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**Title**

Enacting identity and transition: public events and rituals in the university (Mexico and South Africa)

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**Abstract**

On the basis of ethnographic and historical material this article makes a comparative analysis of the relationship between public events, ceremonies and academic rituals, institutional identity, and processes of transition and power at two universities, one in Mexico and the other in South Africa. The public events examined here play a major role in imagining and bringing about political shifts within universities as well as between universities and external actors. It shows how decisive local histories and constituencies are in mediating and transfiguring identity projects initiated from above. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)