

# **Identity, Knowledge and Ownership: Contemporary Theatre Dance Artists in the UK's Creative Economy**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines contemporary theatre dance artists' economic conduct to fill a gap in knowledge in current dance scholarship. It seeks to identify economic competencies and behaviours which dance artists employ in their work lives. Furthermore, it explores to what extent the theatre dance field's senior representatives are influential in shaping these competencies and behaviours. It also investigates the relationship between dance artists' economic conduct and their artistic and financial status, in and outside of theatre dance.

The thesis's central hypothesis is that dance artists approach their artistic practice(s) and related economic circumstances and behaviours as interrelated value spheres, despite publicly upholding their separateness. An empirical ethnographic investigation, which has involved twenty-two research participants, underpins the thesis's argument. By utilising interviews, community reviews and the embodied presence of the researcher in the field, the study's methodology has aimed to create a more level playing field between the researcher and participants. In addition, it draws on commissioned governmental and independent reports which document and debate New Labour's cultural policies between 1997 and 2010.

This study's economic perspective on its research field has been absent in previous key studies. It calls into question idealised perceptions held by many about dance artists as labourers and theatre dance as a work field. To achieve its goals, the study, firstly, provides insights about dance artists' livelihood systems which emphasise that they employ distinct economic strategies and engage expertly with multiple value economies. Secondly, it reveals that New Labour's cultural policies inadvertently disrupted the theatre dance sector's central value-generating mechanisms. In doing so, they destabilised the secondary dance-related labour market and affected dance artists' ability to self-fund their practice. Thirdly, the thesis underlines that cultural policymakers by disregarding dance artists' livelihood systems delivered unexpected outcomes which contradicted their expressed goals.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines contemporary theatre dance artists' economic conduct in the context of the creative economy model which New Labour's policymakers introduced to the UK's arts and culture sector between 1997 and 2010. In order to study how dance artists negotiate economic imperatives and artistic aspirations in this economic setting, I shall draw on New Labour's cultural policy rationale as a key reference point. Researchers examining the history of theatre dance maintain that dance artists, as a matter of course, adjust their livelihoods and artistic practices to changing economic circumstances (Milhous 1991a; b; Carter 2005a; Morris 2006; Grau 2007; Srinivasan 2011). It is therefore safe to assume that, to a certain extent, contemporary theatre dance artists adapt to variances in funding regimes and labour markets as well as legislative and administrative protocols introduced by policymakers. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that we know very little about their economic behaviours and the manner in which they adjust to such shifts.

In order to address this gap in knowledge, I shall embark on examining how dance artists manage personal and structural economic circumstances linked to artistic labour and governmental interventions. Central to my study therefore are three lines of enquiry: firstly, I shall examine if dance artists employ specific economic strategies to negotiate artistic and economic demands. In this context, I am particularly keen to explore if they approach these as interrelated or separate issues. Secondly, I shall explore influential factors in shaping dance artists' economic competencies and behaviours. While I am primarily interested in the roles played by the theatre dance field's senior representatives, such as teachers and prominent dance artists, I am also acutely aware of peers' fundamental influence. Finally, I shall investigate to what extent dance artists' economic conduct affects their artistic and financial status in the theatre dance field and beyond. Here my foci are, on the one hand, how dance artists negotiate precarious economic conditions linked to their work lives; on the other hand, I shall explore the manner in which they approach entrepreneurial opportunities in and outside of the theatre dance sector.

My hypothesis is that dance artists experience their artistic practice(s) and related economic circumstances and behaviours as interrelated value spheres despite publicly upholding their separateness. I shall argue that this *modus operandi* is key to how dance artists operate in theatre dance and associated settings. Indeed, I shall contend that managing such contrary value spheres requires distinct economic competencies and behaviours. Thus, my underlying assumption is that norms, conventions and occupational cultures linked to contemporary theatre dance also inform dance artists' economic conduct. In this respect, their artistic and occupational identities also comprise specific economic dispositions which they employ to navigate the theatre dance sector as well as dance-related educational and non-arts work fields. I am interested to examine to what extent values and expectations linked to a career in theatre dance, for example discipline, self-sacrifice and artistic originality, to name but a few, shape their economic attitudes. At the same time, I shall scrutinise contributory structural aspects of dance artists' livelihoods, such as their access to training, governmental support and labour markets. In these contexts, the study concentrates on pay levels and career trajectories of dance artists together with entrepreneurial opportunities linked to intellectual property rights.

My choice to employ New Labour's cultural policies as a contextual framework for this study is underpinned by the following considerations: first of all, in an unprecedented move, New Labour's policymakers shifted arts and cultural policies from the periphery of government to its centre (Gray 2002; 2004; Hetherington 2014). As a result, New Labour's cultural policy rationale was more visible and discursive, instigating a plethora of commissioned reports (Holden 2004; 2007; DCMS 2007; O'Connor 2007; Bakhshi *et al.* 2009; Oakley 2009) and scholarly research (Belfiore 2002; 2004; Pratt 2009; Lee 2010). What is more, policymakers during these years went far beyond earlier attempts to monitor and measure outcomes achieved through governmental subsidies for arts and culture (Doustaly & Gray 2010; Hetherington 2014). The political and academic debates about the value(s) generated by the sector are therefore well-documented and ongoing (Belfiore 2012; Bakhshi, *et al.* 2013; Bakhshi, Freeman & Higgs 2013; Bakhshi *et al.* 2015; EXCHANGE *et al.* 2013; Hesmondhalgh *et al.* 2015).

In what follows, I shall briefly introduce my personal background and elaborate the events which first sparked my curiosity to undertake this enquiry. I shall then proceed to delineate the critical strategies which constitute its research design. A succinct discussion of the thesis's limitations and key terminology and a short outline of each of its seven chapters will conclude this introduction.

## **1. Motivation for research**

This research enquiry is grounded in my personal and professional biography as a dance artist. My engagement with theatre dance has been in manifold roles as a choreographer, teacher, artistic director, producer and lecturer, the majority of which I have pursued in both Germany and the UK. Starting out as a freelance performer and choreographer in Germany's independent dance sector, I co-founded a dance company called Mind The Gap Tanztheater with a group of like-minded colleagues. Looking back to the company's very beginnings, it is striking how comprehensively our personal economic circumstances influenced the manner in which we realised our artistic aspirations. Likewise, our company's initially unfunded status led to us employ particular economic strategies.

In some respect, we developed an aesthetic vision and production values which are comparable to the first wave of independent ventures in fashion and music between 1985 and 1995. The 'post-punk do-it-yourself ethos', which the cultural theorist Angela McRobbie identifies as a key characteristic of this period, inspired many of our actions (McRobbie 1998; 2004). Indeed, our project steered away from what we perceived as dated aesthetics and production formats embraced by the majority of Germany's municipal and state dance companies in the 1990s; to use McRobbie's words, we held a 'disregard for institutional employment' (McRobbie 2007). This indifferent stance ostensibly appeared to be fuelled by our search for artistic autonomy and self-realisation. However, on closer inspection, we also responded pragmatically to the limited number of available artistic employment opportunities in the theatre dance sector by creating our own jobs.

Our close-knit network of like-minded dance artists offered many opportunities to maximise the impact of our individual artistic skills and industry connections together with our sparse economic resources. For example, our company provided a framework to merge our individual professional contacts in addition to sharing our different specialisms and personal areas of expertise as performers and creators. As 'self-generated sub-cultural entrepreneurs' (McRobbie 2007, p. 121), we decided to live and work in an abandoned industrial unit, thus splitting the financial burden of personal subsistence and rent for studio spaces. We also reinvested any surplus income we generated, individually and collectively, to self-fund our venture. In the words of the sociologist Michael Scott, I had turned into a 'Do it Yourself (DIY)' contemporary theatre dance producer joining forces with other 'cultural entrepreneurs' who shared my interest to develop and self-manage a career in theatre dance (Scott 2012, p. 238).

In order to access a wider range of funding opportunities and to diversify our revenue streams, we decided to establish West Germany's first company-based dance in education programme. From the early 1970s onwards, West Germany's sociocultural movement had propagated a diverse and inclusive approach towards the arts (Hoffmann 1979; Sievers & Wagner 1997; Briese & Spiekermann 2003). However, in contrast to the UK, none of the state-funded dance companies regularly offered outreach activities in education and community settings, nor were they required to do so. Instead, German state funders directed their cultural subsidies almost exclusively towards artistic production (Berndt 2008; Föhl & Lutz 2010). In return, they expected state and municipal theatres to stage a varied repertoire of musical theatre, drama and dance on most days of the year. As such, our dance in education unit filled a gap in the marketplace for cultural activities and proved very successful. It soon attracted funding and thus provided an additional source of income. These earnings initially cross-subsidised the devising and performing of the company's repertoire. Each company member received a basic salary once our efforts resulted in regular local and regional government grants, some sponsorship deals, and fees for our artistic work.

Undoubtedly, studying and working in London during the 1980s significantly influenced my approach to managing the financial aspects of our company. The turmoil caused by arts funding cuts in the UK during this time caught my attention and raised my resolve to become financially literate. Steered by my curiosity in how to operate more self-sufficiently in economic terms, I thus treated my freelance work in the UK and Germany as a microbusiness. Later on in my career, I applied commercial business strategies to the running of our dance company inspired by similar reasons. When, during the 1990s, unprecedented financial pressures on the arts and culture budgets in many of Germany's federal states saw dance companies closing down, we pursued and gained corporate sponsorship. Furthermore, my collaborators and I increased our financial viability by systematically seeking out operational efficiencies. We replaced, for example, previously bespoke dance in education projects with more formatted 'products' and 'services' which lowered our investment of time and money.

Interestingly, in Germany, our exchanges with the wider dance community, funders and policymakers were almost exclusively based on our artistic vision, the content and quality of our repertoire of dance works and our artistic contribution to the local and regional cultural landscape; the company's entrepreneurial rationale was rarely part of these conversations. Furthermore, it is essential to point out that my interest to develop a more financially self-sufficient business prototype for theatre dance companies did not constitute a rejection of the German model of arts funding, as my comment in the dance magazine *Ballet International /Tanz Aktuell* underlines: 'Subvention ist ein legitimes politisches Gestaltungsmittel im Tanz, wie auch in anderen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen<sup>1</sup>' (Sommerlade 1995, p. 2). Instead, I considered access to state funding for arts and culture via sixteen federal states and their multilayered administrative subdivisions, such as area associations (Landesverbände), governmental districts (Regierungsbezirke) and municipalities (Städte und Gemeinden) as a given. The ethos of decentralised distribution of governmental subsidy in tandem with the constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of artistic expression: 'arts and sciences, research and

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<sup>1</sup> 'Subsidy is a legitimate form of political intervention in dance and other areas of society' (my translation).

teaching shall be free' (Der Deutsche Bundestag 1949) have greatly influenced how I, to this day, perceive my societal role and position as a dance artist.

It is thus unquestionable that I arrived with professional and cultural expectations which had been shaped by Germany's federal theatre and funding systems when I commenced my tenure as Artistic Director of Tees Valley Dance, a regularly-funded dance organisation in the North East of England, in 2004. As I have lived and worked in the UK frequently throughout my career, it is important to acknowledge that 'crosscutting identifications' (Rosaldo 1989) as both an insider in the contemporary theatre dance field and as a foreign national in the UK determine my viewpoint. I belong to a number of communities whose values have shaped what the cultural anthropologist Kirin Narayan and others have termed a 'multiplex identity' (Narayan 1993, pp. 673-680) or 'multiplex subjectivity' (Rosaldo 1989, pp. 168-195) which influences my perspective on my research field. Thus, many 'German' norms and conventions informed how I have approached and viewed my encounters with the UK's contemporary theatre dance sector, Arts Council England (ACE) as well as other collaborators. Yet, at the same time, my insider status in the contemporary theatre dance field allowed me to occupy a hybrid space which defies the insider/outsider dichotomy of the researcher's position favoured by some (Kauffman 1993; Gans 1999; Fine 2003, p. 54). My multicultural perspective has surely highlighted distinct characteristics of the UK's arts and culture sector under New Labour, such as its centrally-disseminated policies and grant funding. In other words, as someone who operated across national borders I had a personal and immediate understanding of what it meant to work and make a living as a theatre dance artist in Germany and the UK.

During my time with Tees Valley Dance, I often perceived policymakers and funders adopting an ambiguous stance towards dance artists as autonomous creators and their specialist skill sets. On the one hand, Arts Council England's manifesto for 2003-2006 *Ambitions for the Arts* (ACE 2003a) declared to value artists as the 'life source' of their work and to 'plac[e] artists at the centre' of their vision for the arts and culture sector (ACE 2003a, p. 4), while, on the other hand, their policy objectives and funding priorities seemed to follow inflexible,

remotely-steered templates which revolved around ‘measurable “success factors”’ (ACE 2003, p. 14). Strikingly, many of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport’s (DCMS) and ACE’s policy documents (DCMS 2001a; 2008b; ACE 2003a; b; ACE 2006a; b) pledged to support artists in the autonomous pursuit of their artistic vision, the hallmark of many artistic roles I had experienced in Germany. For instance, the DCMS proclaimed ‘freeing the individual artist [...] so that they can fly and create work of world class excellence will require new policies’ (DCMS 2001b, p. 11). Along the same line, ACE declared: ‘We will encourage artists working at the cutting edge; we will encourage radical thought and action’ (ACE 2003, p. 4). Similarly, its *Agenda for the Arts 2006-2008* appealed to artists ‘to take risks’ (ACE 2006b, p. 1). Moreover, these strategic frameworks seemed to be infused with romanticised perceptions of artists’ work lives and artistic labour when they promised ‘to the individual artist the freedom they need’ (DCMS 2001b, p. 11) or noted that ‘we believe artists, at times, need the chance to dream, without having to produce’ (ACE 2003a, p. 4).

Interestingly enough, at the same time, artists were advised to stay within the confines of governmental policy objectives and funding priorities. The policymakers at the DCMS clearly stated their expectations: ‘In all cases the financial allocations will be closely tied to outcomes which reflect our four central themes - access, excellence and innovation, education, and the creative industries’ (DCMS 1998a, p. 1). Likewise, ACE’s *Dance Policy* explicitly warned artists that ACE was prepared ‘to make choices – sometimes tough ones – about how we commit our funding’ (ACE 2006a, p. 2). Unsurprisingly, I witnessed theatre dance artists on many occasions engaged in projects funded by ACE which had been modified to conform to these overarching governmental goals which promoted extrinsic benefits of dance as an instrument in regeneration, health promotion and education. The outcomes of such endeavours often had little in common with their original creative intentions, with artists complaining about having little choice but to adhere to the governmental agenda if they wanted to be considered for funding.



I frequently wondered how these prescriptive expectations could sit alongside the DCMS's expressed commitment to a creative economy and an entrepreneurial arts and culture sector: 'Arts Council England will help deliver the objectives of the Creative Economy Programme with support targeted at projects that combine artistic excellence with commercial potential' (DCMS 2008b, p. 9). My observations seemed to reveal a substantial disconnection between what Hasan Bakhshi, Ian Hargreaves and Juan Mateos-Garcia's *Manifesto for a Creative Economy* identifies as policymakers' 'high level statements of vision' (Bakhshi *et al.* 2013b, p. 18) and artists' objective working conditions with deteriorating levels of pay (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003) alongside ineffective access to state benefits, such as healthcare and social security (Galloway *et al.* 2003). In my mind, New Labour's arts and culture policies had redefined artists' societal roles and the impact of their labour in economic and instrumental terms with little or no understanding of their economic competencies and behaviours. ACE, for example, noted in its *Local Government and the Arts* vision statement: 'The imagination of individual artists can be the spark that illuminates a production chain employing hundreds of people' (ACE 2003b, p. 3).

By contrast, my first-hand experiences of working in partnership with local authorities, arts and other institutions during my time with Tees Valley Dance were fraught with difficulties. These arose mostly from local cultural strategies which were singularly focused on the requirements of local communities: for example, 'public health, community safety, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, regeneration [...] and lifelong learning - including children's play, youth and community services, and adult education' (DCMS 1999b, p. 15) and less so on the needs of individual artists and arts organisations. The DCMS and ACE expected local authorities to lead on developing a cultural vision for their area, however both gave little consideration to procedural settings which would ensure that artists could effectively contribute to shaping these strategies apart from vague statements, such as ACE noting: 'We help artists and audiences explore the creativity and imagination vital to us all' (ACE 2003b, p. 7). At the same time, the DCMS's *Local Cultural Strategies* document advised:

Local authorities are best placed to take the 'leadership' role for this work. This is because they: are democratic and accountable, directly provide a range of cultural services, help voluntary organisations and other agencies provide a range of cultural services, have regulatory and developmental powers [and] have a wide range of formal and informal networks.

(DCMS 1999, p. 12)

This meant that dance artists were rather treated as deliverers of cultural activities than as partners. As such, they were expected to respond to 'the needs, demands and aspirations of the communities' as identified by a local authority's cultural strategy (DCMS 1999, p. 13) rather than contributing to shaping its content and dissemination.

Furthermore, while "partnerships" with local governments strengthened their project's budgetary position, these alliances also bound artists to comprehensive partnership agreements. Local authorities, for example, had to comply with a complex array of 'other strategies and plans' at a local level, such as *Best Value* performance targets<sup>2</sup> and *Agenda 21* commitments<sup>3</sup> (DCMS 1999b, p. 14). They also had to 'contribute to central government's key objectives: increasing sustainable growth and employment, promoting fairness and opportunity, and modernising public services' (DCMS 1999b, p. 15).

I felt these externally-driven agendas stifled the relationships between local cultural services and artists. All too often, they prevented artistic experimentation and made it difficult, if not impossible, to develop and establish dance artists' original contributions to a project, in particular with regard to creative ideas. Thus, partnership working appeared to undermine New Labour's set objectives with regard to utilising creative innovation for economic growth. Under these circumstances, attempts to assert and exploit dance artists'

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<sup>2</sup> Introduced in 1999, *Best Value* sought to measure effective performance of local authorities or the NHS using Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) which allowed monitoring and comparison of the quality of delivery of public services (Audit Commission 1998).

<sup>3</sup> *Agenda 21* was launched in 1992 as a non-binding and voluntary initiative of the United Nations to promote sustainable development at local and regional level (Keating 1993; Lafferty & Eckenberg 1997).

intellectual property rights, another key objective of New Labour's cultural policy rationale (DCMS 2001b; NESTA 2006b; The Work Foundation 2007; NESTA 2009), proved time-consuming and prohibitively costly. Consequently, partnerships between artists and local services appeared rather to complicate efforts to measure and attach monetary value to artists' input, one of the DCMS's and ACE's key aims (DCMS 1998a; 1999a; b; 2001b; ACE 2003a; b; DCMS 2008b).

## **2. Research design and methods**

In order to gain much-needed insights into dance artists' economic competencies and behaviours, this thesis embraces an ethnographic research design. Pierre Bourdieu's corpus of work and his notions of field, capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1983; 1984; 1986; 1990a; b; 1992; 1993a; 1998) frame the study's socio-economic perspective on dance artists' working lives.

The participants self-identify as contemporary dance artists and perceive theatre dance as their primary field of work to which they typically strive to supply their labour as performers, creators or as performer/creators. It is a primary objective of this study to draw on their first-hand accounts as well as to recognise research participants as active co-constructors of knowledge. As such, the interviewees' experiences inside and outside of the contemporary theatre dance field are a central component of this study. This stance responds to scholars calling for dance artists' voices to be included in research about dance (Stinson 1990; Gray & Kunkel 2001; Grau 2007) as well as my personal observations of dance artists often having little say in matters which immediately concern them, such as funding and the theatre dance field's infrastructure. To support the immediate and flexible exchange between research participants and researcher, I employ open-ended, unstructured interviews and participant observations as key research tools in this enquiry. This dialogical research format also includes regular community reviews which requires that the participants' narratives are appropriately documented.

My position as an insider researcher ensures a consistently genre-specific

perspective on the research field. It also plays a crucial role in eliciting profound empirical insights in the participants' economic conduct. It not only proves useful when accessing the theatre dance sector as a research field: I have also found my insider status helpful to gain the trust and acceptance of the research participants.

Furthermore, the aim is to generate qualitative data sets which reach beyond the scope of existing quantitative, mixed methods and survey-based research efforts. According to their authors, the majority of studies and reports investigating the UK's creative industries have been troubled by largely inconclusive quantitative data sets on artistic labour (NESTA 2006b; 2007a; c; Bolton & Carrington 2007; The Work Foundation 2007; Creative & Cultural Skills 2011; Bakhshi *et al.* 2013b). My choice of research methods thus also strives to achieve comprehensive insights into dance artists' working lives which previous studies about the dance sector (Devlin 1989; Siddall 2001; Arts Council of Wales 2005; Burn 2007; Scottish Cultural Enterprise 2008; Burn & Harrison 2009; Mason 2011; King 2012) have not been able to provide. Commissioned by the DCMS and the national arts councils, these studies also uniformly rely on questionnaire-based survey methodologies which mostly disregard dance artists' primary accounts. Indeed, one could argue that they typically prioritise concerns relevant to the institutions which have commissioned them, for example, by reducing the dance sector's reliance on government investment.

The thesis's temporal framework spans two decades and encompasses the years between 1997 and 2016. This includes the generation of dance artists who undertook their prevocational and vocational training when New Labour was in office. As such, they have potentially benefitted the most from the *Creative Partnerships*<sup>4</sup> programme in schools, manifold youth dance activities as well as specialist training schemes, such as the *Centre for Advanced Training*<sup>5</sup> (CAT) schemes and *Dance and Drama Awards* (DaDAs)<sup>6</sup> introduced

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<sup>4</sup> *Creative Partnerships* was a flagship programme intended to embed creative learning in mainstream schools by involving artists in primary and secondary education. Launched in 2002, the programme ran only in England, funded by the DCMS and administered by ACE. The Coalition government withdrew its funding in 2011 (DCMS 2001b; Sharp *et al.* 2006).

<sup>5</sup> The CATs were launched in 2004 as part of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's

under New Labour. We thus can safely assume that the legacy of New Labour's cultural policy agenda was still firmly embedded in these dance artists' cultural consciousness when they entered the contemporary theatre dance sector as professional dance artists under the Coalition government.

The many informal observations and conversations which instigated this study took place between 2004 and 2011 when three successive New Labour governments promoted their vision of a creative economy as a key contributor to societal and economic development (Smith 1998; DCMS 1998a; 1999a; b; 2001b; NESTA 2005a; 2006a; Holden 2007; The Work Foundation 2007; Bakhshi *et al.* 2008; DCMS 2008b; NESTA 2009). This period also comprises a time of global financial turbulence from 2008 onwards. In 2012, I commenced with the structured fieldwork when the first group of the study's twenty-two research participants took part in open-ended, unstructured interviews. Two changes of government define the period before 2016, with a coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats taking over in 2010, followed by Conservatives coming into office in 2015. During this time, the creative economy model has continued to inform current policies in the arts and culture sector and received governmental support, albeit on a different scale, through the DCMS, ACE and a range of other organisations, for instance the Creative Industries Federation<sup>7</sup> (CIF), the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts<sup>8</sup> (NESTA) and Creative England (CE)<sup>9</sup>. Also, New Labour's legacy in terms of capital building infrastructure and initiatives, such as the prevocational and conservatoire-based vocational training schemes, still affects dance artists well beyond its time in office (EXCHANGE *et al.* 2013).

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Music and Dance Scheme. CATs assist families financially through means-tested provision of funds for young people to attend the high-quality prevocational training they offer (National Centres for Advanced Training 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Introduced in 1999, the DaDAs provide scholarships for gifted performing arts students to train at recognised high-quality vocational training schools (You.Gov 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Launched in 2014, the CIF is an independent organisation which represents the interests of its creative industries and arts and cultural sector membership (Creative Industries Federation 2017).

<sup>8</sup> NESTA was inaugurated in 1998 and initially described its remit as 'a public body designed to promote creativity, talent and innovation across a wide spectrum of areas and interests.' Following a government review, the organisation became an independent charity in 2012 (nesta 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Creative England was founded in 2011 after the devolution of the UK Film Council and other regional film bodies. It is a not-for-profit organisation which provides public and private funds, soft loans and business mentoring to games, TV and film, and digital media industries (Creative England 2017).

### **3. Research limitations and terminology used**

#### **i. Research limitations**

This thesis is predominantly concerned with dance artists' economic behaviours in the context of contemporary theatre dance and dance-related work settings in the UK's creative economy. In order to examine such a specialist research field as contemporary theatre dance and its dance artists, it is unavoidable to establish its boundaries and to define a number of key terms.

As dance scholarship generally is more preoccupied with artistic and interpretative components of theatre dance, it is important to emphasise that my study explores dance artists' economic competencies and behaviours. I am not interested in examining the aesthetic value and meanings of their artistic activities, even though they may feature prominently in their interview contributions and the public's imagination.

The dance artists who are at the centre of this thesis identify their primary occupation as performers, creators and performer/creators in the contemporary theatre dance field. The majority of them started dancing in their preteens and went on to train and graduate at conservatoires and in higher education institutions in the UK and abroad. Some of the research participants transitioned into dance-related and other occupational fields after extensive careers as dance artists. The thesis disregards dance practitioners who identify other dance-related forms of employment, for example dance teaching or dance administration, as their main work field.

#### **ii. Terminology**

Throughout this thesis, I shall use a number of key terms which will benefit from further clarification.

##### *Contemporary theatre dance*

I shall employ the term 'contemporary theatre dance' in its broadest sense as a specialist activity which is underpinned by specific artistic and economic practices. These encompass traditional and current movement systems, genres, techniques and practices unique to contemporary dance as an art form.

They are practised and presented in the context of live or virtual events in theatrical and non-theatrical locations. The vast majority of the approximately 200 dance companies in the UK (Dance UK 2013) describe themselves as contemporary theatre dance companies. As such, contemporary theatre dance is a generic term which is commonly used by British dance practitioners and scholars (Jordan 1992; Mackrell 1992; Miller 1999). However, any attempt to define contemporary theatre dance needs to be considered with caution: depending on geographic location and (dance) cultural context, the term contemporary theatre dance might be employed and interpreted differently. This is particularly relevant as the underpinning aesthetic concepts and practices are diverse and fluid (Jordan 1992; Mackrell 1992; Pakes 2001; Whatley 2005). Indeed, constant change and uncertainty characterise the production and economy of contemporary theatre dance.

### *Dance artists*

For reasons of brevity, I shall use the term 'dance artist' when referring to the research participants. They demonstrate an overall artistic and economic commitment to devising and/or performing content related to contemporary theatre dance while they might also seek employment in secondary, art-related or non-artistic sectors. I shall distinguish their particular roles as performers, creators and performer/creators when required.

### *Cultural intermediaries*

I shall refer to dance producers, promoters, dance critics, dance agencies, local authorities and their staff as 'cultural intermediaries'. Broadly speaking, this term is used for individuals engaged in 'mediat[ing] between two different "cultural groups"' (O'Brien, Wilson & Campbell 2011, no pagination). I shall employ it to describe cultural professionals who inhabit midway positions between dance artists and their audiences: spectators, participants as well as policymakers and who mediate between these different constituencies. My thesis loosely draws on Pierre Bourdieu (1984), who views cultural intermediaries as mediators for an exclusive and small group of artistic producers. He maintains that their role is to translate and popularise art works as well as artists in order for them to reach or appeal to wider, mostly non-specialist audiences and participants (Bourdieu

1984, pp. 323-326). I recognise that this term is also used in other contexts, for example to describe immigrant children acting as cultural intermediaries for their parents (Aitken 2008) and professionals who support individuals negotiating unfamiliar services, such as health and social workers (Andres 2011).

### *Creative economy and creative industries*

I shall differentiate between 'creative economy' as a conceptual construct and the UK's creative economy as a sector of the overall UK economy. However, my choice to use the terms creative economy and 'creative industries' in this study is a pragmatic one: it does not indicate a preference for any particular definition or model I shall introduce.

No authoritative conclusion has yet been reached in relation to how to best describe industries which are based on creative and cultural processes and outputs (Lee 2010, p. 5). I concur with the cultural theorist Rosamund Gill and cultural economist Andy Pratt that switching the term 'cultural industries' to creative industries under New Labour merely constituted a case of 'political rebranding' (Gill & Pratt 2008, p. 4). In a similar vein, Hye Kyung Lee suggests that policymakers and scholars use terms such as cultural and creative economy arbitrarily (Lee 2010).

At the same time, I acknowledge that the creative industries framework introduced under New Labour encompasses a multitude of concepts which have been constantly evolving (DCMS 1998b; 2001a; b; 2008b; NESTA 2006, p. 55; 2009a; The Work Foundation 2007, p. 4; Throsby 2008; Technology Strategy Board 2009, p. 7; Bakhshi *et al.* 2015). They generally recognise the economic benefits gained from producing, supplying and disseminating cultural and artistic goods and services. Most creative industries' models position artistic and cultural activities and processes at their centre (DCMS 1998b; Throsby 2008; The Work Foundation 2007, p. 4). Some also include activities and processes such as research and development (R&D) in areas not commonly-associated with arts and creativity, for instance games, science and technology (NESTA 2006, p. 55; Technology Strategy Board 2009, p. 7; Bakhshi *et al.* 2015).



### *Creative entrepreneurship*

The research on entrepreneurship associates a wide range of attributes with entrepreneurs in the creative industries (Scott 1999; Leadbeater & Oakley 1999; Howkins 2001; Nijkamp 2003). I shall draw on John Howkins' five key characteristics of creative entrepreneurial behaviour: vision, focus, financial acumen, pride and urgency (Howkins 2001) when using the terms 'entrepreneurial' and 'entrepreneurship'. Admittedly, the entrepreneurial behaviours of artists and creative workers and what constitutes their 'enterprising selves' (Du Gay 1996) are difficult to capture (Scott 2012, p. 241). Michael Scott observes that 'emerging at the intersections of economics, sociology, and cultural industries research, there appears to be little consensus on either the nomenclature or activities of cultural industry entrepreneurs' (Scott 2012, pp. 241-242).

### *Dance production*

While in theatre dance, the term 'production' often exclusively describes processes linked to the devising and staging of artistic works, I shall employ this term for all activities which create, validate and disseminate dance knowledge. Dance production is thus used to describe vocational dance training, dance in education, health and community settings as well as the academic study of dance.

## **4. Summary of chapters**

The overall structure of the thesis takes the form of seven chapters excluding this introduction. Chapter One is concerned with the methodology and research methods used for this study. The following two chapters provide the conceptual background of the research, with Chapter Two laying out the theoretical dimensions of Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus' to frame this study. Chapter Three examines New Labour's creative economy agenda on the basis of policy documents, commissioned reports and scholarly research. Chapters Four, Five and Six each analyse the findings of interviews and participant observations undertaken during the fieldwork. Each chapter focusses on one of the three key themes of this enquiry: identity, knowledge

and ownership as highlighted in the thesis's title. Finally, Chapter Seven presents the research outcomes by integrating the thesis's various conceptual and empirical strands. It discusses their wider implication for individual dance artists, the theatre dance sector and policymakers and concludes by identifying areas for further research.

## **i. Chapter One**

### *In pursuit of a level playing field: rationale for a collaborative ethnographic research design*

In this chapter, I shall discuss the reasoning behind the study's ethnographic research framework and my interest in approaching the research participants as co-constructors of knowledge. I shall briefly outline the difficulties which arise from the lack of reliable primary data on dance artists. The chapter then examines how its research methods such as interviews, participant observations and community reviews will help to overcome shortcomings of previous research publications. In order to deliberate a dance-specific perspective on my subject field which integrates theoretical underpinnings and empirical research, I shall draw on Theresa Buckland's seminal contributions to dance ethnography (Buckland 1999; 2006) and Steven Wainwright, Bryan Turner and Claire Williams's ballet-specific ethnographic research design (Wainwright & Turner 2003b; 2004; 2006; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007). The chapter furthermore considers the reflexive relationship between the study's key research methods and Pierre Bourdieu's theories of field, capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1983; 1984; 1986; 1990a; b; 1992; 1993a; 1998) which provide its conceptual underpinning. Moreover, I shall examine the dance artists' role as research participants and the dialogical platform which the research hopes to provide in approaching research participants as co-constructors of knowledge. In this context, I shall discuss my hybrid subjectivity as a member of multiple communities which encompass my insider status in contemporary theatre dance as well as the effect of my outsider position as a German transnational labourer on this enquiry. The chapter concludes by examining how the interviews and observations have been analysed, especially the use of the NVivo coding software, before discussing community review strategies to validate the generated data sets and ethical considerations.

## ii. Chapter Two

### *Habitus, field and capital as conceptual tools for examining contemporary theatre dance artists' economic activities*

I shall introduce Pierre Bourdieu's notions of 'field', 'capital' and 'habitus' in this chapter. These key conceptual tools are central to this study and I shall deliberate their usefulness when examining dance artists' economic conduct from a genre-specific perspective. For this purpose, I shall bring into play scholarly advocates and critics of Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual architecture, such as, amongst others, the French sociologists Loïc Wacquant (2004), Natalie Heinich (2009; 2012) and Bernard Lahire (2003; 2011). As Bourdieu disregards dance, I shall then proceed to examine the efficacy of modifying Bourdieu's notion of habitus to achieve a better genre-specific conceptual fit for this study. For this purpose, I shall review how Steven Wainwright *et al.* have employed Bourdieu's notion of habitus in their ethnographic study of The Royal Ballet's dance artists (Wainwright & Turner 2003b; 2004; 2006; Wainwright, Williams & Turner 2005; 2006; 2007).

Following on, the chapter explores the extent to which romanticised perceptions of artistic labour permeate the rhetoric of policymakers and other proponents of a creative economy. I shall analyse how policy documents portray artists and shall identify qualities they commonly associate with artists' work lives. My interest here is dance artists' apparent disregard for monetary rewards. In order to analyse this phenomenon and its potential impact on dance artists' economic operations, I shall introduce David Throsby's 'work-preference model of artistic behaviour' (1992; 1994; 2007), Hans Abbing's 'non-monetary income preference model' (2002) and Bruno S. Frey's 'crowding theory' (1999; 2002; Frey & Jegen 2001; 2003). Furthermore, I shall investigate the different forms of capital which dance artists produce and associated value economies. I am especially interested if characteristics unique to embodied knowledge, such as its ephemeral nature, affect the value which dance artists as well as others attach to dance as capital, commodity and service.

### **iii. Chapter Three**

#### *The creative economy as a work field for contemporary theatre dance artists*

Chapter Three will review New Labour's vision for a creative economy by examining governmental policies published by the DCMS (1998a; b; 1999a; b; 2001a; b; 2006; 2008a; b; 2009) and other governmental departments. In order to consider the socio-economic and ideological implications of their policy commitments for dance artists' livelihoods and economic operations, I shall also scrutinise ACE's strategic frameworks (ACE 2003a, b; 2006a, b; 2010a; 2013). This is to examine the reasoning behind policymakers' focus on artists as key contributors to the creative industries. The analysis will also consider the instrumental benefits of arts and culture in regeneration, education and health settings. To conclude the chapter, I shall examine reports commissioned by national and international governmental bodies as well as independent scholarly research which investigate the strategic and managerial protocols instigated by the DCMS and their delivery through ACE.

### **iv. Chapter Four**

#### *Wishing, hoping and hard work: contemporary theatre dance artists' artistic and occupational identities*

In order to examine how encounters with norms, conventions and practices of the theatre dance field influence dance artists' economic conduct, this chapter draws on interviews with the study's participants as well as participant observations. It demonstrates how the student and trainee stages shape dance artists' artistic and occupational identities through prevalent standards and practices to which they are exposed during this time. The chapter also explores the roles which senior representatives of the theatre dance field, such as teachers and established dance artists, inhabit, and the influence of the participants' peers in this process. I shall seek to show that dance artists are economically active and draw on dispositions which I have summarised as their 'creative entrepreneurial habitus'. In this context, the chapter will discuss five themes related to dance artists' economic demeanour which emerged when analysing interviews and participant observations. They include economic

competencies and behaviours which featured regularly in the interviews as well as linked strategies. I shall also refer to dance artists' 'cultural intermediary habitus' which consists of dispositions related to networking and engaging with key position holders in theatre dance, such as promoters and producers. Both the creative entrepreneurial habitus and the cultural intermediary habitus will continue to provide key reference points throughout Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

## **v. Chapter Five**

### *For what it is worth: contemporary theatre dance artists in the creative economy*

This chapter begins by examining how dance artists engage with dance and dance-related employment as labourers in the context of the creative economy model introduced by New Labour. Crucially, I shall focus on artists' seemingly indifferent stance towards financial rewards as highlighted by many studies (Throsby 1992; 1994; Karttunen 1998; Abbing 2002; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012). It is for this reason that I shall examine three different value economies and value-generating mechanisms which dance artists encounter in the UK's creative economy. These encompass the internal value systems of theatre dance and conventional economic settings outside of the dance field as well as policy and legislative frameworks. I shall explore to what extent dance artists adopt specific economic strategies to supply their labour in a range of employment situations while simultaneously negotiating the theatre dance field's internal value economy and financial subsistence alongside governmental policy interventions. The chapter proceeds with deliberating New Labour's creative economy rationale as another value economy which dance artists have had to accommodate in their work lives. I shall investigate how its implementation through the DCMS, ACE and local authority-based funders of arts and culture has affected the theatre dance field as an autonomous value-generating authority and, consequently, dance artists' livelihood systems. Indeed, I shall address how cultural policies during and after New Labour's time in office redefined artists' role in society and the manner in which they supply their labour to artistic, arts-related and non-arts markets. For this reason, I shall draw on scholarly efforts to define the artistic work force

(Karttunen 1998; Menger 1999; 2001; Throsby 2001a) and key characteristics of artists as labourers (Mengers 1999; 2001; Towse 2006; 2010) to identify what Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt term 'paradigms of entrepreneurial selfhood' (Gill & Pratt 2008, p. 20).

## **vi. Chapter Six**

### *Dance means business: contemporary theatre dance artists' experiences of ownership and entrepreneurship*

Chapter Six will investigate dance artists as entrepreneurs and small business owners, and their stakes as freelancers and employees in theatre dance and the creative industries. It will examine the manner in which they utilise entrepreneurial opportunities by asserting their moral and ownership rights when devising original content in artistic and arts-related settings. I shall review how the study's participants have engaged with relevant legislative frameworks which regulate dance artists' copyright and their rights as performers. In the first instance, I shall explore in what way factors such as shared authorship, the transient quality of physical capital and the manner in which ownership is formally and informally approached in the theatre dance sector impact on dance artists' economic strategies. Furthermore, I shall investigate to what extent policymakers' recognition of intellectual property rights as a central value-generating driver in the creative economy influences dance artists engaging with entrepreneurial opportunities. The second part of the chapter will examine the role played by funders and cultural intermediaries in this context. The effect of ACE's funding priorities is of interest here, in particular, partnership working, its emphasis on emerging dance artists and the devising of new original works, and its efforts to reframe artists as creative entrepreneurs.

## **vii. Chapter Seven**

### *Conclusion: Mission unaccomplished*

The final chapter ties up the various theoretical and empirical strands developed throughout the thesis in order to summarise and discuss its key findings and emerging themes and issues. I shall deliberate the methodological

and conceptual considerations which have underpinned the research design to examine its usefulness and suitability in order to provide a template for further research. Then, I shall draw on Chapters Four, Five and Six to discuss the new insights they have offered and to suggest areas for future investigations. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations directed at theatre dance artists, cultural intermediaries, policymakers and scholars on how to implement the research findings in their different professional fields.

# CHAPTER ONE

## **In pursuit of a level playing field: rationale for a collaborative ethnographic research design**

This chapter outlines the reasoning behind the methodology selected for this study. I shall explain why ethnographic research methods, such as open-ended, unstructured interviews, participant observations and community reviews have provided useful tools when seeking to close existing gaps in knowledge about dance artists' economic conduct. Moreover, I shall deliberate how these methods play a crucial part in achieving one of the research design's key ambitions: to recognise and involve the research participants as co-creators of knowledge. In this context, the main emphasis of this chapter lies on demonstrating the extent to which the 'methodological eclecticism' which characterises ethnographic scholarship since the 'reflexive turn' in the 1980s (Manning 2009, p. 758) has benefitted these key research objectives. At the same time, I shall illustrate that introducing notions of the multicultural insider/outsider researcher and of participants as co-producers of knowledge did not automatically result in relinquishing the conceptual traditions of the social sciences. Instead, I shall contend that these traditions were considered in order to generate relevant data sets.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first section, under the heading *The reasoning behind the study's ethnographic research design*, examines fundamental ethnographic principles and methods as well as their theoretical origins in anthropology and sociology. The next section, titled *Research participants and researcher*, introduces the respondents, outlining how they have contributed to the research process. I shall then proceed to debate my insider/outsider status before discussing the research design's central ambition to create a less hierarchical relationship between researcher and the researched. The third and final section, called *Taking to the field*, contemplates my strategies for recruiting participants as well as selecting research sites, before presenting the criteria which have guided the data collection for this thesis. The section continues to explore the rationale behind analysing and interpreting the data gained from interviews and participant observations. It



concludes by addressing concerns about criteria of reliability and validity of research findings.

## **1. The reasoning behind the study's ethnographic research design**

This thesis seeks to contribute much-needed empirical data about dance artists' economic behaviours in the UK's creative economy. In order to achieve this, its ethnographic research design adopts a socio-economic and genre-specific perspective on contemporary theatre dance artists' livelihoods. At the same time, Pierre Bourdieu's notions of field, capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1983; 1984; 1986; 1990a; b; 1992; 1993a; 1998) provide the conceptual framework for this study which I shall introduce and deliberate in Chapter Two.

### **i. Conceptual flexibility**

This enquiry takes advantage of the conceptual flexibility which is intrinsic to ethnographic research practices (Coffey 1999; Whitehead 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007; Manning 2009). Since the 1980s, an emerging reflexive stance in ethnographic methodologies has continued to change perceptions of qualitative research processes. The consensus among many social scientists is that ethnography's epistemological and ontological positions are subject to continuous transformations (Clifford 1981; Marcus 1998; Coffey 1999; LeCompte 2002; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007; Manning 2009; Atkinson 2014). Indeed, feminist and postmodern scholarship queries if traditional notions of undertaking research in the social sciences, such as value neutrality and objectivity, are truly achievable and therefore useful goals (Appadurai 1988; Narayan 1993; D'Amico-Samuels 1997; Jacob-Huey 2002; Collins & Gallinat 2010). The sociologist John David Brewer states:

Reflexivity involves reflection by ethnographers on the social processes that impinge upon and influence data. It requires a critical attitude towards data, and recognition of the influence on the research of such factors as the location of the setting, the sensitivity of the topic, power relations in the field and the nature of the social interaction between the researcher and the researched, all of which

influence how the data are interpreted and conveyed in writing up results.

(Brewer 2000, p. 127)

In other words, proponents of the 'reflexive turn' not only take account of contributory factors which shape the research process and the relationship between respondents and researcher; they also consider how the identities of the participants and researchers influence the way in which data are generated, represented and legitimised during the research process (Brewer 2000, pp. 126-127). As this research framework adopts a genre-specific research perspective on contemporary theatre dance, it has been crucial to pay attention to its distinctive characteristics, for example the dependency of individuals and organisations on governmental funding and its particular status within the canon of the arts. Likewise, it has been significant throughout the research process, but especially when encountering the respondents, to bear in mind that dance artists' economic conduct is very rarely spoken or written about, for instance in public consultations, governmental reports and scholarly research.

Significant gaps in knowledge about contemporary theatre dance artists' livelihoods and their economic activities became apparent when I consulted the available literature. A widely-shared understanding that currently available data sets about artists and the creative industries are disjointed and flawed further exacerbates this situation (Selwood 2002; Holden 2007; Bakhshi *et al.* 2013b; Bakhshi *et al.* 2015). Independent academic research (Menger 2001; Belfiore 2002; 2004; Pratt 2007) as well as commissioned reports (NESTA 2006b; 2007a; c; Bolton & Carrington 2007; The Work Foundation 2007; Creative & Cultural Skills 2011) have questioned the usefulness of repeatedly employing inadequate research tools, such as Standard Industrial Classifications<sup>10</sup> (SIC) and Standard Occupational Classifications<sup>11</sup> (SOC) which have proved

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<sup>10</sup> SIC: The UK employs four-digit SIC codes to differentiate between industries and businesses 'by the type of economic activity in which they are engaged' (Companies House 2015).

<sup>11</sup> SOC: These codes classify occupations according to their skill level and skill content (Office for National Statistics 2015).

ineffective in capturing the many variables that determine artists' work lives. Bakhshi *et al.* observe:

Lacking a consistent, objective or transparent framework for selecting particular SIC and SOC codes as creative and others not, we should not be surprised that the DCMS has struggled to keep its classifications up to date in the face of structural changes such as digitisation, and has retained internal inconsistencies [...] which obstruct the production of reliable and trustworthy evidence.

(Bakhshi *et al.* 2013a, p. 7)

It is puzzling how little has been done over the last two decades to address the problem of inconclusive data about the creative economy. There are also no longitudinal surveys dedicated to providing much-needed reliable quantitative data sets about the dance sector. Furthermore, only very few ethnographic studies make references to dance artists as labourers, such as Helena Wulff's (1998) and Steven Wainwright, Clare Williams and Bryan Turner's research about ballet dancers (Wainwright & Turner 2003a; b; 2004; 2006; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007) and Anusha Kedhar (2011), Priya Srinivasan's (2012) studies of South Asian dance artists. Instead, reports which specifically address the dance sector (Devlin 1989; Siddall 2001; Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009, Aujla & Farrer 2016) uniformly neglect to examine possible economic motivations for why their respondents behaved, described, and reflected on their life experiences in a certain way (O'Reilly 2008, p. 16).

For example, Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison's *Dance Mapping 2008/2009: A Window on Dance* report (2009) unquestionably provides some insights into dance artists' economic circumstances, such as low pay levels, intermittent employment and short careers. However, while their mostly questionnaire-based study reports what the research participants 'say they do' Burns and Harrison's disregard 'what people *actually* do' (Schensul & LeCompte 1999, p. 22). Indeed, Burns and Harrison conclude that dance artists do not

engage with their practice and work field in an entrepreneurial manner when they observe:

The workforce needs to be equipped with teaching, entrepreneurial and management skills [...] existing workforce development interventions may not be generating a workforce fit for purpose. There are significant skills gaps.

(Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 15)

However, this interpretation of dance artists' behaviour seems at odds with their manifold and successful efforts to manage careers under difficult economic circumstances. In my view, their ability to achieve subsistence, at the very least, suggests some entrepreneurial aptitude, even if dance artists proclaim not to be entrepreneurially-motivated. In this respect, Burns and Harrison's mainly questionnaire-based findings point towards methodological and interpretational shortcomings, as they appear to remain oblivious to such inconsistencies embedded in their findings.

By contrast, an ethnographic research design allows the researcher, on the one hand, to pick up on unexpected cues which arise from interacting with research participants. I selected participant observations and open-ended unstructured interviews as key research methods in order to pinpoint discrepancies between research participants' concrete actions and their expressed views. Both were especially valuable methods when I tried to disentangle the respondents' artistic ambitions and emotional commitment to theatre dance and the actual time spent working as dance artists.

On the other hand, its openness and flexibility permitted reshaping the research framework during the course of the investigation. Indeed, I followed what the philosopher Abraham Kaplan terms 'logic of discovery' (Kaplan 1964) during the fieldwork, as I anticipated unforeseen developments to arise from such an insufficiently-investigated research field. For example, my initial sample was selected on the basis that participants had trained at conservatoires. But this

choice did not consider the significant number of dance artists who, as I later discovered, studied at universities and further education colleges as well as the ones who had no formal training. Social psychologists Martin Bauer and George Gaskell refer to the 'corpus-theoretical paradox' qualitative researchers encounter when embarking to study unknown varieties of 'behaviours and practices of social life' (Bauer & Gaskell 2000, p. 31). I therefore approached the research design and interactions with respondents as a process that developed over time which required me to 'maintain an open mind to further strata and functional distinctions that may not be obvious in the first instance' (Bauer & Gaskell 2000, p. 34).

Likewise, I was surprised to find that many respondents sought additional reassurances in relation to the confidentiality of the research process. They felt especially anxious about sharing their experiences with funders and cultural intermediaries. Clearly, as Theresa Buckland notes, 'it is the anthropologist's task to reveal what may be hidden or not vocally apparent' (Buckland 1999b, p. 12). However, these incidents also have raised my concerns about a phenomenon the anthropologist David Schneider has described when communities 'prescribe various forms of secrecy against outsiders' (Schneider 1950). Carrie Paechter notes that undisclosed and hidden knowledge exists, 'in one form or another, in every group, although they are naturally less prevalent and intense in groups that feel secure, more powerful in groups that feel threatened' (Paechter 2012, p. 75).

With this in mind, I decided to revise my initial timeline for the fieldwork to allow extra time to reassure the participants and to build trust. I therefore increased the time I spent with individual respondents by conducting longer interviews and by seeing some on a regular basis. The interview transcripts also highlight that I adopted an increasingly informal interview style. Later interviews feature more of my personal views and are interspersed with casual exchanges about dance events and dance-related news. I too began to update participants how the research had progressed and shared my personal experiences as a PhD candidate and dance professional.

These examples demonstrate that I modified my research design by adapting the selection criteria and amending my initial research schedule. This approach, according to the sociologist Robert Burgess,

Cannot be neatly fitted into a linear model of steps or stages. [An ethnographic research enquiry] is, therefore, not merely the use of a set of uniform techniques but depends on a complex interaction between research problem, the researcher and those who are researched.

(Burgess 1979, pp. 5-6)

## **ii. Fundamental conceptual principles**

However, the flexibility and openness of current ethnographic practices should not deflect attention away from fundamental conceptual principles which inform the key critical strategies employed for this study. Reviewing Helena Wulff's ethnography *Ballet Across Borders* (Wulff 1998), dance historian and ethnographer Theresa Buckland welcomed expanding the remit of dance scholarship 'from the predominant study of choreographers, dancers and repertoire' (Buckland 1999b, p. 3). Indeed, she deemed that the shift away from 'the study of dance as a culture [...] to that of dance as social production' offered many opportunities for the 'non-hierarchical treatment' of elite and popular dance practices (Buckland 1999b, p. 3). At the same time, Buckland sounded a note of caution about academics who, while pursuing new directions, haphazardly draw on concepts and methods from the social sciences without sufficiently considering discipline-specific theoretical distinctions. She therefore reminded researchers:

In order to progress knowledge, it is essential to exercise thorough understanding or, at least, respect for the epistemological grounds of each discipline and to issue a caveat against the cavalier adoption of term[s] and methodologies.

(Buckland 1999b, p. 4)

Scholars from other fields have raised similar concerns about the inflationary use of ethnographic formats, a phenomenon which the sociologist Gary Fine coined 'slash-and-burn ethnography' (Fine 1999, p. 533). These critical voices share reservations about the lack of robust conceptual underpinnings. They also object to what they perceive as an indifferent attitude towards the neutral position of the observer and objective research accounts (Agar 1983; Fine 1999; Gans 1999; Salzman 2002; Gallinat 2010). The sociologist Herbert Gans concludes: 'this kind of ethnography has almost nothing to do with research' (Gans 1999, p. 543).

In response to these concerns, first of all, it is important to remind ourselves that anthropology's 'complicity with colonialism' initially brought about the growing disenchantment with traditional ethnographic methodologies which resulted in an 'erosion of classic norms in anthropology' (Lewis 1973; Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p.10; Thiele 2003). As such, the reflexive turn also reflects rapidly-changing societal and scholarly perceptions of identity, culture and place (Appadurai 1988; Narayan 1993; D'Amico-Samuels 1997). Furthermore, emerging notions of the socially constructed and culturally bounded intersubjective dialogic exchange between ethnographer and research participants required the reframing of ethnographic research methodologies (Jacob-Huey 2002, Collins & Gallinat 2010).

