

How musicians differ?

Employment status, careers and recruitment in the living arts
sector in Belgium

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Introduction

- ▶ Arts disciplines are usually considered separately by academics.
- ▶ “Ordinary workers” in art sector (Perrenoud and Bois 2017), we often cross the borders of academics specialties.
- ▶ ordinary workers of the musical field – as ordinary workers of the theatrical field or the dance field – often need to diversify their activities to get enough money to make a living with their activities (Bureau, Perrenoud, and Shapiro 2009).

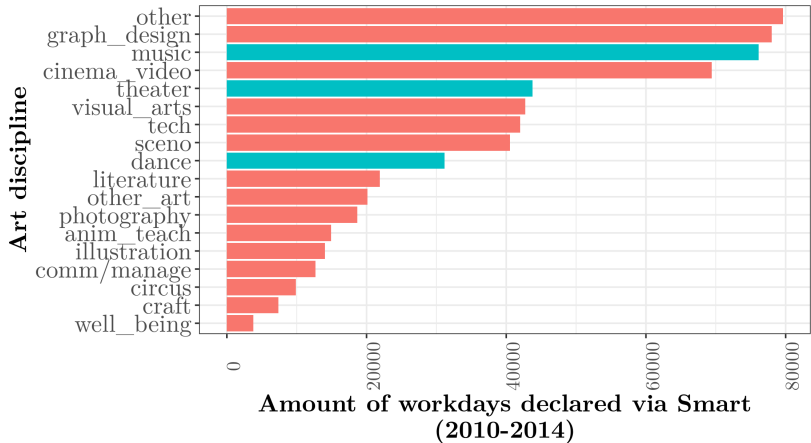
-> how do they diversify their activities? More precisely, what are the material and administrative constraints that frame professional strategies of these ordinary art workers?

Hyp: national employment schemes strongly contribute to shape their activities and strategies.

Data

- ▶ The first results of a research program that we run in Belgium thanks to the National Scientific Fund on the working conditions in the performing arts sector.
- ▶ Combine both a quantitative and qualitative approach.
 1. a two-and-a-half year ethnography with a theater company named Foxes and biographical interview campaign (Louise de Brabandère PhD).
 2. A large dataset with information on work declarations of members of the Smart cooperative (N= 34585) - i.e the leading firm of PayRoll Company (or umbrella company) among artistic workers in Belgium since 2000.

**Fig. 1. Work declaration at Smart
(2010-2014)**



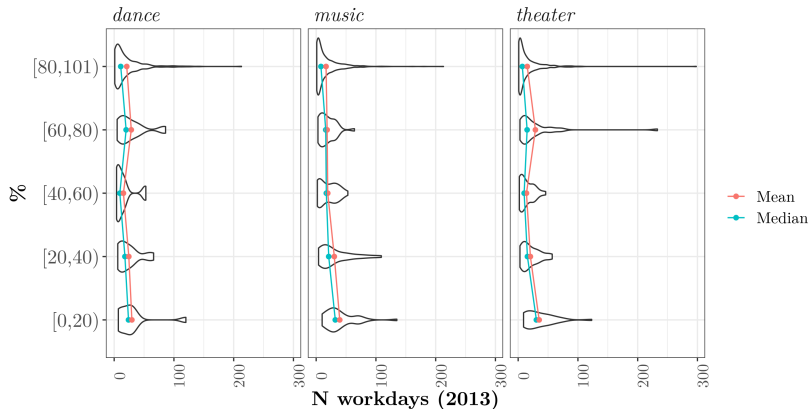
Sources: Smart 2010-2014

A Brief Reminder on the Belgian Context

- ▶ A small country
- ▶ Three sociolinguistic areas: Flemish, French and German-speaking Belgium.
- ▶ A federal (national) government and different governments and (cultural) policies for each of these sociolinguistic areas. Cultural policies, including grants to support creation, are different from one area to another.
- ▶ A national employment scheme that allows workers considered as 'artists' to access to unemployment benefit

