

Labor market intermediaries aiming at a flexibility/security balance

THE SMartBE'S EXAMPLE -
A MUTUAL SOCIETY FOR ARTISTS



Bounded career

Intermediated career



Boundaryless career



New ways of steering careers (1/2)


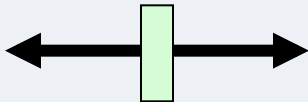
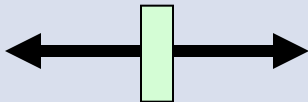
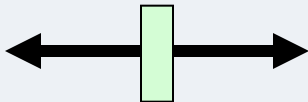


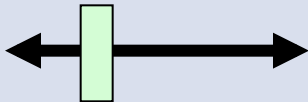
- Emergence of third-party career management devices, seeking to relieve individuals of the administrative difficulties linked to discontinuous professional paths and to smooth over their professional transitions
- Different taxonomies of such intermediaries :

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Benner (2003) based on identity | Private sector intermediaries | Membership-based intermediaries | Public intermediaries |
| Bonet et al. (2013) based on HR functions | Information provider | Matchmaker | Administrator |

- Unidimensional!

New ways of steering careers (2/2)

- Our ambition = to create a multidimensional grid
- Methodology:
 - ✓ In depth case studies at the interorganizational level → selection criteria :
 - 1) Triangular employment relationships
 - 2) Combining flexibility and security at work
 - 3) Not leaded by public policies
 - ✓ Comparison of cases studies → emergence of discriminant characteristics
 - ✓ Return in the literature to “test” these characteristics
 - ✓ Creation of two ideal-types

| Criteria | Ideal-type 1 | Emergent Initiatives | Ideal-type 2 |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Status (Benner, 2003) | Commercial firms |  | Membership-based initiatives |
| Justification of the intermediation (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991) | The Market World (opportunities) |  | The Civic World (general interest) or The Industrial World (efficiency) |
| Employment security (Wilthagen & Tros, 2004) | Social rights |  | Above social rights |
| HRM (Bonet <i>et al.</i> , 2013) | The intermediary = the matchmaker |  | The worker = the matchmaker |
| Employer responsibility (Davidov, 2004) | Clear boundaries |  | Blurred boundaries |
| Segmentation of the labor market (Doeringer & Piore, 1971) | High |  | Process of desegmentation |
| « Innovativeness » on the labour market (Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca, 2009) | Reinforcement |  | Structural transformation |

