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Abstract:	<p>The dissertation "Bread and Home: Global Cultural Politics in the Tangible Places of Intangible Heritage (Bulgaria, Cuba, Brazil)" examines the local meanings and impact of a cultural policy model, understood ethnographically and defined conceptually as the "community culture model". This type of national policy focuses on developing community cultural centers, often called "houses of culture", imagined as spaces that would inspire people of all ages to develop their artistic creativity and/or preserve local traditions. The dissertation traces how this concept and policy strategy traveled from Bulgaria (where the centers are called chitalishte) and the Soviet Union (dom kul'turyi) to Cuba (casas de la cultura) during the communist period, and then in the 1990s from Cuba to Brazil. The Cuban version of the Bulgarian/Soviet model inspired the Brazilian cultural policies of Gilberto Gil leading him to develop similar cultural spaces (pontos de cultura), particularly in low-income areas, in an attempt to improve the local quality of life. While the "houses of culture" model has been widely perceived as a form of socialist propaganda aimed at the masses, the research reveals that it has much earlier origins dating back to the 1850s when a network of grassroots organizations (chitalishte) started evolving in Bulgaria. These centers now number some 3500, reaching all across the country, thus making them the oldest non-governmental organization in Europe as recognized by the Council for Europe. Current ethnographic analysis is, therefore, fascinating for it shows how and why the network is still so meaningful and has persisted notwithstanding the political, economic, social, and cultural turmoil of the past century. One of the reasons why these cultural centers are so interesting is because they occupy space betwixt and between the professional, high arts and community social work, between the state (with its interest in national uniformity) and the local (with its potential for disturbing centralized control of the symbols and metaphors of cultural identity). Studying these centers in their local details allows us to see the negotiation of values over continuity and change, heritage and modernity, consumerism and activism, power and agency, personhood and society. Because the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture linked these cultural centers' activities to UNESCO's Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity, the dissertation also traces how these international standards were developed by each country. Through such an analysis we can see the discrepancies among the interpretations of UNESCO's discourses at both the policy and communal levels. While UNESCO did not address "where" intangible cultural heritage might be locally situated and transmitted, the links between the Convention's goals and the community cultural centers were similarly perceived in the three countries by both the Ministries and the people. Intriguingly, however, in the three cases people's views on cultural heritage and community arts diverged from the national understanding, particularly on the contested issue of food. Sharing food, especially bread as a key symbol in the Bulgarian case, was not officially recognized by UNESCO as intangible heritage - not until one baker's persistent struggle for recognition narrated in the dissertation - or by the state as an activity befitting a "cultural center," even though food was perceived by the local people as central to their transmission of tradition. Ultimately, people's struggles to develop kitchen spaces within the cultural centers enacted creative forms of resistance to the political narratives and a tactic for appropriating public space made private. It is these shared experiences and reactions that point to the particular liminal space of the community cultural centers as friction zones between the global and the culturally specific. Thus, for all their local and evolving qualities, the centers proved to be defined by a few key common characteristics, symbols, and metaphors that make tangible the shared dynamics of these transnational networks. The very choice of where to "break bread" thus allows us the opportunity to assess social and cultural patterns as they are evolving within and across each of the three countries. Ultimately, people's bargains over global cultural politics were lived in multiple daily acts of resistance, often as symbolic and small yet real and powerful as breaking bread.</p>
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