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THE ACTIVIST BODY – IN SEARCH OF A METHODOLOGY FOR DANCE-BASED ENGAGEMENT WITH UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN IN ATHENS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to share and open a debate on methodologies for dance-based engagement with communities in social vulnerability and displacement. It describes the processes and methodologies experimented on developing a dance workshop during an ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Athens in five shelters for unaccompanied children seeking asylum. This study aims to understand what the role of dance inside a refugee shelter is and how it creates affective spaces in the community. In addition to that, this ethnographic work fosters to discuss the kinds of creative opportunities for social transformation can be found in displacement and instability. The main objective of the research is to initiate a reflexive process in order to structure a methodology to facilitate dancing practices in such communities. This fieldwork combines two research approaches: ethnography and action research. Therefore, this research is based on data collected from the field via semi-structured interviews, photos and videos captured in the dance workshops, written feedback from the participants and participant observation. The study evaluates participatory methodology and co-creation as effective practices to engage creatively with refugees through an interdisciplinary dance-based project. Therefore, beyond creating a theory, this work is intended to be a call to action for dance to be involved in the political issues of our times, as well as to bring awareness and relevance to the narratives that have been denied in such communities.

Key words: Displacement, Migration, Activism, Dance-based Engagement, Politics

To the dancers in forced displacement,
dancing in the unchoreographed political flow of the world.

And to the matriarchs of my family: Celina Beneduzi
Iolanda Brussolo, Alice Stefano and Elisa Beneduse
Who taught me that no one should be left behind.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is centred in the investigation of dance as a path for social transformation and empowerment. This ethnographic research was developed in a community of unaccompanied children seeking asylum living in the shelters of a non-governmental organisation named HP[1] in Athens. In the context of resettlement and rehabilitation in the so-called refugee crisis, thousands of young refugees arrived in Greece, separated from their families and forming a highly vulnerable group of people that are daily received and partially accommodated in refugee camps.

In such contexts, this study aims to understand what the role of dance inside a refugee shelter is and how it creates affective spaces in the community. In addition to that, what kind of creative opportunities for social transformation can be found in displacement and instability? In order to address these questions, the main objective of the research was to initiate a reflexive process in order to structure a methodology to facilitate dancing practices in such communities.

I have worked for five years in vulnerable communities in the peripheral area of two big cities in Brazil (Londrina and Curitiba, Parana State - Southern Brazil). Such experiences led me to create methodologies for dancing practices that could establish an atmosphere of investigation of the spaces generated through creative engagement in vulnerable communities. These exchanges enabled the discovery of a wide variety of qualities of movement. It opened my eyes about the diversity and the differences between bodies and one's own acquired culture. Even more in Brazil, where the miscellanea of races and cultures is very significant. This was also the beginning of my awareness towards the political aspect of dance and its potential for empowerment and social transformation, and therefore this is the root of my motivation for this work.

Living this flow of discoveries and rediscovering points of view and motivations, I feel I am in a significant moment of my academic life. The shift from a bachelor's degree in Performing Arts to a comprehensive master's program in Ethnochoreology, Anthropology of Dance, Dance and Heritage Studies broadened not only my perspective of the world of dance but also the global context in which dance happens. I found in this research process the necessary space for debate, critique and (self) reflection to dive in a

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[1] The name of the NGO that manages the shelters that were part in this research will be kept as initials, as well as the names of the participants and shelters. The members of staff will be referred by their position in the NGO. This is in accordance to the ethics of this research of protection of the refugees' identity and private information and the agreement between the researcher and the organisation.

more mature and structured process of academic research through this ethnographic action research. Thus, this is a cautious and hopeful attempt to create a space where the participants can raise their voices and their body awareness in a context in which their stories were neglected by society and by the politicians and policy-makers through the implement of isolationist and short term resolutions towards migration.

My choice of fieldwork topic and location relates with my background, but it also represents to me, as a young researcher, a challenging and new approach and level of generation of knowledge and data. I have been dancing in this path of being acquainted with methodologies that refine the researcher's eyes and most importantly, empower our profound interest in people's life and the core of their happiness. Therefore, ethnography was introduced to me and I consider it a powerful tool to dance research as it is for me a way of touching the affects both of the object of the study and of the ethnographer and then to analyse it generating data and knowledge, just to mention it in simple words.

My approach to the field was through ethnographic action research (EAR). For me, EAR is a way of positioning the other at the spotlight of my speech as a researcher. I conducted this ethnographic practice in five shelters for refugees managed by a non-governmental organisation situated in Athens. The work was developed in three shelters for boys from fourteen to eighteen years old (shelter K, A and O), one for girls of the same age and mothers with their babies (shelter P) and one mixed-gender shelter for kids from six to thirteen years old (shelter LP). The shelters vary in capacity and number of residents from twelve up to thirty unaccompanied refugee children.

The HP is a non-governmental organisation with its main office based in the city centre of Athens. The organisation was set up in order to respond to the global refugee crisis in its peak between 2015 and 2016. The main purpose of the HP is to address the needs of refugees and refugee children who have arrived in Greece alone without the assistance of any adult. The organisation offers a diverse range of programs for accommodation in shelters, education through language and skills learning, psychological support and emergency support for the Greek islands that have been receiving a large number of migrants and refugees and suffering with lack of support and resources to provide them with the basic needs (HP NGO's website)[2].

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[2] The original reference will be kept anonymous in accordance to the ethics of this research and the agreement between the researcher and the organisation.

Therefore, in this moment of structuring knowledge and arguments, I position myself as in the picture below. Looking at my field, observing where the pieces are and constantly re-constructing my analysis and re-creating my narrative, finding support in the connection with the participants of this project. Starting from the material collected in the field and following with the concepts and ideas that they trigger, leading to a dance created systematic and structured but also improvised. Thus, I am taking distance, but I am still with my feet and hands touching the field and being affected by it. I am going deeper in the details and making the writing an empowering tool that brings abstract elements into a necessary palpable and concrete dimension for the debate and the creation of knowledge in the field of dance. Considering this, I will introduce the structure of chapters of this dissertation.

Figure 1: First day of the dance workshop with the kids at LP shelter

The present dissertation will be divided in four chapters and their subsections. Thus, the first chapter is an introductory overview of the context in which this research was carried out. The objective is to provide the reader with an overview of the geographical and political aspects of the field, as well as the theoretical framework that supports the key concepts of this study such as arts and performance activism, political body and space. The chapter will also include the justification of the study and its relevance in the present days in the local and global level.

The second chapter will encompass the politics of negotiation that preceded the Dance Workshop in the shelters. Through a reflexive ethnographic perspective, the reader will be introduced to the roles I took in the field and how they shaped my actions and my relationship with the community and how they contributed to construct my ethnographic research in a refugee shelter for unaccompanied refugee children. To conclude this session, I will analyse the relation among the previous subsections and their role on establishing platforms for dance-based project development. The chapter will also expose the research methodology and the conditions for data collection.

The third chapter is an ethnographic account of the experience lived in the field, and it intends to analyse the data collected and to argue on how dance works inside the refugee shelters. The objective is to put this experience into perspective and contribute to the discussion on the topic of dance and politics in the contemporary social organisation and the implications of one's bodily exposure to one another in such contexts. In order to do that, I will present the tools used to create a dance workshop in socially vulnerable communities and the research ethics that preceded the process of bonding with the community. Moreover, this is a reflection on the unsettling movements of these bodies in transit, movements of reverberation in face of the 'unchoreographed' politics among countries resulting in the unbalanced and chaotic situation of the present days.

The last chapter will take into account the partnership between Greece and Brazil for a shared methodology on dance-based projects for communities living in social vulnerability. This project was co-created in a partnership of artists and researchers from Brazil. It encompasses this present research and the research project of a master's student Patrícia Machado (Master in Art and Education) from the State University of Parana (Brazil). We worked in an exchange of research methodologies, as I am working in the topic of dance as a path for social transformation and empowerment and Patrícia is investigating the development of a performance as a dance teaching-learning process.

As a performing artist, I tend to create things more intuitively, but the tools I have been exposed in the study of Anthropology of Dance have been driving me towards a more mature and systematised process of study. I am now playing in both fields and let them play in each other's spaces. In the path of research, one could not leave a role behind and become another thing. Along with the process of analysis and organisation of the ethnographer's thoughts and feelings by putting them down on the paper comes another dance. The one that moves my assumptions, my values, my cultural understandings, and

my self-reflexivity in a process where knowledge is in constant construction collaborating with the fieldwork myriad of feelings and experiences that traverses me.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The migration crisis and the flow of refugees in Greece that derive from the conflicts in the Middle East have been a central issue in the discussion of the many aspects of this intense contemporary crisis. Whilst the European continent is providing resistance against the massive flow of people through severe policies of closed borders and national protection, Greece plays an important role in its location as the entrance of Europe.

According to the United Nations (2016), Greece has received over one million people in forced displacement since the beginning of 2015. This number includes people that have entered and crossed the country in the attempt to move into and across Europe, with a wide variety of needs that may include the search for asylum, refugee shelters or a state in which to live. Among them, refugees, migrants, unaccompanied or separated children, stateless people and victims of trafficking are part of a mixed movement of migration triggered by different reasons, such as armed conflicts or persecution in their countries, or in search of a better life.

For the year of 2015, the number of people arriving by the sea, from Turkey to Greece, was over 800,000. The massive inflow of people looking for international refuge was followed by a gradual restriction of access to the Balkan route in March 2016, when the border to Northern Europe - between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) - was closed for all third-country migrants. The full closure of the Balkan route came along with the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement - in effect since March 2016 - that enabled Greek authorities to deport migrants back to Turkey after a fast track asylum process.

The agreement between the European Union and Turkey changed the way the Greek government dealt with the situation of the migrants and refugees. They were divided in two groups - separated into those who arrived before March 20th 2016 and those that arrived after this date. This meant that the ones who arrived before March 20th 2016 were only granted the option to apply for asylum in Greece, or in other EU countries, according to a pre-approved list of available places. The ones who arrived after March 20th 2016 now stay in detention facilities while their cases are being processed (https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/).

Nearly 60,000 third-country nationals live in Greece according to the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR). Out of those, 46,000 arrived after the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement and are expected to be hosted in Greece in the medium to long term. In this context, the population of migrants and refugees changed from being transitory to being more permanent, now that Greece is a host country rather than a transit country. Therefore, not only does the state have the responsibility to provide short-term basic needs but also to address the issues related to long-term residence such as accommodation, education, social integration and legal procedures regarding asylum.

One third of the refugees living in Greece are in Athens. The dynamics of integration of migrants and refugees are affected not only by the unprecedented inflow of people mentioned above, but also by the critical economic situation since 2008 that resulted in high unemployment and public budget cuts. The capital of Greece is a migrant metropolis, consolidating intense political actions regarding negotiations on European borders and the articulation of a system of cooperation between national and international partners (donors, foundations, NGOs and civil society) in order to deliver public services and basic needs, in high demand under such circumstances (OECD, 2018).

According to UNICEF (2016), there are almost 27,500 children stranded in Athens. Out of those, 2,250 are unaccompanied and only one third of them is in formal shelters. It is important to highlight that Unaccompanied and Separated children is a specific category of migrants and asylum-seekers and may be found in the form of an acronym such as UASCs in research and policy documents. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, an unaccompanied child is:

> A person who is under the age of eighteen . . . and who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so. (UNHCR, 1994: 121)

Between 2015 and 2016, over 150,000 UASCs applied for asylum in the European Union. Over half of the approximately 2,500 UASCs registered in Greece are still waiting for accommodation. Recent reports show that the overstrained public system has weakened child protection mechanisms and led to unsuitable living conditions, putting the refugee and migrant children at risk of sexual abuse, violence and lack of access to education (Freccero *et al.*, 2017).

Along with the aforementioned circumstances, emerges the necessity to address such risk factors on multiple levels in order to reduce the vulnerability of unaccompanied

children and teenagers in forced displacement. A combination of approaches, including support with mental health, suitable accommodation, protection, access to education and development of individual skills and community building, is likely needed and part of the process of resettlement and rehabilitation so a process of peace-making and empowerment can be triggered and cultivated.

1.1 Statement of the problem

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), five life skills are relevant across cultures: 1 – decision-making, 2 – creative thinking and critical thinking, 3 – communication and interpersonal skills, 4 – self-awareness and empathy, and 5 – coping with emotions and stress. The term "life skills" refers to psychosocial skills. The main purpose is to foment the practice of life skills as abilities that can develop desirable qualities for life such as self-esteem, sociability, sharing, compassion, respect and tolerance. This is, especially necessary in the context of fast sociocultural change, instability and high levels of stress in which the refugees, in particular the UASCs live (Freccero *et al.*, 2017).

Therefore, facilitating the learning of life skills through dance may be a promising approach to build a process of empowerment and creative investigation of body movement systems in the community of unaccompanied refugee children living in shelters. Stimulation of creative thinking through movement may shed light on one's role in creating embodied knowledge. In this process, the participants may discover ways of moving that empower themselves to extend their physicality and acknowledge their own bodies in their new locations.

Dance may enable the dancers to live in the present and to construct in their bodies a place where power can be reinforced, cultivated and exercised. The dancers can be part of the process of creation of such state, which they may carry with them in the process of either displacement or resettlement and rehabilitation. The investigation through dance can also be a trigger to reformulate and re-address concepts such as culture, in the sense of cultivating the land of the bodies, to revolve, investigate and to make arise experiences from modes of practical activity rather than from conceptual and verbal formulations. In this context, the bodily experiences are in the primary source of discourse and creation of knowledge.

In the first place, bodily movements can do more than words can say. In this sense, techniques of the body may be compared with musical techniques since both transport us from the quotidian world of verbal distinctions and categorical separations into a world where boundaries are blurred and experience transformed. Dance and music move us to participate in a world beyond our accustomed roles, and to recognize ourselves as members of a community, a common body (Jackson, 1983:338).

1.2 Justification of the study

Migration and migrants are broad terms that are part of a phenomenon of multiple causes and consequences in both country of origin and destination. The movement of millions of people that have been displaced from their countries of origins due to political, social and economic circumstances is a contemporary and longstanding situation that implicates a multi-layered action at a local, national, regional and international level. Such massive mobility of people and cultures demands responses and actions, not only from the political organisations and governments, but also from communities concerned with the socio-political implications of representation such as artists, writers, activists, anthropologists, dance researchers and so on.

Social sciences, arts and humanities are increasingly engaging with this issue through artistic practices. There are several initiatives involving art therapy, storytelling and dance within the refugee community. My attempt is to create knowledge from this experience within the academic background in the area of dance. One of my aims is to fill the gap of documentation and systematisation of such practices, as well as, to provide a detailed analysis of this experience.

This research aims to contribute to the discussion about the increased use of arts-based methods, and here in particular, the use of dance as a method to approach migration. It evaluates the development of participatory projects and the processes of co-creation and co-production as a practice across academia, arts and activism. Moreover, how the results of such processes can contribute to re-create and challenge the present narratives about refugees and migration. In addition to that, this research also aims to reflect the limitations that dance has in overcoming such complex and unequal power dynamics, considering that this was also a short-term initiative, but with the focus on triggering long-term processes such as the recovery of dance narratives via collaborative artistic expressions in the migrant community.

According to McAllister (2011), arts-based projects can re-create the space for migrants to meet and create bonds with each other and make themselves present in their social landscape in a way that does not reinforce or re-affirm the terms that categorise them as 'needy victims' or 'dangerous agents'. In one of my interviews, the psychologist and one of the staff members at the A shelter talked about how identity is re-shaped in displacement and the importance of opening spaces to help the migrant to rescue their own identity,

> *'If you say that, a person is a refugee, then the only thing, the only information that you give about them is that, okay, they left their country for some reason. That's the only thing that you know. So it's an identity again, but very simplistic identity (...) So all this is your identity and I'm here to stay with you as long as you will travel in order to get this identity again on your own. It's very important for us to be patient, to give them time and to, eh, give them the right - cause they have the right, and the responsibility and the opportunity to make this on their own. It's their identity. Okay, so you're there to accompany the unaccompanied in this process'.* (Psychologist at the NGO (2019) interviewed by Bianca Beneduzi on August 15th).

Furthermore, and specifically for research on migration, dance can help to dissolve the language barriers among the participants that come from diverse backgrounds, as well as between the participants and the researcher (Guruge et al. 2015; O'Neill et al. 2018). When it comes to improving communication and bond with the community, dance can connect and establish social connections and a more inclusive environment. Hence, dance can offer an opportunity to re-tell, review and recreate their memories, culture and identity.

Another aspect to be considered is that dance can also be a complement to the methods used in ethnographic research. Providing that dance opens the possibility of capturing experiences of different kinds, such as sensorial, tacit, emotional and aesthetic that are not easily expressed in words (Gauntlett, 2007; Eisner, 2008; Bagnoli, 2009; Ball and Gilligan 2010 cited in Jeffery *et al.,* 2019). I would like to bring the perspective of a support worker at the A shelter, concerning the language barriers and the importance of opening new channels for the community to express themselves and to have a voice in their social space.

> *'It's still important to put in place things that, you know, younger, especially, any refugee, but eh, in the context of youth, unaccompanied minors, you know, eh, they need a voice, right. So, more ways to express*

that voice for some, uh, because it's possible that maybe not all are very comfortable and open. Uh, takes a special project sometimes to get people involved, right. Uhm, but I think it's very essential for any person, let alone a refugee that has left their country and are coming here, they might want to tell their story, or might have a need to just express it. Express anything' (Support worker at the NGO (2019) interviewed by Bianca Beneduzi on August 15th).

At this moment, my focus is on presenting the development of a methodology that combines a structure that provided me with the reliable tools to start my work in the community, but also that worked with a level of flexibility and porosity, that fostered a participatory process of co-creation with the community. It is important to mention that the workshop was not fully designed before the start of the experience in the field. I kept coordinating and mapping the context of my research constantly, along with the participants and the members of the staff in the shelters. The lesson planning was created as a work in progress, taking into consideration the process of integration between me and the community I was working with.

