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## The multifaceted significance of Cinecittà for cinema, business and tourism

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### Abstract

This study focuses on the importance of Cinecittà as a springboard for the development of film tourism, but also as an example of contemporary cultural entrepreneurship that promotes sustainable local development. Through the use of historical examples, statistical data, and references to international and Italian productions, the multidimensional influence of Cinecittà and its role in strengthening the international image of Rome and Italy are analyzed. Cinecittà is not just a film studio, but a multifunctional organization where art interacts with the economy, society, and tourism. Finally, the paper attempts to map out the challenges and prospects for the future, offering a comprehensive assessment of Cinecittà's position and dynamics in the contemporary cultural and economic landscape.

**Keywords** Cinecitta Cinema; Cinematographic Tourism; Cultural Tourism; Cultural Entrepreneurship; Local Development

### 1. Introduction

Cinecittà, founded in Rome in 1937, is one of the most iconic film production hubs in Europe and a benchmark for the international film industry. Its establishment was closely linked to the political circumstances of the time, as Mussolini's regime sought to strengthen national film production, using cinema as a tool for cultural promotion and propaganda. However, Cinecittà gradually evolved beyond its initial political role, highlighting its importance as a center of artistic creation, cultural heritage preservation, and a driving force for economic activity (Maniou et al., 2025).

In contemporary tourism theory, the concept of film tourism is emerging as a dynamic link between cinema and tourism development, creating new opportunities for promoting destinations and boosting the local economy (Manola, 2024). The cinematic experience extends beyond watching films, transforming filming locations into "living" cultural fields that connect cinema, tourism, and literature, influencing the formation of cultural routes and the image of destinations (Manola & Kostaki, 2024).

Cinecittà, as the "City of Cinema," is a prime example of the interaction between cinema and cultural entrepreneurship. An analysis of its contribution to the development of the Italian film industry, compared to other cultural and film destinations such as Matera, highlights the strategic use of cinema to promote local cultural products and boost tourism (Manola & Tsatambassoglou, 2021). At the same time, research in European contexts, such as the influence of

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Shakespeare on Venetian literature, highlights the importance of cultural entrepreneurship in the film sector as a means of creating added value and sustainable development (Manola, Kouni & Koltsikoglou, 2021).

The historical and functional evolution of Cinecittà highlights how cultural infrastructure can be transformed into a strategic tool for enhancing artistic creation, promoting tourism, and boosting economic activity. The integrated incorporation of cinema, literature, and tourism offers innovative models of cultural entrepreneurship, making Cinecittà a unique and multidimensional agent of development and research (Maniou, Mitoula & Manola, 2024; Maniou et al., 2025).

Concluding the introduction, the positive and useful contributions that digital technologies provide to the field of education and business development should be highlighted as a final point. Mobile devices (21-23), a range of ICT apps (24-28), AI & STEM ROBOTICS and games (29-32), are some examples of the technologies that enable and improve educational processes including evaluation, intervention, and learning. Additionally, the use of ICTs in conjunction with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and the development of emotional intelligence [33-46], accelerates and improves educational practices and outcomes, especially for entrepreneurship business and tourism

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## 2. The Importance of Cinecittà as a Catalyst for Film Tourism

Film tourism represents one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding sectors of contemporary tourism, merging the allure of cinema with the exploration of destinations associated with cinematic and literary narratives. As Manola (2024) emphasizes, the relationship between cinema and literature is bidirectional: literature provides cinema with rich narrative material, while cinematic adaptations can, in turn, rekindle public interest in literary works—generating tourist flows to places linked with them.

The interaction between cinema and tourism is particularly evident in Greece, where the strategic use of cinematic and literary storytelling has reinforced the national tourism image. According to Manola and Kostaki (2024), cinema and literature serve as powerful tools for promoting Greek tourism, offering narrative and cultural contexts that appeal to international audiences and strengthen place identity.

Beyond their promotional value, film tourism initiatives also foster **cultural promotion and sustainable local** development. The case of Matera serves as a quintessential example. As noted by Manola and Tsatambassoglou (2021), the cinematic and literary promotion of Matera transformed the city into a major cultural asset and global tourist destination. Likewise, Manola, Kapsaski, and Raptopoulou (2020) highlight that Matera's "cinematic literature" has enhanced the region's cultural identity and international recognition, illustrating how creative storytelling contributes to the formation of cultural capital.

