

The effects of autonomy on museums

The case of Italy and the

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Abstract

This thesis will analyze the case of twenty Italian museums that became autonomous after the promulgation of a new law in 2014 to investigate the effects of autonomy on cultural institutions. The research was inspired by a series of interviews with the directors of these institutions published in an Italian magazine (Nastro, 2016a; 2016b) and is based on ten interviews made in the months of March, April and May, 2017. The work started with an analysis of the most relevant literature on the broad topic of cultural policies and management, followed by researches focused on museums and autonomy. Papers and publications about the Italian case were also studied, but it must be said that is a topic that needs further research, and this work hopes to be a small step forward in this direction. A format for semi-structured interviews was created, based on the most significant findings of the literature analysis, and all the autonomous museums (20) were invited to participate in the research, with the idea to create a sample of around 10, that was defined after the first positive responses using a number of criteria (number of visitors, location, background of director...). Most of the interviews have been with museums' directors, when this was not the case or when the interview was considered too short or incomplete other sources, like press releases and material provided by the museum's personnel, were used as an addition. The analysis compares the theory drawn from the literature with the findings of the interviews, and both the similarities and the differences are pointed out; the latter are particularly interesting, as they show the peculiarities of the Italian case and open up the discussion of what might be the causes of the discrepancies between theory and practice. The findings are in line with the expectations, and show a widespread growth in both visitor numbers and revenues, as well as a number of new initiatives and projects starting. The main issue remains the lack of control over the museum personnel, still managed by the Ministry, and the resistance to innovation that comes from some people that see the reform as a threat to conservation and that do not like the idea of a museum run by a manager - even though, as the research shows, most of the directors do not have this kind of background.

Keywords: institutional change, autonomy, museums, Italy

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1. Introduction

Italy, like the majority of southern Europe countries, has always believed in state intervention and in a highly structured system, with the ministry of culture (MiBACT) overseeing every aspect of cultural activities through the eyes of general directors and dedicated bodies at the peripheral level. The main issue that this structure entails is that the single units have virtually no autonomy, the decision-making process often takes place outside the institution and measurements, fundamental for performance evaluation, are scarce and incomplete. Both *incentives* and *independence*, seen by Frey (2003) as crucial for an economic management of cultural institution, are missing. Some attempts to change this system were made in the past by creating autonomous entities, like the case of Pompeii (Ferri & Zan, 2014) or of the peripheral bodies responsible for the institution in Florence, Rome, Venice and Naples (Sibilio & Dainelli, 2012), but they were always isolated experiments that were not followed by major changes.

This changed in 2014, when the Minister of Cultural Heritage Dario Franceschini introduced, with two laws, a new structure of the Ministry, in which twenty museums were granted autonomy, although limited for some aspects, the most significant being the management of human resources. Nevertheless, it was a novelty for the Italian system, so much that it was deemed worthy of a research to find out how these museums changed after the reform. The research consists of four chapters, divided as follows: the first one presents some of the most significant articles and publications on the subject of museums and autonomy, as well as some more general works on public policy and cultural economics and some sources (mostly newspaper articles) used to discuss the recent developments of the law; the second examines the reform in greater detail, analyzing the text of the two laws that regulate the autonomy of these museums; the third presents the methodology used to conduct the research, from the reasons behind the choice of a qualitative approach to the creation of the sample of museums to be used in the study; the fourth chapter is the research itself, every interview is discussed individually and they are later combined to obtain some general conclusions; after the last chapter a short paragraph provides a summary of the research conducted and its results.

This is the first research on this specific topic, that is both very recent and quite focused, and it should be considered as a first attempt to provide some material about the dispute over the effects of museum's autonomy that has been going on for decades but that never resulted in an "experiment" of such proportions, at least in Italy, rather than a

comprehensive answer to all the doubts that innovations of these kind bring with them. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this work might serve as a starting point for further analysis and discussions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Definitions

The “Cultural State” (Fumaroli, 1991) - one strongly involved in the arts - has been described as an obsolete system, with analysis, discussions and argumentations against it going back at least twenty years (Benhamou, 1998; Schuster, 1998; Zan, 2000). At the same time, the idea of what a museum is developed over time as its role and what was expected from it by the society changed. The definition that follows was created by the International Council of Museums, or ICOM, to describe the institutions it focuses on. It appeared in its first form in 1986, inside a document discussed at the XV General Assembly of the organization in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and - with some minor changes that occurred at the XXI General Assembly in Seoul, South Korea - is still used to the present day.

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purpose of education, study and enjoyment”

(ICOM definition of a museum, <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>).

This definition is so important for this work not only because it is widely recognized as a precise and comprehensive one (even though there is no “right” definition) and is consistently used by scholars that write and do research about museums, but also because the elements that can be found in it and that are combined to obtain a brief description of what these institutions are - *non-profit, permanent institution*, its different purposes - are the fields of research where most of the literature that will be used come from and the aspects that are interested by the change that will be discussed here. As mentioned in the introduction, this work will be focused on a case that is both extremely specific and quite recent, so academic work on the subject is very scarce. This chapter starts with a brief description of the ways used to subsidize and manage cultural institutions in the past, and how the situation has evolved with the introduction of new theories in both Europe and - later on - in Italy. The last part is focused on previous research on the topic of autonomy and cultural institutions.

2.2 The old way and the new

The traditional approach to the funding of arts and culture in European countries - one of widespread subsidies - developed following a somehow paternalistic approach, in which the state was believed to be the one that knew better than the people the true value of things, with some of them held in such an high regard that it was deemed they should be made available to everybody, as this situation would benefit the whole community - even though most of the people would fail to fully understand this. The roots of this idea can be found in the debate that originated in France in the 1950s, when scholars started to talk about “merit goods” (Musgrave, 1956). The discrepancy that, for a number of reasons, existed between how much the average citizen was willing to pay for a product and the value that the government attributed to it led to a need for public intervention, that resulted in the arts and culture world relying heavily on subsidies.

This approach proved to be problematic because the fact that cultural institutions could count on a guaranteed income - often without the obligation of proving how efficiently said money were used - meant that attracting visitors and generating revenues to cover the expenses was not needed, to the point that providing people with a pleasant experience was not seen as a priority. Museums’ personnel, mostly composed of people with a humanities background such as art historians and archaeologists, focused only on the cultural value of their work and the conservation of the collection, and the museum became a place for a restricted number of experts, with little appeal to the general public and characterized by heavy inefficiencies in expenditure (Peacock, 1998). As a countermeasure, governments started to ask institutions to provide for at least a part of their yearly budget, which meant attracting visitors, selling tickets and collecting donations, offering additional services such as cafes and bookshops. They were also asked to justify the way the money they have been given was spent, leaving the traditional welfare approach that, some argues, allowed rent seeking and caused inefficiencies (Peacock, 2006).

This shift can be seen as part of the greater move from “Progressive Public Administration” to “New Public Management” that started in the 1980s. The strong distinction between the private and public sector way of doing business and the need for a structure of procedural rules to serve as buffers against political and managerial discretion, seen as instruments to prevent favouritism and corruption, were abandoned in favor of a new conception of public accountability. The two main assumption of this being a reduction

or complete removal of the differences between the public and the private sector and the emphasis on accountability moving from *process* - that led to an exponential growth of bureaucracy - to *results* (Hood, 1995). Similarly, institutions started to be separated from the government and moved from the traditional way of running a museum to a new, managerial approach, hoping to increase productivity (Frey & Meier, 2006).

2.3 Europe

The first example of this transformation in Europe is the United Kingdom of the early 1980s, when the government began to convert national museums into organizations with trust status. Following this separation between the institutions and the bureaucratic structures¹, museums were supposed to start new activities and offer new services in order to generate their own resources (Smithuijsen, 1998), as well as to engage in a process to implement accountability systems to provide the government and other stakeholders with reports about the management of the structure. Some argues that this process of autonomization has only reduced the level of state influence over museums, as these institutions still have to rely heavily on subsidies and only the model adopted in the United Kingdom allows for a perfect separation of cultural institutions from the pressure of political organizations (Van der Ploeg, 2006). However, the diversification of financial sources - with income generated via private funds, sponsors, donors, entrance fees and so on - can not only prevent cultural institutions from being patronised by the ones providing the subsidies, but is also linked to being more innovation-prone and open to a business-like approach, which results in the museum and its collections being more accessible and appealing to the public (Camarero et al., 2011; Frey & Meier, 2006).

Other nations followed United Kingdom's example, the most notable case being the Netherlands in 1993, and Europe was divided in two: the northern states, that chose an arm's-length approach and a decentralization of power and responsibilities; the countries from the southern part of the region, opting for a more bureaucratic and state-centered system. Some scholars argue that preferring one approach to funding to the other, or better, to maintain the old structure, could be a consequence of how the first museums were established in each country - by the initiative of private individuals, that then

¹ This system, called *arm's-length approach*, ensures a clear separation between the government, that defines a budget for culture, and the Arts Council, an independent body that is responsible for the allocation of subsidies. Political lobbying, rent seeking and imposition of the government's taste are therefore prevented (Klamer et. al, 2013; Van der Ploeg, 2006).

proceeded to take care of their creation, as in the United Kingdom, or by the state, after the confiscation of aristocratic and church collections, like in France (Benhamou, 1998). An attempt at a more precise division was made in recent years (Van der Ploeg, 2006), using the balance of responsibilities between central and peripheral institutions as the sorting tool. The first category is the one of state-driven countries, like France and Italy, where the government is in charge of the allocation of funds and manages most of the institutions directly. The second group is composed of those countries where there is an independent Art Council and ministerial responsibility, namely the Netherlands. Similar to the previous group's approach is the one of the United Kingdom, but with a substantial difference: it is in fact the Art Council itself that takes care of the allocation of funding, with no involvement from the Ministry. A different case is the one of Germany, where federal cultural policy is almost non-existent and most aspects of it are delegated to the Länder.