My aim was to approach the community through dance in a process that travels from the individual to the group and vice versa. I have the hypothesis that dance can operate in the process of awareness and acknowledgement of one's own body, through a physical perspective that can allow the dancer to recognise their bodies in their physical location. Such processes act profoundly in the knowledge and in the beliefs that are part of the notion of oneself and the other.

> Artistic creation is not committed to promoting social or political changes. But, by giving visibility to the states of crisis, it expresses issues that are not always visible in the everyday life. Thus, the connections that are established can destabilise habits and beliefs and point out to possibilities. It is in this sense that the state of alterity can be translated as a state of creation. Two examples that show this are involuntary nomadism and states of exception. Both are absolutely ambiguous. On one side, they seem to immobilise all processes, but on the other hand, as the Brazilian philosopher Vladimir Safatle (2015) suggests that the helpless body is the one that has nothing to lose. It is the one who can act politically (Greiner, 2017:19).[3]

In this context, dance can be fundamental, as it can operate in the dynamics of movement that are connected to the internal and external ability to simulate states of alterity; experiencing the other through one's perspective that is permeated by the

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[3] Fragmented translated by the researcher. The original article is in Portuguese.

perspective of the other, in the attempt to strengthen the bonds that constitute a community. Thus, dance can be a promising approach to create opportunities for co-creation and shared development in a horizontal relationship with the informants and the participants of this work, envisioning a way of nurturing a ground for political responsiveness and empowerment.

The forms of injustice and inequality that occur in the systematic processes of dispossession, in which people in forced migration find themselves, create an environment in which one is always transported elsewhere, in a context where one is not the centre. The deprivation of forms of collectivity that fosters for collective modes of belonging and justice characterises a process of vulnerability that encompasses, among other things, the loss of land and community, subjection to violence, individualism and poverty, ownership of one's living body by another person (Butler and Athanasiou, 2013).

Considering this, my argument is that there is a human capacity to play and to create that nurtures a way to overcome conflicting times. Taking into consideration that people are capable of creating new relationships, new activities and new ways of moving forward together, then dance-based engagement in such contexts may help to reformulate the base of what constitutes a community and the roles one can play when stimulated to participate actively and to be accounted in the events that surround them.

1.3 Location of the study

Greece is located in the intersection of Europe, Asia and Africa, in the South of the Balkan Peninsula. Imagined as the origin of Western civilization, the country has in its account the source of the most influential philosophical, artistic, intellectual, literary, and political ideas. Located at the crossroads of the Eastern and Western world, it sits on a path where a massive number of refugees have been crossing since the beginning of the refugee crisis

Figure 2: Map of Greece. Source: http://www.greek-islands.us/map-greece/

Athens is the largest city and the capital of Greece. It is situated approximately 8 km from the Phaleron Bay on the Aegean Sea, where the port of Piraeus - the largest of Greece and one of the largest of Europe - is located. As a global city, Athens has been in the middle of extensive and complex negotiations to address the needs of the immense contingent of migrants and refugees who have arrived there.

The HP is a non-governmental organization with its main office based in the city centre of Athens. The organization was set up in order to respond the global refugee crisis at its peak between 2015 and 2016. The main purpose of the HP is to address the needs of refugees and refugee children who have arrived in Greece unaccompanied. The organization offers a diverse range of programs for accommodation in shelters, education through language and skills learning, psychological support and emergency support for the Greek islands that have been receiving a large number of migrants and refugees. These islands have been lacking the support and resources needed to provide for basic needs.

Since the beginning of 2016, the organisation has been supporting and protecting more than 220 children that live in the 11 new shelters built and managed by its team in Athens. The main goal of the HP is to create and operate homes where the UASCs can

receive a holistic range of services covering food, material, medical, social, legal and psychological assistance and have access to education and professional training.

The shelters are intended to be environments of rehabilitation, skills development, employment, social integration and community building. Refugees comprise approximately 50% of the staff, among them members of the community that have previous professional training are stimulated to work and to develop skills towards the benefit of their community.

Education opportunities are offered for the children that stay in the shelters; they attend schools and have access to education. The refugee community living in the shelters and members of the staff are provided with language courses, skill building workshops, and art and music therapy sessions. Such initiatives aim to facilitate their integration into the culture and the society they are called to be part of (NGO's website, 2019).

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR DANCE-BASED PROJECTS IN SOCIALLY VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

My approach to the field was based on two combined research approaches: ethnography and action research. Ethnography is a research method used in anthropology for data collection. It is based in the contact between the researcher and the community studied, in which the ethnographer immerse themselves in the everyday life of the people who are the subject of the study. The base for an ethnographic research is the fieldwork.

Ethnography is a way of researching, but also a way of writing and the written result of the ethnographic fieldwork. Therefore, the data collected from the fieldwork experience is transformed, in general, into a detailed description of the results observed by the researcher (Davies, 1999). For me, ethnography is to observe and to interpret events through cultural lens, assuring that the other is placed in a relevant and meaningful context.

> The ethnographic is a culturally-grounded way of both being in and seeing the world. It is both ontological and epistemological. It is all that goes without saying in terms of what is considered normative or natural, and yet is also the very rules and proclaimed truths – about the way things are, and the way they should be – that underlie both everyday and ritual beliefs and practices (MacGranahan, 2018: 2).

Action research is used to investigate and diagnose problems or weaknesses, whether organisational, academic, or instructional. By observing the actions in the field, we can generate knowledge and create activities based on a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Such processes aim to develop practical solutions to address complications quickly and efficiently.

This multi-method approach is called ethnographic action research and it was initially designed to create projects based on the understanding of the local context holistically. EAR is built upon the notions of immersion and long-term engagement in order to help a new project to develop and adapt to local situations. EAR is a project development methodology created in 2002 for media and information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) initiatives (Tacchi, Slater, and Hearn, 2003).

In this research, I applied EAR methodology to develop an interdisciplinary dance project with unaccompanied refugee children in five refugee shelters managed by

the NGO, in Athens. I used ethnography to construct and guide the research process, as well as a writing practice. The action research bridged the ethnographic research and the project's structure, negotiation and activities. Therefore, I co-developed a programme with a group of researchers from Brazil that encompassed activities categorised in three main categories inside the shelters: field mapping, dance workshops and guided tour.

The field mapping corresponds to the first time I visited the shelters and entered in the houses in order to observe the spaces available for the dance workshops and to meet the residents and the members of the staff. MK, a social worker that has been working with refugees for about 20 years in Greece, accompanied me in the visits. In this organisational phase, we discussed about the selection of the shelters that would be part of the research, taking into consideration their location, their schedule and the potential interest of the residents. The visits took place in one day, but the planning and the communication with them started two months earlier. We had meetings in person in Athens at the NGO's main office at the beginning of June 2019.

The dance workshops were the longest phase and corresponded to my direct action in the shelters. The classes happened once a week for each group and the schedule was organised in a way that I could have access to the groups at least 4 days a week. The classes lasted in general, 1 hour and a half. The starting date was on June 24th and the ending date was on August 10th. According to my data collection, I worked with 10% of the children that live in the shelters managed by the HP.

The Guided Tour corresponds to the last ten days of my fieldwork in which I received a group of researchers from Brazil for a shared action in three of the five shelters I was working with. The Guided Tour happened from July 31st until August 10th. My main contact in the Brazilian group was Patricia Machado. She has been a professional dancer and a dance researcher for many years in Brazil. We combined my fieldwork and research plan with her project called 'Criança que Dança' (Child that Dance), which is an interdisciplinary dance project that encompasses a project called Guided Tour. She has been developing this project in Port-au-Prince, Haiti since 2017 and now this project is part of her Master's degree research in Experiences and Mediations in the educational relations in arts, at the State University of Parana (UNESPAR), in Curitiba (Brazil). More details about this partnership can be found in chapter four.

The starting date was on June 24, 2019 and the ending date was on August 10, 2019. According to my data collection, I worked with 10% of the children that live in the

thirteen shelters managed by the HP. The chart below shows an overview on what this means in the context of the inflow of refugees in Greece.

Number of participants in the Ethnographic Action Reasearch	30
Unaccompanied minor refugees at the Home Project	300
Unaccompanied minor refugees in formal shelters 1/3	750
Unaccompanied minor refugees	2,250
1\3 of the refugees live in Athens	20,000
Minors stranded in Greece	27,500
Refugees that arrived before the EU-Turkey agreement	46,000
Third-country nationals living in Greece	60,000

Figure 3: Screenshot of the table containing the numbers of refugees divided by categories. Source: https://www.unhcr.org/

Hence, we were working in an exchange of research methodologies. I am researching the topic of dance as a path for social transformation and empowerment and Patrícia is investigating the development of a performance in the dance teaching-learning process. Inside this project, she created a methodology to develop a creative work/performance in dance with children in situation of social vulnerability; the process is called Visita Guiada (Guided Tour).

The final moment of my fieldwork was set up in a professional and operational basis. The ten days of the guided tour were intense and needed an organised negotiation throughout the previous three months. The first two months of my active work and bonding with the community created a trustable atmosphere for the new group to start working. The structural conditions for such a project are complex. The negotiations were careful and involved a clear design and sharing of our actions with the office management that proceed legally so we could have access to the shelters.

This research was structured as an intensive and short ethnographic fieldwork and it was performed at HP, an NGO located in Athens, from June to August of 2019. I acknowledge that, at this moment, this is a work in progress and the attempt to analyse the experience in the field has been of great value. This has been a time to reflect and transform blurred good intentions and shy scientific prospects into a more tangible and concrete material. This practice has provided me with a general overview of my research

and stimulated the exercise and the use of the tools we have been exposed in the lectures during the two years of intense studies in our program. Therefore, this whole process has been shedding light on what I want to investigate in the field beyond this master's degree, which was the trigger for a passion about dance in the socially vulnerable contexts.

In order to do so, I engaged myself in the community through participant observation aiming to focus on the context and on the multiple layers that comprises the environment of the NGO and the shelters I was working with. As participant observation requires a deep involvement, and at the same time a detachment from the community, I have been reflecting on the intersections between the subjective and the objective relationship between the researcher and the field, this situation of being and seeing, absorbing and producing knowledge concomitantly in such an intense and unstable context.

Therefore, I have been trying to keep myself as much self-reflexive as I can. It might look obvious that self-reflexivity is an ongoing process during fieldwork, and cannot be placed in a specific frame of time. However, these intersections started to clarify when writing this dissertation. I believe this process will become more and more concrete as time goes by and this dissertation becomes the trigger to other projects, unfolding in new experiences that may bring me back here to re-visit, transform and re-consider these perspectives.

My main approach in the field was through a dance workshop, specifically designed for two different groups of UASCs. Each group had approximately 10 participants on and off and the variation in the number was considerable. I worked specifically with unaccompanied refugee children, meaning that they were all under eighteen years old and arrived in Greece without being accompanied by any adult. They came from diverse backgrounds and countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Congo, etc. They are part of the refugee community and live in the shelters managed by The HP. The workshops were inside each of the five shelters that were part of this project distributed in four different neighbourhood in Athens.

The schedule created on Dissertation 1 was followed and it worked well. I planned to finish on August 23rd, but due to the sequence of the events, we found it more appropriate to end the dance workshops and the action of the Guided Tour, which I will clarify on chapter 4. The images below show the number of children in each shelter per

week during the fieldwork and how I kept record of their presence during the dance practices.

Date / Shelter	Shelter K	Shelter O	Shelter A	Shelter P
24-28 JUN 2019	29	0	0	0
1-5 JUL 2019	28	26	14	12
8-12 JUL 2019	27	26	13	12
15-19 JUL 2019	29	26	12	12
22-26 JUL 2019	29	27	12	12
29 JUL-02 AUG 2019	29	27	12	12

Figure 4: Screenshot of the table containing the weekly numbers of children living in the shelters.

Figure 5: Screenshot of the table containing the weekly numbers of children present in the dance workshop at shelter K.

The dance workshop was divided in two moments and its design was created in partnership with Patrícia Machado. I will briefly explain how this co-creation was done

in practice but this topic will be further developed on chapter 4. The actions were organised according to the following workflow:

1 – The dance workshops started on June 25th. My main task in this period was the creation of a comfortable atmosphere, where the group could create a bond among themselves and myself, establishing a common ground for creative thinking and movement exploration. My work with them happened from June 25th until July 31st 2019.

2 - Patrícia's project was shorter. She developed the creative process with the residents of three shelters out of the five I had worked with in ten days. The process was connected to what I was working with them since the beginning of the project. Thus, she started her work in August, as we believed at that time, that the groups were more connected to the dance and the movement investigation. Her project happened from August 1st until August 10th. All of the members of the group from Brazil were present in all of the sessions. We had Patrícia and Andréa[4] that were responsible for the multidisciplinary dance project, Cayo[5] and Giovana[6] that were part of the multimedia team and Victor that was in charge of the live music during the workshops. I followed all their sessions as a participant observer and as a connector between them and the participants. This project aimed to generate a performance, an artistic product with what the participants could have a sense of conclusion, completion of a process.

3 - I finished the dance workshops on August 10th. I carried out my research alone in the other two shelters that did not receive the project Guided Tour and did the closure with all the communities in the same week. At the beginning, we had the idea of creating an event for the community to show the results of the workshops in some sort of performative festival. Due to time restrictions and that August is a month in which many people take their vacation days and Athens gets practically empty, we decided to do an internal showing inside each shelter so they could see their work.

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[4] Andréa Serio Bertoldi – Head of the department of Human Right at UNESPAR, Paraná, Brazil.
[5] Cayo Vieira - Photographer – Nó Movimento em Rede - Paraná, Brazil.
[6] Giovana Bertoldi - Videomaker – Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, Paraná – Brazil.

Timetable of Activities - 2019			
Activities	**June**	**July**	**August**
First meeting with the staff to discuss practicalities, in person, at HP	Wednesday 12th		
Dance workshop	Tuesday 26th		Saturday 10th
Project "Guided Tour"			Thursday 1st until Saturday 10th
Presentation of the Creative Process to the Community			Thursday 8th and Friday 9th
Last meeting to close the project with the staff at HP			Thursday 8th

2.1 Roles in the field

The reflections on the roles I played in the field are becoming clearer and clearer as I advance in the analysis of the material collected. They are intrinsically related to the complex layers of the reality of the shelters. The moment of taking distance and looking at my material and rediscovering my experience in the field is of a great importance. Thus, I have been able to recognise the nuances and the confrontation of different backgrounds, as each shelter represented a very different core. Although they follow similar guidelines, they work very differently according to the way the staff of the house choose to conduct their house environment. I was able to identify six different roles adopted in the field:

1 – Dance workshop facilitator: I presented myself as the dance workshop facilitator. This is how the NGO saw me and introduced me to the shelters, under the umbrella of Dance Therapy (which was an assumption on their end according to their needs and expectations). The term therapeutic was discussed throughout the whole fieldwork. My approach was focused on the potentialities of the dance in creating and strengthening the agency of the participants of their own bodies and in relation to the spaces in which they were living. Any therapeutic results or subjects that could arise in the practice were discussed with the psychologists from all the shelters, but that was not present in my research goals.

2 – Young woman coming to the house: when I was questioning specifically the teenage boys about their motivation to come to the class (because motivation is an issue to be

addressed in regard to any kind of activity they engage in themselves, there is a documented lack of motivation in the daily reality of the shelters, this will be further discussed on chapter III), they would give general answers about how dance is fun and helps themselves to express their feelings in a different way. When I opened the question to the staff (three men) in the K shelter (for boys at the age of seventeen and eighteen), I got the following feedback: 'You're a young lady, you're pretty, they're teenage boys. You do the math'.

3 – Researcher: when dealing with the research ethics and formal meetings with the administrative staff at the HP for feedback and follow up in the processes in each shelter. Also, as a mediator between the NGO and the group of researchers coming from Brazil in the cooperation with my project.

4 – Head of the projects articulating the connection Brazil/Greece: when channelling and negotiating demands from both sides, the Ngo and the group from Brazil. Centralisation and management of official documents and communication accuracy, such as translation and alignment between the guidelines from the NGO and our project.

5 – Translator (salient moment): when they requested my help to mediate an internal conflict involving a suicide attempt of a child and how to report it to a Portuguese speaker, newcomer who could not communicate with anyone due to language barriers.

6 – Outsider/Friend: when dealing with personal issues from some of the participants of the Dance Workshop. They felt comfortable to talk to me about their personal lives and their personal problems, in which case they did not report to the staff of the house. When I talked to a social worker about these conversations, she mentioned that this could be related to the fact that, as an outsider, they knew that at some point, I would be gone and they would not have to deal with me. On the other hand, the staff is in the shelters every day and play a parental role, which affects the way the residents report their problems or needs to the staff.

2.2 Data collection tools and techniques

The main aim of this text is to address the material collected and/or generated in the fieldwork through ethnography, organise it and to reflect on the choices of data and metadata, as well as to explain the methodology used to organise the material in the Database produced. The methodology used was EAR and the data collection technique was Participant Observation. The ethnographical fieldwork was performed by me and in partnership with a group of researchers and artists from Brazil in the last ten days of my work in Athens.

> Since action research starts with everyday experience and is concerned with the development of living knowledge, the process of inquiry can be as important as specific outcomes. Good action research emerges over time in an evolutionary and developmental process, as individuals develop skills of inquiry and as communities of inquiry develop within communities of practice (Reason and Bradbury, 2008:5).

I went to the field to do ethnographic action research and to develop a dance workshop with the refugees living in the five shelters above-mentioned. The participants of my project included the unaccompanied refugee children under the care of the NGO, the head of the Unit of Child Protection, (my main connection in Athens and with the shelters), the social workers, psychologists and caregivers - staff of the shelters and a translator and interpreter.

The research ethics permeated all my process of data collection due to the kind of community I worked with. This is a sensitive matter in my research and at this point, I am still being acquainted to the boundaries and limitations this creates. The agreement between the researcher and the organisation states that any identifying information needs to be avoided. Thus, the name of the NGO, the shelters, and the name of the children were kept as initials. The members of the staff are identified only by their job position. Photos and videos did not capture the children's faces. The faces captured were blurred from the photos published in this dissertation.