Similarly, Venice exemplifies how literature and cinema can jointly elevate cultural tourism. According to Manola, Kouni, and Koltsikoglou (2021), Shakespeare's literary influence and the city's cinematic reinterpretations have fostered literary and cinematic itineraries that deepen the visitor's experiential engagement. By merging literary heritage with cinematic narratives, destinations can offer immersive, culturally enriched travel experiences.

Film tourism is thus not merely about visiting filming locations; it is a multidimensional phenomenon intersecting with literature, heritage, and sustainable development (Manola & Tsatambassoglou, 2020; Manola, 2024). Through these intersections, it contributes to strengthening cultural identity, diversifying tourism offerings, and promoting long-term sustainability.

Within this context, Cinecittà emerges as one of the most significant hubs connecting cinema and tourism—an iconic film destination often referred to as the "Hollywood on the Tiber." Hosting international productions from *Ben-Hur* and *Cleopatra* to the works of Federico Fellini, Cinecittà has not only shaped Rome's cinematic identity but also contributed to the global cultural image of Italy. Its influence underscores how cinema functions as both a creative industry and a vehicle for cultural diplomacy.

Cinecittà, like Matera, demonstrates how cinematic heritage and literary intertextuality can generate new cultural narratives that enhance the tourism product. Through its open studios, museum spaces, and interactive tours, Cinecittà offers visitors a form of experiential tourism that transcends traditional sightseeing, allowing them to engage directly with the processes of filmmaking and cultural memory. This integration of entertainment, education, and cultural heritage enriches Rome's overall tourism profile and strengthens its international appeal.

Ultimately, Cinecittà serves as a springboard for film tourism, combining artistic creation, cultural entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism development. As contemporary research indicates (Manola, 2024; Manola & Tsatambassoglou, 2020; Manola, Kouni & Koltsikoglou, 2021), the transformative power of film tourism arises from the intersection of art, culture, and local economies—making Cinecittà one of the most emblematic examples of this synergy.

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### 3. Cinecitta as a lever for cultural entrepreneurship

The concept of cultural entrepreneurship is developed within a broad theoretical framework that emphasizes the ability of cultural resources to be transformed into economic value through innovative practices (Dobrevia & Ivanov, 2020; Ratten, 2022; Hill et al., 2023; Pechlaner et al., 2020; Bürger & Volkmann, 2020). This framework highlights the importance of cultural identity, locality, and creative management as critical factors for sustainable development.

At the same time, the integration of digital technologies into tourism and creative industries offers new tools for promoting and connecting cultural destinations, creating digital ecosystems through applications, marketplaces, and immersive experiences (Felicetti et al., 2022; Baggio & Del Chiappa, 2012; Nambisan et al., 2017). In the field of film tourism, the promotion of landscapes and narratives through films significantly influences travel decisions and contributes to sustainable local development (Beeton, 2014; Lopes et al., 2023; Pérez García et al., 2021; Lavaredaset al., 2025). Furthermore, public policies and collaborations in the cultural sector promote clusters and funding schemes that facilitate entrepreneurship (Hill et al., 2024; Elias et al., 2023).

The technological dimension and sustainability are becoming decisive factors for contemporary film tourism. The use of VR/AR technologies and digital mapping of cultural sites broaden audience participation and experience (Fazio et al., 2024; Ruschet et al., 2022; Tomczak & Stachowiak, 2015), while environmentally oriented narratives shape new sustainable tourism products (Ngoasong, 2018; ScienceDirect, 2021).

The human dimension and entrepreneurial spirit of local communities are key factors in the success of cultural initiatives. The innovation and resilience of local entrepreneurs enhance urban regeneration and social cohesion, especially in times of crisis or transformation (Montanes Del Rio & Medina Garrido, 2023; Métze, 2009; Lindkvist et al., 2013; Gangi, 2015).

In the Greek context, examples such as the film *Before Midnight* (2013) in Messinia demonstrate how a film production can boost tourist flows, as evidenced by the increase in arrivals at Kalamata airport. An analysis of eleven films shot in Greece between 1957 and 2023, such as *The Boy on a Dolphin* and *Mamma Mia 3*, show visual mechanisms promote Greek identity and increase visitation to areas such as Skopelos and Skiathos (Papadaki, 2024). The *Mamma Mia!* phenomenon led to an increase of approximately 10% in bookings in 2009, according to local agencies.

In addition, the Thessaloniki Cinema Museum acts as a vehicle for cultural entrepreneurship and as an educational and tourist hub. Environmental features such as the documentaries *Voice of the Aegean* and *The Digger* promote natural heritage and environmental awareness. The Animasyros festival has established Syros as an international animation center, extending the tourist season and combining culture with local development through workshops and international collaborations.