An empirical case : SMartBe

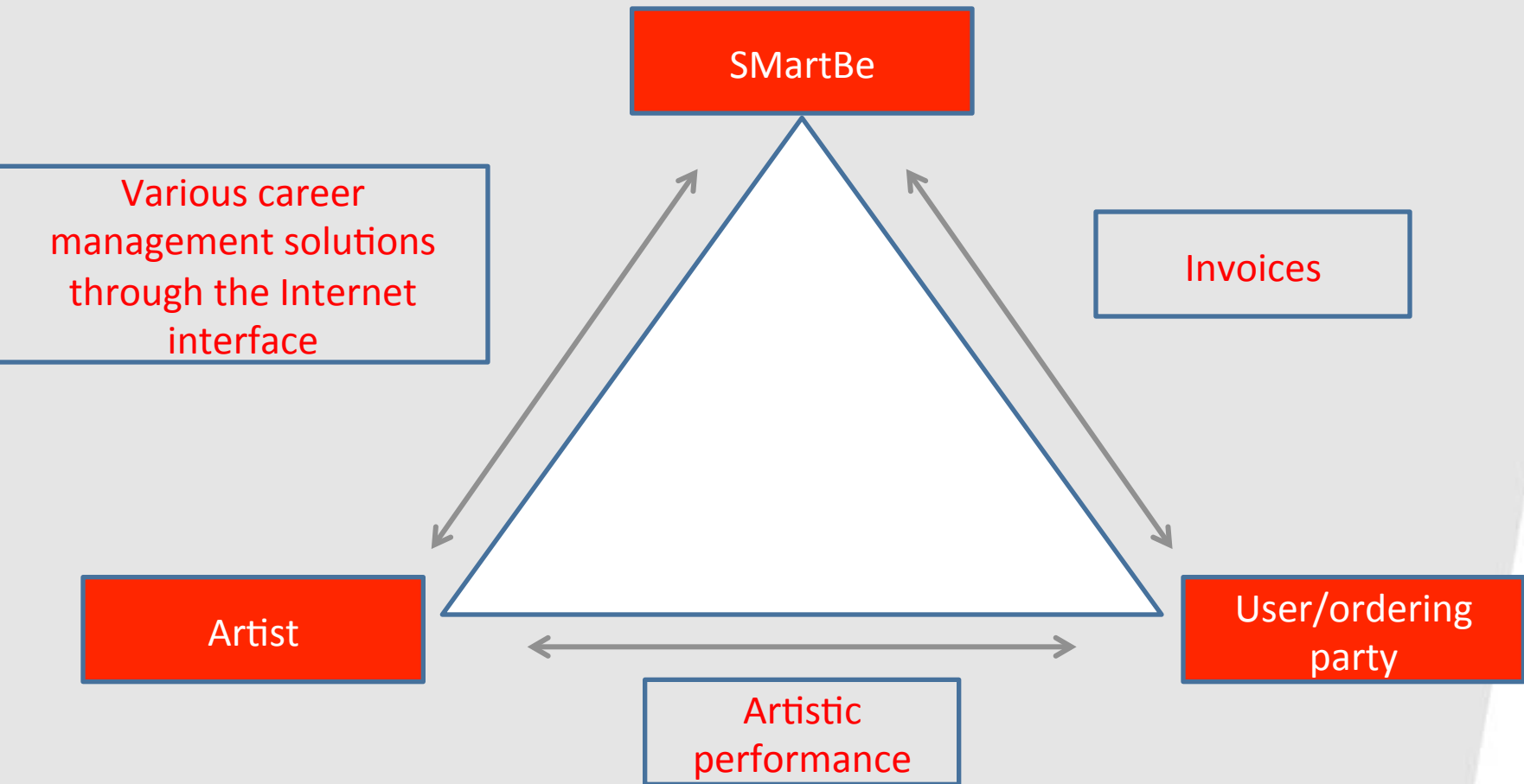
Artistic sector flexible and short-term contracts



