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**Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Culture in Greece:  
Re-defining the Relationship Between Dance, Place and the People**

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**Abstract**

This paper, using the Florina region as ethnographic example, discusses a series of questions related to the Greek traditional dance and its role as an element of culture. More specifically, it explores the process by which dance is perceived as one of the characteristics of the culture of a population group living in a particular area. In this context, dance is understood as a set of structured movement patterns, which are considered to constitute evidence for a distinct cultural/dance identity. The paper highlights a number of dominant, problematic and restrictive assumptions that determine the above-mentioned understanding of dance and supports the need to re-define the way we study dance and its practices as well as the relationship between culture, place and the people who inhabit it. Rather than taking it for granted, it is more useful to turn it into an object of study and examine if and to what extent, and through what processes this is formed. The ethnographic study of dance, the long and on-site presence in the context where people express themselves verbally, performatively, collectively, kinetically and theatrically in relation to dance, is proposed as the primary and most appropriate way to ensure reliable dance knowledge production.

Keywords: Greek dance, anthropology of dance, ethnography, culture, Florina