This study's research design therefore purposefully utilises what Philip Manning categorises as ethnography's 'methodological eclecticism' (Manning 2009, p. 758) to underpin its socio-economic ethnographic perspective on dance artists' economic conduct as artistic labourers in theatre dance and other work fields. As explained above, the many gaps in knowledge about the economic activities of dance artists have necessitated steering clear of rigid and fixed conceptual expectations about field situations and data. In other words, I am not interested in quantifying and comparing participants' responses to standardised questionnaires or to engage in a pre-scripted exchange with research participants. I reject what Kaplan refers to as the positivist 'logic of verification' (Kaplan 1964) and, instead, seek to embrace the benefits of fluid and ever-developing ethnographic orientations:

It is as wrong to assume that all ethnography in the past generations was conducted under the auspices of a positivistic and totalising gaze as it is to imply we are all postmodern now. There is a repeated dialectic between centrifugal forces – tending towards convergence on a dominant orthodoxy – and centripetal forces that promote difference and diversity.

(Coffey 1999, p. 10)

Dance scholarship, so far, has mostly pursued a kinaesthetic research approach which has studied people(s) through their dancing practices and cultures (Sklar 1991; 2000). Seminal ethnographic studies by Joann Kealiinohomokoku (1970), Adrienne Kaeppler (1971) and Drid Williams (1991) examine dance as ethnically, culturally or socially bounded activities and genres particular to specific groups of people. Likewise, more recent publications investigate the manner in which embodied practices are socially, culturally and aesthetically constructed and interpreted, ranging from the world of clubbing (Jackson 2001) to Arabic dance practices in urban England (Bacon 2003). The dance ethnologist Deidre Sklar writes: 'Dance ethnography depends on the postulate that cultural knowledge is embodied in movement, especially the highly stylised and codified movements we call dance' (Sklar 1991, p. 6).

To design a research framework which examines dance artists' work lives from a socio-economic viewpoint bears methodological risks, as Theresa Buckland has rightly pointed out (Buckland 1999b). This might explain why only very few scholars have published ethnographies which have shown an interest in dance artists' work lives. As mentioned above, examples are Wainwright *et al.*'s (Wainwright & Turner 2003a; b; 2004; 2006; Wainwright, Williams & Turner 2005; 2006; 2007) and Helena Wulff's studies of ballet dancers (Wulff 1998). Publications which approach their research fields from a socio-economic perspective are Rachela Colosi's unpublished PhD thesis on lap dancers at work (Colosi 2008) and Priya Srinivasan and Anusha Kedhar's explorations of Indian dance as transnational labour (Kedhar 2011; 2014; Srinivasan 2012). It thus became evident that this study too offered an opportunity to develop a research design which could possibly provide a template for researching dance



artists' economic activities. With this in mind, I have selected an ethnographic research format to support a flexible and collaborative approach which strives to meet the need to generate knowledge as well as to create a more level playing field for respondents and the researcher. The next section introduces the participants and examines in more detail the rationale that underpinned their interactions with the researcher and vice versa.

## **2. Research participants and researcher**

This study acknowledges that the personal backgrounds and motivations of participants and researchers determine the manner in which the research subject and process are perceived. Douglas Foley and Angela Valenzuela note that: 'in a class society marked by class, racial, and sexual conflict, no producers of knowledge are innocent or politically neutral' (Foley & Valenzuela 2005, p. 218). In this respect, all parties involved in the research process are 'always located somewhere' (Griffith 1998) which informs how they interact with each other. Sociologist Jennifer Mason asserts:

The elements which a researcher chooses to see as relevant for a description or exploration will be based, implicitly or explicitly, on a way of seeing the social world, and on a particular form of explanatory logic.

(Mason 2003, p. 8).

Hence, in order to further explore the methods which frame this research design, I shall introduce the research participants to discuss how they have contributed to the research process and findings. Then, I shall proceed to discuss my role as researcher and especially the features of the hybrid space I have had to negotiate as an insider/outsider researcher. Next, I shall debate how my chosen strategies have shaped the relationship between the participants and myself and helped to devise a less hierarchically-organised research field.

### **i. Introducing the research participants**

To begin with, I shall introduce the dance artists who have participated in this study. To ensure their anonymity, all direct and indirect identifiers have been removed: pseudonyms replace their names, the original geographical locations, age and work places have been substituted by replacement terms and vaguer descriptors. Altogether, twelve female and ten male dance artists aged between twenty and sixty-nine years participated in this study. The eighteen UK nationals in the sample had their home and held jobs in the UK. Thirteen of them also worked regularly in other EU countries. The remaining four in the sample were Continental European nationals who had settled in the UK. These four participants sought employment mainly in the UK and occasionally in EU countries. Only two of the participants had worked - or were planning to work - in Asia, Africa and/or North America.

All referred to the contemporary theatre dance sector as their current or previous primary work field. The majority of them (82%) identified their current occupational status as performers, performer/creators or creators. Over half of the respondents categorised themselves as both performers and creators (59%), almost one third as performers (29%) and a minority as choreographers (12%).

The following brief descriptions of the individual participants will refer to the career stage they found themselves in at the beginning of the fieldwork. It will highlight any significant career changes that occurred throughout. Furthermore, it will list the types of secondary employment undertaken whilst working in their primary work fields as performers, creators or performer/creators:

*Alison* was employed as a full-time dance teacher, based in the North of England. Before she stopped dancing as a mid-career performer, she had worked internationally and in the UK. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher.

*Hannah* was a mid-career performer, born and raised in a Continental European country. She trained at a prestigious conservatoire on the Continent

and continues to work in the UK as a performer for small and middle-scale dance companies. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; fitness coach.

*Joanne* was a mature performer/creator who was transitioning to become a freelance choreographer. Based in the South East, she had trained at a vocational training school and had had a successful career as freelance performer for small and middle-scale independent dance companies. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher, somatic practices.

*Karen* was a mid-career performer/creator, who had trained at a conservatoire in the UK. She worked as a performer/creator, mainly in the North of England. She had started to work as a dance teacher and studied for additional academic qualifications. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; fitness coach; somatic practices; hospitality.

*Mary* was a trainee performer who had trained at a Further Education college and completed her vocational training at a London-based conservatoire. She worked in the UK as a performer for small and middle-scale independent dance companies. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; hospitality; retail.

*Millie* had trained at a London-based university and was a trainee stage performer/creator when the study commenced. Originally from Continental Europe, she worked as a freelance dance artist, mainly in London and the South East of England. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; other specialist skills.

*Miriam* was a mature freelance performer/creator who had trained at a London-based vocational school. She worked all over the UK and abroad and started to prepare for new career as a full-time dance and somatic practices teacher at the beginning of the study. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; fitness coach; somatic practices.

*Mona* was a mature conservatoire-trained creator who has worked in national and international dance and musical theatre productions. During the study, she worked as a freelance dance artist in London and the South East of England. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher.

*Paula* was a mid-career performer based in the North. She trained at a Further Education college in the UK and worked mostly in small-scale companies. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; fitness coach; hospitality.

*Susan* looked back on a long career as a performer for international middle-scale dance companies. She trained at a UK-based vocational school. Since retiring from her performing career, she has held part-time as well as freelance positions teaching dance. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; fitness coach.

*Tracey* was a mature creator who had worked internationally for small and middle-scale companies and also created work for her own dance company. She had trained at a vocational training school in London. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher.

*Vicky* was a mid-career performer/creator who ran her own dance company for which she almost exclusively devised work when the study commenced. She had trained at a Further Education college before beginning with her conservatoire-based vocational training. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; other specialist skills.

*David* was a trainee performer/creator who had started out as a performer in a well-known middle-scale dance company. He trained at a Further Education college before completing his conservatoire-based vocational training. He made a number of attempts to launch his own company in the North of England. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; somatic practices.

*Frank* was a mid-career performer who was born and raised in a Continental European country where he had trained at a vocational school. He mostly worked for UK-based small-scale companies as well as middle to large-scale commercial productions which toured internationally. Secondary field(s) of employment: n/a.

*Frederick* was a trainee performer who worked for small-scale UK-based dance companies. He had trained at a London-based conservatoire. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; fitness coach.

*Ian* was a trainee performer/creator who had graduated with a degree from a Further Education institution in the UK. When the study commenced, he ran his own small-scale dance company. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; hospitality.

*Jeremy* was a mid-career performer/creator who worked in the UK and abroad. He had studied at a vocational training school and was interested in becoming a full-time choreographer. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; somatic practices; administration.

*Joe* was a mid-career performer who worked for small and middle-scale companies in the UK. He had trained at a London-based conservatoire and was based in London. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher.

*John* had retired as a performer/creator. Following his training at a vocational training school, he worked for small-scale projects in the UK. When the study commenced, he was based in the North and worked as visual artist. Secondary field(s) of employment: specialist skills; microbusiness.

*Martin* was born and raised in a Continental European country. He had trained at a conservatoire on the Continent and had worked for small and middle-scale companies on the Continent and the UK before retiring as a mature performer. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; administration; retail; specialist skills.

*Robert* was a trainee performer/creator who had trained at a London-based conservatoire. He worked as a performer for UK-based and international small and middle-scale companies. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher; hospitality; specialist skills.

*Victor* had worked as a performer internationally and in the UK before retiring at the mid-career stage. Based in the North, he now works as a full-time teacher. Secondary field(s) of employment: part-time dance teacher.

The participants' level of educational attainment is comparable to other studies (Throsby & Hollister 2003; 2005; Throsby 2004; Hill 2005; Burns & Harrison 2009; Creative Scotland 2012) which have shown that dance artists are highly-skilled and educated. Many had studied in Higher Education institutions or conservatoires in the UK or EU with a specialist contemporary dance focus (68%). The sample of participants also reflected the diversity of the genre, in that it featured dance artists who had entered contemporary theatre dance via pre-vocational or leisure activities such as ballet (32%), street dance (14%) and a range of other pursuits including non-Western dance forms, acrobatics or drama (14%). Only 40% of participants had started out participating in recreational contemporary dance classes.

Despite claiming to prioritise their artistic roles in contemporary theatre dance, the vast majority of interviewees sought employment in secondary, art-related or non-artistic sectors (86%). Four respondents had already retired from their performing career at the beginning of the study. Two stopped dancing during the fieldwork. Three of the six retirees took up full-time or part-time dance-related roles as teachers and facilitators in vocational training, one worked in mainstream education and two transitioned into work fields which required other specialist skills.

## **ii. Participants as research contributors**

In order to generate relevant research findings, dance artists' first-hand accounts of their experiences in and outside of the contemporary theatre dance field are a key feature of this study. I shall use this approach in response to

previous reports commissioned by ACE and other institutions (Devlin 1989; Siddall 2001; Burns 2007; Burn & Harrison 2009; ACE 2010b) which unwaveringly have privileged questionnaire-based survey methodologies. However, these have proved ineffective in delivering comprehensive insights of research participants' economic conduct. The data gained from these surveys appear to provide only superficial insights into dance artists' economic motivations, even when a study specifically evolves around economic circumstances, as in the case of the *Research into Payscales Report* (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003).

This report suggests that the low 10% return rate on 199 questionnaires forwarded to independent dance artists was due to the sensitive nature of the financial information requested. The researchers observed:

It is clear that, particularly for self-employed individuals, whether artists or managers, the issue of rates of pay is sensitive and to an extent personal and there was a reluctance in some areas to reveal detailed information about rates of pay.

(Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003, p. 2)

With 54% of dance companies returning the same questionnaire the report explained the varied response rates by pointing out:

Amongst dance companies in particular there was great generosity in the giving of information with questionnaires arriving very promptly. It was clear from this, and from conversations with a number of individuals over the period of the research, that the issue of pay is one which the sector is keen to explore.

(*ibid.*)

I do not want to speculate about the reasons for the diverging return rates, however it is possible to read this situation very differently. For instance, it is also conceivable that independent dance artists decided against completing this

survey because they were too busy generating an income and could not afford to spend time on this activity. Furthermore, I contend that it is also likely that dance companies' higher response was due to the administrative staff they employed to record and produce this information. It thus did not necessarily indicate that they were more relaxed and 'generous' about sharing their financial data. This highlights the crucial function of a dialogic and reflexive approach to interpret dance artists' actions and responses. It is particularly important as dance artists' experiences and opinions are often overlooked in scholarly and other types of research (Stinson *et al.* 1990; Gray & Kunkel 2001; Grau 2007), as the above example clearly demonstrates.

I therefore selected open-ended and unstructured interviews as well as community reviews to ensure that participants' voices were heard and consistently documented. Indeed, the interview format allowed sufficient room for the respondents to follow their own line of thinking which helped to shape and improve the research design. For instance, the interviewees unfailingly transcended the age-related categories that I had initially selected to distinguish between different career stages. Instead, they identified auditions, gaining contracts or parts and being awarded commissions and funding as career-determining events. Indeed, it proved difficult to apply age-based categories to some respondents who had already pursued careers in other fields before starting to train as dance artists. One interviewee, for example, decided in her mid-twenties: 'I'm just going to go and try it. I'm just going to go to uni and then for three years I'd have dance as a focus for me and then obviously I won't get any career out of it' (Millie, November 2014).

Furthermore, regular community reviews offered opportunities for the participants to check transcripts of their interview(s) and to comment on draft chapters. This dialogic and collaborative strategy took into account the lived experiences of research participants and sought to explore the qualities and meanings of dance artists' livelihoods without separating 'the interview from [the] social interaction in which it was produced' (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, p. 14).



This shared process of discovery, analysis and interpretation proved crucial to develop a research culture that was 'dialogic', and subscribed to what John Blacking describes as 'dialectic dance anthropology' (Blacking 1986, p. 16). Andrée Grau, dance anthropologist and former student of John Blacking, states:

A dialectical approach is a process which attempts to create an exchange between analysts and informants so that two kinds of technical knowledge and experience are confronted and informants can share the intellectual process of analysis.

(Grau 1993, p. 25)

As such, all interactions between individual research participants and myself were based on the premise that we discovered new insights together; in Michael Agar's words, we 'actively constructed [knowledge] over time in a collaborative way' (Agar 1996, p. 4) instead of merely passively collecting data (Condell 2008, p. 325).

### **iii. Locating the insider/outsider researcher**

During this research project, I simultaneously inhabited multiple cultural and social settings. My physical presence and insider knowledge confirmed my insider status in the contemporary theatre dance field, yet my research role highlighted, to a certain extent, my outsidership. Likewise, as a German national whose cultural expectations had been shaped by Germany's federal arts funding system, I held an outsider position.

Anusha Kedhar maintains that transnational labour which is defined by 'the flow of people, ideas, or commodities between nations [...] across political borders' (Nolan, MacRaid, Kirk 2010, p. 9) affects dance artists' bodies, artistic and economic lives, and citizenship (Kedhar 2014, p. 23). Dance artists' transnational migratory work patterns are an enduring key characteristic of European theatre dance as documented by dance historians (Carter 1995; 2005; Milhous 1991; 2003 Guest 1977) and others (Wulff 1998, Wainwright *et al.* 2007). As a 'transnational' dance artist' (Kedhar 2014) I am familiar with

flexibly negotiating the dynamic position of being an insider contemporary dance artist and cultural outsider. At the same time, as a German passport holder I have benefitted from the right of free movement of labour in the European Union (EU) and until the UK's decision to leave the EU, have not viewed myself as what Priya Srinivasan describes as a 'migrant labourer' (Srinivasan 2011, p. 13). In the words of Kedhar, 'the political capital' of my German passport has allowed me to avoid the material and affective constraints of Visa restrictions and immigration procedures which transnational labourers from outside of the EU frequently encounter (Kedhar 2011; 2014; Srinivasan 2011).

In other words, as a dance artist/researcher I occupied a hybrid position that defied polarised views of 'familiarity and strangeness' held by some (Burgess 1979, p. 25). At the same time, many scholars agree that most people, at any time, belong to a number of social groups (Deutsch 1981; Narayan 1993; De Andrade 2000). Cynthia Deutsch suggests: 'We are all multiple insiders and outsiders' (Deutsch 1981, p. 174). The cultural anthropologist Kirin Narayan thus rejects the outsider/insider dichotomy, arguing that multiple and fluid positions inform the interaction between the ethnographer and research participant (Narayan 1993, pp. 671-672). She contends:

We all belong to several communities simultaneously [...]. Which facet of our subjectivity we choose or are forced to accept as a defining identity can change, depending on the context and the prevailing vectors of power.

(Narayan 1993, p. 676)

Nonetheless, it is important to remind us that repositioning the ethnographer as an informant and resource in the research process comes alongside some drawbacks (Coffey 1999; Collins & Gallinat 2010). Robert Labaree notes: 'The insider, already existing within the community, but re-entering the setting as an observer, possesses a considerable amount of pre-constructed assumptions and knowledge about the community' (Labaree 2002, p. 107). According to the sociologist Karen S. Kauffman, such preconceptions are unlikely to affect a 'professional stranger' entering the field (Kauffman 1994). In her opinion, the

outsider researcher is 'unrestricted by prejudged practice and theory and therefore, can raise questions unlikely to be raised by insiders' (*ibid.*). While it might be the case that 'professional strangers' ask different questions, I maintain that this position does not immunise outsiders against holding prejudicial views about dance and dance artists. Instead, I would contend that outsider researchers simply make other assumptions. This is especially relevant, given that many people hold idealised views about the arts and are easily distracted by dance artists' physical competencies and skills.

Nevertheless, I concur with Robert Labaree that the position of the insider researcher needs to be carefully considered. He suggests: 'The positionality of insiderness commits researcher-participants to showing their place in the setting that they are investigating (Labaree 2003, p. 107). Potential shortcomings evolve around a loss of critical distance, with the participants expecting to be treated and portrayed in a sympathetic way by the insider researcher (Labaree 2002; Watts 2006; Taylor 2011). At the same time, dance scholar Anna Pakes notes that insiderness is not a magic bullet which offers the researcher automatic and privileged access to hidden knowledge (Pakes 2001, p. 12). In this vein, Michael Agar warns researchers not to 'overrate [their] impact' and to accept that 'after a period of time, one becomes, on occasion, part of the woodwork' (Agar 1983, p. 34).

It proved impossible to disregard my identity and professional history as a dance artist even when entering the contemporary theatre dance field as researcher with a new purpose and different goals. My insider status therefore demanded a reflexive stance which overtly identified my hybrid position as an insider/outsider researcher informed by multiple cultural experiences. My position came with advantages as well as disadvantages and I agree with Rachela Colosi that the 'dual identity [of] the 'dancing ethnographer', work[s] for and against [the researcher]' (Colosi 2008, p. 48).

My feeling at home in the contemporary theatre dance field on several occasions bore the risk that I digressed from my research task. Now and again, the familiarity I developed with participating in open classes and by being a

dance artist member in dance companies made me temporarily forget my new role. Particularly when participating in morning class, I found myself going 'native' (Junker 1960; Pearson 1993), and the habit of taking class and the ritual informal chats with fellow dance artists temporarily seemed to 'deactivate' the researcher.

Some participants disregarded my new role by continuing to seek my professional advice and inviting me to take on roles within their artistic projects. However, despite working part-time as freelance producer, I declined all work offers made by research participants. My insider position also affected pre-existing professional and personal relationships (Keval 2009; Perryman 2011; Paechter 2012) as I was at all times very anxious not to disclose unintentionally the respondents' identities and confidential information.

On the other hand, my insider status helped me to negotiate the theatre dance field's social and cultural boundaries and was key in gaining access to the research field. Robert Burgess suggests that being an insider not only influences how researchers initially enter the field, but it also affects how they adapt to a field's specific conditions (Burgess 1979). My career as a dance artist before embarking on my study positively influenced my relationship to the participants and sharpened my critical view on my research field. My work life during the fieldwork curiously mirrored many aspects of the participants' portfolio careers. Similar to the respondents, I held various jobs, ranging from part-time lecturer to freelance producer and choreographer alongside undertaking the fieldwork. All these roles were constantly in flux and occasionally overlapping and thus raised my embodied and experiential awareness of juggling scholarly, or in the participants' cases, artistic goals with generating an income.

Amanda Coffey's book *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity* (1999) highlights the influential role of the ethnographer's presence and actions in the research field. As such, my physical presence helped to obtain and maintain experiential and embodied access to dance artists' individual and collective experiences. For example, as an insider I

automatically applied my knowledge of studio etiquette when taking part in dance classes with the participants. I checked carefully if company members habitually worked in particular spaces at the barre and made sure that I stayed at the back of the class. Furthermore, I never assumed that it was acceptable to sit in a rehearsal or to join individuals and groups of dancers during breaks or recreational activities. Accordingly, I negotiated the level of access I had to research participants on a daily basis. It required sensitivity and insights into creative devising processes to notice when, during challenging production periods, the respondents' working lives were 'temporarily or consistently out of bounds' (Mason 2002, p. 91).

According to social scientists Rachel Hurdley and Bella Dicks, it is vital to interpret 'what participants say and do [...] alongside the material and sensorial *settings* in which they say and do it' (Hurdley & Dicks 2011, p. 278). My physical and sensory perspective thus formed a central research tool in this study. My embodied interaction with the field of enquiry embraced Loïc Wacquant's notion 'of a sociology [and economy] not only of the body, in the sense of object, but also from the body, that is deploying the body as a tool of inquiry and vector of knowledge' (Wacquant 2004, p. viii). Indeed, my physical presence helped me to be accepted by the participants. For instance, I purposefully exposed my personal levels of technical ability, physical fitness and mental alertness to the scrutiny of teachers and research participants in open and company classes. In this respect, as Amanda Coffey suggests, I fused my intellectual and physical engagement instead of 'divorc[ing] my scholarly endeavours from the bodily reality of being in the field' (Coffey 1999, p. 68). This strategy, which attempted to overcome to some extent the separation between observer/researcher and the observed/researched, was a vital factor in creating a more level playing field.

#### **iv. Seeking to create a level playing field**

To begin with, it is crucial to acknowledge the unequal power relations between researchers and artist participants, implicitly embedded in many studies of theatre dance artists and the overall dance sector. The dance artists who contributed to these studies (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK

2003; Arts Council of Wales 2005; Burns 2007; Scottish Cultural Enterprise 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009; Creative Scotland 2012) had little choice but to adopt a passive and receiving role whilst 'being consulted'. The social anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener suggest that it is not unusual for research participants to be caught up in an 'explicit framework of power and powerlessness' which 'reduce[s them] to the subjugated and muted objects of a dominating discourse' (Ardener 1975).

I suggest that the research designs which underpin these studies often establish an unbalanced power relationship between the researcher hired to examine and make sense of 'the artistic 'other'' (Coffey 1999, p. 142) and the participant. Dance artists have rarely a say in designing these studies, nor are they formally invited to interpret their findings. It is thus difficult to avoid participants perceiving researchers as experts as well as representatives of the commissioning body. Many reports about the arts and culture sector are commissioned by governmental departments to aid realising a political agenda, such as determining likely pathways to achieve overarching and measurable governmental aims and objectives. As such, they usually prepare for and comment on impending changes to policy frameworks and funding and are less concerned with individual artists (Devlin 1989; Siddall 2001; The Arts Council of Wales 2005; Hall 2007; Arts Council of Northern Ireland 2007a; b; Scottish Cultural Enterprise 2008; Arts Council England 2010b; Creative Scotland 2012). A few respond to critical incidents and crisis situations, such as in 2008 when ACE attempted to withdraw funding from organisations despite an improved financial settlement with the DCMS (McIntosh 2008; McMaster 2008).

I contend that this power imbalance is even more pronounced when one considers that the hired researcher is to a certain extent a conduit of the commissioning body's policies and strategic intentions. Content, structure, and research methods - down to the choice and wording of questions in questionnaires and interviews - are often selected according to the brief received from the commissioning body. Furthermore, dance artists are aware of the close working relationships and communication channels between commissioners, senior dance professionals and researchers. For example, the

consultant/researcher Susanne Burns had been involved in two major studies about the dance sector (Burns 2007; 2008) before embarking on the *Dance Mapping* report (Burns & Harrison 2009). It is thus very likely that some of her respondents regarded interviews and focus groups for this study as opportunities to position themselves as worthy (potential) recipients of monetary or other forms of recognition from ACE and its dance strategy department.

Importantly, these research formats have failed to generate accurate empirical data about dance artists' work lives. In order to establish a more level playing field, I have been sensitive to the contextual settings in which the research participants found themselves. Indeed, I carefully considered the usefulness of the selected research tools and their readiness to accommodate a dialogic and dialectical approach to constructing knowledge. In order to generate more reliable and relevant data, the thesis was contingent on dance artists' situated accounts of their lived experiences. By participating in dance classes, I hoped to raise trust in the research process, particularly as theatre dance artists frequently associate being watched with teachers or coaches, employers, peers and critics who exert authority, influence or pressure. The social anthropologist Helena Wulff's study of ballet dancers' careers highlights how theatre dance artists' heightened awareness of being observed and judged initially influenced the fieldwork she undertook for her study (Wulff 1998, pp. 7-8).

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the short-term engagement between researcher and research participants builds the necessary trust and rapport for participants to disclose what they really feel and think. Also, time limitations constrain researchers' capacity to pick up, and verify the validity of, emergent themes. As discussed above, many governmental research reports draw on findings generated via anonymised questionnaire-based surveys as a central research method. This makes it difficult to assess if the targeted participants have completed the questionnaire. Anecdotal evidence based on numerous informal conversations and my personal experiences suggest that, for a number of reasons, company managers and administrators regularly complete questionnaires on behalf of dance artists who are busy rehearsing or performing. Furthermore, it needs to be considered that dance artists who

attend focus groups and interviews are most likely to be 'reliable' company ambassadors who artistic directors trust not to damage the company's reputation when participating in research events. Likewise, acutely aware of their funding agreements with ACE and other stakeholders, CEOs and senior management teams of dance agencies might be tempted to avoid the potential repercussions of providing overworked and underpaid freelance dance artists with a platform to air their views.

### **3. Taking to the field**

Informal observations and conversations with dance artists from 2004 onwards instigated this research. I formally entered the field in February 2012 to undertake participant observations, conduct interviews and community reviews. Three of the research participants (Tracey; Karen; Martin) I met repeatedly to discuss my preliminary research outcomes. The participants and I referred to these meetings as interviews, but we devoted a substantial part of them to review the research findings. I gradually exited the field between June 2015 and February 2016. During this period, I occasionally met another five of the research participants (Millie; John; Miriam; Susan; Hannah) to discuss my findings and share some of my draft chapters. These discussions of my draft work supported the data analysis and writing-up process.

#### **i. Recruiting participants and selecting locations**

##### *Research participants*

I approached potential research participants in open professional classes and during other professional development activities as well as auditions, performances, post-performance talks and social events. Only two of the dance artists I contacted declined to participate in the study. Interested dance artists received a detailed participant information sheet and consent form by email.

The initial sample of ten participants (Frank; Hannah; Karen; Martin; Mary; Susan; Tracey; Robert; Victor; Vicky) encompassed different age groups, genders, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Once I had completed the first round of interviews in 2012, and after consulting the transcribed interviews, I expanded the initial sample to ensure a balanced representation of



dance artists' key career trajectories in the freelance and maintained dance sector. In this respect, collecting and examining data as well as reviewing the data with participants has been a cyclical process which ended when I found that further participant observations and interviews would have only replicated information already obtained.

### *Research locations*

The fieldwork took place in London, Newcastle and Leeds and other locations in the South East and North East of England. To ensure a representative sample that was not dominated by a London-centric perspective on dance, I chose regional settings which feature a different cultural and economic infrastructure. At first, I had also hoped to identify possible differences and commonalities between dance artists' economic behaviours depending on where they were based. However, this was impossible to achieve as most participants lived and worked in multiple locations, commuting between London and the regions and vice versa.

I selected The Place in London and Dance City in Newcastle as research sites to commence with the initial participant observations. I achieved 'partial and conditional access' (Spradley 1980; Burgess 1979) to their programmes of professional activities and events on two conditions: firstly, that I informed relevant staff of my researcher status and gained their permission prior to attending, for example, open professional dance classes, artist development events and performances and, secondly, that I paid for all ticketed events.

In both research settings, I negotiated access to events with individual members of staff responsible for organising them. Many of these exchanges took place in an informal manner, often in chance meetings before and after dance classes or performances. Having insider knowledge of the different gatekeepers and protocols in the contemporary theatre dance field aided these ongoing conversations significantly. Other insider researchers report to benefit from similar advantages in terms of accessing their research sites (Labaree 2002; Breen 2007; Dwyer & Buckle 2009).

While I depended on the goodwill and support of senior members of staff to gain access to research sites, I tried to keep their involvement at a minimum. Dance City offered to provide desk space for the duration of my stay, which I declined. Being located in a host organisation's office would not only have compromised my independent status as a researcher, it also could have potentially jeopardised the confidentiality of my research.

## **ii. Collecting data**

### *Interviews*

I carried out a total of thirty-one unstructured and open-ended interviews with the twenty-two participants which were spread out over the four years from 2012 – 2016. All interviews took place in meeting places connected to or in close proximity to theatrical or dance production spaces and Further and Higher Education institutions in the North of England and Central London. I documented my observations using my iPhone or laptop. I used these devices to take notes and to audio-record public group discussions or events.

During the first two years of the fieldwork, the interviews with the participants also helped to develop the thesis's framework of enquiry. At the end of the research process, they offered opportunities to review the research findings. On these occasions, the research participants also had access to the transcripts of their first interview(s), including their coded version(s). I also encouraged them to comment on excerpts of the written-up draft chapters. These face-to-face meetings will be also discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter.

While I have strived to conduct open-ended and unstructured interviews, I agree with Jennifer Mason that it is unfeasible to undertake wholly unstructured interviews:

All researchers do have ontological and epistemological positions which get activated or expressed in their research decisions and judgements, and [...] all researchers make decisions and judgements in the conduct of their qualitative interviews.

(Mason 2002, p. 73)

The interviews usually commenced with what Jennifer Mason terms a 'warm up' question or topic (Mason 2002, p. 73). This opening sequence focused on when participants had first started to dance and why they had chosen dance as a professional career. It provided the launch pad for all further questions. Sometimes, interviewees and I had watched the same performance or had participated in the same dance class which then provided a starting point for the interviews.

It has not always been easy to clearly differentiate between 'opportunistic discussions' involving one or more dance artists, such as informal chats before class, and conducting formal interviews. Indeed, Robert Bogdan notes that 'the tone' of an unstructured and open-ended interview can sound and feel more like 'a conversation between people who share similar interests than a formal interview' (Bogdan 1973, p. 304). However, unlike scheduled interviews, these unexpectedly-occurring discussions came about spontaneously, mostly taking place before and after class or social events. They covered a wide range of subjects ranging from room temperature and quality of floors in studios, health problems, ageing and injuries, to internal dance company politics and dance artists' career prospects. However, despite their casual nature, these discussions were, in the words of Robert Burgess, 'conversation[s] with a purpose' (Burgess 1984, p. 102) and they provided important benchmarks when undertaking and analysing the formal interviews.

The social dynamics of some interviews meant that I sporadically had to accommodate unexpected requests and situations. As mentioned previously, I responded to interviewees' requests for career advice. I also received offers to join the boards of dance companies and to work as a producer for respondents. On one occasion, the partner of an interviewee joined the conversation.

### *Participant observations*

During the interviews I obtained permission to observe the participants 'at work' on individually-negotiated occasions. Following Leonard Schatzman and

Anselm L. Strauss's (1973) categories of observable activities, I primarily observed professional 'routine events', for instance classes, rehearsals, performances and workshops in settings, such as dance agencies, theatres or similar production and performance spaces (Schatzman & Strauss 1973). This means that I participated in company and open classes, met dance artists before and after class in studios, changing rooms and for a coffee, sat in rehearsals and production meetings, occasionally taught company classes and spent time with dance artists during break times. In other words, I 'engage[d] in the activities of the group under study' (Sjoberg & Nett 1968, p. 176; Claster & Schwartz 1972, p. 66). My access to the majority of participants was intermittent due to their irregular work hours in theatre dance companies and projects as well as the fluctuating demands for their services as teachers and facilitators in dance-related work fields. Most of the participant observations therefore took place when the opportunity arose and could last between two and up to ten hours per day.

I observed only two dance artists (Karen 2012; Tracey 2012) when they worked in dance-related secondary forms of employment: in education and community settings. Due to child protection protocols, many participants found it difficult to gain permission from their employers for me to observe them in these work environments. At first glance, one could argue that I failed to meet the criteria which Robert Bogdan emphasises when he notes that 'participant observation [...] is characterised by a prolonged period of contact with subjects in the place in which they spent normally their time' (Bogdan 1973, p. 303). This is especially pertinent, as the first data analysis cycles revealed that many participants spent more of their time in arts-related and non-artistic employment than in their primary artistic work field. However, I maintain that it was as important to sustain contact with the respondents over a longer period of time as it was to gain access to the wide variety of contexts they worked in. I thus focussed on observing them in studios, rehearsal rooms, theatres and dance agencies to avoid upsetting the respondents and/or their relationships with their employers.

The participant observations also covered unplanned but anticipated 'special

events', for instance performances and receipt of commissions and funding (Schatzman & Strauss 1973). I watched the respondents perform, and I attended panel discussions and professional development events. I also observed 'untoward events' (*ibid.*), such as dance artists having to withdraw from a production shortly before the premiere due to injury as well as disagreements and frictions between company members.

### *Ethical considerations*

It was unavoidable that occasionally, some dance artists were not aware of my researcher status when they met me in dance classes and during public events. Robert Burgess refers to 'accidental covertness' in 'instances where access is openly negotiated [but] not all individuals will know about a piece of research, nor will they all hold the same or similar interpretations about what is being done' (Burgess 1979, p. 47). For example, it had not always been possible to inform or remind attendees in an open class and during a public event of my reason for being there. At other times, my multiple roles as part-time researcher, dance lecturer and producer confused research participants and research outsiders alike. However, these ethical dilemmas are difficult to avoid as the developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner reminds us: 'The only safe way to avoid violating principles of professional ethics is to refrain from doing social research altogether' (Bronfenbrenner 1952, p. 453).

The theatre dance sector is a comparatively small community which made it an important concern to protect the participants' identities. Its population is connected through professional networks which reach beyond regional and national boundaries (Wulff 1998). In Chapters Four, Five and Six, when analysing the participants' accounts, it was therefore necessary to strike a careful balance between sharing information and, at the same time, ensuring the respondents' anonymity. On the other side of the coin, interviewees sometimes accidentally or intentionally revealed to colleagues and friends in social gatherings that they were participating in the study when asking very detailed questions about my progress with analysing the interviews and writing up the thesis.

### **iii. Analysing and interpreting data**

The data analysis consisted of three stages partially supported by NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), and conventional manual data analysis strategies. During the first data analysis stage, I familiarised myself with the transcripts. Guided by the research participants, I organised the data by focusing on the student, trainee, mid-career and mature phases of dance artists' careers. These categorisations then fed into the second data analysis stage which evolved around the coded transcripts, interpreting recurring themes and linking them to the thesis's theoretical framework. The third and final stage involved sharing and discussing the coded transcripts and draft chapters with five respondents to gain their feedback. These meetings were recorded and transcribed and have been included in the data analysis when appropriate.

The data analysis did not follow a linear approach which moved systematically from the first to the final stage. I also switched between manual and software-supported coding according to what I felt best aided an in-depth exploration. For example, when the NVivo-based analysis pointed towards a particular theme, I changed to manual coding. This way, I avoided what John Seidel (1991) and Nigel Fielding and Raymond Lee (1998) refer to as the dysfunctional aspects or 'coding pathologies' of using CAQDAS, such as getting distracted by too many details which could potentially prevent or dilute emerging patterns and themes. Once a pattern and theme seemed to be firmly established, I would test my findings by running key words through NVivo's query function to check how many of the participants had reported similar experiences. This strategy and the volume of data collated required developing a detailed labelling and tracking system which noted the different stages of my individual relationships with research participants and how the collated data were processed.

I employed two methods to verify my findings: participant observation and community review. This approach, as mentioned previously, also aimed to reduce existing power differentials between researcher and participants (Condell 2008, p. 327). As Jennifer Mason observes, it contributes to a 'roundedness and multidimensionality in data' generated (Mason 2002, p. 86) to

'us[e] interviewing in tandem with another method to see how well they corroborate each other' (Mason 2002, p. 66).

## **Concluding remarks**

This chapter has examined the rationale which underpins this thesis's research design. First of all, the chapter has firmly located the socio-economic perspective of its ethnographic research framework within conceptual traditions in anthropology and the social sciences. It then has highlighted the need for a research framework which aims to create a level playing field for research participants and researcher. The chapter has argued that a dialogic and dialectical research strategy is required to generate empirical data about dance artists' work lives. It furthermore has made a strong case for the embodied presence of the researcher in the field of enquiry. At the same time, it treats the researcher's position as a hybrid one which has benefitted from the multicultural viewpoints of a German dance artist/researcher observing and interacting with dance artists in the UK.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Habitus, field and capital as conceptual tools for examining contemporary theatre dance artists' economic activities**

In order to examine the economic conduct of contemporary theatre dance artists in the UK's creative economy, this chapter draws on the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital (Bourdieu 1983; 1986; 1990; 1992; 1993a) to frame this investigation. I shall discuss their analytical usefulness for an exploration of norms and conventions which shape and validate dance artists' professional identities. Furthermore, I shall refer to advocates of Bourdieu's corpus of work, such as his student and close collaborator Loïc Wacquant (2004) and the anthropologist Mathieu Hilgers (2009) as well as some of his critics, for example the sociologists Bernhard Lahire (2003; 2010; 2011), David Hesmondhalgh (2006) and Natalie Heinich (2009) to underpin my deliberations.

This chapter will investigate the unique value systems of theatre dance and related work fields which determine the artistic prestige and economic status of artists. For this purpose, it will examine prevalent occupational ideologies (Karttunen 1998) and shared 'workplace cultures' (Bain 2005) which inform how dance artists engage with artistic and economic aspects of their work lives. Bearing in mind that Pierre Bourdieu does not mention dance in his texts, I shall debate if this proved a hindrance. Furthermore, I shall discuss my reasoning behind modifying his notion of habitus and how my changes have improved its effectiveness as conceptual tool.

The chapter consists of three parts. As the heading *Employing habitus to develop a genre-specific perspective on dance artists' artistic and occupational identities* suggests, the first part introduces Bourdieu's notion of habitus (Bourdieu 1990b; 1998) and its key benefits for this study. I shall then proceed to discuss my motivation for adapting habitus to achieve a better conceptual fit for the contemporary theatre dance sector and my research subject.

In the second part called *The contemporary theatre dance field as a space for*



*value-generating activities*, I shall deliberate Pierre Bourdieu's theory of field by focussing on its value-generating mechanisms. I shall examine the competitive dynamic between established position holders and newcomers in the field, and the vital role of the autonomous field in sustaining the economy of cultural goods (Parviainen 1998, p. 97). As such, this part briefly outlines how notions of artistic autonomy have evolved over time and have shaped how artists and artistic labour are currently perceived. In this context, I am especially interested in the role played by romanticised views and idealisations of dance artists, and of dance as a profession. In particular, I shall examine Hans Abbing's notion of the 'exceptional economy of the arts' and its influence on how dance artists pursue economically-motivated activities (Abbing 2004).

The final part, under the heading *Producing, owning and converting dance knowledge and other forms of capital*, introduces Pierre Bourdieu's notion of capital (Bourdieu 1983; 1993; 1998, pp. 109-112) before addressing the status of dance knowledge in Western societies. I shall deliberate its unique qualities and how it is viewed differently from other forms of knowledge. Following on, I debate how these characteristics require specific practices to assert ownership and to convert dance knowledge into financial capital.

## **1. Employing habitus to develop a genre-specific perspective on dance artists' professional identities**

At first glance, the location of habitus in the body makes it a useful conceptual tool when investigating how dance artists construct their artistic and occupational identities in contemporary theatre dance. The centrality Pierre Bourdieu assigns to the body as a vehicle and embodied product of observation, reasoning and actions recommends his corpus of work as the conceptual backbone for this study (Bourdieu 1990b, pp. 52-65, pp. 66-79). In this regard, it is particularly useful that his theoretical framework 'transcend[s] the conventional dualisms of social research' through integrating the research and theory of the body (Wainwright & Turner 2006, p. 240). As such, he emphasises that repeated exposure to established practices and conditions shapes how individuals perceive the world and determines the actions they take (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 54).

The sociologist Nick Crossley observes that for Bourdieu, 'practice is the result of various habitual schemas and dispositions (habitus), combined with resources (capital), being activated by certain structured social conditions (field) which they, in turn, belong to and variously reproduce and modify' (Crossley 2001, p. 96). In other words, Bourdieu directs our attention to the connections between the actions of individuals, the distinct social settings in which they find themselves and their access to various types of capital.

Bourdieu perceives the body as 'incorporat[ing] the immanent structures of the world' around it (Bourdieu 1998, p. 81). In this respect, habitus is a practical sense attained through exposure to practices and experiences which produce particular dispositions. Therefore, as the sociologist Steph Lawler points out, '[habitus] is not [...] confined to the body since it also consists of series of dispositions, attitudes and tastes' (Lawler 2004, p. 111).

Individuals, or, as Pierre Bourdieu puts it, 'social agents', often acquire such dispositions in childhood, but they are also shaped by experiences later in life (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 54). For example, much of the literature covering pre-vocational dance training highlights that dance students develop a particular work ethic which promotes hard work and discipline alongside acquiring physical and expressive skills (Stinson *et al.* 1990; Stinson 1997; Pickard 2006; 2015; Aujla 2012; Walker *et al.* 2010; 2011; 2012).

Bourdieu emphasises that habitus is durable, transposable and generative (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 53) and, in essence, reproduces the embodied presence of the past in current situations. Many of the interviewees' narratives, for instance, highlight how standards and practices linked to traditional conservatoire-based training, such as discipline, dress code and time management, are, to a certain extent, evident in their present work lives, even when they pursue alternative career trajectories outside of dance. Basically, habitus reproduces practices, observations and interpretations which sustain the circumstances which have initially shaped an individual's dispositions. In the words of one respondent: 'Yeah it's natural - you just absorb [dance knowledge during training] don't you?' (Frederick, November 2012)

### **i. A genre-specific view of the contemporary theatre dance field**

Habitus, field and capital have shown to be useful analytical tools in Steven Wainwright *et al.*'s ethnographic study of ballet dancers (Wainwright & Turner 2003a; b; 2004; 2006; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007). Their study also provides valuable insights into how to modify Bourdieu's conceptual architecture for the cultural and socio-economic settings of theatre dance. However, while their theoretical framework offers a useful point of departure, its focus on ballet dancers proves problematic when applied indiscriminately to contemporary theatre dance artists.

The sociologists Janet Wolff (1993) and Vera Zolberg (1990) remind us that a scholarly genre-specific perspective on an artistic research field increases the quality of data generated. Wolff stresses that through carefully distinguishing between individual artistic disciplines and their particular characteristics, researchers uncover more relevant information about how specific groups of artists generate and attribute value to artistic production (Wolff 1993, p. 137). I thus briefly consider how contemporary theatre dance differs from the major ballet companies in the UK to identify significant discrepancies between both genres which require amending Wainwright *et al.*'s conceptual framework (Wainwright & Turner 2003a; b; 2004; 2006; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007).

Undoubtedly, the work lives of dance artists from both disciplines share certain similarities, and some creators and performers even move between both genres (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009). Well-known examples are the choreographers Russell Maliphant, Michael Clark and Crystal Pite who initially trained and worked as ballet performers and are now mostly associated with contemporary theatre dance. By the same token, contemporary dance artists, such as Wayne McGregor, Hofesh Shechter and Akram Khan choreograph for major international ballet companies, with McGregor holding a position as one of The Royal Ballet's resident choreographers. However, these seemingly-fluid artistic boundaries should not make us overlook genre-specific and contextual differences in terms of institutional infrastructures, levels of funding, audience numbers and

employment conditions (DCMS 1998b; 2001b; Siddall 2001; Pakes 2001; Burns & Harrison 2009).

The contemporary theatre dance sector's institutional infrastructure consists mostly of freelancing dance artists and small-scale companies and organisations (Siddall 2001; Burns & Harrison 2009; Creative Scotland 2012) (see Chapter Three for further discussion). As has been noted in many studies and reports, the sector has a long-standing history of underfunding which contributes to intermittent production patterns and high levels of precarious forms of employment (Devlin 1989; Sidall 2001; Scottish Cultural Enterprise 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009). Low pay as well as the high volume of unpaid labour are further key aspects which need to be taken into account (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012; Creative Scotland 2012; Aujla & Farrer 2016).

While, according to some sources, 'audiences are increasing, albeit from a small base' (Archer in Burns & Harrison 2009), spectator numbers are still insignificant (DCMS 2001b; Siddall 2001; The Arts Council of Wales 2005; Burns & Harrison 2009; Creative Scotland 2012, p. 35). Despite the popular appeal of a handful of contemporary dance companies, the more experimental and exploratory body of dance works still struggles to win over theatregoers (Pakes 2001; Siddall 2001; Archer in Burns & Harrison 2009).

By contrast, performances by the major ballet companies attract large and loyal audiences (Miller 1999; Siddall 2001; Pakes 2001; Burns & Harrison 2009), with the majority of The Royal Ballet's performances selling ninety percent or above of all available seats<sup>12</sup> (Royal Opera House 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011). The income-generating potential of an established repertoire of works, such as *Swan Lake*, *Giselle* and *The Nutcracker*, to name a few, further underpins ballet's unrivalled financial standing. What is more, the four national ballet companies in the UK - The Royal Ballet, English National Ballet (ENB), Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) as well as Scottish Ballet - have traditionally enjoyed a high level of 'institutional recognition' (Pakes 2001, p. 136). Nicola

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<sup>12</sup> This figure is based on an average of 295 performances at the Royal Opera House per season of which approximately 46% are by The Royal Ballet and 53% are opera performances.

Miller confirms, in her study of dance funding in the UK between 1975 and 1996, that ballet 'is where most of the funding available for dance is allocated' (Miller 1999, p. 119). Likewise, Jeanette Siddall in 2001 observes that ballet companies still benefit from the lion's share of the available funding for dance:

While ballet received about three-quarters of the funds, it also provides almost half of all performances, two-thirds of jobs for dancers, almost three-quarters of all audiences, and good value for money when compared to its peer group of arts organisations.

(Siddall 2001, p. vi)

The differences highlighted above demonstrate that contemporary theatre dance artists encounter distinctive structural conditions in terms of funding and work opportunities. Furthermore, it has to be assumed that their career pathways and economic behaviours are also affected by the marginalised position of the contemporary dance sector, its reduced income-generating potential and lack of prestige. Any conceptual framework investigating dance artists' economic activities has to take note of these variances.

## **ii. Examining Steven Wainwright *et al.*'s notions of habitus**

As I return to examining habitus as a conceptual tool for this study, I shall bear these differences in mind. Wainwright *et al.* differentiate between an 'individual', 'institutional' and 'choreographic habitus' to achieve more appropriate analytical tools for their research field, which is located in the institutional context of a renowned ballet company (Wainwright *et al.* 2006; 2007). To this end, their tripartite modification of habitus inevitably reflects their study's research field: The Royal Ballet and its hierarchical structures and unique position in the theatre dance field.

According to Steven Wainwright *et al.*, ballet dancers' individual habitus develops when they train to become dance artists. At the same time, they also internalise their training providers' institutional habitus (Wainwright *et al.* 2007), and their 'individual habitus is gradually erased by the embodiment of an

institutional habitus' (Wainwright *et al.* 2007, p. 312). Without doubt, contemporary dance students undergo a similar process, even though, at first glance, they appear to be encouraged to develop more diverse and personal movement styles. These embrace what Steven Wainwright and Bryan Turner coin individual habitus: '[the] individual agency of the dancer [...] where the dancer's body is both the medium and outcome of their innate physical capital' (Wainwright & Turner 2005, p. 57). Their counterparts in ballet, on the contrary, mostly seem to adhere to strictly-codified training syllabi, with many striving to embody a long-established and therefore more easily recognisable repertoire of aesthetics and skills (Stinson *et al.* 1990). Despite these differences, both ballet and contemporary dance students try to meet the institutional expectations of their respective schools.

But dance artists' individual and institutional habitus is not exclusively generated and shaped by their training. The formation of an institutional and, not to forget, choreographic habitus also lies at the core of dance companies' operations. As Wainwright *et al.* observe: 'The strong choreographic habitus within the individual dance company has been, perhaps, the major factor in molding a dance company's institutional habitus' (Wainwright *et al.* 2007, p. 314). A company's institutional habitus, for example, reflects its distinct artistic identity which determines the goals it seeks to achieve and defines the manner in which it goes about realising its ambitions. It thus refers to a code of conduct and belief systems which, in Wainwright's and Turner's words, 'becomes quite literally embodied in those dancers who are seen as the most likely to succeed in a professional ballet company' (Wainwright 2005, p. 58).

Accordingly, dance companies provide institutional frameworks which are geared towards producing artistic works in a manner which suits their choreographic habitus and adds to their artistic profile and prestige. For instance, companies evolving around one choreographer or a particular repertoire of choreographic works feature a distinctive choreographic habitus. Wainwright *et al.* (2006) point to The Royal Ballet's repertoire of works by Frederick Ashton and Kenneth McMillan which, until recently, have defined its choreographic habitus and style. Contemporary theatre dance companies, such

as Richard Alston Dance Company and Jasmin Vardimon Company, carry the names of the key creators of their repertoire and thus indicate their choreographic habitus. Likewise, New Adventures with Sir Matthew Bourne and DV8 with Lloyd Newson are linked to a single directorial and/or choreographic voice.

The educationalist and sociologist Diane Reay and her colleagues refer to the institutional habitus as 'the impact of a cultural group or social class as it is mediated through an organisation' (Reay *et al.* 2001, no pagination). As such, dance artists contribute to and benefit from a company's prestige and position in theatre dance. Dance artists who successfully incorporate a company's institutional and choreographic habitus are more likely to obtain a long-term contract with a company than colleagues who struggle to fit in. Such a long-term association can lead to a certain degree of financial security and might also improve their overall status in the theatre dance sector. It is thus safe to assume that most performers and choreographers will at least attempt to adopt their employers' institutional habitus.

Only very few contemporary theatre dance artists encounter opportunities to develop an in-depth and long-term commitment to one institution. Considering the low number of full-time contracts and that employment is mostly project-based and short-term, it is therefore unlikely that they have the opportunity to absorb an institutional habitus in the way ballet dancers do when employed in one of the major national companies. Wainwright *et al.*'s notion of institutional habitus therefore does not provide an adequate conceptual tool to frame their interactions with companies. The *Research into Payscales in Dance* report (2003) verifies this observation: 'Artists' employment patterns are highly sporadic. Relatively few are on 52 weeks' contracts and many are in guaranteed paid work for only half of the year or less' (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003, p. 12). Consequently, the vast majority of dance artists engage in a multitude of relationships with numerous organisations and individuals. What is more, in order to ensure subsistence, they develop links with a number of institutions other than dance companies for short-term and one-off projects.

Indeed, I would argue that even dance artists who work for ballet companies might struggle with similar issues related to finding work and making a living. However, Wainwright *et al.* pay no attention to their interviewees' economic status and thus fail to consider that some dance artists in ballet companies have short-term contracts and might generate very different incomes. On closer inspection, a wide range of contractual arrangements reflects ballet companies' more formalised hierarchical structures. They distinguish between different ranks reaching from artist, soloist, and first soloist to principal (Wulff 1999; The Royal Ballet 2017; English National Ballet 2017; Birmingham Royal Ballet 2017). Furthermore, dance artists who are employed as guest performers or choreographers for a project or a certain performance are likely to manage multiple guest contracts, teaching and other commitments.

Overall, the above raises concerns with regards to Wainwright *et al.*'s institutional habitus which is only applicable to a very exclusive sample of dance artists, namely those who can sustain a singular institutional focus due to being on a full-time contract which guarantees sufficient income. Furthermore, it highlights the fact that neglecting the economic conditions dance artists find themselves in can compromise the validity of research findings.