The fact that these different models were used in countries that share similar conditions at the economical, social and political level made for an easy comparison of the systems, with the ones opting for the arm's-length approach or at least a certain degree of autonomy faring better than the others in term of visitors, efficiency and overall success of the institutions. In fact, most countries are now imitating the models that generated the best results in the past, and their cultural policies are now showing some common traits - reduced role of the public sector, decentralization of the decision-making process, indirect intervention, increased involvement of the private sector (Klamer et al., 2013). In recent years, public policy interest has been focused on new models for restructuring the ownership and management of public cultural institutions, as a consequence of the aforementioned success of experiments like the "privatization" of major art museums in the Netherlands. It is important to notice that the Dutch case is not an example of privatization in the strict sense, but rather a change from the traditional hands-on government engagement to a system where museum managers have more freedom to search new sources of revenues like donations and sponsorship deals, while keeping the ownership of the building and collections in public hands (Throsby, 2010).

2.4 Italy

As mentioned earlier, Italy was one of the countries that kept the traditional structure, with museums being a part of the government bureaucratic structure and little to no autonomy. Institutions that dealt with cultural heritage, from museums to archaeological

sites, were considered responsible for the conservation of the most significant testimonies of the national past, and their being dependent on government's subsidies made the bureaucratic approach reasonable and widely accepted. Scholars, however, have been pointing out the flaws of this structure for years. Giuseppe Bottai, the Minister of National Education for the Fascist Party, wrote in the *Direttive per la tutela dell'arte antica e moderna* (Guidelines for the conservation of ancient and modern art) in 1938 that museums should serve not only scholars and their scientific interests but also the wider public and its cultural needs (Cazzato, 2001). A law was made the following year using Bottai's work as a basis, but the part about valorization was never implemented in practice. In fact, Giulio Carlo Argan, an art historian that contributed to the so-called "leggi-Bottai" about cultural and natural heritage, in 1957 wrote in his book *La crisi dei musei italiani* (The crisis of Italian museums) how these institutions proved to be incapable of having an active role in the education of the people, were growing at an extremely slow pace, had a very limited outreach, little appeal to contemporary society and no connection with schools and universities (Argan, 1957). In more recent years, Antonio Paolucci, at the time the Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, pointed out how marginal the role of the museum in the structure of the *Soprintendenze*² was (Paolucci, 1996). As Casini points out (2016b), it is important to clarify that some of these scholars did not see decentralization as the solution to overcome these problem. In fact, being Bottai a member of the Fascist Party, the focus was on the opposite approach, and centralization the main goal. Nevertheless, as some of the aforementioned literature proves, the concept that cultural institutions see improvements in various areas when they are granted a certain degree of autonomy has been common knowledge for at least twenty years now. Two Italian scholars in particular (Alibrandi & Ferri, 1995) summarized the conclusions reached by the cultural and political debate over museums as follows: all public museum, or at least the biggest ones, should become organs of the state with full financial and managerial autonomy, their own budget and the possibility of retaining their earnings; Italian museums of all kind, regardless their legal status, should be included in the *Sistema museale nazionale*, an organization to be created with the purpose of bringing together all these institutions; the management responsible for cultural heritage should have full decisional power over their resources. A first attempt to create autonomous institutions was made in

² The institutions responsible for the implementation of the Ministry's policies at the peripheral level. Before the reform they played a predominant part in the Italian cultural scene, while other organizations - museums, for example - were less important.

1997 with the archaeological site of Pompei, with mixed results (Sciullo, 2013; Ferri & Zan, 2014), and, ten years later, in the cities of Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples, with the establishment of four *Soprintendenze speciali*³ responsible for these areas were given a special autonomy. The museums that were under the responsibility of these *Soprintendenze* were managed by four institutions, one for each city, called *Poli Museali*, that coordinated the activities of the museums. The decentralization process was strengthened by the introduction of two new committees for each *Polo*: a Board of Directors, composed of the superintendent and four qualified professional, and a College of Auditors (both bodies are included in the structure of autonomous institutions provided by the 2014 law, as will be seen later). Again, for a number of reasons the results were far from ideal (Sibilio & Dainelli, 2012) and the positive effects were limited to only the few museums managed by the the institutions of the *Soprintendenze speciali*, with all the other institutions still in need of a change (Forte, 2011). Then, in 2014, the new reform finally saw the light, as part of a bigger plan of the Italian government to renovate the whole public administration system in order to improve its efficiency and cut costs (Carmosino, 2016).

Before going into the details of the “*Riforma Franceschini*” it is necessary to fully understand the cultural policy and the idea of museum in Italy. The first attempt to develop a program for culture was the aforementioned work of Giuseppe Bottai and the law that followed in 1939. Being museums seen as the natural evolution of governmental collections, supposed to be a resource for scholars and men of culture, these institutions were managed by the state itself, similarly to the French model discussed earlier, as the government was considered the one that should be responsible for the conservation of heritage. An idea strengthened by the constitution of 1948 (“*La Repubblica [...] Tutela il paesaggio e il patrimonio storico e artistico della Nazione*”)⁴ and that remained unchanged throughout the years and was translated into practice through a highly centralized and bureaucracy-based structure, despite the previously mentioned efforts of many experts. In 1964 a committee was appointed by the Minister of Public Education - at the time the Ministry of Cultural Heritage had not been created yet - to analyze the state of cultural

³ With the name Special superintendence are identified some *Soprintendenze* that have scientific, financial, organizational and accounting autonomy, provided that they are responsible for goods of exceptional archaeological, historical, artistic or architectural value (Baraldi, 2007).

⁴ “The Republic [...] safeguards natural landscape and the historical and artistic heritage of the Nation”.

heritage in the country. Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, art historian, founder and director of a magazine, *Critica d'arte*, focused on culture and art criticism, developed the idea to give autonomy to thirty of the most important Italian cultural institutions and submitted it to the *Commissione Franceschini*, but nothing followed (La Monica, 2010). Even if it is impossible to consider the committee a failure - amongst the positive outcomes of it, the first appearance of the term “cultural good” and the foundation laid for the creation, ten years later, of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage - the dismissal of Ragghianti’s ideas, revolutionary in a sense and well ahead of time, was certainly a lost opportunity. Some years later, in 1971, while giving the opening speech at a conference about the role that museums should have in the development of a society, Franco Russoli, director of the *Pinacoteca di Brera* from 1957 to 1977, one of the founder of FAI⁵, a major supporter of ICOM and set to play a significant role in the creation of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage in Italy, denounced the shortcomings of the Italian cultural policy, and how the legal and administrative structure of cultural heritage and museums made it impossible for culture to be accessible for the general public. For how good these institutions were for art historians and other professionals, fulfilling the goal of conservation, they were unable to reach a wider audience, to create synergies with schools and universities, to play a significant role in the development of the society. Cooperation between different institutions and organizations at the regional level, paired with decentralization, was seen as the only solution (Russoli, 1971). However, when the Ministry of Cultural Heritage was created in 1974, the approach was almost the opposite of what Russoli and other experts had hoped for. Three elements characterized the Ministry from the very beginning, to the extent that in one study of the institution are described as “the invariables”: the ministerial model, the localized administration, the crucial role played by committees (Casini, 2016a). The Ministry was responsible for every aspect of conservation and valorization, and the different figures involved had to report to the Minister. A number of advisory boards helped with the decision-making process, while at the peripheral level the *Soprintendenze* were in charge of managing all the institutions. Scholars see this structure as the main cause of problems for museums, as they were nothing more than offices of the Ministry with very limited autonomy. The reasons behind the adoption of this organizational structure have been mentioned before and made sense at the time the system was implemented. In fact,

⁵ *Fondo Ambiente Italiano*, the Italian National Trust, founded in 1975 as a not-for-profit organization with the goal of saving, restoring and opening to the public important pieces of Italy’s artistic and natural heritage.

it can be argued, as some scholars do, that they still do, for example for the case of smaller museums (Forte, 2011) but it is also undeniable that this top-down, highly centralized approach appears now old and backward-oriented, especially when compared to international standards. The Ministry changed its name in 1998, becoming the *Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali*⁶ and having the responsibility also for sports and all kind of performances, but the structure remained the same (Cammelli, 2016a). As already mentioned, some experiments with autonomy were made in the 1990s and in the 2000s, but the efforts made by scholars, advocating for a significant and widespread change in the regulations about museum governance in the country, saw a first significant response from the government only in 2014⁷. Virtually every major country had already experimented with autonomy hoping that it will allow museums to be more efficient in times of financial constraints, since the traditional system - one relying almost completely on state funding - was no longer sustainable. The claims that a new approach was needed to allow Italian museums to bridge the gap with other international institution, especially inside Europe, would finally be put to test. Museums are being recognized as economics agents, and should aim, according to this definition, for the maximization of an objective function - museum attendance, for example. Then, according to Fernández-Blanco & Prieto-Rodríguez (2011), for museums to reach their goals efficient management is necessary, and economics can be a useful tool.

2.5 Previous research

Before going into more details about the reform that is the object of this work it is believed to be important to take a look at what have been done in the past when institutional change has been investigated. Among the most notable researches about autonomy and museums in Italy, two are presented here as examples of different ways to explore the same topic, plus a third that studies the efficiency of museums under direct control of the local government. They all differ in kind of model adopted, number and typology of institutions analyzed and time-frame of the research, and will be further analyzed in Chapter 4 when discussing the methodology used in this work.

⁶ Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activities.

⁷ It is worth remembering that described here is the Italian case, some regions with special autonomy (Aosta Valley, Trentino-Alto Adige and Siciily), are allowed to develop their own cultural policy and have been experimenting with autonomy for years.

The first research is focused on the *Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia* (MNST) “*Leonardo da Vinci*” based in Milan (Bagdadli & Paolino, 2005). The aim of the study, similar to the one of this work, is to understand whether museum directors play a role in the institutional change of Italian public museums. The work is based on a single-case method and on a number of sources covering the period from 1999 to 2003, and uses tools taken from both qualitative and quantitative researches - interviews, organizational charts, budgets, reports and so on. The museum was a particularly interesting case to research the role of the director, because it became a foundation in 1999 and was lead by a director with a humanities background for two years, without much changing in the everyday activities of the museum. It was only after 2011, when a new director with a managerial background was appointed, that the researchers found a significant innovation in museum’s practices. Among the most interesting results the fact that the managerial practices adopted by the MNST were in line with the goal of efficiency coming from the outside - the government - but also more specific to the organizational context and more complex, and that an improvement in efficiency resulted also in increased legitimacy of the institution, a finding in line with some of the aforementioned literature (Castañer, 2013). Another point that will be rediscussed in the analysis (Chapter 5) is the need to have a director “whose values are coherent with the managerialism” (p.19) to achieve a real managerial transformation (Bagdadli & Paolino, 2005).

