

Institution: Oxford Brookes University		
Unit of Assessment: 33, Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Co-Creating Cultural Heritage in Post-War Italy: enhancing older people's wellbeing through digital inclusion and intergenerational collaboration		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013–2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Daniela Treveri Gennari	Professor	[text removed for publication]
Silvia Dibeltulo	Senior Lecturer	
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>In an effort to address the social marginalization of an ageing population, this research conducted in Italy has enabled older people's participation in the creation of cultural heritage, while enhancing their wellbeing through reminiscence activities. The project has captured memories of Italian cinema audience members (who in 2013 were over 65 of age), thus rescuing and preserving intangible cultural heritage for future generations. By co-creating a digital archive, the project has ensured the sustainability of this legacy while enabling older people's digital inclusion beyond the project's lifetime. Moreover, the research has fostered intergenerational collaborations between older and younger audiences, furthered younger generations' involvement in a community forged through cinema-going and enhanced public understanding of Italian cultural heritage.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Funded by a substantial Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) award, <i>Italian Cinema Audiences (R1a)</i> was a collaborative research project involving Oxford Brookes University (as Principal Investigator), the University of Bristol and the University of Exeter. It explored for the first time cinema audiences in Italy in the 1950s. Using oral history methodologies the project gathered cinema-going memories from over 1,200 participants across eight Italian regions. With the assistance of our project partners UNITRE (University of the Third Age in Italy) and Memoro (Memory Bank, an international non-profit organisation dedicated to the collection of memories and life stories of people born before 1950), these memories were captured using a combination of questionnaires and individual video-interviews. These personal accounts have been contextualised with a variety of archival sources (press reviews, box-office figures, and film industry data), allowing us to uncover the hidden side of Italian film history: its spectators (R2a).</p> <p>In February 2017, <i>Italian Cinema Audiences</i> launched the next phase of its research: the development of CINERICORDI (based at Oxford Brookes University and funded by the AHRC Follow-on Funding, specifically aimed at research dissemination and impact) (R1b). CINERICORDI (R2b) is an online interactive archive where the general public can explore the history of Italian cinema-going through the memories of its audiences. The digital archive integrated our collected data (questionnaires, video-interviews, and cartographical data on 1950s</p>		

cinemas) with new and unexplored archival resources, including digitised artefacts related to cinema-going, as well as crowd-sourced collections from older cinema-goers' private archives (comprising of photos, programmes, leaflets, private letters, signed posters, etc.) (R3).

Led by Daniela Treveri Gennari as Principal Investigator, with an interdisciplinary team of international experts on Italian cinema and culture, this research has provided the first nationwide study of cinema audiences in post-war Italy. It was an innovative collaboration between universities, public and private archives, members of the general public and cultural organizations. The research has pioneered a process of rewriting history from "below". By offering insight into audiences' experiences, the project has empowered these protagonists and challenged the traditional top-down understanding of Italian film culture, going beyond canonical histories of Italian cinema dominated by great auteurs and renowned movements such as Neorealism (R4).

The international significance of this research has resulted in the adoption of the *Italian Cinema Audiences* model for further studies. These include the British Academy/Leverhulme-funded *Mapping European cinema: a comparative project on cinema-going experiences in the 1950s* (2016–2017) (R1c) and the AHRC-funded *European Cinema Audiences* project (2018–2021), both led by Treveri Gennari (R1d). The latter is the first large scale qualitative comparative study of cinema audiences in post-war Europe. As with the *Italian Cinema Audiences* project, the memories of the cohort were used to investigate the personal, cultural and social significance of cinema-going for European audiences. These memories enhance Europe's multi-vocal cultural heritage as a shared common history, curating it for future generations.

The innovative contribution to scholarship has been recognised by the international academic community (the model has been adapted by other academics, for example, Dr Asa Jernudd's *Swedish Cinema and Everyday Life: A study of cinema-going in its peak and decline* project funded by the Swedish Research Council). It has also raised awareness and understanding of the importance of autobiographical memories for the elderly (R5). Moreover, the project has identified how the older generation can bridge the digital divide, becoming the curators of an online archive of the cinema-going experience (R6).