### **iii. Modifying habitus for a genre-specific and economic rationale**

The flexible and reflexive stance of habitus makes it a useful theoretical tool to examine contemporary theatre dance artists' economic interactions and circumstances. However, in order to meet the genre-specific requirements of my research field, and as discussed previously, I shall modify Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus to frame this investigation.

Commentators have raised concerns about the apparently all-encompassing nature of habitus (Shilling 1993) and its arbitrary 'fuzzy logic' (Friedland & Mohr 2004). The sociologist Chris Shilling warns that habitus is an 'overburdened concept whose meaning tends to slip, slide and even disappear, as it is deployed in different contexts' (Shilling 1993, p.149). Contrary to these critical voices, I argue that it is exactly this openness which leaves sufficient room to shape habitus as an analytical instrument for the study of dance artists'



economic behaviours. In particular, Pierre Bourdieu explicitly encourages researchers to test and adapt his conceptual tools in order to meet the practical requirements of their research fields. He states:

I blame most of my readers for having considered as theoretical treatises, meant solely to be read or commented upon, works that, like gymnastics handbooks, were intended for exercise, or even better, for being put into practice... In fact, as I have said hundreds of times, I have always been immersed in empirical research projects, and the theoretical instruments I was able to produce in the course of these endeavours were intended not for theoretical commentary and exegesis, but to be put to use in new research, be it mine or that of others. It is this *comprehension through use* that is most rarely granted me.

(Bourdieu 1993b, p. 271)

On balance, Wainwright *et al.* have demonstrated that habitus can be amended to make a useful contribution to an ethnographic study of dance artists. Admittedly, their study has also underlined how important it is to consider dance artists from an economic perspective to avoid inaccurate or inconsistent research findings.

Furthermore, I shall consider values and practices intrinsic to contemporary dance, such as the emphasis on embodied explorations of multiple movement languages and collaborative devising processes. In other words, contemporary dance artists' habitus incorporates specific dispositions, such as curiosity, risk taking and perseverance which might also be useful when negotiating their precarious economic circumstances and expectations of policy makers. Kedhar suggests that dance artists utilise distinctive 'creative, corporeal tactics' (2014, p. 26) to meet demands inside and outside of the theatre dance field:

We can see how late capitalism has created not just flexible citizens but flexible bodies. I understand flexibility here as a broad range of practices that includes, among other corporeal tactics, a dancer's

physical ability to stretch her limbs or bend her spine backward to meet the demands of a particular work or choreographer, her ability to negotiate immigration regulations and restrictions in order to move more easily across national borders, and her ability to pick up multiple movement vocabularies and deploy them strategically to increase her marketability and broaden her employment prospects.

(Kedhar 2014, p. 24)

That is to say, the economic strategies dance artists adopt, according to Kedhar, are also informed by genre-specific dispositions which shape their dance habitus (Kedhar 2014, p. 28).

#### *Creative entrepreneurial habitus*

To begin with, based on the study's premise that dance artists' identities incorporate dispositions which relate to making a living in theatre dance, for instance strategies to manage unpaid or low-paid work, I shall introduce the notion of a 'creative entrepreneurial habitus'. First and foremost, this is an essential requirement to frame my central research interest which is to gain new insights into the economic conduct of dance artists. At the same time, I hope that my choice also helps to establish firmly the significance of incorporating economic aspects into research about dance artists' work lives.

Wainwright *et al.*'s study of The Royal Ballet has highlighted complications which might arise when these are not sufficiently taken into consideration. According to the French sociologist Bernard Lahire, Bourdieu's notion of habitus fails to consider individuals as 'the bearer[s] of heterogeneous habits, schemes, or dispositions which may be contrary or even contradictory to one another' (Lahire 2003, p. 344). Likewise, Wainwright *et al.* appear to adopt what Lahire coins a 'homogenising perspective' (Lahire 2003) on commonalities loosely shared by their study's participants, such as their membership of The Royal Ballet, and experiences of injury and ageing. In the case of Wainwright *et al.*, this approach has surely contributed to a misleading interpretation of dance artists' actions and their meaning.

Alternatively, the creative entrepreneurial habitus seeks to acknowledge dance artists' 'plurality of dispositions' (Lahire 2011). To put it in another way, it recognises that dance artists have to develop and maintain economic competencies and behaviours during their work lives. What is more, it takes into account possible discrepancies between artists' professional identities and their objective conditions of existence. Bernard Lahire argues that failing to match artistic ambitions with the economic reality of everyday life can encourage an 'illusionary relationship an agent may entertain with his own practices' (Lahire 2003, p. 337). As such, the creative entrepreneurial habitus provides a useful instrument to detect when dance artists' actions are economically motivated, even when they conceal their economic objectives.

Some studies claim that artists harbour unsustainable expectations about earning a living and career progression in the arts and culture sector (McRobbie 2007; Von Osten 2011). Their findings appear to suggest that dance artists incorporate dispositions which encourage a strong belief in their artistic development and possibly success. At the same time, when considering that the vast majority of dance artists manage precarious career trajectories in oversubscribed labour markets, these conclusions require further unpicking.

It is all the more important to stress that the vast majority of dance artists have to generate an income to ensure subsistence, even if they, to a certain extent, can fall back on the financial support of family and friends. Undoubtedly, as noted by Natalie Heinrich, artists' 'vocation and generating income does not exclude itself' (Heinrich 2009, p. 88). This is particularly poignant when, in the words of social scientist Sari Karttunen, dance artists negotiate an 'occupational ideology' which perceives them as being motivated by intrinsic rather than financial rewards (Karttunen 1998, p. 4). In order to uncover how artists manage such contrary expectations, Bernard Lahire suggests differentiating between social agents' 'dispositions to act' and their 'dispositions to believe' (Lahire 2003, p. 336). In this respect, he proposes to separate the beliefs individuals express from their inclination or ability to act on them:

It is important, however, to refrain from assuming from the start that a

belief is a disposition to act, because this would be an impediment to understanding such phenomena as illusions, frustrations, and feelings of guilt (or 'bad conscience'), all of which are produced by gaps between beliefs and dispositions to act, or between beliefs and real possibilities of action.

(Lahire 2003, p. 337)

Furthermore, Philip Schlesinger and Charlotte Waelde observe: 'Market and work place conditions deeply condition the career strategies of cultural workers, which differ in precise detail according to the opportunity structures of each cultural practice' (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 18). The creative entrepreneurial habitus thus helps to reveal the competencies and behaviours dance artists draw on to manage these predetermined 'work place cultures' (Bain 2005) alongside the economic circumstances they find themselves in.

#### *Cultural intermediary habitus*

In order to frame this investigation of dance artists' economic conduct more effectively, I shall replace Wainwright *et al.*'s notion of institutional habitus with a 'cultural intermediary habitus'. As mentioned above, contemporary theatre dance artists are very likely to deal with a diverse range of employers, funders and producers whom I refer to as cultural intermediaries (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of cultural intermediaries). Consequently, the cultural intermediary habitus will be a more appropriate tool to investigate how dance artists manage the expectations and demands of a wide variety of professional relationships.

In the UK dance sector, dance agencies, producers, critics and local authorities inhabit the role of cultural intermediaries. Engaged in promoting and advocating particular dance artists and their works, dance agencies foster what Natalie Heinich coins the 'triadic relation between [dance] works, the public and a number of mediation processes' (Heinich 2012, p. 701). Others, who are based in education and health sectors, promote the instrumental benefits of dance-related activities to commissioners and users. That is to say, they are key

contacts in dance artists' work lives and can have a significant influence on their artistic development and economic situation.

In Pierre Bourdieu's words, cultural intermediaries 'possess, simultaneously, economic dispositions which, in some sectors of the fields, are totally alien to the producers and also properties close to those of the producers whose work they valorise and exploit' (Bourdieu 1983, pp. 320-321). Essentially, they do not only communicate the value and benefits of dance to multiple communities of users, but their actions are also economically motivated.

In essence, the relationships between dance artists and cultural intermediaries are multifaceted. Dance artists, in their dealings with them, have to respond to a range of values and criteria, for instance the health or community benefits of dance which might not have much currency in the institutional context of a contemporary theatre dance company. Furthermore, Pierre Bourdieu suggests that cultural intermediaries benefit from an ideology which views artists as primarily concerned with intrinsic rather than financial rewards (Karttunen 1998, p. 4). As a result, the relationship between dance artists and cultural intermediaries, according to Bourdieu, is occasionally fraught with obstacles: '[Cultural intermediaries] make their living by tricking the artist or writer into taking the consequences of his statutory professions of disinterestedness' (Bourdieu 1983, pp. 320-321). In other words, cultural intermediaries can benefit financially and otherwise, for example from artists self-funding their practice, to accumulate capital relevant in theatre dance. The cultural intermediary habitus will help to reveal such underlying financial motives embedded in interactions between dance artists and cultural intermediaries.

#### *Differentiating between institutional and individual choreographic habitus*

In order to account for the full breadth of how dance artists contribute to theatre dance productions, I shall differentiate between an 'institutional choreographic habitus' and an 'individual choreographic habitus'. This distinction fulfills two objectives which are essential to gain insights into dance artists' economic activities: firstly, it recognises that some dance artists adopt a dance company's and/or a project's choreographic habitus. They contribute to the devising

process by executing and interpreting set movements created by a choreographer. Secondly, it acknowledges that other dance artists are creative collaborators and/or creators with an individual choreographic habitus who devise original content, a customary feature in many contemporary theatre dance productions.

While Wainwright *et al.*'s notion of choreographic habitus provides a useful conceptual starting point, it does not prove an effective analytical tool for the contemporary theatre dance sector. It unquestioningly reflects the institutional structure of The Royal Ballet by assuming that ballet performers are merely instruments for choreographers (2006; 2007). Their view of performers is thus very limited: 'The process of creation is often inspired and always changed by working with dancers' bodies' (Wainwright *et al.* 2006, p. 544), and exposes a stark contrast to contemporary theatre dance performers who regularly and extensively contribute to devising original concepts and movements as co-authors.

Artistic Director Kevin Finnan of Motionhouse, for example, emphasises the latter: 'dancers' own devising of ideas is both crucial and central to Motionhouse productions' (Motionhouse 2013). Choreographer Lloyd Newson also credits the performers who are involved in the devising process of some of his pieces. The production credits for the cast and crew of *To Be Straight With You* (DV8 2009) and *Can We Talk About This* (DV8 2011) explicitly state that the company's performers are responsible for the choreography alongside Artistic Director Lloyd Newson, which is still quite unusual (DV8 2009; 2011). In order to consider these more collaborative work practices, Wainwright *et al.*'s notion of a choreographic habitus needs to be modified.

## **2. The contemporary theatre dance field as a space for value-generating activities**

I shall now proceed to explore how Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'field' (Bourdieu 1983; 1993) can help to assess how the theatre dance sector's structural characteristics influence dance artists' economic conduct. The Finnish dance scholar Jaana Parviainen emphasises that the way in which the dance sector operates plays a vital role in gaining a better 'understand[ing of] how the dancer is constructed by the agents of a dance field' (Parviainen 1998, p. 16). I shall examine the theatre dance sector as a space which incorporates specific value economies and employs distinct value-generating protocols. In this context, my key foci are the functions of established dance artists, artistic directors and teachers, to name just a few key players, in upholding and conveying theatre dance's values; in particular, their role in shaping dance artists' identities and careers. Furthermore, I shall consider the purpose of the theatre dance sector in endowing value to the positions of individual dance artists and dance works.

### **i. The autonomous dance field and its agents**

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'field' describes a socially constituted formation within a hierarchically organised group of fields (Bourdieu 1983). Viewed from Bourdieu's theoretical standpoint, the dance field is a heterogeneous system which incorporates small-scale or restricted, middlebrow and large-scale subfields (Bourdieu 1983). In the theatre dance sector, popular touring companies such as Sir Matthew Bourne's New Adventures and Rambert are most likely to be located in the middlebrow subfield which, according to Bourdieu, caters for culturally aspirational audiences (Bourdieu 1983). Commercial dance shows and West End musicals characterise the large-scale field and provide entertainment for mass consumption. Bourdieu perceives these subfields as less autonomous and thus more open to external standards and influences, or in David Hesmondhalgh's words: 'heteronomous – subject to outside rule – but never fully so' (Hesmondhalgh 2006, p. 214). Their success is measured by their popularity with ordinary non-specialist consumers and the revenue generated through ticket and merchandise sales. Yet, while these subfields' economies feature high levels of financial capital, they achieve a much lower return of symbolic and cultural capital.

In short, each subfield features a distinct value economy, employs different principles to legitimise its agents' status and appeals to specific audiences. In Bourdieu's words: 'The evolution of societies tends to make universes (which I call fields) emerge which are autonomous and have their own laws' (Bourdieu 1998, p. 83). In essence, they are governed by their own rules and, to a certain extent, independent from outside interventions. A vital feature of the artistic field is therefore its autonomous status:

The artistic field, which has been posed explicitly by the so-called art for art's sake school [...] is independent from the laws of other universes, which are auto-nomes, which evaluate what is done in them, the stakes at play, according to principles and criteria that are irreducible to those of other universes.

(Bourdieu 1998, pp. 83-84)

The contemporary theatre dance sector with its unique value-generating principles, hierarchies and gatekeepers represents an autonomous field amongst other autonomous fields, for instance ballet, street dance or ballroom dancing which constitute the overall field of dance production. Following Bourdieu's field theory, artists have to adhere to its legitimising protocols in order to gain access to and progress in the dance field (Bourdieu 1983). These demand that they accrue specific types of capital which demonstrate their commitment to autonomous artistic work. According to Janaa Parviainen, crucial indicators of the dance field's autonomous status are fundamental infrastructural features. These comprise performance spaces and vocational training institutions and are complemented by the specialised professional expertise of cultural intermediaries, scholars and critics, amongst others (Parviainen 2002). She concludes that these provide the 'necessary conditions for the functioning of the economy of cultural goods' in the dance field (Parviainen 2002).

Nonetheless, to perceive of the arts and artists as autonomous is not particular to Bourdieu's theories. In fact, seminal contributions ranging from Immanuel



Kant (1781; 1791) Friedrich Schiller (1794), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1835-8) to Walter Benjamin (1935), Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1946) and Raymond Williams (1958) demonstrate that the discourse about artists' autonomy has been a recurring feature in scholarly literature and debate over centuries. I shall summarise historical and currently-held notions of artistic autonomy and their influence on how dance artists' economic activities are perceived further down in this chapter.

### *Negotiating the theatre dance field's different value economies*

Dance artists have to demonstrate the highest level of autonomy by engaging exclusively with art for art's sake activities or 'pure art' without external interventions. According to Bourdieu, artists have to abide by: '[A] specific principle of legitimacy, i.e., the recognition granted by [...] the autonomous, self-sufficient world of "art for art's sake", meaning art for artists' which rules the restricted field (Bourdieu 1983, pp. 331-332). They embrace this distinct logic and value economy which privileges dance artists' physical, cultural and symbolic capital. In other words, their position in the field depends on their technical and expressive skills, alongside their experience and professional authority.

Following this logic, dance artists expect no financial rewards. On the contrary, they persevere with their artistic practice in the face of minimal or no financial compensation. In this respect, the theatre dance field's value economy is determined by 'a systematic inversion of the fundamental principles of all ordinary economies' (Bourdieu 1983, p. 320). Instead of generating economic capital through artistic production, this 'anti-economy' (Bourdieu 1983) is contingent upon artists accumulating knowledge, skills and prestige. Observers of the dance field and the creative industries also suggest that artists' behaviours and responses indicate their disinterest in financial rewards (Karttunen 1998; Freakley 2002; Freakley & Neelands 2003; McRobbie 2007; Von Osten 2011; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012).

At the same time, dance artists operate under the umbrella of the creative industries and occasionally migrate to work in commercial settings, such as

musical theatre in London's West End, and television, advertising and film productions. In doing so, dance artists respond to economic imperatives and, possibly, in the case of New Labour, political forces which have encouraged such choices. Scholars examining the impact of the economic and political expansion of late capitalism on the performing arts (Hesmondhalgh 2006; Banks 2007; Harvie 2013; Varriale 2015) have suggested that heteronomous influences are unavoidable in contemporary cultural production in which avant-garde producers and elite institutions 'committed to the values of high culture [...] have to deal with the demands of market gate keepers' (Varriale 2015, p. 3). Simone Varriale draws attention to growing empirical evidence about the impact of economic constraints on cultural fields, especially on actors concerned with preserving some degree of autonomy from economic necessity (Varriale 2015, p. 3). Jen Harvie raises the question to what extent the autonomous field and its agents are 'complicit with the agendas of neoliberal capitalist culture' (Harvie 2013, p. 2-3).

It is thus important to acknowledge that Pierre Bourdieu's more or less exclusive focus on the restricted subfield and its value-generating principles, which I have introduced above, comes alongside limitations when examining commercially-orientated production settings in the creative industries. David Hesmondhalgh concurs: '[Bourdieu's approach] ignores profound transformations in the field of cultural production in the 20th century, in particular the growth and expansion of the cultural industries' (Hesmondhalgh 2006, p. 227). In this respect, Bourdieu's understanding of the middlebrow and large-scale fields of cultural production is sketchy with heteronomous forms of cultural production remaining largely underexplored. However, his comprehensive analytical interest in the workings of the small-scale field by far outweighs these conceptual weaknesses. In particular, his notion of the small-scale subfield's 'reversed economy' offers a valuable theoretical framework when artists seemingly prioritise their unpaid or low-paid artistic practice over paid art-related or non-art opportunities, as mentioned above.

The cultural economists David Throsby (1992; 1994; 2007) and Hans Abbing (2002) underscore this point, albeit with slightly different conceptual

perspectives. David Throsby develops a 'work-preference model of artistic behaviour' (1992; 1994; 2007) to describe this phenomenon. He contends that artists generate an income in secondary employment exclusively to fund their primary artistic occupation. This presents a stark contrast to non-artistic workers who generally use their earnings to afford leisure time. Hans Abbing's 'non-monetary preference of work', on the other hand, stresses that artists seem to prefer artistic work despite minimal financial rewards. They have little other interest in their secondary jobs than to generate sufficient income for underwriting their primary artistic occupation. For instance, they do not seek opportunities to progress their secondary careers. Indeed, according to Hans Abbing, artists show no loyalty towards employers in secondary work fields. As soon as they are offered artistic work, even if it is badly-paid, they will leave (Abbing 2002, p. 83).

Vivian Freakley suggests that artists employ a 'work preference matrix' when they decide which work to take on or to disregard (Freakley 2002). Her study of actors and dance artists identifies four key factors which inform artists' decision-making: 'artistic satisfaction, expertise development, reputation-building and income generation'. She notes:

Investment in (low income or high risk) reputation-building work accumulates cultural capital which can in turn be converted into labour market advantages, status and financial reward. Both the high-profile performer and the creative artist can have high cultural capital in this way and it brings them a greater choice of work opportunities which in turn reinforce the reputation-log and expand the work choices still further.

(Freakley 2002, p. 160)

*Dance artists' perpetual struggle for positions in the dance field*

Dance artists seeking to accumulate capital and legitimisation are the subjects of and catalysts for an ongoing battle in which they strive to better their positions in the field. Steven Wainwright *et al.* note:

The power to determine 'what counts' exemplifies the power struggles within a field. The careers of ballet dancers, like other 'sports stars, artistes' (and even academics), depend on the views and actions of those with the power to determine what counts as capital within a particular field.

(Wainwright *et al.* 2006, p. 549)

What is more, all involved in producing dance works which are categorised as art - artists, cultural intermediaries, teachers and critics - participate in this struggle for positions. As such, the dance field is a space in which individual producers compete with each other in a continuing struggle for legitimacy and positions by challenging and determining the meaning and value of dance works (Bourdieu 1996, pp. 295-296). Natalie Heinich emphasises:

Far from aiming at equality, artistic, literary and scientific worlds are strongly sustained by a need to rank orders of greatneses: that is, an individualistic and meritocratic mode of recognition, instead of a collective and egalitarian one.

(Heinich 2009, p. 104)

Newcomers to the field, for example, have to meet codified entry requirements through auditions or other forms of screenings which require them to showcase live and/or recorded samples of their work. They enter the field by 'consecration' through established dance artists and teachers who hold legitimised positions in the field's hierarchy (Bourdieu 1983, p. 324). Only these gatekeepers can validate a dance artist's accrued physical, symbolic and cultural capital.

At the same time, newly-consecrated artists can also defy the existing hierarchy of the field by introducing new ideas and perspectives which might not conform to predominant production standards and belief systems. According to Pierre Bourdieu, newcomers often interpret this course of action as progress which is necessary to advance the art form. He argues that:

When a new [...] artistic group makes its presence felt in the field of

[...] artistic production, the whole problem is transformed, since its coming into being, i.e. into difference, modifies and displaces the universe of possible options; the previously dominant productions may, for example, be pushed into the status of outmoded [...] or classic works.

(Bourdieu 1983, p. 314)

That is, these non-conformist and often controversial approaches threaten and destabilise the 'interests in continuity, identity and reproduction' (Bourdieu 1983, p. 340) of the established position holders in the field. Furthermore, they bring with them 'discontinuity, rupture and subversion' (*ibid.*) which can result in established artists losing their status and position in the field.

## **ii. Idealised notions of dance artists as labourers**

The omnipresent 'collective mythology' (Wacquant 2002) attached to artists, art works and creativity often overshadows and diverts the discourse about the economic conditions in which dance artists find themselves. For example, in dance scholarship, an almost exclusive focus on how dance artists develop and shape aesthetic practices seemingly veils and obliterates the economic strategies they employ to fund these undertakings. What is more, idealised notions of artistic labour are often linked with views which perceive creative practices as inherently opposed to the logic of business and profit (Hodgson & Briand 2013, p. 331).

Indeed, when discussing artists' economic circumstances, scholarly literature does not always refrain from drawing on stereotypical assumptions, even if it serves the purpose of satire. The cultural scientist John Hartley, in his book *Creative Industries* (2005), loosely draws on the metaphor of the poverty-stricken martyr figure (poet in the garret) when he describes artists as 'subsidy junkies [who] had sat for decades holding out the tin for arts subsidy – miserable, self-loathing and critical (especially of the hand which fed it), but unwilling to change' (Hartley 2005, p. 19).

Similarly, as some scholars argue, the rhetoric employed by advocates of the

creative economy model fetishises the autonomous artist as the powerhouse and key contributor to the creative industries (McRobbie 2007; Von Osten 2011; Virno 2011a; b; Raunig 2011). The urban studies theorist Richard Florida provides a good example of such an appropriation, claiming that individuals could have more prosperous and fulfilled lives by realising their creative and entrepreneurial ambitions:

We trade job security for autonomy. In addition to being fairly compensated for the work we do and the skills we bring, we want the ability to learn and grow, shape the content of our work, control our own schedules and express our identities through work.

(Florida 2002, p. 13)

Commonly-shared stereotypical assumptions about dance artists' lifestyles evolve around clichés, such as the 'virtuoso' performer and 'visionary', employed to highlight the artists' extraordinary talents, successes and failures. Likewise, the frequently nomadic work lives of artists serve as glamourised examples of artistic freedom, passion and a self-determined life. Other endlessly-perpetuated archetypical constructs, for example the rebellious non-conformist, or on the flipside, the irrational and excessive misfit beyond the reach of reason, come into play when artists resist or oppose artistic, societal or political conventions in their work or through their lifestyles.

The urban social geographer Alison Bain highlights that these constructs are at odds with the economic contexts which dance artists find themselves in:

Although myths of marginality, alienation, 'outsider' status and creative freedom remain potent and have a strong hold on artists themselves, the reality of marketplace requirements currently dictates a different set of demands.

(Bain 2005, p. 2)

Instead, she emphasises that collectively-shared stereotypes provide vital

explanatory, stabilising and reassuring functions which help artists to develop a professional sense of self (Bain 2005, p. 34). They can provide common ground shared with other artists when other signifiers of their professional status, for example employment, funding, commissions and awards, are in short supply and mostly of a transient nature.

Vera Zolberg also paints a very different picture when she insists that ‘the majority of [artists are] either engaged in routine activities or attain a moment of fame only to be rather quickly relegated to the margins of aesthetic regard’ (Zolberg 1990, p. 108). She reminds us that only very few artists and/or the artefacts they produce ‘are universally recognised as extraordinary, unique, innovative, powerful’ (*ibid.*). However, her stance suggests that notions of artists’ unique and autonomous status are deeply embedded in the fabric of the scholarly and public debate. She contends that ‘it is important to recognise that [...] features [such as the artist as genius] are historically-grounded rather than universal and timeless’ (Zolberg 1990, p. 118).

#### *A historically-grounded phenomenon*

Already during Greco-Roman times, the uniqueness of the artist (Porter in Steptoe 1998, p. v) was contemplated: ‘[...] [W]e can take the idea of the artist as a special kind of person, and of the ‘wild’ genius, as far back as the Socratic definition of a poet in Plato’s *Ion*’ (Williams 1979, p. 54).

The Enlightenment and German Idealism provided the conceptual foundations for Western European notions of autonomous art. Theorists such as Immanuel Kant (1781; 1790), Friedrich Schiller (1794) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1835-8) contributed to concepts and principles which evolve around the notion that artists’ practices and their outcomes are determined solely by artistic values and criteria independent from external influences. The Romantic Movement’s focus on nature, emotion and intuition reinforced and expanded on the Idealist perception of the autonomous artist. Artist and artwork were perceived as revealing and transmitting an intuitive, higher kind of truth that is profoundly and sensitively connected to nature (Williams 1979, pp. 58-59).

Modernist theorists, such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, have viewed artists as agents of aesthetic innovation, critique and societal change whose autonomy is a crucial prerequisite to fulfill their role in society. Peter Uwe Hohendahl argues that Adorno elevated the status of the 'authentic work of art' to 'a permanent testament of human history' which he defended against state intervention (Hohendahl 1981, pp. 139-40).

In this respect, notions of autonomy have been intimately associated with political, economic and technological changes and artists' efforts to adapt their artistic practices and economic strategies to such transformations. In order to counter developments they perceived as endangering their livelihoods, artists revived and utilised the collective mythology linked to art and artists as a self-promotional tool and marketing device (Bourdieu 1993; Williams 1979). Many scholars (Williams 1979; Davis 2000; Milhous 1991a; b; Carter 2005a) agree that artists' access to the emerging capitalist markets of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries afforded them greater social independence. Indeed, improved public transport and the developing mass-market for print media made it easier for them to reach their audiences.

At the same time, these opportunities raised challenges. While the printing press made it possible to duplicate original art works for a growing market, printing also turned them into reproducible commodities which threatened the unique status of the work and its creator (Benjamin 2008; Adorno 2004). Raymond Williams notes that: 'At a time when the artist is being described as just one more producer of a commodity for the market, he is describing himself as a specially endowed person' (Williams 1979, p. 53). Hans Abbing concurs that stereotypical assumptions about artists feature prominently when they engage with marketplaces for artistic or arts-related works: 'Myths or persistent beliefs about art and artists make the economy of the arts exceptional' (Abbing 2002, p. 31).

Pierre Bourdieu's field theory provides a useful tool to uncover such deeply ingrained romanticised perceptions of dance artists as labourers. His expressed intention 'to counter naïve notions of creative freedom and innovation'



(Hesmondhalgh 2006, p. 216) has to be a guiding principle when exploring the internal and external forces and processes which determine dance artists' economic activities. Other scholars have shared this interest (Benjamin 1982; Peterson 1976; Peterson & Anand 2004; Williams 1976; 1981) and, according to Georgina Born, 'found it productive to distance the study of the production of culture from the idealist assumptions attached to the notion of art' (Born 2008; 2010).

However, critics such as the philosopher Hubert L. Dreyfus and the anthropologist Paul Rabinow contend that Pierre Bourdieu's theories reduce meaningful human practices and motivations to the competitive accumulation of cultural and symbolic capital (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1993). They, and also others, argue that Bourdieu disregards the transformative aspect of aesthetic evolutionary events and processes (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1993; Born 2010). Indeed, Georgina Born argues that Pierre Bourdieu neglects the seminal contributions of 'aesthetic traditions and particular art works by focussing on the conflictual component of agents' operations in the field' (Born 2008).

### **3. Producing, owning and converting dance knowledge and other forms of capital**

In order to gain a more detailed understanding about dance artists' economic conduct and the value economies they operate in, it is necessary to consider the types of capital they engage with, in and outside of the restricted field. Pierre Bourdieu's notion of capital is closely intertwined with the concept of field and habitus as encapsulated in the 'formula': '[(Habitus) (Capital)] + Field = Practice' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101). That is to say, in order to investigate dance artists' economic behaviours, we will also need to examine the capital dance artists accrue alongside their habitus and position in the field.

#### **i. Different types of capital in the dance field's value economies**

I shall now discuss capital relevant in the theatre dance field's internal value economy. Pierre Bourdieu links different types of material and non-material forms of interchangeable capital (Hanappi 2011, p. 789) to the field of cultural production. As we have seen above, its reversed economy plays a crucial role

in validating the capital which dance artists accumulate. Financial capital, such as fees and wages achieved through artistic production, has no or little value.

The theatre dance field features specific forms of capital, such as cultural, symbolic, social and embodied capital next to financial capital. For example, dance performers accrue physical, cultural and symbolic capital when adopting a company's institutional habitus. Bourdieu categorises educational credentials and knowledge about dance as 'cultural capital'. Cultural capital occurs too in an embodied format and encompasses dance artists' physical skills, body shape and technical facilities which are also referred to as 'physical capital' (Shilling 1993).

'Symbolic capital', on the other hand, evolves around prestige and status. Performing a renowned dance company's repertoire can add significantly to a dancer's prestige and can positively influence their position in the field of restricted production. Similarly, a choreographer accrues cultural and symbolic capital when being commissioned to create a piece for an established dance company's repertoire. One could therefore argue that a mutual exchange of cultural and symbolic capital underpins the relationship between a dance artist and a dance company, with both parties potentially benefitting from their investment.

'Social capital' comprises artists' professional contacts and networks (Bourdieu 1985, p. 248; 1997, p. 51). These offer access to 'collaborators, customers and employees', particularly in the creative industries, and frame interactions in the field through implicit agreements and responsibilities based on shared belief in their mutual benefits (Scott 2012, p. 244). As such, social capital enhances dance artists' cultural and symbolic capital (Accardo & Corcuff, 1986, p. 94) by helping them to access the theatre dance field and smoothing their career trajectories (Grenfell & Hardy 2003, p. 29).

In essence, Bourdieu considers everything as capital which can command an exchange value relevant to the setting in which a transaction takes place (Crossley 2001a). Nick Crossley observes that capital is only valuable if all

participating in a transaction agree that this is case. In other words, it is vital that all individuals involved in an exchange or conversion of capital recognise the value of the capital involved. He thus emphasises the role habitus plays in these transactions: 'Such agreements are precisely rooted in habit; indeed, they are so deeply rooted that they are seldom identified as agreements at all' (Crossley 2001a, p. 87).

Significantly, as already mentioned in the previous section, only position holders in the field can validate and provide a return of symbolic capital on a dance artist's accrued physical and cultural capital. As such, the theatre dance field's gatekeepers measure dance artists' efforts to build a career based on the knowledge they produce in the shape of physical, cultural and symbolic capital which they accumulate in the process (Parviainen 1998, pp. 93-94). Unless peers, specialist critics and scholars acknowledge and approve the work which performers and choreographers produce, for example dancing a part and devising a dance piece, 'the work does not exist as a symbolic object endowed with value' (Parviainen 1998, p. 91). This mechanism is crucial to attach artistic and economic value to dance artists' labour and the artefacts they produce.

## **ii. Embodied knowledge as a form of capital**

I shall now explore qualities unique to dance knowledge and how these influence dance artists' economic activities. As Jaana Parviainen remarks, dance knowledge comprises different modes: the practical embodied knowledge of the dance artist and the conceptual understanding about dance as expressed in written and visual documents (Parviainen 1998, p. 76), and a variety of activities reaching from devising aesthetic works, leisure and educational pursuits to academic research, generating dance knowledge. Undeniably, dance artists are mostly understood to 'produce a new knowledge of the moving body by dancing in a choreographic process or in teaching a dance' (Parviainen 2002, p. 21). Nonetheless, as Parviainen observes, dance artists 'need both modes of knowledge to develop as artists and to modify their identities' (Parviainen 1998, p. 76).

Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework recognises embodied knowledge as a

form of capital which determines artists' positions and status in the field of cultural production. As explained by Steven Wainwright *et al.*, 'the acquisition of physical capital is essential in pursuits where 'the body matters'' (Wainwright *et al.* 2006, p. 536). Dance artists usually accumulate physical capital alongside cultural and symbolic capital by studying at a prestigious dance school and working for renowned choreographers and dance companies. According to Bourdieu, dance artists' physical capital has to be matched by cultural and symbolic capital 'in the embodied state [...] in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the body and the mind' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243). In a similar vein, Wainwright *et al.* concur that embodied capital consists of different forms of capital which dance artists accrue: '[T]he technical abilities of fleshy bodies (physical capital) are combined with an embodied cultural knowledge (artistic capital)' (Wainwright *et al.* 2006, p. 539).

In this respect, it is important to differentiate between what the Finnish dance scholar Jaana Parviainen describes as 'knowledge of dance, which means knowledge in the body, and knowledge about dance' (Parviainen 1998, p. 76). Many theorists suggest that verbal communication and spoken language are crucial aspects of knowledge generation, privileging reasoning, the spoken and written word, instead of intuition and perception. Similarly, Parviainen proposes that dance 'knowledge must be clearly articulated to count as real knowledge (Parviainen 2002, p. 12). Namely, while a dance artist's physical skills and fitness level are essential, they are only useful if they are complemented by an aptitude for expression and interpretation of content which is furthermore underpinned by detailed contextual knowledge.

### *The absent body in the creative economy*

So far, little effort has been made to examine the value and utility of dance artists' embodied ways of knowing for the creative economy. Despite celebrating 'virtuoso cultural producers' (Lorey 2011) and modelling the workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on qualities associated with creative labour, the body has remained absent in the creative economy discourse:

[P]roductive labor as a whole has adopted the particular

characteristics of the artistic performing activity. Whoever produces surplus value in post-Fordism behaves – seen from a structuralist standpoint, of course – like a pianist, a dancer, etc.

(Virno 2004, pp. 154-155)

While practices of generating and sharing knowledge are generally recognised as crucial to the creative economy (Donate & Guadamillas 2011; Crane 2012; Bakhshi *et al.* 2013), embodied ways of generating knowledge in the context of creative production are mostly neglected.

This is not an unusual occurrence limited to the creative industries. Many dance scholars observe that dance artists' embodied and experiential frames of reference are often not acknowledged or understood (Barbour 2004; Brandstetter 2007; Klein 2007; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012). They highlight that in contrast to rational thought and analysis, movement experiences and embodied ways of knowing are not accepted forms of knowledge. What is more, much of the literature points to dance knowledge as being under-represented in the public and scholarly discourse and often misunderstood in its complexity (Parviainen 2002; Barbour 2004; Brandstetter 2007; Klein 2007). As such, the absence of the body and of 'dance as a culture of knowledge' (Parviainen 2002; Brandstetter 2007; Klein 2007) in Western societies needs to be taken into account when examining dance artists' economic behaviours as creators and holders of dance knowledge.

Dance knowledge features distinct characteristics which inform how dance artists, scholars and non-specialists perceive and attach value to it. Notably, dance is often categorised as 'another form of knowledge' (Klein 2007, pp. 28-29) due to its physical and embodied nature as well as its ephemeral quality. Various theorists argue that the neglect of the body as a carrier of knowledge underlines that 'philosophy has established itself on a profound somatophobia' (Grosz 1994 cited in Barbour 2004, p. 228). The New Zealand dance scholar Karen Barbour refers to this 'dualism of mind and body' when she draws on

Plato and René Descartes and their notions of the mind and body as separate entities (Barbour 2004, p. 228).

Nonetheless, a substantial body of work suggests alternative concepts of the body and its cognitive capacities (Merleau-Ponty 1962; 1964; Sheets-Johnstone 1999; Barbour 2004). For the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, for example, mind and body are closely connected. He views the body as central to an individual's ability to comprehend and experience the world (Merleau-Ponty 1962; 1964). Likewise, the dance scholar Maxine Sheets-Johnstone proposes that movement provides the foundation for all our 'sense-makings' of the world around us (Sheets-Johnstone 1999, p. 161). She contends that individuals' kinaesthetic experiences enable them to negotiate the world as 'knowers'. Karen Barbour draws on her own movement experiences when she examines embodied ways of knowing: 'I never encountered another person without a body, or knowledge existing without an embodied knower (Flax 1993). Everything that I have done myself required a body, from speaking and thinking and working to eating and sleeping and dancing (Nettleton & Watson, 1998)' (Barbour 2004, pp. 229 – 230).

#### *Owning and converting embodied capital*

Following on, dance artists' specialist expertise and skills are not conventional and commonly accepted forms of capital and reliant on the validation through the restricted field. Furthermore, ownership of embodied capital and practices of capital conversion are fraught with risks which can devalue or impinge on opportunities to utilise a dance artist's embodied capital.

It needs to be taken into account that dance knowledge, such as its codified movement vocabularies, devising styles and the repertoire of dance works, is passed down from one generation of dance artists to the next one. Parviainen notes that dance artists often perceive themselves as custodians of dance knowledge who ensure its continuity rather than as property holders. This 'tradition entails the notion that a dance cannot be an individual's own invention [and is] not under her/his control' (Parviainen 1998, p. 77). At the same time, customarily, ownership models in the arts have evolved around the single

author. Vera Zolberg states:

We view the artist as one who makes things which are separate or separable from him or herself. Except for property rights which permit the artist to sell or make contracts concerning the works, or moral rights, which extend the artist's interest in the work beyond its immediate sale or use, the work is no more a part of the person who makes it than any other property.

(Zolberg, 1990, p. 112)

These traditional notions of ownership are further complicated by increasingly collaborative production formats in which 'the individual artist is prosaically transformed into a team player, one of a number of possible collaborators' (Zolberg 1990, p. 108). Collaborative production settings, with multiple authors devising an artefact, challenge the established notion of single authorship and an ownership model which links capital to a clearly identifiable individual.

Current trends 'of immersing audiences within theatrical worlds and inviting them to participate' (Harvie 2013, p. 1) which can be linked to New Labour's 'access for all' agenda (DCMS 1998a) (see p. 101), according to Jen Harvie, also devalue artists' specialist input (p. 41). This development not only replaces artists with amateur performers but it also obscures artists' stake in productions by undermining their status as skilled contributors to original content. Similarly, digital technologies and social media allow for relatively easy access to dance works, offering ample opportunities for what Vera Zolberg coins: 'Re-readings and re-creation works by successive receptors' (Zolberg 1990, p. 108). These phenomena, which some have likened to the 'death of the author' (Barthes 1977; Foucault 1979; Bourdieu 1986), might further undermine established models of ownership and authorship.

In addition, the physical, cultural and symbolic capital which dance artists 'own' is susceptible to changes in contemporary theatre dance and society. For example, the appeal and popularity of body types, dance genres and styles may fluctuate in response to artistic developments and changing trends. Sociologist

Chris Shilling highlights that: 'The value attached to particular bodies changes over time; as fields within society change, so may the forms of physical capital they reward' (Shilling 1993, p. 121). When new arrivals in the field introduce a different aesthetic or an unusual approach to devising and staging theatre dance, this might add value to some dance artists' capital, yet others who are not able or willing to adapt to these new developments may lose out. As these changes are unpredictable, they add significant risks to dance artists' accumulated capital and make it difficult to foresee if their significant investment in training and further professional development will bear fruit. Shilling notes:

Physical capital *cannot* be purchased [...] acts of labour are involved in the acquisition of symbolically valued bodies for each new generation. [...] the actual acquisition of any type of physical capital is never guaranteed.

(Shilling 1993, p. 124)

Bourdieu contends that 'physical capital cannot be accumulated beyond the appropriating capacities of an individual agent [...] it declines and dies with its bearer' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 245). But dance artists can engage in practices of capital conversion by exchanging physical, cultural and symbolic capital for economic capital. Within the overall field of cultural production, their accumulated physical, symbolic, cultural and social capital, or knowledge and expertise is recognised as commodity or service. For instance, dancers transitioning into a new role in the contemporary theatre dance or dance-related field as choreographers, teachers or academics can convert their accrued physical, cultural and symbolic capital to financial capital. In doing so, performers utilise their expertise, skills and reputation to transition into other work fields, such as teaching, choreography and rehearsal direction (Wainwright, *et al.* 2006b, pp. 242-243). Their professional expertise and prestige as a dance artist helps them to acquire a new job.

## **Concluding remarks**

This chapter has introduced the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's corpus of work on notions of habitus, field and capital and has explored their conceptual



appropriateness for a study of contemporary theatre dance artists' economic conduct. It has taken Stephen Wainwright *et al.*'s study of The Royal Ballet's dance artists as a point of departure to demonstrate infrastructural and economic differences between the ballet and contemporary dance sector. The chapter has argued why variances, such as sectorial funding levels and prestige, have necessitated amending the notion of habitus to fit the contemporary theatre dance field. It then has proceeded to discuss how Bourdieu's field theory has offered many opportunities to examine the different value economies with which dance artists engage during their work lives. In particular, its detailed focus on their value-generating principles provided a helpful framework when investigating the possible economic functions and effects of romanticised views and idealisations on dance artists' economic activities and status. Similarly, Bourdieu's critical position with regard to romantic notions of artistic labour has aided this purpose. Finally, the chapter has examined the status of dance knowledge in Western societies, and the unique qualities of dance knowledge which differentiates it from other forms of knowledge. For this purpose, it has discussed specific characteristics of dance knowledge by drawing on Bourdieu's notion of capital. These have encompassed its unstable and transient qualities, notions of ownership in the dance sector and practices to convert dance knowledge into financial capital.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **The creative economy as a work field for contemporary theatre dance artists**

This chapter examines how cultural policies as articulated by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE) in policy documents, reports and strategic frameworks have affected the theatre dance field. In order to provide a dance and genre-specific focus on an extensive research field, it is crucial to identify the ideological, structural and economic dimensions of New Labour's cultural policy rationale. This is particularly important as many argue that initiatives and interventions during these years constituted a significant shift in attitudes towards the arts and culture sector which still affects artists and cultural practitioners today (Oakley 2009; 2011; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012; EXCHANGE 2013; Easton & Cauldwell-French 2017).

This chapter has two sections. The first section, under the heading *New Labour's vision and policies for a creative economy*, introduces and reviews New Labour's creative economy rationale. For this purpose, I shall briefly outline key aspects, such as the creative economy's historical background and its appeal to policymakers worldwide. I shall then proceed to examine the reasoning behind the DCMS's focus on the arts and culture's instrumental benefits in regeneration, education and health. Among other things, I shall discuss political constraints but also pragmatic considerations which informed New Labour's approach. The following section, titled *Delivering and monitoring New Labour's creative economy vision: DCMS, ACE and its stakeholders*, will examine how the DCMS and ACE conveyed New Labour's plans and oversaw local authorities and the dance sector implementing centrally-driven governmental policy objectives.

#### **1. New Labour's vision and policies for a creative economy**

New Labour's programmatic vision of a creative economy identified creativity and entrepreneurship as key drivers of economic prosperity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Both lay at the core of New Labour's policies, which position the arts and culture

sector as vital contributors to a transformational overhaul of the UK's economic, social and cultural landscape (DCMS 1998a; b; 1999a; b; 2000a; b; 2001a; b; 2008a; b; 2009). The then Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997-2007) summarised New Labour's ambitions concisely:

This Government knows that culture and creativity matter. [...] They [...] matter because creative talent will be crucial to our individual and national economic success in the economy of the future.

(Blair 2001)

However, far from merely employing arts and culture to develop an optimistic blueprint for societal and economic reform, New Labour located them close to the heart of government. As stated by Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport between 1997-2001: 'The arts are not optional extras for governments; they are at the very centre of our mission' (Smith 1998, p. 42). Undeniably, this was an unparalleled approach considering that previous UK governments had unswervingly relegated the arts to the sidelines of politics (Gray 2004, p. 41; Hetherington 2014, p. 1).

It is also noteworthy that policymakers' interest in a creative economy model has been gradual in its build up and influenced by prior efforts to define the arts as an industry sector (Miller 1999; Roodhouse 2006; Oakley 2009; Harvie 2013). Local governments in the early 1980s started to harness the economic potential of the sector, long before media expert and business consultant John Howkins first popularised the term 'creative economy' in his seminal book *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money From Ideas* (2001) which deliberates the relationship between creativity, innovation and economics (Howkins 2001). Labour-run local authorities, such as the Greater London Council (GLC) between 1981 and 1986, developed cultural industry strategies to combat the devastating effect of the deindustrialisation which took place under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990). At the same time, conservative politicians in central government expressed a keen interest in entrepreneurship and the economic value of the arts and culture.

It is fair to say that New Labour's vision and policies merged both initiatives. Some refer to a 'paradoxical alliance' of the social democratic policies of the GLC (Bilton 2010, p. 257) and 'the Thatcherite ethos that is efficiency, effectiveness, value for money, and market forces' (Roodhouse 2006, p. 16). What is more, this economic rationale is not exclusive to New Labour and politicians in the UK. According to Christiaan De Beukelaer, 'virtually every country around the world now uses the concept (or one of its variants) in politics, policy, advocacy and practice' (De Beukelaer 2015, p. 18). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimated in 2008 that the creative economy globally contributed to 3.4 % of total world trade, and exports of \$424 billion (UNCTAD 2008). The educationalist Michael A. Peters acknowledges that the creative industries form a vital part of knowledge-based economies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

There is now widespread agreement among economists, sociologists and policy analysts that creativity, design and innovation are at the heart of the global knowledge economy: together creativity, design and innovation define knowledge capitalism and its ability to continuously reinvent itself.

(Peters 2010, pp. 69-70)

At the same time, this economic notion meets very different aspirations and challenges worldwide. These span distinctive national goals ranging from regenerating and transforming Western economies to developing newly-industrialised nations and emerging markets (De Beukelaer 2015).

### **i. New Labour's cultural policy rationale**

In the UK, the creative economy model offered a post-industrial alternative to overcome long-standing problems of economic decline and social inequality. Fundamentally, it provided politicians with 'a political narrative of modernisation [which relied on] knowledge rather than natural resources and manufacturing skills' (Bakhshi *et al.* 2013b, pp. 17-18). Indeed, policymakers optimistically predicted that the arts and culture sector would contribute to economic growth. This would be achieved through individual creativity, innovation and knowledge spillovers from the publicly-funded creative and expressive arts to commercial

sections of the creative economy's infrastructure (DCMS 1998a; b; 1999a; b; 2000a; b; 2001a; b; 2006; 2008a; b; 2009).

New Labour's cultural policies, as outlined in *A New Cultural Framework*, identified four overarching key objectives: 'access, excellence, education, creative industries' (DCMS 1998a, p. 2). These priorities unequivocally emphasised the instrumental benefits of the arts and dance by 'stress[ing] the non-cultural and non-artistic dimension to art in ways that have rarely been so explicitly stated in the past' (Doustaly & Gray 2010, p. 332). Against this background, dance featured as a subsector of the performing arts within *DCMS 13*, the government's creative industries model (DCMS 1998b).

In addition, high-profile flagship initiatives demonstrated New Labour's ambitions. For instance, the *National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts* (NESTA), founded in 1998, was to advise and support artists, creative entrepreneurs and businesses. Its remit helped to propagate the creative industries by funding practitioners, their projects, and disseminating an extensive body of research. *Creative Partnerships*<sup>13</sup>, when it commenced in 2002, improved the access to artistic and creative activities for teachers and pupils of participating schools through embedding creative learning in primary and secondary education. Furthermore, policymakers, scholars and creative practitioners benefitted from the numerous research programmes which accompanied both schemes (Thomson *et al.* 2014).

#### *New roles for dance artists and the dance sector*

New Labour's policymakers elevated holders of creative and artistic skills to vital contributors to societal progress and economic growth by linking the arts and culture to economic prosperity, education, health and regeneration. But the emphasis on instrumental aspects of dance revised dance artists' roles in society. Indeed, dance and other creative practices progressed from obscure vocations or hobbies for a few to being beneficial and relevant activities for all.

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<sup>13</sup> *Creative Partnerships* reached 1 million children and over 90000 teachers, delivering more than 8000 projects across 5000 primary, secondary and special educational needs (SEN) schools in England. The programme ended when the Coalition government cut its funding in 2011 (Thomson 2014 *et al.*; CCE 2017).

What is more, creative labour was repeatedly linked to fundamental and frequently idealised values, such as self-realisation and personal autonomy. This form of 'value amplification' is a common feature of many political reforms (Béland 2007, pp. 93-94). David Snow *et al.* state:

Value amplification refers to the identification, idealisation, and elevation of one or more values presumed basic to prospective constituents but which have not inspired collective action for any number of reasons.

(Snow *et al.* 1986, p. 469)

Simply put, New Labour attempted to convey its vision by blending values and aspirations that were meaningful to many, such as 'access for all' to artistic and cultural activities (DCMS 1999b; 2001b; b; 2004; DCMS 2008a), with an economic rationale (ACE 2003b; 2008c; e; f; ACE-NE 2005b; ACE-NW 2006a; DCMS 1998a; 1999a; 2001b; 2008b; 2009; The Work Foundation 2007).

Ambitious and enthusiastic assertions about the utility and impact of arts and culture, many of which reached way beyond the traditional perimeters of cultural policymaking, accompanied this process (Oakley 2009c). What is more, the DCMS and ACE underpinned their emphatic declarations about these benefits with actions which clearly demonstrated political intent. For instance, when New Labour reconfigured the Department for National Heritage in 1997 as the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, this move confirmed to policymakers, stakeholders and the electorate alike that the government was serious about the sector (White & Dunleavy 2010, p. 6). The cultural policy expert Clive Gray notes:

Both [arts and culture] have traditionally been dealt with by governments either reluctantly [...] or at a low level of priority, with little money and even less enthusiasm being expended upon them, and with direct policy and management concern being undertaken at least 'arm's-length' from the centre (Gray 2000). [...] both policy areas being considered too peripheral to the 'real' business of

government to merit much concern.

(Gray 2004, p. 41)

By instituting close links with the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Department of Trade and Industries (DTI)<sup>14</sup>, New Labour purposefully broadened the DCMS's remit and increased its reach beyond traditional departmental boundaries. This 'policy attachment' strategy, following Clive Gray, assisted the DCMS in generating cross-departmental support through:

A process by which a public sector that had limited public visibility, very limited budgets and even less political clout gradually came to 'attach itself' to other, more prominent and better resourced areas of the welfare state, in the hope of sharing into their budgets and partaking of their greater political relevance.

(Gray 2002, cited in Belfiore 2012, p. 105)

However, this strategic approach, to be truly effective, required more than shared goals that were meaningful to education, business and health departments alike, as Stephen Hetherington explains:

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport claimed a central role for cultural policy in realising New Labour's social and economic objectives, yet it attempted to do so with policies well beyond the remit of any previous arts or implicitly cultural department.

(Hetherington 2014, p. 1)

To this end, the DCMS's policy objectives needed to be pertinent to national,

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<sup>14</sup> New Labour reconfigured both departments several times. The DfEE in 2001 changed into the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). In 2007, following Gordon Brown becoming Prime Minister, DfES was split into the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). Likewise, the Department for Trade and Industries (DTI), founded in 1970, was reorganised in 2007 as the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). In 2009, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) succeeded BERR.

regional and local levels of government. What is more, they had to convincingly serve a wide range of aims ranging from creative learning and economic growth to community regeneration and health. Cécile Doustaly and Clive Gray note:

There has been the development of two distinct forms of attachment strategy in the case of the arts. [...] The first of these is concerned with overall sectorial coherence through joining-up mechanisms, primarily at the regional and local levels [...] and the second is concerned with a more straight-forward policy attachment model where the arts sector links itself to the policy concerns of other policy sectors altogether, leading to an instrumentalisation of arts policy.

