



THE REACTION OF ENTERTAINMENT WORKERS TO THE COVID-19

A cooperative case study

Francesca Martinelli, PhD

*7th Conference of the Regulating for Decent Work Network
COVID-19 and the world of work
Towards a human-centred recovery
International Labour Organization
Geneva, Switzerland
6-9 July 2021*

@centrostudidoc

- ◆Research question and methodology
- ◆Main features of Italian entertainment workers
- ◆The role of entertainment workers'-owned cooperatives in Italy
- ◆The case of Doc Servizi
- ◆The alliance between cooperation and unions in Italy
- ◆The impact of COVID-19 on the Italian entertainment industry
- ◆The Italian government's response to the effect of COVID-19 pandemic and the reaction of entertainment workers
- ◆The commitment of Doc Servizi to the entertainment sector during the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆Concluding remarks

Research question and methodology



Were the Covid-19 support measures of the Italian Government effective for entertainment workers? How did they react to the effects of the pandemic on their work? Are there specific examples of structured and organized actions of entertainment workers?

- ♦ Few research and reports at the international and national level dedicated to the effect of Covid-19 on entertainment workers, and few reports focus on direct workers' reactions (see ILO COOP)
- ♦ Statistical and general data come from national repositories (Italian National Institute of Statistics, ISTAT, and Italian Social Security Institution, INPS) and institutions of the entertainment field
- ♦ One year of field study based on observant participation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis

Main features of Italian entertainment workers



Artists are the first gig workers

- ♦ *Multiple clients and multiple contracts, the impossibility to perform the same show in the same place for long periods*
- ♦ *Undeclared work (4 billions euros only in the live music)*
- ♦ *Economic difficulties*
- ♦ *Non-standard workers with lack of social protection*
- ♦ *Scarce unionization of workers*



The role of entertainment workers'-owned cooperatives in Italy



Decent work is applied by law

In Italy, since the '80s artists create worker cooperatives to obtain better working conditions

♦ as members

- Achieve goals they could not reach alone
- Participate democratically to the governance ("One member, one vote")
- Become entrepreneurs

♦ as workers

- Access to social protection schemes of employees (family and sick leave, health insurance, unemployment benefits)
- Work in legality and safety
- Union rights

But how to combine this double nature of the worker cooperative with the activities of artists, who are used to work with a very high level of autonomy?

The role of entertainment workers'-owned cooperatives in Italy



Self-management cooperative

The third ingredient:

Autonomy in the management of the activity

- ◆ Freedom in the management of activity (where, when, with whom, etc.) and in finding clients
- ◆ Each worker's income is calculated on the basis of the actual income generated
- ◆ Fixed-cost services shared by all members
- ◆ This model has also attracted other figures used to work with high level of autonomy (e.g. riders, IT experts, journalists, etc.)

In 2019, Italy had more than 80 self-management coops



The case of Doc Servizi



Doc Servizi and its network



Since 1990

7 societies (joint coop group)

1 foundation

70 millions €

8.400 members

34 branches in Italy

1 branch in Paris

(numbers 2019)

“We are professionals who run their own cooperative business to be part of a network. We created innovative tools, platforms and services to get more benefits and protection.”



The case of Doc Servizi



Promotion of members' activity

Services

- ◆ Lifelong learning training courses
- ◆ Tax, legal and social security advice
- ◆ Network of professionals (communities)
- ◆ Call for tender, foreign, marketing, press offices
- ◆ Marketplace
- ◆ Travel agency
- ◆ Independent label
- ◆ Management and booking agency

The digital platform

- ◆ Highly technological digital platform
- ◆ In house technology
- ◆ Based on safety, transparency, trust, quality
- ◆ Tool for self-management
- ◆ Support the connection with clients