3. References to the research

R1. Key research grants

- a. *In search of Italian cinema audiences in the 1940s and 1950s: Gender, Genre and National Identity*, PI Treveri Gennari, AHRC, 01/09/2013 to 31/12/2016, GBP652,412, Grant Ref: AH/K003453/1
- b. *Mapping cinema experience as living knowledge across Italy's generational divide* (ICAMAP), PI Treveri Gennari, AHRC, 01/02/2017 to 31/05/2018, GBP81,131, Grant Ref: AH/P00928X/1
- c. *Mapping European cinema: a comparative project on cinema-going experiences in the 1950s*, PI Treveri Gennari, British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grants, 04/04/2016 to 31/10/2017, GBP7,551, Grant Ref: SG151899
- d. *European Cinema Audiences: Entangled Histories and Shared Memories*, PI Treveri Gennari, AHRC, 01/03/2018 to 07/09/2021, GBP706,840, Grant Ref: AH/R006326/1

R2. Project websites: a. www.italiancinemaaudiences.org; b. www.cinericordi.it

R3. Treveri Gennari D., S. Culhane (2019) 'Crowdsourcing memories and artefacts to reconstruct Italian cinema history: Microhistories of small-town exhibition in the 1950s', *Participations: Journal*

of *Audience & Reception Studies*, 16 (1) pp. 796-823. Available [here](#)

R4. Treveri Gennari, D., S. Dibeltulo, D. Hipkins, S. Culhane and C. O’Rawe (2020) *Italian Cinema Audiences: Histories and Memories of Cinema-going in Post-war Italy* (Bloomsbury: London/New York). ISBN: 9781501347696

R5. Treveri Gennari D., S. Dibeltulo, D. Hipkins and C. O’Rawe (2019) ‘Analysing Memories through Video-Interviews: a Case Study of Post-War Italian Cinema-going’, in *The Routledge Companion to New Cinema History*, Biltereyst D., R. Maltby and P. Meers (eds.) (Routledge: New York). ISBN: 9781138955844

R6. Dibeltulo, S., S. Culhane and D. Treveri Gennari (2019) ‘Bridging the Digital Divide: Older Adults’ Engagement with Online Cinema Heritage’, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 35 (4) pp. 797-811. DOI: 10.1093/llc/fqz079

4. Details of the impact

The cinema audience research has had an impact in two main areas: ‘creativity, culture and society’ and ‘understanding, learning and participation’. Moreover, it has impacted positively on the social welfare and wellbeing of older people.

CINERICORDI has developed an accessible digital archive (with 6,900 page views since April 2018) that allows the general public to explore and contribute to a new history of Italian cinema-going through the sharing of personal memories. It gathers data collected in *Italian Cinema Audiences* with further crowd-sourced visual material (over 1,200 items) donated by cinema-goers in Italy. Enabling older people’s participation in cultural heritage creation and preservation has been demonstrated to enhance their wellbeing, confirming the utility and success of the co-creation practice, as highlighted in a report by Age UK ‘Creative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life’ (2018: 3). In fact, the main beneficiaries of this research-led engagement were older people, who have been largely ignored in the creation of culture, especially in digital and online contexts. Through CINERICORDI they have become part of a community forged through cinema-going: this has enabled them to be at the forefront of reconstructing the history of post-war Italian film culture, traditionally only written by film scholars.

Ten public engagement events were held across Italy and three in the UK (with over 1,000 participants between the two countries) **(S1)**. Through collaborating with UNITRE (which shared access to their national network of over 80,000 members), 200 older participants have shared their positive feedback on these events and highlighted the benefit generated by the project’s activities both in terms of their sense of inclusion and valorization of their cinema memories: “*People my age feel the need to tell about themselves to realise that they exist*”; “*The recovery of memories feeds self-esteem!!!*”; “*It helps us remember and stimulates our relationship with others*”. Many have also highlighted the pleasure they feel in the process of remembering: “*They make me relive the good times*”; “*[the project] is helpful in remembering pleasant things*”; “*memories hidden and forgotten in a drawer, dug out with your help*”. **(S2)** Furthermore, CINERICORDI has inspired the creation of new knowledge and cultural expression amongst its participants. This includes: a book on cinemas in Amelia (Italy) written by one of the participants and presented at the Turin International Book Fair (one of the largest book fairs in Europe) **(S3)**; an exhibition on film culture in Manduria (Italy), which attracted around 1,500 visitors in one week **(S4)**; and research on local cinemas in Messina (Italy) **(S5)**.