(Doustaly & Gray 2010, pp. 331-332)

The DCMS certainly managed to secure the necessary political and financial support through applying this strategic approach. Undeniably, it too affirmed its institutional authority as a new governmental department (Hetherington 2014; Doustaly & Gray 2010). However, the downside of value amplification and policy attachment strategies were that policymakers had to find ways and means to prove their ambitious claims about the arts and culture's positive impact on regeneration and economic growth.

## **ii. Measuring the value of dance**

Determining values and benefits associated with arts and culture and their economic contributions is a complex undertaking. The many attempts to devise effective methods to measure their impact during New Labour's time in government underscore that practitioners, policymakers and researchers have struggled to 'place a measurable value on arts and culture [and] to prescribe a value to things that cannot be touched or counted' (EXCHANGE *et al.* 2013, p.13).

This wide-ranging discourse features two main strands of research. One is concerned with determining the arts' intrinsic values and their contribution to society (Throsby & Withers 1982; Ellis 2003; DCMS 2004; Joss 2008). For



instance, the study of the Australian economists David Throsby and Glenn Withers *Measuring the Demand for the Arts as a Public Good* (1982) employs notions of public or contingent value when measuring the arts' impact (Throsby & Withers 1982). As such, both authors are interested in determining the intrinsic value of local arts provision. They find that even people who do not engage with the arts are proud of arts venues in their locality and judge the opportunities they provide as valuable and important (Throsby & Withers 1982).

Overall, scholars and policymakers continue to grapple with how best to evidence intrinsic benefits (McCarthy *et al.* 2004; Holden 2006). The *Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts* (2004), devised by the American social scientist Kevin F. McCarthy and his team of co-researchers, comprehensively examines the close links between the intrinsic values of an artistic experience and the arts' instrumental benefits (McCarthy *et al.* 2004).

Ultimately, McCarthy *et al.* (*ibid.*) but also John Holden (2006) argue that a lack of intrinsic artistic quality is most likely to reduce the instrumental value of an artistic experience:

But it is difficult to achieve instrumental ends in the absence of intrinsic value and, in order to achieve their instrumental aims, *all* professionals will seek to achieve the highest intrinsic quality in their work.

(Holden 2006, p. 26)

The extent to which intrinsic and extrinsic benefits are intertwined becomes evident in McCarthy *et al.*'s detailed research. In essence, they differentiate between intrinsic benefits which are private, such as captivation and pleasure, and those which are public, for instance the creation of social bonds and the expression of communal meaning. Importantly, their research also attends to the more ambiguous area of private benefits with public spillovers, for example, individuals' expanded capacity for empathy and cognitive growth which benefits society. In a similar manner, McCarthy *et al.* distinguish between the private benefits of the arts' extrinsic values, such as improved wellbeing, and the public benefits of social capital and economic growth (McCarthy *et al.* 2004, p. 4).

At the same time, a significant number of studies have exclusively examined instrumental impacts of arts and culture (DCMS 1999a; b; 2000; Shellard 2004; KEA 2006; DCMS 2008a; Higgs *et al.* 2008). According to some authors, their focus on measurable outputs disqualify them as suitable tools to make the case for the arts. Australian policy analyst and economist Christopher Madden argues that economic impact studies 'distract attention away from the articulation of better advocacy arguments' (Madden 2001, p. 161).

Madden's reasoning is particularly important for the dance sector. Its small size and relatively low level of economic return, compared with the other performing arts, does not necessarily imply that it is less significant within the overall ecology of creative industries. However, it is often overlooked as a sector and even dance advocates find it difficult to make an economic case when asking for government support which I shall demonstrate below. HR specialist and arts advisor Judi Piggott moreover problematises that most economic impact studies do not capture what she terms the 'individual creative worker as asset and economic contributor' (Piggott 2008, p. 2). Instead, they neglect artists' particular economic behaviours and related economic impacts and thus fail to understand their 'livelihood systems' (*ibid.*).

Bakhshi *et al.* (2009) have raised the issue that this lack of specialist and detailed insights has played a significant part in the critical stance of artists and arts organisations towards ACE's funding priorities and monitoring systems: 'When arts funding decisions use methods appropriate for manufacturing or ICT, it is no wonder that the criteria applied seem alien to the arts community' (Bakhshi *et al.* 2009, p.13). All in all, I contend that the lack of genre-specific knowledge about artists' economic activities has not been helpful when trying to develop systems to determine the intrinsic or extrinsic values of arts and culture.

### **iii. Introducing new business models**

Despite these robust debates and unresolved issues with measuring the arts' value and impact, artists and creative workers have supported many aspects of New Labour's creative economy vision (McRobbie 2004; Gill 2007; Oakley

2011). The ethos propagated by many initiatives founded under New Labour suggested that the business models offered by the creative industries were 'inherently progressive' (Banks & Hesmondhalgh 2009, p. 416).

Notions of self-realisation and more self-determined work lives which policymakers linked to creative labour when they pledged to 'free [...] the best artists to get on with their jobs' (DCMS 2001b, p. 12) appealed to these audiences. Kate Oakley notes that the nature of the work promoted thus 'could all be constructed as a story of good, even ideal, work' (Oakley 2011). It thus does not astonish that practitioners, policymakers and scholars worldwide, representing a variety of genres, political convictions and academic disciplines, continue to express an interest in the creative economy model. Indeed, as highlighted by Christiaan De Beukelaer 'the discourse of the creative economy is global' and ongoing (De Beukelaer 2015, p. 18). Crucially, Jen Harvie observes that arts organisations and artists have adopted the more business-oriented operational formats linked to the creative economy in order to alleviate growing financial pressures caused by governmental austerity measures since the banking crisis in 2008 (Harvie 2013, p. 15).

A common denominator of all creative industries frameworks is that they connect arts for art's sake practices to commercial settings and strategies, an interpretation which was reinforced by Secretary of State for Culture Chris Smith when he promised to: 'ensur[e] that the full economic and employment impact of the whole range of creative industries is acknowledged and assisted by government' (Smith cited in Roodhouse 2006, pp. 16-17).

At the same time, many find it difficult to describe what constitutes the creative industries. Commentators agree that the multitude of different models and their individual interpretations make it a difficult endeavour to define their exact remit (O'Connor 2007; Lee 2010; Gill & Pratt 2008). A report published by Skillset and Creative & Cultural Skills emphasises:

The nature of and activities associated with the creative industries mean that the development of one consistent understanding of the

structure, spillovers and influence of the sector will always be a complex issue, open to many competing and complementary theories.

(Skillset & Creative & Cultural Skills 2011, p. 10)

It is thus useful briefly to outline key efforts to conceptualise the creative industries and their remit under New Labour.

The *DCMS 13* model was the first of many attempts to define the creative industries. The *Creative Industries Mapping Documents* (1998a) explain that they comprise ‘those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ (DCMS 1998a, p. 3). In the eyes of the DCMS, thirteen key sectors fulfilled the above criteria: ‘advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and television and radio’ (*ibid.*). While the *DCMS 13* model has been influential and popular with policymakers and scholars on a global scale (De Beukelaer 2015), it also has been the subject of ongoing debates about how to classify creative producers more effectively within an industry context.

The Work Foundation in 2007 recommended differentiating between ‘creative industries’ which achieve expressive value and ‘cultural industries’ focused on mass (re-) production of ‘expressive outputs’ (Work Foundation 2007). Their proposal derived from David Throsby’s *Concentric Circle* model (2001b, pp. 122-113, 2008) which suggests that ‘core creative fields’, such as the performing arts, contribute to ‘commercial outputs [that] possess a high degree of expressive value and invoke copyright protection’ (Work Foundation 2007, p. 6). To put it in another way, the knowledge spillovers generated through the research, development and rehearsal activities, for example of independent dance artists when producing dance works, can benefit larger-scale commercial performing arts companies, directly or indirectly.

By contrast, NESTA’s *Creating Growth Model* (2006) categorises contemporary

theatre dance artists as 'creative experience providers' who deliver 'an experience [that] is consumed at the time and place of performance (NESTA 2006, p. 6). This model distinguishes between four areas of creative production: originals, content, services and experiences. For instance, dance producers generate commercial value by devising original dance works. They provide services and experiences through the staging of performances but also through teaching dance classes and workshops or holding post-performance talks.

Finally, the Technology Strategy Board's *Creative Industries Segmentation Strategy* (2009) responds to the increasing digitalisation of creative products and services. It discriminates between physical and digital products as well as manual and technologically-aided creative processes, and identifies three types of outputs: artefacts, services and content. In dance terms, this industry model anticipates that dance content will be increasingly located on digital platforms, via web streaming, apps and digital archives.

Overall, it is noteworthy that inconsistencies and shortcomings have hampered most attempts at classifying the creative industries. Bakhshi *et al.* have noted repeatedly 'that concepts like the 'creative industries' and 'creative economy' – indeed 'creativity' itself – although widely used by policymakers, lacked sufficiently clear and rigorous definitions' (Bakhshi *et al.* 2013a; 2015, p. 6). They have pointed out that the worldwide popularity of the *DCMS 13* creative industries model overshadows significant inconsistencies (Bakhshi *et al.* 2013a, p. 6-7). In a similar vein, Philip Schlesinger and Charlotte Waelde underline that *DCMS 13's* popular appeal is unusual: 'It is doubtless[ly] rare for a conceptually and empirically flimsy government report to achieve widespread influence in international academic and policy circles' (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 15). However, the impression here is that other aspects too played an important part in developing the normative basis for social, political and economic change in relation to the creative industries. In order to identify these, it is thus essential to examine in what manner the DCMS and ACE translated New Labour's vision into policy objectives.

## **2. Delivering and monitoring New Labour's creative economy vision: DCMS, Arts Council England and its stakeholders**

The close links between the DCMS, ACE and its stakeholders are evident when examining ACE's *Dance Policy* (ACE 2006a). The document unmistakably draws on the DCMS's priorities for arts and culture: 'taking part in the arts, children and young people, the creative economy, vibrant communities, internationalism and celebrating diversity' (2006a, p. 2) as outlined in previous publications (DCMS 1998a; 2001b). Furthermore, ACE clearly states that it expects dance artists to 'pursue new opportunities' (*ibid.*) and to meet its funding priorities. Crucially, it explicitly warns dance artists of potential consequences if they choose not to engage with its objectives: 'We are prepared to make choices – sometimes tough ones – about how we commit our funding to respond to the kind of ambitious thinking and high-quality work that will take our priorities forward' (*ibid.*).

Undeniably, this echoes Secretary of State Chris Smith's thinly-veiled threat in *A New Cultural Framework* (1998a) which first outlined the DCMS's funding commitments and expectations for the sector:

The Government has provided the resources and the will, but we know that we cannot just sit back and hope that these are transformed into better and more accessible performances, sporting records, improved cultural education and more opportunities for the excluded. We will give direction; we will set targets and chase progress; and where appropriate we will take direct action to make sure that our objectives are achieved.

(DCMS 1998a pp. 1-2)

Unsurprisingly, artists frequently complained about their difficult relationships with ACE and the various inadequacies of its funding system, as John Holden observed:

Many artists feel that they are made to jump through hoops and that

they create art in spite of the funding system. Their ability to ‘play the game’ and write highly articulate funding proposals is more important than the work that they make or facilitate.

(Holden 2004, p. 14)

Furthermore, numerous changes to agreements between the DCMS and ACE throughout New Labour’s time in government (Doustaly & Gray 2010) resulted in continuously-evolving monitoring regimes which artists and organisations found time-consuming and costly to implement (Holden 2004; Doustaly & Gray 2010). White *et al.* highlight that such conditions limited artists’ ability to respond to arising artistic opportunities. They also ‘create climates of vulnerability, distrust and paranoia, overdependence on and over conformity to organisational dictates, [and] inhibit creativity’ (White *et al.* 2014, pp. 51-52).

While there might have been some exceptions, I maintain that the above observations are representative of the way in which DCMS and ACE steered its stakeholders to deliver and monitor set policy objectives. Indeed, I contend these strategies provide the backbone to policy interventions, such as *Creative Partnerships*. It thus requires further examination to understand the reasoning behind adopting this approach which proved so controversial with some key stakeholders.

#### **i. The policy ‘delivery chain’ from the DCMS to dance artists**

Stephen Hetherington’s study of New Labour’s cultural policy rationale demonstrates how performance targets formulated in Public Service Agreements (PSAs) cascaded down a ‘delivery chain’ from the Treasury to all recipients of grant funding. In his words, ‘financial assistance was unilaterally co-opted into the consanguineous policy objectives originated by HM Treasury’ (Hetherington 2014, p. 142). It was thus crucial for the DCMS to provide evidence that its interventions had met targets agreed with the Treasury, for example those linked to improved access to arts and culture, regeneration and the creative industries. To achieve this, New Labour’s policymakers opted for a

centrally-controlled 'top-down' approach which required all parties involved in the funding process to monitor funded activities against agreed targets and priorities. Cécile Doustaly and Clive Gray emphasise:

The Labour governments post-1997 have effectively been more managerially interventionist into the arts sector than the Conservatives were through [...] the use of the reformed versions of NPM that [Labour] have been associated with.

(Doustaly & Gray 2010, p. 322)

In order to ensure the joined-up multi-agency approach, which its policy attachment strategy required, the DCMS introduced managerial systems inspired by New Public Management (NPM) thinking. In the 1990s, NPM was popular with local and national administrations which found themselves under pressure to deliver efficient and accountable public services (Lapsley 2009, p. 2). NPM protocols were thus employed to closely monitor the outcomes which policy interventions achieved. The consultant and cultural policy expert Sara Selwood highlights:

The gathering of evidence about the impact of the sector has assumed centre stage in the management of the subsidised cultural sector in England. It is closely associated with an extension of government control over the sector, and the tendency to value culture for its 'impact' rather than its intrinsic value.

(Selwood 2002, p. 13)

As such, the DCMS's governance framework was 'based on network arrangements integrating local authorities and representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors, Regional Development Agencies and [Non-Departmental Public Bodies]' (Doustaly & Gray 2010, p. 328). For instance, to meet the Treasury's performance targets, all involved had to agree on jointly-pursued performance criteria, accounting and management practices.



According to Cécile Doustaly and Clive Gray, these incorporated 'adopt[ing] new management methods based on structural reforms, joined-up decision making, public/private/voluntary partnerships, accountability, users' consultation and participation [and] increased control mechanisms' (Doustaly & Gray 2010, p. 320). In other words, ACE and local authorities had to undergo significant structural and organisational changes. As a result, dance artists encountered ever-changing prescriptive expectations and review systems when applying for funding. These generally emphasised quantifiable criteria, such as attendance and participation numbers.

#### *Arts Council England (ACE)*

Since its inception, and in its various configurations throughout its history, ACE is perceived by many as a non-governmental public body which distributes allocated funds from the Treasury at arm's-length from central government. Although some may argue that policymakers under New Labour disregarded this principle, with Public Service Agreements (PSA) between the DCMS and ACE clearly stipulating expected priorities and outcomes (Doustaly & Gray 2010).

But Nicola Miller indicates that ACE fulfilled multiple institutional roles even before New Labour instigated its joined-up multi-agency strategy:

[ACE] can be considered as an economic institution insofar as it is primarily concerned with the dispersal of money. It is a political institution in that it receives its funding directly from the government, and also in that its chairman (there have so far been no chair women) is appointed by a government minister. It is a cultural institution in that its concern is that of arts and arguably therefore cultural policy.

(Miller 1999, p. 18)

It is therefore not unusual that ACE has articulated and conveyed New Labour's creative economy agenda to artists via its strategic frameworks, annual review systems and policy documents. However, the DCMS's quest for quantifiable

evidence underpinned by NPM-inspired bureaucratic protocols has exerted significant pressure on ACE and its funded dance clients to meet priorities and targets.

This situation has not been helped by DCMS and ACE regularly failing to meet their ambitious targets. For example, while the 2001-2004 public service agreement (PSA) between DCMS and ACE contained relatively unspecific objectives, the agreement for 2005-2008 identified twenty detailed quantitative targets. When ACE did not succeed in meeting eighteen of these, the 2009-2011 PSA reverted back to a more general approach which aspired to 'increase' its outputs (DCMS 2009, p. 165). Without doubt, the varying agreements have influenced how ACE has monitored and reviewed its funded clients.

As numerous observers have pointed out, New Labour's policymakers struggled with making their case to other departments and faced opposition from governmental insiders, ACE's grant-funded clients and other stakeholders (Joss 2008; Bakhshi *et al.* 2013a). It is thus not surprising that the 'golden age' for the arts as proclaimed by Prime Minister Tony Blair in his speech at Tate Modern (Blair 2007) was short-lived. While ACE's spending on dance under New Labour had initially increased to 12.44% of ACE's total expenditure, dance funding started to decline by 2007/2008 to 10.78% of ACE's overall spending on the arts and culture (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 32). Following Bakhshi *et al.*: 'The visionary dynamics of *Creative Britain* were encountering resistance. Education policymakers were not convinced by [ACE's Chairman Gerry] Robinson's creativity agenda. Business and innovation policymakers did not act upon [the] Cox Review<sup>15</sup>' (Bakhshi *et al.* 2013a, p. 22).

### *Local authorities*

Local authorities played an important part in implementing New Labour's policy objectives: 'Local authorities are a significant partner for the Arts Council,

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<sup>15</sup> Bakhshi *et al.* (2013a) list George Cox's *Creativity in Britain: Building on the UK's Strengths*, commissioned by HM Treasury, Richard Caves's *Creative Industries: Contracts between Art and Commerce* (2000) and Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) as key publications, which underpinned New Labour's creative economy agenda.

particularly in supporting access and participation work' (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 14). In 2004, they were the second-largest funder of the arts and culture in England and contributed approximately 57% of all arts spending (Gray 2004, p. 40). Forty local PSAs, drawn up by the DCMS between 1999 and 2010, regulating their engagement with arts and culture, are testament to their significance (Doustaly & Gray 2010, pp. 9-10). Gray notes:

Local authorities have been considered by central government to be the key organisations for developing and coordinating cultural policy since the original founding of the DCMS as the Department of National Heritage in 1992.

(Gray 2004, p. 39)

ACE's *Stakeholder Focus Research* report in 2010 also confirms the role of local authorities and arts organisations as its key stakeholders (dha 2010, p. 2). As producers, funders and employers, they played a vital role in the contemporary theatre dance sector. More significantly for this study, they engaged directly with dance artists and were frequently crucial in facilitating the relationships between local artists, arts organisations and ACE.

Local arts teams, alongside their responsibilities for the arts and culture sector, were often key brokers of work opportunities for dance artists in national strategic initiatives such as *New Deals for Communities*, *Neighbourhood Renewal Fund* and *Education and Health Action Zones*<sup>16</sup>. This vital role of local authorities is also evidenced in numerous strategic documents, such as *Local Cultural Strategies* (DCMS 1999b), *Regional Cultural Consortiums* (DCMS 1999c), *Creating Opportunities* (DCMS 2000) and *Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy* (DCMS 2006). These publications illustrate the DCMS's intention to communicate directly to regional and local agencies 'with a perceived interest in using and developing culture as a tool for social and economic regeneration and/or enhancement' (Gray 2004, p. 39). As Clive Gray

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<sup>16</sup> *New Deals for Communities*, *Neighbourhood Renewal Fund* and *Education and Health Action Zones* were programmes which supported the most deprived local authorities to promote regeneration and address issues related to educational underachievement, health and other inequalities.

suggests, this was a huge and complex task for local governments:

Local authorities need [...] to pay attention to at least five different central government departments, four separate task forces, and ten 'arm's-length' 'sponsored agencies', as well as at least ten statutory plans and five non-statutory ones, alongside the local authority's own corporate strategy, best value plan, individual service strategies and plans.

(Gray 2004, pp. 39-40)

Considering centrally-driven targets and extensive monitoring mechanisms which I have outlined above, it is not surprising that the relationship between the different partners was often difficult to negotiate, according to John Holden:

The problem is particularly acute in the relationship between local authorities and the cultural organisations that they fund. Even where targets refer to cultural activities, they are often expressed in terms of efficiency, cost-per-user and audience diversity, rather than discussed in terms of cultural achievement. In turn, the funding bodies and the DCMS will have marshalled statistics on the social outcomes of the activities that they fund, and deployed arguments about how culture helps social integration, economic regeneration and health. The attempt to make the effects of culture transparent and manageable, in order to support it effectively, has somehow obscured the true nature of the activities and experiences themselves.

(Holden 2004, pp. 13-14)

This might also explain why not all local authorities allocated the same level of funding to their arts budgets or provided arts and culture services during New Labour's time in government (National Association of Local Government Arts Officers 2008). It is also interesting that local authority involvement in the arts and culture in England<sup>17</sup> has remained a non-statutory commitment.

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<sup>17</sup> In 2003, local authority arts funding became a statutory requirement in Scotland.

### *The theatre dance sector*

The dance sector as the recipient and beneficiary of funding is the final link in Stephen Hetherington's 'delivery chain' (Hetherington 2014, p. 142). The *Dance Manifesto* (Dance UK *et al.* 2006) reflected the sector's relationship with the DSMS and ACE when it offered New Labour's policymakers a straightforward deal: 'When government invests in strengthening dance as an art form, the sector will provide wider society with access to the highest quality experience' (Dance UK *et al.* 2006, no pagination). Following Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison, this strategy attempted to justify the dance sector's receipt of funding with measurable increases in audiences and participant numbers which 'surpassed expectations [and] 'generated an increase of 83% in public engagement, through performance and participation, over the three-year period 2004-2007 (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 72). There is some evidence too that individual dance artists 'strived to demonstrate their 'usefulness' in socio-economic terms, seeing in the claim for impact a route to secure better funding levels' (Gray, 2008).

Admittedly, low audience numbers for contemporary dance (Archer in Burns and Harrison 2009, no pagination) left dance advocates and artists little choice but to focus on contemporary dance's instrumental benefits in education, health and regenerating communities to comply with ACE's priorities. The Artistic Director and CEO of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Alistair Spalding, a prominent representative of the dance sector, thus promoted 'the benefits of physical exercise' and the 'experience of expressive qualities' [...] dance can provide [that] 'unify communities' [and are] 'open to all ages and abilities' (Spalding cited in Dance UK *et al.* 2006, no pagination).

In order to contextualise the *Dance Manifesto* and to gain a more detailed insight into the contemporary dance sector's relationship with the DCMS, ACE and local authorities, it is useful to examine the impact of New Labour's policy interventions on the theatre dance field's infrastructure.

## ii. Infrastructure of the contemporary dance field

The contemporary theatre dance field consists of a diverse range of institutions which play a vital role in dance artists' lives and as such influence their economic behaviours. These encompass training providers, dance agencies<sup>18</sup>, companies, venues and advocacy organisations, such as One Dance UK<sup>19</sup> and People Dancing<sup>20</sup>. New Labour's policy interventions boosted the sector's infrastructural development in manifold ways. For instance, ACE's capital investment helped to refurbish existing dance buildings, such as The Place in London and DanceXchange in Birmingham. It also funded new purpose-built spaces, for example Dance City in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Jerwood DanceHouse in Ipswich and Trinity Laban in London (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 72).

### *Education, training and professional development*

Such initiatives also expanded the provision of dance activities for amateurs and student dancers in formal educational and informal youth dance and community settings. Grassroots initiatives, such as *Creative Partnerships* and *Youth Dance England* provided additional routes for children and young people to engage with dance as a pastime alongside private dance schools. At the same time, the *National Centres for Advanced Training* (CAT) Scheme, combined with *Dance and Drama Awards*, offered increased opportunities for aspiring contemporary theatre dance professionals to participate in structured pre-vocational dance activities and to study on vocational training courses (Aujla 2012). In short, these programmes led to higher student numbers which, to a certain extent, strengthened vocational training institutions dedicated to contemporary theatre dance and their role as crucial building blocks of an autonomous profession (Parviainen 1998, p. 91).

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<sup>18</sup> The term dance agency describes dance organisations dedicated to dance development activities. These may include offering support to dance artists, and education and community activities amongst other work.

<sup>19</sup> One Dance UK was launched in 2016 following a merger with previously independent dance organisations, such as the *Association of Dance of the African Diaspora* (ADAD), Dance UK, National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) and *Youth Dance England* (YDE). It describes itself as 'a lead industry body' (One Dance UK 2017).

<sup>20</sup> The Foundation for Community Dance or People Dancing represents the interests of community dance practitioners. It is engaged in advocacy and research which it shares with its membership and the wider dance community (Foundation for Community Dance 2017).

It is also important to point out that alternative forms of dance training have been able to establish themselves because of these efforts, and due to the expansion of university-based dance courses under New Labour. These have seemingly moved away from the traditional notion of conservatoire and vocational dance education which focusses on training elite performers. Inspired by Jacqueline Smith Autard's *Midway Model* (2002), which merges professional and educational modes of dance training, these courses proclaim to prepare students for a wider range of professional roles. They offer a broader range of skills including academic ones and are open to a more diverse group of students in terms of interests, abilities and age range. As such, they appeared to be well-placed to train and prepare dance practitioners to become the entrepreneurial agents of societal change in educational and community settings which New Labour's policies envisaged. At the same time, these aims have been difficult to achieve as traditional notions of vocational dance training still dominate educators and students' perceptions of dance as a profession (Burns 2007; 2008).

Undeniably, the introduction of tuition fees for undergraduate and post-graduate university courses in 1998 added to the financial risks borne by aspiring dance artists. These are further exacerbated by the paucity of paid work, low pay levels and a labour market which commonly does not rely on the screening function of Higher Education or other training providers. As previous studies have highlighted, formal qualifications are not necessarily required for a successful career in the arts (Towse 1993; 2006b; Rengers 2001). Arts economist Ruth Towse notes that in musical theatre and opera, 'employers prefer to rely on their own assessment of singers' (1993, p. 52).

Dance companies, choreographers and commissioning organisations also assess an applicant's skills and abilities by watching them in auditions, performances or similar events. Susanne Burns observes perceptions 'within the [dance] profession [are] that the HE sector is not sending graduates out into the world of work equipped for employment within it' (Burns 2008, p. 14). Her reports (Burns 2007; 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009) have repeatedly highlighted skill shortages in arts-related and non-artistic areas, such as dance teaching,

administrative and business competencies:

There are significant skill gaps and distribution issues, suggesting underemployment in the context of the overall dance marketplace.

The workforce needs to be equipped with teaching, entrepreneurial and management skills alongside performance and choreographic skills.

(Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 15)

These practices and opinions underscore that dance employers do not consider degrees and diplomas as effective and reliable indicators of artists' professional qualities and skills.

#### *Dance companies and agencies*

It is noteworthy that while the dance sector has seen a steady increase in funding levels since the 1970s, funding for dance companies has historically been at a lower level than revenue support received by most other art forms (Miller 1999, p. 11, Burns & Harrison 2009). This did not change under New Labour, despite the considerable infrastructural interventions outlined above. Indeed, long-established imbalances in dance funding, such as the preferential distribution of funds to the four major ballet companies, remained unchallenged (Miller 1999; Siddall 2001; Burns & Harrison 2009). While constituting only 4% of ACE's dance portfolio clients in 2008/9, these companies received at least 55% of the total dance budget, for example with Birmingham Royal Ballet being allocated £7,777,163 and English National Ballet £6,537,950 (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 63). By contrast, in the same year, ACE's other regularly-funded dance clients received individual grants of up to a maximum of £250,000.

Dance agencies provided administrative and managerial support systems to build and maintain partnerships with dance artists, local authorities and other agencies. Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison report that 49% of dance artists 'worked in partnership with their local/regional dance agency' (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 216). Their role under New Labour was two-fold; on the one hand, they



functioned as gatekeepers and producers embedded in the ecology of the contemporary dance field. On the other hand, they acted as conduits for DCMS's and ACE's policy objectives. This thesis follows the education policy and leadership expert Meredith Honig when referring to dance agencies as cultural intermediary organisations: 'that operate between policymakers and implementers to effect changes in roles and practices for both parties' (Honig 2004, p. 65).

In 2009, Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison noted that the dance sector included '22 small-scale companies, 14 middle and 5 large-scale companies which include the four major ballet companies and Rambert' (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 72). These figures demonstrate that the sector has grown significantly over the past three decades from initially seven ACE supported dance organisations in 1969/70 (Miller 1999; Siddall 2001, Burns & Harrison 2009). However, these numbers are not useful to gain a detailed understanding of the contemporary theatre dance sector as a work field. One reason for this is that they do not contain any information about companies' business models. Furthermore, they omit the many self-funded small-scale companies which populate the contemporary theatre dance sector.

There are different ways to define the scale of a performing arts company's operation, with some studies using the capacity of the venues for which companies produce their repertoire as a benchmark (Burns & Harrison 2009). By contrast, I have grouped companies based on the number of freelance and fully-employed staff, an approach also selected by other studies of the performing arts sector (Dellot 2014; BOP Consulting & Graham Devlin Associates 2016). Throughout this study I shall refer to dance companies which have up to nine freelance and/or fully-employed staff working for them as small-scale; in the context of the creative industries, these are labeled as 'microbusinesses' - a subcategory of small and medium sized enterprises (Dellot 2014, p. 16). I have classified companies with ten to fifty staff as medium-scale dance companies. Last but not least, companies which employ fifty-one or more staff are categorised as large-scale organisations.

### iii. Business models

Most dance organisations in receipt of state funding are run as mixed-model business ventures: companies limited by guarantee with charitable status (Companies House 2013). Likewise, private dance schools and similar setups are registered as companies limited by guarantee. Only a few, mostly high-profile dance organisations, for example Akram Khan Company and Sir Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, feature more complex business structures which integrate subsidiary commercial companies, such as Khan and Choudhry Productions or the many commercial subsidiaries which underpin New Adventures' dance productions (Companies House 2013; 2017; Burns & Harrison 2009, pp. 119-120). Overall, the dance sector mostly refrains from embracing other business models, such as cooperatives and social enterprises which, following Burns and Harrison, stifles 'innovation in both arts and creative industry contexts' (Burns & Harrison 2009).

Some of ACE's funding priorities, such as the support for emerging artists and focus on research and development, have resulted in vast numbers of microbusinesses and few middle to large-scale hub institutions, such as The Place; Sadler's Wells; New Adventures/Re:Bourne; Random Dance/Studio Wayne McGregor. These hubs offer a widening range of activities which reach far beyond their original core purpose as training providers, dance companies, or venues. In essence, these developments have contributed to what the business consulting firm McKinsey & Company refers to as the 'barbell-like transformation' of the creative and other industries (McKinsey 2006, p. 4). The report on *The New Artisan Economy* by the Institute for the Future (ITF) suggests the imminent arrival of 'barbell economics' (Institute for the Future 2008, p. 3) when 'most industries will move to a barbell-like structure: a few giant corporations on one end, a narrow middle and a large group of small businesses balancing the other end' (*ibid.*).

Some reports suggest that 'mutual interdependences' in the creative economy seem to outweigh the disadvantages of 'asymmetric competition' between small-scale and larger creative enterprises (UNCTAD 2010). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) *Creative*

*Economy Report* from 2010 indicates that 'larger firms and multinationals are an important source of commissions and capital, whether through subcontracting and outsourcing arrangements or joint ventures' (UNCTAD 2010, p. 84). Furthermore, they claim that smaller creative businesses benefit from larger companies through 'flexible networks of production and service systems spanning the entire supply chain' (*ibid.*).

According to the *Dance Mapping* report, there is some 'evidence of a transfer of dance work from the subsidised to the commercial sector' (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 14). Likewise, dance artists migrate between both sectors. These activities indicate that commercial and middle to large-scale hub organisations have derived benefits from 'mutual independences' in the dance sector. However, following Burns and Harrison, the dance field needs to engage more effectively with the private sector. Corporate and private investment in dance is low, as is individual giving (*ibid.*). By contrast, Jen Harvie posits that a business-centric 'approach to the arts [...] will certainly de-prioritise and potentially endanger' core artistic values and practices (Harvie 2013, pp. 72-73).

Importantly, there is little evidence that individual dance artists and their microbusinesses have benefited from hub organisations. By contrast, ACE's funding priorities have come at the expense of mid-career and mature artists (EXCHANGE *et al.* 2013, Aujla & Farrer 2016). Furthermore, according to Angela McRobbie, well-networked creative elites have been better placed to take advantage of the support available from New Labour (McRobbie 2011, p. 32). In a similar vein, Kate Oakley notes:

Certain structural factors stand out as likely contributory factors. In a sector with an over-supply of labour, high levels of self-employment, very small firms, strong social networks and a suspicion of formal qualifications, the employment of those without relevant social contacts, or unable to support unpaid work, has always been problematic.

(Oakley 2011, p. 285)

Nicholas Garnham argues that New Labour was unwilling to engage with concerns about distribution of resources (Garnham 2005). Instead, policymakers had abandoned notions of 'radical stakeholderism' and collective ownership (Hutton 1996; Kay 1993) which originally had informed debates around creative production in the beginning of the 1990s (Oakley 2011, p. 284). Broadly speaking, they appeared to give little thought to how their initiatives would shape the creative industries and the lives of creative practitioners. Such issues become especially relevant when examining dance artists as entrepreneurial innovators, producers of original content and owners of intellectual property rights in Chapter Six.

### *Intellectual property rights*

In this context, it is important to examine in more detail that New Labour's creative economy vision has been based on the commercial exploitation of intellectual property. The DCMS repeatedly acknowledged in *Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years* (DCMS 2001b) and other strategy papers (DCMS 2008a; The Work Foundation 2007; DCMS 2009) that 'intellectual property will increasingly represent a valuable asset base for the UK' (DCMS 2001, p. 33). Regional Innovation Funds provided financial and/or in-kind support for dance artists and organisations to develop their ideas for products and services. Likewise, Business Link was set up to offer training, specialist advice and mentoring in areas, such as business structures, marketing and how to secure intellectual property rights.

The Copyright, Design and Patents Act (CDPA) regulates artistic and economic ownership in the UK (CDPA 1988). It protects dance artists' moral rights and associated non-pecuniary interests, on the one hand, and their copyright as owners and potential economic beneficiaries, on the other hand. The political scientist and philosopher John Christman identifies three fundamental notions which define intellectual property and non-property rights: 'the right to possess, the right to use and the right to the income' (Christman 1994, p. 227).

In essence, the theatre dance sector incorporates two main forms of property holding which cover performers' original contributions and their non-property

rights. Dance artists can assert their ownership of intellectual property in relation to the 'reproduction (copying), performance, recording (film, video, notation, and so on) and [the] distribution, and adaptation of [their] works' (Yeoh 2012, p. 230). Likewise, performers' non-property rights are legally recognised. This means that performers need to authorise any live recording of their work and also have to give permission before recordings of their performance(s) are distributed or sold. They are legally entitled to share financial rewards achieved by distributing such recordings. Put simply, dance artists can generate an income from exploiting their intellectual property rights by demanding royalties for recorded performances which are disseminated online or via other media, still images and original works they have devised.

### **Concluding remarks**

This chapter deliberated the reasoning behind New Labour's creative economy rationale and issues which arise when attempting to measure the value of arts and culture. Furthermore, it has outlined how policymakers employed value amplification, policy attachment and NPM monitoring strategies to increase and maintain the influence of the DCMS and its agenda. The chapter has also discussed the manner in which DCMS, ACE and local authorities delivered policy interventions and monitored their outcomes. I have introduced a range of creative industries models and key institutions which constitute the dance sector. This discussion included associated subjects such as prevalent business models and attitudes in relation to intellectual property rights. The chapter demonstrated how the DCMS's and ACE's policy objectives resulted in an expanded job description for dance artists which revolved around dance artists' instrumental and entrepreneurial contribution to regeneration and economic growth. In addition, I have briefly highlighted key aspects which inform dance artists' working conditions, pinpointing features such as falling pay levels and oversubscribed labour markets which have remained unresolved.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Wishing, hoping and hard work: contemporary theatre dance artists' artistic and occupational identities**

This chapter seeks to show that dance artists' encounters with norms, conventions and practices of the theatre dance field also influence their economic conduct. I shall demonstrate that they emulate what I have coined a 'creative entrepreneurial habitus' by drawing on specific economic competencies and behaviours. This suggests that dance artists negotiate artistic and economic activities simultaneously, invalidating commonly-held beliefs that they are irreconcilable. Indeed, I shall establish that the absence of dance artists as economically-active agents from the public and scholarly debate points towards a gap in knowledge rather than a representation of their actual status.

The chapter is divided into two parts. Under the heading *Becoming a contemporary theatre dance artist*, the first part examines how the training and trainee stages of the participants' careers have shaped their artistic and occupational identities. It considers influential factors in this process, such as the roles assigned to teachers, established artists and peers. Other contributory aspects examined are notions of occupational identity which assume that dance artists are indifferent to economic motivations, and linked, frequently contrary, expectations and demands which aspiring dance artists have to face.

Following on, the second part identifies and examines a range of economic competencies and related behaviours which the respondents recurrently brought up in interviews and displayed throughout the fieldwork. Titled *Emergent economic competencies and behaviours*, this section deliberates their varied functions and benefits. The insights gained will provide key reference points throughout Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

#### **1. Becoming a contemporary theatre dance artist**

To begin with, I would like to delineate the professional career trajectories of the research participants which revealed that they shared comparable formative

experiences, despite citing very different reasons for engaging with dance as a pastime and profession. I have been interested in whether dance artists, already during these early formative stages, acquire economic abilities alongside developing and refining their technical and expressive skills. I have furthermore sought to determine the manner in which they internalise such economic know-how: first, during their years of training and, later on, when entering the dance profession. In order to achieve this, I have focused on everyday dance-related activities which student and trainee dance artists commonly engage in with the aim of revealing potential economic connotations which might have been overlooked so far.

### **i. Starting points**

The training and trainee stage are generally recognised as fundamental junctures in dance artists' identity development. Much of the literature about dance training (Gordon 1983; Van Rossum 2001; Walker *et al.* 2012; Pickard 2015) and early-career development (Siddall 2001; ACE 2006b; DCMS 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009) highlights their significance, albeit for different reasons. Research reveals, for example, that prevocational dance students often do better in formal primary and secondary education than their peers, develop meaningful social interactions with adults and peers, and possess better self-regulatory skills (Aujla 2012, pp. 15-16).

It is thus helpful to remind us briefly of key features which generally characterise the dance training stage. Available statistical evidence suggests that many dance artists initially engage with dance in recreational settings (Foundation for Community Dance 2002; Warwick Commission 2015). Some participate in structured prevocational dance activities offered by talent development programmes, such as the National Centres for Advanced Dance Training (CATs). Prior to entering full-time vocational dance education, these schemes 'aim to improve specific skills and emphasise technique and discipline' (Aujla 2012, p. 15) In comparison to recreational activities, they offer a purposeful approach to dance practice at more advanced and competitive levels (Aujla

2012, p. 38). However, some applicants join vocational dance courses, especially in Higher and Further Education institutions, without any previous dance experience except for unstructured leisure pursuits.

A range of planned and chance encounters with dance, such as theatre visits and recreational dance classes, provided entry points for the study's participants. Several had watched professional dance performances (John, January 2013; Martin, February 2012) or accompanied siblings to dance classes (Frederick, November 2012; Hannah, March 2012). Robert, Frederick and Millie accidentally participated in their first dance class without having any intention to pursue dance as a hobby or profession (Robert, April 2012; Frederick, November 2012; Millie, November 2014). Robert recalls that he and a friend 'just stumbled onto this boys' dance group, and from there we kept doing that for a number of years' (Robert, April 2012).

The age of the respondents when they initially encountered dance also differed substantially, ranging from two years old to their mid-twenties. Some experienced dance as already central to their lives at a very young age and explained that they 'had always danced' (Hannah, March 2012; Mary, April 2012; Alison, November 2012). Vicky notes: 'I started dancing when I was four years old [...] and my mum said to me that I took my mum to the dancing classes' (Vicky, September 2012). By contrast, other interviewees had their first meaningful encounter with dance as teenagers and young adults aged between fourteen and twenty-six years (Karen, April 2012; Ian, January 2013; John, January 2013; Martin, February 2012; Millie, November 2014; David, October 2014).

The majority of research participants remember their early dance experiences affectionately. All of the interviewees recall positive physical and emotional memories relating to their primary dance encounters. Many refer to their excitement and joy when they first took part in dance activities (John, January 2013; Frederick, November 2012; Robert, April 2012). Vicky, Frank, Hannah and Miriam all 'enjoyed' dancing (Vicky, September 2012; Frank, April 2012) in 'amateur' or 'fun' contexts (Hannah, March 2012; Miriam, October 2012).



Studies of young people participating in recreational and prevocational dance activities by Judith Alter (1997), Susan Stinson (1997) and Angela Pickard (2006; 2015) echo these findings. They highlight how being creative as well as physically active increases levels of happiness and satisfaction in children and young adults.

Intriguingly, the respondents often link their memories to elusive qualities of dance. Ian, for instance, reports that the 'otherworldliness' of theatre dance appealed to him (Ian, January 2013). Susan remembers that engaging in dance activities allowed her to flee 'quite a harsh, hard world' (Susan, February 2012) and Frederick, similarly, recalls that dance helped him to cope with the mundane aspects of everyday life: 'I absolutely loved it, it was my escape' (Frederick, November 2012). These observations raise questions with regard to idealisations and stereotypes in artistic and occupational identity formation. Findings by the dance educator and scholar Susan Stinson (1997) as well as the psychologists Kendra Gray and Mark Kunkel (2001, p. 15) highlight similar discoveries. Stinson refers to such experiences of young dancers as 'transcendence' when alluding to learners who lose their sense of time and space during dance activities (Stinson 1997, p. 60). Likewise, Gray and Kunkel record dance artists' sense of escape when being 'absorbed and lost' in fantasy situations (Gray & Kunkel 2001, p. 15). Bearing in mind the study's focus on the creative economy, it is crucial to point out that the rhetoric in its support frequently presents creative labour as an escape route from traditional nine-to-five jobs, as noted by many (McRobbie 2007; Von Osten 2007; Raunig 2011). I shall therefore return to deliberate the functions of such heightened experiences and idealised perceptions of artistic labour in more depth in the second part of this chapter. Under the heading *Multi-purpose dance myths*, I shall examine to what extent they are influential factors in shaping student and trainee dance artists' understanding of artistic livelihoods and their personal economic circumstances.

The trainee stage commences when graduate dance artists leave full-time training and start out to develop their professional careers. During the New Labour years they joined a workforce of around 40,000 people who worked in

the dance sector, mostly as dance teachers or facilitators, a calculation which also included practitioners who volunteered their labour (Burns & Harrison 2009). Almost half of the overall workforce (49%) was concentrated in the South of England which contributed to a highly competitive labour market and led to skills shortages elsewhere in the UK (*ibid.*). However, these figures remain estimates and it is at this point important to remind us of the paucity of statistical and qualitative data about dance artists.

The psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and educationalist Jacob Getzels distinguish this transitional period as the 'intermediate stage between being students and professionals' (Csikszentmihalyi & Getzels 1973, p. 91). Policymakers and funders, amongst them the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE), categorise artists as 'emerging' during this career stage (Buck 2004, pp. 22 & 54; ACE 2006a; DCMS 2008b; ACE 2010a). Correspondingly, business consultants acknowledge 'new starters' of freelance careers and the 'start-up' phase of creative microbusinesses as a distinctive developmental stage (D'Arcy & Gardiner 2014, pp. 21-27).

However, ambiguous and fluid criteria as to what constitutes an artist seem to complicate efforts to identify dance artists as populations and measure their economic activities. The EXCHANGE *et al.* research study (2013), which was in part commissioned by a dance company, concludes that a focus on 'economic growth has made artists and creative practitioners a kind of positive ghost in the machine of most frameworks for measuring the effects of culture' (EXCHANGE *et al.* 2013, p. 16). It is thus vital to consider how this threshold point influences dance artists' economic demeanour.

Notwithstanding the different career trajectories of performers and choreographers, all respondents identify leaving full-time vocational training as a challenging time. The majority recalls the distinctive challenges they encountered upon entering the trainee stage. They had to gain access to and position themselves in the hierarchy of the theatre dance field, an undertaking in which they were guided by its internal value economy. Martin recalls: 'You

were supposed to have [...] an apprenticeship in your third year and you would [...] graduate and immediately enter into a job. That was the preferred route [...] as a dancer in a dance company' (Martin, February 2012). However, the majority of interviewees did not secure paid work in theatre dance. Instead, Paula's experience of working for a small-scale project without pay is representative of most of them (Galloway *et al.* 2002; Burns & Harrison 2009; Aujla & Farrer 2016).

The loss of organisational support formerly provided by training institutions necessitates trainee dance artists to rapidly expand their professional networks and to secure the backing of arts organisations and funders (Freakley & Neelands 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009; Aujla & Farrer 2016). They also have to generate an income, either by finding work as a dance artist, which is difficult to achieve, or by seeking employment in other sectors. It stands to reason that in order to develop new support structures, trainee dance artists have to consider the interests and expectations of cultural intermediaries and prospective employers in and outside the contemporary theatre dance field (Menger 1999; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Muñiz *et al.* 2014). For this purpose, they engage in 'strategic reputational work' which Albert Muñiz and his colleagues compare to 'brand management' (Muñiz *et al.* 2014, p. 83). These self-promotional and networking activities require dance artists to internalise dispositions which, while there is considerable overlap, reach beyond economic competencies and related behaviours. Instead, they constitute what I refer to as 'cultural intermediary habitus' which, I propose, only fully develops when trainee dance artists start to cultivate productive relationships with cultural intermediaries and funders.

This could explain why many felt underprepared for the reality of working as professional dance artists. Mary even contemplated giving up on her career ambitions: 'I came out of [the conservatoire] and I didn't want to dance anymore' (Mary, April 2012). Paula struggled with the demands of a portfolio career: 'I think just because I was so new and so inexperienced at the time I just found the whole thing quite daunting and a bit kind of overwhelming' (Paula, November 2014). As Vivien Freakley and Jonothan Neelands observe:

'Dancers work hard to "sell" their services within a small group of choreographer/producers' (Freakley & Neelands 2003, p. 54). For Millie, it proved a daunting task to engage with dance and other arts organisations:

I wrote [...] letters, emails, applications. And I got nowhere. Not a single reply. When I finally started getting a couple of rejection emails I was thinking, at least I know my emails are getting through. It was the first year and I had no idea what was happening at all.

(Millie, November 2014)

By the same token, it is imperative for choreographers and performer/creators to 'effectively manage a support system of different intermediaries' if they intend to establish themselves in their fields (Muñiz *et al.* 2014, p. 71). In line with Albert Muñiz *et al.*, David alludes to cultural intermediaries endorsing his work as a prerequisite to developing as a choreographer:

The more people that I can bring on board to show their backing and support for me will make me more credible as an artist in this district and in the city. Which is why I've been so eager to build up a relationship with [the local dance agency] because they are our representatives of the region.

(David, October 2014)

Joanne furthermore observes: 'You have to really persuade [funders and cultural intermediaries] with big business documents and they need to see all your work, they need to trust you' (Joanne, November 2014). In other words, trainee dance artists have to develop and refine a range of administrative and managerial skills linked to networking, fundraising and marketing their work.

## **ii. Exposure to norms, conventions and practices of the theatre dance field**

Despite their individual points of departure and different career trajectories, all respondents experienced similar theatre dance practices, norms and

conventions, such as studio etiquette and dress codes. As soon as they made their first tentative contacts with the dance field, dance artists acquired what Steven Wainwright and his research partners label as a 'dance habitus' through systematic and repeated embodied exposure to its standards and practices (Wainwright & Turner 2003a; 2003b; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007). Pierre Bourdieu refers to this process as 'inculcation' (Bourdieu 1993a, p. 5) and argues that its impact reaches far beyond the effort of copying a set gesture or movement: 'What is "learned by the body" is not something one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is' (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 73). This means that after years of training, dance artists perceive many, though not necessarily all, conventions and practices of the theatre dance field as natural to them.

Teachers expected the respondents to devote most of their time, energy and attention to absorb the theatre dance field's cultures and practices. Studies of dance students in prevocational and vocational settings (Stinson *et al.* 1990; Alter 1997; Van Rossum 2001; Aujla 2012) corroborate the intense commitment required during the training stage. John recalls his teacher's instructions:

The first thing [our teacher] said to us [...] when we started on our first year was that you need to immerse yourself in dance. You know, you need to go see shows, think about what you're looking at, and I did that so much that I was awarded student of the year.

(John, January 2013)

Alison, who initially trained as a ballet dancer, also engaged in a rigorous training regime: 'The timetable was that you just did ballet class after ballet class after ballet class on six or even seven days per week' (Alison, November 2012).

I contend that dance artists, already at this early stage, incorporate principles and expectations that lie at the core of the theatre dance field's value economy and expertly respond to its demands. As Martin observes:

I think this [level of commitment] has been drilled in through training particularly because you do class [...] 3-4 times a day, different techniques for four years solid. [...] I think this... gets instilled into you along the way.

(Martin, February 2012)

Susan and Hannah's dance habitus, for example, reflects norms and conventions they have absorbed during their training. Hannah's embodied core values and practices, or in Pierre Bourdieu's words, 'dispositions' (Bourdieu 1984; 1990b), even now constitute her dance habitus, eight years after graduating (Turner & Wainwright 2003a; 2003b; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007). She remarks: 'What you're wearing for certain classes maybe kind of stuck with me' (Hannah, March 2012) when she describes how she still dresses for class as a mid-career dance artist. In other words, the prescribed dress code during Hannah's vocational training has become second nature and determines her current choice of training clothes.

Susan recalls how she was introduced to preparatory activities which are associated with performing, such as 'warming up and doing rehearsal', in her amateur classes (Susan, February 2012). They were vital elements in the staging of her dance schools' regular annual performances at the end of the school year. It is apparent that the respondents take their dance habitus for granted and accept dispositions, such as dedication, discipline and hard work, as self-evident features of their profession. Susan, for instance, did not question these values and finds it difficult to understand why some of her students today 'don't really want to work hard, they just want to dance about a bit' (Susan, June 2015).

Their dance habitus also manifests itself when participants recall how they prepared for auditions and castings. Such screening events are regular occurrences throughout a dance artist's career and many respondents view them as career-determining events. Frederick remembers auditioning for a youth ballet company's three-week residency during his early prevocational training: 'I got a little part [...] and I got some great kind of feedback from it'

(Frederick, November 2012). Screenings ascertain if aspiring dance artists fulfill the expected technical, expressive and creative standards to start training as professional dance artists and, at a later stage, to join dance companies. To put it in another way, such screenings assess an auditionee's dance habitus and his or her embodied physical and expressive aptitude. Both are relevant assets in the value economy of theatre dance in which the 'raw material' of the body, for example its shape and flexibility, constitute a dance artist's physical capital (Wainwright *et al.* 2006, p. 548). This is complemented by their cultural capital, that is their 'embodied knowledge of dance' (Wainwright *et al.* 2005, p. 50): for example, their ability to recall, execute and interpret specific dance techniques and dance works.

Significantly, the respondents' narratives about their auditions for vocational training institutions reveal that they skillfully mastered the theatre dance field's value economy. As to be expected, in preparation for their auditions, most applicants ensured they had accumulated sufficient physical and cultural capital. Susan and Hannah, for instance, increased the number of classes they attended to three or four per week (Susan, February 2012; Hannah, March 2012). Susan also took part in additional training units, such as workshops and summer schools scheduled on weekends and during school holidays: 'I was training about 3 hours a night, then on Saturdays, and it was with the [youth dance company] on Sundays. So, it was my whole life' (Susan, February 2012). Being invited to join the audition for a respected institution confirmed the interviewees' unique status in a highly competitive environment. Likewise, most respondents carefully listed the auditions that they had succeeded in, even when they had rejected the offer of a place at a school (Alison, November 2012; Hannah, March 2012; Susan, February 2012).