- Video recording

Data was collected using a video camera to register the movement processes and to generate data for future dance analysis. The main aim of this practice is to identify and analyse patterns of movement, as well as to register and observe the levels of interaction among the dancers and to capture narratives present in the bodies in movement. The

largest amount of videos recorded happened during the Guided Tour part. The films were used to create movie clips of the process and to document the outcomes of this experience.

- Interviews

Regarding the kids from P shelter, the interviews were performed in order to construct a narrative that could be choreographed by them. This process was developed during the Guided Tour. Patrícia and I worked in a process where kids could investigate different forms to express themselves, so they could speak through movement, drawings, writings and so on. Instead of collecting formal data from them, we operated in an environment where we could construct knowledge together.

Patrícia had already some questions to ask them through the creative movement process. Some kids were invited to participate in the interviews. They were performed with one child at a time. We would ask the questions in English and the children replied in their mother language. The process was recorded and then later transformed in a script that the children would use to create their own choreography, based on their personal narratives. The methodology and the questions will be addressed on chapter IV.

Regarding the social workers, psychologists and members of the management staff, I intended to address aspects that allowed me to map the background of the community, to be acquainted with their life routine and to learn in which condition they arrived in the organisation. The interviews were collected through recordings and notes.

Structured interviews were only performed with the members of staff of the NGO. I interviewed, at least one member of each position that worked directly with the residents of the shelters. I have interviewed members from the management team, social workers, psychologists, caregivers, refugees that lived in the shelters and became part of the staff after having their asylum accepted. There is one member of each shelter and I tried to approach as much people as I could in order to have access to different points of view regarding the refugee situation in the shelters and the levels of adaptation in this cross-cultural situation.

- Field Notes

They were taken in there different methods and notebooks. They were divided according to the different situations in the field. I had a small notebook that was used for the daily experiences, when exploring the city, or in events at the organisation, during the workshops and meetings with the staff, mainly for quick notes and for dynamic situations

where there was not enough time for thick descriptions in which important moments should be summarised in small and objective sentences.

A big notebook was used for a detailed description and analysis of the events of the day. This was more or less based on the notes taken in the small notebook among other methods of data collection.

- Pictures

Pictures were taken during the creative process of the workshop in order to register their movement investigation and to reproduce meaningful moments of this process. During the first month and a half I was working with them, I took very few pictures and videos. I felt that this was invasive and it required a good level of trust and a more mature bond. On some occasions, I felt they were uncomfortable with the camera so I just dropped the idea of recording and taking pictures in order to focus on the relationship we were building up. The majority of the pictures and videos from my fieldwork experience were taken by the professional team that came from Brazil, as they arrived in a moment were the community was more comfortable with our presence in the house.

- Audio recording

This method was used to record interviews, also for the documentation of personal statements about their creative process in the dance workshops. In the Guided Tour project, we used audio recording to create narratives for a choreographic project. In addition to that, one of our participants who is also a writer, wanted to record one of his poems and later to create a dance based on this record. In this case, we found the audio recording as a way of keeping oral tradition and heritage that was present in the group. This participant created a poem about his continent Africa and wanted to dance to it, as he considers dance as inherited way of search for relief and happiness from his ancestors that found their way through dance to survive slavery.

> *'Dancing is something I have passion for. As an African it is part of who we are. It is part of my culture and heritage, it makes me feel relief, relax, flexible and above all, it brings joy and smile to my life. Another important thing that motivates me into dancing is that it makes me to know many things about other part of the condition dancing impacts the lives of people. It also takes out tension and stress from me, because of all these things motivate me into dancing. As an African, our ancestors use this medium to feel relief and happy when they were enslaved and beaten and stoned to death during the early century. So, they pass it through us, the*

new generation and implemented it in our culture. So knowing all this things makes me feel motivated about dancing and implement it into my life and makes it part of me'(L's written feedback extract about their impressions on dance].)

2.3 Conditions for data collection

My approach to the community was divided in three main moments. The first and most intense part it was called dance workshop. The second intense moment was the last ten days with the team from Brazil which we call Guided Tour. The last moment was actually my first interaction with the NGO and the refugees in a community-building event that happened in the Refugee Day in a square in Kolonaki.

The context in which I was during my fieldwork and the conditions I had to work with affected greatly in my data collection. For the first eleven weeks, I was completely alone to organise the dance workshops and to negotiate the participation of the habitants of the house. The atmosphere was sensitive and I was very careful in order to build a relationship with my participants. It took time to develop a space where they felt comfortable to dance together. I started to collect pictures and videos from middle July on and the amount of material collected was small compared to the one done in Guided Tour. Another reason is that it was difficult to coordinate the workshops and to organise an affective data collection alone, so I tried to coordinate the actions and did my best to capture important moments, but the majority of the material was collected in the last 10 days of the fieldwork and with the assistance of the group from Brazil.

The Guided Tour event happened in a different context. When the group from Brazil arrived, there was already a bond between my community and me and they were introduced to my participants as part of my project. The participants were already feeling comfortable with our activities so photos and videos were not an issue in that moment. Obviously, there was a negotiation previously, we agreed about the limits, and the Code of Ethics involved when capturing images of refugees. Our photographer, Cayo Vieira, is a professional in the area and has already been in other similar projects, which created a trusting bond with the Ngo.

The interviews were collected in the last week of the fieldwork. The main reason was that I needed to understand and develop an objective eye towards my field in order to create questions that would contribute to my research. The interviewees were open to

answer the questions, to provide all the information I needed, and to share their knowledge. I interviewed only the staff of shelters (psychologists, caregivers and social workers) and the management staff of the HP. I collected some material from my participants in the form of writing and drawing, which I included in the Database of this research. I scanned the materials I have collected and organised them in my system of archiving.

CHAPTER III

HOW DID THE DANCE WORKSHOPS WORK IN THE REFUGEE SHELTERS?

The increasing number of people using performance and arts to help communities to grow and create social change drew my attention to the conciliatory power of dance. In which case, the aspects of political responsiveness shift from confrontation and antagonist struggles to the creation of ways to bridge antagonist and polarised communities. Thus, in the sequence after sharing the background and the methodology used in this study, I want to invite the reader to join me in the ethnographic account of what happen during the fieldwork and think of dance in the context of a refugee shelter.

The title of this chapter has been enlightening and frightening me for over a year now. It permeated the construction of my research plan, traversed my work in the field and it has landed on my table as I write the last chapters of this dissertation. I reflect on what kind of knowledge is being created and how it connects and dialogues with what it is already out there. When does one start to expand the boundaries in their fieldwork? When do we start to generate knowledge and innovate our areas of research? Is it in the reflexive process after doing fieldwork? Is it in the moment one applies the knowledge acquired in their academic training when doing ethnographic research? Is it in the systematisation of the experience in the writing process? Is it when managing the collected data? Is it collecting it? The objective of this chapter is to construct a narrative from the perspective of a researcher that inhabits a territory populated by these questions and by the restlessness to bring the field back to this space of reflection and creation of knowledge.

This dissertation does not have the objective to answer these questions in order to generate a recipe on how dance-based projects should be developed in refugee shelters or share a methodology for dance practices in socially vulnerable contexts. The objective is to put this experience into perspective and contribute to the discussion on the topic of dance and politics in the contemporary social organisation and the implications of one's bodily exposure to one another in such contexts. By doing that, I write this text with my focus on sharing an experience and a kind of knowledge created in the field that is unique and has its roots in this experience.

Moreover, I aim to describe the physical space of each shelter and how they differ significantly, affecting the way the dance workshops were organised and evolved during our time together. Although the spaces are roughly being referred to under the umbrella of 'refugee shelter', it is important to highlight that each house has their own dynamics and work as independent units. On one hand, all of them follow a set of rules designed for their capacity and age/gender. Such rules and generally premises are created and discussed jointly by all the members of the staff managed by the NGO. On the other hand, the staff of each house has its own way to organise a sustainable community environment and to apply them according to their needs and context.

A social worker mediated my approach to the shelters at the beginning. Her expertise of more than fifteen years working with refugees as a social worker and as the head of the child protection unit at the HP was crucial in the process of selecting the five shelters from a list of thirteen. We had discussed my project previously and determined some guidelines. For instance, the maximum number of participants, the duration of the classes and how often they were going to be happening. She pre-selected the shelters eligible to receive the dance workshops according to the space available in the houses, their schedule, age, gender and potential interest in receiving an arts-based project in the summer.

She proposed me a list of five shelters encompassing unaccompanied refugee minors, teenagers from fourteen to eighteen years old and one shelter for unaccompanied children from six to twelve years old. Three of the shelters for teenagers are only for boys, one for teenage girls, and their babies and the shelter for children is the only one that mixes gender.

Once we had the list, a visit to all the five shelters were organised so she could introduce the dance project and me. This mediation was of great importance to place me in a position of trust. She represents the NGO and the place that manage their houses; they have a friendly, respectful and trustful relationship with her. Being in the house accompanied by her guaranteed that they could trust me at a certain level, not only the residents, but also the members of the staff. I realised later that the members of staff represented a group of people that hold a very trustable relationship with the residents and they play a very important role in their decision-making. I realised that when the staff members accompanied me in the workshop and in the approach to invite the boys for the dancing I had more participants engaged. Having support from the trustable members of

their community accredited me as a trustable person and that called the boys' attention to participate in the new project that was going to happen in the house.

That was my first contact with the shelters, and I was overwhelmed and concerned about how to manage such sensitive and complex situation. It was the first time I realised that an absolute beginning did not exist for this kind of experience. The houses had already so many stories, so much life that for the first time I felt what it was to be informed and affected by the field. The beginning of the dance workshops was happening in the middle of a highly complex process for them. I crossed their transitory journey and I was ready to pact with them and engage them in my work, as much as I was willing to construct this work day-by-day, knitting my knowledge with what they would be willing to share with me.

Out of the five shelters I was working with, three were for boys. They are the largest number among the refugees, hence a highly vulnerable community. By the time they arrived at the shelters, they have already been in a long and dangerous journey. Before coming to the shelters, they lived for a period of time in the so called 'Safe Zones', where there were camps that host the refugees and migrants that manage to arrive in the mainland of Greece until the National Centre for Social Solidarity (NCSS) find them a bed in a shelter. Until the moment I was doing my fieldwork, the NCSS had registered 3500 unaccompanied refugee minors and 1000 beds, nationally.

> *'I mean there are camps that there are fights between the tribes every day. And the safe zones, especially for the boys, I mean we never know if someone will come and rape you. So, how you're going to do it, how you're going to survive. You live in a safe zone but you actually need money for that, money for that, you decided then this is my life so they start to survive for sex, so that's usually people that they use sex to survive or to live with they use drugs to deal with that'.* (Head of the Human Development at the Child Protection Unit at the NGO (2019) interviewed by Bianca Beneduzi on August 8th).

The asylum-seeking system is very complicated. An extremely bureaucratic process creates a rather confusing environment for the residents of the shelters. In some cases, they do not understand what is happening around them. There is a wide range of different cases in one shelter, each of them in different stages. The roles that people are playing in their daily lives can be directly connected to their processes of asylum seeking.

For instance, when I started the dance classes, in the three shelters for boys, they asked me if I was going to give them a certificate for the dance classes. I explained to them that this was not going to be possible, because it was not a course for professionalization but, rather, a moment to explore themselves and seek different forms of expression, to play and bond with their colleagues in a creative and relaxed way.

The fact that my project would not help them to develop their CVs contributed to their lack of motivation, along with other reasons. The unaccompanied refugee children are considered legal in the country while living in the shelters up to the moment that they are called for an asylum interview. The interview happens in two degrees, in which the second is when they expect a definitive answer, either to be rejected or accepted, and granted the refugee or other humanitarian status.

The unaccompanied minors I was working with were all legal and waiting for their interviews either in the first or second degree. Therefore, the community was under the pressure of not knowing what was going to happen to their lives, and an answer or any clarification, in this situation, can come in years.

Considering this, their behaviour is influenced by the status of their processes, which leads to a degree of uncertainty that results in lack of motivation and difficulties to engage and integrate with the community. Most of the participants came to Greece as a transitory destination and ended up stranded in the country. Their objective is to keep moving towards Western Europe. Hence, their focus are not in engaging in the local community or in long-term projects.

On the other hand, the group of participants were incredibly skilled. Some of them were amazing dancers, with a varied repertory of movements from the traditional dances from their countries in the Middle East and Africa. Some of them were talented musicians, especially with drums and body percussion. Talents also included a wonderful drawer, martial arts practitioners, soccer players, sensitive and critical thinkers with an articulated speech about their context and various subjects. All of them were, at least, bilingual, and some of them knew over five languages.

How to create and develop a project in such circumstances and what could embrace and encompass such high level of sophisticated group? According to the scientific supervisor in the Child Protection Unit of the NGO, art-based projects are part of a model that they would like to have in the shelters. He believes that arts play an

important role in the process of integration and healing of this community that is traumatised and living in harsh conditions throughout their journey.

I was focused on creating a methodology for dance-based engagement in refugee shelters. It turns out that my experience in the field revealed that the politics of negotiation of my role in the shelters preceded that. To negotiate how I would bring dance to their environment, to the same place they eat, pray, sleep, fight, find hope or not was as much important as the dance methodology or even more. I felt that if my relation with them were well established and grounded in a trusting base they would try what I was proposing. This is the reason I added the brackets at the end of my topic saying (How it works), I had to take a step back in creating a methodology for dance practicing and I entered in the analysis of these delicate and complex negotiations.

For example, the dance workshop was a form of structured event happening once a week in the shelters. In some shelters, for example in the shelter K, the living room where we were dancing was in the inter-section of their bedrooms and a bathroom. We had to have the consensus of the house as whole, because, for a certain amount of time, they would not have the couches and one of the common areas available, they would have music and noises around their bedrooms. They would have to cross the living room with people dancing after taking a shower. They would have the dance practice interfering in their phone calls, praying rituals and personal interests.

Before the dance workshops could happen, I had to analyse the situation of the house in that particular day, taking into consideration their routine. From that, I had a very short time to trace a plan and start talking to them in the kitchen, in their bedrooms, in the couches where they were resting, in the office where they were arguing about issues concerning the everyday life. The dance started with a dialogue and a simple conversation.

In addition to that, it was important to create the environment for the dance to happen, including moving the furniture and re-creating spaces in their private space of life. The next step, once the group was united for dancing, involved strategies to keep them motivated, especially the teenage boys. My aim was on creating a democratic space where they could explore their potentialities and interests like drawing and martial arts (which I would include in the dance practices to attend the demands of some participants). After the workshop, we would finish each day with a simple step, or song or conversation

that I could use to reconnect with them in the next meeting. In general, this was a constant path in my experience in Athens.

During the whole process, when I arrived at the shelters, I would start to look for the people that would be interested in dancing at that particular day. In the first meetings, I would be accompanied by the members of the staff, but after a couple of days I was told that I could come to the house and feel comfortable to walk from one room to the other and talk to the people and engage with them in the kitchen, in their bedrooms. After a couple of weeks, I was feeling, in a certain level, part of the shelters.

In this context, the practice is connected to a dance form based on improvisation. The principles are not part of a system of codified movements but rather a playful combination of exercises that foster to explore movement through music and drawing. Through this practice, the dancer investigates a new way of being in the world, exploring it in a process of self-knowledge but also in connection and dialogue with the other.

> We can agree that beyond the enormous differences that exist in the designs and their contents, the trainings involve the encounter with a new way of being and being in the world, of knowing it, of knowing it and of intertwining in it and with him. That is, the acquisition of what I call a specific somatic poiesis that allows the updating of creative tendencies in performative action in terms of inhabiting a certain space / time, displaying certain perceptual abilities, as well as particular bodily and movement relationships (Aschieri, 2018: 2).[7]

Those principles support an investigation that stimulates the deconstruction of the quotidian posture and aims for an extra quotidian way of behaving. This investigation aim to create a safe space for the dancers to explore their own bodies and to create their own movements.

This meticulous investigation on the individuality fosters to create a common ground where the immense diversity found within a shelter for refugees can meet and share similar tools of research but with diverse results. To deeply understand our own body function taking into consideration the presence of the other, can be a way of understanding how I construct the body image and how much it is influenced by one's own experience and the presence of the Other.

To create such awareness and openness can be a way of a more integrated and tolerant society, where people can realise we have peculiarities, but at some point, there

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[7] Fragmented translated by the researcher. The original article is in Spanish.

is a space where we can meet and help each other to form and transform our bodies and our representation in the world. This way, we may see and recognise ourselves in the others and others may see and recognise themselves in us.

This chapter has five sections dedicated to introduce the five shelters involved in this project, as well as the process of co-creation of the dance workshops according to their particular context. The focus is in the process of bonding with the community and how we co-created affective spaces to practice and to reflect about dance. This corresponds to the first part of my fieldwork. The project 'Guided tour' will be further discussed and analysed on chapter four.

3.1 Shelter 'K'

Shelter 'K' is the largest shelter among the five, with the maximum capacity of thirty residents. The shelter hosts unaccompanied refugee minors, boys from fourteen to eighteen years old. It is a two-floor house with the entrance door at the sidewalk.

The shelter keeps its doors open mostly all day long. One can encounter some residents at the entrance door chatting, smoking and listening to music. It was summer in Athens, very sunny and warm so they would stay a lot outside, in the common areas or in their bedrooms taking advantage of the air conditioner. The houses have a mix of feelings of a multicultural house environment with an adult structure kept by a group of professionals that takes care of cleaning, cooking, advising, psychological health care and immigration counselling. According to the head of human development of the NGO, the houses are meant to offer a therapeutic environment for the residents.

> *"What we want to do in the shelters and what I think in my opinion a shelter should be is that, you try to become a house environment, it is not a home environment, it is not, because no home has 15 residents at the same time, different nationalities, but, on the other hand, you are trying what you are really trying is to make a therapeutical environment for these kids. So, this is why you have kids staying there and you have also the specialists, or the workers that work inside."* (Head of the Human Development at the Child Protection Unit at the NGO (2019) interviewed by Bianca Beneduzi on August 8th).