The second example is a work focused on the case of Pompeii that studies the rise and fall of managerial autonomy in the archaeological site (Ferri & Zan, 2014). The work is particularly interesting as it provides a ten-year-long analysis of the development that followed the giving of a new status to Pompeii, a result of an ad hoc law promulgated in September 1997. The year before, the at the time Minister of Cultural Heritage Walter Veltroni created a new system, based on private foundations, to manage opera houses, one of the first experiments with autonomy in Italy. For the archaeological site of Pompeii a different approach was taken, to cope with the strict regulations about cultural heritage of the country. It was no longer a branch of the Ministry, managed by the *Soprintendenza*, instead, an autonomous entity - the *Soprintendenza autonoma* - was created. The ten-year period is particularly significant because in 2008 an administrative act revoked the autonomy given by the law under extraordinary circumstances - the site was in such bad condition that the very integrity of the buildings was at risk. The law had much in common

with the reform that will be analyzed in the next part: a director - the *City Manager* - with managerial knowledge and expertise was to be appointed for a period of five years, with the selection process drawing from both the public and the private sectors; a *board of directors* would be established; the entity would be autonomous on scientific and financial matters. The reduced role played by accountability in the case of Pompeii is indicated by the authors as the main reason behind the crisis of legitimacy for the institution that resulted in the revocation of the autonomy.

The last one is a quantitative analysis of the relative efficiency of fifteen museums located in three cities in Italy, Bologna, Florence and Venice (Basso & Funari, 2004). The work compares the institution between them using data from the three municipalities collected in 1998. The result is a ranking, from the most to the least efficient.

Although the research will be conducted using an approach that differs from all of the methods presented here - the reasons are discussed in Chapter 4 - these cases are perfect to highlight the main topics that are common in analyses focused on museums and autonomy. One of the first and most basic goals of cultural institutions is to gain and maintain legitimacy for the organization and for the field at large, with relevant external audiences having the perception that the institution's activities are worthy and their goals are efficiently pursued (Castañer, 2013). The level of efficiency achieved by museums, investigated in the aforementioned research (Basso & Funari, 2004), is crucial to prove that the reform has had a positive impact, that it was needed and the organizations are now more than ever worthy of being subsidized as they are using the funds efficiently. The case of MNST is an example of the organizational innovation mentioned by many scholars (Dewey, 2004; Vicente et al., 2012).

3. The Reform

3.1 Introduction

Traditionally, Italy's approach to culture has always been a top-down one, with the central Ministry bearing most responsibility and offices, known as *Soprintendenze*, working at the peripheral level to implement policies (Klamer et al., 2013), and, as discussed earlier, attempts to change the system failed to be a real watershed. Although in the past forty years some experiments of autonomous institutions were made new laws and renovations of the Ministry did not result in a breakthrough and in a widespread change in the management of museums. The reasons are many, from the resistance of some figures, like the privates to which many services are outsourced by museums (Vicente et al., 2012), to the opposition of bureaucrats, that often see valorization as a threat to conservation (Rizzo & Throsby, 2006) and have no incentives to change (Holler & Mazza, 2013). It is also undeniable that autonomy did not automatically lead to success and improvements for institutions, as seen for example in the case of Pompeii (Ferri & Zan, 2014), and these negative example were used as an argument against innovation.

Despite the resistance a process to restructure the Ministry of Cultural Heritage started in 2014, and part of this renovation was the conferment of a new, autonomous status to twenty national museums. The most significant changes to the Ministry, made through two different laws, are presented in the first part of this chapter, while in the second the topic of museums, and of the aforementioned twenty in particular, is discussed in greater detail. The last part discuss briefly the legal issues encountered by the reform in 2017.

3.2 The two laws

The reform was developed over the course of 2014, following the appointment of Dario Franceschini as the Minister of Cultural Heritage on the 21st of February of the same year, and is the continuation of the efforts made by Massimo Bray and the others Ministers before him to restructure the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. Efforts that, it must be said, translated in a series of laws, attempted reforms and changes, that resulted in a lot of confusion and misalignment, as the regulations were not transposed into practice by the institutions supervised by the Ministry. An emblematic case was presented in a study of Italian museums in the years before the reform (Forte, 2011). Reading the Code of Cultural

Heritage⁸ one would have assumed that state-controlled cultural institution had a certain degree of autonomy, as it is stated in it that *direct management of museums is to be carried out through organizational structures within the administrations, provided with adequate scientific, organizational, financial and accounting autonomy and provided with suitable technical personnel*⁹. However, as the author noted, the reality was quite different.

Just to give some perspective without going into further details, as part of its history was described in the previous chapters and a more thorough analysis is not necessary for this work, the Ministry was reformed in 1998, restructured in 2004, 2007 and 2009, given the responsibility of overseeing tourism in 2013. In the same year, a committee was established to analyze the Ministry and provide a report on how to relaunch tourism and cultural heritage while at the same restructuring the entity to cope with the spending review measures to be implemented throughout the public administration. Following the report, the last renovation was implemented (Forte, 2015).

On the 29th of August 2014 a decree, regulating the organization of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, the offices of the direct collaboration of the Minister and the *Organismo indipendente di valutazione della performance*¹⁰ was promulgated. Three are the main area of intervention: the creation of a national system of museums; the autonomization of the institutions; the new role of the *Soprintendeze*. It has been argued that the main goal of the reform, to which the aforementioned changes and novelty serve as tools, was to put at the center of the system the goals of education and research that should always have been the main function covered by the management of cultural heritage (Casini, 2014). Each line of intervention will be described and analyzed to verify this claim.

The first innovation was the creation of a structure, with the General Directorate of Museums at the central level and the *Poli museali regionali* at the peripheral level. The first is in charge of the collections of the institutions and the heritage sites on the matters of acquisitions, loans, cataloguing and valorization. The latter translate into practice the dispositions and recommendation that come from the General Directorate and are granted

⁸ *Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio*, a code promulgated in 2004 that regulates all the legal aspects connected with heritage and the national landscape.

⁹ Item 115, Section 2

¹⁰ Independent performance evaluation body, an autonomous entity responsible for the assessment of the quality of the management of cultural institutions, in accordance with a law from 2009.

some operational space to define common strategies and goals to achieve valorization. The law identifies 17 *Poli*¹¹, similar to those established for the *Soprintendenze Speciali*, and 20 autonomous institutions, chosen amongst the most important museums of the country using a number of criteria such as the number of visitors, the quality of the collection and the growth potential¹².

The second part of the reform is focused on national museums. As laid down by the law in the aforementioned law¹³, promulgated on the 29th of August 2014, for a successful restructuring of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage a regulation for museums is to be published, in accordance to the decree and the other legal sources that deal with museums, the most important two being the Constitution, from where the fundamental concepts of conservation and valorization are drawn, and the Code of Cultural Heritage, implemented in 2004. The law, officially listed as the *Decreto Ministeriale del 23 dicembre 2014, Organizzazione e funzionamento dei musei statali* was signed by the Minister of Cultural Heritage Dario Franceschini on the 23rd of December 2014 and was registered by the *Corte dei conti* on the 25th of February 2015. It consists of twenty one articles divided in four parts. Article 1 provides the definition of a museum, in line to the one used by the

¹¹ The Italian regions are 20, five of which autonomous with a special statute (Aosta Valley, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sicily and Sardinia). Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Sardinia share the same cultural policy as the other 15 regions, while the other three, as mentioned earlier, have their own systems, thus the total of 17 *Poli*.

¹² Some comments and details are mentioned here, as some simplifications were made for the sake of fluency in the text.

The law lists four kinds of museums: the museum-office, with limited autonomy, a director, a statute and personnel assigned to specific tasks and role, following the standard for museums stated by ICOM; the autonomous museums, 20 as of 2014; the *Polo Museale Regionale*, an institution that coordinates the aforementioned museums-offices it is responsible for and develops valorization strategies for the area in which it operates; the museum-foundation, a form of public-private partnership, inspired by the examples of the *Museo Egizio* of Turin or the *MAXXI* in Rome (for a more detailed description of the four systems, see Casini, 2014, pp. 3-5).

The *Poli* are only 17 despite the regions being 20, as explained in the previous footnote. The law, however, identifies only 14 independent management structures with their own director, since for the three smaller regions that have at least an autonomous museum (Liguria, Marche and Umbria) a compromise has been made in a perspective of efficiency and austerity and the directors of these museums serve also as the directors of the *Polo* of the region. Although it might look like a technicality, it is pointed out here because it is a topic that will be mentioned later in the interviews (see Chapter 5).

The first list of autonomous museums was comprised of only 18 institutions, that became 20 after the promulgation of a decree by the Minister. A third addition was made in 2016, bringing the total number of autonomous institutions to 30.

¹³ Officially listed as d.p.c.m. n. 171, available at <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2014/11/25/14G00183/sg>

ICOM and mentioned in the first part of this work. The Constitution is mentioned as the source used to determine the functions of museums - conservation and valorization - and the Code of Cultural Heritage, article 101, to stress the public service role of these institutions. Another important word found in the article is *accountability*, a concept that was often mentioned as the other face of the coin of autonomy (Sibilio & Dainelli, 2012). All museums are granted technical-scientific autonomy, need to have a statute and provide a financial statement. Those museums that do not have the so-called special autonomy are part of their respective *Poli Museali Regionali*, groups of institution, divided by the region they belong to, with a director whose duties are to define a common strategy, the goals of the *Polo*, opening times and ticket prices. Articles 2 and 3 describe the requirements for the statute (again a direct reference to ICOM, in this case for the *Code of Ethics for Museums*) and the financial statement, both must be accessible on the websites of the institution, the *Polo* and the Ministry. Article 4 is a list of departments to which each museum has to assign at least one person: direction; conservation, research and education; marketing, fundraising, public relations; administration; structures and security. Article 5 encourages the General Director of Museums to look for new forms of collaboration between different institutions and opens the door to *Public-Private Partnerships*. Article 6 briefly explains how museums are going to be evaluated and article 7 describes the National Museums System, a network of all museums, the state ones and all the others, both public and private, provided that they come to a convention with the director of their Regional Department and the structure adopted is in line with the law and the aforementioned *Code of Ethics*. The second block, articles from 8 to 14, in which the case of museums with special autonomy is described into details, will be analyzed later in the next part of this chapter. The third, just articles 15 and 16, clarifies some aspects relative to the *Poli Museali Regionali*, while the fourth and last - from article 17 to 21 - regulates the time of transition between the previous system and the newly introduced one and the abrogation of older decrees.