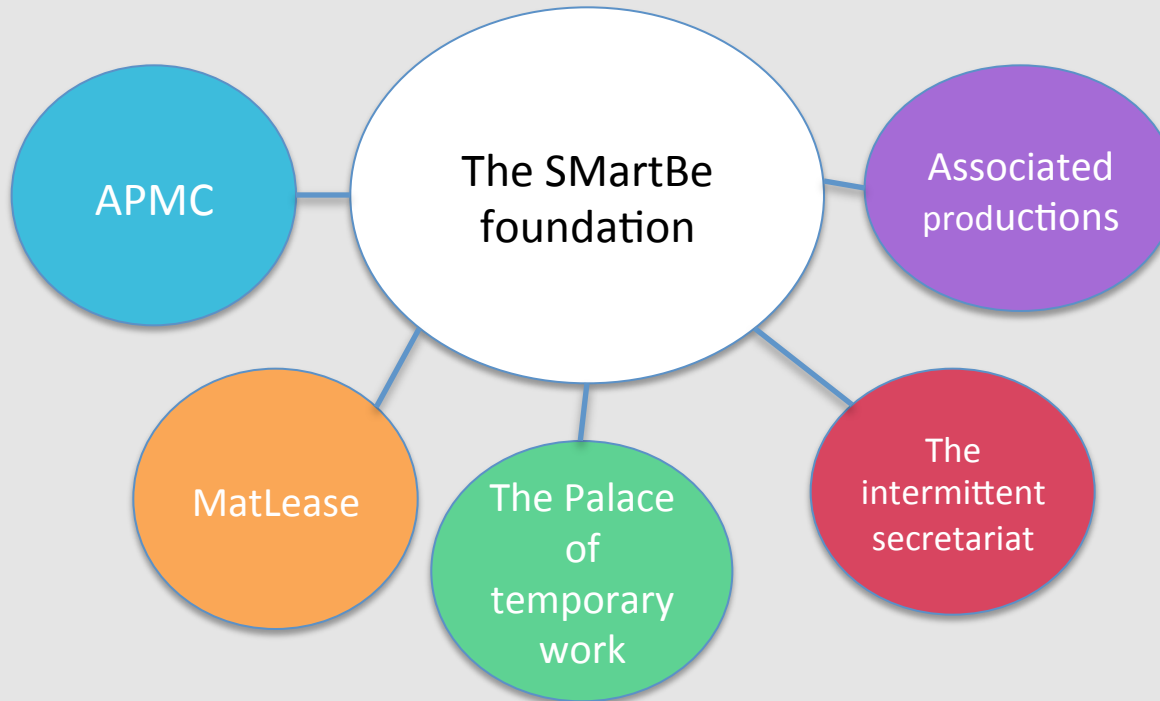
A brief presentation

- Foundation created in 1998 by two entrepreneurs
- Intermediary role, managing contracts negotiated between artists and ordering parties
- Thanks to a user-friendly internet platform, allowing workers to input directly the data related to their professional activities, SMartBe Foundation provides an integrated device for artists regardless of their changing statuses
- Self-financed (commissions on transactions + contributions from members)
- High visibility in medias and academic conferences around flexicurity
- More than 40,000 members
- International developments (currently in France and Sweden)

SmartBe, a third party in the artist's career management



SmartBe: organizational structure



- An association that supports, protects and defends artists' interests
- A cooperative firm that lends professional materials to artists
- A temporary work agency that engages artists through employment contracts
- An association that works as a third-party payer thanks to the artist specific status
- A non-profit organization that permits artists to accumulate contracts and other funding sources, to take certain professional expenses into account, to hire personnel and to build projects on a wider scale

| | Content | Who is the employer? | Artist | Activities | User (<u>ex</u> : theater) |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|
| Palace of temporary work (PTW) | Classical temporary work agency | PTW = legal employer | Employed by PTW | Short terms activities, student jobs, etc. | Receives a bill |
| Intermittent secretary (IS) | Third-party payer | Artist specific status → the artist sells services to a client and he/she receives money for it. The IS takes in charge the administration of this contract so that the artist can benefit from the social security system, without employment relationship. | | | Receives a bill |
| Associated Productions (AP) | Non-profit organization that hires artists | AP = legal employer | Administrator of his own entity within AP → works « as » an employee | Long term, multiple or collective activities | Receives a bill and/or buys a work of art |



Research questions

- Are militant third-party career management devices likely to transform the current labour market regulation modes?
- Reference to the institutionalist theory (Greenwood *et al.*, 2002; Lawrence *et al.*, 2009)
 - To what extent may such devices be considered as institutional innovations?
 - Do these innovations contribute to balanced and lasting evolutions of the labour market?

SMartBe, an institutional innovation ?

(Greenwood, Suddaby, Hinings, 2002)

*Precipitating jolts : events
destabilize established
practices*

Multiple tensions around the artistic status, exclusion of an unemployed writer from the welfare benefits, creation of the national Platform for artists, adoption of the artist status

SMartBe, an institutional innovation ?

(Greenwood, Suddaby, Hinings, 2002)

Precipitating jolts : events destabilize established practices

Multiple tensions around the artistic status, exclusion of an unemployed writer from the welfare benefits, creation of the national Platform for artists, adoption of the artist status



Deinstitutionalization : new players introduce new ideas and disturb the field consensus

Two newcomers developing a full range of services coping with the administrative complexity of the artistic work

SMartBe, an institutional innovation ?

(Greenwood, Suddaby, Hinings, 2002)

Precipitating jolts : events destabilize established practices

Multiple tensions around the artistic status, exclusion of an unemployed writer from the welfare benefits, creation of the national Platform for artists, adoption of the artist status



Deinstitutionalization : new players introduce new ideas and disturb the field consensus

Two newcomers developing a full range of services coping with the administrative complexity of the artistic work