Digital technology enhances cultural entrepreneurship by facilitating the promotion, management, and promotion of cultural resources. Digital practices improve the accessibility and interactivity of cultural spaces, support the organization of festivals, and promote local monuments (Maniou and Mitoula, 2025; Maniou, Mitoula, and Manola, 2025). In practice, the use of digital tools in Italian literary parks and industrial buildings on the islands of Lesbos, and Lemnos highlights cultural heritage with educational, tourist, and business value (Maniou, Mitoula, and Manola, 2024; Maniou, Mitoula, Manola and Tsatambassoglou, 2025). The digitization of Ottoman monuments and the integration of innovative digital applications have contributed to the growth of cultural tourism and the promotion of sustainable development (Maniou, Mitoula and Kostakis, 2024; Maniou, Mitoula and Manola, 2025).

Overall, the literature shows that the combined use of cultural entrepreneurship and digital technology creates strategies that promote economic, social, and cultural sustainability, opening new avenues for innovative forms of tourism and cultural activities (Maniou, 2024b; Maniou, Mitoula, Laloumis and Astara, 2024).

At the same time, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) improve education and training in cultural entrepreneurship by introducing innovative learning methods, enhancing knowledge retention, promoting collaboration, and making learning more flexible and adaptive through mobile devices, virtualization, artificial intelligence, and educational platforms (Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances, 2025). The integration

of ICTs in combination with psychological frameworks such as metacognitive education, mindfulness, and the development of emotional intelligence further enhances the effectiveness of education and training for young cultural entrepreneurs.

#### 4. Cinecittà as a driving force for tourism development

Cinecittà, internationally known as the "City of Cinema," is one of the most important film studios in the world and serves as a key pillar of Rome's cultural and economic development (Manola et al., 2025). Since its founding in 1937, during the Fascist period, until the heyday of Italian cinema with creations such as Fellini's films, Cinecittà has been associated with Italy's identity as a country with a strong cultural and artistic tradition (Bondanella, 2009).

Today, Cinecittà is redefining its role not only as a production site but also as a cultural tourism destination. Through organized tours of the sets, themed exhibitions, educational workshops and collaborations with international film festivals, it attracts thousands of visitors every year, directly boosting the local economy (Felicetti et al., 2022). This strategy places it among Rome's iconic tourist attractions, alongside the Colosseum and the Roman Forum, offering a more contemporary and experiential cultural experience (Maniou and Mitoula, 2025).

The integration of digital technologies, such as virtual tours, interactive multimedia, and online archives, helps attract new audiences and creates new business opportunities in the cultural sector. The digitization of cultural heritage broadens the scope of cultural tourism, making Cinecittà not only a place of memory but also a space for innovation. (Maniou et al., 2025b).

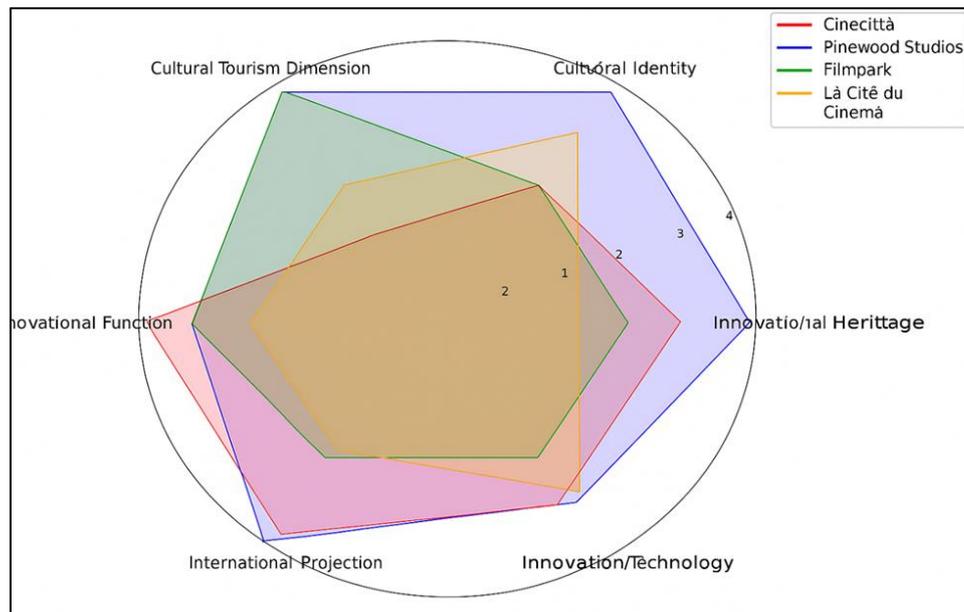
Furthermore, the development around Cinecittà enhances Rome's cultural sustainability by promoting local participation, strengthening social cohesion, and providing a framework for international cooperation (Manola et al., 2025). Thus, Cinecittà is not just a place of cultural consumption, but also an example of cultural entrepreneurship that combines heritage with innovation.