It is immediately clear that the new law changes completely the relationship between the Ministry, the *Soprintendenze* and the museums, in an attempt to create a more clear division of tasks and goals, with the centralized bodies responsible for conservation and general policies and the institutions at the peripheral level, being them autonomous museums, *Poli* or any other structure, working on the valorization. It is an attempt to resolve the state of uncertainty and confusion in which museums have been

during the past years (Forte, 2015). The introduction of a director and a statute for each museum, a novelty whose importance can be easily underestimated, especially given the fact that for the majority of the institutions the tangible effects are limited, has a strong symbolical value and is a watershed for museums. Each institution is now an entity in its own right, the *minimum requirements* for an organization to be considered a museum, mentioned by Feroni (2010) for the cases of the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Spain, are now inspired by ICOM principles, and these institutions are recognized, have a person at the head that takes full responsibility for their actions and a statute to express their goals, aims and purposes. Museums are no longer an office of the Ministry, a definition used in the past by scholars to describe the Italian structure (Forte, 2011). The financial statement is equally important, although it can be argued that its legal value is limited since the law states that it serves only a reporting purpose. Still, it is a revolution in the Italian system, as it used to be almost impossible to find clear and detailed information about the expenditure of a museum (Cherchi, 2017).

3.3 Autonomous museums

The main innovation in the reform is undeniably the introduction of autonomous museums (Forte, 2015). The history behind this decision has been already discussed, the only point that will be mentioned again is how old this idea is - Ludovico Ragghianti submitted his proposal for the establishment and arrangement of the autonomous state administration of artistic and historical heritage to the Franceschini Committee on the 4th of October, 1965. Fifty years later Italy has come up with a law regulating the autonomization of twenty institutions - that as was already stated will become thirty later on. A complete list of the museums, as mentioned in Article 8 and taken from the document attached to the law, is provided in Appendix 1 along with some basic data (number of visitors, name of the director, location etc.). Article 9 provides a list of the key figures of the museum - the director, the board of administration, the scientific committee, the board of auditors - which must guarantee the fulfilment of the organization's mission and verify the quality of the museum's offer and of the policies of conservation and valorization.

The director is the central figure of the new museums, as one is responsible for the design of a multi-year plan for the institution, the development of significant partnership with other organizations, the promotion of the museum, the loans policy, the permanent collection, the temporary exhibitions and so on. Every aspect of the life of the institution is

supervised by the director. The other bodies, as well as the museum's personnel and other figures can and should play an advisory role, but - as some of the interviewees pointed out - they are the ones with the legal responsibility. The Board of administration is a body composed of five members - with the director serving as its president. It is responsible for the approval of the annual and the long-term programs of the museum and of the budget, although, as will be discussed later, the procedure to approve the budget proved to be quite problematic for some institutions.

The Scientific committee helps the director in all the art-related decisions: restoration works, loans, temporary exhibitions, editorial projects and so on. It is also important because of its composition, as it consists of five members, each representing a different institution: one is the museum's director; one is appointed by the Minister; one by the Superior Council of Cultural Heritage; one by the region and one by the municipality where the museum is in. It is an innovation warmly welcomed by scholars, as it is a first attempt to include the local government in the museum management and to have experts (candidates have to be university professors in fields connected to the museum's activity or proved authorities on the matters of conservation and valorization) inside the institution, while the role of the *Soprintendenze* is reduced (Forte, 2015). The last body is the Board of auditors, and is responsible for the financial statements of the museum. Members of both the Board of administration and the Scientific committee are appointed for a period of five years, and their mandate can be renewed only once, the Board of auditors for three, with the same restriction of no more than another three years.

The Ministry oversees the autonomous museums through the *Direzione generale Musei* and the *Direzione generale Bilancio*. The financial reports of the museums must be approved by the two bodies, the first of which also coordinates and provides advices on the activity of the institutions. Under exceptional circumstances the General secretary of the Ministry, in the case of first-level institution, or the *Direzione generale Musei*, for second-level ones, can remove the director.

For the sake of completeness it is also worth mentioning the step further in the reform of the Ministry that was made in 2016. The main focus was the restructuring of the bodies responsible for the archaeological heritage, but other novelties were the addition of a number of museums to the one supervised by the *Poli* and the inclusion of ten new institutions in the list of the autonomous ones, a form of validation of the work done so far.

3.4 Reception and legal issues

From the very first introduction, the reform has been object of discussion and division (Povoledo & Donadio, 2015; Rivetti, 2015a)¹⁴. Bureaucrats' resistance to innovation (Holler & Mazza, 2013), contrasts between old and new professions (Castañer, 2013), the idea that valorization would only take place at the expenses of conservation (Rizzo & Throsby, 2006) were among the many sources of criticism. Some scholars dismissed the discussions as pointless, or at least too political and not based on the contents of the reform (Casini, 2016b). Although this position could seem extreme, it is undeniable that the new law is a significant step forward for Italian cultural institutions, and has been widely praised by experts (Cammelli, 2016b; Carmosino, 2016; Casini, 2014; Forte, 2015). The reform is not perfect, however, and some comments and recommendations will be made in Chapter 5. Here it is considered more important to provide a brief summary of the legal issues encountered by the reform.

On the 25th of May, 2017, newspapers reported the news that the *TAR* of *Lazio*, through two different sentences, ruled that five of the twenty directors appointed by the reform were to be removed from their position. The acronym stands for *Tribunale Amministrativo Regionale*, or Regional administrative court, a body privates can present an appeal against administrative acts to when they believe their interests are damaged. The appeal was presented to the one responsible for *Lazio* as it is the region where Rome is, and is therefore allowed to rule not only on local matters but also on those related to state administrations with ultra regional competence. The ones filing the documents are a candidate for *Palazzo Ducale* and *Galleria Estense* and a candidate for Paestum and the archaeological museums of Taranto, Napoli and Reggio Calabria. All the directors of these institutions, with the exception of Paestum due to a defect of form in the notification of the judgment, has since been removed from their position. Other appeals, going against Eike Schmidt (*Uffizi*), Cecile Holberg (*Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze*) and Paola Marini (*Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia*) has been rejected, but, as some has noted, the whole structure is at stake, as the selection process is considered faulty (Cherchi, 2017b).

The main arguments made by the *TAR* are the lack of transparency and objectivity of the selection process and the fact that, according to a law from 2001, managerial

¹⁴ Mentioned here an article from *The New York Times* and one from *The Art Newspaper*, two renowned publications, as representatives of the general press and more specialized newspapers, respectively. Much more has been said by the Italian media,

positions in the public administration are limited to Italian citizens, therefore museum directors cannot be from outside the country. Seven of them are in fact from all over Europe, and the call for tenders was open to international candidates, a clear contradiction of the 2001 law. This irregularity, combined with the lack of official material to document the interviews that opened the way for accusations of unequal evaluation of the candidates, was considered enough to rule the removal of the directors. A second grade appeal has been made by the Minister, that should provide a final solution to the problem (these sentences are resolved in two degrees of justice, the only exception to the three-degree system used in Italy).

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The topic of this thesis is the effect that autonomy has on cultural institutions and, more specifically, the research question this work tries to answer is *how the special autonomy granted to twenty museums by the Riforma Franceschini in 2014 changed them*. To do so, a series of interviews were scheduled with the directors of the institution included in the sample of ten out of the total twenty - as mentioned earlier and further explained later in this chapter, the ten institution that became autonomous in 2016 are not part of this research.

This chapter is divided in three parts. The first explains the choice of a qualitative approach from a theoretical point of view, using some of the literature discussed earlier, as well as from a practical one, because the lack of data available played a significant part in the decision for a qualitative approach (particularly relevant for this point will be the previous research on autonomy in Italy, see Chapter 2.5).

The second part presents how the research was conducted, and in particular the two steps used in Chapter 5 to analyze the data collected. In the first, each museum will be considered individually, and the most significant changes will be commented. This process is focused on peculiar aspects, that are found only in that specific institution and that provide interesting insights on the effects of autonomy in that unique environment. Common aspects - increasing numbers of visitors, for example - that are similar throughout the sample will be the subject of the second part of the analysis. Both the single cases and the general findings will be discussed using the literature presented in Chapter 2, to see how the theory translates into practice. As mentioned earlier, the Italian system used to adopt a top-down, highly centralized approach for the cultural sector, and even the autonomy granted to these institutions by the new reform has some limits. For this reason, some discrepancies between the literature and the cases are to be expected.

The third and last part describes the process of creation of the sample, lists the institutions included in the research and the figures that contributed to it, and ends with a comment about the museums excluded from sample and the reasons behind the decision to do so.

4.2 A qualitative approach

Traditionally, researches that want to analyze the effects of autonomy and organizational changes use a quantitative approach rather than a qualitative one. It was mentioned several times in this work the central role played by accountability in autonomization, as with autonomy comes the need to prove to stakeholders the quality of the work done. This also means that data must be not only available but easily accessible, as it is in the best interest of the management to document their efforts (Sibilio & Dainelli, 2012). Consequently, most scholars opt for studies of these numbers, that can be processed using standardized methods to obtain values that measure the level of success of the managerial activity. Example of this are the work of Basso and Funari (2004) and that of Bagdadli & Paolino (2005), the latter being a combination of the aforementioned approach and other tools, like interviews.

