

The Hyper-Real Urban Landscape: Rrepresentations of Turin in the Eyes of Foreign Investors

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ABSTRACT

According to Jean Baudrillard, hyper-reality is the situation where reality has lost its referent, and representations become “more real than the real”. The aim of this paper is to investigate on the process of investment by enterprises who had decided in recent years to move to Turin, Italy, discussing which kind of “reality” has led to such a decision. This investigation is directed not only to detect and classify sensible external economies and location factors of the city, but also to analyze to what degree economic decisions are bound to necessarily simplified, or even stereotyped, mental geographies.

The study is realized on the basis of in-deep interviews with managers of transnational enterprises, and it proposes an attempt of reconstruction of their perception of the city (questioning for example the relevance of hallmarks events and landmark buildings), the importance of these landscapes in the decision process, and the links between such images and “hard facts” concerning Turin. The focus of this analytical exercise will be posed on the investment process, taking a closer look on the building up of an investment idea, from its first glimpse to its tangible realization. Finally, some reflections of political nature link the issue of urban images to urban strategies, particularly in the field of city marketing and urban branding.

Key Words: urban image, Turin, investments