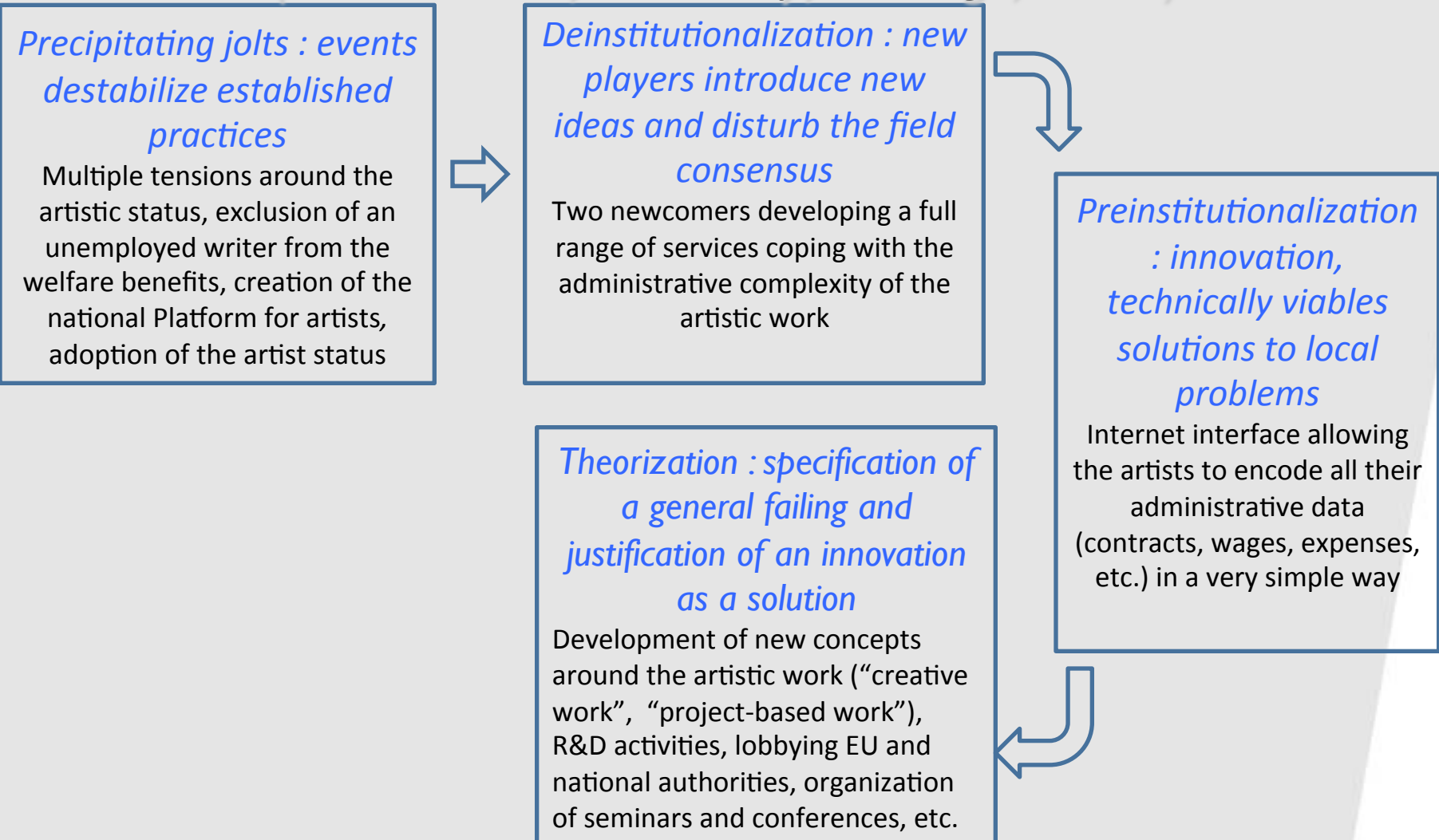


Preinstitutionalization : innovation, technically viable solutions to local problems

Internet interface allowing the artists to encode all their administrative data (contracts, wages, expenses, etc.) in a very simple way