At the same time, the respondents made use of their comprehensive understanding of the theatre dance field's hierarchies to rank and select training providers (Susan, February 2012; Alison, November 2012) and dance company employers (Susan, February 2012; Vicky, September 2012). This means that they applied the value system they themselves depended on to choose or reject a particular school and dance company. Susan Stinson *et al.* allude to the

contrast of students' powerlessness with regard to theatre dance's domineering value systems and hierarchies, on the one hand, and their freedom to choose or reject a particular school and career pathway, on the other hand (Stinson *et al.* 1990, p. 19). Put differently, under such paradoxical and fluid conditions dance students are at once powerless and powerful: learners seeking to develop specialist skills and fee-paying customers. However, as Stinson *et al.* suggest, most dance students do 'not focus on their lack of power over the field of professional dance but on their power to make "realistic" choices' (*ibid.*).

I argue that what the psychologist Stephanie Taylor and educationalist Karen Littleton coin the 'art-versus-money' dilemma, which implies that being an artist and engaging in purposeful economic activity is incompatible (Taylor & Littleton 2008, p. 10), presents an equally paradoxical situation. This study's findings suggest that all participants took a pragmatic approach to overcome this quandary. I contend that they employed specific economic competencies and related behaviours to make 'realistic choices' (Stinson *et al.* 1990, p. 19) which simultaneously met artistic as well as economic demands.

For instance, when Susan notes: 'The Royal Ballet [School] was my number one choice, [followed by] Rambert, then was Arts Educational' (Susan, February 2012), her selection of vocational schools therefore not only describes her personal artistic aspirations and understanding of these schools' ranking in the theatre dance field; rather, Susan's choices might indicate that she has also pursued 'realistic' economic goals. Marijn Rengers's study examining the career progression of visual and performing artists in the Netherlands reveals tentative links between a school's prestige and the earning potential of its alumni: 'Arts graduates from regions [...] with two of the most prestigious arts colleges in the Netherlands appear to earn a higher wage than their colleagues (or competitors)' (Rengers 2002, p. 72). He refers to the career-enhancing prestige and authority linked to high-profile training institutions and teachers. His findings suggest that these override all other aspects of a vocational training course, such as its content and length (Rengers 2002, p. 59).

In this context, it is essential to highlight that contemporary theatre dance-based



training institutions and companies in the UK, compared to their counterparts in ballet, inhabit a more marginalised position in the dance field (Devlin 1989; Brinson 1991; Mackrell 1992; Miller 1999; Pakes 2001; Burns & Harrison 2009). This differential in terms of status, funding levels and employment opportunities is reflected in fewer paid positions for contemporary dance artists and lower remuneration (Miller 1999; Siddall 2001; Freakley 2002; Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009). Despite these genre-specific variances, Vicky echoes Marjin Rengers's findings (2002) when she emphasises the importance of a school's status for attracting students and senior dance professionals: 'It is a prestigious school, so prestigious people wanted to be connected to the school' (Vicky, September 2012). In other words, contemporary theatre dance artists who have completed their vocational training at a high-ranking conservatoire increase the likelihood of securing paid labour throughout their careers.

Receiving a paid contract validates dance artists' sense of artistic and professional self and positions them in the theatre dance field. However, there is ample evidence that financial motives also inspired some respondents to accept or refuse dance work. Susan recalls that she signed up for her first full-time job as a performer based on its economic as well as artistic rewards: 'I ha[d] medical insurance, dental insurance [...] they bought you[r dance] shoes. [...] It was my first two years in the theatre, I wasn't that bothered about the artistic side' (Susan, February 2012). These examples indicate that the spectrum of economic dispositions which I refer to as creative entrepreneurial habitus overrides constraints that arise from Taylor and Littleton's 'art-versus-money' dilemma (Taylor & Littleton 2008, p. 285).

As such, the primacy of the field's internal value system does not seem to prevent dance artists from operating in a range of value economies as long as they internalise distinct economic competencies and behaviours to do so. It is therefore most likely that dance artists are also economically motivated when accepting artistic employment. First and foremost, considering the scarcity of paid positions for performers and choreographers (Siddall 2001; Burns & Harrison 2009; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012; Aujla & Farrer 2016), it is a

remarkable accomplishment for a trainee dance artist to secure paid artistic employment, especially with established choreographers and companies. Hannah therefore achieved an unlikely feat when she joined a small-scale dance company straight after graduation: '[The contract with the company] made me feel like I was an artist' (Hannah, March 2012).

### **iii. Mentors, role models and gatekeepers**

It is well-recognised that dance teachers play an influential part in their students' artistic development (Lee 2001; Critien & Ollis 2006; Nordin-Bates *et al.* 2012; Aujla 2012). The dance scientist Imogen Walker and her fellow researchers note that 'teachers and coaches can have a profound impact on the lives of young dancers' (Walker *et al.* 2010, p. 179). Psychologist Jacques van Rossum concurs that dance students identify their teachers as 'by far the person of most influence in [their] career' (Van Rossum 2001, p. 186; 2004). Equally, choreographers and performers in eminent dance companies are generally regarded as powerful representatives of the theatre dance field's culture and value systems (Stinson 1990; Alter 1997; Burns 2007; Burn & Harrison 2009).

Most of the respondents mention the influential role of their teachers and highlight the inspirational and supportive quality of their relationships during the interviews. David's example emphasises the vital role that specialist dance teachers play in identifying prospective high-ability students. He recalls his teacher at secondary school who persuaded him to train as a dance artist:

She was my inspiration. [She] took me to the theatre [...] and showed me contemporary dance and I loved it. [...] So I went and did [A-level Dance] and then she said: "Right, go and audition for the conservatoire!"

(David, October 2014)

Vicky alludes to the nurturing aspects of engaging with high-profile dance artists during her training: 'I had teachers from [famous international and national

dance companies] and I was open to all these various kinds of... food, really' (Vicky, September 2012).

The majority of participants profess to have followed advice given by teachers even if they found it challenging to do so. Mary observes that after overcoming her initial reservations, the explorative approach of one of her teachers had been an eye opener: 'I love [this teacher] and she taught me at school and I was really interested in the way that she worked, and it really annoyed me to start with but now I really appreciate what she taught' (Mary, April 2012). Indeed, her teacher's work methods still inspires her to explore artistic practices which are unfamiliar and slightly uncomfortable.

Some respondents (Martin, February 2012; Hannah, March 2012; Mary, April 2012; Vicky, September 2012; John, January 2013; David, October 2014) recount that established dance professionals provided role models during their training and trainee years, an observation also noted by Jacques van Rossum (Van Rossum 2001, p. 187). Mary points out that the encouragement she received from an established choreographer she assisted during an outreach project was a crucial factor in her joining a dance company as a performer: 'So I think he's a really important role model in where I am today' (Mary, April 2012).

The interviewees' narratives indicate that teachers' embodied dispositions played a central role when introducing the theatre dance field's culture and values to the next generations of student and trainee dance artists. Accordingly, teachers mostly recommended schools whose institutional habitus they had adopted or to which they were connected in some other manner. A common example is Frederick's teacher who had himself trained at the school which he suggested as a possible destination for his student (Frederick, November 2012). In Mary's case too, her teacher advised her to audition for a school she 'had a clear link to. So I kind of got into contemporary dance through that' (Mary, April 2012).

They furthermore call to attention another aspect of this relationship: senior dance professionals' advice and network of contacts is advantageous when

student or trainee dancers try to gain access to vocational training schools and potential employers. Vicky, for example, joined a vocational training course with her teacher's support who 'was just moving into a position at [a conservatoire], so she very much promoted the school' (Vicky, September 2012). Hannah, a Continental European national who trained in her home country benefited from the transnational networks which underpin the dance labour market. Her teachers' international contacts made it possible for her to audition for a UK-based company which offered her a job. In doing so, I maintain that senior dance professionals, purposefully or unknowingly, also affect their students' and mentees' future economic prospects. As I have demonstrated previously, studying at high-profile institutions - and working abroad - not only helps dance artists to accrue symbolic capital relevant in the internal economy of theatre dance: in keeping with Marijn Rengers's findings, it can also raise their earning potential (Rengers 2002, p. 72).

These examples demonstrate that teachers and other senior dance professionals hold positions which allow them to instigate and reinforce economic dispositions and not exclusively artistic ones. Drawing on Susan Stinson who notes that 'teachers serve as interpreters of the dance world and gatekeepers to opportunity and self esteem' (Stinson *et al.* 1990, p. 21), it is therefore pertinent to investigate to what extent senior representatives utilise their multiple functions as advisors, role models and gatekeepers to convey a creative entrepreneurial habitus.

At the same time, the fluid roles inhabited by educators and artistic mentors again evoke the paradoxical situation which aspiring dance artists find themselves in. On the one hand, they are encouraged and nurtured in a manner that seemingly responds to their individual developmental needs. On the other hand, the theatre dance field appears 'as a separate and fixed world, a hierarchy that is created and controlled by others' (Stinson *et al.* 1990, p. 19). It is evident that respondents who share their teachers' institutional habitus and therefore embrace similar artistic values often continue to benefit from their support long after graduating (Martin, February 2012; Mary, April 2012; Susan, June 2015). Others, however, felt constrained by what they experienced as the

inflexible and set ways of their teachers (Vicky, September 2012; Miriam, October 2012; Frederick, November 2012; Alison, November 2012). As proposed by Wainwright *et al.* (2006, p. 545), the commitment of teachers and mentors to the institutional and choreographic habitus of specific training institutions or companies can prevent them from reaching beyond their embodied dispositions. Frederick observes that teachers do not question their perceptions and choices:

[Teachers have] been in the profession long enough, they've found what they like the most, they've explored the dance world so much, they know what they like, they know what they don't like, and they're very subjective and very biased.

(Frederick, November 2012)

Many interviewees mention how the aesthetic preferences of some tutors and mentors dominated their artistic discourse, frequently to the detriment of what the respondents view as progressive visions and practices, in particular collaborative ones (Vicky, September 2012; Miriam, October 2012; Frederick, November 2012; Alison, November 2012). Vicky, for example, dislikes traditional devising processes which, as she observes, reduce her to an instrument rather than acknowledge her as a collaborator:

I had a terrible time [at the conservatoire] with the [rehearsal] process. [...] I said what can I do to make this experience better for me and for the [guest] choreographer to acknowledge that I am a dancer and I'm present in the room?

(Vicky, September 2012)

Susan Stinson *et al.*, in line with Vicky's comment, emphasise that female dance students are not 'passive' despite perceiving the theatre dance field as 'created and controlled by others'. Instead 'they seem to be strong young women who wish to be in control of their own lives' (Stinson *et al.* 1990, pp. 19-

20). Inevitably, Vicky's stance frequently resulted in volatile relationships with her teachers and visiting guest choreographers:

I did struggle with the hierarchy at [the conservatoire] because [...] when they said "Oh, so you don't want to perform?" I said "Well, I do want to perform but I want to perform a different kind of work".

(Vicky, September 2012)

I maintain that the ability to negotiate such complex situations, which also include the 'arts versus money dilemma' mentioned above (Taylor & Littleton 2008), is key to dance artists' livelihood systems and their creative entrepreneurial habitus. In Bernhard Lahire's words, they internalise how to manage the 'discrepancy between [their] subjective definition of self' as a dance artist and their 'objective life conditions' (Lahire 2010, p. 445). However, leading this type of 'double life' requires dance artists to adopt dispositions which allow them to manage such contradictory circumstances (Lahire 2010).

At first sight, Vicky, Hannah and Frederick appeared to follow their true artistic calling when they openly disobeyed teachers and mentors during their student and trainee years. Hannah switched to a contemporary dance programme after years of training at a renowned ballet academy against the advice of her school (Hannah, March 2012). Frederick also resisted his teachers during his years as a student: 'I found that my training made me go [...] in the complete opposite way to what they were pushing me towards' (Frederick, November 2012). Similarly, Vicky disregarded the expectations of teaching staff when she refused to pursue a career as a performer: 'I do want to work hard but I just have a different style, a different type of moving' (Vicky, September 2012).

It is tempting to interpret their behaviour as some kind of rebellion which aims to safeguard their artistic self-determination. At the same time, it is far too simple to conclude that these disagreements arise solely from insurmountable artistic differences. Instead, I maintain that all three stayed within the established boundaries of what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as the restricted subfield of cultural

production and its reversed value economy (Bourdieu 1983). While pursuing their individual artistic pathways carried a risk of alienating the theatre dance field's established representatives, Vicky, Hannah and Frederick nevertheless played by its rules. Indeed, they took a calculated risk based on their 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990b, pp. 66-70). They were aware that, on occasion, the theatre dance field attaches prestige and value to those who have a 'different style' and overthrow the existing order. As Bourdieu illustrates, by disregarding the advice of senior position holders they engaged in the legitimate struggle for positions in the field (Bourdieu 1983; 1992; 1993a).

At this point, it is useful to consider to what extent economic self-interest also plays a part in the struggle for positions. For example, senior dance professionals, such as Susan and Mona, are able to convert their physical, cultural and symbolic capital into monetary rewards (Susan, February 2012; Mona, October 2012). Wainwright *et al.* refer to 'star performers' and recognised master teachers who turn their cultural and symbolic capital into financial capital (Wainwright *et al.* 2006, p. 552). Hence, they benefit economically from their embodied knowledge of a specific dance technique or dance repertoire and the reputation attached to their high-ranking status in the field.

I propose that it is thus very likely that economic factors also contribute to disagreements and friction between aspiring dance professionals and their senior counterparts. In this context, first of all, it is important to remind ourselves that economic constraints, such as underfunding and a lack of paid employment characterise the contemporary theatre dance field. Even if it is rarely acknowledged, this means that trainee dance artists are not only mentees but also competitors who seek to benefit from the same limited resources and positions as their mentors. Consequently, dance artists compete with established dance professionals for funding and choreographic commissions as well as paid and unpaid dance employment in an oversubscribed labour market as soon as they enter the trainee stage of their careers.

#### **iv. Peers as collaborators and competitors**

Studies by Jacques van Rossum (2001, p. 194) and Imogen Walker *et al.* (2010, p. 180) identify the affective as well as practical backing of fellow students, ranging from providing crucial emotional support to offering career advice, as a crucial factor in dance students' artistic identity construction. It is safe to say, however, that most studies of dance artists fail to examine that peers also play an important role in modelling economic behaviours. Indeed, I contend that their creative entrepreneurial habitus is further reinforced by what Nicola Critien and Stewart Ollis describe as a communally-shared 'ethos and collective attitude' of peers in the contemporary theatre dance field (Critien & Ollis 2006, p. 188).

Hannah recalls how she and her fellow students supported each other throughout their prevocational training: 'We were the dancers and we kind of stuck together and we understood each other' (Hannah, March 2012). At the same time, she emphasises that more advanced peers were especially inspiring role models who further strengthened her commitment to the theatre dance field's value systems:

Because the [prevocational] classes were in the academy so we saw the actual people on the vocational training a lot and we went to performances of them [...] there was a couple of other occasions that people from the professional world came in to kind of have a chat with us.

(Hannah, March 2012)

Social and artistic exchanges with peers provided Victor with what the anthropologist Dorinne Kondo calls 'a means of participatory belonging' (1990 quoted in Bain 2005, p. 27). In other words, meeting fellow dance artists and sharing the social and physical experience of a dance class with them sustained Victor's artistic identity and confirmed his status as a professional dance artist:



I think you need to keep going in yourself to keep motivated 'cause that translates into your work, it translates into classes and it translates into how you go about yourself and the work, the people that you talk to, and it's also networking.

(Victor, February 2012)

Significantly, the respondents identify their peers as key artistic and economic contributors when they first enter the trainee stage. Ian alludes to this when he describes the first stage of his career as a choreographer: 'I graduated [and] I spent about two years working away with friends and students' (Ian, January 2013). Student projects often provide the starting point for future professional collaborations of performers and choreographers. Many of the participants, but especially the choreographers, depended financially on forging such temporary partnerships with others. Ian's example highlights that such collaborations are based on pragmatic economic considerations and are not exclusively inspired by artistic ones. Furthermore, Ian employed a specific economic competency when he and his collaborators pooled their collective capital for everyone's mutual benefit. I shall examine this economic strategy as well as other ones in the second part of this chapter under the title *Economic core competencies*.

These narratives add a further facet to the paradoxical circumstances that dance artists find themselves in which we have examined above, with peers being support-givers as well as competitors striving for the same coveted positions in the theatre dance field. Millie stresses that peer support is crucial to develop as an artist: 'Having a critical review from your peers pushes you to develop your craft, like the craft of choreographing, like finding the artistic language' (Millie, November 2014). Peer approval also presents an important stepping-stone towards accessing the theatre dance field by 'consecration' through gatekeeping artists (Bourdieu 1983; 1992; 1993a). Millie observes: 'I'm noticing that I am now recognised as being part of the dance scene, and it's nice. It validates' (Millie, November 2014). At the same time, she notes that her relationship to a long-term artistic collaborator needs to be carefully negotiated: 'There's this constant [bouncing off each other] [...] we say that our relationship is perfect because we are driven by envy of each other's successes' (Millie,

November 2014). In essence, as research findings from other creative fields confirm, these alliances are fragile and of a temporary nature (McRobbie 2007; 2016; Scott 2012).

## **2. Emergent economic competencies and behaviours**

In the second part of this chapter, I shall explore the recurring direct and implicit references made by the interviewees about their economic conduct. The respondents regularly appeared to display three economic competencies: cross-subsidy, bartering arrangements and pooling capital for mutual benefit. These frequently seemed to come alongside related behaviours I shall refer to as 'wishing and hoping', 'adaptive-resilient' and 'concealment'. Furthermore, idealised perceptions of theatre dance as a profession and being a dance artist featured prominently during the interviews which I shall discuss under the heading 'multi-purpose dance myths'. The study's participants drew on this repertoire of economic competencies and behaviours regardless of personal characteristics such as age, social and economic background, the aesthetic qualities of their work, and the level of funding and income they received.

### **i. Economic core competencies**

#### *Cross-subsidy*

The respondents' interview contributions have revealed that they are the principal funders of their artistic practice and indirectly the wider contemporary theatre dance sector. Scholars from the fields of arts economy and sociology have long recognised that artists use income from other work fields to sustain their artistic development and livelihoods (Throsby 1992; 1994; Abbing 2002; McRobbie 2004). The participants' narratives indicate that they routinely cross-subsidise their work as dance artists (which they view as their primary occupation) by using income generated from secondary employment to do so. For example, Susan sought paid employment alongside her dance training to overcome financial constraints. Advised by her teachers, she supplemented her local authority grant to self-fund her vocational training:

I was so aware of the money [...] my grant didn't cover all of my training; it only covered my classes from 10 till 4. So anything outside

of that was extra cost; one-to-one tuition you had to pay for extra, but you could get two-to-one tuition for another price.

(Susan, February 2012)

Her account of self-funding her tuition fees through income generated in secondary work fields exemplifies what David Throsby has coined 'work-preference model of artist behaviour' (Throsby 1992; 1994). In other words, instead of using her income for leisure activities, she has invested it in developing her professional artistic practice.

The self-funding of activities linked to dance artists' professional development is not limited to the early-career stages. Instead, respondents disclose that, as a matter of course, they have cross-subsidised dance classes and other forms of development activities throughout their career (Victor, February 2012; Karen, February 2012). As Sheila Galloway *et al.* remark, it is an established feature in the arts that artists 'absorb [...] uncoded components of [their] professional practice' (Galloway *et al.* 2002, pp. 44-45), which also extends to auditions, travel and administrative costs. Karen dedicates significant amounts of time and money to ensure her professional development: 'I certainly try and prioritise my own sort of physical training, classes or workshops or the gym [...] and actually if I add up the time in my week, I think I spend a lot of time doing that, definitely' (Karen, February 2012).

Vivian Freakley and Jonathan Neelands also recognise dance artists as 'self-investors who favour work offering opportunities for learning and/or reputation building over immediate financial reward' (Freakley & Neelands 2003, p. 53). I would argue, however, that when dance artists subsidise their personal practice, this investment also benefits the overall theatre dance sector. To put it in another way, 'internal subsidisation' through self-funding their artistic work complements or even replaces 'external subsidisation' via state funding (Abbing 2004). As such, I propose that cross-subsidy is an economic competency that is deeply embedded in the value economy of the theatre dance field.

Millie and Ian's accounts are representative of how trainee choreographers invest in devising work to develop their artistic profile. Millie, until recently, has self-produced her dance pieces and frequently pays for them through income generated from secondary employment and her family's financial support. She explains: 'I think I'll end up paying the dancers out of my own pocket because I just can't face not paying them again. [...] I have experienced dancers. [...] They have to be paid. I won't get paid myself' (Millie, November 2014). By contrast, Ian's status as a resident artist of a regional dance agency should reduce some of the economic pressures Millie has to deal with. His residency involves participating regularly in platform events staged by his host organisation. These events are aimed at raising participating artists' profiles and giving them exposure to audiences, peers and funders alike. However, Ian's comment suggests otherwise: he points out that he too self-funds most aspects of his work as a resident artist:

Financially [the residency] hasn't supported me [...] I've never received funding for anything. [...] Apart from the studio, I've paid for everything myself; I've paid for my own travelling - you know I've paid for myself to go to abroad [to participate in a dance festival].

(Ian, January 2013)

I do not want to speculate about the exact details of Millie's and Ian's agreements with particular venues and dance agencies, but I deduct from their statements that these dance organisations have provided them with free access to performance spaces and, in Ian's case, rehearsal facilities. At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that the organisations benefitted from Ian and Millie's financial investments. Doubtlessly, by covering the performers' fees and paying for costumes, music, per diems and travel, together with performing their work "for free" in ticketed showcases, Millie and Ian have partially funded these events, not to forget the added reputational benefits for the host organisations.

While it is easy to interpret Ian and Millie's behaviour as evidence for their selfless commitment to theatre, it is important to underline that their actions are

also economically motivated. The sociologist Michael Scott notes: 'the production of these [free] cultural goods and events are necessary to gain cultural intermediaries' attention as these prove ability and signal seriousness' (Scott 2012, p. 238). In short, their unpaid labour purposefully supports their career development and leads hopefully to funding, commissions and earned income through touring and ticket sales. Moreover, I would argue that some dance artists are motivated by what Robert Frank and Philip Cook (1995; 2013) describe as the 'winner-take-all' phenomenon: the authors maintain that chance occurrences can be threshold points in artists' or entrepreneurs' careers. Simply put, being in the right place at the right time, for example by showcasing one's work in front of influential cultural intermediaries, can be a determining factor for future artistic and economic success.

### *Bartering arrangements*

Another economic competency is to negotiate a variety of bartering arrangements in which dance artists exchange a clearly-defined type and volume of their labour in return for dance classes and access to tuition, dance and performance spaces. I suggest that dance artists resort to this form of transactional exchange to overcome the shortage of financial capital. Michael Scott alludes to 'cultural entrepreneur's capital mobilisation practices' when artists deploy 'alternative capitals' to realise their projects (Scott 2012, p. 250). Many respondents highlight that their teacher or other senior dance professionals have introduced them to these transactions. During her pre-vocational training, Susan exchanged her labour as her teacher's assistant, supervising younger students for additional dance classes. She negotiated similar barter arrangements during her vocational training: 'I was the canteen lady and [...] it was my job to open up the school in the morning but what they did was they didn't pay me; they gave me the extra lessons' (Susan, February 2012). Representing the other side of this exchange, Tracey offered her expertise and prestige as a choreographer and teacher to trainee artists in return for their unpaid work as her company's interns. Barter arrangements, it seems, are firmly established and central aspects of individual dance artists' and dance organisations' business models.

### *Pooling capital for mutual benefit*

The respondents also made many references to teaming up with their peers to realise artistic projects by pooling specialist and other resources for mutual benefit (Karen, February 2012; Ian, January 2013; David, October 2014; Millie, November 2014; Paula, November 2014). I would like to return to the example of Ian and Millie who, as we have seen above, have covered the costs for their performances at platform or similar events. An alternative scenario is that all involved - dance artists, choreographers and performers alike - have worked for free, sharing the costs of devising and staging their work. Choreographers and performers frequently combine their different skills, specialist knowledge and networks when collaboratively staging dance work on the agreement that everyone supplies their labour for free (Vicky, September 2012; Ian, January 2013; David, October 2014; Millie, November 2014).

I propose that dance artists employ this economic competency to maximise their access to financial and 'alternative forms of capital' (Scott 2012). In the words of Michael Scott, artists 'mobilise and convert' social, cultural, and symbolic capital to develop their freelance career, start microbusinesses and generate financial capital (Scott 2012, p. 238). At the same time, I contend that dance artists follow long-established customs in theatre dance when they join forces to share the financial burden of producing work. Typical business models in the theatre dance and the creative industries rely on group effort and networks to thrive (Becker 1992; Leadbeater & Oakley 1999; McRobbie 2004; 2007), but these practices also extend to other aspects of dance artists' work lives. Susan, for example, reduced the logistical and financial responsibilities of auditioning when she 'ended up [in] this big group travelling around together' (Susan, February 2012).

### **ii. Wishing and hoping**

The interviewees revealed countless wishes and hopes for their artistic future throughout the interviews and observations. The sociologist Natalie Heinich remarks that artists share a 'specific temporality [...] that is oriented towards the future much more than towards the present' (Heinich 2009, p. 89). I maintain that wishing and hoping is an important driving force which helps dance artists

to realise their artistic ambitions as well as to overcome inevitable setbacks. For example, their belief in a better future motivates them to achieve a standard of excellence despite receiving comparatively little or no pay for their labour. When asked about his aspirations, Ian first of all prudently acknowledges his precarious freelancer status and associated economic constraints: 'I can't see it because I'm not used to living like that, because I've lived as an if-and-when freelancer' (Ian, January 2013). Nevertheless, he then proceeds to outline a substantial wish list which is quite detailed, broadly resembling the operational model of a middle-scale contemporary dance company:

I would love to have my own company [...] I would love to be touring, I would love to have a set of dancers that I can work with full-time and pay them to work. I would love to have more opportunities to travel and see the world and be inspired by things and that's really all that I want. I would love to be able to do a massive show, I'd love a big show with 20 dancers or something but I think economically that is really above the clouds for most people, but who knows where you'll be in 10 years' time.

(Ian, January 2013)

Much of the literature about what motivates dance artists to progress and strive for excellence (Alter 1984; Bakker 1988; Gray & Kunkel 2001; Van Rossum 2001; Pickard & Bailey 2009) emphasises that, already at the training stage, dance artists possess higher levels of 'achievement motivation' (Atkinson 1964) than other individuals. I maintain that dance artists' wishes and hopes for the future play a crucial part in motivating them to dedicate time, effort and money to achieve their goals without any guaranteed return in terms of artistic success or financial income. Martin describes this approach as an 'all or nothing approach':

It cannot just be half: it's an all or nothing kind of approach. I mean a lot of my class mates also had it - like you either do it or you don't do it all, you don't do it [with a] half sort of attitude.

(Martin, February 2012)

Indeed, the participants' belief in their ability to achieve their artistic goals, if they only worked hard enough, seemed to be key to overcome the many obstacles they reported, for instance loss of funding from ACE and lack of support from cultural intermediaries, and the emotional and economic impact of such events.

Their hopes for their future also included financial considerations. Tracey, for example, sketches out her plans by outlining the business model she aspires to achieve for her company. She summarises her long-term vision as follows:

So maybe you know in 5 years' time, if all goes to plan 3 years down the line, you will be talking to somebody who is running a middle-scale company even if it is still project-based - it will be aspiring for NPO<sup>21</sup> status.

(Tracey, March 2012)

Furthermore, I maintain that wishing and hoping is a behavioural pattern linked to the economic competencies introduced above. Frederick chose to self-fund his participation in a dance platform when he discovered that the host organisation also provided financial support to artistic projects:

The reason I actually applied for [this platform] was in the hope that I'd be seen and that somebody might go "Oh maybe we'll..." because I know there is money [...] so I thought maybe that would happen here and maybe I would get that opportunity.

(Frederick, November 2012)

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<sup>21</sup> Since 2011, regularly-funded clients of ACE have been called National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs).



In order to realise his goals, Frederick assessed the likelihood of receiving a return on his investment of time, effort and money. Following Robert Frank and Philip Cook's notion of 'winner-take-all markets', Frederick speculated that 'small differences between talent or effort' and luck might result in him being rewarded with funding (Frank & Cook 1995, p. 24). In other words, if successful, he hoped to be rewarded disproportionately in comparison to the majority of other artists who participated in this event.

### **iii. Adaptive-resilient**

The interview contributions highlight the respondents' extraordinary ability to adapt to changing and often challenging circumstances. Psychologist Fran H. Norris and her colleagues describe resilience as 'a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance (Norris *et al.* 2008, p. 130). While this term is often used to assess the organisational health of arts and cultural institutions, it is not exclusive to them. Arts consultant and writer Mark Robinson has emphasised that the integral benefits of 'adaptive-resilient' capacities also 'apply at an individual level' (Robinson 2010, p. 16). Anusha Kedhar notes that the adaptive capacities of dance artists correlate with specific physical dispositions of the dancing body which she refers to as 'flexibilities'. Crucially, she suggests, these also inform the strategies they deploy to manage the legislative, economic and cultural constraints they encounter in their work lives (Kedhar 2011). I contend that 'adaptive-resilient' behavioural patterns are key characteristics of dance artists' creative entrepreneurial habitus, especially when it comes to sustaining their working lives under difficult economic conditions. Joe's adaptable and resilient qualities are a prerequisite to his successful career as freelance performer. He embraces what Wainwright *et al.* refer to as 'quest of the unattainable' (Wainwright *et al.* 2006, p. 547) when incrementally adapting to recurring challenges in class, rehearsals and performance as well as the logistical challenges his work life entails:

When you're in the [devising] process you become very involved in it, it's not so clear where work begins and home starts. [...] I've been doing kind of relatively short projects, so they've run back to back but

they've been maybe five or six weeks [each]. So it's every time [...] starting a new mental kind of research and how people want to look at one specific thing. Which is interesting, I really enjoy it but [...] there's a domino effect of one thing to the next, it becomes quite tiring.

(Joe, October 2014)

Findings by Angela Pickard (2015) indicate that teenage ballet dancers have already developed sufficient resilience and 'adaptive capacity' (Norris *et al.* 2008) to accommodate the physical and emotional discomforts associated with their training (Pickard 2015). This prepares them for their professional careers when they will have to rely on their ability to accommodate the aesthetic and physical demands of working with different dance companies and choreographers.

In this vein, the respondents utilise adaptive-resilient behaviours to sustain their practice and manage disruptive and negative events in their lives. Tracey and David, for instance, have regularly had to overcome unfavourable conditions and rejections. David determinedly worked on developing his own choreographic style and starting his dance company: '[I am] constantly trying to build my own language and aesthetic and the way I create work, and I want a kind of very individual company' (David, October 2014). Despite recurring setbacks, mainly the lack of support from his regional dance agency, he did not give up. Tracey had originally encountered similar setbacks as David:

My work is good enough and I feel particularly [the] triple bill was packed full of potential and I don't think the [director of the dance agency] even ever saw it. [...] what that told me [...] was quite painful, that's going back [some] years.

(Tracey, November 2012)

However, such obstacles only strengthened Tracey's resolve to realise her artistic aspirations: 'I came with very clear views and a legacy and a

background and now my views [and my desires are] even clearer' (Tracey, March 2012). As dance artist Jo Pollitt and psychologist Dawn Bennett observe, artists can utilise the 'positive impacts of instability' [to develop] a strong sense of self-preservation and adaptability, alongside the freedom to be creative, unorthodox, or innovative' (Pollitt & Bennett 2009, p. 526).

While Tracey has succeeded, at least for the time being, to gain ACE funding and dance agency support, David continues to invest financial, social and cultural capital in developing his relationships with various dance agencies, with no guarantee of return, as his comment illustrates:

I did a residency [...] for a week where I was working on a new [...] work. [...] I invited [staff of dance agency] and no one turned up at all. [...] That was the first thing that made me go "Oh, I've not really got any kind of audience or support". [...] At that time, I thought it was quite important to have people there; I felt quite lonely.

(David, October 2014)

David's and the following examples illustrate that there are limits to dance artists' resilience and adaptive capacities. For example, Susan had to work as a freelance dance artist when, a year into her contract, the company's funding was cut. She recalls her rapidly-changing economic circumstances: 'You know when you come out of [a company] and you're working freelance, you weren't making no money' (Susan, February 2012). To make ends meet, Susan followed a relentless schedule: 'I was rehearsing, doing class, giving class, rehearsal with [the company] from 8 in the morning till 4 o'clock. And then to make up the money [...] I taught aerobics from 6 until 10 at night and then I was in rehearsal again and class at 8 o'clock in the morning' (Susan, February 2012). However, Susan was not able to sustain the high levels of mental and physical commitment to primary and secondary work: 'And after two years of that, plus I did party hard, it's my own fault, I got burnout, I got severe burnout' (Susan, February 2012).

By a similar token, Millie found it difficult to overcome her exhaustion after an intense period of self-funded artistic work during which she planned, devised and rehearsed a dance piece and wrote funding applications alongside working part-time in her secondary job. She recalled that she was too exhausted to enjoy her success when she received ACE funding:

I didn't want that funding. I didn't want to do any more work. I was just exhausted and tired and fed up. I was just thinking I want a calm life. A calm six months. I don't want to do this work anymore.

(Millie, November 2014)

These narratives reveal that adaptive and resilient dispositions are helpful to sustain contemporary theatre dance artists artistically and economically. However, they do not always suffice to overcome disruptions and economic hardship.

#### **iv. Concealment**

The 'art-versus-money dilemma' (Taylor & Littleton 2008) and what Hans Abbing refers to as the 'exceptional economy of the arts' requires dance artists to conceal the economic purpose of their work lives. Abbing suggests that artists have to hide or deflect attention from any form of self-interest in order to be economically successful in artistic market places. Bruno S. Frey concurs that: 'Most artists would emphatically deny that they produce art because of the monetary compensation received thereby' (Frey 2002, p. 364). Concealment of economic motivations is therefore a key behaviour which features prominently in dance artists' work lives (Abbing 2002).

At the same time, I would argue that the act of concealing economic activities is embedded in a much wider-reaching culture of silence and secrecy. I was initially surprised how many of the study's participants repeatedly emphasised that their interview contributions needed to be treated confidentially and, if published, had to remain anonymous. Frederick often answered my questions by asking: 'Do you want me to be honest?' (Frederick, October 2012). Millie

stipulated during her first interview: 'So, this is between you and I, I never admit it to anyone else [...]. I don't know why' (Millie, November 2014).

While this is not the main focus of this study, in order to avoid any confusion, it is important briefly to examine my observation that the respondents seemed to engage in a 'hidden discourse' throughout the interviews and fieldwork (Scott 1990). When I pointed this out, many shared experiences which reveal ambivalent attitudes towards voicing their opinions. The political scientist and anthropologist James Scott employs the notion of a 'hidden discourse' to describe unvoiced criticism and resistance in the context of politically oppressive circumstances (Scott 1990 cited in Svašek 1997, p. 384). Frederick, for example, refers to his experience as a dance student: 'Everybody was straight-talking from the students up to the director, and all the teachers said exactly what they thought' (Frederick, October 2012). At the same time, he illustrated that 'straight-talking' could result in negative repercussions:

[The conservatoire] was such a small community and for that reason you didn't want to speak out because you didn't want to have enemies [...] you were kind of encouraged to speak your mind even if you were kind of scolded for it later.

(Frederick, October 2012)

David deliberated the potentially career-threatening consequences that prevented him and other dance artists from 'speaking out':

There is this element of hierarchy within the [local dance sector] and there is a fear of speaking out and saying things because at the end of the day I feel like I also need their support, so I can't say anything bad about them because the minute I say something bad, I've lost their support.

(David, October 2014)

Drawing on a familiar stereotype, for instance, that dance artists express themselves using their bodies rather than vocalising their opinions, was

therefore a commonly-accepted strategy which the participants employed to conceal aspects of their profession. The sociologist Loïc Wacquant (2004) explains in his text about semi-professional boxers how the reality of exceptional work lives is often hidden behind such stereotypical constructions. The monotonous routines, injuries and many disappointments are disguised by 'the prefabricated exoticism of the public and publicised side' of their careers (Wacquant 2004, p. 6). However, stereotypical and idealised notions of dance as an activity and profession seem to serve multiple other purposes which I shall examine in the next section.

#### **v. Multi-purpose dance myths**

Dance artists can also strategically draw on stereotypes and myths linked to dance and dance artists to overcome barriers to communication when they verbally share their embodied experiences, particularly with non-specialists. For example, it is easier for dance artists to adhere to commonly-shared assumptions about their healthy lifestyles than to explain that some are heavy smokers and possibly self-medicate to be able to dance and that others suffer from eating disorders. Furthermore, as Loïc Wacquant (2004) suggests, by assigning a special and exceptional status to theatre dance, the interviewees attached meaning and purpose to unspectacular and precarious aspects of their work lives, such as the monotony of daily class and rehearsals, chronic injuries and the lack of career progression and income.

It is important to note however, that the respondents clearly distinguish between the mythology generally associated with dance from their everyday life experiences in the theatre dance sector. Ian, for instance, describes how as a student he was inspired by 'this other world, it's amazing' (Ian, January 2013). He notes how as a trainee dance artist, he began to realise that 'this [amazing] other world, [...] it's, it's not at all [amazing]' (Ian, January 2013). This indicates that Ian clearly differentiates between his initial perceptions of the sector as a student and the reality of his work life in theatre dance. Ian's comment also suggests that, should he employ myths and idealisations, he will do so purposefully. This might be partly in response to the creative economy rhetoric and what philosopher and art theorist Gerald Raunig refers to as the 'complex

resurgence of creation myths' (Raunig 2011, p. 2), and, as we have heard above, to conceal economically-motivated activities. Much of the critical literature about the creative economy (Virno 2011a; McRobbie 2004; 2007) points to its neoliberal underpinnings which 'lead us to offer our creative force for the fulfillment of the market [...] (Rolnik 2011, p. 36). Ian's example, furthermore, raises the question to what extent dance artists believe in this romanticised vision of work which links creative labour to personal contentment and economic prosperity.

Two stereotypical constructions are of particular importance: the concept of the unique dance artist, and the idea of artists' selfless devotion to their art form. According to Hans Abbing, such notions 'induce[...] politicians to support the poor servants of the sacred arts and to increase subsidisation' in highly-subsidised Continental European arts funding systems (Abbing 2004, p. 17). In this vein, many participants emphasise their unique pathways, their distinct artistic voices and their exceptional merits. Joe cannot envisage engaging in projects which do not share his artistic ambitions: 'I would do it as long as it's only a small portion, as long as it doesn't inhibit doing what I really want to do' (Joe, October 2014). Likewise, while Joanne finds it difficult to verbalise her artistic vision, this does not affect her faith in its relevance: 'I feel like it's just my passion it's so right' (Joanne, November 2014).

Selflessness is the other important currency in the arts world and dance artists have to demonstrate that they 'serve' dance. John notes: 'We are expected [...] as professionals [to] be immersed in [dance] and be passionate about it and keep doing it' (John, January 2013). Alison establishes a link between dance artists' selfless dedication to dance and their popularity with theatre dance employers:

As a common denominator, the discipline and the kind of almost self-sacrifice that everybody has to make in that system means that you are incredibly employable... because you will go the extra mile, you will do as you're told, you're very good at taking direction, you're used to being exhausted permanently.

(Alison, November 2012)

Dance artists' appeal to audiences, clients and funders depends on the quality of the art works they produce, but also on demonstrating that they are true artists who have not 'sold out' (Abbing 2002). The arts sociologist Natalie Heinich concurs that careers in the arts and similar contexts demand a 'strong implication of personhood in one's work. They foster proximity, if not inseparability, between work and person' (Heinich 2009, p. 89). The interviewees frequently chose to present their work lives in a manner where 'financial security, and in fact all of "the outside world" [were sacrificed]' (Gray & Kunkel 2001, pp. 19-20). When I interviewed Susan, she initially highlighted how she had served dance by fully immersing herself in a dance company to fine-tune and apply her craft despite her dislike of its repertoire and aesthetic. It emerged only much later in the interview that she had accepted this job predominantly for financial reasons (see p. 136).

### **Concluding remarks**

This chapter has established that dance artists internalise economic dispositions - which I refer to as 'creative entrepreneurial habitus' - together with artistic ones. One can conclude that formative experiences in the theatre dance field which are usually associated with artistic practices, such as classes, rehearsals and performances, also introduce dance artists to economic competencies and behaviours. Pre-vocational and vocational training institutions alongside dance companies play a significant role in this process, with dance educators and established dance artists serving as teachers, role models and mentors. The respondents acted on their advice and guidance by adopting specific economic strategies, frequently to overcome economic constraints. They took on teaching and other forms of secondary work, such as unskilled jobs in catering and cleaning services, as advised by their teachers; often offered by training institutions. While there was a certain overlap between dance artists' economic activities and their reputational work, they had to adopt a separate set of dispositions which focussed on networking with cultural intermediaries to develop their artistic reputation and brand. This 'cultural intermediary habitus' was crucial once dance artists had left vocational dance



schools and university-based courses and needed to develop new support systems.

The interview contributions have emphasised that dance artists view artistic and economic spheres as interrelated. The findings furthermore have revealed that the study's participants habitually employ three economic core competencies: first, they cross-subsidise their artistic practice; second, they negotiate barter arrangements; and, finally, they pool financial and non-financial capital with others for mutual benefit: a range of economic behaviours which I have termed 'wishing and hoping', 'adaptive-resilient', 'concealment' and 'multi-purpose dance myths' complement these competencies.

The findings also illustrate that dance artists' economic dispositions are central to vocational training institutions and dance companies alike. Teachers, mentors, the participants and their peers considered them to be crucial factors in ensuring their artistic development and careers. Throughout the next chapters, it is my intention to demonstrate that economic activities are crucial components of how dance artists interact with the theatre dance field's institutional infrastructure. These emerging economic themes will provide key reference points in examining how respondents navigated dance production and labour markets. They will also play a role when examining entrepreneurial behaviour and notions of ownership in theatre dance and the UK's creative economy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **For what it is worth: contemporary theatre dance artists in the creative economy**

This chapter explores how dance artists engage with dance and dance-related employment in the context of the creative economy model implemented by New Labour in the late 1990s. In order to achieve this, I shall demonstrate that dance artists negotiate three distinctive value economies when working as performers, performer/creators and choreographers. These encompass the internal value systems of theatre dance, conventional economic contexts outside of the dance field, and policy and legal frameworks which underpin the creative economy in the UK. I shall investigate how dance artists employ economic competencies and behaviours which I have described as 'creative entrepreneurial habitus' in Chapter Four. Furthermore, I shall examine to what extent their 'cultural intermediary habitus', also introduced in the previous chapter, influences the manner in which they relate to employers inside and outside of the theatre dance field.

I shall contend that artists' apparent disregard for financial rewards, as noted by numerous scholars (Throsby 1992; 1994; 2007; Karttunen 1998; Abbing 2002; Taylor & Littleton 2008), does not indicate an absence of economic considerations and competencies. Instead, I maintain that dance artists, when they supply their labour, simultaneously negotiate personal economic interests and governmental policy frameworks, alongside responding to the theatre dance field's internal value systems. For this purpose, they draw on specific economic competencies, such as cross-subsidisation, which form their creative entrepreneurial habitus. Likewise, they employ communication, networking and negotiating strategies, in other words their cultural intermediary habitus, which are particular to the value economies they engage with.

Dance artists' creative entrepreneurial habitus and its influence on how they engage with dance, dance-related and non-artistic labour markets are the common threads which connects the two sections of this chapter. As I have argued in the previous chapter, their creative entrepreneurial habitus

encompasses key economic competencies which I have categorised as cross-subsidisation, barter arrangements and pooling capital for mutual benefit. Additionally, I have singled out four economic behaviours: first of all, 'wishing and hoping', which relates to the dance artists' firm beliefs that they will achieve a sustainable future at or near the top of their fields. Another behaviour, which I have termed 'adaptive-resilient', describes dance artists' robust yet flexible stance when facing challenging circumstances in their work lives. Furthermore, I have identified 'concealment' as a key strategy, particularly when dealing with financial matters. Last but not least, dance artists tactically use idealised notions of theatre dance as 'labour' and a 'work field' when negotiating contrary expectations and demands of the different value economies. I have referred to this behaviour as utilising 'multi-purpose dance myths'.

*Managing different value economies*, the first part of this chapter, investigates the manner in which the respondents negotiate the demands of the theatre dance field with a particular focus on its 'reversed economy' (Bourdieu 1983). I then examine how they supply their labour in dance, dance-related and non-artistic labour markets. This section then shifts to exploring how the interviewees accommodate holding jobs in secondary work fields together with managing their commitments in theatre dance. I conclude by considering how the characteristics and status of dance knowledge influence dance artists' supply behaviours.

Under the caption *Making a living in the creative economy*, the second part investigates New Labour's cultural policy rationale as a further value economy which the participants had to integrate in their work lives. It examines how the policies and interventions by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE) have impacted on dance artists' work lives throughout the different stages of the respondents' professional careers. It especially considers how New Labour's focus on the instrumental values of dance in non-theatrical contexts affected dance artists' ability to generate an income in secondary work fields such as dance teaching.

## **1. Managing different value economies**

This section will demonstrate that dance artists negotiate distinctive value economies when working as performers, performer/creators and choreographers in the UK's creative economy. I seek to establish that in order to accomplish such a complex undertaking, they draw on their creative entrepreneurial habitus, incorporating distinct economic behaviours (see above) and their cultural intermediary habitus.

### **i. Dance comes first**

The interviews suggest that dance artists are acutely aware of most of the aspects which characterise the internal and external value economies they operate in. They employ particular economic strategies to manage these complex and frequently contradictory systems, as I shall outline below. To begin with, I shall investigate to what extent the theatre dance field's internal value system affects the manner in which dance artists supply their labour. According to the respondents' interview contributions, its 'reversed economy' (Bourdieu 1983, p. 311) influences how they attach value to their artistic work. It is thus crucial to remind us of the key value-generating principles and distinctive currencies in theatre dance (see Chapter Two, pp. 78-82 for in-depth discussion). As Pierre Bourdieu outlines, the field of cultural production features a 'reversed' or 'anti economy' which ranks artists and their position in its hierarchy solely based on their cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1983, p. 335; 1993, pp. 74-76): a stark contrast to conventional economies which evolve around financial capital and monetary rewards.

Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison (2009) allude to these hierarchies in the dance sector when they emphasise the prestige, or in Pierre Bourdieu's words, 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu 1983) assigned to theatre dance performers and choreographers compared to that, for example, of dance teachers (Burn & Harrison 2009, p. 129). Likewise, Imogen Aujla and Rachel Farrer refer to 'unspoken hierarchies', which categorise dance artists according to their vocational 'training, location, types of work and employers' (Aujla & Farrer 2016, pp. 16-17). The manner in which Tracey links a guest choreographer, who she has employed for her company, to high-profile dance organisations illustrates

these ranking systems: 'He's [teaching] at [an international conservatoire] at the moment [...] and he did a piece for [an established UK contemporary dance company]' (Tracey, April 2012). In other words, she attaches value to the choreographer exclusively based on his accrued symbolic capital. In a similar vein, Vicky takes care to emphasise that she prioritises her artistic practice, despite juggling many dance-related and non-artistic jobs, which incidentally absorb most of her working hours: 'I feel very much that artistic development and relationships are very much at the top [...] for me' (Vicky, September 2012). Her comment suggests that she perceives her secondary job, as a facilitator of dance-related projects, as not adding to her standing in the theatre dance field.

However, despite their declared allegiance to theatre dance's 'anti economy' (Bourdieu 1983, p. 321), my observations suggest that dance artists might still benefit financially from their position in the field. Simply put, dance artists who inhabit a position of authority and prestige in the theatre dance's hierarchy are more likely to achieve higher financial rewards inside and outside of theatre dance. For example, Susan, Mona and Tracey have converted their embodied knowledge and the prestige of working for renowned companies to financial capital, namely by securing secondary employment in dance-related contexts. Their accrued symbolic capital was financially rewarded by higher and further education institutions which market their dance courses by highlighting that dance students are taught by experienced industry professionals: 'Our lecturers are practising artists' (Leeds Beckett University 2014). In other words, all of them utilised the capital they have accumulated in the theatre dance field to generate an income in another value economy. Likewise, other participants have sought temporary or permanent dance-related employment in education, health and community settings (Hannah, March 2012; Karen, April 2012; David, October 2014; Victor, February 2012). I shall return to discuss their economic strategies below and in the second part of this chapter when examining how dance artists have negotiated strategic funding frameworks and flagship projects instigated under New Labour.

Intriguingly, Joe's comment below brings to our attention that financial capital is also not fully excluded at the core of the theatre dance field's value economy, despite the primacy of other forms of capital. He explains:

If [the artistic producers] want [the company] to be successful and financially successful, they have to at least tick certain boxes. And while it does create art, I have to say I don't think it creates exciting new art.

(Joe, October 2014)

He seemingly makes a connection between financial capital, monetary success and interventions from outside of the field and lower quality of artistic work, or in Pierre Bourdieu's words, lower levels of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1993, pp. 50-51). The above example therefore underlines that the theatre dance field consists of different subfields with diverging agendas and value-generating potential. According to Bourdieu, the 'exciting new art' to which Joe refers is produced in the restricted field of art for art's sake producers. It achieves a higher level of cultural and symbolic capital than work produced in other subfields, such as the 'middlebrow' or 'large-scale' ones. Artists and cultural intermediaries who work in these fields aspire to produce 'financially successful' standardised theatre dance productions which appeal to a mass market of educated and/or non-specialist audiences (Bourdieu 1983; 1993, p. 50-51).

Joe and Millie also highlight the different levels of prestige attached to artistic works and their producers. On the one hand, they identify 'financially successful' (Joe, October 2014) and 'funded work' (Millie, November 2014) which can be associated with Pierre Bourdieu's 'middlebrow' field (Bourdieu 1993). On the other hand, they acknowledge 'unfunded' (Millie, November 2014) and 'exciting new art' (Joe, October 2014) linked to the restricted subfield of cultural production (Bourdieu 1993). Millie furthermore adds another dimension to theatre dance's internal value systems when she appears to imply

that dance artists are bound by an artistic code of conduct to produce 'interesting' work:

It's making me really angry because any work that I see come out, it's exactly [the same], it's ticking boxes, it's making me really angry. And any interesting work is underground and unfunded [...] [the] UK dance scene is so dull. It's incredibly dull and I think they should be ashamed of themselves for putting that work forward.

(Millie, November 2014)

I contend that Millie's fervent judgment seems to suggest that 'interesting' dance artists engage with theatre dance without considering financial rewards. At the same time, she indicates that this type of work does not receive funding because it is too experimental to meet ACE's funding priorities. I shall come back to this later on in the second part of this chapter.

Undeniably, Millie's comment also pinpoints tensions between established dance artists and newcomers, which populate the restricted field of art for art's sake production. As such, this subfield is not a homogeneous entity, but a place of struggles for positions which Pierre Bourdieu links to 'the opposition within the subfield of restricted production [...] between the established figures and newcomers' (Bourdieu 1983, p. 333). New arrivals such as Millie, similar to Hannah, Vicky and Frederick, as discussed in the previous chapter (see pp. 141-142), often challenge the status quo of established position holders in the field whose artistic practices they might consider outdated. More importantly, once newcomers are successful in instituting their aesthetic vision and values, they can replace senior theatre dance representatives who fail to embrace these changes. This 'ongoing struggle for positions' means that even mid-career and mature dance artists have to continue to accrue cultural and symbolic capital to secure their positions (Bourdieu 1993, pp. 40-43). Mona, a mature dance artist, observes that 'she is constantly reinventing herself' by exploring different settings and new ways of working (field log: Mona, October

2012), despite her decades of experience as a choreographer in national and international theatre dance and musical theatre settings.

Similarly, as mentioned previously (see p. 136), Susan had to carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of working for dance company employers and other artistic collaborators when she was a trainee dance artist: '[The artistic side] was really not good stuff but you learnt a lot about theatre life, you learnt a lot about how it works to be in a professional company' (Susan, February 2012). Acknowledging the company's low ranking in the theatre dance field's hierarchy, she pragmatically immersed herself fully in company life to fine-tune and test her craft in a professional theatrical environment. Once Susan had achieved this goal, she left the company to work for one to which higher value was ascribed (Susan, February 2012). In this respect, the participants' narratives confirm that the internal value economy of the theatre dance field with its apparent disregard for financial capital needs to be carefully managed, in particular, if dance artists seek to generate financial income outside of the dance field.

