

DANCE ANTHROPOLOGY AND MIGRATION RESEARCH

CONNECTIONS, DIRECTIONS, POSSIBILITIES

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Abstract

Drawing on international literature, and without claiming to be exhaustive, this paper aims to review how research on the social practices of movement accompanied by music relates to international mobility and issues faced by migrant populations. The paper addresses the question of how dance studies can contribute to the exploration and understanding of different forms of international migration, both individual and communal.

Keywords: literature review, dance anthropology, migration research

1. INTRODUCTION

International migration, a specific form of spatial mobility, has become a massive phenomenon of unprecedented scale in recent decades, setting in motion an unforeseeable chain of social changes. At the same time, the study of migration has become a focal point in the social sciences. The issue has not only become a dominant feature of the abstract world of science; its various forms and experiences permeate everyday life around the world. These social changes can also be detected in the world of dance. In social sciences research related to dance phenomena, intriguing questions arise as to whether it is possible to capture individual and community events and experiences of displacement through the study of dance phenomena that would otherwise remain hidden, and whether some of these experiences are generated by dance. Can the anthropological study of dance enrich or shed new light on what we know about the practices and politics of migration and its impact on people? In general, what questions have been raised through dance research, and how can the results of these inquiries be linked to the problem of geographical mobility? How do the studies on dance as a bodily practice nuance and capture knowledge about global migration? By narrowing down the classic query on the function of dance in human society (Boas, 1944, cf. Szőnyi, 2019), we can also formulate this question in terms of the functions of dance in different situations of migration.

Scholarly approaches, conceptualizations, and interpretative frameworks related to migration have become highly nuanced and refined in recent decades. Research on international migration focuses on a multifaceted process involving people in very

different situations. A wide variety of causes prompt migration: these include forced migration triggered by wars or humanitarian crises; emigration as a response to political persecution; permanent displacement driven by work opportunities or economic factors that can lead to chain migration, circular mobility, or the return migration of diaspora populations to their country of origin; and marriage migration and family reunification across international borders. These different facets have led to varied thematic orientations in research (see Gold & Nawyn, 2019). New paradigms and conceptualizations have emerged in the study of global migration. Such developments include the growing body of research investigating geographical mobility in the context of human movement systems accompanied by music, or the exploration and understanding of particular human movement systems and conventions in the context of global migration.

When considering international population movements, it is thought-provoking to recall the statement of Susan L. Foster, a classic figure in dance anthropology. According to Foster, dance “recreates, expresses, amplifies and obscures, reflects, interprets and creates, symbolizes, interprets, encodes and communicates the key values of the culture in which it takes place, (...) while also representing conflicts and negotiations” (Foster, 1992, p. 362).

Drawing on dance literature and without claiming to be exhaustive, this paper aims to review how research on the social practices of movement accompanied by music in different contexts of international mobility contributes to answering the above questions, and how dance research has so far contributed to exploring and understanding different forms of international migration, both on the individual and community level. Building on Hungarian and international literature, this work aims to examine dance as a social practice in the Bourdieusian sense (Bourdieu, 1972) in the context of international migration. Partly due to my own personal interest, research on community practices and participatory dance phenomena are more prominently featured in comparison to the equally illuminating analyses of stage works and the works of specific performers. Dance appears in many contexts of international migration, and the studies cited have sought to capture the dance phenomena of very different migrant populations using various approaches. Each text presents different aspects of the relationship between dance and the individuals and communities involved in the context of international migration.

The topic at hand is not new: Paul Scolieri (2008) argued in the introduction to a special issue of the *Dance Research Journal* that dance studies can significantly contribute to understanding the human experience of migration. His introduction, like most of the articles in the thematic issue, emphasized the study of the artistic representation of migration, stressing that this could lead to a deeper exploration of the conditions and experiences of global migration. Scolieri also stressed that, especially in the case of multi-ethnic and socially stratified refugee communities, dance can articulate the experience of belonging and exclusion, create new social relationships, and restore some degree of the control that migrants have over their bodies and lives.