Overall, Cinecittà is emerging as a multidimensional development tool: on the one hand, it strengthens Italy's cultural identity and global image, and on the other, it contributes to tourism diversification and the sustainable development of Rome. As such, it can be considered a model for the strategic exploitation of cultural heritage for economic, social, and cultural progress. (Maniou et al., 2025a).

**Table 1** Comparative Evaluation of European Initiatives in Cinematographic Cultural Entrepreneurship

Feature	Cinecittà (Rome, Italy)	Pinewood Studios (United Kingdom)	Filmpark Babelsberg (Germany)	La Cité du Cinéma (France)
Established	1937	1936	1912	2012
Main identity	"City of Cinema," strong connection to the history of Italian cinema	Professional studio for international productions (e.g., James Bond, Star Wars)	Film and television theme park	Cultural and educational hub for cinema
Cultural tourism dimension	High - open to the public, museum, exhibitions, themed experiences	Very limited - access mainly for professionals	Very high - theme park, Disneyland-type experiences	Moderate - exhibitions and educational programs
Economic function	Combination of production, tourism, events, and branding	Professional focus on international productions	Commercialization of experiences and entertainment	Mix of cultural activities and educational uses
Strategic advantages	Historical heritage, international brand, tourist attraction	Specialized know-how, international collaborations	Popular thematic concept, visitor experience	Connection with film education and creation
Weaknesses / Challenges	Need for modernization and greater digitization of infrastructure	Lack of cultural-tourism dimension	Limited historical authenticity, focus mainly on entertainment	Economic sustainability and international recognition

**Comment:** In Table 1, the European initiatives demonstrate different models combining culture, tourism, and film production



**Figure 1** Comparative evaluation of European Cinematographic studios

**Comment:** The graph presents a comparative evaluation of four major European film studios – Cinecittà, Pinewood Studios, Filmpark Babelsberg, and La Cité du Cinéma – based on six key criteria: cultural identity, historical heritage, innovation/technology, international projection, economic function, and cultural tourism.

A comparative assessment of European film cultural entrepreneurship initiatives highlights the uniqueness of Cinecittà, which combines historical heritage, film production, and tourism in an integrated model.

Unlike Pinewood Studios, which focuses primarily on international productions, Filmpark Babelsberg, which operates as a theme park, Cinecittà integrates cultural identity and sustainable tourism practices.

La Cité du Cinéma focuses on education and cultural activities, but faces challenges in terms of international recognition and economic sustainability. Cinecittà’s approach combines culture, tourism, and economic value, offering visitor experiences and creating new business opportunities.

Digital technologies and innovation are critical tools for boosting visitor numbers and international visibility. Its model can serve as a strategic template for other European studios seeking integrated cultural entrepreneurship. Cinecittà maintains its historic brand while evolving into a hub of sustainable tourism and cultural innovation. Its international recognition and cultural value make it competitive with other European initiatives. Despite the challenges of modernization and digitization, Cinecittà remains a model of integrated cultural strategy. Overall, the comparison confirms that the combined exploitation of heritage, model in Europe.

Graph commentary: The centralized radar chart shows the comparative assessment of the Cinecittà, Pinewood, Babelsberg, and La Cité du Cinéma studios, based on the main dimensions of cultural entrepreneurship and tourism development. The chart clearly shows that Cinecittà has a strong combination of historical heritage, cultural identity, and tourism, while the other studios excel in specific functions, such as production or themed experiences.

## 5. Conclusions

Cinecittà is a prime example of cultural entrepreneurship in Europe, combining historical heritage with active film production and tourism development. The studio functions both as a production hub and a cultural destination, attracting visitors through guided tours, exhibitions, and educational activities. Compared to other European studios, such as Pinewood, Babelsberg, and La Cité du Cinéma, Cinecittà stands out for its integrated and sustainable model. It

incorporates innovative practices and digital technologies, enhancing the visitor experience and creating new business opportunities. Its strategy links Rome's cultural identity with international visibility, promoting the city's image as a cultural hub. Its operation contributes to economic growth, strengthens social cohesion, and promotes sustainability in tourism.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

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### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

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