The alliance between cooperation and unions in Italy



First achievements

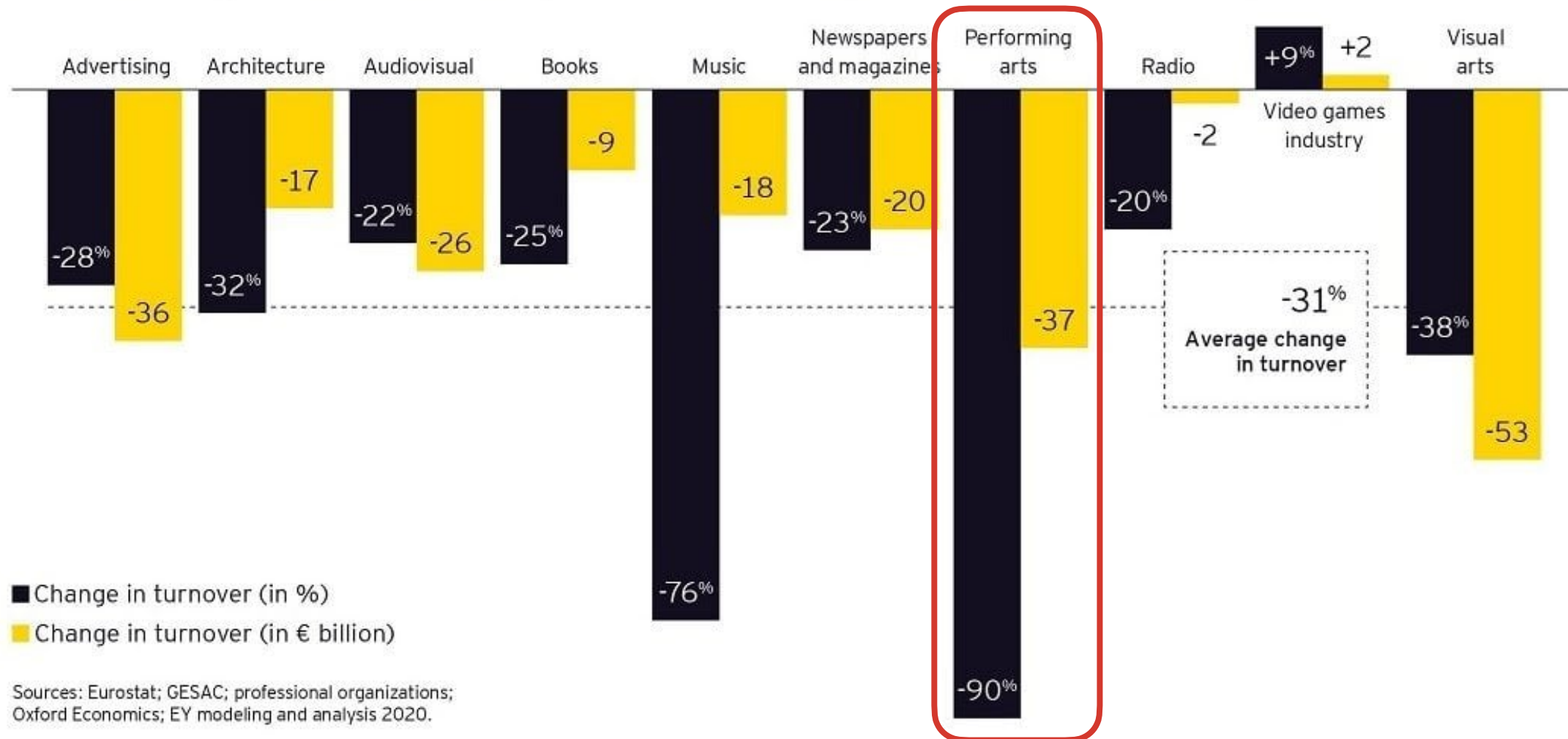
Two fatal accidents of stage technicians in Trieste in 2011 and Reggio Calabria in 2012 are at the origin of the social mobilization of workers of Doc Servizi and entertainment cooperatives (“Table for legality and safety in the entertainment field”)

- ◆ First Italian decree dedicated to the safety of entertainment technicians (“Decreto Palchi e Fiere”) delivered in 2014
- ◆ First Italian collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for the professionals of the arts who work in a cooperative (2014) signed by the most representative Italian trade unions (CGIL, CISL, and UIL) and the major trade association of cooperatives (Agci, Confcooperative, and Legacoop)
- ◆ The new CBA signed at the beginning of 2020 protects all freelancers of cultural and creative industry and regulate platform work (the 1st in Italy)

The impact of COVID-19 on the Italian entertainment industry



Estimated change in turnover 2019-20 by CCI sector (in % of total 2019 turnover and in € billion; EU-28)



In Italy:

- In 2019, the CCI produced 60 billions euros (3,2% GDP), and the entertainment field produced 11,4 billions euros (0,6% GDP) with 327,000 workers
- In 2020, the CCI lost 42 billions euros, and the entertainment field lost 8 billions euros (-80%) with the drop of almost 70,000 workers (-21%)

The Italian government's response to the effect of COVID-19 pandemic and the reaction of entertainment workers



The Italian Government has always had a lack of information on the entertainment field and therefore was not immediately able to provide effective solutions and support for entertainment workers

Main difficulties:

1.lack of eligibility, due to the variety of non-standard employment contracts

2.complexity and length of administrative procedures for claiming benefits

- *legal technicalities, because they had not worked enough days in 2019, or because their incomes were considered to be too high to*
- *technical reasons and complicated bureaucracy reasons related to the Italian Social Security Institution (INPS)*
- *different interpretations of the circulars by INPS employees*

3.no entitlement to economic, social, and labour rights implying difficult access to ordinary social protection schemes (e.g. sick pay)

4.insufficiency of funds to support long-term employability (many workers have changed jobs and will not re-enter the entertainment industry)

The Italian government's response to the effect of COVID-19 pandemic and the reaction of entertainment workers



The gap between entertainment workers' needs and the government

The difficulties to access both ordinary and emergency social benefits made visible the existence of a common social condition among workers of the sector, which in some cases resulted in the (re)emergence of some collective mobilisation processes with many entertainment workers that chose to organize themselves in formal and informal association or to eventually enter in a union



The commitment of Doc Servizi to the entertainment sector during the COVID-19 pandemic