The diversity of migrant populations and dance phenomena have established different research directions and approaches. In these works, the formulation of the research problems, literature background, and methodological approach are strongly influenced by the researchers’ disciplinary affiliations – as well as their personal

relationship with movement. The new conceptual frameworks, methodologies, and changes in the approach to migration research are reflected to varying degrees in the research on dance phenomena. In several works, the analysis of the dance phenomenon has been driven by the researcher's desire to gain a more detailed understanding of a particular aspect of the migratory process. Transnational and postcolonial interpretative frameworks, complemented by a simultaneous examination of the sending and the receiving sides, and conceptual tools such as a reconsidered, inclusive, and dynamic notion of diaspora; long-distance nationalism; the economic, social, and cultural goods and knowledge returned by migrants (i.e., remittances); the various dimensions of immigrants' coping with loss; and place-finding and integration have contributed to the exploration of the deeper interrelations between dance and migration.

In addition to traditional areas of immigrant integration, such as political integration (acquiring citizenship) or integration through education and work, new dimensions have also emerged. In the social sciences, the last decade and a half have witnessed a shift in perspective, or emotional turn, that has brought to the fore the importance of emotions in human decisions and experiences (see e.g., Lemmings & Brooks, 2014). In migration research, a new approach has emerged that focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and studies the processes and dynamics of integration through intimate relationships, mixed couples, friendships, and, distinctively, the emotions experienced by migrants (see Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). In public discourse, dance is often associated with emotion, with particular focus on its practitioners' personal experiences and on staged dance performances, mostly in the sense that dance expresses and displays emotion. Furthermore, Drid Williams, a researcher dealing with basic theoretical issues in dance anthropology, has raised the possibility that emotions are awakened during dance through the movements of the body (Williams, 1991, pp. 34–35; cf. Christensen et al., 2016).

How does dance represent migration as an experience and a process of change? How does it represent situations of transnational migration and simultaneous belonging to more than one place? How can folk dance movements, widely observed among ethnic diasporas, be understood and interpreted? How does geographic (and in many cases social) mobility affect dance practices, categorizations, and meanings? In what ways do the seemingly innocent, uninformed, and non-verbal bodily practices of dance maintain or attempt to break down postcolonial power relations?

As we will see below, the works discussed in this paper base their analyses to varying degrees on the study of movement itself. Unravelling the function and meaning of dance and movement in the broader context of a given social phenomenon is a major professional challenge even for research that is "not blind" to the phenomena of dance. This is a difficult task, as the analysis and interpretation of a movement form requires special training, as well as a thorough knowledge of the conventions and socio-cultural context of the dance practice.

Studies on dance and music tend to simultaneously formulate claims about the same complex phenomenon, so research related to dance practices but with a musical focus may also be of interest when one investigates bodily movement and migration. Typically, music and dance are complementary and for analytical purposes can be viewed as separable parts of a complex system.

In this review of the works mostly accessed through a search of the relevant online literature, I have assessed the following aspects. What research question did the authors formulate to approach the dance phenomenon and movement form related to migration? What empirical data was the analysis based on, and how was it presented in the text? According to which disciplinary perspectives did the authors formulate their research, and what is their contribution to migration and dance research?

Practices reflecting on migration in different ways have appeared at both the individual as well as the community level, in the form of social dance events and staged performances. Rather than providing an exhaustive investigation, this literature review aims to highlight some of the more significant lines of inquiry. The first section reviews studies have been inspired by the dance phenomena of ethnic diasporas — these have been the subject of attention in the Hungarian context for a relatively long time. Fascinating aspects of the relationship between people and dance are explored in the second thematic section of the paper, which studies the dance conventions of the so-called “Atlantic” or “African diaspora”, primarily in the Americas. An in-depth knowledge of movement systems is reflected in the writings examined in the third part, which focuses on migrant dance conventions and their changes as they travel around the world. The papers in the final section cover the years after the international refugee crisis of 2015, examining the role of dance in the lives of refugees.

2. DANCE PHENOMENA OF ETHNIC DIASPORAS

This section focuses on the ethnic dance practices of diaspora populations formed as a result of geographical mobility and on how the literature approaches and interprets these practices. Using the lessons learned from the Hungarian and international dance anthropology literature, it explores the role that the dance heritage of the sending countries play or may play in the lives and workings of diaspora communities in their relations with their mother country, host society, and other ethnic immigrant groups.

