PRISTINA WORKSHOP
"Ecologies of identity" draft version 20080810

The idea is to work on the complex topic of "building" a national identity of Kosovo and its consequences for the urban development of Prishtina and the whole Kosovo.

The framework is the recently declared independency of Kosovo from Serbia and the need to build its own identity in order to proceed with the international discussion. A clear and visible identity is vital if you need to assert your country in relation to other countries. This is a consequence of a long term policy dating from last century where the idea of Nation & State was gathered together bringing also the theme of ethnicity.

The topic will be approached via several ecologies of identity:

1. The ecology of narration:
   In "Nation and Narration", Homi Bhabha defines the relationship built in the 20th century history between the need of national identity with the practice of "story-telling": The mythology of the foundation/birth of your own nation – and all the connected stories – was the first step towards independency, autonomy etc, all needed characters in order to be able to compete in the global society. National writers have a relevant role in this concern. In this ecology relevant writers will be traced.

2. The ecology of "power buildings"
   A second step towards a "building" of a national identity is the role of the built environment: power and architecture have an even too easy to relationship to be understood. One can think about all the strong dictators/dictatorships and the role architecture has always had in the building of the social image of the power but also of the image of the national identity (Culture?). In this concern the architects and the urban planners are relevant figures.

3. The ecology of cultural heritage and nature:
   There are also other "genuine" aspects we can recognize to be part of a national identity policy: every country has a culture (even we should state clearly that this is neither monolithic neither static neither forever: concepts such as tradition, origin, roots, and similar are both powerful and dangerous and very often manipulated in order to demonstrate the opposite of what they are). See also Iain Chambers, Homi Bhabha, and the Cultural studies group working on this topic.
   Back to the idea of a "genuine" culture, it was manifested into the "built environment" of some quality (tangible heritage: an heritage we recognize has something to say about the Culture that produced it) it depends, or it descends, or it come from something it is defined as Un-tangible Heritage (few years ago UNESCO launched a campaign for taking into serious consideration non visible aspects of own culture as they are, at the very end, what is deeply connected with what we are able to recognize as Culture Products). Knowledge, skills and other similar categories have the privilege to "maintain & transform" or better "maintain through transformation" the DNA (the Identity) of a specific Culture.

4. The ecology of networks:
   The people in Kosovo dispose over several densely knit networks inside Kosovo and across the world. Refugees in the European Union and other countries, who have not returned after the war, still hold contact with the family and support them financially. For the people in Kosovo these contacts to their family members abroad are in most cases vital and helpful if

they need a visa in order to get abroad. (See also Mark Lombardi's visualisation of networks)
Next to these invisible networks also other networks like highways, railways, air routes etc. have to be examined and related to identity.

5. The ecology of energy:
   An important step in building Kosovo's new independence is to support all sustainable energy sources, since they represent, next to Kosovo's own resources the only reliable independent source of energy. Moreover Kosovo is asked to strengthen and develop partnerships with energy suppliers in the neighbouring countries.
   The need of energy (quantity & uses) of the country, a possible urban strategy for energy saving (quantity & places) and alternative energy productions (wind parks? Earth heating/cooling systems, etc.) will be defined, in order to give a chance to work with the question of shaping those structures and solving their relationship with the context (built or natural environment);

6. The ecology of taxes
   Via flat tax or other tax measurements, incentives for investors can be built, in order to keep the money in the country and in order to diminish the high percentage of unemployment. Businesses and industry buildings will need special areas in the city, and have to be included in the next update of the Prishtina master plan. Prishtina or Kosovo's identity as tax haven?

7. The ecology of speed
   In emerging countries or zones after a war you can observe two different speeds of adapting to a "western" lifestyle. Therefore students in Prishtina listen probably to the same kind of music, have the same mobiles and drive the same cars as students in Milan, while "heavier" factors like infrastructure, economy, politics etc. are adapting much slower. Which potential can be derived from these parallel worlds or speeds? The higher speed of un-tangible versus tangible culture.