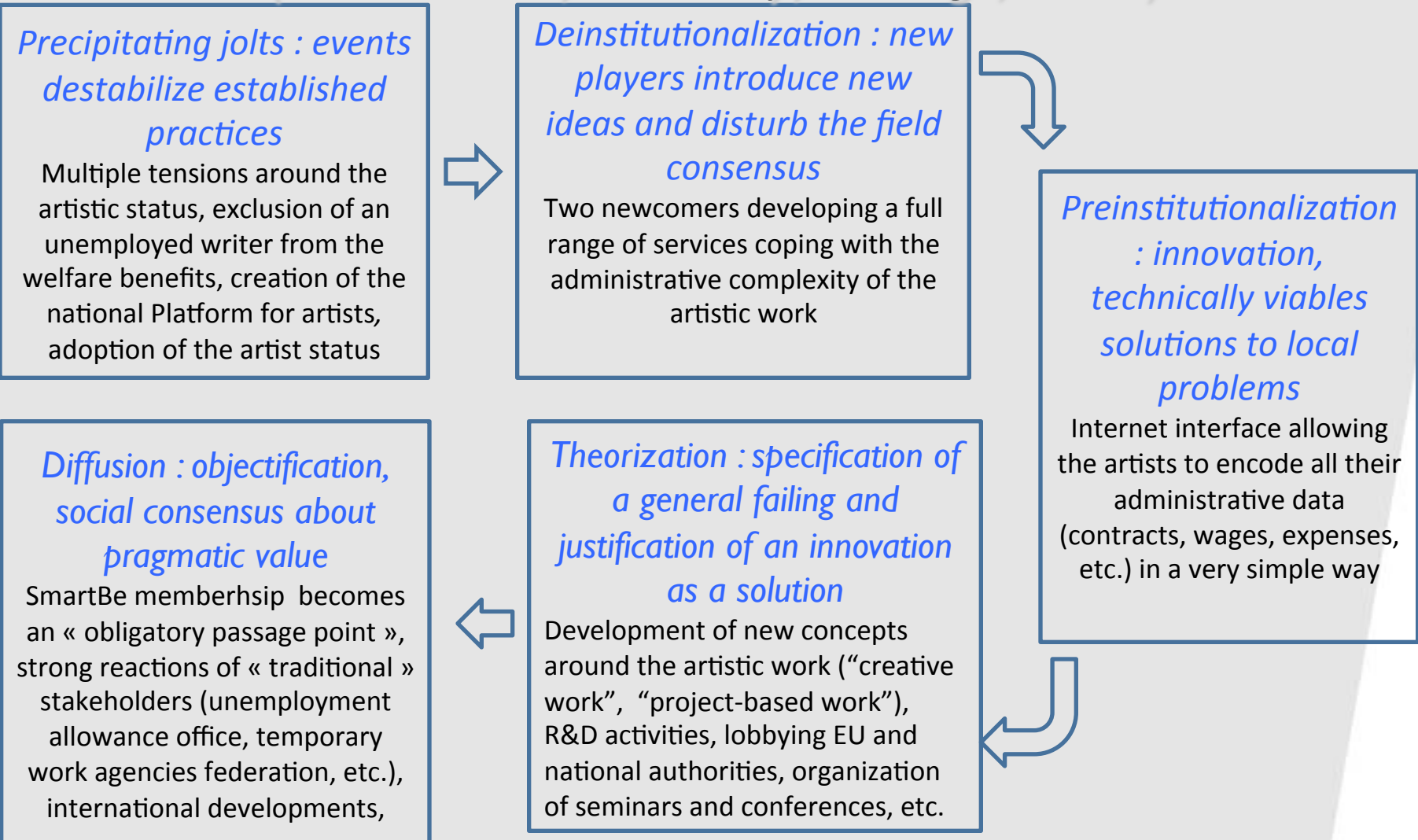
SMartBe, an institutional innovation ?

(Greenwood, Suddaby, Hinings, 2002)



SMartBe, an institutional innovation ?

(Greenwood, Suddaby, Hinings, 2002)



SMartBe, a contribution to balanced and lasting evolutions of the labour market?

- A growing influence among labour market policy makers
- The Internet interface: an “obligatory passage point” (*Akrich, Callon & Latour, 2006*) for artists
- A subtle shift in the career management patterns: from « securing the employment relationship » to « securing professional transitions » by guaranteeing a continuity in terms of income and social security rights
- Towards a « commodification » of the artistic work (Adorno, 1991)?
 - Lack of differentiation of artistic work activities \Leftrightarrow “project-based work”
 - Homogeneous of the various statuses through the Internet interface (“as if” employees)
 - Growing dissociation of legal and *de facto* responsibilities in the employment relationship (employer \neq user) \Rightarrow self-management of the career

Conclusions

- SMartBe may be viewed as a vector of institutional innovation on the Belgian labour market:
 - Introducing temporal continuity in discontinuous paths, “as if” the artist was employed (→ securing professional transitions)
 - Enlarging its intermediary role to all project-based activities
 - Securisation vs commodification?
- In case of commodification, intermediaries undoubtedly facilitate the administrative aspects of professional transitions but do not necessarily change the precariousness of boundaryless careers, that remain mostly self-managed
- These provisional conclusions must be validated through further analyses of other third-party career management devices (employer groups, co-sourcing, etc.)