The original meaning of the term diaspora is “dispersal”, referring to populations that have been forced to leave and settle outside their place of origin. The notion was initially used to describe Jewish, Armenian, and Greek ethnic communities, but over time it has been extended to more populations, and its meaning has broadened. Perhaps for this reason, its analytical utility has become questionable; nonetheless, the literature on the topic is rich and varied. Given the limited scope of this article, I will briefly cite only a few observations based mainly on the work of Safran (1991) and Clifford (1994). According to these works, the common traits of diaspora populations are that they are minority communities living far from their country of origin, cherish memories of their original homeland, and are not necessarily fully integrated into the host society. They hope to one day return to the land of their ancestors, with which they maintain permanent contact and solidarity. Diaspora is a useful analytical concept in the study of certain migrant populations, such as overseas Eastern Europeans and their descendants, but it cannot be applied to all forms of human mobility.

As a result of global migration processes, the communication revolution, and the technological achievements of the past decades, the demographic composition and internal proportions of the ethnic diasporas that emerged in traditional immigrant countries (e.g., USA, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay) during the 20th century have been transformed. New forms of large-scale international migration have emerged, with political, ideological, and economic migration complemented by increasing student mobility, marriage migration, and circular migration for work purposes. The institutional structures of traditional diasporas have also undergone transformations.

Ethnic and folk dances are widely present in the cultural practices of ethnic diasporas living in traditional immigrant countries and are generally accepted as one of the cultural factors shaping diaspora identity. The existence of institutions involved in their cultivation is taken for granted in the life of these populations: dance groups and orchestras in the diaspora operate within this institutional system. These are discussed in the literature for a number of European sending countries, including Eastern European and Baltic countries, as well as the Yugoslav successor states (Mollenhauer, 2018; Óry-Kovács, 2010; Rüütel et al., 2013) and Greece (Hajdu, n.d.; Liddle, 2016), but there is also abundant and in-depth literature on the dance phenomena of, for example, Chinese and Indian diasporic communities (see, e.g., Lopez y Royo, 2004; Sreevathsa, 2020; Unni, 2016; Wong, 2010).

It is important to note that the music accompanying movement is inseparable from ethnic dances, and research on the function of music in the construction of ethnic diaspora identity can be paralleled with the results of studies on folk dance. Rolf Lidskog (2017) has explored the role of music in this field through English-language journal articles, most of which are case studies, and has found that music has a pronounced identity-forming power in diasporic settings. While it can stabilize and maintain ethnic bonds, it also has the potential to destabilize them.

In the second half of the 2000s, Hungarian researchers conducted a large survey of Hungarian diaspora institutions and associations in the United States (Papp, 2008). Their volume features a chapter on participation in Hungarian organizational and community life, highlighting the cultivation, teaching, and organization of Hungarian folk dance. The research notes the intense nature of these experiences, underscoring their complex preparation and the important role they play in the everyday lives of the participants.

Since the 1980s, ethnographic and anthropological studies of the Hungarian diaspora living outside the Carpathian Basin have touched on the phenomena of dance and music (see, e.g., Boglár & Óry-Kovács, 1998; Hoppál, 1989; Kovács N., 2009, 2023; Niedermüller, 1989; Óry-Kovács, 2010). While the self-representations of the diaspora through dance offered an opportunity to study ethnic identity via performance and movement, the dance phenomenon itself and its detailed context typically appeared only as a reference in these texts. While they have drawn attention to the interpretative possibilities of a more systematic study of the subject and to the performative aspects of ethnicity, these possibilities have remained largely unexploited. In the mid-1980s, Péter Niedermüller (1989) conducted comparative research investigating changes in peasant culture in a village in the Zemplén Hills of Hungary and in an Hungarian-American diaspora community of peasant origin. In the latter, social occasions

referencing a shared ‘cultural past’, in which music and dance played a central role alongside language and food, were central in the 1980s. The music consisted mainly of the ‘Magyar nóta’ and gypsy music, which had developed during the 19th century and had become part of the national culture, while the dance, as Niedermüller noted, was identified as the *Csárdás*. “Here, as with the musical genres mentioned above, we are talking about a dance whose primary importance lies not in its local characteristics but in the fact that it is known to everyone, that it is part of Hungarian culture” (p. 113). Music and dance at balls and Hungarian festivals manifested patterns of Hungarian cultural ethnicity in the broader social context of ethnic communities in the Calumet region, while local diaspora members experienced a shared, symbolic culture primarily through their Hungarian identity.