## **ii. The exceptional economy of dance**

Furthermore, the demands of the theatre dance field's value economy and expectations of funders and audiences require dance artists strategically to employ idealised beliefs about dance as a profession. Hans Abbing argues that artists must utilise 'myths or persistent beliefs about art and artists [which] make the economy of the arts exceptional' to be accepted as 'true artists' (Abbing 2002, p. 31). He observes that they are economically more successful when they are seen to repudiate financial aspects of their livelihoods:

Trade in art profits from the belief that art is sacred and beyond commerce. [...] denying the economy is profitable: it is commercial to be anti-commercial. Such denial and simultaneous embrace of money is present in almost any transaction in the arts.

(Abbing 2002, p. 12)



The case of Joe provides an apt example: he attempts to present his work life in a manner that fulfills these and other expectations linked to being an artist when he weighs up the advantages and disadvantages of working for a middlebrow theatre dance company. During the interview, he appears concerned that I might question his commitment to dance when he considers joining the company for an international tour:

I've always said [...] that I don't really have an interest in [Brian's] work. [...] I would do it [...] if it was a good tour. I wouldn't do it if it was a UK tour or a European tour; it would probably have to be further afield. I know that sounds so shallow.

(Joe, October 2014)

He also seems worried about how others, especially employers and funders, might perceive him if he would work for this company:

I think it would read very strange on my CV that I suddenly worked with [Brian]. [...] people would [...] think [...] I only did it because I wanted the tour. I think some people would laugh, I think others might be a bit like: "Okay, you're very specific in what you want out of something". But yeah, I think [...] people would also maybe question my motivation in why I do certain work.

(Joe, October 2014)

Millie is even more outspoken about how she tries to meet the expectations of funders and venues:

I just get on with it. I fake it most of the time. I just put on a mask of a professional, assertive, decisive creator. I'm good at marketing, so my media is always spot on. My imagery is perfect, [...] I think it's about that. I think it's about appearances at this early stage, you know?

(Millie, November 2014)

In other words, Millie admits to impersonating the assertive creator in order to accommodate the different value economies she has to reconcile to establish herself in the theatre dance field.

Both Joe and Millie are guided by their cultural intermediary habitus when deciding how best to present themselves to others in and outside of the theatre dance field. Their knowledge of different cultural intermediaries and the institutional cultures of dance companies and organisations supports the manner in which they communicate and network. In this context, Millie benefits from her marketing and media skills which help her to capture and present her artistic work on a website and on various social media platforms. These skills also prove helpful to convert her embodied and cultural capital to social and financial capital. They thus help, to a degree, to overcome constraints which come alongside the short-lived and fragile quality of embodied performances and knowledge.

Significantly, the respondents' narratives furthermore highlight another aspect of the exceptional economy of dance: dance companies and organisations rely on dance artists' self-funding themselves and their projects. Even when they were contracted as dance artists, the inadequate levels of pay compelled many of the interviewees to generate additional income. While Joe appreciates that workers in other industries might not benefit from a similar level of governmental support, he is also highly critical of how the choreographers and company directors he has worked with have used the state funding they were awarded: 'Other things are deemed more important. [...] How much [dancers are] paid is always the most flexible thing in terms of budget' (Joe, October 2014). In comparison, he observes that technicians and costs for materials are treated differently: 'If they want to build a set, the person comes in; [...] the piece of wood [...] is a certain cost in the shop and there isn't going to be any change on that' (Joe, October 2014).

Additionally, Joe finds that dance employers implicitly expect him to commit himself far beyond the agreements outlined in his contracts:

If the contract states ten to six, I mean dancers will always be there earlier to warm up, so their day has also been extended by 20 minutes, half an hour [...]. Choreographers also [have to be] very aware of [...] timekeeping [...] and this thing of running overtime 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes without acknowledging it [...], which also diminishes how much you're being paid.

(Joe, October 2014)

Dance artists also invest in other aspects of their practice, for instance attending auditions as well as paying for their ongoing professional development and specialist healthcare. Many of the performers in the sample reported covering the costs of travelling to national or international auditions (Susan, February 2012; Martin, February 2012; Hannah, March 2012; Robert, April 2012), and attending dance classes and receiving physiotherapy treatment (Susan, February 2012; Martin, February 2012; Paula, November 2014; Mary, April 2012). The respondents also self-funded participating in dance agencies' platform events to showcase their skills and dance works, as discussed in Chapter Four (Frederick, November 2012; Ian, January 2013; Millie, November 2014; Paula, November 2014). In my view, the above examples illustrate that dance artists make significant financial investments in the overall dance sector and its exceptional economy by funding their practice. In other words, they subsidise theatre dance employers, ranging from individual small-scale projects, dance companies and agencies to dance hub organisations.

### **iii. Secondary employment in dance-related and non-arts sectors**

At some point of their careers, all of the interviewees have sought secondary forms of employment, such as dance teaching or working in retail and hospitality settings. This means that they have operated in two different value economies: the theatre dance field and their secondary field of employment. As Vicky's narrative above highlights, working in secondary jobs can be a time-consuming undertaking and might potentially diminish a dance artist's ability to accrue cultural and symbolic capital. This raises the question of how dance artists overcome these constraints to ensure their position in the field. With this

in mind, it is necessary to examine in more detail the strategies they use to negotiate working in primary and secondary employment contexts.

Dance artists do share distinctive features generally associated with artistic labour with artists from other disciplines in the performing and visual arts (Wasall & Alper 1992; Throsby 1992; Towse 1993; Menger 1999; Rengers 2002; Towse 2006b). For instance, findings by Burns and Harrison (2009) and Aujla and Farrer (2016) confirm that they, similar to other creative professionals, display above-average levels of holding multiple jobs and are seeking short-term and intermittent arts-related or non-arts employment (Galloway *et al.* 2002, p. 35).

At the same time, temporal and income constraints imposed by dance artists' shorter career spans - in addition to extensive and costly training and physical maintenance regimes - distinguish them from other performing artists. These genre-specific characteristics determine their creative entrepreneurial habitus and other dispositions and need to be taken into consideration when assessing their economic conduct and engagement with labour markets in the creative economy.

Contemporary theatre dance artists, for instance, usually start to engage in more formalised prevocational activities and vocational training at a younger age than actors and visual artists, although not necessarily as early as ballet dancers. Numerous reports (Burns 2007; 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009; Creative Scotland 2012) indicate that the dance workforce in the UK is highly-educated with 62% of members holding a degree. Furthermore, dance artists, as a matter of course, are involved in continuous training or knowledge production in private, formal or other contexts (Throsby & Hollister 2003, p. 32). At the same time, some reports, as already mentioned above, have identified skill gaps in arts-related and non-artistic areas, such as dance teaching, leadership and business skills (Burns 2007; 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 15).

Income uncertainty characterises dance artists' primary roles, as highlighted in previous studies (Siddall 2001; Freakley 2002; Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009; Aujla & Farrer 2016). Remuneration is generally low and average income levels are lower than those of other workers, for example in the public sector, who are educated to a similar level (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003, p. 12; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009). Sheila Galloway *et al.* underlined in 2002: 'Those employed in cultural occupations have experienced a relative deterioration in their earnings position and generally earn less than those who possess similar levels of education and training' (Galloway *et al.* 2002, p. 29).

During the fieldwork between 2012 and 2016, the interviewees worked intermittently in their primary artistic work field, usually employed as freelancers on short-term contracts. During this time, only one of the performers in the sample I observed received an employment contract which expanded beyond six weeks of paid artistic work. Millie declares: 'There's no stability. There's nothing to hang on to, if it's just dance. I don't see a way' (Millie, December 2015). Jeremy confirms that most dance artists have at least two different sources of income: 'I think most dancers have two jobs' (Jeremy, November 2013). Even Joe, who is in considerable demand as a performer, notes: 'I've been doing kind of relatively short projects so they've run back to back, but they've been maybe five or six weeks' (Joe, October 2014).

Both primary and secondary work fields can be unpredictable in terms of work hours, locations and income levels. Research into pay levels (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003) published during New Labour's second term in government revealed that 38% of dance professionals earned between £5,000 and £20,000 per annum and 23% achieved an annual income of below £5,000. Dance artists with a fifty-two-week contract at ITC/Equity's<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The Independent Theatre Council (ITC) represents the interests of 'a community of 450 companies and producers'. It advises on management, legal and financial matters and organises training events (ITC 2017).

Equity is the UK trade union for performer and creators in the entertainment industry. It negotiates pay rates for its membership of over 40,000 and runs campaigns, such as *Professionally Made, Professionally Paid* (2015) for fairer pay (Equity 2017)

recommended minimum wage achieved ‘an annual income of £15,704, which does not compare well with the basic National Union of Teacher (NUT) pay rate for teachers of £18,105 (or £21,522 with inner London weighting)’ (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003, p. 12). More recent studies seem to indicate that this trend is ongoing with dance artists’ earnings continuing to fall in relative terms despite the apparent growth rates in the global creative economy (Burns & Harrison 2009; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012; Aujla & Farrer 2016).

Most of the participants have to manage commitments associated with their artistic practice, for instance rehearsals and performances which are difficult to plan and coordinate. At the same time, the vast majority of them work as freelancers in dance-related and non-arts settings on fixed- and short-term contracts and hence have also to meet the demands made by secondary jobs. For Millie, it is therefore essential that these jobs flexibly accommodate her work in theatre dance:

The reason why I am no longer stressed about [generating an income] is because I’ve set up different lines of work that is freelance and really flexible. So, I can get my income from [other sources] with a flexibility that doesn’t affect what I need to do. If I didn’t have that, I’d be screwed.

(Millie, December 2015)

Miriam notes: ‘If you are a freelancer, the chances are that you have got six or seven or eight or nine different employers’ (Miriam, January 2016). Many have also worked as casual labourers with ‘zero hour’ contracts. Ian recalls the advantages and disadvantage of this type of employment contract:

I’m on a zero hour contract [...] It is good but it’s difficult in summer because there’s never any, there’s never any [work] in the summer which is strange and... January has been quite a difficult month.

(Ian, January 2013)

The respondents' contributions seem to confirm that dance artists undertake secondary jobs mainly to fund working in their primary artistic occupations as performers, performer/creators or choreographers. David Throsby focuses on artists favouring their practice over leisure time when he conceptualises this unusual economic behaviour as 'work-preference model of artistic behaviour' (Throsby 1992; 1994). Hans Abbing coins this phenomenon as artists' 'non-monetary income preferences' (Abbing 2002), which underlines that they prefer their artistic practice, even though it is rarely financially rewarded, to other better remunerated occupations. Both notions present a stark contrast to conventional economic behaviours which see individuals striving to achieve financial rewards to fund free time, recreational activities and other goods and services.

In this vein, many of the interviewees rank their artistic practice as more important than paid employment, leisure time and consumption. For example, the demands of Paula's mostly unpaid work as a performer appear to override her dance-related employment which guarantees a reliable income: 'I've got this job teaching at the uni but there's always that fear of committing to a term of teaching and then potentially getting a [dance] job and then it's like you're letting down something you've already committed to' (Paula, November 2014). Mona too reveals that she does not feel truly dedicated to the part-time positions she has as a dance lecturer. As soon as one of her employers refused to accommodate her intermittent absences due to her artistic commitments, she resigned from the post, an approach which echoes Hans Abbing's findings (Abbing 2002). Mona notes: 'It allows me to do more creative work [...] I was very cross that they wouldn't allow me to go back to my practice' (Mona, October 2012). However, it would be wrong to conclude from their lack of commitment to secondary work fields that dance artists therefore are not interested in generating an income. Hans Abbing stresses that financial rewards play a crucial role in dance artists' work lives as a means to fund their practice:

Take the models I work with; most of them are young dancers and I notice that money is extremely important to them – far more than others their age. This is the last thing you'd expect from artists who are supposedly devoted to art. However, the instant my models earn

some money dancing, they are suddenly unavailable for modeling – not even if I offer them far above the normal wage.

(Abbing 2002, p. 83)

At the same time, as he suggests, ‘the exceptional economy of arts’ rewards artists financially for appearing to have no interests in monetary gain (Abbing 2004). Dance artists therefore must demonstrate their commitment to the theatre dance field’s reversed economy and their selfless dedication to dance. Indeed, I propose that their unique supply behaviour indicates that it is vital for dance artists to ensure that peers, theatre dance employers and cultural intermediaries perceive them as primarily committed to dance, especially as most of them spend many more hours working in secondary fields outside their primary occupation.

In this respect, dance artists’ cultural intermediary habitus ensures that they manage these expectations by signalling their commitment to the logic of the reversed economy, where monetary rewards are of less significance. As I have proposed in the previous chapter, to achieve this dance artists employ concealment as a key economic strategy in conjunction with other economic competencies. This is to hide aspects of their work lives which could prove detrimental to establishing themselves as dance artists in the hierarchy of the field and to generating an income. The respondents’ narratives suggest that they disguise their real opinions and motivations when negotiating artistic labour. This became obvious through contradictions, variances and omissions which surfaced during the interviews, data analysis and the participant observations (see Susan, p. 136 and p. 249; Miriam, p. 192).

In this vein, John evokes the notion of dance artists selflessly pursuing highly individualised trajectories to realise their artistic calling. He emphasises that artistic curiosity and commitment motivate his colleagues to take on work:

They’ll take a job, not on the money they’re going to get from it, but because it’s really great and they want to do it. They [...] work with



different people that they've never worked with before. They get fresh ideas coming into their own work.

(John, June 2015)

It might be the case that John's colleagues are truly not interested in economic rewards. Indeed, one could argue that they are fully committed to the logic of the theatre dance field's reversed value economy, however I maintain that their actions could also be interpreted as economically motivated, even though outsiders, and maybe the artists themselves, would not perceive their behaviour as such. When John observes his colleagues work with 'different people' in order to share 'fresh ideas' (*ibid.*), he describes them pooling their resources for mutual benefit, an economic competency introduced in Chapter Four. Sharing expertise can serve multiple economic goals, for example helping dance artists to create time and money-saving synergies as well as expanding their professional networks. As such, I contend that dance artists are frequently economically motivated even when they proclaim their commitment to theatre dance. Indeed, concealing their economic intentions allows John and his colleagues to simultaneously manage the different value economies they engage with.

I maintain that dance artists' cultural intermediary habitus helps them to accommodate the varied expectations of the multiple constituencies they work within. For example, many interviewees' narratives refer to working as dance teachers in ways which effectively hide that they are mostly financially motivated when teaching in various dance-related settings in education and the community. Victor seems to enjoy teaching dance in a school catering for special educational needs:

I think I like the special needs projects [...] I can throw all my creativity in there, put it in the pot, stir it up, see what comes out. Some fantastic stuff has come out and I feel, yes: this is me being an artist and being creative, I've risen to the challenge, done, done.

(Victor, February 2012)

He presents himself as an artist by highlighting his creative input and avoiding any references to his financial interest. However, it is highly unlikely that he would teach the sessions if he was not paid to do so and, revealingly, his description of his experience almost sounds like a sales pitch. Hannah illustrates how pay rates have informed her decision-making when accepting work: '[I have] done a little bit of [teaching] work for Dylan as well where there was the kind of weighing up of like, he pays well, but the work [I] don't really like, but he pays well' (Hannah, June 2015).

Studies of artistic labour by Clare McAndrew (2002, p. 63) and Sheila Galloway *et al.* (2002, p. 39) furthermore suggest that casual teaching jobs were better remunerated than employment in retail and hospitality during the early years of the New Labour governments. According to Susanne Burns, some areas in the UK even reported a shortage of dance teachers in education and community settings (Burns 2008). In this respect, teaching must have seemed a straightforward way to convert the interviewees' accrued physical, cultural and symbolic capital to financial capital (Bourdieu 1983). This was especially so as, at first glance, dance teaching does not require the same level of investment in additional skills development and resources than other non-dance professions, allowing dance artists to maximise the return on their labour.

#### **iv. Dance knowledge as a transient and unstable form of capital**

In this context, it is also necessary to consider attributes of dance knowledge which play a role in its perceived 'otherness' in Western societies (Klein 2007, pp. 28-29). This unique status is a further contributory factor which affects the manner in which dance artists supply their labour in different market places. The sociologists Chris Shilling (1993) and Gabriele Klein (2007) reflect on the transient and unstable nature of the physical, cultural and symbolic capital which dance artists produce when they devise and perform dance works. Klein proposes that dance knowledge, because of its embodied nature and ephemeral quality, is often viewed as 'another form of knowledge' (Klein 2007, pp. 28-29). She notes that dance knowledge, because it is located in the body

(though not exclusively so), needs to be differentiated from 'proper knowledge [...] gained through reason, understanding and rationality' (*ibid.*), for example in philosophy and mathematics.

Proponents of the embodied capital theory (Kaplan *et al.* 2000; 2009) note that all individuals, not only dance artists, invest in 'processes of growth, development, and maintenance' in order to develop embodied capital (Kaplan *et al.* 2009). Anthropologist Hillard Kaplan and his colleagues furthermore recognise that for a variety of different reasons, individuals' embodied capital 'tend[s] to depreciate with time' (Kaplan *et al.* 2009, pp. 42-43). Studies from the fields of sociology (Shilling 1993; Turner & Wainwright 2003; Wainwright & Turner 2003b; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007), and dance and sport medicine (Brinson & Dick 1996; Laws & Apps 2005; Angioi *et al.* 2009; Russell 2013) acknowledge that dance artists are particularly susceptible to multiple factors which lower the value attached to their embodied knowledge. These range from changing perceptions of ideal body types and new movement styles. Furthermore illness, injury (Brinson & Dick 1996; Turner & Wainwright 2003; Wainwright & Turner 2003a; b; 2006; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; Laws & Apps 2005) and ageing (Turner & Wainwright 2003a; 2004; 2006) can devalue dance artists' physical, cultural and symbolic capital.

I contend that dance artists therefore have to adopt a robust and flexible stance in order to manage this 'other type' of knowledge with its fluid and unstable properties. Many of the interviewees reveal an 'adaptive-resilient' attitude when dealing with the uncertainties linked to the physical capital they have accrued. Martin understood from early on in his career that his embodied expertise and the prestige of having graduated from a notable institution had a sell-by date:

I don't know if you would be considered a failure but people would know, okay, you're up for a very hard time [...]. [You] give yourself three years of doing auditions all around Europe; after three years of searching, if you still haven't found anything really, stop it and do something else.

(Martin, February 2012)

Jeremy anticipates that his physical capital will lose its current value when he gets older and/or injured. He therefore proactively utilises his freelance status to pursue professional development opportunities which broaden his skill set:

I'm learning a huge amount of stuff that dancers in full-time work don't get. They don't get the experience of doing all the other jobs. When [...] they are forced to retire, at a certain age, they don't know what to do. They don't know what they can do. They don't know what other skills they might have. I've learned along the way what I might do.

(Jeremy, November 2013)

As a mid-career performer, Jeremy has begun to prepare for a future career transition by systematically seeking out openings to work as a choreographer, teacher and manager/producer. Mona, on the other hand, seems to accommodate changes in aesthetic tastes and artistic practices to hold her position in the field. As we have seen above, her strategic response is to constantly 'reinvent' herself as a choreographer by looking for new ways of accumulating cultural and symbolic capital (field log: Mona, October 2012). As such, she has developed an eclectic portfolio of choreographic works which comprises the staging of high-profile commercial musical theatre productions alongside small-scale community events.

The 'otherness' of dance knowledge also led to repercussions in other areas of dance artists' lives, for instance when attending job interviews in non-artistic settings (anonymous, field log September 2014), and in their leisure time (Martin, February 2012; anonymous, field log September 2014). The interviewees reported that people outside of theatre dance frequently held uninformed and negative views about dance which occasionally compromised job searches and their social lives. Again, overcoming such attitudes required a robust stance, as Martin found out when leaving the dance profession and attempting to develop a career in a non-artistic work field:

There are lots of stereotypes [...] and I noticed as soon as you mention the word dance there is immediately this thing of Aha! Okay, we don't need to take this person very seriously. [...] I think this is so widespread you really have to make a very serious case in order to get it recognised.

(Martin, February 2012)

On the other side of the coin, many of the respondents emphasised and experienced themselves as being different from non-dancers. Idealising their 'otherness' as a unique, almost unattainable feature helped to confirm their artistic identity and thus appeared to fulfill a stabilising function. This is also recognised in Alison Bain's study of visual artists (Bain 2005). She argues that 'professional status comes largely from drawing on a repertoire of shared myths and stereotypes to help create an artistic identity and project it to others' (Bain 2005, p. 25). As Karen explains, she has little in common with outsiders to the dance field. When she attends the gym, she is aware that her accrued physical and cultural capital singles her out as a dance artist: 'I have my moments, you know; sometimes you know if I'm at the gym, it's usually, My God, I feel so different' (Karen, April 2012).

In a similar vein, other interviewees stressed that outsiders lack a detailed understanding of the theatre dance field's norms and conventions as well as the embodied experience of dance. Tracey, for example, describes the non-specialist cultural intermediaries she deals with as 'uneducated in dance' (Tracey, March 2012). Likewise, Susan does not trust her higher education dance students' and her non-specialist line managers' understanding of dance:

I have that knowledge and that understanding [...] but they can be critical of the class, not because the class isn't right, but because they couldn't do it or they couldn't understand it.

(Susan, June 2015)

This distrust in value judgments from outside of the theatre dance field exists also at an institutional level, with vocational training providers and dance companies relying on auditions and other legitimisation processes, in which their gatekeepers ‘consecrate’ aspiring dance artists, instead of having faith in formal qualifications (Bourdieu 1983, p. 320; 1993, pp. 76-77). The cultural economist Ruth Towse observes a similar phenomenon in her examination of the career trajectories of professional singers. She notes that recognised qualifications, for example a university degree, provide ‘an ineffective screen for the qualities [...] sought by employers’ in the arts sector’ (Towse 1993, p. 52).

## **2. Making a living in the creative economy**

In the second part of this chapter, I seek to demonstrate how New Labour’s creative economy agenda has affected dance artists’ practices and economic status. I propose that the manner in which ACE and local authorities implemented the DCMS’s policy objectives has disrupted dance artists’ interactions both with the theatre dance field’s internal economy, and dance-related and non-artistic work fields.

### **i. Getting paid by the state**

I contend that New Labour’s cultural policies constituted a further value economy which the participants had to accommodate in their work lives. Indeed, I shall argue that strategic governmental plans, such as the *New Cultural Policy Framework* (DCMS 1998a), *Local Cultural Strategies* (DCMS 1999b), *Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years* (DCMS 2001a) and *Creative Britain* (DCMS 2008a), amongst many others, have had a bearing on the respondents’ livelihoods, especially as the majority of them have benefitted from ACE funding as applicants or through funding received by others.

Importantly, New Labour’s policies (DCMS 1998a; 1999a; b; 2001a; 2006; 2008a; 2009) reframed artists’ professional roles by linking their support for artistic ‘excellence’ to ‘access’ to arts and culture. That is to say, the DCMS linked dance artists seeking to make and disseminate high-quality work with obligations or opportunities to employ their expertise for a range of arts-related or non-artistic purposes in education, regeneration and the creative industries.

This interpretation of their roles expanded far beyond the traditional remit of performers, creators and/or teachers in theatre dance and related work fields.

Following the DCMS's multi-pronged strategic directives, ACE's policies ambitiously envisioned artists engaged at the forefront of artistic innovation:

We will encourage artists working at the cutting edge; we will encourage radical thought and action, and opportunities for artists to change direction and find new inspiration.

(ACE 2003a, p. 4)

At the same time, policy makers positioned them as key contributors at the core of the creative industries: 'Artists are the source of work that sustains whole industries' (ACE 2003b, p. 13). In addition, some would be working as cultural agents for societal change: 'We bring the transforming power of the arts to bear on issues of health, crime, education and inclusions. Some artists are naturally drawn to those fields' (ACE 2003a, p. 10). In short, dance artists were to pursue artistic excellence while at the same time contributing to economic growth and a societal overhaul.

Following Pierre Bourdieu's theory of field, conditions inside the field of cultural production are determined by its proximity to and affiliation with the state's legislative and executive representatives, 'the field of power' (Bourdieu 1993, pp. 101-102). In this respect, it is crucial to recognise that governmental policies influence dance artists in multiple and often unobtrusive ways. During the fieldwork, very few of the respondents overtly linked their current or past artistic and economic circumstances to New Labour and its creative economy agenda. Like Miriam, they frequently declare that governmental policies, while they might have impacted on the overall dance sector, did not have an immediate effect on their work lives:

I'm sure things did affect me but they might have affected me slightly more indirectly. [...] I might have done an education project that might have been funded by something New Labour had supported

but because I was just a little employee I wouldn't have noticed all of that because I was just doing my little job.

(Miriam, January 2016)

Unsurprisingly, choreographers and performer/creators are more aware of the role of the state in funding the arts than dancers, with ACE and cultural intermediaries acting as conduits for cultural policy priorities and financial support (Tracey, March 2012; Karen, April 2012; Robert, April 2012; Mona, October 2012; Millie, November 2014). However, even dancers and dance practitioners who worked mainly in dance-related secondary employment have been directly or indirectly affected by the cultural policy changes New Labour instigated.

As highlighted in numerous publications (Miller 1999; Siddall 2001; Pakes 2001; Burn & Harrison 2009), governmental policies in the UK, especially those that impact on funding levels and priorities, affect dance artists at all stages of their careers. Some of the respondents (Robert, April 2012; Mary, April 2012) participated in projects funded through *Creative Partnerships*<sup>23</sup> as learners in primary and secondary schools. They also took part in youth dance activities instigated by *Youth Dance England*<sup>24</sup>. Robert recalls the various opportunities 'to really participate in a lot, a lot of things to do with dance' (Robert, April 2012) when summarising how he developed his dance skills:

I found myself at the end of my A-levels having studied and trained in dance, now being in [a regional] youth company, having done a couple of national [...] government initiative projects and then [I] was applying for dance schools.

(Robert, April 2012)

Many of the interviewees (Mary, April 2012; Robert, April 2012; David, October 2014; Vicky, September 2012) have benefitted from initiatives introduced under New Labour, such as the *Dance and Drama Awards* and *National Centres for*

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<sup>23</sup> *Creative Partnerships* (2002-2010): see also Introduction, p. 19 and Chapter Three, p. 100 and p. 110 for further information.

<sup>24</sup> *Youth Dance England* (2004-2015) did not cover Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.



*Advanced Training*<sup>25</sup> which support gifted dance students with state-funded pre-vocational and vocational training opportunities. These schemes present a stark contrast to Susan's training experience before New Labour: Susan relied largely on self-funding her dance classes in a private dance school and securing one of three local authority grants available in her municipality, as outlined in Chapter Four (see pp. 145-146). Even Miriam concedes at the end of the interview that some of her work had been supported by state funding:

I got some professional development money once from the *Grants for the Arts*<sup>26</sup> and I've done one or two of these artist residencies and things like that. Bits and pieces of funding have come to me. So now that I think about it, I probably did benefit. [...] I didn't always relate my benefit to the fact that the government [was] making these changes.

(Miriam, January 2016)

Others, for example Joe, immediately relate artistic employment in the maintained and independent theatre dance sector to governmental funding:

I don't know of any other kind of freelancing job that is essentially funded by a governing body. So you're freelancing but you are paid by the state in a roundabout way.

(Joe, October 2014)

The choreographers and performer/creators in the sample have engaged most closely with ACE and other national funding bodies, such as the Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Scottish Arts Council<sup>27</sup>. Many therefore hold detailed knowledge about funding priorities and governmental cultural policy initiatives. They have met regularly with the representatives of

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<sup>25</sup> *Dance and Drama Awards* were introduced in 1999. *The National Centres for Advanced Training* were rolled out in England from 2004 onwards.

<sup>26</sup> *Grants for the Arts*: Funding programme launched in 2003 by Arts Council England under New Labour which awards grants from £1,000 – £100,000 to individuals and organisations (Arts Council England 2017).

<sup>27</sup> In 2010, Scottish Arts Council was relaunched as Creative Scotland.

these funders and have dealt directly with ever-changing funding application formats and reporting regimes. Most have experienced fundraising as a highly competitive process and the national funding organisations and local authority funders as unpredictable and oversubscribed sources of support (Tracey, March 2012; Karen, April 2012; Robert, April 2012; Mona, October 2012; Millie, November 2014). Millie refers to receiving ACE funding as a chance occurrence, equally deserved by many other artists in the field:

Now that I have funding, Arts Council funding, I feel like I need to tattoo this on my face because suddenly I'm sieved through the first round, you know? There's thousands of people like me who know that their work is great and who know that they deserve that chance.

(Millie, November 2014)

Tracey underlines the impact of funding priorities when she discusses ACE's focus on 'emerging work' and its effect on mid-career and mature dance artists:

[ACE] is all the time looking for emerging work and [...] therefore we'll put money on the emerging work. So it's very very difficult to get a track record, sustainability and continuity and standards.

(Tracey, March 2012)

The participants furthermore point out that they also have to cover the costs for the bureaucracy which accompanies the state funding disseminated by ACE and local authorities. The interviewees note how much time and effort it takes to submit funding applications, collate the data ACE asks for and write up project evaluations and reports (Tracey, 2012; Joe, October 2014; Millie, December 2015). Millie observes: 'The amount of administrative work is enormous [...] I always felt that it takes me away from producing good work. [...] All of that time is obviously unpaid' (Millie, December 2015). In fact, scholars and other observers have also frequently questioned New Labour's managerial protocols for the arts and culture sector, noting that they were unnecessarily time-

consuming and ineffective (Galloway *et al.* 2002, p. 45; Holden 2007; Joss 2008; Bakhshi *et al.* 2009, p. 13).

## **ii. Making it work at all costs**

Decades of research about the dance sector have uniformly underlined dance artists' poor levels of pay and frequently unforgiving working conditions (Devlin 1989; Miller 1999; Pakes 2001; Freakley 2002; Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009; Schlesinger & Waelde 2012; Aujla & Farrer 2016). Paid artistic employment in contemporary theatre dance, such as devising, rehearsing and performing of theatre dance works in dance companies and on a project basis, is rare. There is also very little evidence of wage progression to reward more experienced mid-career and mature dance artists whose level of pay mostly does not differ from those who have just entered the profession. Unsurprisingly, a lack of clear job profiles and progression routes further characterises this situation which, as some suggest, is possibly exacerbated by underfunding and a workforce which is mostly young and often inexperienced (Aujla & Farrar 2016). Dance artists who hold managerial and administrative posts or work as specialist teachers and lecturers in the education sector are more likely to have salaried full-time and permanent contracts than performer and choreographers (Foundation for Community Dance 2003, p. 10). These findings mirror the overall arts and culture sector where 'rates of self-employment are [...] low among managers (14 per cent)' (Galloway *et al.* 2002, p. 31).

Numerous studies (Freakley 2002; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Throsby & Hollister 2003; Throsby 2004; Hill 2005; Burns 2007; Burns & Harrison 2009) highlight that it is unusual for dance artists to make a living exclusively through working as performers, performer/creators or choreographers. Only five dance artists in the sample (Susan, February 2012; Hannah, March 2012; Martin, February 2012; Victor, February 2012; Jeremy, November 2013) had occasionally secured full-time posts as performers, which came with benefits such as pension contributions and additional healthcare provisions. Victor acknowledges the advantages of gaining a permanent contract: 'The security

thing [...] on the full-time contract feels good, it feels like [you] can do things, it feels like you can travel, it feels like you can go out' (Victor, February 2012).

However, dance artists' ability to cross-subsidise their artistic work enables them, to a degree, to renounce financial rewards for artistic labour. I maintain that their willingness to do so ensures that they accrue relevant capital in the reversed economy of theatre dance, especially, as I shall illustrate below, when they receive inadequate or no pay for their labour. It is unlikely, for instance, that Miriam could have taken on an unpaid artistic project without cross-subsidising it through paid employment as a dance teacher. She notes the risks she took with this endeavour:

I was doing an unpaid performance [...] and I had no idea what was going to come out of it, and as it happened by the grace of the universe, it did happen that things led onto other things. But it could easily have gone the other way.

(Miriam, January 2016)

I suggest that Miriam's example also illustrates the interplay between cross-subsidisation and related behaviours, such as concealment and wishing and hoping. Miriam, at no point during the interview, mentions how she has self-funded her project or refers to any additional costs involved in this staging of her work. Instead, it seems that Miriam is keen to hint at the selfless sacrifice her actions required, and her wishes and hopes to develop her practice as a performer/creator.

The extent to which dance artists adapt to economic hardship and difficult working conditions has been a striking feature throughout the fieldwork. Most respondents highlight that their overall annual income is below the minimum income threshold in the UK. They give the impression that this had not been a cause of concern during their student and trainee stages when it had been easier to explain failure to secure a reasonable income by being an artist. In the words of artist and cultural researcher Marion von Osten, at this early stage of their career, the 'myth of the unrecognised, unsuccessful but still talented, if

misunderstood, artist' still reassures them (Von Osten 2011, p. 138). Mary refers to the dichotomy between her initial expectations about a professional career in dance and the reality of her work life which she has found difficult to adjust to during the trainee stage (Mary, April 2012). Equally, Robert, when graduating, fully expected to be in a position to make a living in theatre dance. Instead, he works intermittently as a freelancing performer cross-subsidising his artistic practice in the hospitality sector (Robert, April 2012).

Mid-career and mature dance artists are more reflective about their career prospects during the interviews. They mention that their attitudes towards realising their ambitions have changed during their careers. Hannah who, during her first interview in 2012, came across as quite worried about not finding work, expresses a more laid-back attitude three years later:

'I [am] still hoping, wishing that maybe... But time's running out [...] I don't know? I feel like it's running out in terms of me performing, that is. I would like to still do something a bit more abstract, but I also feel I'm not up there in terms of my physicality [...] so who knows? I'm not desperately wishing for it; if it happens it happens, if not then I'm happy to [...] find my way to doing other things within dance.

(Hannah, June 2015)

At our final meeting, Miriam has stopped working as a dance artist and pursues a career as a dance and Pilates teacher. She notes:

I think at the end of the day, you have just got to be balancing things up. You have just got to be asking yourself: Am I making enough money to live on? Am I healthy? Because if you are getting yourself injured, that is a clear sign things are not working. If you are not able to pay the rent, that is also a clear sign that things are not working. [...] It's as simple as that. [...] Because I think a lot of the time we are just doing this job, or going for a workshop, or going for a class, or for

an audition, and doing this and doing that. But [do] we actually stop and ask ourselves if we are happy?

(Miriam, January 2016)

The previous chapter has listed dance artists' adaptive resilience as a key approach which contributes to their creative entrepreneurial habitus. However, the interviewees' contributions highlight that they have found it increasingly difficult to cross-subsidise their artistic practice for the last two decades.

There are numerous signs that despite the ambitions and enthusiastic rhetoric, the policy initiatives of the DCMS and ACE have not changed the working conditions of dance artists for the better. Many have noted that while New Labour's policymakers promoted dance artists and other creative workers as 'paradigms of entrepreneurial selfhood' (Gill & Pratt 2008, p. 20), they neglected to pay attention to the economic circumstances of artists and creative labour. John illustrates: 'You are always thinking about the no-cost way of doing something. Never mind low-cost. It's got to be no-cost' (John, June 2015). Likewise, Jeremy notes: 'Currently I'm earning money, so I'm saving. I'm very frugal when I make money and I use that to live by, partly. When I work at the [Pilates] Centre, that's also a top up. It's not a huge amount of money, but it's a nice top up' (Jeremy, November 2013). For John, taking responsibility for his actions is a key feature of being a dance artist:

It's on you: if you don't show up then it's on you, if you want to do class, if you don't look after yourself, if you don't go to auditions or try to get funding or do work or do a workshop [...] it's all on you, and I think that's the good thing about it.

(John, January 2013)

While I would argue that this demonstrates that the neoliberal template of taking initiative and responsibility for one's livelihood is an established economic pattern in dance, the interviews also reveal its limitations.

The respondents describe the challenge of pacing themselves persistently to meet the demands of their primary and secondary work fields. Millie is particularly anxious about the mercilessly competitive atmosphere in the theatre dance field:

I have a tendency to go full speed and then crash and burn, and then slowly pick up, and then go full speed and then crash and burn. The pressure that you feel from the industry from a very basic checking on Facebook how people are doing. [...] Reading who got what and how the industry is going to shit and how I will never get anywhere because of blah, blah, blah. It's just... I don't need it. It's too much pressure.

(Millie, December 2015)

Ian worries about his physical and mental wellbeing when he has to take on bar work:

Bar jobs are such a hard turnover because it's [...] horrible, [...] 6 at night until 6 in the morning with no break in between. I mean as a dancer you can't do that, like you can't do that to your body or to your mind.

(Ian, January 2013)

Others are confused and disillusioned, having failed to achieve their artistic goals. Mona realises that the jobs she has taken on to generate an income have just helped her to hold onto her position in the theatre dance field. Ultimately, cross-subsidising her practice has not paid off artistically: 'The craving I have at the moment is to be in a studio with two people. [...] That's where I want to be but it's not actually what I necessarily feel is happening right now' (Mona, October 2012). Paula despairs that she still has to fall back on waitressing to fund her work as a dance artist: 'I just point blank I don't want to be doing it, I've been doing it since, what, ten years now, waitressing' (Paula,

November 2014). She wonders how best to define and evaluate her career so far and what she has achieved as a performer/creator:

I think what worries me more is that I'm going to stop one day and I'm going to think I've never, like, made it. Like how do you, how do you measure success as a dancer?

(Paula, November 2014)

Robert indicates that the creative economy rhetoric which celebrates creative fulfillment and economic prosperity was left unchallenged by his teachers at the conservatoire: 'I'm not sure if anyone looked me in the eye and was clear about the financial implications of it being a tough industry' (Robert, April 2012). The French sociologist Loïc Wacquant warns about the enduring power of mythological constructions which can overshadow the actual conditions in unusual work fields such as the arts and sports (Wacquant 2004, p. 6). As such, one could argue that some respondents have bought into the 'collective mythology' linked to artists' and creative practitioners' work lives and creative labour which was promoted by New Labour and other proponents of the creative economy model (McRobbie 2007). At the same time, the interviewees display diverse and frequently-changing or contradictory feelings about their roles as artists. John does not question that he has to work hard for unpredictable artistic and financial rewards:

I was working and making choreography and touring and stuff; there was never a sense of entitlement, I don't deserve something. You have to work for it and do the best you can. [...] I don't do that kind of mental thing where you build yourself up by saying you are great and amazing, and all that motivational garbage, which I think doesn't work at all. [...]. It's about confidence, not arrogance.

(John, June 2015)

On the other hand, he observes that once the myths and rhetoric surrounding artistic labour are stripped away, dance artists are left facing a grim reality: 'It's



because it's all they've got. [...] they've been sold the lie of it' (John, June 2015). Millie, at first sight, defiantly rejects the repertoire of idealisations linked to artists' work lives:

You know the idiocy of the struggling, suffering artist. I don't subscribe to that. I also want to have a life. I don't need to be a starving artist, or whatever, you know.

(Millie, December 2015)

Instead, she professes to follow her own path: 'I guess ignoring the wider context and just making decisions that work for me' (Millie, December 2015). She also underlines that artistic practice and economic strategies are connected entities:

I am learning about how to achieve things. I am learning about the business side. I enjoy it and, also, I don't see it as separate. I think I need to nail this and make this easy and smooth in order to be an artist. So, I just see it as interlinked. And it's easier to deal with that if I have a plan and I can direct it.

(Millie, December 2015)

However, by embracing a self-directed action plan, she links her objectives directly to the neoliberal values of self-reliant entrepreneurialism. Considering how she has self-produced and self-funded her projects in the past (see Chapter 4, p. 147), she appears to be caught in a vicious circle which sees her falling back on economic strategies which have significantly contributed to the situation she is trying to change.

### **iii. Brave new world of dance labour**

The interviewees' narratives in the previous section present a stark contrast to New Labour's declared ambitions to position artists and their needs at the centre of their creative economy agenda. Instead, they suggest that

governmental policies have resulted in unplanned outcomes which are still felt today and have achieved the opposite of New Labour's original intentions. Kate Oakley maintains that New Labour's policymakers have neglected the increasingly exploitative working conditions for creative labourers that the 'new' business models brought with them (Oakley 2011, p. 287). While their creative industries policies have targeted business development initiatives and invested in related education and training programmes, they showed little interest in the work lives of the individual creative practitioner. It is thus unsurprising that there are many indicators which suggest that dance artists inhabit an unstable position, despite their 'flexible, resilient, and adaptable disposition; the willingness to take risks in seeking material gain' (Skeggs 2004, pp. 73–77).

I argue that the DCMS's and ACE's policy interventions have destabilised dance artists' already fragile economic status and difficult working conditions. Indeed, their commitment to prioritising the instrumental benefits of dance rather than its expressive and aesthetic values - and the measures they took to achieve this goal - disrupted the central value-generating mechanism of the theatre dance field.

As demonstrated in Chapter Three, the DCMS, ACE and local authorities expected dance artists, as a matter of course, to employ their specialist expertise in contexts beyond the artistic confines of the contemporary theatre dance field. Karen notes how a local authority employer prioritised projects located within the boundaries of ACE's focus on dance's instrumental value. While she was offered secondary employment in dance-related contexts, she did not gain any support for her artistic projects:

I think there have been times when I've gone to [the] Arts Development [officers of my local authority] [...] and there's just never been any take up on [artistic work]. [...] I suppose if their focus is community classes and young people and that kind of thing, then obviously there's teaching roles to be had, but it's not about creation of artistic work.

(Karen, April 2012)

Martin, who has trained and worked in state-funded Continental European dance companies argues that dance teaching in outreach settings is therefore detached from its theatrical context: 'In Britain a lot of projects, I thought, were disconnected from the theatre experience and made less sense to me' (Martin, February 2012). Miriam too recalls a shift in expectations when she sought out employment in dance-related settings:

I remember getting lots of jobs teaching dance in hospitals or in prisons or in rehab clinics. It was very much that the art had its purpose to cure people who have Alzheimer's or angry teenagers; dance had its purpose, as opposed to just dancing for the sake of dancing.

(Miriam, January 2016)

This shift away from aesthetic and expressive qualities of dance notably has raised concerns amongst theatre dance insiders and observers alike. Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison in the *Dance Mapping* report observe:

An increasing awareness of the extrinsic value of dance has led to greater appreciation of its value, but also an increasing instrumentalism in its application. It is important that the intrinsic value of dance continues to be acknowledged.

(Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 13)

Crucially, I maintain that this shift unintentionally imposed significant constraints on dance artists' ability to cross-subsidise their artistic work. Findings of numerous studies confirm that theatre dance artists' core skills prove less useful and valuable in projects which evolved around extrinsic benefits of dance (Burns 2007; 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009). For example, dance artists have found it more difficult to convert their expressive and technical expertise to financial capital without attaining additional qualifications as teachers and facilitators. In other words, a change in expectations with regard to dance

teaching and facilitation has limited their ability to fund their artistic practice through dance teaching.

At first glance, the expanding dance-related labour market in education, community and regeneration settings under New Labour appeared to open up additional secondary employment opportunities for dance artists. However, their policies increased the demand for practitioners equipped to contribute to specific contexts in education and the community rather than theatre dance per se. As such, priorities set by DCMS via ACE systematically undermined dance artists' professional status and devalued their specialist knowledge base. Karen comments on a mismatch between her expertise as a dance artist and the skills required for teaching some outreach projects: 'You know, never once do I say I'll be happy to teach freestyle or street dance, you know I'm very up front about it' (Karen, February 2012).

Few of the respondents felt, particularly when they first started to teach, that they were equipped with pedagogical and other specialist skills required in educational and community settings, such as prisons, hospitals and rehabilitation clinics. Hannah notes that she had not gained any teaching skills during her conservatoire training:

There were a lot of things that I wasn't aware of as such [...] especially all the education [side] because initially I never had any desire to teach. I was more a performance dance person.

(Hannah, March 2012)

She acquired some basic training by observing other company members teaching outreach projects: 'Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't but [I] kind of try to find my way of doing things' (Hannah, March 2012).

In order to generate an income in dance-related settings, some of the participants therefore invested in developing new and formally-recognised skills as dance teachers and facilitators. Miriam, who has recently studied for a

Diploma in Dance Teaching and Learning (DDTAL), notes that for most of her career, she had taught without a teaching qualification:

What I did when I graduated was to get schools' workshops and bits and pieces of teaching that don't always require a qualification, like kids' after school clubs or something like that. I did that for 20 years.

(Miriam, January 2016)

However, even after gaining additional pedagogical and academic qualifications, such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Diploma in Dance Teaching and Training (DDTAL), Master of Arts (MA) or Science (MSc), dance artists' income levels do not necessarily improve. Reports by Rhys Davies and Robert Lindley (2003), Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison (2009) and the Centre for Economics and Business Research (2013, p. 26) confirm that pay rates for dance artists have declined under New Labour. Victor questions why his income as a dance teacher is so low:

Why do you do all this work for nothing? Why did you spend all that money training for four years, [...] then going back to university to get more knowledge, [...] to get paid even less [...]. I do resent it sometimes; I just think, oh I can walk away anytime but you don't, cause obviously something inside you says no.

(Victor, February 2012)

In fact, the power imbalance between freelance dance artists and full-time educators in schools embedded in flagship projects, such as *Creative Partnerships*, further undermined the authority of dance artists as specialist knowledge holders. Its rules of engagement positioned educators in schools as drivers for its creative agenda. Even today, Victor finds that non-specialist staff in many education and community settings discount his dance background. In addition, he feels that they prevent him from progressing in his new role as a qualified dance teacher:

I think I shouldn't feel like this after, what this would be my [...] 12-13th year of professional dance and [...] probably 8-9 years of teaching. But then if there was another dance specialist there, then you wouldn't have this problem. You'd just be like: we do this, we do that: [...] this is how it works.

(Victor, February 2012)

Another reason for declining incomes in secondary work fields has been the proliferation of vocational dance courses and rising student numbers which have resulted in oversubscribed dance-related labour markets. Student numbers on higher education programmes increased by 97% between 2003 and 2009, with roughly 10,000 students attending dance courses in further, higher or vocational training institutions every year (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 15). Mary recalls the growing student numbers during her training: 'There were 60 in my year which was the biggest intake that they'd had for a while' (Mary, April 2012).

Following the recommendations made by three seminal reports undertaken during this period (Foundation for Community Dance 2006; Burns 2007; 2008), vocational training providers accommodated a more diverse group of dance students in terms of interests, abilities and age. Together, these measures inadvertently lowered the secondary employment prospects and pay levels for dance artists who work in dance-related settings. At the same time, this development reflects a trend in the creative industries overall, as the sociologist Pierre-Michel Menger observes: '[T]he number of individuals who enter the system of intermittent employment is increasing far more rapidly than the volume of work they have to share among themselves' (Menger 2005).

Undeniably, New Labour's measures have also undermined the theatre dance field's legitimising power. Insisting that dance artists hold qualifications which are accredited by the state and delivered via education institutions has weakened the dominant role of the theatre dance field's internal value

economy. In other words, dance artists cannot singularly rely any more on converting the cultural and symbolic capital accrued in theatre dance to work as dance teachers, but instead have to gain approval from non-specialist outsiders.

Many conservatoire-trained participants report that widening and reframing the remit of vocational training has led to standards plummeting during the New Labour years and beyond (Tracey 2012; Mary, April 2012; Victor, February 2012; Martin, February 2012; Hannah, February 2012; Susan, June 2015). Some interviewees have repeatedly referred to a watering down of key values and practices in dance training. Mary, for example, missed the hard work and discipline traditionally associated with professional dance education but which was not reinforced during her vocational training, and which has contributed to her feeling underprepared as a trainee dance artist (Mary, April 2012).

Hannah experienced the impact of what Harvie describes as New Labour's 'endorsement of amateurism [which] can risk de-professionalising the artist and devaluing artistic expertise, skill, commitment, training and educations' (Harvie 2013, p. 41). She argues that some of her competitors with accredited dance-related skills in sports, education or similar sectors lack the necessary expertise to teach dance:

[I am a] bit angry and deflated because there's a lot of sports people around that kind of try to get their way in [...] dance [...] I mean my mum could do better in a way. [...] The whole dance system within England with dance within university and colleges - for me coming from a conservatoire [...] it doesn't work for me because they just lower their standards and lower their prices.

(Hannah, March 2012)

Hannah's perspective is surely informed by the dance habitus she developed during her formative years as a student dancer in Continental Europe, however many of the UK trained participants shared her perception of the sector. In Susan's opinion, dance graduates who trained at further and higher education

institutions do not have the in-depth knowledge and high-level skills provided by the highly selective traditional conservatoire training courses: 'They're not technicians in a way, it's the technique [which] is missing' (Susan, June 2015). She emphasised that widening the access to vocational dance training has also come with new challenges for teachers on these programmes:

The level is not as high as it should be [...] each year the level coming in was lower. The calibre of student has changed [...] we've had very difficult students and you know they're requiring an awful lot of pastoral care that sometimes I don't understand why they're there, they don't want to do the nitty gritty, they don't really want to work hard, they just want to dance about a bit.

(Susan, June 2015)

Despite all these changes which took place following New Labour's policy interventions, traditional values inherent to theatre dance, such as hard work, discipline and selfless dedication, still inform the interviewees' individual dance habitus, independent of where and when they have trained. For example, Ian is adamant that his lack of conservatoire training (in Pierre Bourdieu's words, his paucity of symbolic and cultural capital) initially disadvantaged him. When it came to establishing himself as a choreographer, he found it challenging to gain access to the theatre dance field: 'I think when I graduated, I found it really difficult to be... accepted by other artists here. I think students probably do still feel that, I think they find it quite a difficult wall to break down' (Ian, January 2013).

Interestingly, further and higher education institutions, to a certain extent, need to replicate some aspects of conservatoire dance training and its curricular content in order to meet the expectations of prospective students. This is highlighted by Susanne Burns's study *Mapping Dance: Entrepreneurship and Professional Practice in Dance Higher Education* (Burns 2007) which points out that universities often prioritise specialist technical and expressive content of theatre dance, rather than the facilitation skills and entrepreneurial knowledge



demanded in dance-related settings promoted by New Labour. I argue that a poor understanding of dance artists' economic behaviours, and in particular the different value economies they engage with, have resulted in policy decisions which inadvertently undermine value-generating principles at the core of the theatre dance field.

ACE's *Dance Policy*, published in 2006, provides an excellent example of this lack of awareness. The document explicitly recommends dance artists and organisations to 'take creative risks, develop new ways of working, new business models and new ways of increasing the visibility of what they do and connecting with the communities they serve' (2006a, p. 6). In other words, ACE demanded that its funded dance sector clients adopted an entrepreneurial approach which many already pursued, according to my findings. The wide-reaching consequences of New Labour's approach for the arts and culture sector have been extensively debated in numerous publications (Holden 2004; 2006; 2007; Gray 2007; 2008; Joss 2008; Doustaly & Gray 2010; Belfiore 2012). Crucially, dance artists have unintentionally contributed to these issues by concealing their economic competencies and motivations.

### **Concluding remarks**

This chapter has demonstrated that the study's respondents operated in three value economies with distinct value-generating mechanisms. It has confirmed that the logic of Pierre Bourdieu's subfield of restricted cultural production (1983) guides dance artists when they offer their labour in the theatre dance field. Managing different value spheres in an effective manner is therefore a key feature of their work lives. While the participants appeared to disregard financial rewards when offering artistic labour in artistic production, this does not necessarily indicate their exclusive commitment to the logic of the field. In order to meet the expectations of gatekeepers, funders and audiences alike, dance artists have to keep economic and artistic value spheres separate. This included that they routinely had to conceal economically-motivated activities to maximise financial returns by drawing on idealised perceptions of dance. In order to achieve this, they have drawn on their cultural intermediary habitus to develop their reputation, brand themselves as artists and access relevant professional networks. Similarly, their creative entrepreneurial habitus has

sustained the field's reversed economy through economic competencies, such as cross-subsidisation, pooling resources for mutual benefit and barter arrangements.