This thesis will instead be focused on a qualitative approach, as stated earlier. One reason behind this decision is merely practical, and has to do with the lack of data available about Italian museums, a problem mentioned by many scholars (Casini, 2014; Sibilio & Dainelli, 2012) and that has finally been addressed by the government¹⁵ (Cherchi, 2017a). Furthermore, the reform is fairly recent, as it was promulgated in 2014 and implemented even later, so the impact of the reform analyzed only in numerical terms might be underestimated, since most of the changes will show their results in a few years (exhibition spaces are still undergoing renovation, new areas will be opened to the public in the future and so on). At the same time, it is undeniable that a considerable - but difficult to estimate - positive effect on visitors' figures, as well as interest in collaborations from third parties, is a consequence of the novelty of this management structure and the media exposure that interested these institutions in the past months. This could cause bias in a more quantitative research as the influence of the reform on those figures would be overestimated by including the positive influence that this particular situation had. This enthusiasm is bound to decline, when this will happen, once the first few years have passed, a more quantitative approach should be used, for the time being a qualitative one seems the best solution.

¹⁵ A number of museums have been using a standardized process to create their own financial statement as part of an experimentation, and the Minister of Cultural Heritage hopes to have the procedure implemented by all museums.

This research will use interviews as the main source, data such as the total number of visitors or generated income will be mentioned and are useful as a reference or a validation point for some claims, but the main conclusions will be drawn from them. Some different ways of conducting the analysis were considered in the early stages of this work, like a mixed-method system to combine interviews and a substantial dataset composed of all the data disclosed by the museums after the reform, and also an efficiency frontiers approach (Pignataro, 2011), either with one of the twenty institutions or a best-practice case from the outside - the ideal candidate was considered the *Museo Egizio* of Turin, a foundation since 2004, with more than 850.000 visitors each year and widely regarded as an example of successful autonomy. However, the interviews and a more in-depth analysis of the situation of each museum involved in the process of *désétatisation* of 2014 made clear that a comparison between these institutions would be much less interesting than an analysis of how each one of them has evolved in the past months and the goals set for this first four years of autonomy, as some were already established museums before the reform, while others are undergoing significant changes and renovations. Moreover, since the goal of the research is to discover the effect that this process of autonomization had over the museums, it is more useful to go into the details and the unique experience of each organization. A more quantitative research on how they have performed and a comparison of them should be an interesting research to do in a couple of years, as it is much too soon to measure the effects of the reform in raw numbers.

4.3 The research

The decision to use interviews as the main resource was taken at the beginning of the work, that was actually inspired by a series of interviews with the directors of these museums published by the Italian magazine *Artribune* (Nastro, 2016a; 2016b). Previous research about autonomy and museums in Italy was mentioned in Chapter 2, here they are discussed briefly to show what parts were used for the development of this method and what was discarded. The first, although not focused on autonomy, was the paper by Basso & Funari (2004), and was studied during the early stages of this thesis as the Data Envelopment Analysis was considered an interesting instrument to investigate technical efficiency, but as the project developed it became clear that the goal of this work is not to have a list of the best-performing museums and that, as mentioned several times, data collection might have been problematic. Lastly, there are significant differences in term of

size and visitors among the twenty institutions, while the cases used in their research were easily comparable. For these reasons, the DEA was discarded. The work about the new director of the MNST was also analyzed (Bagdadli & Paolino, 2005), but the cases available were far less ideal than the one used by the scholars for their research, as they had more data to work with and focused on one museum, while the aim of this work was to draw some general conclusions. Nevertheless, the paper has been a really useful source as part of the literature. The last paper is also the most interesting of the three, as the 2014 reform has much in common with the Pompeii case in the study of Ferri & Zan (2014). Some limits of the law were overcome in the new reform, such as the number of members of the *board* - raised from three to five - and the lack of clarity regarding the freedom to operate by the institution, while other issues remain, the most significant being the human resources management, still done by the Ministry. The similarities between this case and the reform being analyzed in this thesis are countless, so it seemed right to use a similar approach - without the ten-year-long amount of data, unfortunately - to investigate the autonomization of museums.

It has been said that this will be a qualitative research, that data on the subject are scarce and that a series of interviews will be conducted and analyzed. The literature presented in Chapter 2 provides a series of concepts that are related with autonomy in cultural institutions, the figure of the director in museums, the importance of accountability and so on. All these assumptions, verified by the researchers in their samples, will be tested again in the Italian case, and more specifically in the twenty museums that gained an autonomous status following the reform made by the Minister of Cultural Heritage in 2014. The year is particularly significant here because the process of autonomization started in 2014 with a list of institutions that was expanded two years later to thirty. This work, however, is focused only on the institutions that became autonomous in the first instance, as the ones that were granted the new status in 2016 have been in this new situation for such a short amount of time that it is impossible to make even a first analysis of what the *désétatisation* means for them.

A sample will be created, consisting of ten museums, that will represent the whole group. Museum directors, the ones that arguably know better the changes that have been going on inside the museum after the reform, will be interviewed, using a format (see Appendix 4) developed for the purpose, drawing from the book *Social Research Methods* (Byrman, 2012). Rather than a set of standardized questions, with the answers ready to be

coded and processed, the interviews wanted to be a way to let the interviewees focus on the aspects that they considered more significant. Some other sources, like reports and press releases, will be complementary to the primary research technique, especially in those cases when the directors were not available or the interviews were significantly shorter than the others.

In the first part of the analysis each interview will be presented separately, to provide some basic data on the museum and highlight the most significant and peculiar aspects that emerged from the talk. References to the literature will be made when the findings are in line with the theory, as well as when the position or idea expressed by the interviewee differ from the academical perspective; in this case, an attempt to explain the reasons behind this discrepancy will be made.

The second part of the analysis will look at the whole sample to obtain common aspects and test these findings using the literature discussed in the previous chapters. In particular, since the goal of this research is to understand how the museums have changed with the introduction of the reform, two papers will be used, Dewey's work on arts management (2004) and an study of innovation in European museums (Vicente et al., 2012). The first article lists five functions that are considered crucial for the cultural sector - managing international cultural interactions, representing cultural identity, promoting innovative methods of audience development, exercising effective strategic leadership, fostering a sustainable mixed funding system (Dewey, 2004, p. 19), while the latter proposes four fields that signal innovation in museums, namely technological innovation in management, technological innovations applied to visitor experience, organizational innovation, artistic innovation (Vicente et al., 2012, p. 652). The interviews and the additional material provided by the museums will be examined to find evidence of these activities. The research question *how the special autonomy granted to twenty museums by the Riforma Franceschini in 2014 changed them* will thus be break down in three parts: what are the most significant examples of change, what are the functions that have been developed better, in which areas was innovation more important.

4.4 The sample

At this point it should be clear that the most significant innovation of the reform is the autonomy given to the museums, and how crucial the role of the museum's directors is in these times of change. As the persons responsible for all the aspects of the institution's

life, that had to understand the situation each institution was in at the time of their appointment and are now pushing to prove that the reform was needed, it seemed logical to pick them as the ideal candidates for the interviews. Furthermore, it was believed that this pivotal role they cover put them in a particular position, ideal both in terms of willingness to be part of this research and quality of their contributions: they will be happy about the reform, of course, and would want to give as much visibility as possible to it, to the novelties that it brought about and to the museum they manage; at the same time, if there are any flaws or problems, they are the ones most affected by them, thus they should be critical and provide a useful feedback. The main downside of the choice of interviewing directors was that, given their role, they would be quite busy and scheduling an interview with all of them would take a significant amount of time and effort. For this reason it seemed a good goal to interview half of them, enough to be able to make some general assumptions while still being manageable in term of time devoted to the research. This, of course, was cause of some concerns. All the twenty institutions were invited to participate in the research, and depending on the availability a selection was be made to create a combination as close as possible to the original group - to prevent excessive bias - using geographical position, number of visitors and focus of the collection as the key variables. While they have been considered equally important from a cultural point of view by the policy makers, these museums greatly differ in size, number of visitors and appeal, and for this reason it will be crucial to take these differences into consideration when trying to create a sample. Just by looking at the number of visitors over the year 2016 for each museum the differences among these institutions are obvious: the most visited site is the *Gallerie degli Uffizi*, in Florence, with 2.010.631 visitors; at the bottom of the list the *Galleria Estense* in Modena with around 24.000, less people than what the *Uffizi* see in a week (A comprehensive list with visitors numbers can be found in Appendix 1, an overview in appendix 2). Some of these museums have always benefited from a great exposure, are located in some of the most visited cities of the country, if not the world, and can be considered already successful in what they do, while other operate on a much smaller scale, in cities and regions that are not touched by major tourist flows (that can have a huge impact on visitors numbers). Moreover, these institutions are scattered throughout the country, with one or more being present in 13 out of the total of 20 Italian regions (for a more in depth analysis of the distribution see Appendix 3), and services that can have a positive or negative effect on visitors greatly differ from one region to the other. The final

sample can be found below. Each entry is compiled with this scheme: *Name of the institution*, city, level of the institution, identity of the interviewee (code used in the next chapter to refer to the interviewee), date of the interview, duration of the interview, additional comments when needed.

Institution	City	Level	Interviewee (Code)	Date	Duration	Notes
<i>Palazzo Reale</i>	Genoa	2	director Serena Bertolucci (I1)	28/03	80 min.	
<i>Gallerie dell'Accademia</i>	Venice	1	director Paola Marini (I2)	12/04	79 min.	additional material was provided by Romina Simonato, from the museum offices, via email.
<i>Musei Reali</i>	Turin	2	Eliana Bonanno Administrative Officer of the museum (I3)	13/04	27 min.	additional material was provided by the interviewee via email.
<i>Palazzo Ducale</i>	Mantua	2	director Peter Assmann (I4)	18/04	37 min.	
<i>Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria</i>	Perugia	2	director Marco Pierini (I5)	19/04	32 min.	
<i>Gallerie degli Uffizi</i>	Florence	1	director Eike Schmidt (I6)	/	/	the director answered some of the questions found in the format, the rest of them were answered by a number of people working in the museum's departments that were more relevant for each question.

<i>Paestum</i>	Capaccio Paestum	2	director Gabriel Zuchtriegel (I7)	27/04	27 min.	additional material was provided via email by Rossella Anna Tedesco, responsible for the communications and marketing office of the museum
<i>Reggia di Caserta</i>	Caserta	1	director Mauro Felicori (I8)	27/04	56 min.	
<i>Capodimonte</i>	Naples	1	director Sylvain Bellenger (I9)	28/04	71 min.	
<i>Pinacoteca di Brera</i>	Milan	1	director James M. Bradburne (I10)	04/05	51 min.	