An example of the role of ethnic dances in interethnic competition between immigrant communities was presented by Lajos Boglár and Katalin Óry-Kovács in their case study of the descendants of Veszprém Swabians (ethnic Germans from Veszprém, Hungary) living in southern Brazil (Boglár & Óry-Kovács, 1998; Óry-Kovács, 2010). Young fourth- and fifth-generation Hungarians (ethnically German, considering their ancestors) began learning Hungarian folk dances in the late 1990s to carve out a qualitatively different place for their community distinct from local German descendants as well as all the other ethnic groups in ethnically diverse southern Brazil (Boglár & Óry-Kovács, 1999). Similarly, Jeanette Mollenhauer (2018) presents and analyses interethnic competition through her ethnography of Croatian and Irish folk dance groups in Australia. In her work, the author also connects the local value and relative positioning of ethnic immigrant groups’ cultures within their host countries with national cultural policies.

Mihály Hoppál observed the role of folk dance in Hungarian-American identity in his study of second-generation young Hungarians visiting Hungary. He described an event which took place prior to the regime change in Hungary, the central content of which was folk dancing. The event provided an opportunity for young second-generation diaspora members with knowledge of folk dance to travel to Hungary to learn the typical dances of the region from members of a local folk-dance group by dancing with them. In the event described by Hoppál, dance was used as a means of mediating communication between people and cultures, “allowing both groups to express and strengthen their ethnic identities. It is precisely the exceptional nature of such an unusual event that heightens emotionally the sense of belonging to a community” (Hoppál, 1989, pp. 22–23).

A study of identity construction by the Hungarian community in Buenos Aires at the turn of the millennium also suggested that the cultivation of Hungarian folk dance and belonging to a dance group community were important activities and mediums through which younger second and third generation members of the Hungarian community could experience and display their emotional identification with the country of their parents and grandparents (Kovács, 2009). Furthermore, through dance, the second and third-generation members of the Argentine diaspora community who no longer spoke Hungarian could also participate.

Examining the political role of the Hungarian dance-house (*táncház*) movement, Ágnes Fülemile and Balázs Balogh showed how the revival of folk music and folk dance offered an alternative to state youth culture in socialist Hungary in the

1970s and 1980s, as well as how the concept of “authentic” folk culture became an identity-forming factor leading to the development of political opposition (Balogh & Fülemlé, 2008). In addition, Mary N. Taylor drew attention to how the Hungarian dance house movement and its institutions became an important site for the ethnicisation of folk dance (Taylor, 2008, 2020). The initial subversive overtones of the dance house, which opposed the existing communist regime, and the increasing ethnicisation of folk dance may have increased the popularity of the activity among the anti-communist Hungarian diaspora in Buenos Aires. This effect has further enhanced in recent years by the increasingly important support system provided by the Hungarian government to its diasporas worldwide since 2010, in particular by the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Programme (see www.korosiprogram.hu), which has contributed to the expansion of diaspora dance groups and the spatial mobility of their members, ensuring a continuous presence of Hungarian folk dance teachers in Buenos Aires since 2013. The intensification of diaspora folk dance practices has become a key tool for forming a diaspora network over the past decade and a half, creating an interesting transnational practice between the motherland and its diaspora (Kovács, 2023).

Sau Ling Wong (2010) analyses the decades-long history, repertoire, and relationship with the homeland of a Chinese folk dance company in California, highlighting the complexity and diversity of ethnic diaspora cultural practices. Wong’s underscores how cultural activities of the diaspora may change over time, with shifts in emphasis occurring: some cultural practices may lose importance while others come to the fore, changes which are closely linked to social and political changes in the motherland. Her case study traced a long timeline, indicating differences in the activities through which subsequent generations of immigrants experienced their ties to their nation-state of origin. An important theoretical contribution of Wong’s work is that she convincingly linked the dance practices of the Chinese diaspora to notions of long-distance nationalism and transnationalism.

