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Panel Title: "Reconsidering the representational frame: Nexuses between practice and theory"

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The Folklife Festival as Transferable Technology for Cultural Heritage Tourism: Does The Model Translate?

Cities, states, and nations are drawn to participate in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival as a means to stimulate cultural tourism in their own localities. UNESCO, the World Bank and other agencies have encouraged local governments to inventory "treasures of intangible heritage" and to utilize local culture as a resource in sustainable development. For example, on its website <http://portal.unesco.org/culture> UNESCO has declared as part of its mission, "to assist the 190 Member States in preparing their policies while reconsidering the relationship between tourism and cultural diversity, tourism and intercultural dialogue, and tourism and development. In this way, the Organization proposes to contribute to the fight against poverty, protection of the environment and mutual appreciation of cultures."

Cultural tourism is furthermore linked to the development and representation of identity and citizenship which may incorporate an acknowledgement of "cultural diversity" as an asset. Local governments interested in economic development through cultural tourism see Smithsonian's Folklife Festival as a way to introduce a large and diverse audience to the features that make them unique as a cultural destination. In 1994, a study of regional tourist bureaus voted the Smithsonian's annual Festival the best tourist event in the United States. Perceiving the Festival's success, participating governments also look to the elements of Festival representation for clues as to how to develop their own events and as a way to "learn the ropes" of cultural representation through traditions on display. At the level of local governments, participation in the Festival and adoption of Folklife festival paradigms sometimes impact cultural policy and tourism practice. Such participation often involves the negotiation of turf and subsequent collaboration among ministries of culture, tourism, craft and cultural industries. At another level involvement with the Folklife Festival stimulates conversations about changing and conflicting notions of heritage, authenticity and cultural citizenship. This paper examines attempts to utilize the Festival model as technology of development in cultural heritage tourism.