Some comments must be made, as there are some off criteria making a comparison between the sample and the full list (Appendices 1, 3 and 5). First of all, the city of Rome is missing from the sample although three of the twenty institutions are located in the city. This is partly due to the lack of responses from the museums and partly to pondered decisions. *Galleria Borghese* did not answer the first round of email sent in the early stages of this work and was discarded after the first candidates were selected, as it is both a Level 1 institution and a sufficient number of respondents was already met - in fact the total count is 5 out of 7 in a 10 museums sample, arguably even too many. Furthermore, being an institution that attracts little more than 500.000 visitors a year it lies between the 300.000-500.000 and the 500.000-750.000 categories, both of which were already covered, with 5 out of 6 and 1 out of 2, respectively. The other two institutions, the *Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea* di Roma and the *Gallerie Nazionali d'arte antica* were considered more interesting, as the former is the only museums of the 20 focused on modern and contemporary art and the latter meets the criteria of being a Level 2 institution and of having between 50.000 and 150.000 visitors a year, both underrepresented in the sample with 5 out of 13 and 2 out of 5 respectively. A number of

attempts to schedule an interview, made via email and telephone, were not successful, so they were both dropped from the research.

Another issue is the concentration of all the institution from the south in one region, *Campania*. This was due to a number of factor. Firstly, two of the museums that made the sample were the very first respondents to the preliminary round of emails. Another reason was that the other institutions located in the southern part of Italy are archaeological museums (one in Taranto and the other in Reggio Calabria). No more than two of these kind of institution should be featured in the sample, as there are 4 out of the whole 20, with Paestum being the first and the *Museo Archeologico Nazionale* of Naples a potential candidate the other two were not pursued further (the latter was also dropped when *Capodimonte* declared available, as 4 out of 4 in *Campania* would be too much. However, they are all from different parts of the region so was considered acceptable.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, the findings of this research are quite interesting. There are some substantial trends throughout the sample - a general increase in both the figures of visitors and income, just to mention the one that catch the eye first - but also many differences, as expected, given the heterogeneity of the group. For this reason, each institution will be presented individually, while the general impact of the reform is discussed later. The interviews are discussed in chronological order, and for each one of them the most significant points will be highlighted using both the words of the interviewee and the theory found in the literature. To prevent an excessive use of brackets and references all the parts inside quotation marks, if not specified otherwise, are to be intended as part of the face-to-face interview analyzed in the paragraph and conducted personally by the writer. In the second part of this chapter, where the general findings are presented, each source is referenced using the code from the list at the end of Chapter 4 (I1, I2, I3...). The identity of the interviewee, usually the director of the institution, is mentioned at the beginning of each part. Exceptions to the standard method, being them telematic interviews or a combination of face-to-face interaction and other sources, are also described, expanding the list found at the end of the previous chapter. Facts and figures are a personal elaboration of data taken from Mibact's reports of the years 2015 and 2016¹⁶. Recordings and transcripts of the interviews, as well as the additional material used and mentioned in this chapter are available upon request.

5.2 The interviews

The research started at *Palazzo Reale* in Genoa, with the director Serena Bertolucci. The palace, located in the center of the city, had 72.896 visitors in 2016, up almost 10% from the total of 66.523 of the year before, with total revenues growing from €101.555,00 in 2015 to 176.829,40 in the following year, up an incredible 75%. In the very beginning of the interview it was mentioned how “it is a unique case, because the museum is inside a building that does not serve only the purpose of a cultural institution, as it hosts other governmental offices and only with the reform is becoming a museum in its own

¹⁶The tables are available at http://www.statistica.beniculturali.it/rilevazioni/musei/Anno%202015/MUSEI_TAVOLA7_2015.pdf and http://www.statistica.beniculturali.it/rilevazioni/musei/Anno%202016/MUSEI_TAVOLA7_2016.pdf for the years 2015 and 2016, respectively.

right". This meant renewing all the exhibition spaces, that will result in an increase of the available space by as much as 50%. "I'm still not working on the next step, we are trying to turn the palace into a real museum". At the same time, since the building includes more than 50 apartments, 20 shops and 15 storage units, the museum is starting a collaboration with the local institutions to provide an affordable housing solution to people willing to give back to the neighbourhood and the city, to open a surgery and to rent the commercial spaces to local businesses. It is a perfect example of the *empowering institution* (Casini, 2014) that museums should aim to become by serving the public interest (Throsby, 2010), and also testimony that a less bureaucratic structure - the representatives of the city could discuss everything with the director - can increase collaborations with both public and private parties (Holler & Mazza, 2013) and encourage valorization (Rizzo & Throsby, 2006). These changes, new projects and improvements allow people "to enjoy the museum and, more important, to identify with it", building legitimacy for the institution. Another point that stood out in the interview was the importance of social networks and how the image of the director can influence the whole institution, something that has been mentioned by all the interviewees but was particularly strong for Genoa, part of a bigger effort to reach out to new audiences, another goal of any modern museum (Van der Ploeg, 2006)

The second institution was the *Gallerie dell'Accademia* in Venice, the interviewee the director Paola Marini. The museum is the only one in the North-east area and a first-level organization. Numbers grew from 286.821 visitors and €1.676.220 in revenues to 312.014 and €2.088.849, 9 and 25%, respectively. The institution is still in the early stages of the renovation, and most of its activities were limited by the works that led to the opening of the seven new rooms and the considerable number of artworks (more than 90) that were touring the world as part of three different exhibitions. A university professor worked with the museum to completely redesign one of these exhibitions and allowed the institution to retain part of the painting that were supposed to go abroad as part of the loan, proving once again the importance of the relationship museum-schools.

The third was the *Musei Reali* in Turin. It is a complex of several museums and exhibition spaces, that is still in the process of becoming a single, cohesive institution. In the meantime, the main issue is the lack of human resources. For the museum is available a report of the personnel situation¹⁷, a tangible testimony of this problem so often

¹⁷ Provided by the interviewee Eliana Bonanno via email.

mentioned in the literature (Carmosino, 2016; Casini 2016b). All but three of the fourteen positions included in the organization chart are understaffed, with the total number of employee being 135, 53 short (30%) of the 188 that should be there. The importance of accountability (Cherchi, 2017a; Ferri & Zan, 2014; Peacock, 2006) was confirmed by the interviewee, that also mentioned a project developed by *Politecnico* of Milan to analyze the performances of three of the autonomous museums, *Musei Reali*, *Palazzo Reale* in Genoa and *Palazzo Ducale* in Mantua, another sign of the need that these institutions now have to provide consistent data on the management.

The fourth interview was with the director of *Palazzo Ducale*, Peter Assmann, in Mantua. An art historian from Germany, with experiences in both Italian and international museums, under his supervision the Palace saw one of the most significant increase in the total number of visitors of all the autonomous institutions, growing by as much as 50% in one year, from 243.740 to 363.173. Ticket revenues grew accordingly, going from €1.069.790,75 (749.923,32 after the concessionaire took its percentage) to €1.564.997,15 (€1.097.063,00). When evaluating this numbers it must be taken into account that Mantua was the Italian Capital of Culture in 2016, a city-wide event that surely had a positive impact on the flow of visitors throughout the year, but the first months of 2017 confirm the trend and are actually better than the previous year, so this incredible result is not merely a consequence of the event itself but also of the effort put in place after the reform. A reform that, in the words of the director, “sets the museums in line to an international standard of autonomy previously attainable only by foundations or private initiatives”. The building is no longer “a palace that people can visit” but a museums in its own right. While keeping the same opening hours and admittance fees, the museum managed to attract more visitors by providing new services and a more broad artistic offer. It is clear how most of the institutions are using modern and contemporary art to attract a more diverse audience, a strategy carried out also in Mantua: the gallery for contemporary art is now open throughout the year, with up to six exhibitions over the course of twelve months; a solo show of street artist Patrick Moya was staged in the cellars of Vincenzo Gonzaga; an exhibition of Italian artists that use light as a medium was set up in the *Cavallerizza* courtyard; an installation is to be hosted in the main square of the palace - *Vorticci*, by Hidetoshi Nagasawa at the time of the interview.

However, as the director said, “a lot of things are still missing, especially on the personnel, but we are already having some success, and we are proving that this is the

right way to go, as it has been done in other countries". He also said that a misconception, the idea that the goal of museums is valorization and it goes against the *Soprintendenze* and conservation, is the main behind the resistance that the reform is encountering. Although some initiatives were promoted by the museum before the reform, they were usually "secondary", with conservation as the main goal ("it is good if nothing moves"), the main difference is that now valorization is the main goal. "We do not have visitors, we have guests".

The fifth the *Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria* in Perugia. Visitors went from 68.713 in 2015 to 66.087 in 2016 (-4%), while revenues grew from €235.873,64 to €286.296,79 (+21%, €176.905,23 and €214.722,59 after the subtraction of the concessionaire percentage). The increased revenue is easily explained, as the admittance fee was raised from €6.5 to €8. The increase is significant because it covers the aforementioned quota - 20% of the revenues - that goes to the fund created by the Ministry to subsidize smaller institution while still maintaining a price in line with most cultural institutions. This means that the museum can still serve the public interest (the very reason for its existence, according to Throsby, 2010) while having the same budget as the previous year, as the increased price is enough to balance the new "tax". The separation between the government and the management really works, mentioned by Frey & Meier (2006) as a way to increase productivity proved to be effective, according to Marco Pierini, the director. Like the director of *Palazzo Ducale* (I4), the interviewee, art historian and philosopher stressed how the reform aligns the Italian system to the international standard, with the person in charge able to develop a program and spend - an aspect in which the financial autonomy, even though limited, is crucial. Almost all the members of the Board of directors are art historians, showing the need for new professional figures in museums mentioned by Casini (2016b) and others, but in the case of Perugia the audit committee serves also an advisory purpose, a "fundamental help" (I5). Visitors number went down after the earthquake that hit the region in the summer of 2016. Even though the museum, the city of Perugia and the nearby area were not affected by it, general tourism in the region went down by as much as 70% and the visitors of the museum by 50%, mostly due to the tourists being misinformed about the situation. Temporary exhibitions are developed with the collection and the area in mind, in line with the idea of Bradburne (2001) and the practices adopted by other museums and one of the exhibitions open to the public at the time of the interview, "*Baldassarre Orsini tra arte e scienza*", is a good example of this, as

it uses the focus on the artist to provide an insight on the art scene of the region in the second half of the XVIII century. It is the other one, however, that is worth mentioning here, a proof of the *artistic innovation* mentioned by Vicente et al. (2012) and the *international cultural interactions* found in Dewey's work (2004): "*Federico Seneca (1891 – 1976). Segno e forma nella pubblicità*" is an exhibition about design, a form of art usually not found in museums like the *Galleria Nazionale*, and the result of a collaboration with a Swiss museum.