Two very exciting studies related to migration and Latin American dance phenomena have drawn attention to the ways in which the social changes resulting from migratory processes are mapped in concrete community dance practices through the movements of the dancing bodies. Adriana Cruz-Manjarrez has studied the complex and, in many ways, negative and socially destructive consequences of the labour migration of a rural Mexican indigenous community to Mexico City and the United States (Cruz-Manjarrez, 2008, 2013). The changes in the dance practices of the Yalalag community analysed by Cruz-Manjarrez were represented through the use of traditional dance forms and articulated through movement; attempts were also made to negotiate negative changes in the community through the social practices of community dance. Cindy Garcia conducted fieldwork in metropolitan Los Angeles, home to a large number of Latin American immigrants, where she analysed dance practices in salsa clubs (Garcia, 2013). The author’s subtle analysis details the ways in which salsa dancers from immigrant backgrounds change the dance movements learned in the dance communities of their home countries. This change in their dance habitus (cf. Hadas, 2021; Kavecsánszki, 2019) aligned them with the more prestigious and artistic stylistic variation popular in Los Angeles.

An interesting feature of ethnic diaspora dance events in multicultural cities has been highlighted in a study on the national identity of the Greek diaspora in Budapest (Hajdu, n.d.). Gabriella Hajdu explored the specific characteristics of the Greek community in Hungary through the analysis of community events and found that the ethnic Greek diaspora in Hungary has a broad folk dance repertoire. On the occasions when Greeks in Budapest commemorate Greek national holidays, the most important event for the participants was the viewing of the folk dance groups' performances followed by music and communal dancing. Hajdu noted that the Greeks in Budapest perform the dances of various Greek regions, identifying not with one particular region or the homeland of their ancestors, but rather with a more abstract concept of "Greekness." The need for symbolic identification is visible in the specific dance culture. Music making and dancing within the Greek community of Hungary are the most suitable symbolic actions for expressing national identity and a sense of community belonging, with most of the dances consisting of circle dances that fortify a sense of belonging to a larger community (see Hajdu, n.d.). The importance of the complex emotions experienced by diaspora groups through ethnic dances is highlighted in a study focusing on another Greek diaspora context (Liddle, 2017). Liddle's study demonstrates that the emotions aroused in dancers by Pontic Greek dances are linked to the historical memory of the Pontic genocide, the sadness of losing one's homeland, and the perpetual longing and sense of loss that accompany the diasporic experience.

A research team in Estonia sought to find out what motivates Estonian diaspora folk dancers from all over the world to participate in folk dance activities (Rüütel et al., 2013). The results of their interview-based research showed that the emotions they experienced through these activities played an important role. Folk dancing also provided them with an attractive leisure activity, an opportunity for self-expression, and Estonian social interaction, as well as possibilities for cooperation and physical activity.

As the above examples have shown, diaspora folk dance events are often sites for the ethnicisation of dance, and music and dance are sometimes the last remaining or consciously acquired elements of ethnic identity for participants, especially in the absence of language skills. However, in the New World contexts examined below, the cultivation of certain ethnic dances and active participation in the associated musical culture does not necessarily imply an experience of identification with a particular ethnic group.

In summary, studies on the dances of ethnic diasporas have outlined interesting links between dance practices and international migration. Folk dance groups among the diaspora serve, simultaneous multiple functions: they represent the diaspora population in the host state, help members to experience a connection to their ethnic roots, provide opportunities for self-expression, offer enjoyable leisure activities, and function as scenes for endogamous partner selection. Ethnic identity is formed and built through dance. For members of an ethnic group, folk dancing develops a sense of belonging which is expressed performatively through the body. Ethnic dance practices of the diaspora are presented both to the diaspora community as well as the host society while also

positioning the diaspora group in the competition with other ethnic immigrant communities. As the practice appeals to young people, it also has the potential to engage and incorporate younger generations of immigrants into the ethnic diaspora community.

