Conflicts around urban development and planning issues represent an important dimension of urban politics. Issues of social cohesion and democratic representation are all the more relevant in times when cities are undergoing a severe economic crisis and when local politics tends to meet its challenges with “post-political” responses. The relevance of local conflicts as moments of political mobilization is particularly apparent as institutions and procedures of urban politics fall short of meeting the expectations of local communities.

The case-studies from cities throughout the world explore the potential of planning conflicts to raise questions about urban democracy. They point at some of its key challenges: the multi-scalar nature of urban policies; the tension between “policing” and “politics”, between institutional control and popular resistance; the spatial dimension of protest and social mobilization; the limits to institutional practices of citizen participation and conflict resolution; the struggle for new democratic exercises and forms of citizenship. The volume is a contribution to rethinking conflicts in urban development and planning in a multidisciplinary perspective, raising questions about the role of planning theory and practice in turning conflict into a transformative resource for local policy.