The chapter has also underlined that all respondents have had to supply their labour in secondary work fields to fund their artistic practice. Generating financial capital in secondary work fields has allowed them to counterbalance unpaid and underpaid artistic labour. Moreover, they have supported an occupational culture in which theatre dance employers have routinely relied on the participants' ability to cross-subsidise their practice. Furthermore, difficult working conditions and inadequate levels of pay have mostly remained unchallenged by the interviewees and funders. The measures which New Labour took to introduce its vision of a creative economy have unintentionally destabilised dance artists' economic position by compromising the theatre dance field's central value-generating mechanisms. Overall, the findings suggest that the DCMS's and ACE's interventions have resulted in lower income levels and worsening working conditions in the theatre dance field.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Dance means business: contemporary dance artists' experiences of ownership and entrepreneurship**

In this chapter, I shall examine the prevalent artistic and economic ownership models which dance artists encounter when they are self-employed or employees of dance companies and other organisations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, dance artists work mostly as freelancers who run microbusinesses. The chapter will investigate their role, strategies and circumstances as entrepreneurs and small business owners. This status comes with opportunities and drawbacks. It potentially allows dance artists to explore the business prospects of their creative ventures, for example to develop and commercially exploit original content, such as dance works, but also dance-related products and services including dance training and fitness programmes.

I am especially interested in the manner in which dance artists seek to utilise entrepreneurial opportunities which involve their intellectual property rights. In this context, I shall explore the way in which they employ the economic behaviours I have identified as their 'creative entrepreneurial habitus' to assert and exploit their copyright and performers' rights. This is to analyse how dance artists engage with the legal frameworks which regulate artistic and economic ownership as well as implicit interpretations of ownership embedded in the theatre dance field.

New Labour's creative economy model envisaged artists and creative practitioners as independent small businesses owners who generated profits by exploiting the innovative original content which they create. This chapter will therefore explore the manner in which dance artists were affected by the cultural policies introduced by New Labour to promote this economic model. It focusses on how agencies and individuals in charge of delivering governmental cultural policies respond to dance artists as entrepreneurs and property holders. My investigation therefore also scrutinises the ways in which dance artists employed their 'cultural intermediary habitus' when encountering policies and the representatives of ACE and local authorities tasked to deliver them.

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section, titled *Ownership and entrepreneurial behaviours in contemporary theatre dance*, examines the two main legal concepts which regulate artistic and economic ownership: the moral rights and intellectual property rights of dance artists. They frame the ways in which artists, cultural intermediaries, funders and audiences can engage with original content. This section discusses a range of issues, such as emerging multi-author production formats, the transient quality of physical capital, and their creative entrepreneurial habitus which complicate dance artists' efforts to establish their artistic and economic stakes when devising original content.

Under the heading *Having a stake in the creative economy*, the second part of this chapter examines how and to what extent dance artists benefit from entrepreneurial opportunities linked to intellectual property rights, a central value-generating driver in the creative economy. It also scrutinises key policy objectives which are mainly linked to New Labour but which have not changed under the Coalition and Conservative governments. These encompass ACE's focus on partnership working, emerging dance artists and the devising of new original works as well as the manner in which such policies are delivered. This section furthermore explores how these objectives affect dance artists when pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities and securing their intellectual property rights. It subsequently investigates to what degree policy makers, funders and cultural intermediaries influence the manner in which dance artists pursue potential business ventures. For this purpose, I focus on examining if and how dance artists assert and exploit their property and non-property rights.

## **1. Ownership and entrepreneurial behaviours in contemporary theatre dance**

This section will examine dance artists as artistic and economic stakeholders and proprietors of original dance works and dance performances. Dance artists create, or contribute to, original content during devising processes and performances in their roles as choreographer, performer/creators and performers when they work in theatre dance. This means that they have an artistic and an economic stake in the production process as well as in

performances, even if this often remains unacknowledged, for reasons I shall discuss in more detail below.

It is important to consider that dance artists' ownership of intellectual properties also includes merchandise, for instance DVDs and books which accompany their core artistic activities. It could furthermore encompass content generated in secondary dance-related contexts, such as dance/movement programmes for education and leisure settings.

#### **i. Creator, collaborator and instrument: establishing dance artists' stake in dance productions**

The legal context which frames artistic ownership in the UK determines the possession of original content and regulates the economic transactions between sellers and buyers. In this connection, it is important to acknowledge the key role of intellectual property as a wealth generator in New Labour's creative economy model. Cultural sociologist Philip Schlesinger and intellectual property lawyer Charlotte Waelde emphasise that: 'The centrality of intellectual property to the exploitation of economic gains produced by the creative industries is unmistakable [in New Labour's cultural policies]' (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 15). In other words, New Labour recognised that appropriate and effective legal systems to protect and manage artistic and creative ownership were key to the creative industries' economic success.

In essence, there are two legal concepts which regulate artistic and economic ownership in theatre dance: moral rights and intellectual property rights. The umbrella term 'intellectual property' covers four distinct areas: copyright, patents, design and trademarks. It furthermore extends to include still images, film and text embedded in a dance work as well as depicting the work, for example promotional or documentary footage featuring original artistic content. The *Copyright, Design and Patents Act* (CDPA) from 1988 protects dance artists' moral rights and their non-pecuniary interests. For instance, the *right of attribution* determines that choreographers need to be acknowledged as creators of original dance works once they have asserted this right, for example in a contract with an employer. The *right of integrity* stipulates that only the

original creator of a dance work has the right to change their work's original intention. Furthermore, the *right of disclosure* guarantees that only choreographers can determine when their works are ready to be presented to the public. Likewise, they can withdraw a work from public display supported by their *right of withdrawal*. Unlike economic rights, dance artists cannot sell and transfer moral rights to other parties, but they can waive these rights (CDPA 1988; Towse 2006a, p. 571). For example, they can choose not to assert their right to be named as the choreographer and allow third parties to modify and rework their original choreography.

By contrast, the core purpose of copyright and performers' rights is to protect dance artists' economic interests. Copyright legislation protects choreographers' rights as owners and potential economic beneficiaries related to the 'reproduction (copying), performance, recording (film, video, notation, and so on) and [the] distribution, and adaptation of [their] works' (Yeoh 2012, p. 230). In other words, it ensures that they benefit from any monetary value generated by exploiting the intellectual property rights embedded in their dance works.

To a certain extent, similar legal and economic principles apply to a dancer's performance as they do to the work of a choreographer (Towse 2006a, Schlesinger & Waelde 2012). UK copyright law recognises performers' rights to both their live and recorded performances by differentiating between their property rights and non-property rights (CDPA 1988). Performers' property rights comprise the reproduction and distribution of their performances and are transferable to third parties: for example, they can be sold to a dance company employer. Their non-property rights stipulate that performers have to consent to recordings of their live performances and their dissemination. They are non-transferable and thus can only be exercised by the performer. This means that choreographers and other employers have to gain a dancer's permission to live-record and distribute their performance, for example in a promotional or documentary DVD format.

Current legislation rigidly categorises choreographers as artistic creators and performers as skilled and expressive instruments (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012,

p. 17). Hence, long-established notions of single authorship and their exclusive focus on a single unique creator inform current notions of artistic and legal ownership in theatre dance. In this connection, Ruth Towse notes:

The conventional justification given in law books and the like is that copyright and authors' rights are the reward and stimulus for creativity but performers do not create works, they just 'execute' the performance of existing works and that does not merit the grant of the exclusive right as for the author.

(Towse 2006a, p. 573)

The legal scholar Barbara Singer echoes this reasoning when she observes that 'the choreographer's treatment of rhythm, space, and movement in the work' determines its originality. She further notes: 'As long as the dance bears the choreographer's individual stamp, it is irrelevant that his dance uses well-known or often-used steps' (Singer 1984, p. 300). In other words, recognisable aesthetic characteristics, for example particular signature movements and structuring devices, are crucial components which prove a choreographer's authorship of an original dance piece. Further distinguishing features which establish and protect a choreographer's intellectual property rights might encompass the manner in which a dance piece employs narrative or non-narrative components as well as sound and lighting design.

Many production settings in theatre dance revolve around the single authorship model with the choreographer's exclusive responsibility for concept and movement material. Joe describes working in such a traditional production setting: '[The choreographer] created everything. It wasn't so much about [the dancers] creating anything; it was him [...], kind of like an older way of choreographing' (Joe, October 2014). According to Joe, it was solely upon the choreographer to provide the original material, with the performers following his detailed instructions, embodied or otherwise: 'For me it was very much me replicating exactly what he wanted because this was his vision and that was it' (Joe, October 2014). Other respondents too participated in devising processes

which were exclusively determined by what I have termed a choreographer's individual choreographic habitus in Chapter Two (see pp. 76–77). Mary outlines:

You walk into the studio with [the choreographer] and you might not know what the piece is about until the last week. Although she's told you what the piece is about, you don't necessarily understand what she's talking about. She's not a person that talks a lot. She churns out movement and you learn all of the movement from her. So you have to be creative in the sense that you've got to make the movement fit to your body.

(Mary, April 2012)

Mary relies on her dance expertise and her previous experiences of working with this particular choreographer to execute the embodied instructions she receives. In other words, adopting the choreographer's individual habitus allows her to adjust set movements to suit her physical and technical abilities. This choreographic approach has been much criticised for being dictatorial (Barbour 2008, p. 41), but this is not the immediate concern of the thesis. Instead, I am interested in examining to what extent the single authorship model reflects Mary's artistic and economic contribution to the creative process.

In the production contexts which Joe and Mary describe above, it might seem appropriate that the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* (CDPA 1988) differentiates between copyright and performers' rights; in other words, it recognises choreographers as artistic creators and performers as skilled and expressive instruments. However, I contend that the single authorship model does not adequately reflect the numerous collaborative and interactive forms of devising in contemporary theatre dance. Many recent productions perceive performers, and even occasionally audiences, as collaborators in the making of artistic works. Indeed, the boundaries between the traditional roles of choreographers as providers of original content, vision and quality control, on the one hand, and dancers as instruments, on the other hand, have become



increasingly blurred.

In this vein, dance scholar Roger Copeland observes a ‘paradigm shift’ during recent years in which ‘collectively created’ and culturally more diverse works have replaced what he calls ‘the Great Western Individual Choreographer’ (Copeland 2011, pp. 39-40). Similarly, the performance theorist and maker Bojana Cvejić notes: ‘There was a moment around 2000, where single authorship was contested on artistic grounds. Then it was re-valorised, politically, economically, in relation to the value of the contribution of the dancers themselves’ (Cvejić 2016). Harvie highlights that unpaid amateurs increasingly seem to be replacing professional artists as performers and creative collaborators in productions (Harvie 2013). Recent theatre dance examples are Southpaw’s *Rush Hull* (2017), under the direction of Robby Graham, and Ballet Lorent’s *Rapunzel* (2012), *Snow White* (2015) and *Rumpelstiltskin* (2017) featuring community casts of up to hundred participants (Southpaw 2017; Ballet Lorent 2017). The expanding terminology which dance scholars and dance artists employ when they relate to choreographers as directors, makers, authors and facilitators is testament to these changes. Likewise, performers are conceived of as performer/creators, collaborators and co-authors in recognition of their diverse contributions and the gradual erosion of the single authorship model.

The respondents’ narratives also suggest that the traditional roles of choreographer and performers in dance productions are evolving. Mary notes:

You have to take that responsibility on as a dancer as well. Sometimes she goes, okay, let me see that solo: “That solo’s really beautiful” and you know within yourself it’s not. And you’re at home thinking: “How can I make that better?” Because at the end of the day, I’ve got to put it on stage and I’ve got to make it look good. [...] I wouldn’t be comfortable putting it on stage like that so I’m gonna go home and have a look at it.

(Mary, April 2012)

She has also worked in productions where the choreographer frames the making of a dance work with nothing more than loose thematic boundaries. In these settings, performers are tasked to devise the original movement material, as Mary illustrates: 'I'm making all of the material more or less myself' (Mary, April 2012). In a next step, the choreographer might then select sections of the original material devised by the dancers which fit his/her artistic vision. Mary describes this process: 'I'm just kind of going: "Is this right? Is this not right? Is this what you want?"' (Mary, April 2012).

The manner in which Mary and Joe seem to contribute to the devising process reaches far beyond the legal margins established by distinguishing between the choreographer's copyright and performers' rights (CDPA 1988). They inhabit more fluid roles in which they make significant original contributions to the devising process and are responsible for interpreting the original material on stage. These emerging professional roles refute traditional conceptual boundaries, suggested by the sociologist Bill Ryan, which define a performer as a 'technical craft worker' (Ryan cited in Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 126). As we have heard above, current copyright legislation neglects performers' increasing involvement in developing and shaping original content by assigning attributes to performers which are comparable to Ryan's definition (1992). As Ruth Towse observes, for lawmakers, 'performers do not create works, they just 'execute' the performance of existing works and that does not merit the grant of the exclusive right as for the author' (Towse 2006, p. 573).

By contrast, most of the respondents view themselves as collaborators who are as equally involved in shaping original content as the choreographer. Joe observes:

[Is] a dancer [...] purely a body to transform the ideas of a choreographer or is the dancer there to interpret what [a choreographer] wants and to create a third dimension to it?

(Joe, October 2014)

Put differently, Joe perceives that his role expands far beyond providing an empty vessel – his body – and interpreting the choreographer’s vision. In order to ‘create a third dimension’ (*ibid.*). Joe too makes a personal and emotional commitment which includes contributing his professional skills and life experiences to the creation process. What is more, he considers his unique embodied and creative input as an essential ingredient to enrich the choreographer’s vision. Following the value-generating principles of the reversed economy, Joe indicates that his personal physical, cultural and symbolic capital adds to the overall capital that the choreographers and dance companies he works for can accrue. Ruth Towse concurs with Joe’s view when she notes:

A performance is formed by talent, years of training and investment in human capital and involves considerable risk of how it will be received by audiences. A performance is a work in the sense of copyright law and so the same economic logic should apply to it as it does to the work of an author.

(Towse 2006, p. 574)

At the same time, the single authorship model undoubtedly bestows artistic value to individual choreographers: in Pierre Bourdieu’s words, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1983). Single authorship is not only legally recognised, but can economically benefit the individual choreographer, as Ruth Towse acknowledges: ‘Copyright and authors’ rights are the reward and stimulus for creativity’ (Towse 2006, p. 573).

The choreographers in the sample do not question their artistic stake in the production process. Millie insists that her presence, ideas and instructions as a choreographer, however subtle, have determined the originality of work which was devised:

I think that’s a tricky question. I’m still the director. When I worked [as a performer] in those settings, I never felt any ownership of the work

that I've developed for somebody else. I would never have produced those little details if it wasn't for that direction, so I'm absolutely fine with that. I do acknowledge [the performers] in credit notes [...], I will always thank the performers.

(Millie, December 2015)

Similarly, Tracey stresses: 'The concepts [are] mine, completely' (Tracey, April 2012), although she tasks the dancers with creating movement material. The performers in her devising processes also have to memorise the material they create. She notes: 'I can let them remember the steps so we do move much faster. And I can allow my own creative play to really, really flow' (Tracey, April 2012).

At the same time, the single authorship model also strictly limits the scope of a choreographer's job description to a particular set of skills and a specific devising model. The dance artist and educator Gill Glarke notes: 'There seems to be a strange need to perpetuate the myth that a choreographer's role is to devise and compose the "steps"' (Clarke 2001, p. 14). However, my observations during the fieldwork have illustrated that the role of choreographers is much more varied and constantly evolving (field logs February, April 2012).

During the trainee stage, many participants were involved in projects in which all dance artists shared cultural, symbolic and financial capital for mutual benefit. These setups allowed room for experimenting with aesthetic content and professional roles and thus diluted traditional boundaries between performers and creators. ACE's funding criteria, which for the last 20 years have focused on supporting emerging creators, have further contributed to develop performer/creators, as it is very difficult to receive funding to develop as a performer without proposing a clearly-defined creative project. The advent of mobile digital devices and dissemination platforms means that the roles of performers and creators might change even further. Movement recognition, editing and documentation tools as well as streaming technologies can

potentially expand their professional roles significantly. Even now, dance artists take on roles, such as filming and marketing of content, which were previously undertaken by specialist professionals.

## **ii. Asserting legal ownership rights**

For a number of different reasons, dance performers and creators have found it difficult to assert legal ownership rights. First of all, dance knowledge as we have seen in Chapter 2 is a mostly transient and fragile form of capital (see pp. 90-95). What is more, the dance sector often automatically privileges the single authorship model which perceives the choreographer as exclusively responsible for an original work's concept and devised content. Dance performer and teacher Gill Clarke notes:

We [in the UK] are rather behind Europe considering authorship and copyright for dance artists, there are issues worth considering. [Siobhan Davies] has always acknowledged the creative role of her dancers, but there seems to be a strange need to perpetuate the myth that a choreographer's role is to devise and compose the 'steps'.

(Clarke 2001, p. 14)

Furthermore, administrative protocols and occupational cultures in contemporary theatre dance seemed biased towards ensuring that dance organisations and employers are exclusive holders of copyrights. Dance scholar Francis Yeoh highlights that so-called silent clauses in contracts ensure that dance artists automatically forfeit their intellectual property rights of work they produce while employed. These are a standard feature in employment contracts issued by companies and commissioning organisations (Yeoh 2012). As such, the dance sector's managerial practices have stood in stark contrast to ACE's plans which envisioned artists pursuing their entrepreneurial self-interests: 'The aim is to give the artists the tools they need to maximise the business potential of their art work' (ACE 2003b, p. 13).

Importantly, dance artists' ownership of intellectual property is not automatically

guaranteed. UK copyright legislation requires producers of original content to document their devised original material in 'writing or otherwise' to claim ownership (CDPA 1988 s 3[2]). According to Schlesinger and Waelde, a dance work, therefore, 'can exist prior to fixation but copyright only arises on fixation' (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 16). The court proceedings to determine the ownership of undocumented works by Martha Graham, for example, highlight that dance works are only protected by copyright law on fixation (Yeoh 2012). This means that choreographers have to assert their copyright by notating or filming their dance piece.

During the fieldwork, I did not encounter any dance artists who overtly declared to notate or document their dance pieces or dance-related original content in their teaching practice for the purpose of establishing their copyright or performers' rights. While the respondents identified their creative input in the devising of original content, they rarely seemed to consider their intellectual property and non-property rights. This apparent lack of interest and concern might explain why disputes about choreographers' copyright and performers' rights are rare. Schlesinger and Waelde highlight that in the UK, 'dance has occasioned virtually no case law' (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 16). However, the paucity of court cases could also indicate that dance artists, for a variety of reasons, are not in a position to assert and exploit their intellectual property rights. First of all, I maintain that the protocol linked to establishing dance artists' copyright and performers' rights seems to be fraught with numerous challenges. For instance, theatre dance's lack of visibility as a stand-alone art form (Siddall 2001; Pakes 2001) and its standard presence as an add-on in musical theatre and commercial advertising might suggest that copyright legislation does not apply to dance works.

This could explain the incident which the dance scholar Francis Yeoh coins the 'choreographic "borrowings"' of the R&B artist Beyoncé Knowles-Carter (Yeoh 2013). Knowles-Carter seemingly circumvented the Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's copyright when she 'borrowed' choreographic material from De Keersmaeker's works *Rosas danst Rosas* (1983) and *Achterland* (1990) for the music video *Countdown* (2011). It is not known why

De Keersmaeker did not take Knowles-Carter to court. There are many possible reasons, such as lack of funds and insurmountable legal hurdles. Whatever they may be, her restrained response to the apparent violation of her copyright has highlighted to other less-established dance artists that current legislative frameworks within the European Union do not necessarily protect their ownership rights. Furthermore, De Keersmaeker's example raises the wider question of whether dance artists fear the reputational damage of appearing to be troublemakers when asserting their property rights. In addition, enforcing their ownership rights would also reveal that they are economically motivated which, according to Hans Abbing, diminishes their prestige and earning potential in the 'exceptional economy of the arts' (Abbing 2004).

Turning now to performers, it proves a challenging task to determine their artistic stake in the creation of dance works. Increasingly, collaborative devising processes make it difficult to differentiate between the original input of choreographers and that of performers. Joe notes that the collaborative and fluid nature of artistic creation processes is an obstacle when determining artistic ownership: 'It's become this very fine line between what's a choreographer and what's a director and who owns the material that exists [...] and if you are replaced with somebody else doing material that you created' (Joe, October 2014).

In his opinion, in order to be credited as a creator of original content, a dance artist either has to devise original material or extensively shape material originally developed by another artist:

I think for me it really depends on how much the choreographer or director manipulates the material. I think sometimes the choreographers ask you to do a lot of creating but then they manipulate it beyond recognition of what you originally created. They want a skeleton of some sort to work from. They want a jumping-off point.

(Joe, October 2014)

The reenactments of historical dance works prove that, in principle, it is possible to determine the boundaries of multiple creators' original input. Works such as Fabian Barba's *Schwingende Landschaften* (2008), which is based on seven solo pieces originally created in 1929 by Mary Wigman (Départ 2017) and *Urheben Aufheben* (2008), in which Martin Nachbar reconstructs and performs Dore Hoyer's choreography *Affectos Humanos* (1962) (Kampnagel 2017), have shown this. However, Barba and Nachbar have drawn on completed works by single authors which were fixated through notation and/or filmed documentation. Undeniably, it is a much more complex undertaking to document the individual contributions of multiple creators during the making of a piece, especially as the material is shaped and reshaped during this process. In short, it might be impossible to reflect truly each creator's exact contribution.

Furthermore, I maintain that dance artists experience the legal protocols linked to intellectual property rights as unrelated to their artistic practices and livelihoods. Findings by Schlesinger and Waelde illustrate that 'the exercise of legal rights might often seem to be irrelevant to cultural workers' (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 18), especially as contractual agreements and supporting administrative practices do not sufficiently reflect the artistic and economic stake of performers in contributing to original artistic content. Indeed, Schlesinger's and Waelde's study of dance artists and musicians concludes:

For dance, it is widely considered that the choreographer is the author and therefore the owner of the copyright. It is rare for the choreographer to think of the dancer as a co-creator of the work.

(Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, pp. 16-17)

It was striking during the interview and fieldwork how Joe, on the one hand, detected subtle differences when determining his artistic contributions in the context of manifold devising processes. On the other hand, he did not seem aware of his moral rights or performers' rights nor did he, at any point, express an interest legally to assert his right to the original content he had contributed to. Other performers in the sample too, similar to Joe, seemed to avoid claiming



their personal economic stake in devising original content (Karen 2012; Mary, April 2012). This might be the case because performers do not expect such a move would generate any income. In addition, as already mentioned above, the occupational culture in the theatre dance and the 'exceptional economy' of dance (Abbing 2004) might discourage dance artists from asserting their rights.

It is possible that the interviewees felt it was inappropriate to discuss their financial practices in such detail. It is also worth considering that contractual practices in theatre dance have habitually failed to acknowledge the original content which performers contribute to devising dance works. Indeed, contracts issued by many dance companies and other employers ensure through silent clauses that performers, and also choreographers, relinquish intellectual property and non-property rights, often unbeknown to them. In this manner, commissioning organisations automatically hold all intellectual property rights of the original work (Yeoh, 2008).

Furthermore, as Hans Abbing proposes, dance artists increase their income-generating potential when meeting idealised perceptions of the selfless dance artist held by funders, cultural intermediaries and audiences (Abbing 2004). This might also explain why Joe states that he does not feel the original material he contributes to the devising process belonged exclusively to him:

I feel ownership in the sense of I feel comfortable with it and it's really familiar to me and [...] I've been involved in the creation of it. [...] If then somebody else took that on, I don't think I would feel like I was being robbed, necessarily.

(Joe, October 2014)

However, Joe excluded original material that was based on his own personal experiences. He felt that this type of original content could only ever be shared but not owned by anybody but the creator:

I think if you're dealing solely with your own experiences, I don't think it can be owned by anyone else. [...] You can share [it] with the choreographer, you can share with the director, but they can never own your life, your experiences. [...] In that sense, I don't think even [...] as a piece [...] the ownership is theirs. [...] I think the individual elements are owned by the people in it.

(Joe, October 2014)

It is striking that Joe differentiates between 'owning' and 'sharing' original content when it comes to personal life experiences. It is a well-established devising format for choreographers to use performers' personal backgrounds and experiences to explore themes which interest them: choreographers such as Pina Bausch (Tanztheater Wuppertal), Lloyd Newson (DV8) and many others are well-known for integrating aspects of performers' personal life stories into their pieces, which, when the original performer/creator left their companies, were performed by somebody else.

Undeniably, Joe's case is linked to what sociologist and philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato (1996) identifies as immaterial labour. Lazzarato's concept revolves around the notion of a postindustrial economy which routinely draws on personal and subjective attributes of its workforce to generate financial capital. He states that 'immaterial labour involves a series of activities that are not normally recognised as work' (Lazzarato 1996, p. 133). Indeed, it relies on the labourers' emotional and social capacities and involvement. While Joe is a seasoned dance professional, he is unaccustomed to view his own personal life experiences as an exchangeable commodity. As such, he finds it difficult to envisage how other performers could take on his personal experiences:

If I feel like I've invested a lot emotionally into something in terms of its creation, I mean even it's manipulated a little bit but I feel like it really is still me, I think I have a strong sense of ownership.

(Joe, October 2014)

In other words, Joe feels that while he might 'share' his life experiences as a performer, he is their rightful owner and there is little authentic and transactional value to be gained from them unless he performs them. His stance explains why he does not seek to assert his ownership in legal terms. His example furthermore highlights, as Angela McRobbie points out, the collapsing boundaries between work and play and the personal and professional spheres which increasingly characterise the creative economy model as a work field (McRobbie 2004, no pagination). At the same time, dance artists clearly separate their artistic work for others from their personal artistic projects.

### **iii. Dance artists' 'own project'**

It is common practice for dance artists autonomously to pursue their 'own project' alongside other primary and secondary work commitments. John's comment illustrates this well:

[Dance artists] are sorting out 15 different things all at once, organising a massive project, organising their own project. You know, the massive project was within a big organisation and then they break off and do their own thing.

(John, January 2013)

The respondents started their own personal artistic projects for a variety of reasons. Some noted their interest in engaging with artistic processes and themes which are truly meaningful to them (Karen, April 2012; Robert, April 2012). For others, they offered an opportunity to overcome the destabilising effects of unemployment and intermittent artistic labour linked to developing a career in the oversubscribed theatre dance field (Paula, November 2014).

Karen explicitly frames her artistic partnership with Gary as her 'own professional work' which she then proceeds to qualify:

In my own professional work, it's [...] focused purely on the movement, on the trying to focus on the detail of it and trying to

create things that feel new [...] I don't know if that exists, but for us, and we take a lot more time.

(Karen, April 2012)

She emphasises their artistic autonomy when indicating that both of them are committed to long-term experimentation with indeterminable outcomes. She furthermore locates their project in the realm of art for art's sake activities which are highly valued in the reversed economy of theatre dance. Both dance artists pool their artistic and financial capital for mutual benefit for this collaborative venture. While Karen stresses that she and Gary are in charge of their artistic direction, similar to Joe above, she seems less concerned about legally asserting their intellectual property and non-property rights. Indeed, she only vaguely alludes to contractual and economic aspects of ownership in theatre dance: 'So we take ownership of that. But it's nothing formal [...] and you know it isn't on paper or anything' (Karen, April 2012).

Schlesinger and Waelde warn that implicit contractual arrangements are 'unenforceable as, if it came to a dispute under current law' (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 20). Regardless of such concerns, Karen appears mostly preoccupied with autonomously determining and pursuing their unique artistic vision without outside intervention. The economist Robert E. Caves draws on the 'theory of contracts' when he observes that collaborative work practices in the creative industries are framed by 'the notion of an implicit contract that involves no written terms at all, only an informal understanding that the project will be governed by practices that are common knowledge in the community' (Caves 2000, pp. 12-14). Karen and Gary's long-standing artistic partnership exemplifies such 'extra-contractual' arrangements which underpin production processes in theatre dance (Schlesinger & Waelde 2012, p. 20). At the same time, a sense that copyright legislation does not really offer adequate protection, as in De Keersmaeker's case, might also explain why they rely on implicit agreements. Furthermore, similar to Joe above, both artists might estimate that there is little transactional value attached to their work unless they are personally involved as creators and performers.

Additionally, I maintain that hoping eventually to be recognised for their artistic achievements is another key driver which underpins dance artists' 'own projects'. As such, self-directed projects are also linked to an economic behaviour that I have described as 'wishing and hoping' in Chapter Four. Poignantly, the sociologist Angela McRobbie observes how wishing and hoping is intertwined with other economic behaviours:

Having a single project which is one's own work, a kind of magic card which it is hoped will one day come to fruition, but which in the meantime is propped up by three or four more mundane and income-generating projects.

(McRobbie 2007, p. 125)

I thus contend that self-directed projects present an economic strategy which sees dance artists invest time and effort based on the belief that this investment might lead to future success. Robert Frank and Philip Cook identify this approach as the 'winner-take-all' phenomenon, a notion which suggests that success is down to chance as well as opportunity and not related to major variances in talent or effort (Frank & Cook 1995, p. 24). In other words, when pursuing their own projects, respondents such as Vicky, Paula and Robert not only seek artistic self-realisation, but they also attempt to maximise their economic potential (Vicky, September 2012; Paula, November 2014; Robert, April 2012). Dance artists' self-directed projects can help to accumulate cultural and symbolic capital which they can convert to financial capital. As we have seen in Chapter Five, they are financially rewarded for their authority and prestige in both the theatre dance field and dance-related work fields, for example in higher education or private dance schools. Furthermore, if they choose to do so, they can generate income through exploiting their intellectual property rights and performers' rights.

If we approach Karen's and Gary's case from an economic perspective, both have invested a significant amount of capital by drawing on the economic competencies I have identified as dance artists' creative entrepreneurial habitus in Chapter Four. For example, they have numerous bartering arrangements in

place to support their artistic partnership, such as teaching dance workshops in return for rent-free access to studio space; furthermore, they also cross-subsidise their project through income generated from theatre dance and dance-related employment. In short, while they might conceal their economic motivation, by investing their artistic and financial capital, they have an economic stake in their self-directed project.

## **2. Having a stake in the creative economy**

This section will examine to what extent New Labour's creative economy vision influenced dance artists' entrepreneurial ambitions and provided incentives to assert their intellectual property rights. This section therefore focusses on how dance artists benefit economically from the creative economy and the entrepreneurial opportunities which it provides. Policymakers (DCMS 1999a; b; 2001a; b; 2008a), consultants and think tanks (Bakhshi *et al.* 2008; 2009; NESTA 2005; 2006; 2007b; c; 2009a; The Work Foundations 2007) and scholars (Caves 2000; Howkins 2001; Florida 2002) have repeatedly emphasised the income-generating potential of artistic and cultural innovation. According to Chris Bilton, 'this model of applied creativity connects with the UK definition of the creative industries in terms of the commercial exploitation of intellectual property and shifts the focus away from the genius creator to the systems which turn raw ideas into commercial property' (Bilton 2010, p. 10). It is therefore crucial to examine how New Labour's proposed interest in 'those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS 1998a, p. 3) affected dance artists' entrepreneurial behaviour.

Policy documents and funding priorities published by the DCMS and ACE clearly evidence a shift in expectations with regard to the roles of dance artists and their contribution to society:

We know that many talented individuals wish to set up their own business in one of the creative industries. Whether they seek to establish a small dance company, a theatre group, an independent

production company or a digital design business, or they simply want to work as an individual artist, we must ensure that they receive the support they need. In particular we need to make it easier for individual artists and small businesses to get access to funding, expert advice, protection of intellectual property rights, accommodation, networking with similar organisations and skills development.

(DCMS 2001b, p. 32)

The financial management terminology used by funders to describe New Labour's cultural policy rationale reflects these changes. The *New Cultural Policy Framework* refers to grant funding as 'investment' in return for artists delivering a 'service' (DCMS 1998a, p. 1). It further underlines its commitment 'to ensure the delivery of appropriate outputs and benefits to the public' and its concerns with 'cost pressures' and 'efficiency' (*ibid.*).

Most of the respondents emphasise the important role governmental funding plays in realising artistic projects and sustaining their practice. Emerging choreographers such as Millie highlight how they have benefitted from receiving Arts Council funding at this early stage. Funding has allowed Millie to hone her choreographic skills, question her devising practice and thus helped her to develop a unique artistic voice and create original content:

The result, at the end of those three weeks, was very different than what I had done before in terms of how I worked, what questions I asked, what I produced. I feel that I was able to... I had the guts to just push it further, and I'm guessing that comes from having a lot of time in the studio and really getting to know the dancers and paying them, and then not feeling guilty for whatever I ask of them.

(Millie, December 2015)

Her improved working conditions affected her artistic process when devising the piece as well as the quality of the work she produced. Millie's observations are representative of other interviewees at this stage of their career (Ian, January 2013; David, October 2014; Paula, November 2014) when she notes that funding changed her attitude towards choreographing and influenced the way in which she produces work:

That was a big change in the way I work and the level of confidence that I had because suddenly I was auditioning and hiring people, everyone was paid properly. I had a producer to work with who helped me stay on top of things and helped me focus on the artistic side of things. I had a dramaturg. I had the time and the studio, dedicated time in the studio, not like a day here and a day there. So, just the way I approached everything changed. It was really different from my last work.

(Millie, December 2015)

Tracey acknowledges:

You could work outside of the system your whole life and then I would get to the point and say you know what, the work was good, but it was never as good as it could have been, and I never could employ people for long enough.

(Tracey, March 2012)

Both dance artists furthermore stress the pivotal role of funding in providing financial and in-kind support as well as employment for dance artists. Many interviewees relied on artistic employment by state-funded choreographers and dance companies. They have noted that their wages in theatre dance companies are contingent on governmental funding (Susan, February 2012; Tracey, March 2012; Mona, October 2012; Joe, October 2014).



However, it is also crucial to highlight that at times, extreme and contradictory feelings characterise the relationship between respondents and funding agencies. Oversubscribed funding schemes coupled with the majority of dance artists being dependent on receiving governmental support to ensure continuous artistic development have frequently resulted in a strained relationship with ACE and local authority funders. While Mona's relationship with ACE has improved significantly over the years, she admits: 'I regarded [ACE] for a long while as the enemy... [Their] bureaucratic approach was very schematic for me' (Mona, October 2012). Joe notices that dance artists struggle to maintain a constructive working relationship with ACE:

I don't think that it's [...] a system that benefits choreographers or dancers or administrators in the arts, and I think most people, when they talk about the Arts Council, it's probably with a voice of panic or stress.

(Joe, October 2014)

Joanne's narrative highlights that dealing with ACE can be an emotional rollercoaster for dance artists. On the one hand, she describes her experience in glowing terms: 'So far the support's been brilliant in terms of Arts Council' (Joanne, November 2014). On the other hand, she recalls in equally strong terms 'the disaster' of not receiving funding:

I didn't get the Arts Council funding which did happen once, it was a disaster because everything was set up to go; I didn't get the funding, the dancers didn't want to come for free. I had to ring up the venues, they were fuming and it was the strongest application I ever wrote, ever. [...] Oh I was gutted, it set me back a long way. But that was a long time ago [...] but it really set me back.

(Joanne, November 2014)

In fact, governmental funding provides dance artists with essential support which reaches way beyond funding individual projects or their company.

Indeed, it ensures that many artists can pay their rent and buy food. This is another contributory factor to the tense relationship between funders and dance artists which is often overlooked, yet governmental subsidies make a significant contribution to alleviate economic hardship experienced by dance artists. In Joanne's words, to receive funding also helps 'just [to] take the edge off your poverty' (Joanne, November 2014).

It is noteworthy to emphasise that dance artists' poor levels of pay and frequently unforgiving working conditions provide a unifying thread which links decades of reports (Devlin 1989, Siddall 2001, Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009) and scholarly research about the sector (Miller 1999; Pakes 2001; Rengers 2002, p. 27; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Aujla & Farrer 2016). Dance artists are very likely to experience more periods of reduced employability due to injury, compared with other artists in the performing and visual arts (Brinson & Dick 1996; Laws & Apps 2005). Furthermore, there are fewer full-time contracts for performers in the contemporary theatre dance than in musical theatre and ballet companies (Siddall 2001; Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003; Burns & Harrison 2009). The overwhelming majority of dance artists are employed on a fixed and short-term basis and/or are contracted as freelancers on a fee-only basis (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003, p. 12; Burns & Harrison 2009; Aujla & Farrer 2016).

These findings seem to confirm Mareijn Renger's claim that dance artists are accepting of 'inappropriate' returns for artistic employment' (Rengers, 2002, pp. 7-8). By contrast, Angela McRobbie offers an alternative reading of dance artists' work lives and economic behaviour:

Creative projects disrupt the normal means of measuring and rewarding working time, since so many new projects, embarked on during downtime, are unpaid, they are done 'on spec'. The relation between paid and unpaid work is constantly jumbled and opaque. It is too time consuming and possibly unproductive to spend this time applying for Jobseeker's Allowance for a period of just a month or so,

more productive to look for more work, which is exactly the point.

(McRobbie 2011, p. 33)

Some of the interviewees relate their artistic endeavours to business strategies which are financially motivated and demonstrate the degree to which dance artists engage with artistic and economic activities as interrelated. Many perceived their knowledge base as an artistic and economic asset. Millie observes: 'I don't feel like it's embarrassing or I don't feel like it's shameful to call this a business. It is my business. I am the brand and I am fine with the practicality of it' (Millie, December 2015). Likewise, Frederick emphasises: 'I've got a business mind and [...] with the fitness [business], for example I can make money doing that and I know I can and I'd prefer to, which I'm doing this year' (Frederick, November 2012). Joanne too lists her economic objectives in an entrepreneurial and business-like manner: 'If I don't get another 9 gigs for my show in the next two weeks, I won't get the £60,000 to make it' (Joanne, November 2014). At the same time, hardly any of the respondents indicated during the interviews and fieldwork that they have made any efforts to assert and exploit their copyright and/or performers' rights to generate an income. For example, none of the study's participants had policies and administrative protocols in place which ensure that cultural intermediaries have to ask for consent and/or pay for using photographic images and publicity materials.

I contend that firstly, this suggests that dance artists hide efforts to exploit their intellectual property. I have identified concealment as a specific economic behaviour employed by dance artists to maximise their economic rewards for artistic and arts-related labour. This might explain why Millie is met with resistance in the theatre dance field when she overtly promotes herself as a business:

I've had loads of conversations where people just get offended and say, "What do you mean 'it's a business?'" Well, I'm a business, you know? So, there is this shame of being business. Also, it does not just come from the industry. It's external. Artists are romanticised

[...], “Look at them suffer for their art”. At the same time, [artists] are expected to be business people and it just clashes.

(Millie, December 2015)

In order to avoid such negative repercussions, several interviewees couched their entrepreneurial strategies in language or narratives which subscribed to the mythical construction of the selfless artist. For example, John stresses that despite his many artistic endeavours, he does not feel that he is entitled to any rewards. He thus emphasises that he selflessly serves dance, which deflects attention from the funding he might have received for his many projects and any income these activities have generated (see Chapter 5, p.189 & 191).

Nevertheless some respondents, at least during their interview(s), ignored the ‘exceptional economy’ (Abbing 2004) of theatre dance and used terminology from the world of business to describe how they managed their companies. Tracey explains: ‘I see myself as a flagship enterprise because I know what knowledge I bear’ (Tracey, March 2012). In her statement, Tracey has linked her assets, or in her words, ‘the knowledge’ she held, to her status as an important business. She then continued to observe: ‘I’ve got to have that sort of business head [...] it’s about cultural investment and confidence from funders and confidence from sponsors’ (Tracey, March 2012). Also, Hannah realises that it is beneficial to stand out in the oversupplied market for dance-related labour: ‘When I started freelancing initially, it was just [...] how can I make money just by going to schools. [...] There are so many people who do that and everybody’s offering the same [...] So then you try and think what can you do to be unique?’ (Hannah, June 2015). Hannah’s comment reveals how the traditional notion of artists and their unique contribution have been appropriated by contemporary business practices and terminologies and have re-emerged as the unique selling point of a product and service in commercial environments, such as the creative industries. This phenomenon has also been observed in other performing arts disciplines (Harvie 2013).

### **i. The entrepreneurial dance artist**

In order to establish why dance artists and the theatre dance field have been slow to embrace New Labour's entrepreneurial agenda, it is necessary to examine a range of potential contributory factors, for example the role and influence of agencies such as ACE, local authorities and cultural intermediaries tasked with delivering these policies, as well as the content and effectiveness of them. I argue that key features of New Labour's cultural policies have resulted in unintended outcomes with regard to dance artists asserting and exploiting their intellectual property rights. In order to examine these in more detail, I shall investigate three key cultural policy priorities: partnership working, emerging artists, and the focus on funding new original dance works.

Undoubtedly, and as many others have observed, policymakers and advocates of the creative economy instil artists and creative workers with a remarkable set of competencies and skills (Pratt & Gill 2008; Gill 2007; McRobbie 2004; 2007). The marketing and international business scholar D. Steven White and his fellow researchers agree that individuals' creative competence is 'one of the most powerful sources of competitive advantage in the modern economy [...] for industries and countries alike' (White *et al.* 2014, p. 46). In a similar vein, Shalini Venturelli, Associate Professor of International Communication Policy at American University in Washington D.C. highlights that nations without a creative workforce of artists lack the expertise and skills to succeed in knowledge-based economies (Venturelli 2000, pp. 13-16).

Despite their declared economic interest in the creative economy and its benefits, policymakers seem to be oblivious to the complexities of artists' and creative practitioners' livelihood systems. This is surprising, considering 'the centrality of the individual artist, creator or maker' in policy documents published by DCMS and ACE (Galloway *et al.* 2002, p. 11) as there appeared to be little appetite to investigate how exactly individual artists contribute economically to the arts and culture sector. By and large, studies (DCMS1998b; 1999a; Buck 2004; The Work Foundation 2007; DCMS 2009) seem rather to emphasise commonalities shared by artists and creative workers, for example that they rely on grant funding. At the same time, they often disregard discipline and genre-

specific differences, for instance by categorising dance artists, singers and actors as performing artists. Chapter Two has demonstrated in some detail how such an approach can compromise research findings (see pp. 66–69). Also, as Judy Piggott highlights, many studies on artistic labour are often oblivious to the diverse and multiple roles artists inhabit and their economic implications:

Our cultural labour force is not a mere set of employees and contract freelancers. They are also creators, producers, and employers who may fit into all or none of these categories at different times in their lives.

(Piggott 2008, p. 4)

In their vision for a creative economy in the UK, New Labour perceived artists as entrepreneurial wealth creators located at the core of the creative industries (DCMS 1998b; 2001b; 2008a; The Work Foundation 2007). Indeed, their cultural policies not only recognised artists as key contributors to economic growth, they also attributed specific economic interests to artists. They assumed that economic rewards, such as royalties gained from exploiting intellectual property, incentivised artists to create work. The cultural researcher Marion von Osten astutely describes the entrepreneurial interpretation of artists and cultural workers under the auspices of the creative economy doctrine. She notes:

The figure of the artist – or ‘cultural-preneur’ as Anthony Davies once named it – seems to embody that successful combination of an unlimited diversity of ideas, creativity-on-call and smart self-marketing that today is demanded of everyone. [Artists] are celebrated as passionately committed ‘creators of new, subversive ideas’, innovative lifestyles and ways of working.

(Von Osten in Raunig *et al.* 2011, p. 137)

However, there are also those voices who question a rhetoric which endows artists and creative labourers with such powers (McRobbie 2007; Lorey 2011; Von Osten 2011). Paolo Virno (2011) and Angela McRobbie (2007) warn that embellished narratives of self-determined lifestyles and personal fulfillment are

more likely to serve the purpose of deflecting their audiences from increasingly precarious working conditions. John Holden, freelance writer and until 2008, Head of the cross-party think tank Demos, notes:

What is missing from the current literature on professional creativity more generally is a convincing analysis and understanding of how the characteristics and the development of creative people, and their economic activity in the creative economy, can cohere with institutional policies.

(Holden 2007, p. 27)

Indeed, the respondents' accounts in the first section of this chapter appear to refute Marion von Osten's description of the entrepreneurial artist. Their contributions rather suggest that insecurities about how to define original dance content constrains dance artists' ability and interest in exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities linked to intellectual property. Collaborative forms of knowledge production further exacerbate these difficulties. The authors of the *Dance Mapping* report also observe a similar phenomenon when they emphasise: 'The dance field is not exploring its assets as fully as it could. The repertoire [of dance work] is not currently valued and intellectual property is not capitalised on' (Burn & Harrison 2009, p. 13).

Some respondents allude to ACE favouring dance artists who intend to create new original works, instead of developing and revisiting a repertoire of existing dance works (Tracey, March 2012; Millie, November 2014). While at first glance, such a funding strategy might increase the overall innovation potential of a sector, it also shifts the emphasis away from exploiting intellectual property rights. Indeed, it is doubtful if the sheer number of new works being produced achieves a financially more favourable outcome than royalties linked to a carefully nurtured high-quality repertoire of original works. From the standpoint of successfully utilising intellectual property, ACE prioritising emerging artists, for this reason, seems counterproductive. Some interviewees also noted that the focus on emerging dance artists during the trainee stage of their career has limited support for mid-career and mature dance artists.

Crucially, New Labour's cultural policies promoted 'partnership working' between private, public and academic sectors as essential to a thriving arts and culture sector (DCMS 1999a; b; 2001a; 2006; 2008a):

In addition, we want to see funding bodies taking a direct role in awarding grants to individual artists, so that individual composers or theatre directors or sculptors are themselves funded with commission fees or bursaries and project funds to enable to set up *genuine partnerships* [my italics] with orchestras, theatres, and other institutions as they wish. We shall ask funding bodies to build on current work by introducing individual awards for artists and creators which give the individual the power to develop their artistic project by themselves or in *partnership* [my italics] with larger cultural organisations.

(DCMS 2001b, p. 35)

In a similar vein, ACE highlighted its 'coherent, nationwide approach to developing artistic talent in partnership with arts organisations, artists, and other stakeholders' (ACE 2010a, p. 29). In this context, it is essential to note that while partnership working had been a feature of public policy in the UK since the 1980s, it became a policy priority under New Labour (Perkins *et al.* 2010). In the words of social policy experts Bernard Dowling, Martin Powell and Caroline Glendinning, partnership working turned from an option to a requirement<sup>28</sup> (Dowling *et al.* 2004, p. 309).

This meant that as a prerequisite to applying for ACE funding, dance artists had to commit to working in partnership and to secure financial or in-kind support from multiple agencies. Robert feels that trying to fulfill ACE's focus on partnership working would dilute the idea of the dance piece he proposed to ACE, as he would have had to accommodate his numerous partners' diverse interests:

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<sup>28</sup> Glasby and Dickinson have highlighted that 'the word "partnership" was recorded 11319 times in 2006 in official parliamentary records compared with 38 times in 1989 (this is after removing references to civil partnerships, which were being debated in 2006)' (Glass & Dickinson 2008).



It became very clear that I'd have to sacrifice so much of what I possibly might want to do and replace it with what I'd have to do for a likely chance to receive funding from the Arts Council, i.e. working in regions and with people that don't have much contact to dance, and as a professional artist I'm very comfortable in saying I don't have much interest in that.

(Robert, April 2012)

I maintain that working in partnership with multiple agencies further complicates dance artists' entrepreneurial efforts. Unresolved issues with determining ownership in collaborative devising practices, the prevalence of implicit contracts as well as silent contractual clauses already undermine attempts to exploit intellectual property to generate income, as established in the first section of this chapter.

Furthermore, I contend that an asymmetrical distribution of power compromises partnership working as it advantages funders and arts organisations. This power differential prevents dance artists from challenging practices which, for example, routinely neglect their moral rights as outlined in the first section of this chapter. As Frank notes, dance artists often experience themselves as powerless in these partnerships. As an example, he mentions a regional dance agency which forced an emerging choreographer to perform in his own piece which they had commissioned, against his wish: 'They asked [the choreographer] to dance in the show [...] it's not only that they're hosting the choreographer, it's that they're managing [the artistic process] as well' (Frank, April 2012).

Both the DCMS and ACE publications identify the economic rationale which underpins their call for partnership working. The *Staying Ahead* report in 2007, commissioned by the DCMS, highlights the financial benefits of 'closer partnerships with a wide variety of sectors along the value chain, extending from small content creators to large network operators, [...] leading to a reduction in costs' (The Work Foundation 2007, p. 43). Similarly, Arts Council

England's strategic framework for the arts, *Achieving Great Art for Everyone*, noted in 2010 that its focus on partnership work is economically motivated: 'We will broker partnerships with other major public and private funders to secure greater impact from our shared investment in the arts' (ACE 2010, p. 33).

Governmental reports, such as *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (DCMS & Creative Industries Task Force (1998b) or *Creative Industries: Exports our Hidden Potential* (DCMS 1999a) furthermore firmly concentrate on quantifiable economic aspects of the performing arts, for instance, the sector's revenue sources and volume (DCMS 1998b), its UK market size and contributions to the overall economy (Buck 2004; The Work Foundation 2007; DCMS 2009). However, despite their declared interest in the creative economy and its economic benefits, policymakers seem to be oblivious to the complexities of determining intellectual property rights. As the previous section has illustrated, so far these have often prevented dance artists and cultural workers from asserting and exploiting their intellectual property rights.

## **ii. New Labour's policy 'delivery chain' and its effect on dance artists' entrepreneurial ambitions**

This raises the question of how national arts councils and local arts and culture services relate to dance artists as entrepreneurial creators and owners of intellectual property. Undeniably, funders inhabit a position of power and influence with regard to providing financial support and artistic opportunities to dance artists. However, Ruth Towse stresses that a comparatively insignificant share of arts and culture funding reaches individual artists directly (Towse 2006). She notes that 'government bodies tend to prefer to channel funds through cultural organisations on the one hand, because transaction costs are high and, on the other, because there are moral hazard problems of supporting individuals' (Towse 2006, p. 569).

Stephen Hetherington refers to the policy 'delivery chain', under New Labour, which joined up multiple agencies at all levels of government from the Treasury to beneficiaries of funding, such as dance agencies and similar organisations in the arts and culture sector. This strategy was to monitor that funding agreements were adhered to and achieved the numerous governmental targets

(Hetherington 2014, pp. 142-150). David's account describes how he experienced the effect of Hetherington's policy 'delivery chain' as a trainee choreographer. He found it initially difficult to gain support from a regional dance agency; this situation changed however once David received ACE funding:

That relationship is very much improving, but it was quite interesting [...] it only really changed once I got Arts Council funding for the first time. So that was a bit upsetting cause it still feels that [...] unless I get money, no one's going to show me any signs of moral support.

(David, October 2014)

Gaining ACE funding seemingly alleviated or overruled any concerns the dance agency might have previously had about supporting David. As an organisation funded by ACE, the dance agency would have found it difficult to argue against working in partnership with another recipient of ACE support, especially as David, as a trainee choreographer, was also an emerging dance artist and thus met another of ACE's funding priorities.

David's narrative raises concerns that a decision-making process which is underpinned by strategic priorities such as partnership working does not serve art or artists well. Instead, it encourages ACE, local arts services and cultural intermediaries to streamline the artistic visions and outputs of dance artists and contemporary dance companies to adhere to policy requirements. Arts and cultural management expert Jo Caust warns that 'by attaching extra "value definitions" to subsidised culture in order to obtain funding, there is the danger that the sector's ability to be innovative and truly creative may be seriously constrained' (Caust 2003, cited in Lee & Byrne 2011, p. 286). Joe indicates the detrimental effect of prioritising specific types of works and activities which in ACE's case revolved around instrumental values of dance:

I think the Arts Council is very much about ticking boxes. [...] My impression of the Arts Council is: "It's very rigid and not

understanding of artistic processes in any kind of way". [...] While there is one way of applying for money for the Arts Council, there is an infinite number of ways to create art in contemporary dance.