3. THE 'AFRO-ATLANTIC WORLD': LESSONS FROM THE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN DANCE TRADITION IN EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS

The literature on music and dance phenomena in Latin America, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean is notably rich. Texts on ethnic dance conventions and stage choreography often refer to the dance traditions of the "African diaspora" or the slightly broader terms "Atlantic diaspora" or "Afro-Atlantic world", used synonymously. Colin Palmer's work provides guidance as to the precise meaning of the terms (Palmer, 1998), noting that the expression 'African diaspora' was already present in the 19th century, although it was not until the 1960s that the term itself came into wider use. He also argued that there is no single specific ethnic movement or monolithic diaspora community that can be the sole focus of research. Palmer distinguished five historical phases in the emergence of populations of African descent in Europe and the New World, of which the last two are relevant to the present study: the slave trade from the 15th century onwards, which brought 200 000 people to Europe and 11–12 million to North and South America, and the spontaneous influx of populations following the abolition of slavery in the 19th century. These two waves and the communities that emerged from them constitute the modern African diaspora, whose two most defining features, as Palmer's 1998 article points out, are skin colour-based racial oppression and social resistance to it. This group continues to construct itself today, fighting against discriminatory social practices of racism through liberation movements. The struggle against these global processes and inequalities is expressed not only through political movements and practices but also through a culture of resistance, which can also be seen in the world of dance.

Alongside these developments, the last decades have seen a growing body of historical and anthropological studies of dance phenomena that have interpreted certain dance practices as representations of postcolonial power relations (San-Pablo Burns, 2008) and as expressions and practices of resistance. Such works have also touched on issues of race, gender, and social class, and are in some cases linked to geopolitics. Although the author does not analyse the details of the specific movement, San Pablo Burns draws on historical sources to provide an intriguing analysis of the historical-geopolitical dynamics manifested at the level of dancing bodies that, as she argues, made Filipino male taxi dancers (i.e., professional dance partners paid per dance) extremely popular in the social dance clubs of American cities in the 1930s. Several works have also explored various aspects of the Indian diasporas' classical dance tradition of Bharatanatyam (see <https://bharatanatyam.hu/bharatanatjam/>), including the relationship between the dancers' social caste, skin colour, and the heritagization of the tradition in a postcolonial interpretive framework, while at the same time providing an in-depth analysis of the changes in movement conventions (Lopez y Royo, 2004; Sreevathsa, 2020; Unni, 2016). A fascinating and rich volume of

studies focusing on the music and dance conventions of the Afro-Atlantic world (Diouf & Ifeoma Kiddoe, 2010) fits into the same intellectual trend. Several studies in the volume explore the complex and multiple connections between Latino identity and dark skin colour in cultural movements related to dance and music in the region (see, e.g., Rivera, 2010; Foster, 2010). Dana Mills analysed the role of African dance traditions in the emancipation movements of the Afro-Atlantic diaspora through the life's work of esteemed dancer-choreographer and social activist Pearl Primus (Mills, 2021).

Those researching the dance phenomena of the Afro-Atlantic diaspora are typically both dancers and activists. One of their UK representatives, the leader of the NGO the Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD), has sought to promote the development of African Diaspora dance using the appeal of creativity (Bain-Burnett, 2011). This dance movement promotes traditional African and Caribbean movement forms, jazz dance, Afro-Latin dance, and contemporary fusion dance practices as well as their representation in the UK theatre world.

An exciting trend that can be observed in the body literature on the Afro-Atlantic diaspora dance scene that seeks to unravel the connections between ritual dance conventions, embodied knowledge, and spirituality. One of the most prominent representatives of this intellectual vein (though not without controversies) is the dancer-choreographer-anthropologist-professor Yvonne Daniel. Daniel connects Afro-Atlantic religions with the 'bodily intellect' inherent in ritual dance and writes about the danced, sung, and drummed knowledge that survived the era of slavery and survives in religious practices found in Cuba, Brazil, and Haiti. In her landmark interdisciplinary research (Daniel, 2005, 2010, 2011), Daniel analyses the religious systems of the African diaspora as manifested through dance, including Haitian voodoo, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé conventions.

An interview with Daniel in 2017 (Zutshi, 2017) emphasizes the special insights that her decades-long comparative research offers into the world of mystical, spiritual beliefs articulated and manifested in ritual dance. Daniel's basic premise, backed by considerable literature and years of research experience and personal participation - conceptually and methodologically questionable at some points - is that the dancing body carries wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation by ritual communities of African descendants living in the Americas. Daniel articulated the shared features of these dance and music traditions in the following five statements: (1) the participants are convinced that music and dance ceremonies bring the spiritual wisdom of their ancestors to present-day communities; (2) the dancing body is a vehicle for transcendence with the chanting, singing human voice, and ancient rhythmic sequences creating a coded dance vocabulary with the dancing body that has been passed down through generations of dancers who have travelled great geographical distances; (3) the ritual family and ritual space are at the heart of the liturgical order, with family needs and family relationships entailing an annual series of music-dance ceremonies; (4) both public and private ceremonies aim to promote healing, health, connection, and goodwill while also deepening the practitioner's connection with nature and the spiritual universe; (5) Daniel emphasizes that none of the ritual dance practices she experienced or witnessed included sexual content or a vulgar dimension (Zutshi, 2017).