Importantly, the project has rescued and preserved intangible cultural heritage for future generations. It has captured memories of Italian culture and created an accessible digital archive to ensure the sustainability of this legacy. A training programme delivered to the UNITRE

members, both online and face-to-face across the country during the public engagement events, has extended the geographical scope of the project and enriched its crowdsourced collection **(S6)**. In fact, it was through the training programme that further crowdsourced data was added to the digital archive **(S5)** and new courses on the history of Italian cinema were developed for the members of UNITRE, using CINERICORDI as learning material **(S6)**.

The project has also fostered an intergenerational collaboration through online learning and research. Through CINERICORDI, two generations of cinema-goers have taken control of their shared cultural heritage. This collaboration has tackled the problem of digital exclusion of older people through the development of a digital platform in which they are both curators and users. In addition, the project has enabled interaction with younger people, who helped the older users to navigate digital contexts in two events organised by the team in Rome. These interactions have benefitted the participating students through key activities and events. For example, in collaboration with the Italian Ministry for Education and the Society for Italian Studies in the UK, CINERICORDI organised a national competition '*Come Andavamo al Cinema*' for high school students **(R2b, 'Competition')**. By encouraging students to engage with the content of the archive in creative ways, the aim of this competition was to promote inter-generational collaboration and greater awareness of the history of cinema-going. The winners of the first edition of the competition were the students of class III K, ISIS Alfonso Casanova from Naples. The students, together with their teacher Prof Luigi Barletta, presented the winning film at the award ceremony at the Experimental Center of Cinematography in Rome on April 27, 2017.

This competition allowed students to engage with the digital archive and use it to learn about a significant aspect of the history of Italian culture: cinema and its audiences. The tools developed in the project have also enabled students to use CINERICORDI as an educational resource, both in Italy and abroad. The educational impact has enhanced student's understanding of post-war Italian culture as well as demonstrably improving academic attainment through face-to-face and online intergenerational engagement. It has also provided new materials for use by teachers, as part of their syllabi. In an evaluation of the project, a teacher described the students' enthusiasm: "*they guided their grandparents in the use of the digital archive*" and "*developed a sense of self-esteem which helped reduce the gap in academic attainment*" **(S7)**.

The new knowledge generated by this research has contributed to a wider discussion over Italian film culture. Public engagement has occurred at national and international level, with events and across radio, TV, press and social media platforms, as well as our website (both in English and in Italian), which has attracted an international audience (over 52,000 page views since January 2015) **(S10, see also S1, S8, S9)**. This has enhanced public understanding of the historical culture of movie-going in postwar Italy.

The project also had a variety of positive impacts on our partner, Memoro **(S11)**. Participating in the *Italian Cinema Audiences* project has enabled them to develop their international reach, leading them to develop collaborations with other international projects (ECA and We HOPE with Lincoln University). It also helped them to define the new technical standard for all their future video projects and create an app connecting Nvivo metadata (research outputs) to the videos. These will have long term benefits for the organisation.

In summary, the *Italian Cinema Audiences* project has: enabled older people's participation in the creation of cultural heritage, while enhancing their wellbeing through reminiscence activities; rescued and preserved intangible cultural heritage for future generations; fostered intergenerational collaborations that have furthered younger people's skills and understanding; and been pivotal for our project partner's future development.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1. 13 Public engagement events organised across Italy and in the UK in collaboration with UNITRE (network of over 80,000 members)

S2. Testimonials: 200 Feedback forms collected at the public engagement events, attended by c.1000 participants

S3. *Amelia perla del cinema* book inspired by the CINERICORDI project and presented at the Turin Book Fair, attended by 148,000 people in 2019

S4. Exhibition on Film Culture in Manduria inspired by the CINERICORDI project, which attracted over 1,500 visitors in one week

S5. Research on local cinemas in Messina inspired by the CINERICORDI project and now available on the digital archive

S6. UNITRE's reports on project activities and influence

S7. Feedback from teachers and students involved in the competitions for secondary schools in Italy and the UK (Society for Italian Studies in the UK) and university teachers

S8. Evaluative reviews of the project in the media (articles in the local and national press, as well as online reviews and blog posts)

S9. Participation in debates on the history of cinema in national radio (BBC, RAI broadcast)

S10. Google Analytics Report, www.italiancinemaaudiences.org and www.cinericordi.it

S11. MEMORO testimonial on the changes in their organization after the collaboration with the *Italian Cinema Audiences* project