(Joe, October 2014)

In fact, in the *Dance Mapping* report, Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison also find evidence of a more standardised range and quality of theatre dance works and company practices:

We appear to have reached a moment in time where a level of homogenisation is evident. This has had an impact on the dance aesthetic within some of our subsidised touring companies.

(Burns & Harrison 2009, p.18)

Respondents often found it counterproductive to accommodate funding priorities which they felt prevented experimentation and exploring new artistic territories. While tightly-monitored funding strategies can possibly reassure policymakers and help them to make their case for arts funding with the Treasury, they have however proved less effective in supporting artists to develop and shape high-quality original content (Frey 1999; 2002; Frey & Jegen 2001; Frey *et al.* 2002). In short, prescribed and narrow sets of funding priorities frequently result in artistic outcomes of inferior quality. Joanne, for instance, illustrates this effect when she discusses ACE's focus on accessible work (ACE 2003a; b; 2006a; b; 2008b; 2010a):

Some of the work that's been made outside hasn't necessarily been super high-quality. It wouldn't necessarily survive indoors but because they're getting 40,000 people watching it it's all fine, which is quite interesting. Yeah, people jumped on that bandwagon doing all the festivals and everything which I think is actually quite fun because it's a way to take dance out to where the people really are.

(Joanne, November 2014)

Similarly, the Swiss economist Bruno S. Frey's 'Crowding Theory' refers to the stifling effect of prescriptive governmental targets on artistic production. In Frey's words, a 'Crowding-Out' effect suppresses the creative drive of artists. Consequently, they 'tend [...] to produce more but rather mediocre art, because the artists concerned are not intrinsically motivated to produce original art' (Frey 2003, pp. 143-149). This means inflexible funding criteria can lead to formulaic and homogenised artistic outcomes. For instance, dance artists who jump on the 'bandwagon' of outdoor dance performances favoured by funders (Joanne, November 2014) might successfully adhere to set funding priorities. However, as Joanne's comment suggests, they might be of a lower quality (*ibid.*) and possibly incorporate less innovative potential. In other words, prescriptive and rigid target-setting undermines knowledge transfers, such as innovation spillovers from the core of the creative industries to medium and large-scale commercial ventures at their periphery. This approach furthermore stifles entrepreneurial opportunities which could possibly provide platforms for generating income through exploitation of intellectual property, for example small-scale independently produced dance works transferring to London's commercially run West End.

Indeed, several respondents stress that many of the dance-related contexts and instrumental values promoted in ACE's policy documents and strategic plans were irrelevant to their primary artistic practice. Miriam found it arduous to devise what ACE called 'accessible' work:

It's a challenge making work for that type of audience; you [leave] out experimental stuff because it would just go over people's heads. [...] I mean, I hate using words like accessible because that always sounds very simplistic and I don't think you have to be totally simplistic at all, but I just think it has to be watchable, you know it just has to.

(Miriam, October 2012)

Retrospectively, she observes during the interview that ACE's emphasis on dance artists making work for audiences with little or no experience of theatre dance has curtailed her ambition and opportunities to push artistic boundaries. Robert also observes how it was impossible for him to pursue specialist and niche interests. ACE's priorities required him to adapt his original vision for a dance piece until it had changed beyond recognition: '[You] then find that starting your own project ended up with mixed messages from the Arts Council [...] as to what will be required of me as an artist' (Robert, April 2012).

### **iii. The impact of asymmetrical distribution of power on entrepreneurial behaviour in dance**

The respondents' narratives furthermore suggest an uneven distribution of power which positions funders and medium- to large-scale dance hub organisations as influential decision-makers and channels to distribute governmental funding (see also Chapter Three, pp. 121-123). The relationship between funders, cultural intermediaries and dance artists is furthermore robustly framed by governmental priorities. For example, ACE's *Dance Policy* (ACE 2006a) includes a thinly-veiled threat to artists by declaring the agency's willingness to take tough decisions to ensure its priorities are realised:

We are prepared to make choices – sometimes tough ones – about how we commit our funding to respond to the kind of ambitious thinking and high-quality work that will bring our priorities forward.

(ACE 2006a, p. 2)

What is more, for many of the interviewees, it is crucial not only to comply with the priorities and protocols of funding agencies at national and local level; they also have to consider the institutional interests of dance agencies, dance hub organisations and venues whose partnership support they seek. In other words, in order to receive ACE support, dance artists have to mould and present their ideas so that they fit in with potential partnership organisations' goals.

Tracey alludes to modifying her artistic vision and to conform to ACE's priorities

to gain their support: 'I always feel I have information that I have to follow through to fit in' (Tracey, April 2012). She is aware that a failure to commit to their objectives could result in her losing her funding:

I think [I have to] fit in with Arts Council, I think that there are certain people in the Arts Council who, even if they now have a quiet respect for me, would happily not see me making work.

(Tracey, November 2012)

Indeed, many of the interviewees' contributions suggest that it is almost impossible to receive funding to pursue alternative artistic paths. According to the economist Bruno S. Frey, national and local funders seem to ignore that 'the production of art in all its forms is (in principle) traced back to individual behaviour [...] and [...] incentives and constraints [which] induce people to create art' (Frey 2003, p. 25).

Although Joanne is proud of her good relationship with ACE, she too concedes that she had to readjust her artistic vision in the past when her ideas did not meet ACE priorities:

[ACE] got their policies so if [...] I want to do a festival: "You know we're not really interested in festivals at the moment". I said: "But it's brilliant". They said: "Well, you can apply if you like," giving me a look in the eye saying: "Good luck with that!" So I didn't.

(Joanne, November 2014)

Likewise, the respondents frequently experienced cultural intermediaries, such as dance agencies' staff and local authorities' cultural services teams, as inhabiting powerful positions to negotiate with dance artists. They controlled access to additional financial and in-kind support, for example studio and performance spaces, alongside having valuable contacts to networks of

commissioners and promoters. Relationships between dance artists and cultural intermediaries therefore comprise a broad spectrum of very diverse interactions.

Tracey reports that dance agency staff intervened in her artistic process: 'I was under pressure from [the regional dance agency] to actually have a solo made' (Tracey, April 2012). Ian, a trainee choreographer, describes how the director of an arts organisation insisted on Ian having to employ a particular group of dancers when she commissioned him to create an original dance piece. This caused unrest and frictions with friends and colleagues who had supported Ian, up to this point, by working for him without pay (Ian, January 2013).

Furthermore, during the fieldwork, I observed many incidents when dance artists' moral right to *attribution* – their right to be acknowledged as creators - and *integrity* – which stipulates that only they have the right to change their work's original intention - were routinely ignored by arts organisations and their staff (field log, February, April 2012). Miriam notes that she is rarely consulted when the organisations which book her shows advertise the work. During the interview, she recalls one of those occasions and her frustration with the situation in some detail:

That's pissed me off big time. [...] I was doing [...] a solo and the idiot in the venue in the marketing department didn't bother to ask me for an image at all. He just went to my website and grabbed a photo and it was a picture of me teaching a workshop. [...] Anyone looking can see that is an educational picture. They used that picture to market a solo performance. [...] It couldn't have been more wrong. [...] But some people are actually just like: "I don't know what's wrong". He could have just emailed me and asked for an image. It could have been that simple.

(Miriam, January 2016).

Miriam's narrative highlights her difficulties with trying to control the use of her photographic images. To argue with a venue's staff is a difficult call to make as she benefits from having a media presence. Furthermore, if she would like to be



booked again, she cannot afford to aggravate her relationship with the organisation.

While it is reasonable that partner organisations attempt to achieve the best possible fit of a project with the overarching goals of their organisations, John indicates that partnership work frequently involves staff who lack any practice-based dance expertise. He suggests: 'I think that interference is a problem, especially when incompetent people are interfering' (John, June 2015). In John's opinion, this leaves little room to accommodate projects which reach beyond the boundaries specified by organisations' funding agreements with ACE:

[This dance agency] is a microcosm of the Government [...] You can't go in there with an idea and say let's do this and have a progressive and enlightened person go: "Okay, we will give it a shot for six months and see if it works".

(John, June 2015)

Tracey distrusts the judgments calls of ACE, but also that of cultural intermediaries in relation to theatre dance:

The structure systemically is lacking in knowledge so that when your work is viewed [...] by the so-called skilled eye actually, or the skilled observer, they are not skilled enough. [...] I think the Arts Council has problems with understanding [...] the work it sees, or the context of the work it sees.

(Tracey, March 2012)

Dance artists need to carefully negotiate the boundaries of their self-determined practice as well as asserting their moral rights in order to gain and maintain support from funders and cultural intermediaries alike. Millie refers to her cultural intermediary habitus, in other words dispositions, such as her networking and social skills which she believes enable her to manage this relationship: 'I think you can learn to play their game' (Millie, November 2014).

She distinguishes between her artistic identity and interests on the one hand, and those of cultural intermediaries on the other:

As long as you're really clear to yourself about your artistic direction and so long as you maintain your artistic integrity. And not start to think I need to make work that fits the box, or I need to include this section because that's what sells tickets.

(Millie, November 2014)

Ian is also aware that he has to balance meeting the expectations of cultural intermediaries and those of the restricted theatre dance field. For example, he refused when a dance organisation asked him to perform one of his theatre-based pieces in a shopping centre: 'I'm not shifting on this one, I thought; I'm just going to have to be a little bit stubborn with it' (Ian, January 2013). He is aware that while he needs to accommodate the demands of partner organisations, it is equally important for his standing in the theatre dance field to demonstrate his artistic autonomy:

I think I would have lost respect from [other artists] because I think people would have thought that I was just being a yes man and I'm just being told what to do and you know not really an artist; I'm more of a, I'm more of a mascot.

(Ian, January 2013)

At the same time, the respondents rarely participated in decision-making that concerned their work field and its conditions; many admit to lacking confidence when negotiating with funders and cultural intermediaries. In order to overcome such issues, dance artists employ mediators whenever possible, such as producers and managers, on an individual basis:

I actually paid a producer to help me with the application and she's now working on the project with me. She suggested as a first application to develop the relationships and develop the trust, it's

better to do it in two stages. It looks like there's a lot about developing other partnerships.

(Millie, November 2014)

Some respondents report that they lack the specialist terminology and writing skills required to write a funding bid. Millie stresses: 'I'm learning what venues want, what kind of language I should use, how I should involve them' (Millie December 2015).

Moreover, dance artists stress the time-consuming and labour-intensive aspects of receiving state funding. This is also a key criticism made in numerous reports (Holden 2007; McMaster 2008; McIntosh 2008) in which their authors note the excessive bureaucracy which accompanies ACE funding. The interviewees emphasised the hidden costs linked to fundraising activities (Millie, December 2015; Tracey, March 2012; Joanne, November 2014). Millie observes: 'The amount of administrative work is enormous [...] I always feel that it takes me away from producing good work. [...] All of that time is obviously unpaid' (Millie, December 2015).

I maintain that the effort and investment required from dance artists to familiarise themselves with funding programmes creates a dynamic which shifts the focus onto the application process and meeting priorities of funders, rather than serving the vision of artists and maximising their entrepreneurial opportunities to generate and exploit intellectual properties. Also, I argue that funding is therefore inaccessible to many dance artists, despite ACE and other funders professing to make funding inclusive and accessible for all potential beneficiaries. For example, ever-evolving funding schemes mean that dance artists have to invest time and money to keep up to date with these changes. Tracey notes that ACE and other funders are constantly coming up with new funding programmes, or in her words 'products', to tackle specific issues. She observes that it requires specialist expertise and staff to keep up with these frequent changes:

What's happening is that funders, trusts, foundations [find] new ways of stimulating and supporting the arts [...]. But what they're doing is actually making new products that you then have to buy. [...] But somehow I can't keep buying all those products [...] I need to employ somebody who knows how to buy them, otherwise [...] the company [...] won't survive and develop in the way it's capable of.

(Tracey, March 2012)

This approach to funding furthermore disadvantages individual artists who, in contrast to middle- and large-scale organisations, cannot afford to buy in external time and expertise to benefit from these funds. These artists also often have less access to networks of other artists and cultural intermediaries who are associated with funders.

This might explain why very few interviewees have been invited to join boards and recruitment panels of dance organisations in a non-executive directorial or advisory capacity. When discussing her regional dance agency, Susan notes: 'It should be the artists who are making the decisions and also the artists choosing the director as well' (Susan, June 2015). Millie agrees that 'if the independent sector wants the industry to change, we have to take an active part. We have to make decisions and we have to go and talk and have discussions' (Millie, December 2015). At the same time, she acknowledges: 'But I've never gone as far as sitting on a board and representing [my] personal interests' (Millie, December 2015). She also admits:

I would say yes, this needs to happen, independent artists having a say in the wider industry. On a personal level, I just think oh god I don't want the extra work. So I worry that a lot of artists feel this way. In theory, this is amazing, but I don't want to do it.

(Millie, December 2015)

## **Concluding remarks:**

This chapter has examined dance artists' stake in the creative economy as entrepreneurs and small business owners. It has revealed that dance artists mostly disregard legal aspects of ownership in artistic and dance-related theatre dance production. Furthermore, choreographers and performer/creators have perceived their stake in artistic productions differently to dancers. My interviewees employed increasingly diverse devising methods to create original content which ranged from single authorship schemes to teams of artistic collaborators steering the devising process. The fluidity of collaborative forms of knowledge production and the transient qualities of dance artists' embodied capital further complicated the process of identifying the extent to which individual dance artists contributed to devising original content in production processes.

The findings have also revealed that sectorial practices and occupational cultures were biased towards the single authorship model. They have disregarded the legal implications of emerging collaborative multi-authored works which might not be adequately recognised by current copyright law. Established contractual practices in theatre dance, such as silent clauses in employment contracts, furthermore mean that performers have possibly relinquished intellectual property and non-property rights without actually being aware of doing so. Performers were thus rarely credited and legally acknowledged for their original contributions in collaborative devising processes. What is more, the interviewees based their self-directed projects mostly on implicit contracts which are not legally recognised.

Finally, key strategic governmental policies for the arts and culture sector, prescriptive funding priorities and narrow monitoring regimes under New Labour have resulted in a lack of professional autonomy and democratic deficits which have disadvantaged dance artists and also have had a detrimental impact on the quality of work produced. Crucially, New Labour's policies have undermined the effort of artists to develop and utilise innovative content commercially and/or to strengthen their economic and artistic positions in the theatre dance field. Individuals and small-scale companies have therefore found it difficult, if not

impossible, to engage with and benefit from the entrepreneurial opportunities which the creative economy model offers.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion: Mission unaccomplished

The objective of this thesis has been to examine contemporary theatre dance artists' economic conduct to overcome gaps in knowledge about their economic competencies and behaviours. It has explored its subject in the context of the creative economy model which three consecutive New Labour governments introduced to the UK's arts and culture sector between 1997 and 2010. In order to achieve its goals, this project has investigated three aspects of dance artists' economic activities. Firstly, it has identified and scrutinised key economic competencies and behaviours which dance artists employ in contemporary theatre dance and the other work fields they engage with. In this respect, it has been particularly concerned with how dance artists negotiate artistic and economic demands and whether they have approached these as interrelated or separate. Secondly, the study has examined to what extent teachers, mentors and established dance artists and the occupational cultures they represent are contributory influences in shaping dance artists' economic demeanour. Thirdly, the research has raised the issue of how dance artists' economic conduct affects their artistic and financial status in and outside of the theatre dance field. It has been interested in the manner in which dance artists have approached employment and entrepreneurial opportunities offered by New Labour's interventions. At the same time, it has examined whether cultural policies and funding strategies which were instigated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE) have had a destabilising effect on their livelihood systems.

Three different areas have emerged throughout this study which this final chapter will revisit. First of all, the research exposed important gaps in knowledge about dance artists' economic activities which it has endeavoured to fill. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the empirical and methodological relevance of significant themes related to dance artists' economic behaviours which became apparent during the fieldwork and data analysis. Finally, the thesis's findings suggest areas for change to artists' working conditions and pay levels. These will be discussed and I shall suggest possible avenues for future

research of dance artists' and the overall sector's economic activities and conditions.

## **1. Key research findings**

My working hypothesis has been that dance artists approach their artistic practice(s) and related economic circumstances and behaviours as coexisting value spheres despite publicly upholding their separateness. As such, I have argued that many perceived divisions between arts and economics are largely ideological rather than based on historical and empirical evidence. The premise here has been that dance artists experience artistic and economic demands as closely linked and employ specific economic competencies and behaviours to respond to them. This starting point has viewed dance artists' actions as frequently economically motivated and, to some extent, entrepreneurial in their intentions and outlook. Furthermore, my perspective on the theatre dance field has challenged idealised perceptions about dance professionals as labourers which confirm and feed into the public imagination about dance as a work field. These romanticised views often portray dance artists as dedicated professionals who are exclusively motivated by their passion for dance and not by financial rewards. Overall, the thesis's key research findings have addressed methodological shortcomings and gaps in knowledge about dance artists' economic conduct.

The findings demonstrate, firstly, that dance artists have been crucial contributors and co-constructors of knowledge during the research process. This has allowed for new insights into their economic conduct which have not been achieved by previous survey and focus group-based studies. Furthermore, the thesis's genre-specific research strategy has ensured that distinctive characteristics of the contemporary theatre dance field's economy and dance-related work settings can emerge. Thus, it has highlighted the unique economic circumstances of contemporary dance artists, which earlier reports about the dance sector or the performing arts have neglected.

Secondly, the thesis has shown that dance artists have economic competencies which they use together with other related economic behaviours. These have



included their ability to cross-subsidise their practice through employment in secondary work fields and to manage barter arrangements in which they have exchanged their labour in return for goods and services, such as studio space and dance tuition. Furthermore, they have funded projects and start-up dance companies together with their collaborators by pooling their financial, cultural and social capital for mutual benefit. The interviewees have employed these competencies together with a repertoire of behaviours, which have served distinct economic purposes: wishing and hoping, for example, relates to how dance artists have motivated themselves to achieve their artistic and economic goals and overcome setbacks. Adaptive-resilient behaviours have been required for dance artists to manage the numerous value economies they have engaged with and to respond flexibly to ever-changing and contradictory demands in their work fields. In addition, concealment and multi-purpose dance myths have played an important part in maximising financial rewards by meeting expectations about dance artists and theatre dance held by funders and the general public. At the same time, the thesis's findings have highlighted that New Labour's cultural policies overlooked these economic strategies when it reframed dance artists' roles in the creative economy.

Thirdly, the research outcomes have revealed that dance artists have operated in three different value economies: the reversed economy of the theatre dance field, dance-related and non-artistic economies outside of the field, in which they have found secondary employment, and economic frameworks which were determined by governmental policies and legislation. However, the findings have also suggested that New Labour's policy interventions, by neglecting the theatre dance field's crucial role as a central value-allocating authority, have inadvertently disrupted dance artists' ability to self-fund their practice.

Finally, the thesis has demonstrated that dance artists under New Labour were entrepreneurial in their outlook, in spite of the theatre dance field's occupational cultures and its governance systems constraining their ability to devise and market artistic and dance-related content. Indeed, the DCMS' target-driven cultural policies and centrally-controlled monitoring regimes have limited dance artists' self-directed pursuit of artistic and economic goals. Furthermore, many

of the DCMS's and ACE's interventions have encouraged an asymmetrical power balance in the dance field which has resulted in few large-hub organisations, and exclusive decision-making processes which involve funders and a selected few of the major players in the dance field. This has disadvantaged individual dance artists who were not associated with these large-scale organisations and were therefore excluded from shaping the infrastructural developments and business models in their primary work field.

## **2. Methodological, conceptual and contextual considerations**

Before I proceed with discussing the findings I have summarised above, I shall address the methodological and conceptual challenges which have influenced this research project. The lack of previous research about dance artists' economic conduct and questions about the validity of earlier research designs, which unanimously favoured survey and focus group-based research strategies (Arts Council Wales 2005; Burns & Harrison 2009; Creative Scotland 2012) when mapping the ecology and economy of the dance sector, make it necessary briefly to revisit the methods I have used to research and represent dance artists' experiences.

### **i. Methodological considerations**

The findings suggest that participants' accounts have proved useful to generate insights into dance artists' economic conduct which have not been picked up by previous survey and focus group-based studies. The longitudinal nature of the fieldwork and the regular informal conversations and formal community reviews have allowed for detailed and new perceptions about dance artists' economic strategies to emerge. Many of these would have been difficult to spot when solely relying on questionnaire-derived data. In fact, it has been crucial to interview and observe dance artists to detect inconsistencies between interviews and their everyday actions. For example, Susan stressed during her interview how she strictly monitors that she only works the hours she is actually paid for as a dance teacher. However, as soon as she delivers professional open classes, away from her part-time job in formal educational settings, she disregards her financial code of conduct. Instead, she regularly teaches far longer than the agreed ninety-minute slot. The long-term perspective on the

research field has also confirmed the substantial disconnect between what Hasan Bakhshi *et al.* identify as policymakers' 'high level statements of vision' (Bakhshi *et al.* 2013b, p. 18) and dance artists' objective working conditions with deteriorating levels of pay (Foundation for Community Dance & Dance UK 2003) and ineffective access to state benefits, such as healthcare and social security (Galloway *et al.* 2003).

In an effort to overcome the methodological limitations of previous studies, the thesis has aimed to create a more level playing field for research participants and the researcher. Its interest has been to provide a template for future research which will involve and recognise dance artists as primary co-contributors to the research process. With these objectives in mind, three key features have played a significant role in how I have engaged with the respondents and generated empirical data about their work lives: firstly, the study has taken a genre-specific stance by focussing exclusively on contemporary theatre dance artists. This move indicated to the research participants my detailed understanding of and interest in their practice field and its unique artistic and economic characteristics which are different to those of other dance genres.

Secondly, interviews, fieldwork and community reviews have provided a dialogical platform which has included the research participants as co-constructors of knowledge. These methods, which are firmly located within conceptual traditions in anthropology, ethnography and the social sciences, have underpinned the thesis's dialectical research strategy. However, I do not claim that this approach has, at any point, fully achieved overcoming deeply-ingrained hierarchical traditions which underpin the relationship between researcher and research participants, especially as research findings have underlined that concealment and silence are default positions amongst dance artists when engaging with their work field. Indeed, both participants and observers (Grau 2007; EXCHANGE *et al.* 2013) have highlighted that dance artists' voices are rarely heard. Unavoidably, this affects any discourse about dance artists as labourers and their working conditions. In particular, in settings in which, according to cultural policy expert Kate Oakley, 'talking about artistic

production as work still produce[s] [...] resistance or discomfort' (Oakley 2009, p. 16).

Considering these circumstances, my presence in the field of enquiry together with open-ended and unstructured interviews and frequent community reviews have differed noticeably from previous survey and focus group-based research designs. The majority of encounters were face-to-face meetings and additionally, the open-ended unstructured format allowed themes to emerge which were relevant to the participants. Community reviews opened up discussions about my interpretations of their narratives and the situations which I observed throughout the fieldwork. The instant feedback provided by the research participants led to amendments to the research design: for example, I changed the ways in which I had initially categorised respondents by age to career-stage categories. This was to accommodate the diverse and non-linear career trajectories the participants reported which were determined by significant events, such as joining a company and being awarded funding, rather than by age.

By contrast, the reported findings of earlier studies have suggested that even their respondents' contributions to focus groups have been significantly filtered through the "expert" selection criteria of consultants, scholars and dance advocates before being shared with a wider public. In this respect, this thesis has regarded dance artists as expert partners who have shared their insights to develop a joint perspective on the subject field in collaboration with the researcher. This has been reflected in the participants' frank contributions and unrelenting commitment to this study.

Thirdly, the study makes a strong case for the embodied presence of the researcher in the field of enquiry. My active physical engagement in dance classes and rehearsals has played a crucial role in gaining the trust of research participants as it confirmed my insider status as a dance professional. Furthermore, I have exposed my own work life to the scrutiny of the participants, as many of them have witnessed my personal struggle with juggling multiple freelance and part-time jobs alongside my research

commitments: challenges which in some way were all too familiar to most of them. The research process has also benefitted from my multicultural viewpoints on the research field and my 'hybrid position' (Deutsch 1981; Narayan 1993; De Andrade 2000) as a German researcher and outsider in the UK who, at the same time, inhabits an insider position in the contemporary theatre dance field. My status as a transnational dance labourer (Kedhar, 2011; 2014; Priyasavan 2012) to some degree, has reflected the situation of some participants who are also Continental European nationals.

## **ii. Conceptual considerations**

The thesis's genre-specific standpoint has made it necessary to develop a conceptual framework which adequately considers characteristics distinctive to contemporary theatre dance. Pierre Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field and capital, which incorporate the body and are open to conceptual modifications, have proved valuable tools in achieving this goal. In addition, Steven Wainwright's *et al.*'s ethnographic study of dance artists of The Royal Ballet (Wainwright & Turner 2003a; b; 2004; 2006; Wainwright *et al.* 2005; 2006; 2007) has provided an important stepping-stone. The manner in which the authors have employed Bourdieu's conceptual infrastructure suggested its usefulness in a dance context. At the same time, my economic research perspective and variances between ballet and contemporary dance, in terms of funding levels, prestige and infrastructure, have made it necessary to amend the notion of habitus for this thesis.

For this reason, I have introduced an 'entrepreneurial creative habitus' and a 'cultural intermediary habitus' to reveal the crucial functions of the theatre dance field's value-generating principles. Both concepts have been essential in demonstrating that the participants have internalised economic dispositions together with artistic ones. Furthermore, in order to distinguish between collaborative devising practices and single authorship models in dance production, I have differentiated between an 'individual choreographic' and an 'institutional choreographic habitus'. Together, they have helped to uncover that the interviewees were economically motivated and have employed particular strategies to achieve their economic goals.

Complemented by Pierre Bourdieu's theories of field and capital, they have underlined the significance of the theatre dance field's internal value economy and its essential function as a non-financial value-generating mechanism which cannot be fulfilled by non-specialist outsiders. Considering that dance knowledge is often treated as 'another type of knowledge' (Klein 2007) by many outside of the theatre dance field, achieving acceptance by other dance professionals, or in Bourdieu's words, consecrations by the field's gatekeepers is key to ranking dance artists' artistic expertise and attaching value to the artefacts they produce, undisturbed by financial interests.

Additionally, it has been advantageous that Bourdieu is mindful that idealised belief systems are inextricably intertwined with the field of cultural production:

Those who think in simple alternatives need to be reminded that in these matters absolute freedom, exalted by the defenders of creative spontaneity, belongs only to the naïve and the ignorant. [...] For bold strokes of innovation or revolutionary research to have some chance of even being conceived, it is necessary for them to exist in a potential state at the heart of the system of already realised possibles.

(Bourdieu 1996, p. 235)

In fact, the interplay between habitus, field and capital has been essential in exposing how idealised perceptions of dance form a fundamental value-generating component which dance artists have had to incorporate in their economic strategies. According to Hans Abbing's notion of the 'exceptional economy of the arts', idealisations play a key role in the arts' economy of goods and labour (Abbing 2002; 2004).

### **iii. New Labour's cultural policy rationale as an ideological and temporal focal point**

The main reason for choosing New Labour's cultural policies between 1997 and 2010 as a contextual framework has been the abundance of available policy documents, commissioned reports and scholarly research. Indeed, these

publications have extensively explored the relationship between arts and economics and numerous related factors, ranging from the creative work force to the creative industries' contribution to economic growth. Reviewing these publications has highlighted inconsistencies in the reasoning and approach of the DCMS and ACE. Their careful analysis has also brought to light that there was little appetite under New Labour to scrutinise dance artists' livelihood systems and, especially, the economic activities which sustain them.

Despite disregarding the dance sector, these documents and studies have illustrated that key governmental strategies led to outcomes which contradicted the stated intention of the DCMS that 'the funding system should itself be simpler, less bureaucratic' (DCMS 2001b, p. 15) and that it should free artists from red tape (DCMS 2001b, p. 16). In fact, they have allowed little room for flexible responses to artists' ideas and interests, as the narratives of many interviewees have suggested. For example, strategies such as value amplification, policy attachment and New Public Management systems resulted in an exponentially-increasing administrative workload at all levels of the funding process and related target-driven monitoring systems.

Furthermore, New Labour's policymakers created a closed discursive space which was inhabited by representatives of hub organisations, cultural intermediaries and expert/consultants who reliably amplified predefined governmental values and priorities. Pascal Gielen has observed a similar phenomenon when examining the operations of Flemish dance organisations. They are also finely-tuned to government as their central subsidiser and its ambitions. Gielen notes: 'As a consequence, they are implicitly or explicitly tuned to each other. The selection context partly determines the programming. Artistic choices are compared with and related to the selections of other dance organisations' (Gielen 2005, p. 800).

The DCMS and ACE regularly commissioned expert advisors to report on specialist fields and subject matters. Consultant Susanne Burns, for example,

was commissioned to undertake three key dance reports<sup>29</sup> between 2007 and 2009 (Burns 2007; 2008; Burns & Harrison 2009). At the same time, her website highlights that she also worked for many other dance and arts organisations during this period (Burns 2017). In this respect, she was part of a network of consultant-advocates<sup>30</sup> and think tanks, such as Demos<sup>31</sup> and NESTA's Policy & Research Unit, which advised the DCMS, ACE, local authorities, cultural intermediaries and dance companies.

The echo chamber effect of such close-knit circles of advisors might explain why the inconsistencies embedded in the body of the DCMS's and ACE's policy documents have remained undisputed or were met with little resistance. For example, ACE's manifesto for 2003-2006 *Ambitions for the Arts* (ACE 2003a) declared it would value artists as the 'life source' of ACE's work and promised to 'plac[e] artists at the centre' of their work (ACE 2003a, p. 4). Yet, in the same breath, their funding priorities follow inflexible, remotely-steered templates which evolved around 'measurable "success factors"' (ACE 2003, p. 14). Their policies have been similarly inconsistent in how they link theatre dance artists to notions of self-sufficiency, entrepreneurialism and innovation on the one hand, and threaten to reprimand them if they disobey governmental priorities on the other hand (DCMS 1998a; ACE 2006a). At the same time, complex monitoring and reporting systems have rather suggested that artists were not trusted and, indeed, ACE needed to robustly enforce its targets. Overall, there are significant gaps between the ambitious vision statements which propose to 'free our young creative artists' (DCMS 2001b, p. 31) and the dire working conditions reported by respondents.

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<sup>29</sup> Susanne Burns was commissioned by the Higher Education Academy Palatine (2007), DTAP (2008) and ACE (2009). Furthermore, she worked for Youth Dance England, Ludus Dance, Merseyside Dance Initiative and Paul Hamlyn Foundation amongst many others (Burns 2017).

<sup>30</sup> Example of consultant-advocates are Hasan Bakhshi, Director of Creative Industries in NESTA's Policy & Research Unit and Kate Oakley who was commissioned by ACE in 2005, and by NESTA in 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Demos was founded in 1993 and describes itself as a cross-party think tank whose research has traditionally focused on social policy, health provision and economic issues. Its close links to New Labour are evidenced by numerous staff who have moved from DEMOS to work for the New Labour governments and vice versa (DEMOS 2017).



### **3. Emergent themes and issues**

The thesis's key research findings have addressed themes and issues which so far have been absent from dance scholarship and governmental research reports. Overall, they have confirmed that unique infrastructural and economic conditions characterise the contemporary theatre dance sector which have affected the economic conduct of the participants. These have comprised a distinct labour market with employment patterns and career progression routes which in many aspects, but not all, differs from other art forms and dance genres.

#### **i. Dance artists' economic competencies and behaviours**

The research outcomes have demonstrated that dance artists have drawn on specific economic competencies and behaviours to sustain their practice and ensure subsistence. The respondents have employed three key economic competencies: they have cross-subsidised their artistic practice and negotiated barter arrangements. Furthermore, they have pooled financial and non-financial sources with others for mutual benefit. These competencies have been accompanied by economic behaviours which I have termed 'wishing and hoping', 'adaptive resilience', 'concealment' and 'utilising multi-purpose dance myths'. Summarised under the term 'creative entrepreneurial habitus', these economic strategies have provided key reference points throughout the thesis when examining how dance artists have navigated labour markets, dance production and artistic and economic ownership in theatre dance and the creative industries.

#### *Economic competencies*

Dance artists' economic competencies and behaviours have been central to the infrastructure and economy of the theatre dance field. Pre-vocational and vocational training institutions as well as dance companies and organisations have benefitted from the participants' economic activities. Dance educators and established dance artists have provided artistic and economic role models for students and trainee dance artists. They have served as mentors and guides who have introduced the participants to a particular economic conduct during their vocational training and the early-career stages. The interviewees

internalised economic dispositions together with artistic ones in settings such as classes, rehearsals and performances, which are commonly only associated with artistic practice. They observed how senior theatre dance representatives managed their work lives and the majority, but not all, acted on their dance-specific and financial advice. These respondents adopted the artistic and economic strategies suggested to them in order to further their artistic development and to overcome financial constraints.

Interviews and participant observations have revealed that cross-subsidisation lies at the core of dance artists' economic activities. Their ability to self-fund their artistic practice has been imperative to manage low-paid dance jobs and unpaid self-directed projects. As such, this economic competency has also made a significant contribution to the overall financial status of the contemporary theatre dance sector: a fact which is often overlooked. Similarly, barter economic arrangements and pooling capital for mutual benefit have been competencies which have underpinned entrepreneurial activities, such as dance artists starting their first projects or microbusinesses. They were also testament to dance artists' entrepreneurial aptitude which was no different to entrepreneurs in other fields, who have received more recognition for their entrepreneurial ambitions, such as in music and digital ventures. Similar to producers in these fields, dance artists during the start-up stage of their projects and companies have operated as creative entrepreneurs 'sans capital' (Scott 2012).

#### *Related economic behaviours*

Related behavioural patterns have usually accompanied these economic competencies. The interviewees' wishes and hopes to realise their goals have helped them to sustain years of self-funding their own artistic projects and to overcome inevitable artistic and economic setbacks. For example, their wishes and hopes have typically revolved around developing certain technical and expressive skills, achieving artistic recognition and finding employment, which has motivated them to invest time, effort and money into achieving their goals. They have also driven their ambitions to achieve and maintain a standard of excellence despite consistently receiving little recognition and no financial

rewards for their efforts. On the other side of the coin, the findings have illustrated the respondents' extraordinary ability to adapt to changing and often challenging circumstances. Their adaptive capacity was highly developed and the participants were experts in accommodating artistic, infrastructural and policy changes. However, the research has also highlighted limitations when the obstacles to overcome have been too many and had to be dealt with too frequently. Importantly, the respondents' adaptive and resilient dispositions on their own, or linked to economic competencies, have not enabled them to overcome all of the disruptions and economic hardships caused by New Labour's interventions in the contemporary theatre dance field.

The respondents have concealed economically-motivated actions to maximise financial returns, as these would have contradicted beliefs held by the manifold constituencies external to the field, such as policymakers, funders, cultural intermediaries and audiences about the 'exceptional economy of the arts' (Abbing 2004). Their behaviour has highlighted that the use of multi-purpose dance myths has a significant and established value-generating function in the dance economy. At the same time, the power of collectively-shared values and beliefs about artists and art, even if they do not reflect artists' working lives, has offered some commonality when the respondents have tried to meet the manifold and complex demands of different value economies.

Furthermore, myths and idealisations are effective marketing ploys which overcome otherwise existing boundaries between specialist and non-specialists. However, romanticised perceptions about artistic labour not only conceal that dance artists are motivated by financial rewards; they also draw the public and scholarly attention away from the difficult reality of dance artists' livelihoods. For example, New Labour's policymakers employed idealised notions of artists' autonomy and their fulfilled creative lifestyles to promote an alternative model of work which is less reliant on state support (McRobbie 2007; Von Osten in Raunig *et al.* 2011) with little concern for the significant drawbacks.

## **ii. Operating in different value economies**

The respondents have operated in three distinct value economies, each with a unique value-generating mechanism. These have encompassed the contemporary theatre dance field's internal value economy, the economy outside of theatre dance, and frameworks determined by governmental policies and legislation. The respondents' narratives have underlined that they view artistic and economic spheres as interrelated and have simultaneously managed expectations associated with theatre dance, secondary employment and governmental interventions. Poignantly, they have developed and maintained artistic and economic relationships with a range of other artists, cultural intermediaries, employers and funders. In order to facilitate the diverse range of individual and institutional interests, they have drawn on their social capital, networking and communication skills which constitutes their cultural intermediary habitus.

The thesis's findings have revealed that employers of dance artists in theatre dance have routinely relied on unpaid or underpaid labour as part of their business models. The respondents have experienced the theatre dance field's occupational cultures as accepting of inadequate working conditions and levels of pay which have changed very little since the 1970s (Devlin 1989; Miller 1999; Siddall 2001; Burns & Harrison 2009; Aujla & Farrer 2016). All of the study's participants have generated financial capital through secondary employment to self-fund their artistic practice and to counterbalance unpaid and underpaid artistic labour.

At the same time, the value-generating principles of the theatre dance field have been central to the interviewees' artistic and economic activities. Their creative entrepreneurial habitus has been essential in meeting the reversed economy's priorities while accommodating demands from secondary jobs and governmental policies. They have been keenly aware that their status in theatre dance and their earning potential in secondary dance-related work fields was contingent upon accruing physical, cultural and symbolic capital, such as technical and expressive skills and expertise, prestige and acceptance. It has therefore been imperative for the participants to manage different value

economies in such a manner that they could sustain their artistic practice and ensure their subsistence. This meant that they have had to conceal economically-motivated activities in order to meet the expectations of gatekeepers, funders and audiences alike.

Furthermore, the status of respondents' expertise and skill base as 'another form of knowledge' and its ephemeral and unstable qualities intersects with their economic conduct. The interviewees have pointed out that they have encountered numerous incidents when non-specialists responded reservedly to them as dance professionals and they had to overcome ignorant and prejudiced assumptions about dance as an embodied and theoretical knowledge base. These have included funders, cultural intermediaries, employers and the general public alike. They have also highlighted that injuries, changing aesthetic styles and ageing are further contributory factors which have affected their physical and cultural capital and which have played a significant role in how they have accumulated and converted dance knowledge into financial capital.

Significantly, the participants indicated that under New Labour, funders and cultural intermediaries were more interested in their instrumental contributions to regeneration and economic growth than their art for art's sake activities. The creators in the sample noted how funding priorities, such as making dance more accessible, together with quantifiable targets, have shaped the aesthetics, content and presentation formats of pieces to increase the chances of receiving funding. According to the interviewees, this has led, for example, to an increase in dance works which have been made for outdoor spaces.

In this context, the findings have also revealed that New Labour's interventions have inadvertently undermined the participants' economic and artistic activities by ignoring the value-generating principles central to dance. Their narratives have illustrated that by emphasising artists' instrumental contributions and related new skill sets in teaching and facilitating dance activities in education and community settings, policymakers have devalued dance artists' technical and expressive core skills. Furthermore, they have reduced artists' opportunities to generate a secondary income without investing in new skills, for example

teaching qualifications. The exponentially-increased number of university-trained dance professionals entering the labour market, following New Labour's interventions in the education sector, has further enhanced this effect, an observation which has been supported by sociologist Pierre-Michel Menger: '[T]he number of individuals who enter the system of intermittent employment is increasing far more rapidly than the volume of work they have to share among themselves' (Menger 2005). According to many of the participants, these developments have resulted in lower professional standards and an increased competition for work in dance-related work fields, lower wages and shorter contracts. In addition, power imbalances in partnership projects have had a detrimental effect on the production of more experimental work as dance artists have found it difficult to determine their content autonomously. Instead, they have often had to follow the directions of non-dance specialists and their various agendas linked to education, regeneration and community cohesion.

Notably, on a larger scale, New Labour's interventions have resulted in a dance landscape which has become ever more characterised by a few hub organisations alongside large numbers of emerging individual artists and small-scale companies. The interviewees have expressed significant concerns about this development which has seen mid-career and mature artists and their microbusinesses gradually being pushed out of the theatre dance field. Consequently, according to the respondents' observations, many artists have left the profession once they reached the mid-career stage, if not earlier. Their observations have been supported by cultural policy analysts Peter Stark, Christopher Gordon and arts consultant David Powell who highlight in their independently-funded report *Hard Facts To Swallow* (2014b) that since 2007, ACE has systematically withdrawn financial support from small-scale organisations. They point out:

We note the implementation of an apparently undeclared policy substantially to reduce the number of awards for organisations receiving extended security of funding up to £100,000 per annum. There has been a net loss of 352 such organisations since 2007-08. Such small organisations, typically lightweight, flexible and affordable

and often specialist and culturally diverse have a particular capacity to contribute to artistic innovation and to work with local communities across the country.

(Stark *et al.* 2014b, p. 2)

Unavoidably, the asymmetrical power balance between hub organisations and small-scale dance companies together with prescriptive partnership agreements has stifled experimentation and individual artistic voices. ACE's funding strategy has furthermore made it difficult to identify dance artists' original contributions and thus to allocate financial and cultural value to their specialist knowledge base. This has been especially pertinent as silent clauses and the complexities of intellectual property rights legislation have disadvantaged individual dance artists and small-scale dance companies. The many dance microbusinesses which have been incorporated using *company limited by guarantee* (Ltd) with charitable status as their business model of choice also reflect this imbalance. Without wishing to get sidetracked by speculations about the reasoning which has underpinned these individual choices, it is however reasonable to suggest that other business forms, such as cooperatives and community interest companies (CIC), might have been more appropriate to reflect the business interactions of entrepreneurs 'sans capital' (Scott 2012) who, at least during the start-up phase, share their capital for mutual benefit.

### **iii. Negotiating fluid notions of sharing, collaborating and owning dance knowledge**

The interviewees have mostly disregarded legal aspects of ownership in artistic and dance-related theatre dance production in favour of implicit contractual agreements. The findings have revealed a number of contributory factors which have played a part in bringing about this stance. Firstly, dance knowledge is traditionally passed on from one generation of dance artists to the next in immediate and embodied interactions between learners and teachers/mentors, rehearsal directors, choreographers and peers. While financial transactions accompany this process, for example dance students paying for their training and many professional dance artists self-funding their artistic projects, they

remain in the background. Following the logic of the restricted field, the participants have paid more attention to the physical, cultural and symbolic capital derived from passing on and learning technical and expressive skills and repertoire of dance works. This has been evident on many occasions during the fieldwork when teachers, choreographers and performers 'forget the time' and classes and rehearsals vastly overrun their original schedules.

Another contributory factor has been the group-based creating and sharing of dance knowledge in companies and dance projects. This practice has involved teams of artists, and possibly even amateur collaborators, when making and rehearsing original and other content. Generally, the participants have not expected to be credited and legally acknowledged for their original contributions in these contexts. I have identified this practice of pooling resources for mutual benefit as one of the key economic competencies which increasingly lies at the core of many artistic projects. However, the fluidity of collaborative forms of knowledge production together with the transient qualities of dance artists' embodied capital have made it difficult to identify the extent to which dance artists have contributed to original content. Unsurprisingly, collaborative devising methods are also not adequately covered by current intellectual property rights legislation, which is inclined towards the single authorship model. Despite New Labour's focus on the benefits of exploiting intellectual property, copyright protection for artistic content has weakened (Oberholzer-Gee & Strumpf 2010) throughout their time in government. However, these issues have not only affected dance, as concerns with file sharing in music, film and literature have shown.

Furthermore, legal and administrative practices in the theatre dance sector have discouraged the interviewees, individually or as a group of collaborators, from asserting their ownership rights. Silent clauses in employment contracts have led to performers relinquishing intellectual property and non-property rights without actually being aware of doing so. But also when such contractual agreements have not been applied, participants rarely have been asked to give permission to use images and other materials for marketing purposes, for instance. The findings have highlighted a culture which is neglectful of dance



artists' moral rights and of the legal requirement to ask dance artists to consent to the use of their photos and filmed footage. There seems to be very little or no awareness about the unlawfulness of such practices. It thus came as no surprise when I appeared in a trailer advertising a programme of open classes for professional artists (Dance City 2016) containing footage filmed during the fieldwork, for which I had not given consent. Similar issues relating to ownership have also extended to include the participants' secondary jobs and original content which they have devised for workshops and dance classes. Interviewees have noted that host teachers and facilitators in education and community settings often copied and reused materials without their permission and showed little concern for potential breaches of copyright.

The thesis has also highlighted that sectorial practices and occupational cultures in theatre dance do not invite dance artists to participate in its governance. Consequently, they are not adequately represented on boards and interview panels. The respondents have reported many incidents which suggest a democratic deficit when it comes to who decides on the matters which concern their professional lives. These include, for example, their input in deciding on how budgets of dance agencies are spent, curating and programming, and their involvement in selecting artistic and executive leaders as well as other staff in dance organisations.

The participants have also spoken about a lack of professional courtesy and respect amongst company directors, funders and cultural intermediaries, who might be supportive of some artists, but who showed little interest in and care for others who were not associated with them. Indeed, the participants' narratives have suggested a dominating presence of almost impenetrable alliances between senior members of ACE, influential chairpersons and artistic directors of established dance companies and organisations. Their comments have described shielded zones of concerted dance sectorial interests which have been hermetically sealed to the vast majority of dance artists.

Many observers have also suggested that joined-up and prescriptive governmental funding priorities and monitoring regimes introduced under New

Labour have consolidated unequal power structures in the arts and culture sector (Stark *et al.* 2014; Hewison 2014; Stafford-Clarke 2014). For example, Stark *et al.* describe the relationships between ACE and some of its clients as ‘an increasingly closed system that operates with insufficient transparency. Too often there appear to be disguised agendas that benefit a small minority of established, and most commonly London-based arts organisation’ (Stark *et al.* 2014, p. 3).

#### **4. Outlook**

I maintain that in order to achieve sustainable sectorial growth and development of the art form, it is of paramount importance to address dance artists’ working conditions and levels of pay. Dance artists’ economic activities and working conditions will have to receive further scholarly attention to gain a deeper and more detailed understanding of individual dance artists’ economic activities and the theatre dance sector’s economy. While the thesis has established that dance artists are economically motivated and employ specific financial strategies to achieve monetary rewards, it has also just scratched at the surface of this subject area. Indeed, much more research is needed in order to follow up questions which the thesis’s findings have raised, for example how dance artists determine the transactional value when they and their collaborators pool their capital to achieve a project or start a company. It would also be of interest to gain a more detailed understanding of the different economic competencies and behaviours used by dance artists. Furthermore, it would be useful to know more about how governmental subsidies and dance artists’ investment proportionally support the theatre dance sector and to what extent these monies benefit dance artists. Another area of interest would be to develop a reliable framework to collate quantitative data about dance artists and the overall sector.

The experiences of the study’s participants have drawn attention to numerous conflicting and dysfunctional aspects of New Labour’s initiatives. They have also illustrated a lack of knowledge about and concern for artists and creative workers. The thesis has furthermore provided ample evidence of how New Labour’s interventions have polarised the contemporary theatre dance sector into winners and losers. The asymmetrical power balance between hub

organisations and established companies, such as Sadler's Wells<sup>32</sup>, Random Dance and Studio Wayne McGregor<sup>33</sup>, and freelancing dance artists and their small-scale microbusinesses has continued after New Labour's time in office. ACE's funding cycles 2011-14 and 2015-2018 have seen the merging of Dance UK, the Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD), Youth Dance England (YDE) and the National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) 'to create a unified "go-to industry body"' (Dance UK 2015). Furthermore, small-scale dance organisations, such as Greenwich Dance, Merseyside Dance Initiative, Dance Manchester, and Tilted Productions amongst many others, have seen the loss of their NPO status or have had their funding substantially reduced (ACE 2017). Another phenomenon which requires our attention is the growing number of companies which work with unpaid amateurs instead of paid professional performers to stage professional dance pieces. While these productions, such as Ballet Lorent's *Rapunzel* (2012), *Snow White* (2015) and *Rumpelstiltskin* (2017) (Ballet Lorent 2017) are often labelled 'participatory' they are marketed and traded in the same manner as the company's professional repertoire.

A change of attitudes and approaches toward the economy of the dance sector and, in particular, the working conditions of dance artists, is imperative to prevent continuing to repeat the mistakes of the past. The thesis has highlighted that the economic circumstances and pay levels of dance artists need urgent attention. The sector has undoubtedly grown since the 1970s, as noted by Nicola Miller in 1999 and Susanne Burns and Patricia Harrison in 2009 who have referred to dance as 'an art form in growth' (Burns & Harrison 2009, p. 13). However, while ACE's budget for contemporary theatre dance and the numbers of contemporary dance companies in receipt of state funding have increased, there is little evidence that the conditions for dance artists have improved. Indeed, the thesis has demonstrated that dance artists have not benefitted from the significant increase in funding for the arts and culture sector

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<sup>32</sup> Sadler's Wells is a multiveneue organisation which hosts resident dance artists and companies and the National Youth Dance Company. There are plans to develop another venue in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (Sadler's Wells 2017; Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park 2016)

<sup>33</sup> In 2017 Wayne McGregor opened what his company website refers to 'as a new world class creative space' in the former Olympic television centre (Wayne McGregor 2017).

during New Labour's time in office. Furthermore, numerous reports examining the dance sector's infrastructural development over the last forty years have raised consistently similar concerns (Devlin 1989; Miller 1999; Siddall 2001; Freakley 2002; Freakley & Neelands 2003; Burns 2007; Burns & Harrison 2009; Aujla & Farrer 2016). It is thus not surprising how few dance artists are currently represented on dance organisations' boards of directors, advisory boards and staff recruitment panels. Any discussions and decision-making processes about the future of dance and the governance of dance companies and organisations will therefore need to involve all concerned which includes dance artists at all career stages, alongside theatre dance's senior representatives, funders, cultural intermediaries and policymakers. It is crucial that dance artists participate in decisions which might change their work field's circumstances.

Furthermore, as long as dance artists' economic activities and entrepreneurial efforts are not taken into consideration, policies and funding will not be as effective as they could be. Funders, cultural intermediaries and taxpayers need to be better-informed about how dance artists generate cultural and financial value, and how these values contribute to support the dance sector and generate economic rewards. This is to ensure that cultural policies do not have unintentional side effects and, as in New Labour's case, devalue dance artists' skill base and weaken their position in the market place by interfering with central value-generating mechanisms.

It is important to remind us that the majority of dance pieces would not have been made without dance artists self-funding their production costs. All involved need to be more aware that dance artists contribute financially to the dance sector and to adjust their engagement with them accordingly. For example, administrative protocols which accompany funding applications and funding decisions should recognise dance artists as co-funders in the overall funding mix and treat them accordingly. As such, they are much-needed financial partners instead of needy recipients of state support. In this context, it would be helpful if dance artists' direct (financial capital) and indirect (social, cultural and symbolic capital) investment does not remain hidden in the 'in-kind support' section of project budgets. Instead, I would suggest routinely sharing such

information in programme notes or similar. Likewise, dance artists' significant economic contribution to dance agencies, venues and other theatre dance organisations should be publicised in this manner. A further step in this direction will be to ensure that current legislation which protects dance artists' intellectual property and non-property rights is adhered to by all parties involved in these transactions.

Ultimately, it is not sufficient for dance artists to be entrepreneurial in their outlook to overcome outdated occupational cultures and the disruptive fall out of ill-advised governmental interventions. There is still a stigma attached to dance artists who present themselves as economically motivated and entrepreneurial. Funding criteria and policy interventions moreover need to be carefully considered to avoid inadvertently streamlining content, encouraging risk-adverse practices and thus limiting dance artists' ability to experiment and invest in developing their artistic practice and effective financial income sources. This might include generating income from spillover effects and through exploitation of intellectual property rights. I suggest that if the contemporary theatre dance sector is to move forward artistically and economically, discussions about the future of theatre dance between artists, cultural intermediaries, funders and policymakers will rely on further independent scholarly research. It will help to position the economy of the sector and dance artists' livelihood systems in a more prominent place. This hopefully will increase the willingness of all concerned to engage with these matters and raise the quality of such efforts.

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