Researchers examining this work must decide how to interpret this view of dance practices as manifestations of non-verbal knowledge and spiritual experience that exist fundamentally in the body and are passed down from generation to generation. How can the dancer's body evoke ritual knowledge and wisdom that is not acquired through personal bodily experience? This question is closely related to the notion of 'embodiment', often used in dance criticism and dance studies literature, but not yet sufficiently clarified in terms of its theory and conceptual framework. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to address this problem, it is worth referring to a connecting observation by Susan Foster (2010). Foster suggests that rather than focusing on the body's memory through dance, a concept which is difficult to operationalize beyond the level of the individual dancer, one should focus on the various ways that the dancing body is able to relate to cultural heritage (p. 122).

4. REFUGEES IN CRISIS AND DANCE AS A RESOURCE

The relationship between the challenging and often painful human experience of migration and dance provides insight into the role of dance in the lives of refugees experiencing forced migration. Dance also plays a role in the contemporary reality of global migration and the international refugee crisis beyond the narrow world of academic publications. Following the migration crisis of 2015, solidarity with refugees has been expressed through dance in public spaces as well as through the social movements of our time, where it has appeared as a permanent feature of street demonstrations and flash mob events. In her book on social activism through dance, Dana Mills (2021) dedicates a separate chapter to the exploration of the refugee experience through dance. The social potential of dance is also demonstrated by the central role that community dance events occasionally play in the commemoration of *World Refugee Day*, organized by *UNHCR*. A striking example of this is the work of self-taught ballet artist Ahmad Joudeh, a stateless person who grew up in a refugee camp and thematized the experience of migration (see www.ahmadjoudeh.com and Mills, 2021).

Works that address the dance-related life situations of refugees tread the boundaries between disciplines, with the different disciplinary backgrounds of the authors presenting distinctive pictures. Most of them are psychologists as well as movement, dance, or art therapists who are active both in the academic as well as the clinical world; some of them are also active dancers with a specialization in trauma management, while others have examined refugee groups as ethnomusicologists, specializing in a particular geographical area (MacLachlan, 2014). This relatively recent branch of literature is exploratory in nature and represents shorter-term empirical research in an anthropological sense. Yda Smiths (2018) has investigated the role of traditional dances in identity construction and the formation of social relationships among people in situations of forced migration in the US. Arroyo (2018) also examines the US context, summarizing the lessons learned from several weeks of intensive volunteer work among Venezuelan and Syrian refugees. Unfortunately, the empirical basis of her work (i.e., the empirical dance material and the narratives related to the experiences of the movement therapy

sessions) did not directly appear in her analysis, although she did suggest that the therapy sessions built heavily on the music and movement forms brought by the refugees. The paper discusses the legal aspects, traumas, losses, and physical and psychological hardships of being a refugee but also argues, with references to the literature, that the dance therapy sessions created by the therapist produced an experience of safety, reassurance, and social connection for the refugees, who gained an opportunity to better connect with themselves and their lived experiences. Piccirillo's essay (2019) analysed the possibilities for solidarity with refugees through artistic choreographies and participatory dance projects, while Dieterich-Hartwell et al. (2020) and Verreault (2017) developed a methodology for specific dance therapy situations and explored possibilities for increasing resilience.