Doc Servizi was also hit hard by the crisis from the outset, with a loss of turnover in the first months of the lockdown of around 95%, leading to an overall loss in 2020 of 60% compared to 2019

 Doc l'arte si fa valore	<i>numbers 2019</i>	<i>numbers 2020</i>
<i>Turnover</i>	59 millions €	23 millions € (-60%)
<i>Members</i>	6,400	3,500
<i>Employees</i>	180	145
<i>Prevision turnover 2021</i>	pre-Covid-19: 80 millions €	post-Covid-19: 40 millions €

Since the beginning of the pandemic the cooperative has responded to the situation in two ways:

- ♦ supporting the lobby action of the Centro Studi Doc Foundation for entertainment workers, who involuntarily become one of their spokespersons with the Italian Government
- ♦ acting as a safety net for the administrative staff and worker-members, supporting them with various actions

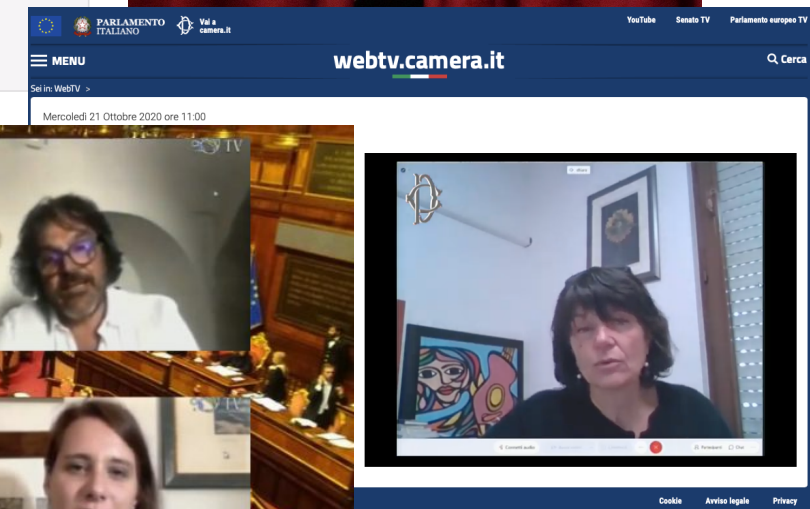
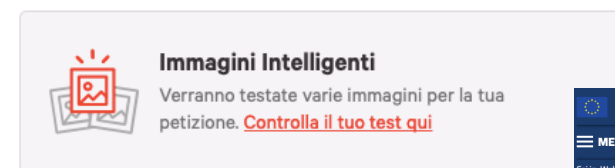
The commitment of Doc Servizi to the entertainment sector during the COVID-19 pandemic



Lobby and advocacy

#nessunoescluso Appello per sostegno urgente ai lavoratori dello spettacolo

- ◆ First petition for entertainment workers
- ◆ More than 50,000 signatures
- ◆ Consulted by the Italian Government (Senate, Chamber, Minister of Culture)
- ◆ Obtained benefits for entertainment workers (about 330.000 workers)
- ◆ Promotion of Arts and Entertainment Forum with ore than 60 realities of the artistic field and 12 municipalities
- ◆ Bottom-up elaboration proposals for the reform of the Italian entertainment system, included in two bills deposited in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in December 2020 and currently under discussion



The commitment of Doc Servizi to the entertainment sector during the COVID-19 pandemic



Staff and worker-members support

- ♦ redundancy fund for the administrative staff anticipating the payment of subsidies
- ♦ 24/7 assistance to members to access health care, sick leave, unemployment benefits, COVID-19 support measures
- ♦ regular meetings about Italian Government Decrees
- ♦ profile of members' skills to find new job opportunities for them (e.g. IT field)
- ♦ free refresher courses for stage technicians

With the help of trade unions

- ♦ second-level agreement allowing members to **work in areas other than entertainment** at least during the period of the pandemic while remaining in the cooperative (e.g. as electricians or gardeners at high altitudes)
- ♦ agreement to activate between May and July 2021 a **massive lifelong learning program** partly funded by the state and with the characteristic to pay workers for each hour of training attended (27 training courses, 1,111 administrative staff, artists and technicians, 980 training hours)

Concluding remarks



Self-management cooperatives and trade unions

1. The cooperative can be a bridge between entertainment workers, trade unions and institutions thanks to the double nature of the worker-member:

- *as workers, artists are employees of the cooperative thus they automatically assume a status that can be represented by trade unions*
- *as members, they participate in the management of the cooperative democratically*

→ **The result is a lack of the classical social conflict between enterprise and worker, turning cooperatives into allies of trade unions against market abuses and undeclared work**

2. The alliance between self-management cooperatives and trade unions means:

- *for cooperatives, allowing their members access to higher and more efficient levels of negotiation*
- *for trade unions, having better understanding and thus better representing the needs of figures poorly unionised but who are looking for representation*



Thank you!!

Keep in touch!

Francesca Martinelli, PhD

Director – Centro Studi Doc Foundation

info@centrostudidoc.org

[@centrostudidoc](#) [@Fo_Elettrica](#)