I arrived there for my first workshop on June 25th, 2019 around 2 p.m.. I met with some of the boys at the door, just said 'Hi' and entered to meet the members of the staff to check how I could approach the boys for the first time. They accompanied me in a tour

in the house to invite the boys to meet upstairs for a dance workshop. The boys seemed interested in what was going to happen. Because of the time, some were having lunch, some were praying, and some were out. It took around twenty minutes to organise a group of four and have a first chat about the project.

The boys were aware, more or less, about what was going to happen. The staff had let them know about the dance classes. Therefore, the residents of the shelter were expecting someone in the house that day. The staff accompanied the workshop as a way to encourage the boys to be part of that initiative.

As I mentioned before, I visited the shelters before starting the dance workshops in order to check the spaces available and the possibility to develop this work with the staff about their routine and schedule. In the case of the 'K' shelter, we decided that the living room in the second floor was the largest room of the house and could accommodate the dance practice.

On my first day, once we had gathered the boys that were in the house and willing to participate, I started the project by explaining to them that we would have to prepare the space to dance. For that, we needed to move all the furniture to the corridor and organise it in a way the other residents could still walk through it. We agreed that this would be a routine for both the beginning and the end of the practices. Therefore, at the end of every meeting we would have to put the furniture back and leave the living room organised. The floor plan below shows roughly the space we used for the workshops.
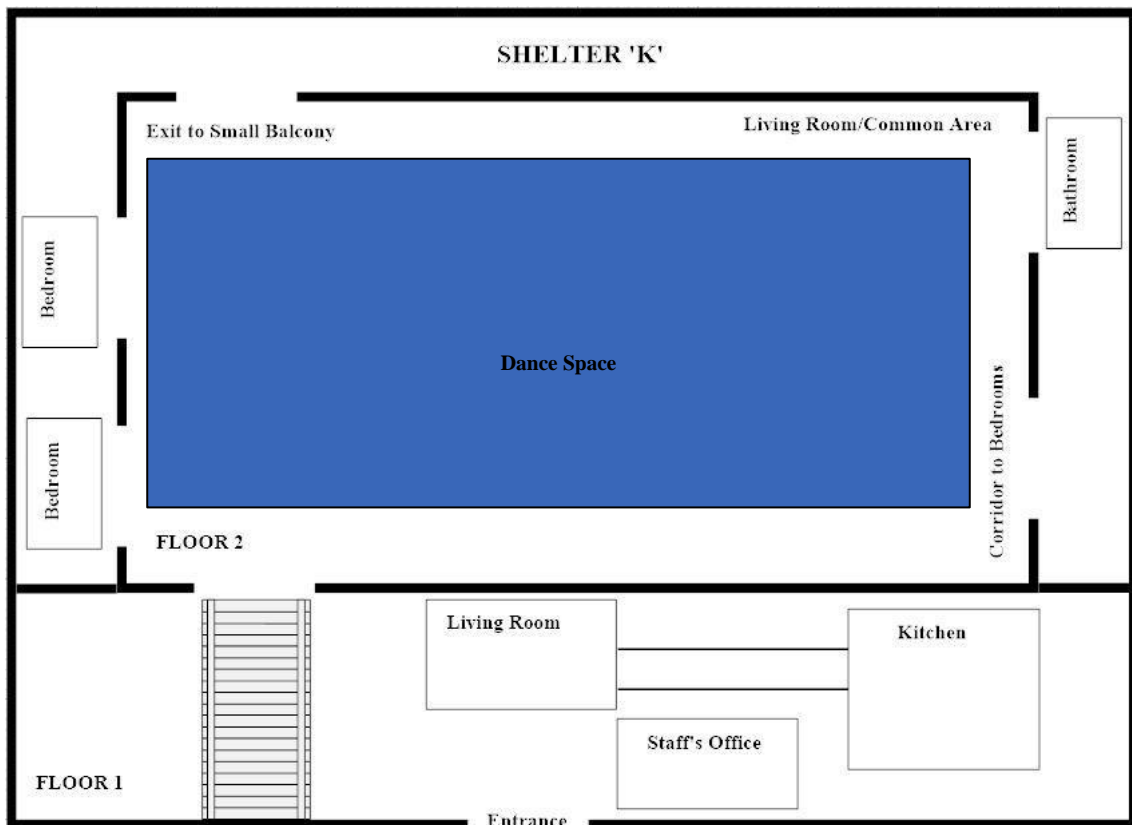
Figure 6: Floor plan of Shelter K

After setting up the space, I proposed to them to start the dance practice. I was about to start an improvisation exercise. The clash of my background as a performing artist with their complex layered background of constant displacement was about to begin. As in most of my experiences teaching creative movement and drama, I asked them to walk around the space and to look at each other, as well as to observe the room. Secondly, I asked them to lay down on the floor. Some of them refused to lay down on the floor at first. With very little understanding of the situation, I thought that was just a matter of denying something new or maybe they would like to observe first and then join it. I insisted once more, but also remarking that they could come and go as they wish. A significant part of the group laid down. I noticed that they were uncomfortable but I thought that was going to pass as we moved on with the exercise.

After the whole group agreed to do the exercise, I went further in my mistake and asked them to close their eyes, in a naïve attempt to invite them to feel their bodies, to connect with their breaths and pay attention to how they were feeling at that moment.

As the floor part made them uncomfortable in the presence of each other, I decided to change it to another exercise. Instead of keeping them on the floor, I proposed to them to travel through different levels, from the laying position up to standing up using the

image of a spiral. The dynamics of the exercise made them feel more comfortable, as the laying down now was just a transitory position. I would like to remark that in our first meeting, in which they had very little knowledge about me, I was asking them to put themselves in the most vulnerable position possible.

Episodes such as the one above mentioned happened constantly throughout my experience in the shelters. At the beginning, I did not realise that, not only were the residents in a transitory mode, but also the concepts of home, trust, culture, body, immigration, asylum, motivation, country, language and humanity. On the other hand, I was proposing a step towards finding a common ground inside that universe and for that, I had to open widely my attention to the intricacies of our moments together.

Figure 7: Dance workshop in Shelter K. Finding the beat and the rhythm together

At the end of the first meeting, I explained to the group that I was doing my master's degree in Dance Anthropology and that I was going to be in the house, once a week, every Tuesday around 2 p.m. for the dance workshops. I roughly explained that I was researching about dance in the refugee shelters and that I was interested in a shared methodology to be created in cooperation with them as much as they were willing to engage.

I let the participants know that the encounters would happen during the whole month of July and half of August. Moreover, I explained that my objective was to propose

a moment to create and move together and that the objective of the work as a whole would be constructed day by day. I invited them to engage in different forms, for those that did not like to dance but would like to create music or drawing or support the group by watching the classes or helping to move the furniture back and forth.

One of the members of the staff at shelter K told me that observing one of the workshops in the house, he noticed that a boy with a traumatic past was very excited being part in one of the activities that involved dance and playing the Handpan. He highlighted that the group was integrated in the activity and some boundaries that may have kept them apart, such as language and difficulties with communication, were faded out. He observed the group was united and focused in one objective: to create music and to support the ones that were dancing in the middle of the circle. In the dynamics, the participants were working as a team in order to achieve something together.

> *"Especially when you are in a band and you connect because you want to achieve something higher than you, something better and it is it is five or ten I don't know how many ...try at this point be all together at the same place, at the same time. Without speaking, without seeing each other just because they want to achieve something better".* (Social worker at the NGO (2019) interviewed by Bianca Beneduzi on August 6th).

Figure 8: Dance workshop in Shelter K. Creating music and dance as a team

Initially, the dance workshops were planned and with a clear objective for each session. As I got more involved with the community, I opened space in the planning that I wanted to be filled by their interest. For instance, A[8], one of the residents of K shelter, was always around during the workshops with his friend M, also resident of the same shelter. They were part of one or two sessions together until they stopped coming to the dance practices. One day, walking in the shelter and chatting with the boys before the workshop, I saw A carrying a beautiful drum. I asked him if he played the drum and he said yes. I suggested him to play for us in the dance workshops and reinforced the importance of having a musician that could keep the beat and the rhythm present in the room. That was such a successful partnership. A. played in almost all the sessions after this. This established another level of non-verbal dialogue in the group. A was always very aware of the group and vice-versa. I would ask him what I needed for determined exercise, but as the dance evolved, we would establishing connection and working as a group in harmony, affecting and being affected by music and dance. Music was very strong in K shelter. It was a powerful way to connect with them. The boys were passionate about playing instruments or doing body percussion.

The group in K shelter changed every session. Some boys would join more than others would and there was always someone new dancing. Either a newcomer, a friend that was visiting the shelter or a resident that was curious to try it once. Sometimes the group was completely different. I had two different groups in the house. One was composed of older boys that were living in the house for longer time and the second that was composed by younger boys and newcomers that were interested in trying something new in their new home.

At the end of the project, I was feeling part of the house and comfortable to call them my friends. They would make fun of me due to my negotiations in all the rooms in the house, trying to bring them to the living room to dance together. Some of the dance workshops became an afternoon of chatting about different subjects, including how some of them did not like dance, or thought dance is a girly thing or something for children. I felt we had openness among us and they could express their feelings freely without being judged or forced to like anything. For me, these moments were as important as the dance

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[8] The names of the participants will be kept as initials in order to protect their identity according to the research ethics of this study.

practices. We bonded through dance, we communicated through movement and when this communication was more solid, we talked about dance.

3.2 Shelter 'A'

I will make a larger introduction of the location of shelter A, due its relevance in the context of the research and in the city. In the heart of Athens, not so far away from one of the main squares of the city, the Syntagma Square is located a neighbourhood well known for its anarchist movement and counterculture atmosphere, called Exarcheia.

Exarcheia is a space of political resistance that influences significantly the social and political life in Greece. The resilience of its community sustains the neighbourhood in the debate regarding the propagation of antifascist, antiracist and anarchist ideologies. The anarchist movement acts, among other causes, in the occupation of empty buildings that became community centres and squats. This has been an alternative to the crowded and poorly equipped refugee camps, in which sub-human conditions of living are being condemned internationally (TG, 2019).

The political atmosphere in the neighbourhood has its roots in the years of the Greek dictatorship during the junta or the Regime of the Colonels (1967-1974). Important symbols of resistance against the dictatorship such as the Athens Polytechnic University, where the Greek military raided a student occupation and killed forty people in 1973, is less than one kilometre from Exarcheia Square. (TG, 2019).

Exarcheia holds a pulsing social revolt that inhabits its buildings, squats, self-organised community centres and streets. In the crossroads between demonstrations, tear gas and Molotov cocktails, the community fights against the threats of the government represented by Kyriakos Mitsotakis. The actual Greek party in power, 'Neo Democratia', through the Ministry of Citizen's Protections, has broadened the pressure on squats in Greece by releasing a statement in November 2019 demanding all of them to be evacuated in fifteen days' time. The state was attempting to evict migrant squats and anarchist social centres in Exarcheia in order to take control gradually of the place. The neighbourhood kept its borders close to the entrance of the police or any kind of state intervention until the moment I was living there (TG, 2019).

Shelter A is located in Exarcheia and it was a 15 minute-walking from my apartment. Although the building is surrounded by the context above-mentioned, it

operates in different circumstances, as it is not a self-organised community. Therefore, the shelter was not directly threatened by Exarcheia's current situation, but the residents lived in this environment, in which they carried on activities related to their social life and education.

It is a two-floor house, with similar characteristics of the shelter K. It is also a house for boys from fourteen to eighteen years old, all unaccompanied minors. The staff encompasses social workers, caregivers, psychologist, cleaner and cook. When arriving in the shelter, I always did a check in with the members of the staff in the office to check how the boys were, if there was any important event that could be important to take into consideration when doing the workshops or if there was a newcomer.

Shelter A is smaller in capacity and can accommodate 14 residents; they come either from Pakistan or Afghanistan. As I mentioned before, each shelter is a different unit and has its own particularity. Most of the times I encountered the door close and rang the bell to have access to the house. Our meetings were always on Fridays from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. One of the characteristics of this shelter is that the boys had an active nightlife and during summer time and holiday, they would spend the day resting and sleeping. Hence, most of the times I arrived for the workshops the house was nice and silent and the boys were sleeping in their bedrooms.

I would start the day in the shelter talking to the staff and collecting important updates about the house and feedback from previous sessions. Afterwards, I would start to organise our dance space that was in the common area/living room. I kept the same organisational structure in this shelter. We needed to move the furniture together before and after the classes.
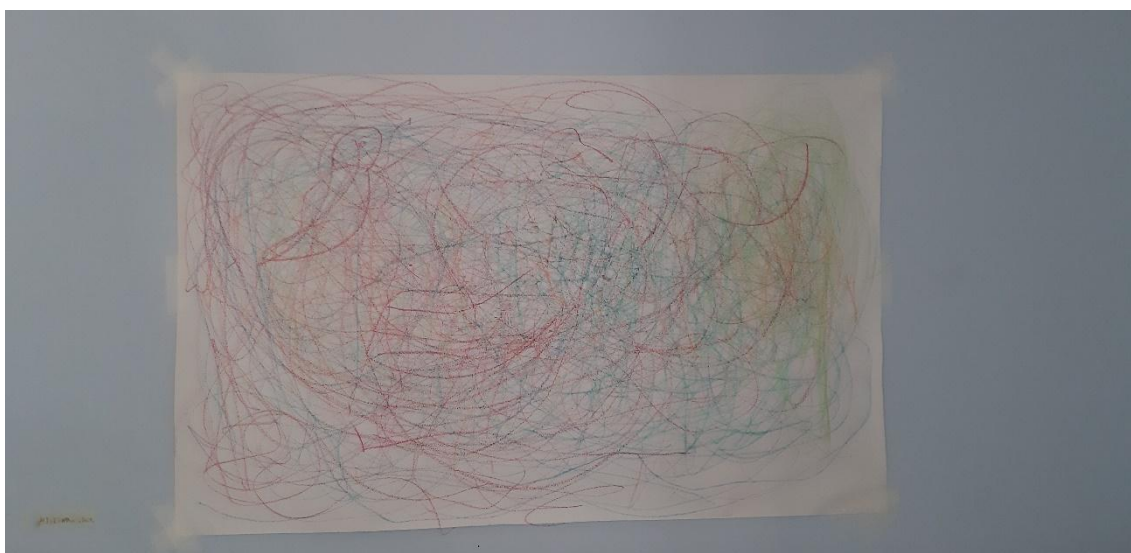
Figure 9: Dance and Drawing done by the residents of shelter A

After checking in with the staff, I always had a chat with the translator /interpreter. He arrived in Greece as a refugee over thirteen years ago and now works for the NGO. He accompanied me in A and in O shelters helping with language barriers. He was also an active dance practitioner in the workshops and an important figure to motivate the boys to dance and to understand some guidelines I was giving to the dance practice. The staff in shelter A was supportive of the dance project and helped me every Friday to wake up the boys and to invite them to dance. They also participated in the workshops as much as they could, motivating the boys to dance and strengthening the bond among them and facilitating our relationship.

Taking into consideration that the boys would come to dance right after waking up or having their breakfast, I started the dance workshops with a calm dynamic. Exercises like the 'dance of the joints' in which they move one joint at a time as if they had a brush at the top of each of their joints and could draw shapes in the space, worked well to break the ice and wake up the bodies.

The group in shelter A was sensitive and focused with ease in the activities. Our space was small and the movements were adapted to that reality. The movements were smaller in the outside, but with a high level of engagement that led the group to connect in interesting and abstract experiences. For example, one of the most beautiful moments in the shelter was during a simple exercise in which the main goal was investigate the actions of throwing and receiving movements.
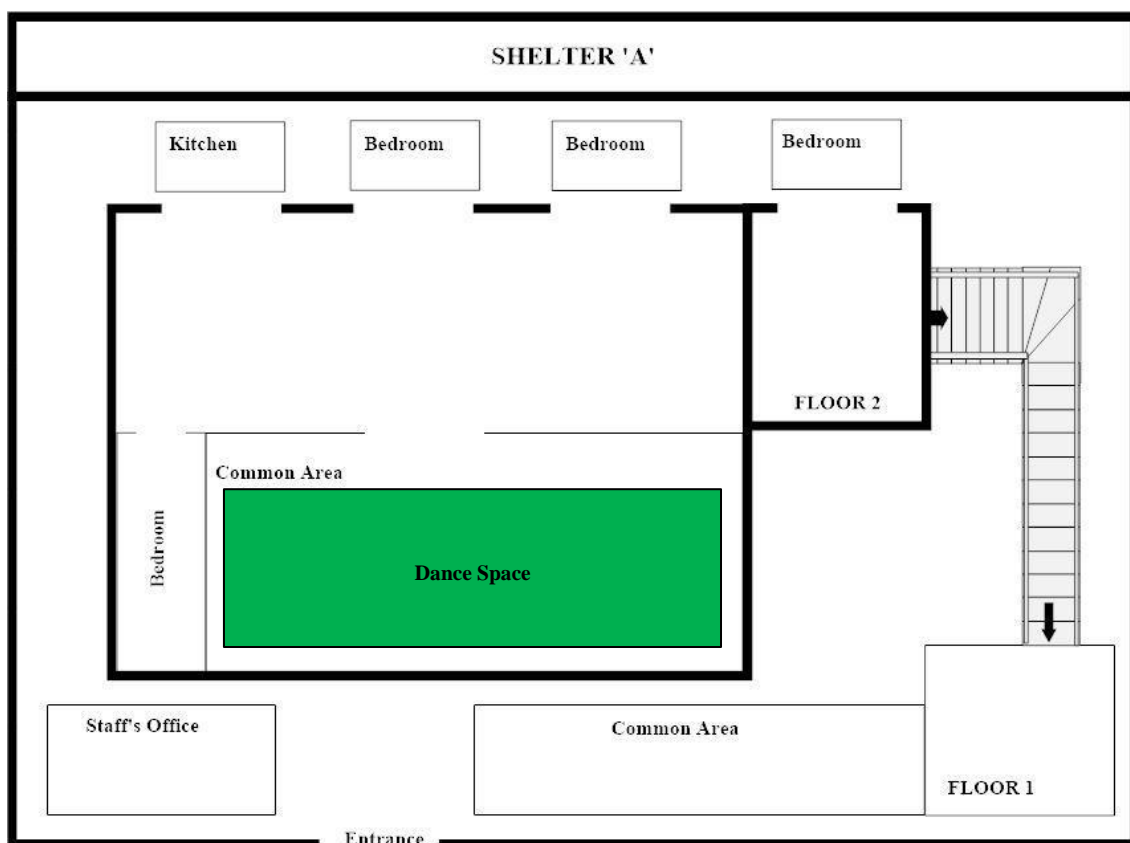
Figure 10: Floor plan of shelter A

Here is an example of a successful dance practice in this shelter. After warming up and feeling the group more engaged, we made a circle. The exercise was very simple. I started with a movement in my hands and I would throw it to one of the participants that would receive it, be affected by it and throw it to another participant. The basis was to explore these two actions of throwing and receiving a movement with the whole body. There was no right or wrong way of doing it, just a starting point. The exercise started well and kept its initial structure for a couple of minutes.

