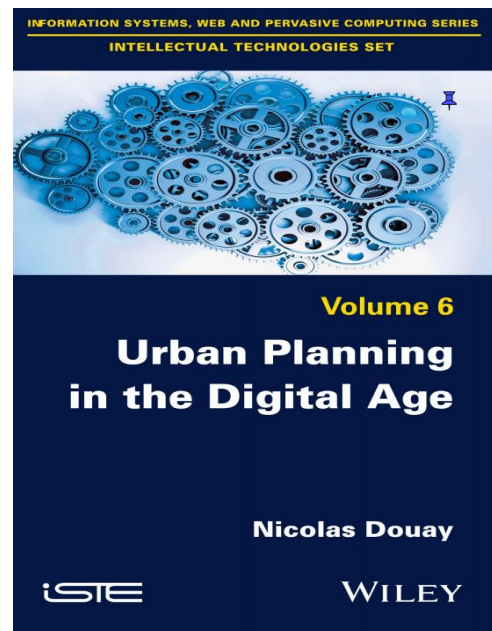


## BOOK REVIEW: URBAN PLANNING IN THE DIGITAL AGE BY NICOLAS DOUAY

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Nicolas Douay is a senior lecturer in the field of urban planning at Paris Diderot University as well as researcher within the laboratory UMR Géographie-Cités in France. He made the PhD in co-supervision between the University of Montréal and Aix-Marseille University. He got a Lavoisier post-doctoral fellowship continuing his studies within the Center for French Studies on Contemporary China (CEFC - Hong Kong). He has published several papers in the field of urban policy, spatial planning and urban activism where he focused on comparative approaches between three continents: Asia, Europe and North America. The book written by this author entitled "Urban Planning in the Digital Age" was published in 2018 in Great Britain and the United States by ISTE Ltd and John Wiley & Sons. Inc.



This book is designed to provide complete and in-depth descriptions of the digital impact on the urban planning process. Through the four scenarios proposed in the book reflecting the issues and processes at local level, the author allows the reader to have an overall understanding of the influence of digital mechanisms on urban planning. In this regard, in the author's opinion, the four scenarios correspond to four categories of urbanism: algorithmic urbanism, uberized urbanism, wiki-urbanism and open-source urbanism.

The book is organized into four chapters where the author analyzes and reconsiders the role of public entities and planners in relation to two concepts: urban planning and digital epoch. Furthermore, taking into account its expertise regarding the urban planning in cities within Europe and Asia, the author presents several analysis and case studies highlighting that technological changes lead to important social transformations which subsequently have spatial implications.

The book is based on a dissertation prepared in 2016 in order to become competent to supervise doctoral research. Therefore, several sections of the paper addresses the concept of urban planning without reference to digital technology, while the rest of the paper focuses on important issues related to the role of digital mechanisms in spatial planning. Moreover, considering the three dimensions of the digitalization influence on urban planning (methods, actors, processes), the author proposes four research hypotheses regarding the transformation of urban planning patterns.

The first hypothesis starts from a planning model that appeared in the 19th century while its validity was questioned in the 70s of the last century. While enjoying a renaissance today due to digitalization, this model brings to the fore the essential role of the experts and technical actors in urban planning.

The second hypothesis discusses the effects of digitalization on the entities involved in urban planning, focusing in particular on the legitimacy and capacity of public organizations in the new context of urban development and planning, as well as on the growing role of private actors in spatial planning.

The formulation of the third hypothesis is based on certain tendencies manifested in the 90s of the last century, which outlined two perspectives of planning: strategic and communicative. In this sense, according to this hypothesis, the civil society actors, in addition to private ones, are interested and involved in solving urban problems, sometimes questioning the decisions of public authorities regarding the development of cities.

The fourth hypothesis refers to the benefits of digital mechanisms which provide the actors involved new possibilities to communicate and reach a consensus. Therefore, the digital technology allows different parties involved, each representing certain interests, to dialogue more easily and discuss divergent issues.

Each of the four chapters of this book brings to light the challenges of an important part of the puzzle that is urban planning digitalization.

The first chapter, "*Algorithmic Urban Planning: The Return of Experts*" analyzes the connection between urban planning and digitalization, questioning the influence of digital technology and the changes produced by it on urban development. The author highlights a new concept discussed in the literature, that of the sustainable city. Issues related to the challenges posed by the use of digitized tools in urban planning are also discussed.

In chapter two, "*Uberized Urban Planning: Extension of the Area of Urban Capitalism*", the author provides a broad overview of the actors involved in the practice of urban planning as well as their roles, responsibilities and interests in the production process of sustainable urban forms. Moreover, certain doubts about the influence of digitalization on the various categories of actors involved in the process, especially those in the private sector, are highlighted. Furthermore, the author reviews the private actors as well as their interests and vision in this area and discusses how they impact urban processes. In light of these aspects, the topic of the rebirth of strategic planning in the current society is emphasized.

The contribution of third chapter of this book, entitled "*A Wiki-Urban Planning: Searching for an Alternative City*", consists of analyzing the influence of digital technology on civil society actors involved in urban planning, while recognizing the impact of their activities in this area. Moreover, the author helps us understand the various digital resources used by urban planning activists in the last decades as well as their effects on the urban planning evolution over time. In this context the author focuses on the effects of using these resources in Western Europe, giving Marseille as an example, as well as in the emerging states, especially China.

The last chapter of this book, chapter four, entitled "*Open-Source Urban Planning: The Renewal of Planning Institutional Practices*" builds on the concepts presented in the previous chapters, explaining the connections between urban area digitalization and urban planning institutions while illustrating how the former influences the latter. Moreover, the author addresses the core elements of urban planning in the new epoch of digitalization, focusing on the steps to be taken until the elaboration of urban policies. In addition, the theoretical aspects exposed in this chapter are applied at local level, in the city of Paris, where the author conducted a research in order to investigate the social networks used for public debates. In this regard, public debates expressions have been examined, especially the divergences generated by urban planning transformations.

The conclusions put in a nutshell the main results of the research which are highlighted for each of the four hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the paper. In the last paragraph of the book, the author hopes that the transformations of the current society will have a positive contribution in the preparation of future planners in the urban field.

The publication is of a special complexity, considering the four possible directions identified by the author regarding the challenges of urban planning at local level. Moreover, the author used several research methods such as interview based investigation, case study and observation in order to develop it. Furthermore, the theories and practical aspects included in the book "Urban Planning in the Digital Age" could be of great interest to academia, researchers, practitioners and other interested categories.