they encourage a focus on the qualities of the built environment in shaping decisions about the future. From an **empirical perspective**, they propose that the actions of professionals (architects, engineers, and urban planners) be situated within the broader field of future-making practices. Regarding **practical and political relevance**, they highlight the role of professionals in the urban environment in addressing key conflicts in contemporary European societies.



In the **first chapter**, the authors theorize the notion of conflict and present how urban professionals debate, within “conflictual arenas,” topics related to the future of cities. They appear as “agents of conflict,” facing the complex task of applying scientific knowledge, communicating with diverse public representatives, while at the same time maintaining their own values and worldviews. Three variations of conflict negotiation are described, emphasizing that in the process of building the urban future under conditions of conflict, beyond rational appearances lies a deeply affective component, which generates emotional reactions in both citizens and professionals. In the **second chapter**, the authors conceptualize the notion of *agency* (the capacity of social actors to act) in the context of the process of shaping the urban future. They also highlight how uncertainty strongly influences professionals’ decision-making processes at different levels.

The **second part**, containing the first thematic group of the book, “*Contested Governance and Policy*”, consists of four chapters that analyze future conflict scenarios in a political context. These chapters address: the commitments of cities to achieve net-zero carbon emissions in the post-Paris Agreement climate regime; potential latent conflicts generated by urban greening initiatives; potential conflicts arising from the European project for developing Positive Energy Districts (PEDs) and the emergence of conflicts through the development of autonomous driving and its preconditions.

The **third part**, containing the second thematic group entitled “*Contrasting Cultures and Institutions*”, explores how local action can generate large-scale transformations within divergent cultural worlds. The **first chapter** highlights both gradual and radical changes in transport planning and policy. The **second chapter**, linking urban mobility to climate change, criticizes the lack of efforts in the transport sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The **third chapter** exposes internal conflicts among planners, policymakers, and public officials, interpreted as “*formations of the political*.” In the **fourth chapter**, the authors emphasize that challenges such as rising sea levels in coastal cities hold great potential, as they compel urban inhabitants to experience new forms of life and to politicize the unequal effects of climate change.

The **fourth part**, comprising the third thematic group “*Grounding Conflicts in Everyday Practices*”, examines how material interventions in cities are introduced and negotiated within local contexts. In the **first chapter** of this group, the author shows how greening interventions acquire multiple political meanings. The **second chapter** examines the dynamics of conflict within a traffic experiment in a German city that aimed to reallocate street space for alternative forms of mobility. The **third chapter** presents a series of urban experiments in mobility, public space design, and other fields, showing how tensions related to governance, socio-ecological justice, power, and politics are not merely obstacles but can

create opportunities for transformative action, becoming catalysts for innovation and for reconfiguring the urban order.

This book constitutes an intellectual journey through the dynamics of conflict that emerge in the imaginative, negotiation, and materialization processes of various scenarios for the urban future in the context of multiple contemporary crises. It is of great interest to various disciplines related to the built urban environment, both in academia and professional practice.