The next part was to stimulate them to change the size, the weight, the rhythm, the speed of the movements. They could receive a movement with a determined quality and transform it to something different before passing it on. The communication was so successful that they felt comfortable to extend their action from changing the movements to changing the space, as well. They broke the circle structure and started to keep the exercise with the whole group walking around the room. Soon, we were changing the speed and the size of our steps in displacement in the space without losing the connection established through the exchange of the movements.

This exercise lasted, at least, thirty minutes. After 'exploding' and 'occupying' all the corners of the room and trying diverse forms of moving the body we started to go back to the circle and work with small and slow movements. The same dynamic persisted but the movements were being internalised and the outside was becoming quieter and quieter, as if we were recollecting all we had project outside, previously. The circle was getting smaller and smaller, until the point, we were touching each other's hands and could not move anymore. A small pulse was kept, until someone made the last small throwing and the last receiver took it as pill, internalizing the experience symbolically compressed in that last action.

At the end, there was a sense of accomplishment and we were so happy that this engagement brought up movements and levels of relationship that created a trustable and comfortable environment for creative investigation. We were so pleased with the exercise that we asked to one of the members of the staff if he could film us doing it. The group agreed to do a shorter version of the whole process and have it filmed. What was impressive to me, as a performer, is that the repetition of the exercise was as genuine and spontaneous as the previous moment. In general, when performing artists are creating something and achieve an interesting moment that happened in an improvisation, it is a challenge to repeat it and bring the colours and the freshness of the new material back when repeating it. In the case of this group, we had another beautiful moment together, engaging and full of possibilities to be explored.

Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14: Sequence of the 'Throwing and Receiving' exercise.

According to a support worker at shelter A, it was possible to notice that some of the boys were moving in ways that they have never moved before. He affirmed that they were stiff in their movements, but there were certain breakthrough moments where we could see them crack a smile, and when we see them crack a smile through a certain movement, that is always a good sign.

> *'That shows that from the inside something is coming out, something that was not always there. It is coming out in a way, and it came out in a way not through speaking, but through movements. They might've thought they were silly, they might've thought they were, you know, whatever but it was sense of, I think, freedom from the inner self, to come out, and I think that's really important for all human beings, uh, to be able to experience even if it's for a short time like the programme'* (Support worker at the NGO (2019) interviewed by Bianca Beneduzi on August 15th).

3.3 Shelter 'O'

Shelter O had the most stable participation in the dance workshops. Our meetings were every Wednesday, in the morning. Of all the shelters, this was the only one where the practice took place in a room separated from the shared space of the shelters. The space for dance was in the same building but one could not access it through the house. It was necessary to leave the house and unlock the door from the outside. It was a space for studying, music practicing (they had a keyboard), a board for lessons, sofas, tables and chairs.
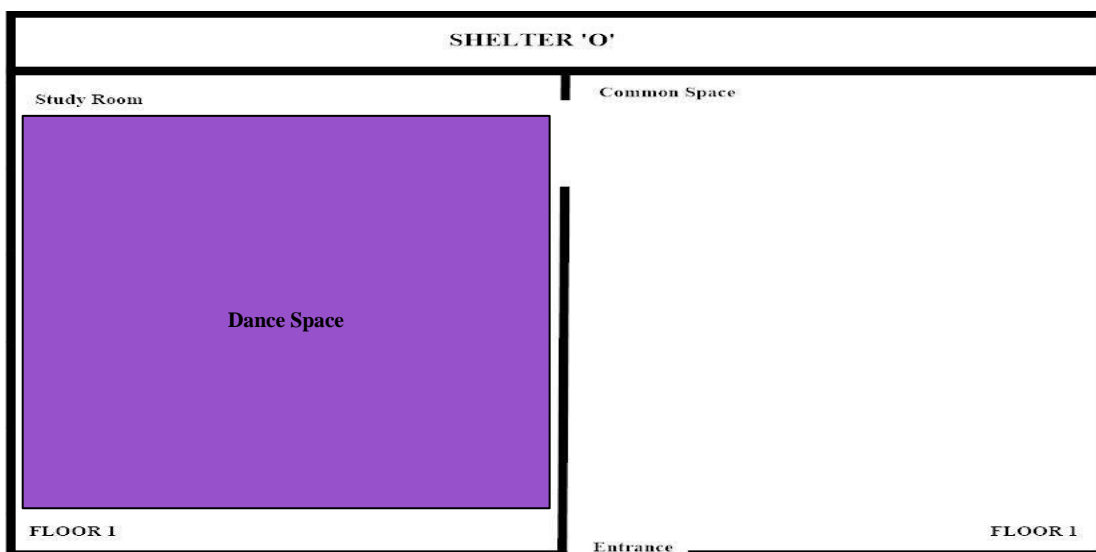

Figure 15: Floor plan of shelter O

Shelter O was the most successful example of bonding with the community. The group for dance practice was composed of three solid participants and some boys that would come and go, depending on the week. The boys in the house had a busier schedule that conflicted with the dance workshops. Regardless, they were participating or not in dance practices, the boys would always come downstairs to say hi and to have a look at our dances or to have a conversation.

In the shelter O, the role of the friend/outsider was salient. I had a deep connection with one of the residents, called L. He has a bright mind with a precious talent for speeches and defending his passionate ideas about his country and continent. He was one of the solid participants of the dance workshops. He would wait for me, ready for the dancing after his morning running. One of the days, we started to talk about general things, and we ended up talking about writing and I was explaining him that I was going to write about the experience we were having in the shelter and that I would like to write a book one day. He completed the thought telling me that he himself wrote a book about his country during the period he was living in the refugee camp.

I was very curious about this and asked him to show me the book. He went back to his bedroom and showed me a notebook, handwritten, illustrated and coloured by himself. The material was neat and the content was comprehensive. The book was divided into chapters and covered from practices in the local culture until political issues. I was impressed with the book and very happy that he shared it with me. I asked him if I could borrow the book and take it home for one week and he allowed me to do so. I commented about this to a social worker in one of our meetings and she was surprised because this book had never been shown to anyone in the shelter before. In this moment, I started to realise how this work could affect the community.

The dance workshops were pleasant and creative. The participants were open and curious about the exercises. The boys were engaged with each other and willing to experiment dance in different ways. One great experience with them was the dance notation. I divided the dance practice into two steps. First, I split them in two pairs and worked with stimulus for movement creation. The exercise was based on the principle of the mirror. They should take turns to mirror each other's movement.

Figure 16: Participants creating stimulus for movement creation

Figure 17: Participants creating stimulus for movement creation

The second phase of the exercise was to break the structure and exchange movements and roles more fluidly, without talking, just by listening to each other's movements. Once they established a dynamic to create movement together, I encouraged them to progressively take distance from their partners and invest in the movements that they were repeating from the first phase of the exercise.

I gave them some time to create a phrase of movement, a sequence that collected movements from the mirror exercise. I gave them five minutes to finish this third part. After all of them finished, I proposed to them to perform their sequence of movement to their friends that were present in the class. In this occasion, one dancer was going to perform and one of the people in the audience could volunteer to notate the dance.

Figure 18: Dance notation exercise.

They could use any form of notation and choose what they found more interesting in the work of their friends to focus and transcribe it to the paper. I left them free to improvise and create the movement scores according to their understanding of the task. The outcome of this task was impressive. Each one of them focused in different aspects of the movement.

In the example below, Z. explained after the exercise that he was interested in the path the dancer was creating in space. Therefore, he represented the shapes and spaces created by the dancer, tracing them according to the displacement of the dancer.
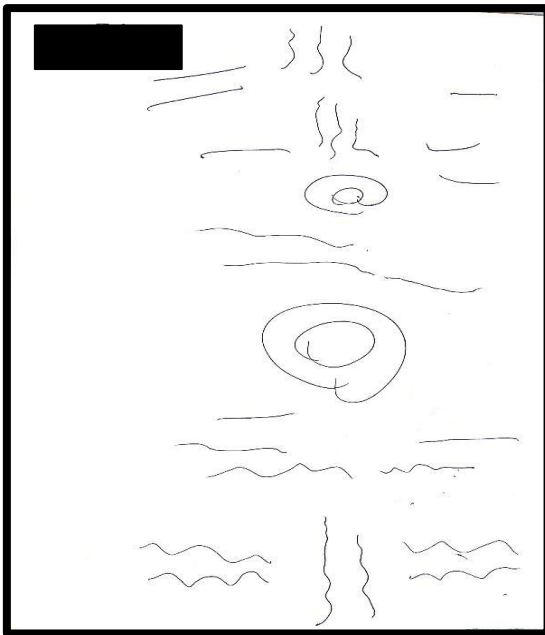
Figure 19: Dance score page one. Based on L's dance. Created by Z.
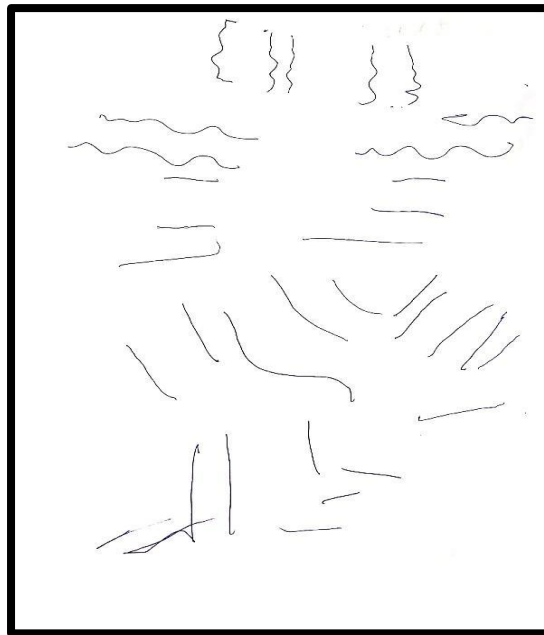
Figure 20: Dance score page two. Based on L's dance. Created by Z.

In the next example, L. focused on the shapes created by the body. He told us that he paid attention to the parts of the body where the movement was happening. In the first picture, he says that multiple movements were combined in one body. The overlapping of the body limbs represented previous movements and how they stay in the memory of the muscles. In the second picture, he decided to try to create different bodies for different moments of the sequence of movements.
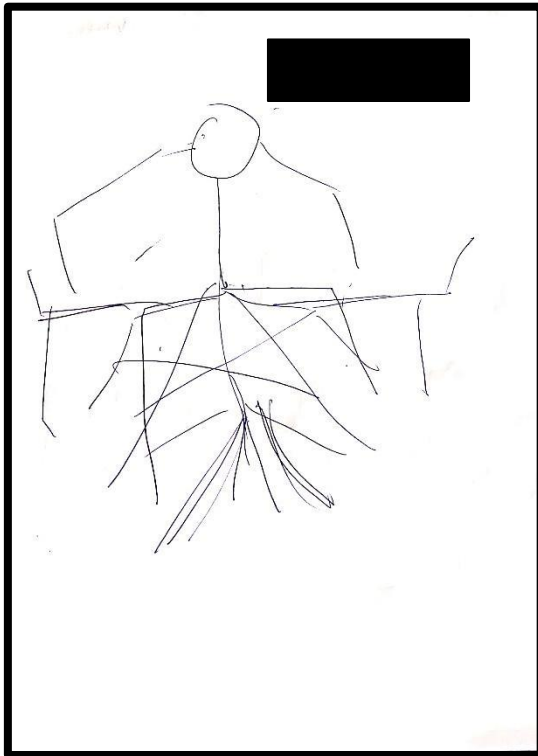
Figure 21: Dance score based on my dance. Created by L.
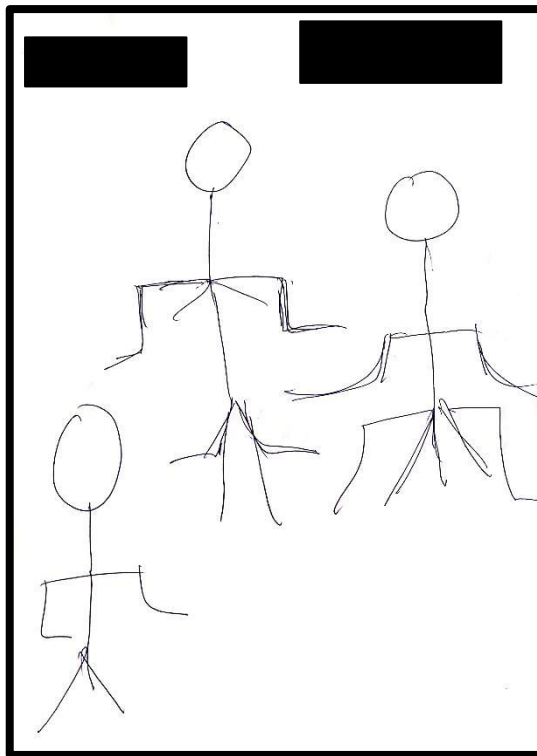
Figure 22: Dance score based on Z's dance. Created by L.

3.4 Shelter 'P'

Shelter P is a two-floor house with their doors constantly closed. The residents are unaccompanied minor girls and mothers with their babies from fourteen to eighteen years old. In this shelter, I re-encountered a part of my research that I thought it had been left behind. My topic shifted a bit at the beginning of this research process from dance with women in socially vulnerable situation to unaccompanied refugee children. I thought the focus was not in the gender anymore, but this place brought it back into perspective.

Boys are, in general, a much larger number in the refugee community. The path for a girl to leave her family and migrate alone is more restrict than for a boy. In a situation where the family can choose who is going to try migrate to Europe, they will choose the strongest son that they believe will be able to complete the journey. Among others, marriage, motherhood and religion are factors that contribute to the lower number of unaccompanied refugee girls in comparisons to the boys. What I found in the shelter P was a place of resistance and endurance. It is a group of teenage girls that migrated from afar in order to find better conditions of life, access to education, run away from violence and re-start with a different perspective from the one in their countries of origin.

Before starting the workshops in shelter P, I thought that the bonding with the girls would be easier and that they would be more interested in the dance practice. I assumed that because we were the same gender we would find more things in common, than I could have with the boys. I was wrong and that was a naïve assumption.

The reality in the house reflected the mechanisms of defence one needs to develop in order to accomplish the journey. It is a very delicate process to have the trust of the girls. According to verbal communication with a psychologist of the shelter, in general, they keep in small groups in order to feel safer and not vulnerable. The bonding among their community is a harder work when compared to the shelter for boys. It takes longer time for them to trust each other and obviously to trust someone new in the house.

The group in shelter P was in a significant moment of constructing themselves as a community and processing the layers added to their lives by living together. My action in the house was careful and in constant communication with the social workers and psychologists of the shelters. From the beginning until the end of the dance workshops, no photos or videos were allowed in the house. The documentation of this experience happened through notes and the interview with the psychologist at shelter LP. The main goal was to keep the space for dancing as comfortable and safe as possible.

