

Entrepreneurial Regions in Turkey: Cultural Economies and Tourism at the Crossroads in Kayseri, Turkey

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XI

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The culturally entrepreneurial city represents a conceptual engine to bolster local and regional economies (Florida 2002, Kearns and Philo 1993). Consequently, cities and their regions seek to harness their cultural heritage and natural assets for economic development (Brenner 2004, Milne and Altejevic 2001).

A study undertaken by Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2007 indicates „tourism corridors, cities and ecotourism areas...“ are to set regions on a „self-strengthening course... through an integrated rather than an individual assessment of sites and settlements.“ The metropolitan area of Kayseri in Central Anatolia is conceptualized as part of a winter (and mountain) sports corridor due to its proximity to Mt. Erciyes. This focused strategy is also evident in a master plan commissioned by the Metropolitan Municipality of Kayseri (2006-2007) to develop an international tourism destination. Yet, the Kayseri region has a rich, complex history; it represents one of the crossroads of the silk road, and the regional structure developed out of the intersection of many cultures, represented by individual sites, neighborhood districts and rural-urban connections. Our research examines efforts to safeguard and promote cultural and natural assets in Kayseri and its region, investigates how these are marketed to a global tourism class and highlights the local-global tensions that arise from this economic development model (See Milne, Bremner and Delpero 2006). We ask: how is the knowledge and capacity of local stakeholders integrated in the development of these plans? Whose image of the region is promoted and to whom?