5. DANCE HERITAGE AROUND THE WORLD: TRANSLOCAL VERSIONS

Finally, it is important to mention a rich and exciting segment of the international dance literature that focuses not on dance phenomena associated with specific population movements but on musical and movement systems that have travelled to other parts of the world as part of global cultural processes and interactions. Some dance conventions and traditional systems (e.g., Cuban salsa, Spanish flamenco, American hip-hop, or Argentine tango, to name but a few well-known examples), which have been declared intangible cultural heritage, migrate in space and time, undergoing formal transformations and acquiring new layers of meaning in changing social contexts, creating translocal versions of the original conventions (Stepputat & Djebbari, 2020). In the globalization of cultural heritage, dance practice becomes separated from the original, mostly ethnic, community as its referential domain expands. The range of dance conventions that have become globalized—and the literature pertaining to them—is vast; as such, in this subsection I provide a few examples which highlight the empirical richness and depth of analysis that characterizes many of the works on the subject. Several works cited in the contexts of the previous subsections, such as the analyses of the classical dance tradition of Bharatanatyam (Lopez y Royo, 2004; Sreevhastra, 2020; Unni, 2016) have also focused on trans-local versions of a particular dance convention.

The seemingly contradictory relationship between the popular Balkan folk dance movement in the US and American identity was explored by ethnomusicologist Mirjana Laušević in her book *Balkan Fascination* (Laušević, 2007), based on an ethnography of the Balkan dance culture and social milieu of urban America. The term 'Balkan' in this music and folk dance movement could refer to Bulgarian, Macedonian, Gypsy, Greek, Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, and even Turkish music and dance. Laušević found that her anthropological field and the community that was the focus of her study could not be grasped either through locality or through the notions of common ethnic origin that she had presupposed. The community under study was based solely on a dedicated interest in a particular musical and dance repertoire, and as such, it fits into the system of ethnic dance movements that have historically developed in the United States.

Halifu Osumare (2010, 2012) provides a nuanced analysis of the rise of African American rap music and youth hip-hop culture in Africa with a keen sensitivity to the social context of the phenomenon. She compellingly shows how the possibility of expressing opposition to the existing social order has become a prominent feature of the process, still ongoing today, and how it is a linking factor among the various African trans-local hip-hop varieties.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has emerged as an effort to forge closer links between dance studies and dance anthropology. It aimed to provide an overview of the lessons learned from research analysing the phenomena that are simultaneously related to dance and migration. This exploratory review had a limited scope, outlining the main directions and highlighting the more important aspects of the studies on the relationship between geographical mobility and dance.

International migration and the fundamental social changes it has brought about in recent decades have been reflected in the literature on dance phenomena. This literature is diverse in terms of its disciplinary connections, with representatives of ethnography, cultural anthropology, critical dance and cultural studies, psychology, and movement therapy. Most authors in this research area are also experts in the dance conventions under study. As such, it seems that the depth of movement analysis and the elaboration of its associated dimensions of meaning-making have been most successfully achieved from the research position of observer-participant.

Literature on dance phenomena in ethnic diasporas has yielded numerous insights. In diasporic situations, performative identity through community dance is of particular importance, as it is directed towards both the ethnic diasporic community and the host society, while at the same time establishing an emotional attachment to the diasporic community and the motherland. We have seen that the cultivation of ethnically affiliated folk dances can serve as a conducive space for ethnicizing dance, for competition between immigrant groups, and for integrating descendants with lack of language knowledge into the diaspora community. Diasporic dance practices may be driven by long-distance nationalism, while ethnic dance processes may, in some cases, be linked to the transnational aspirations and diaspora politics of the country of origin.

A significant body of work focusing on dance phenomena in the Afro-Atlantic world aligns with critical social and cultural studies. Such studies often analyse dance practices from a postcolonial interpretive framework as a culture of resistance against oppressive power relations and discrimination based on skin colour. A line of research in this field links Afro-Atlantic religions to the 'bodily intellect' of ritual dance and describes a kind of danced, sung, and drummed knowledge that is related to the notion of 'embodiment'; this perspective has links with several other disciplines, including the anthropology of religion. This line of thought was taken further by Foster (2010), who, in this context, emphasized the dancing body's ability to relate to a traditional dance convention.

Dance and movement therapists have made a significant contribution to the third identified thematic area of the literature that explored the role of dance in the lives of refugees. This relatively new line of research has highlighted the potential of dance to build resilience and to facilitate emotional and social relationships. In addition,

a number of works have indicated the importance of dance as a safe space in dance therapy situations for traumatized refugees. Finally, an important lesson was drawn from the fourth thematic group of works focusing on the spatial and temporal displacement of locally developed music and movement systems, often declared as intangible cultural heritage, and their resulting trans-local variations.

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