We did all the dance workshops in the dining room of the house. As in shelter K, this space was also in the way for the girls to go to the backyard and it was a common area. Thus, even the girls who were not part of the dance practices could observe a little bit from the backyard or when passing through the room. They were always welcome to watch the dancing or engaging in it the way they would feel more comfortable.
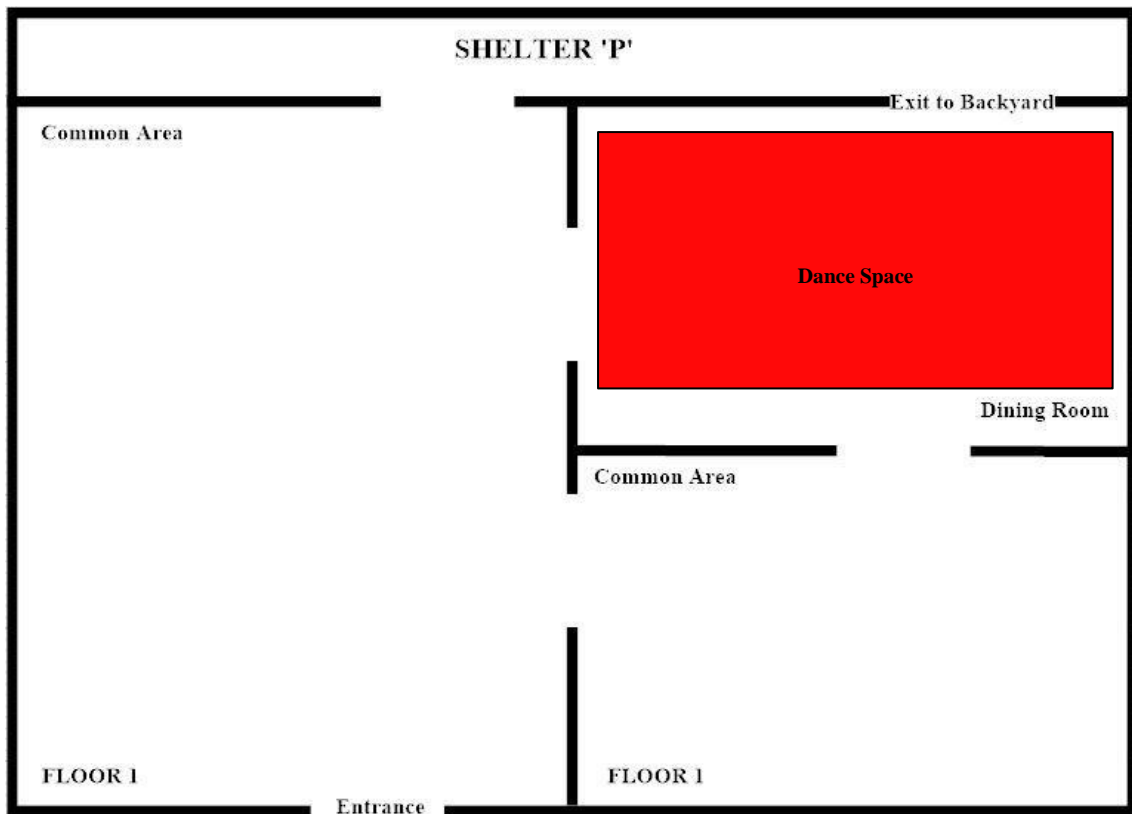
Figure 23: Floor plan of shelter P

     Three girls engaged frequently in the dance workshops and for three different reasons. One of them, called S, was in all dance practices and in the majority of the workshops it was only the two of us. S had a role of leadership and she was a source of motivation for her other two friends M and Sh. M participated in many workshops either watching or engaging in parts of the exercises. The presence of S was an important stimulus for her. Sh was present as much as she could with her baby boy. For this, I tried to create a small web of support in our small group. I would stay with the baby so Sh could dance and not worry with him for a while. We would dance together with the baby and he was as much part of the group as the girls. This level of openness was part of all the workshops, but in P shelter I found important to reinforce that they were free to come and go as they wish and that their needs were welcomed and there was always space to adapt.

     We had clear conversation about expectations, and the girls demanded a certain type of dance that would suffice their needs at that moment. S. told me that she wanted to learn new dance movements so she could improve her dancing in a party and have more fun. Also, she wanted to strengthen her body and improve her body image and physical shape. M. was more connected to the ludic and creative aspects of the dance. She enjoyed the moments were they could improvise and she could be more playful. The

psychologist mentioned that there could be the possibility that M was exploring aspects of her childhood, and that she wanted to feel more comfortable with herself. Sh wanted to have a little bit of time and space for her, because she is a mother, and she does not have that in her daily routine.

Having that in mind, I created a dance programme to cover the main needs of this community. I covered the ludic and more improvised and playful part of the workshop at the beginning of the classes. We always started with a group exercise that involved individual exercises, to provide them with space to explore their own interests in dance, but also a group activity where they could play among them.

The second part of the workshop was dedicated to the demand for dance vocabulary for the parties. In some workshops I covered some Brazilian couple dances like 'Forró'[9], and Latin dances like Salsa. They enjoyed this part very much because they could practice with each other during the week when I was not there.

The end of the workshop was always something relaxing where they could lay down or sit down and breathe, think about their bodies and reflect on the experience the had just had. After that, we would put everything back in place, because the dance workshops were in the morning and finished almost at lunchtime, so we could not be late.

The P shelter brought me the reflection on how important is to map the field and analyse the opportunities but also the limitations of the community, in order to design something appropriate. I carried on my dance practices with the girls and the baby boy, but always in contact with the staff and exchanging information to understand what they would be willing to do or be prepared to receive. In my interview with psychologist, she mentioned that motivation in the shelter is a bi-dimensional effort, according to her:

> *I think that it's not only what you will do, in order to motivate them, it's also what we are going to do in order to motivate them. It also has to do with the shelter, if the shelter is ready to do something like that. In order to be ready, that means that, it has a balance. And, and I don't know if we have this balance in order to bring something new* (Psychologist at the NGO (2019) interviewed by Bianca Beneduzi on August 15th).

Therefore, these processes had to be analysed carefully in order to not push too much the boundaries in regard to what the community was ready to receive. On the other hand, the dance workshops represented a moment in which the three girls were learning

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[9] In this context 'Forró' is a term that refers to a dance that comes from the Northeastern region of Brazil. The term also refers to a musical genre, a rhythm and the event in which this dance happens.

something new and having the chance to experience something different together that could be connected to their goals in life. I received a feedback from the psychologist that stated the girls were happy to have something different in their routine and they found it very interesting. It was not about the quantity of people that participated, as many times it was only me and S dancing. She reinforced that it was important to keep the practice even with one girl, because the others were still watching it and acknowledging that one person matters as much as a whole group, and we were willing to make it happen no matter how each resident was going to engage. Even with one girl, we were still in the house being watched by the other girls that maybe benefitted from that in a different way. Everyone counts and no one should be left behind.

3.5 Shelter 'LP'

My first dance steps in the field started with the children of the shelter LP. They were the first participants I met and had the chance to share a moment of dancing together in an outdoor event called "The World Refugee Day" organised by the NGO. The house is also a two-story house with its doors always closed in order to protect their residents who are unaccompanied children from six to twelve years old. In my first interaction with them in the house I found out that they were very passionate about dance. The shelters for children are the only ones that mix gender, and in this house boys and girls had their own dance groups. They told me, they were very excited about their dance projects and how they rehearse by themselves using YouTube videos and the latest released pop songs.

We got along right away and they seemed to be very interested in being part of a dance workshop. It turns out that they had a summer camp during the whole month of July, and we ended up meeting for the workshops just in the last ten days of my fieldwork. The main intervention in this shelter was during the partnership with the group of researchers from Brazil. However, our first dance experience in the outdoor event was very important and it represented a turning point that contributed a lot to how I organised and created the dance lesson plans for the workshops to come. The floor map below represents the space we used to dance together in the house in my first meeting and in during the Guided Tour. The activities develop during the Guided Tour project will be further described on chapter four. In the following paragraphs, I would like to share my first dance experience in my fieldwork and explain why it was important and how it affected my work.
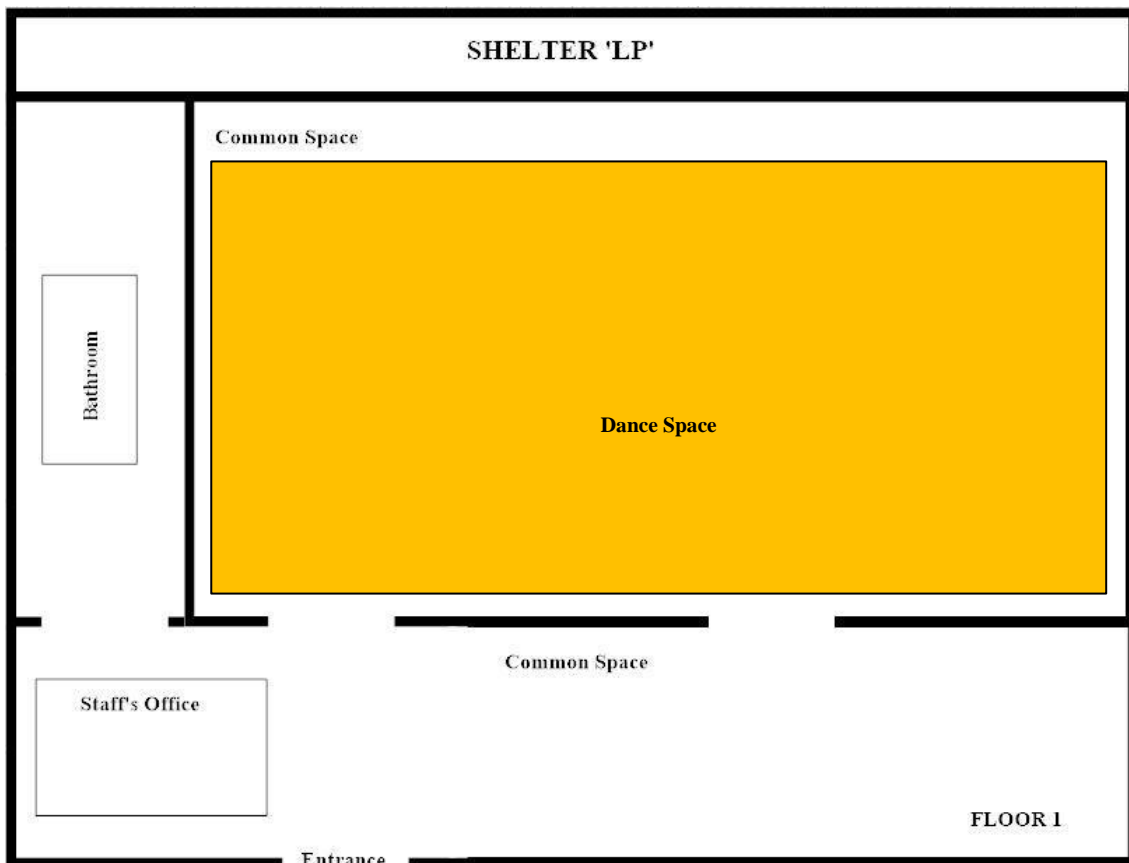
Figure 24: Floor plan of shelter LP

The following Labanotation score is about a basic step that does not belong to any particular dance or style, but it was of great importance as it represented my first contact with my community through dance and its transmission. My focus in this analysis is in the environment in which the dance was happening. Moreover, what precedes it in order to make the dance a moment of bonding and trustful relationship with the participants. This particular moment happened in an event celebrating the World Refugee Day and preceded my action in the shelters. Therefore, this was a moment of immersing myself in the community and getting to know them.
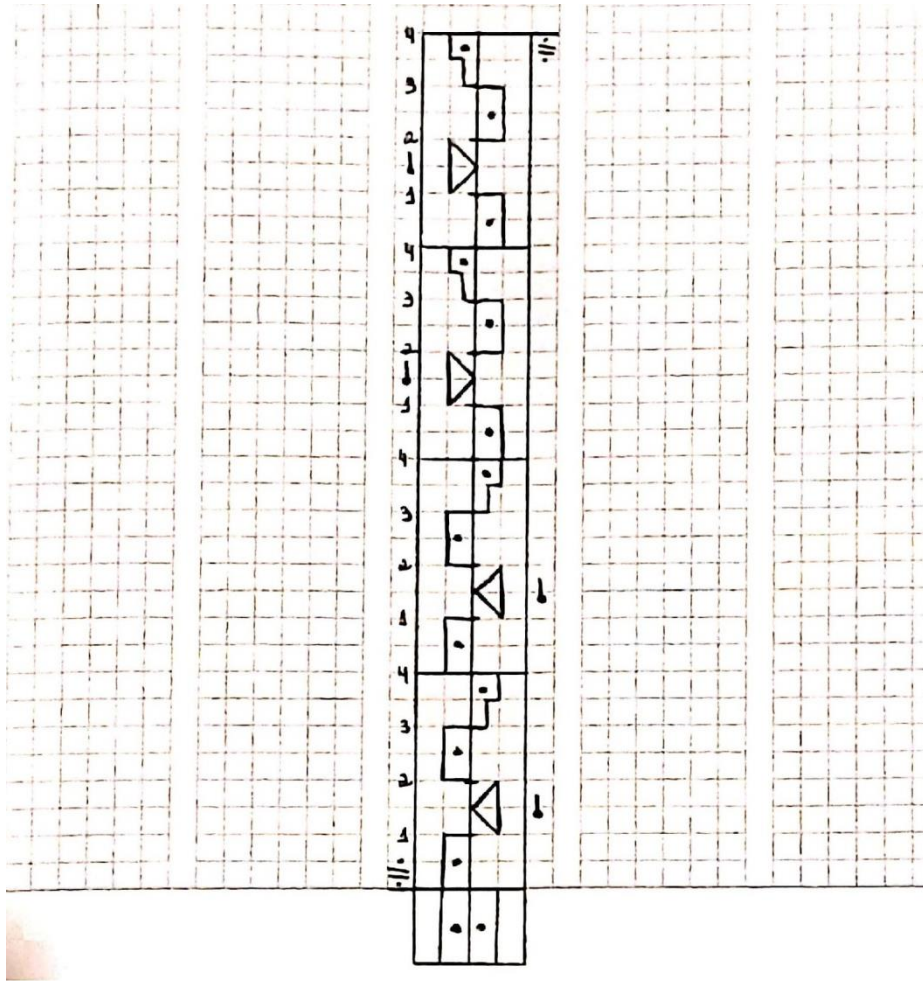
Figure 25: Screenshot of a Labanotation score done by Bianca Beneduzi

The World Refugee Day is an international date observed on June 20th each year by the United Nations. Many organisations that work in this area create events on this day in order to bring awareness to the situation of the refugees all over the world, as well as to pay a symbolic tribute to those who fled their homeland in order to find better conditions of life under the thread of being violated and persecuted.

The organisation I was working with did the same and created an open-air event in a square (Plateia) called Dexamenis (Plateia Dexamenis). This square is located in a neighbourhood called Kolonaki and it is in the city centre of Athens. Kolonaki is a quartier where you can find stores that sell international brands or represent well-known fashion designers. It is said that some spots in Kolonaki can be compared to expensive quartiers in Paris or New York.

Although many shelters are not so far from the city centre of Athens, the logistics of the event involved some buses bringing the community living in the shelters to Plateia Dexamenis. There were many activities involving music, games and dance in order to

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provide the participants with a community-building event. Because of the nature of this event, I thought this could be a good first approach to engage with my community and to interact in a more relaxed way before going to their houses. Therefore, June 21st was the day! Right on time at 6:30 p.m. I was there.

As soon as I arrived at Plateia Dexamenis, I started to feel what being in the field was going to be like. I could recognise many faces from my visits in the shelters. Some recognised me and kept observing me and trying to figure out what I was doing there. I felt I had some sort of unclear role to be performed although I wanted to observe the event and see how the people I had previously known would work together. The CEO of the NGO asked me if I could start any action that would make people dance, as the event was a little bit sparse and people looked engaged in different things separately and made the community not so united. It was necessary to create an event that engaged a number of people that brought up the "community building" atmosphere.

I cannot deny that I was terrified. I had prepared myself to observe the chronology of the events, the structure of the facts and maybe from what I saw I could create a way to engage with the community in their respective shelters. I was thinking about different ways I could engage people in a dance practice and most importantly what kind of public I was targeting. There were refugees from all the 13 shelters managed by HP. Their ages varied from 6 up to 18 years old (officially, many refugees lie about their ages at the borders in order to get accommodation for as long as it is possible, as the majority of the shelters are for minors). I was starting to position myself in the interactive side and to use Michael Houseman's words "to see how the interactions between people could rise to certain realities" (Houseman, 2016 cited in Gobin and Vanhoenacker, 2016, para.12).

While I was reflecting on how to start this interaction with them through dance, the photographers and the filmmakers were in their position. I felt I had to create something interesting to be captured. The context was imposing its perspectives on me and I needed to find a way to deal with that. I did not have much time to be in a floating situation and I needed to make something happen. Then I decided to invite the children to dance with me.

There are two reasons for that. First, the children from the LP shelter were very receptive with me and they are very flexible when it comes to dance together and share steps and conversations. In the event, they remembered me, and approached to talk while the teenagers were a bit more suspicious and reserved, especially the girls. The second

reason is that when I was in their house they came to me and asked if I knew a particular song that they assumed it was Brazilian. The rhythm is similar to Latin American songs but the lyrics were in English and I had no idea whatsoever what song that was or how to dance it. At that moment they doubted my nationality and even asked me "How can you be Brazilian and not know this song?" Hence, I decided to try to make it up.

Among all the children, I chose a Syrian girl called N to start my approach. I have observed before that she represents some sort of central role in the group and she has a brother, F, that would follow her (I noticed previously that they were very close to each other) which means I could engage two participants at once. N is also very communicative and smart, so she asked many questions and insisted in the steps until she learned it very well, this made the dancing look interesting to other people. From outside, other children started to be interested in what we were doing and then they started to come closer to us.

On the other hand, I was trying to find balance between something interesting and challenging and a movement that would provide them with an openness and space to be filled by their personal understanding of movement. As a facilitator, I was proposing a simple movement that would create the possibility of repetition and sense of community when we were dancing together to the rhythm of the percussion. According to Ingold (2001), "the role of the tutor is to set up situations in which the novice is afforded the possibility of such unmediated experience" (Ingold, 2001:136).

In the picture below, you can see the beginning of my action. N is by my side trying to repeat the steps I taught her. F is behind me, with a black cap on his head, observing the action and considering joining the group. At the back, R and A (leaders of a dance group of four members that lives at the LP shelter) were starting to engage themselves. I started the whole dance practice telling them I was going to teach them a very Brazilian step (remember, I was trying to make it up). In front of us, you can a Greek group of percussion called 'Quilombo'. Although all the participants of 'Quilombo' were Greeks, the group practice had roots in the slavery history of the Americas and Brazil had a huge quilombo called "Quilombo dos Palmares". Therefore, I took the chance to introduce this piece of information and my dance step.

Figure 26: Children getting together to learn a new dance step

The first mission was accomplished. The next steps were to hold it and to bring more people to dance with us. I calculated the amount of steps that would keep them engaged enough for a while and but not too difficult that they would get bored and give up. I use some crossings and jumps what made us to connect as a group in order to perform it at the same time. I tried to find what Ingold (2001) puts as "metacultural framings" that are part of our heritage from our ancestors and enable us to learn from variable aspects of a cultural motif or tradition. In my case, the jumping worked really well because we had to find our group time and rhythm to perform it all together. In the next picture, it is possible to notice that F. (the boy with the black cap) decided to join the group and positioned himself at his sister's side. By this time, we had the core group of children and I was, of course, celebrating!