The sixth the *Gallerie degli Uffizi* in Florence, the superstar. The growth is not as impressive as in other museums - 1% for visitors, 2% for revenues - but it is probably a consequence of the huge success that these museums¹⁸ were experiencing even before the reform, with more than 3.000.000 visitors and €18.000.000 in revenues each year, and the *Galleria* totalling 2 million visitors alone. The complex was already operating a condition of autonomy after the special *Soprintendenze* established in Rome, Venice, Naples and Florence, as discussed in Chapter 2, and some aspects of the reform, the most significant being having to deal with budgets and financial statements, were already part of the everyday life of the institutions. Although some interesting changes, that will be discussed in the next part of this chapter, followed the appointment of the new director¹⁹, the institution continued a process of autonomization started years ago.

The seventh Paestum. The archaeological site attracted 383.172 visitors in 2016, up 27% from the 300.343 of the years before. An even more significant growth is found in revenues, the total of 2016, €1.621.820,59, was 47% more than the one of 2015, when the area collected €1.100.489,93 (€1.183.929,03 and €803.357,65 without the the concessionaire percentage). The interviewee is the director, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, a German archaeologist with both hands-on and academical experience, he contributed to numerous excavations, published several articles and taught archaeology at the university level in Italy. The research is integrated with facts and figures provided in a second instance via email by Rossella Anna Tedesco, responsible for the communications and marketing office of the museum. The answer to the first question confirms the analysis of the reform made by Forte (2015) and mentioned before in this work. The museum is no longer an executor

¹⁸ Under the name *Gallerie degli Uffizi* are grouped a number of institution, although is the museum (*Galleria degli Uffizi*) that attracts almost two thirds of the total visitors; a detailed list is provided in the document mentioned in the next footnote.

¹⁹ Information from the Cultural Program for the year 2017, available at <http://www.uffizi.it/getFile.php?id=1151>

but an actor, and there is a shift from one of the offices of the Ministry to an autonomous institution. A significant change is how the person responsible for the institution is now present all the time, with an office inside the building where the museum is, while before the *Soprintendente* in charge of overseeing the museum was located 50km away, in Salerno. The shortage of personnel is less significant here than in most of the other institutions, and the director does not see the ministerial control over human resources as problematic as others do. While it is mentioned to be a problem the fact that is hard to motivate people if there is no way of punishing and rewarding them, it is believed that the reform empowers workers and give them a new responsibility, often enough to push them to perform better. Another finding in line with the need for leadership mentioned by Dewey (2004).

The eighth the *Reggia di Caserta*, that jumped from 497.197 visitors and €2.739.600,67 in revenues to 683.070 and 4.112.305,63, up 37% and 50%, respectively. The director is Mauro Felicori, one of the few cultural managers appointed for the autonomous museums. Like the case of Paestum (17), the superintendent was located far away from the museum, resulting in a lack of legitimacy. Now the person in charge is inside the museum, is there everyday. The museum is now offering more in terms of exhibitions and events, and works together with international institutions like the *Hermitage*. All of this is helping to create a new image of the *Reggia*, that used to make the news only for the wrong reasons and is now one of the most successful museums of the reform

The ninth *Capodimonte* in Naples, Last year visitor numbers rose by 34% and revenues by 54% (147.668 visitors and €432.411,85 in 2015; 198.467 visitors and €666.124,39 in 2016; the 30% taken by the concessionaire reduced yearly revenues to €302.688,30 and €466.287,07). The museum is just one of the buildings located in the Royal Park, a 1,24km² green area, and a remarkable work has been done to renovate the whole site, as the director said in a previous interview (Nastro, 2016b) the first goal was to bring the institution back to a condition that would be considered normal for a museum and start from there, as *Capodimonte* was far behind even on the most basic aspects.

The tenth and last museums was the *Pinacoteca di Brera* in Milan, where the growth trend is once again verified. Visitors were 322.372 in 2015 and 343.173 in 2016, 6% more, revenues went from €1.037.312,00 to €1.812.604,20, a substantial increase equal to 75%. Roughly 10% of the total went to the concessionaire, reducing the net to

933.580,80 in 2015 and 1.631.343,78 in 2016. The director, James M. Bradburne, is a British/Canadian architect turned into museum manager. His opening sentence already says a lot about the current situation, “A lot has changed and the same time not much has changed”. The reform and the newfound autonomy have not made the museum as dynamic as some might have hoped to, due to the fact that most of the processes are still standardized and slowed down by bureaucracy and by a strict anti-corruption policy. With that said, a lot has improved: the museums was the first to have a bank account, where the revenues from ticket sales, the contributes of sponsors and all the other source of funding are collected; a three-year long plan, approved by the board, has been developed to renovate all the 38 rooms where the artworks are exposed - 21 of which are already finished less than one year later - with new lighting, freshly painted walls and bilingual labels; the restoration and reopening to the public of closed spaces can now be done much faster than in the past. However, “it is a system that is not sustainable on the long run, needs some improvement”. Another interested remark made by the interviewee, is that innovation is made possible by the directors, in line with the findings of the research focused on MNST (Bagdadli & Paolino, 2005).

5.3 General findings

An effort was made to present the main changes that took place in each institution after the reform and the appointment of the new directors, both those strictly connected to the novelties and those that are mainly an initiative of the ones in charge. This was not done to confuse the reader but as a way to present two concepts that are somehow opposite and still complementary: as the director of Brera said, not all of what has been going on in the museums is a direct consequence of the new law but rather of the initiative of the people that work in the museum. This does not reduce the importance of the reform, as directors would not be there in the first place without it, but was pointed out because it is a finding in line with the research of Bagdadli and Paolino (2005), where the scholars say that “the practices adopted at NMST were more specific to the organizational context and their contents were more complex than those created at regional level” (p.18). Likewise, the change seen in these museums is the result of an active role of the directors and the people working there combined with the new possibilities that the reform made available.

All the museums mentioned in this research improved their figures in both visitors and revenues, growing 10,2% and 19,4% respectively²⁰. All directors confirmed that is crucial to have a figure responsible for the institution and a certain degree of autonomy, another concept amply discussed and underline in the theory (Alibrandi & Ferri, 1995; Dewey, 2004). A reoccurring statement was that now Italian museums were finally in line with international standards (I4, I5, I8, I10), which means two things: firstly, the existence in the cultural sector of some widely agreed-upon measures, as mentioned earlier (Klamer et al., 2013), and secondly, the fact that the reform succeeded, at least to a certain extent, in its attempt to bridge the gap with other countries that has characterized the Italian cultural sector in the past years (Cammelli, 2016a; Forte, 2015)²¹.

Vicente et al. (2012) propose four key fields of innovation for museums: technological innovations in management, technological innovations applied to visitor experience, organizational innovation, artistic innovation. The analyzed museums show improvements in all four, and - in line with the findings of the research - is the mode of governance that plays a decisive role in terms of innovation. Digitalization is crucial for innovation in management - the *Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria* has project to scan and catalogue the whole collection that will start this summer (I5), a similar work was developed in collaboration with the *Politecnico di Torino* by the *Musei Reali*, to create the digital version of the *Fondo Promis*, a collection of 3.500 documents and drawings of Italian architect Carlo Promis (I3) and other institutions hope to follow this trend, as mentioned for example by *Capodimonte's* director Sylvain Bellenger in regard of the museum's collection of prints and documents (I9) - and in visitor experience, with all museums offering (or planning to have available as soon as possible) a new website and apps to facilitate the interaction of the visitors with the institutions, their collections and exhibitions. Important to recall here how interaction was mentioned by Bradburne (2001) as crucial for the development of museums, that stressed also the need for a new kind of exhibitions, with less blockbusters ("it is not the role of a public museum" (I1)) and a stronger focus on the collection of the museum. This approach is shared by all institution, from *Brera* - obviously- to the already discussed example of Perugia, to the *Uffizi*, that in

²⁰ Data retrieved from a table by Il Sole 24 Ore, available at <http://www.infodata.ilssole24ore.com/2017/05/29/musei-aumentano-visitatori-incassi-un-anno-dalla-riforma/>

²¹ Forte already advocated the need of innovation, mentioning the existing and growing distance between the Italian case and the international standards years ago (see Forte, 2011)

the aforementioned document about the projects for the year 2017 plan a reduction of big exhibitions in favour of initiatives aimed at a better understanding and appreciation of the collections.

All the museums are adopting basic marketing techniques, a crucial aspect, as mentioned by Van der Ploeg (2006), that was often overlooked in the past. Another point mentioned by all the interviewees is the importance of school and universities, and numerous examples of collaborations and joint projects were given. Incentivizing the creation of synergies between these institutions was one of the main goal of the reform, as well as a task that Ministry should have always aimed for, as claimed by a number of scholars (Argan, 1957; Cammelli, 2016a; Casini, 2014; Russoli, 1971).

The interviewees also agree that the figure of the director contributes to the legitimacy of the institution at the internal level and that it motivates the employees. The conflicts that might surface as a consequence of the introduction of new forms of management in cultural institutions (Castañer, 2013) appear to be limited, probably also because most of the directors are still have a humanities background rather than a managerial one, which is mentioned as the source of conflict. It was mentioned earlier that the directors of three autonomous museums, *Palazzo Reale*, *Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria* and *Galleria Nazionale delle Marche*, located in Genoa, Perugia and Urbino, respectively, are not only at the head of the institution but also of the *Polo* of the region. It was mentioned by I1 and clearly stated by I5 that the decision to ask the directors of those autonomous museums located in smaller regions to also oversee the other museums of the area, made to reduce public expenditure, creates some issues similar to the ones caused by the *Soprintendente* being far away from the institution.