Working in the performing arts in Belgium: when diversification is not an option

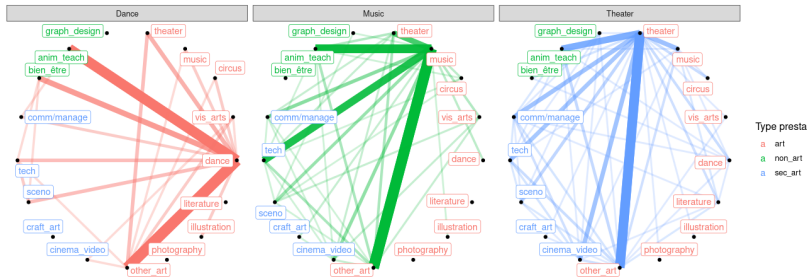
Fig. 2. Amount of workdays and sectorial concentration



Sign. (ANOVA) = $1.2e-14$ ***
Sources: Smart - 2013

Co-declared work tasks among Belgian artistic workers

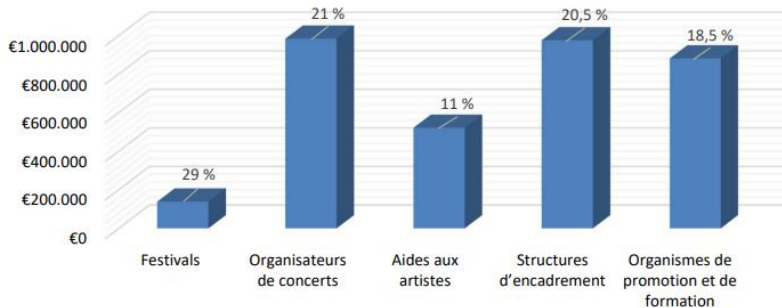
The case of Smart members (2010-2014)



Data: Smart 2010-2014
Layout: P. Bataille, Louise de Brabandère et P. Desmarez - mistakes Bataille only

Yet, Some Structural Differences. . .

Budget 2020 alloué par types d'activités



Source: activity report 2020, non-classical music commission Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles

"I have the feeling that young choreographers get in touch with places more quickly and have partnerships more quickly, either for co-production or in any case . . . because you need a place to rehearse in fact. It can't be done in your living room, whereas if I get a saxophonist and a pianist together, well, there you go. If there is a piano somewhere, at his place, at her place, whatever. . . So it's already possible to work. In dance that means lighting, that means . . . Well, for those who involve that in it. So there is more quickly constitution of a file with a note of intention, with a precise object or a direction of research. Finally, something that allows you to ask for support from cultural institutions"

Sylvie, 35 years old, dance and music interpretation/teaching/unemployment benefits.

... That frame work situations

"This show was very successful everything was organized, you had a small travel package [...] compared to the tours that we do with friends in a van, where we barely have enough money to pay for our overheads. Where you go to sleep at four o'clock in the morning because you played super late and the next day you have to get up at eleven o'clock to go and play 500 km to another Spanish village, well you see it's different. [With the theater company] you go to a place, the technicians set up the show. You go to sleep the next day, you play at night, you go to sleep. You play again the next day... And you have a hotel room, well nothing to do with it! And then you have all the technicians around who are more than us [on stage] you know. There were 5-6 of them each time to set up the play, transport the truck with the set and everything.

Mathieu, 29 years old, teaching/composition and piano interpretation

Conclusion

- ▶ The need for diversification is shared by all musicians, actors and dancers who try to make a living from it.
- ▶ However, there are structural differences, such as the way grants are allowed in Belgium.
- ▶ Musicians and music organizations of non-classical music do not benefit from sustainable funding. This structural reality has impacts on the working and employment conditions of performing artists.
- ▶ Music and dance are more connected to para or non-artistic fields (technical and teaching activities) when theater mainly shows connections with other artistic disciplines.
- ▶ The heuristic of the “ordinary workers” perspective and how it challenges our usual categories and analytical frames

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