Figure 27: New participants joining the group

The last picture is very symbolic to me. We are all dancing together and stepping with the same foot, in harmony with the music and among ourselves. It is possible to notice the presence of a new kid at the last line holding a cup on his hands, probably stepping in spontaneously in the middle of the event but still catching up with the group. It is important to acknowledge that being together and doing the steps in a synchronised way were valuable, according to my objectives with this work. Hence, the objective was to create a structure to provide an atmosphere of aggregation and not one focused on the accurate and precise repetition of what I was doing.

> To follow someone is to cover the same ground through the world of lived experience, so to remember is to retrace one's steps. But each retracing is an original movement, not a replica (Ingold, 2001:139).

Figure 28: Group connected and dancing together

The World Refugee Day event lasted around three hours. There were many activities going on, the community was engaged in all of them with efforts of the whole team of the NGO, and the artists invited. My action lasted around twenty minutes with the children and later on, we got together again to dance in a different moment. Because we had already had that moment of sharing a dance together, whenever there was a beat in which our step could fit it was a moment to start dancing and the ones who had watched me dancing with the children would start to dance together. The festive environment, in which we were, created appropriate conditions to bond through dance.

CHAPTER IV

**GUIDED TOUR AND THE PARTNERSHIP BRAZIL/GREECE FOR CO-
CREATION IN DANCE WITH REFUGEES**

The social transformations and political uprising of the 1960s challenged the idea that dance and politics were on opposite sides. The social, political and economic changes resulted in what today is identified as a globalised, post-colonial or neoliberal society. In addition to that, in a new world where boundaries were being dissolved and the flow of traffic of people and products were increasing significantly, movement and dynamics became terms that formed the kinetic basis of the modern age (Klein, 2011). In the 20th century, dance, regardless of what kind, represented an alternative for the mechanisation of the industrial work. Therefore, dance in the modern age has constructed its aesthetics and social justification in this pattern of discourse (Klein, 1992, cited in Klein, 2011).

In the globalised society, the massive flow of capital, migration and data along with the fall of political walls, such as the Berlin wall permeated the emergence of a philosophical idea of openness and the dissolution of confrontational social systems. In this historical moment, dance has become the symbol of a globalised and medialized society, representing a source of the ephemeral, fluid and momentary. Hence, in the modern society, the narratives generated in the medialized society were reflected in the choreographies becoming a dramaturgical process (Klein, 2011). Thus, dance was considered a way of expressing feelings organically, in which one can explore ways of being authentically, and this discourse forms the base that asserts the subversive power, and socio-critical and emancipatory potential of dance (Klein, 2009, cited in Klein, 2011).

According to Jacques Rancière (2006) there is a paradox embedded in the modern age in regard to the role that art plays. On the one hand, art can be an enabler for freedom and autonomy, a territory of discoveries and the investigation of oneself and their space. On the other hand, art plays its part in the fulfilment in the principles of modernity. Gabrielle Klein (2009) states that in this context dance has a specific physical way of accessing worlds, and by promoting this specific form of experience in which one investigates body and space, a free and equal community based on self-development is brought into perspective.

Dance is a world in itself. In this world of the body and the senses, of the movement of feelings and metaphors, it is possible to affirm that words do not express

the singularities of such processes. The limitations in the communication of embodied practices through words has imposed a great challenge for this work. If something is suppressed, hidden or even diluted in the written discourse, one expresses what is possible with the available resources in the attempt to face the complexities of life. Taking into consideration that the body is an existential ground of culture, the embodied experience 'is the starting point for analysing human participation in a cultural world' (Csordas, 1993:135). Hence, by analysing it and the conditions in which the body is inserted we can create an environment in which the dancer can be a centre of awareness and agency.

If the state of our body places us in the world and connects us to the environment that forms our corporeality, then how can we think of a body inscribed with of suffering, which needs symbolic adherence to put itself in the place of the real when the "person" becomes materialised in the figure of a refugee? The connections of dance and social transformation and the debate about what happens when the political body of a refugee dances is the guide of the reflection in the ethnographic account of this shared methodology to promote dance in socially vulnerable communities.

4.1 – The construction of a shared project and its logistics

This initiative is the result of a partnership of artists and researchers from Brazil. It encompasses the research projects of two master students: Patrícia Machado (Master in Art and Education) from the State University of Parana (UNESPAR/Brazil), and Bianca Beneduzi (Choreomundus - International Master in Dance Knowledge, Practice and Heritage). The main objective of this project was to develop an ongoing interdisciplinary dance project. The target audience comprised unaccompanied refugee minors living in the shelters in Athens.

We used the processes and methodologies discussed in our masters research projects to create an interdisciplinary dance workshop inside the shelters in Athens. The first edition of this project happened from June through August 2019. We aim to discuss and develop methodologies in such sensitive contexts through interdisciplinary and creative dance projects. The main goal of the activities is to provide the children contact with dance based on human development concepts such as curiosity, inventiveness, empathy and affection, fostering the broadening of possibilities for self-perception and the world around them. We assume that learning is a process of invention, of

problematizing reality. This process is stimulated through artistic creation procedures that promote the child's playful and inventive encounter between themselves and other creative people, cultures and languages with whom they can co-exist and co-create, bringing them closer and enabling individual empowerment to create new collective knowledge in art.

Practical procedures are based on the children's perception of individual and collective characteristics (physical, emotional, cultural, among others), which are reinvented in the exploration of different body movements and their relation with the creation of drawings, sounds produced by the percussion of everyday objects and to the perception of the environment through a camera made of recyclable materials.

The articulation between the artistic languages facilitates the motivation and affective involvement of the group with the work and the creation of new perspectives about themselves and their environment. Therefore, the proposal of a multidisciplinary project in the shelters aimed to provide multiple artistic languages to the children but also to experiment with what would work better with each community. It is important to mention that the Guided Tour project happened in three shelters out of the five due to time limitation. We chose Shelter K and shelter O for the boys, due to the solid relationship we had established in my dance workshops and the LP shelter for children. They were in a summer camp during the month of July 2019. Therefore, we decided to do the Guided Tour when they returned to the house.

Professor Andréa Bertoldi and Patrícia Machado composed the dance research team from Brazil. The multimedia team comprised multitalented artists from the fields of photography, cinema and music with whom we co-created this interdisciplinary dance project. The group included Giovana Bertoldi, a filmmaker and audio-visual student, Cayo Vieira, a professional photographer specialising in artistic photography in dance, and Vitor Bertoldi, a professional musician. The presence of this group in the field played an important role in the closure of the project, as well as in the creation of media and documentation that registered the experience.

The group from Brazil brought a significant amount of resources to develop wonderful activities with the community. They designed a set of activities coordinated by all the five members of the group encompassing: drawing, photography, dance and music. That represented a great support and an interesting initiative for the participants that had

access to new knowledge through solid and diverse material that broadened their perception of the space and the different ways to approach dance.

Therefore, the activities proposed at this moment of our research were intrinsically connected to what I was working with them on beforehand. The difference was that this moment was guiding the dance practice towards the creation of an 'artistic' product; a concrete material that would lead us to the closure of the whole process. This phase operated like a speeding up of the whole process. It condensed the principles we were investigating with the focus in the creative processes of dance fostering the combination of them in a concrete and structured result. These principles were grouped into five interdisciplinary categories.

Firstly, 'Movement and Trace' in which the dancer is invited to explore movement and drawing simultaneously using sheets of paper and crayons, improvising in a cross-boundary platform. The participant is invited to experiment and create individually and/or in group.
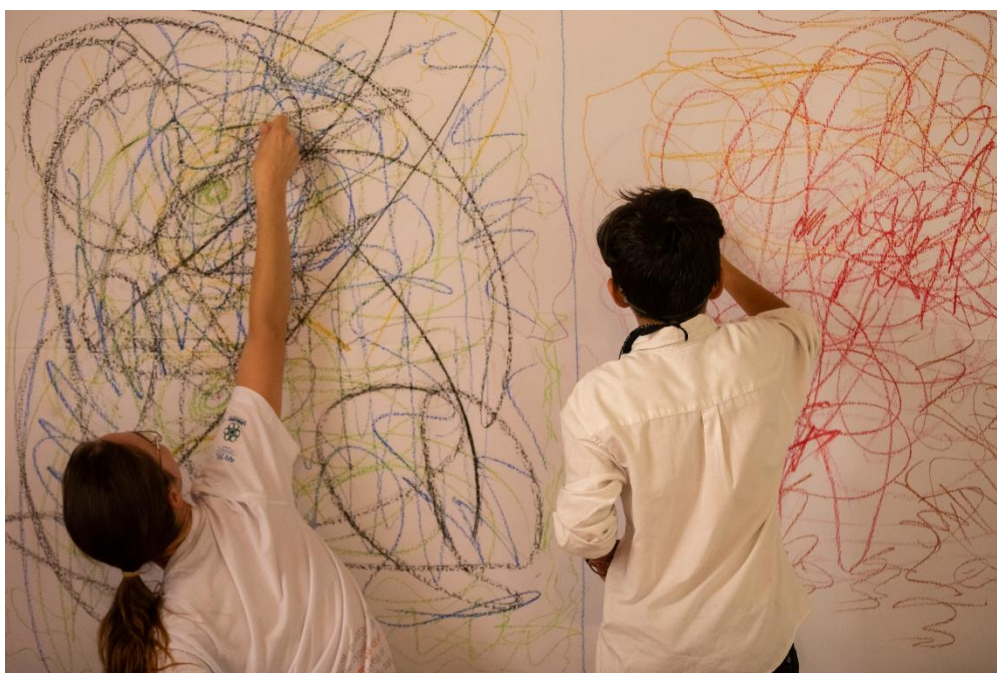
Figures 29: Movement and Trace exercise at shelter LP

Secondly, 'Movement and Observation' that proposes a danced creative process that combines techniques of movement improvisation with the awareness of the space. The participant look/gaze is provoked and conducted towards their environment by creating a photographic camera using recyclable materials. It involves the study of the photographic imaging creation process.

Figures 30: Movement and Observation exercise at shelter O

Thirdly, 'Movement and Sound', a dance creation process that combines techniques of movement improvisation with the multiple sounds generated by the Handpan instrument, as well as with the sounds produced with everyday objects such as buckets, cans and scrap materials explored by the participants. We also study some of the sounds and rhythms from Brazil.

Figures 31: Movement and Sound exercise at shelter K

Fourthly, was 'Affection and Creation' in which the participants are divided into small groups in order to compose a small choreographic piece using elements of the previous exercises. The objective of this exercise was to propose an experience of creation

and composition in dance, as well as to identify what are the activities with which the children most empathised in the workshop.

Figures 32: Affection and Creation exercise at shelter LP

Last, but not least, 'Guided Tour' (the name of this whole part of the project but also the name of choreographic methodology created by Patrícia) in which one is invited to create his/her own performance called Guided Tour. The process consists of an investigation of the dancer starting with a questionnaire (the questionnaire can be found in the appendix C), that generates a personal narrative, recollecting material to be danced/choreographed. Memories, biographical passages and personal desires are taken as a starting point, allowing a kaleidoscopic view of life. The answers to the questionnaire are registered with an audio recorder. The audio is transcribed and the material transformed into a poetic writing/script. The dancer records this new text in audio format in their own voice. This material is the base for the dance to create movements and choreograph the memories collected in the audio. The notion of the creative process that this work presents is interested in the unpredictability and uncertainties. When creating from themselves, the children have autonomy to elucidate their stories in a real or fictional way.

This methodology served as a base to create the dance workshops and to prepare the community to be part of the Guided Tour project. This ethnographic practice was carried out in three out of the five shelters involved in my dance workshops. We had to reduce the number of the shelters due to time restraint. We chose two shelters for boys

based on their experience in the dance workshop. The head of human development of the NGO helped in the selection based on the feedback she received and we agreed that shelters O and K were more ready to participate. This phase will be further explained in the next section and the narrative is a descriptive ethnographic account of the process of constructing a nurturing ground that privileges a horizontal relationship with the community, reinforcing the conciliatory and emancipatory aspects of dance mentioned in the previous session.

4.2 - The preparation of the communities and the construction of a solid ground to accommodate the Guided Tour project

During the dance workshops, conducted by myself from June until August, I explained to the boys that we were going to receive a group from Brazil in August. Thus, a multidisciplinary dance project was going to be carried out with them as an extension of the work we were doing together. I kept them aware of this event and clarified that the dynamics were going to change from once a week to an intense process of four or five days in each shelter. In the LP shelter, with the children, the dynamic was different and the project took ten days.

In this phase of the project, my role was to bridge the relationship between the shelters and the group coming from Brazil. In the first meetings, I arrived with the Brazilians in the shelters and introduced them as my friends and partners in the project. This process was similar with what happened when I started working in the shelters. The connection created by the social worker that accompanied me and the members of the staff facilitated the beginning of my bonding with the community. In the case of the Guided Tour project, they had only ten days and the time was very short to invest in the building of this relationship from scratch. My role previously was to create this platform for dance practices in the houses, in order to prepare the community for a more intense creative process.

We arrived in shelter O on a weekday and luckily, many boys were in the house. The number of new people arriving called their attention. We entered in the shelter to talk to the members of the staff and get the keys for the outdoor room. In this moment, I could met some boys and invited them to see what we were going to do. They also had our visit in their calendar and they knew we were coming in that day. The solid dancers of my dance workshops were there and willing to try this new phase of the project.

The Brazilian group started to set up the equipment in the room. Cayo and Giovana were organising the cameras, Victor was placing the musical instruments, I was talking informally to try to invite as many participants as I could. Patrícia and Andréa were adjusting the last details for the dance practice. We did not have many boys by the time we decided to start, but as the dance started to happen the boys started to come and join us. Some were coming back from their appointments in the city and when they passed by the room they were surprised by the new event.

The atmosphere was friendly and we felt comfortable dancing together. We were surprised by how they engaged in the dance practice and Z., one of the solid participants of my dance workshops revealed a great dance skill in an improvisation with Patrícia. He performed steps that I have never seen in our dance practices. He was joyful and skilled.

Figure 33: Dance improvisation in pairs to the sound of the Handpan.

Shelter O received the project very well. After the dance, we stayed in the common area where there are some sofas and talked for a little bit. Some boys wanted to play the instruments and some wanted to check the cameras. We were sharing knowledge with each other, talking about our countries, our languages and our dances. It was a warm

welcome from them and a success for us, as the space was open for more creation together.

We worked with two categories in the Shelter O: photography and guided tour. They were elected according to the interest of the community. In the photographic project the boys were asked to observe their space by framing it with a small square and then later, with a real camera. The technique used was double exposure photography, in which their faces are combined with their favourite shot of the house.

Figure 34: Photographic project. Framing the space

Figure 35: Double exposure technique.

The LP shelter was another delightful experience. The children were excited when we arrived. Different from the other shelters, the children had not worked with me. We had only our experience at the World Refugee Day, which was a point to re-connect with them again. When I met N and F, they remembered the step I taught them that day and we started dancing together. I told them about our project in the house. They were aware of it as it was planned in their schedule. The LP shelter had its own dance groups and some children had regular practices with their dance groups. Patrícia danced for them on our first day, with her head covered by colourful balloons, she caught their attention and started the project as we had planned, communicating and bonding through dance.

Figure 36: Performance 'Gravity Theory'.

The LP shelter absorbed the most of our project out of all the groups. We worked with all the categories mentioned in the previous section. The children were energetic, involved, productive and participative. They asked questions and suggested changes in some practices; for example, in one of the Guided Tour narrative recordings, one of the participants asked to use his favourite classical musical along with the recording of his voice. Another participant who is a very keen dance practitioner wanted to create his choreography based on the beats and rhythm of pop music along with his personal narrative. The Brazilian group was divided in this shelter in order to develop all the activities. In most of the times, I was assisting Patrícia with the interviews, recording and choreographic process with the children.

Figures 37, 38, 39 and 40: Four categories developed in the shelter LP.

The experience in shelter K was permeated by the importance of our bonding during my dance workshops and their passion for music. Due to conflicting schedules, I could not be with the Brazilian group when they first arrived in the shelter. When I arrived, Patrícia was already performing her own version of the Guided Tour (choreographic methodology) for one of the boys. The boys were in different rooms of the house, and, as usual, I started to talk to them and try to form a group for the first day of our project.

There were many boys in the house and the members of the staff took part in the event we proposed, as well. At the beginning, it took us some time to negotiate with them and to explain exactly what was going to happen. While I was talking to them and gathering up the boys and the rest of the group was setting up the space, organising the instruments. This helped to make them interested in the event. A few boys agreed to go upstairs and be part of that. Others just carried on with what they were already doing, but then progressively started to join us as the music started.

The feeling was as if they were not interested or not feeling motivated for such a thing that day. As always, we left the space open so they could interact according to their feelings. We decided to start in a circle; Victor put all his instruments all around the room

and invited the boys to play. A was one of the boys in the house who was the drum player of the dance workshops. He got his beautiful drum and joined the team. They started to play following Victor's guidance. Cayo and Giovana were filming and taking pictures. Patrícia, Andréa and I were dancing and improvising.

The three of us were trying to invite the boys to dance but they were hesitating. They were engaged in the music. I tried to do some of the exercises we had done during the dance workshops and see if that would bring some of them to dance. I had a couple of successful moments. One of them was when one of the boys, B., who was at the corner watching the jam session, agreed to dance with me when I started to do some 'Capoeira' moves from one of our practices. He remembered the moves and started to play and dance with me.
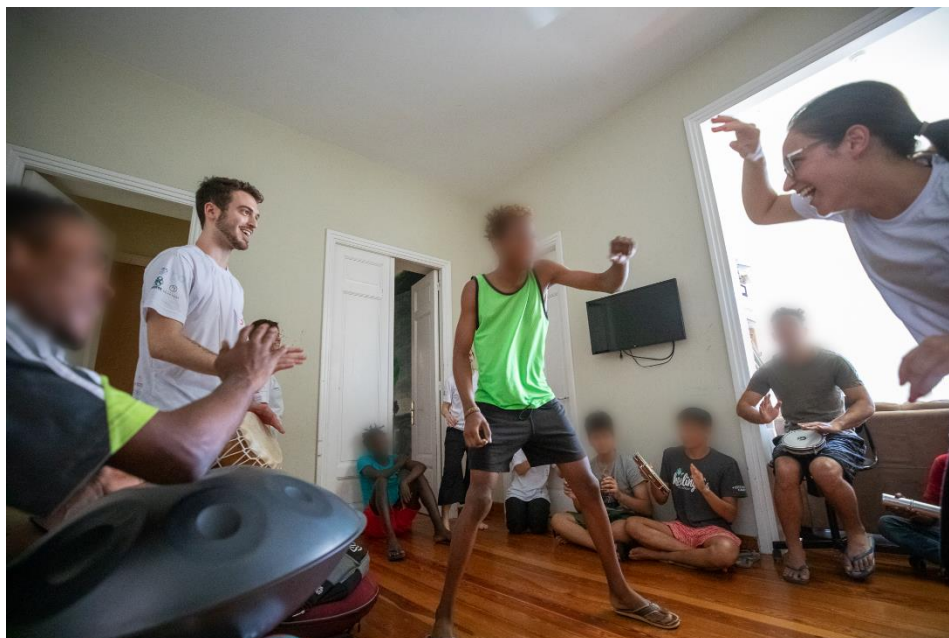
Figure 41: Capoeira 'ginga' and jam session at the shelter K

The boy at the left side of the picture, playing the Handpan, was the talent of the day. He did not participate in any of my dance workshops and the people in the house did not know he played drum. He took the Handpan and played it for a long time; everybody was cherishing him for his talent and he seemed to be so happy, with that big smile was on his face during the whole time. In another day, during an interview, one of the members of the staff said that his performance was very impressive. He told me that he had never seen this boy so relaxed, so happy and integrated with the others. At the end, the staff thanked us for the work, but most of all, for the smiles and laughs they could see on the boys' faces.

After this day, we realised that the boys in shelter K were interested in the music, so we proposed a music workshop. Two boys, A. and M. (both were part of my dance workshops) wanted to work with music together. M. had created a rap in Farsi and wanted to sing it while A. would play the drum. The other boys preferred not to be part of the project, but they were present and supporting A. and M. when they released their song together.

Victor, our musician, mostly coordinated the project with A. and M. He set up the microphone in the staircase of the house and all the necessary material to record the boys. Cayo and Giovana prepared the cameras to record the video clip of the song. The boys rehearsed their song for a couple of days in separated meeting with Victor. They prepared in advance for the day of the recording. M. and A. were active in the process and asked to check the quality of the song and sometimes to re-record some parts in order to achieve a better version of the song. At the end of this process, the multimedia team needed time to edit the material and show them the final version. In our last day in the house, we invited the boys to watch the video clip, which they did twice. The house celebrated the work of the two boys and the closure of the project.

Figures 42 and 43: Video clip and song recording. Rap composed by M. with drums created by A.

4.3 – The closure, the validation and the celebration of the process

The final moment of my fieldwork was set up in a professional and operational basis. The ten days of the guided tour were intense and needed an organised negotiation throughout the previous three months. The first two months of my active work and bonding with the community created a trustable atmosphere for the new group to start working. The documentation and artistic closure performed by the Guided Tour moment in my fieldwork celebrated the creative work in the communities and gave them a sense of completeness; the participants had an artistic result at the end. The structural conditions for such a project are complex. The negotiations were careful and involved a clear design and sharing of our actions with the NGO's management team.

From the panorama presented, the desire to understand how dance and the aesthetic experience can contribute to displaced children, where their freedom and identity are denied, emerges. The experience of contact and artistic enjoyment and the opportunity to produce your own performance expands the potency for a different look in the way you perceive and live life, especially when your stories are neglected by society and the lack of inclusive policies.

CONCLUSION

The ethnographic experience described in this dissertation is an attempt to generate knowledge in the area of migration and arts activism. Hence, it aimed to address this subject collectively through dance-based engagement with unaccompanied refugee minors in Athens. The main objective of this research was to initiate a reflexive process in the creation of a methodology to facilitate dancing practices in such communities. Under the logic of a permanent crisis, people are led to live and act in a constant state of dispossession. In such contexts, it is urgent to create a safe space for disclosure. A space where an inclusive dialogue can be promoted as an alternative to the chaotic and 'unchoreographed' political situation of our times.

The study established that the role of dance in the shelters is to engage people in a process that is meant to be a U-turn for the violent paths that they are coming from. Therefore, dance creates affective spaces in the community and generates a possibility in which the dancers can occupy the space as a welcoming territory to be explored with their bodies in movement. Such initiative brings awareness, gives visibility, relevance and representability. This is a crucial step to ignite new narratives, new languages in a space where one can tell their own stories.

In the refugee shelters, dance is a way to bring awareness and acknowledgement of one's own body, through a physical perspective that can allow the dancer to recognise their bodies in their physical location. Therefore, dance acts profoundly in the knowledge and in the beliefs that are part of the notion of oneself and the other. The narratives and art works created by the participants represented their efforts to re-create life in community and to generate new forms of self-representation. Thus, the experience in the field revealed that the politics of negotiation in the shelters was fundamental to bond with the community. I was focused on creating a methodology for dance-based engagement in refugee shelters, but the negotiation of my role in their houses with them preceded any dance practice.

Each shelter is an independent unit, a body by itself. To create a dance workshop inside the body of the shelters was also to create multi-spaces in the house. The children were not only living inside the shelter, but also participating in an activity inside the house that brings a new form to express feelings, to tell stories, to give voice, to build a team and to work according to a mutual objective. On the other hand, some children could come for one time, watch the dance workshops and move on with their lives

acknowledging that they do not like it, or just do not feel like participating. In any case, they had their voices heard and their presence acknowledged.

In this process, the dancers were invited to revisit the unconventional territory of dance. The project we designed together aimed to create a space where the dancers could talk about themselves through art, rescue their memories and put them into action. We wanted to create an environment where they could deal with their strengths, doubts and weaknesses. Their stories were not told through the moving body, their stories were the movement itself and they were present in each gesture. Bodies in action, managing and generating reality, assuming artistic compositions that deal with the risk and instability of such a delicate encounter.

The experience of creating a performance with the members of these communities cause reflections about the role of art and its importance in producing affection and recreating realities. The dancer that goes through the experience can be seen as an agent capable of building bridges and connections through the narratives of the body. For example, in a written feedback, one of the resident of shelter 'O', wrote that 'dance means the cool thinking because it makes me feel happy. When I dance I feel free because I take my angry out and also makes the body feel relaxed'. Another resident from shelter 'K' wrote that dance is to be happy, to be free and to feel your body'. All the screenshots of the written comments of the participants can be found in the appendix A.

With the practice of otherness, one can strengthen oneself and become an agent for the creation of one's own state / reality. This state can also be the physical space, supported by its creative practices: an activist body that incorporates experiences and memories that are part of the constitution of the self and the other and of the personal space, sharing its practices in the community. It is important to shed light on the voices of these people, not only as victims of the migratory movement, but voices capable of inventing and recreating themselves. In this context, artistic processes such as dance, fuelled by otherness, promote an experience of singularity and individuation. When the human being is acknowledged as something complex, unique and unfinished, we support the formation of autonomous and creative individuals.

The project had also many challenges. One of them is its short-term duration and lack of time to deepen the connection with the community. When trying a movement-style learning in such a diverse community, it is natural that not everybody and in many cases almost no one is going to be on board. It takes time to understand and to design an

inclusive project that addresses accurately the needs of each group. In which case, motivating the participants was a challenge. The limitations of the project were time and lack of opportunities to engage more with them and to design a project that would keep them interested based on their needs and personal demands.

The project had a small ambition. The work was based in the micro politics present in the encounter. The dance workshops were a small invitation to form temporary communities that lasted hours, in which we were listening to each other. A micro political exercise of meeting, dancing and talking. This was an important initiative to improve the subjective experience of being with each other, learning how to see the other, and what an encounter like this can generate. To open the eyes to what was there was the basis to research with them and not about them.

Dance is a powerful conciliatory mean that aggregates people and generates vocabulary for multicultural communities to engage with each other. The choreographies we created, among all the nationalities that were present in the workshops, united us in common ground, where language barriers were subverted to a non-verbal, shared and co-created way of communication.

Life is ephemeral and those moments pass in a glimpse. It is therefore necessary to return and to continue the engagement in the complex processes of our times through dance. These actions might look microscopic in comparison with the complexity of the current political crisis involving migration and refugees. Nonetheless, I believe that embodied practices nurture the ability that one has to connect with oneself and to create bridges in a deeply segregated world. I hope this work contributed to create a window of circulation in which the micro politics nurtures the macro and in this complex process, knowledge can be generated through embodied practices. I believe this is the value of this experience, partially settled in this writing process.

The work of the artist is to witness their time and history. Dance is an encounter. Gathering forces and bringing people together to promote dance in socially vulnerable communities is one way of nurturing and creating a better world. This is what I advocate for and that is why I carried out this research. Therefore, beyond creating a theory, this work is intended as a call to action to involve dance in the political issues of our times to bring awareness and relevance to narratives that are being denied in such communities.

There is more to come.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Written comments from the participants of the dance workshops about what dance means to them, organized by language.

Arabic:

Dance is a beautiful thing and we like this thing. The reasons are that it makes people happy. And I thank the beautiful singers and I do hope I become a singer [illegible]. My salutations to singers. And my favourite singer is Abdalla Al Rashid.

I love it I don't know why, it is the first time I dance, thank you very much, it was very nice.

In my opinion, dance is an entertainment or exercise. But unfortunately dance is being used in different ways in our country. Not in the correct way. It is illegal. But it doesn't mean that we use dance in different ways.

Farsi:

این هفته اول من درخانه بود
و اولین بار بود دیپایتکا رو صدا زدم
برام جالب بود دکه پدوشم چیه کاری
انجام میده وخیلی خوب به نظر
میرسیده

This was my first week at the home. And also my first time that I saw Bianca. It was interesting for me to see what she's doing and it all looked good.

رقص ورزش خوبی است که بدن
را سالم میکند و یکی از روش
های است که ما میتوانیم بدن خود را ریلکس
کنیم.

Dance is a good sport which makes our body be healthy and it is one of the ways with which we can relax our bodies

رقصیدن خوبه خلا مه همه جوره OK
بخوای حساب کنی یه حالت ورزشی
مفید برایه بدن و اگر دقت کرده باشید
همه نوع رقصی باعت خنده میشه
و این خیلی مهم است.

Dancing is great in all aspects, You can count it in as an exercise and a useful activity for the body, and if you have noticed, every kind of dance makes us laugh (happy) and this is important.

French:

La danse me donne envie d'être heureux La danse permet une personne d'être content Avec le mouvement de la danse, la santé de l'homme serais toujour possitip	Dancing makes me want to be happy. Dance allows a person to be happy. With the dance movement, the human health will be always positive.

Hindi:

dans mujY Acha lagta hY mujY agr ham log dans kartY hY to hmari bddi ko sakoh karti hY	I feel good about dance because if we people dance then we make our elders happy.

Appendix B

Questions for semi-structured interview

Created by Bianca Beneduzi

1 - What is your name and your position in this shelter/NGO?

2 - Is there any workshops involving arts in a regular basis in this shelter?

3 - What is your opinion about arts-based initiatives with refugees?

4 - What are the main reasons for the minors to migrate, according to your experience in this context?

5 - What are the paths/perspectives after they leave the shelters?

6 - Could you point the negative and positive aspects that you observed during the development of this project in the shelters? Could you give me any suggestions for future initiatives like this?

7 - Do you have any highlights or comments about the reactions of the participants in the shelters?

8 - What are the nature of the conflicts that happen in the shelters?

Appendix C

Questionnaire used in the Guided Tour choreographic process with the children

Created by Patrícia Machado

1 - When and where he was born:

2 - What do you like to do as soon as you wake up?

3 - What do you want to be when you grow up? Why?

4 - What makes you so angry?

5 - What do you like to do at school?

6 - What do you think people need most in the world?

7 - What are you most afraid of?

8 - What do you like to play with?

9 - Whom do you play with the most?

10 - What was the happiest day of your life?

11 - If you could take something out of the world, what would it be?

12 - Is there any place in the world that you would like to visit? Which one?

13 - What is your favourite song? Sing a snippet

14 - If you could choose your name, what would it be?

15 - What do you most enjoy doing at home?

16 - What makes you very happy today?

17 - What makes you sad?

18 - What story in your family did you not like to hear?

19 - If you could get into a pool full of things to choose from, what would it be?

20 - What do you most enjoy doing with other children?

21 - What do you think about the fact that some people are different from others?

22 - What is war for you?

23 - If you could make a wish, what would it be?

24 - What part of your body do you like the most?

25 - What is there after the stars?

26 - If you could increase the quantity of something in the world, what would it be?

27 - How did man get into the world?

28 - What do you like to draw the most? Why?

29 - If you could choose one thing to have forever, what would it be?

30 - Who is the person you know the most?

31 - Who is your best friend? What do you like most about him?

32 - What is the most important thing in your life?

33 - What does peace mean?

34 - What is your favourite food?

Appendix D

Description of activities

Activity 1 - Recognizing artist-researchers

Action: The group of artist researchers performing and dancing to generate greater empathy between people and work.

Participants: Residents of the shelters managed by the NGO part of this study.

Pedagogical Manager: Andréa Sério

Dancer - Patrícia Machado

Musical Accompaniment - Vitor Bertoldi - Handpan Instrument

Photographic Record - Cayo Vieira

Video Recording - Giovana Bertoldi

Activity 2 - Movement and trace

Action: Dance creation procedures that combine techniques of improvising body movements with the production of different drawings and traces related to movements on sheets of paper and crayons.

Participants: Residents of the shelters managed by the NGO part of this study.

Pedagogical Manager: Andréa Sério

Workshop Teacher - Patrícia Machado

Musical Accompaniment - Vitor Bertoldi - Handpan Instrument

Photographic Record - Cayo Vieira

Video Recording - Giovana Bertoldi

Activity 3 - Movement and sound

Dance creation procedures that combine techniques of improvising body movements with the production of different sounds created using the Handpan instrument, with sounds produced by everyday objects such as buckets, cans and scrap materials. The study of the sounds and rhythms of Brazil.

Participants: Residents of the shelters managed by the NGO part of this study.

Pedagogical Manager: Andréa Sério

Workshop Teacher – Patrícia Machado

Musical Accompaniment and Workshop Teacher - Vitor Bertoldi

Photographic Record - Cayo Vieira

Video Recording - Giovana Bertoldi

Activity 4 - Movement and observation

Dance creation procedures that combine techniques of improvising body movements with directing the way one looks towards the environment by creating a photography camera with recyclable materials. The study of the process of photographic image creation.

Pedagogical Manager: Andréa Sério

Workshop Teacher 1– Patrícia Machado

Workshop Teacher 2 - Giovana Bertoldi

Musical accompaniment of the workshop - Vitor Bertoldi - Handpan instrument

Photographic and video recordings - Cayo Vieira

Activity 5 - Affection and creation

Participants will be divided into small groups that will deepen the process of creating and composing movements with the activities in which the children had the most empathy, presented in the previous steps.

Pedagogical Manager: Andréa Sério

Creative Workshop 1– Patrícia Machado

Creative Workshop 2– Giovana Bertoldi

Creative Workshop 3– Vitor Bertoldi

Photographic and Video Registration - Cayo Vieira

Activity 6 - Composition and process sharing

It is intended to share the process developed, composed by the creation choices of the participating children.

Pedagogical Manager: Andréa Sério

Creative Workshop 1– Patrícia Machado

Creative Workshop 2– Giovana Bertoldi

Creative workshop 3– Vitor Bertoldi

Photographic and video recordings - Cayo Vieira

Activity 7 - Product Sharing

After the development of the previous steps will be carried out in Brazil, the script and audio-visual editing. This product will be sent to the NGO by 30 August 2019.

General Director: Andréa Sério

Performance Director: Patrícia Machado

Video Direction: Giovana Bertoldi

Sound Direction: Vitor Bertoldi

Director of Photography: Cayo Vieira

Comments:

1 - No photographic or video record showing the identity of the children will be used by the members under any circumstances.

2 – All the materials needed for the workshops will be provided by the members of the Guided Tour project.

Appendix E

Interviews

Title	Place	Date	Type of Material	File Format	File Duration	Device Used
INT_HP_KA_01 - Social worker	Shelter	06/Aug/19	Audio	MP4 File (.mp4)	00:09:35	Samsung A7
INT_HP_KA_02 - Social worker	Shelter	06/Aug/19	Audio	MP4 File (.mp4)	00:49:43	Samsung A7
INT_HP_A_01 - Translator	Shelter	09/Aug/19	Audio	M4A File (.m4a)	00:08:54	Samsung A7
INT_HP_A_02 - Psychologist	Shelter	02/Aug/19	Audio	M4A File (.m4a)	00:47:05	Samsung A7
INT_HP_A_03 - Social worker	Shelter	02/Aug/19	Audio	M4A File (.m4a)	01:08:24	Samsung A7
INT_HP_A_04 -Social worker	Shelter	09/Aug/19	Audio	M4A File (.m4a)	00:35:41	Samsung A7
IINT_HP_O_01 - Social worker	Shelter	15/Aug/19	Audio	MP4 File (.mp4)	00:36:20	Samsung A7
INT_HP_P_01 - Psychologist	Shelter	15/Aug/19	Audio	MP4 File (.mp4)	00:50:02	Samsung A7
INT_HP_MS_01 - Head of the human development at the child protection unit of the NGO	Coffee shop	08/Aug/19	Audio	MP4 File (.mp4)	01:24:01	Samsung A7
INT_HP_MS_02 - Scientific supervisor in the child protection unit of the NGO and a social worker and coordinator of a shelter.	Shelter	08/Aug/19	Audio	MP4 File (.mp4)	00:57:55	Samsung A7