The main problem in the reform lies in a significant limitation of the autonomy, the management of human resources. As highlighted by Cammelli (2016b) the introduction of new law was not followed by significant changes in the museums' personnel, and the ideal approach (define the functions that should be covered, create the organizations needed to fulfil those functions, allocate the right people for the job) was overturned, with the personnel being virtually fixed due to limited mobility and the functions being limited. Furthermore, as pointed out by one director (I10), another aspects that limits autonomy is the fact that the budget, once it is approved by the Board of directors, has to also be approved by the central organization of museums in Rome, a procedure that can take up

to five months during which the museum is not allowed to spend freely, as it was supposed to do with financial autonomy.

Another issue that is shared by the majority of the museums is the outsourcing of the ticket office (8 out of the 10 considered by this work, but the two that are already opting for an in-house solution, *Palazzo Reale* in Genoa and *Musei Reali* in Turin, are the only two among the twenty autonomous institutions). It has been a common practice to entrust services like ticket office and publications to third parties, but the impact of the revenues of museums is incredibly high, as these entities, known as *Concessionari*, are entitled a quota as high as 30% of the total of ticket sales²² and are responsible for key activities like the creation of exhibitions (Casini, 2016a). All directors mentioned this situation as something that must be addressed in the future, with a number of them saying that they hope to regain control of these tasks once the contracts end, confirming the problem of outsourcing of key services that affects many state run museums (Vicente et al., 2012).

5.4 Limitations and avenues for future research

So much material has been left out for reasons of time, space and focus. This work aimed at finding out the effects of the reform on a general level, but each museum provided many insights and peculiarities to be worthwhile of an individual research,

One really interesting aspect that surfaced several times during the interviews with the directors and was mentioned by scholars (Casini, 2016) is the need for new professionals, that are not considered by the present regulations. However, given the current issues with well established figures - virtually every museum is understaffed when it comes to vital positions, from guardians to restorers - the discussion has been pushed in the background. In the next few years, once these missing has been covered, it might be interesting to analyze the matter further and find out how these new figures changed - if they did - the museum.

It might also be interesting to extend the analysis to the other ten institutions in the following years, and maybe compare those with the twenty that became autonomous before

²² An interesting investigation that shines light on the problem of *Concessionari*, with the evocative title "*Chi guadagna con l'arte italiana?*" ("Who is making money with Italian art?") was published in 2016 by the newspaper *Repubblica*. It can be found at http://inchieste.repubblica.it/it/repubblica/rep-it/2016/02/03/news/la_grande_rapina_ai_musei-131170754/?refresh_ce

6. Conclusions

This work wanted to analyze the effects that the new level of autonomy introduced by the *Franceschini Reform* had on the Italian museums. In particular, the research was focused on the twenty institutions with the greatest degree of autonomy out of the four provided by the law (Casini, 2014) appointed in 2014, the year the reform was promulgated.

To do so, a number of relevant articles and publications were collected and discussed in Chapter 2, starting with some broad topics (cultural policy, management and economics) and narrowing down the research to the case of Europe and then to that of Italy. Chapter 3 presented the reform in detail, showing how the most significant points of it were supported by the literature and by the experience of other countries. Chapter 4 explained the methodology used to conduct the research. It started with the creation of a sample, containing of half of the total number of museums, taking into account a series of key characteristics - number of visitors, city where the institution is, background of the director and so on. 40 days were then dedicated to data collection, which consisted of 10 semi-structured interviews with the directors of the museums in the sample and a variety of documents and sources (reports, press releases, databases...) that was later processed with a two-steps approach, focusing on each interview as a single case and then combining all of them to draw some general conclusions.

The results are in line with the expectations, with all the museums improving in terms of visitors, revenues and activities, confirming the assumption that a certain degree of autonomy, especially for bigger museums, has indeed a positive effects on them. Also the problems of the reform mentioned in the literature, namely the management of human resources, can now be based on empirical research.

Resources

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Appendix 1: institutions

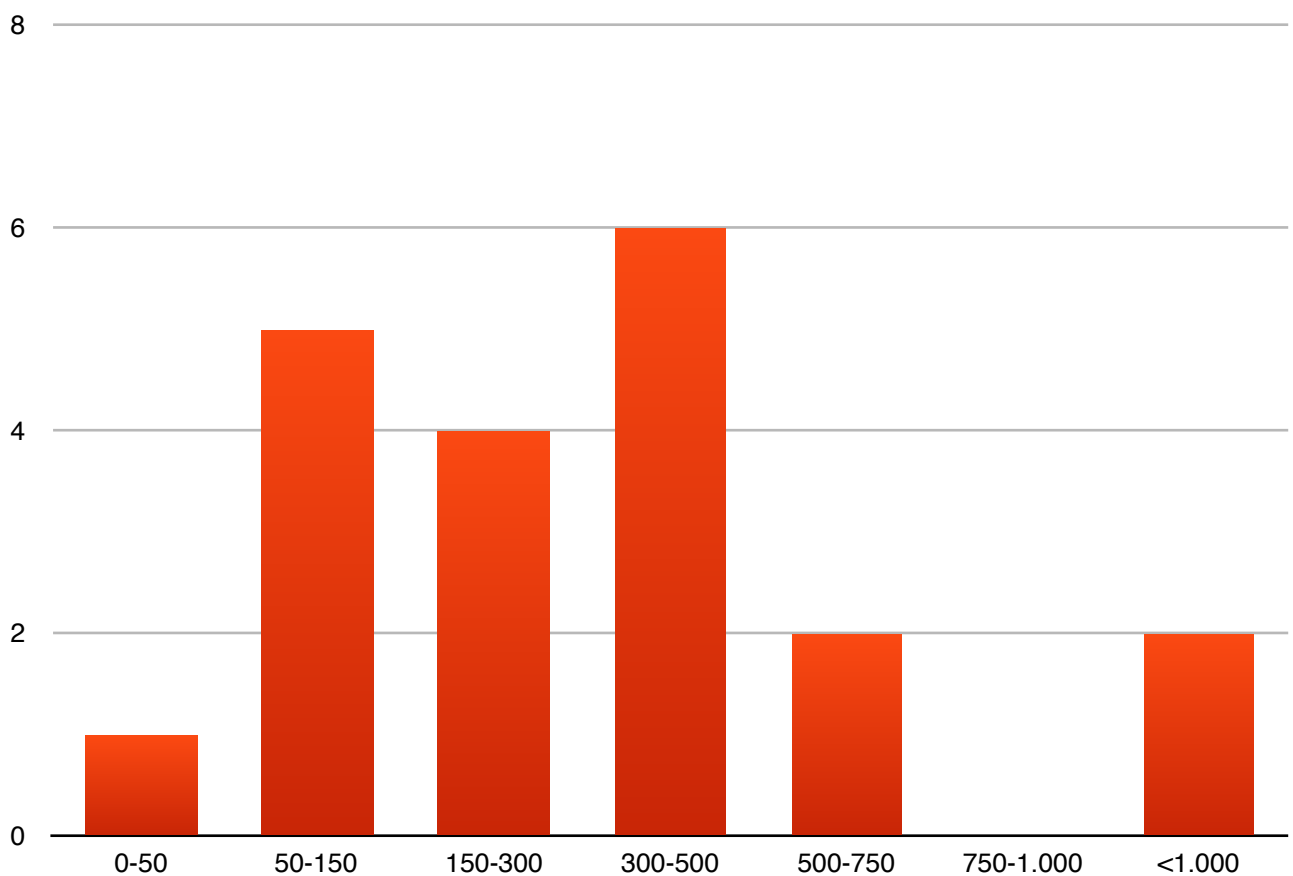
The table provides some data on the museums that became autonomous in 2014 and that were used as criteria for the creation of the sample. As mentioned in the text for the case of Mantua, in the table are listed as directors also those who have been, at the present time, removed from the position following the ruling of the *TAR*.

Museum	City and region	Director	Nationality	Level	Number of Visitors
Galleria Borghese	Rome, Lazio	Anna Coliva	Italian	1	524.785 (2016)
Gallerie degli Uffizi	Florence, Tuscany	Eike Schmidt	German	1	3.327.720 (2016)
Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Roma	Rome, Lazio	Cristiana Collu	Italian	1	135.218 (2016)
Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia	Venice, Veneto	Paola Marini	Italian	1	312.014 (2016)
Museo di Capodimonte	Naples, Campania	Sylvain Bellenger	French	1	198.467 (2016)
Pinacoteca di Brera	Milan, Lombardy	James M. Bradburne	British / Canadian	1	343.173 (2016)
Reggia di Caserta	Caserta, Campania	Mauro Felicori	Italian	1	683.070 (2016)
Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze	Florence, Tuscany	Cecilie Hollberg	German	2	1.461.185 (2016)
Galleria Estense di Modena	Modena, Emilia-Romagna	Martina Bagnoli	Italian	2	24.474 (2016)
Gallerie Nazionali d'arte antica di Roma	Rome, Lazio	Flaminia Gennari Santori	Italian	2	145.096 (2016)
Galleria Nazionale delle Marche	Urbino, Marche	Peter Aufreitet	Austrian	2	197.103 (2016)
Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria	Perugia, Umbria	Marco Pierini	Italian	2	66.087 (2016)

Museo Nazionale del Bargello	Florence, Tuscany	Paola D'Agostino	Italian	2	213.598 (2016)
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli	Naples, Campania	Paolo Giuglierini	Italian	2	452.431 (2016)
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria	Reggio Calabria, Calabria	Carmelo Malacrino	Italian	2	210.598
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Taranto	Taranto, Apulia	Eva Degl'Innocenti	Italian	2	82.319 (2016)
Parco Archeologico di Paestum	Paestum, Campania	Gabriel Zuchtriegel	German	2	383.172 (2016)
Palazzo Ducale di Mantova	Mantua, Lombardy	Peter Assmann	Austrian	2	363.173 (2016)
Palazzo Reale di Genova	Genoa, Liguria	Serena Bertolucci	Italian	2	72.896 (2016)
Polo Reale di Torino	Turin, Piedmont	Enrica Pagella	Italian	2	314.195 (2016)

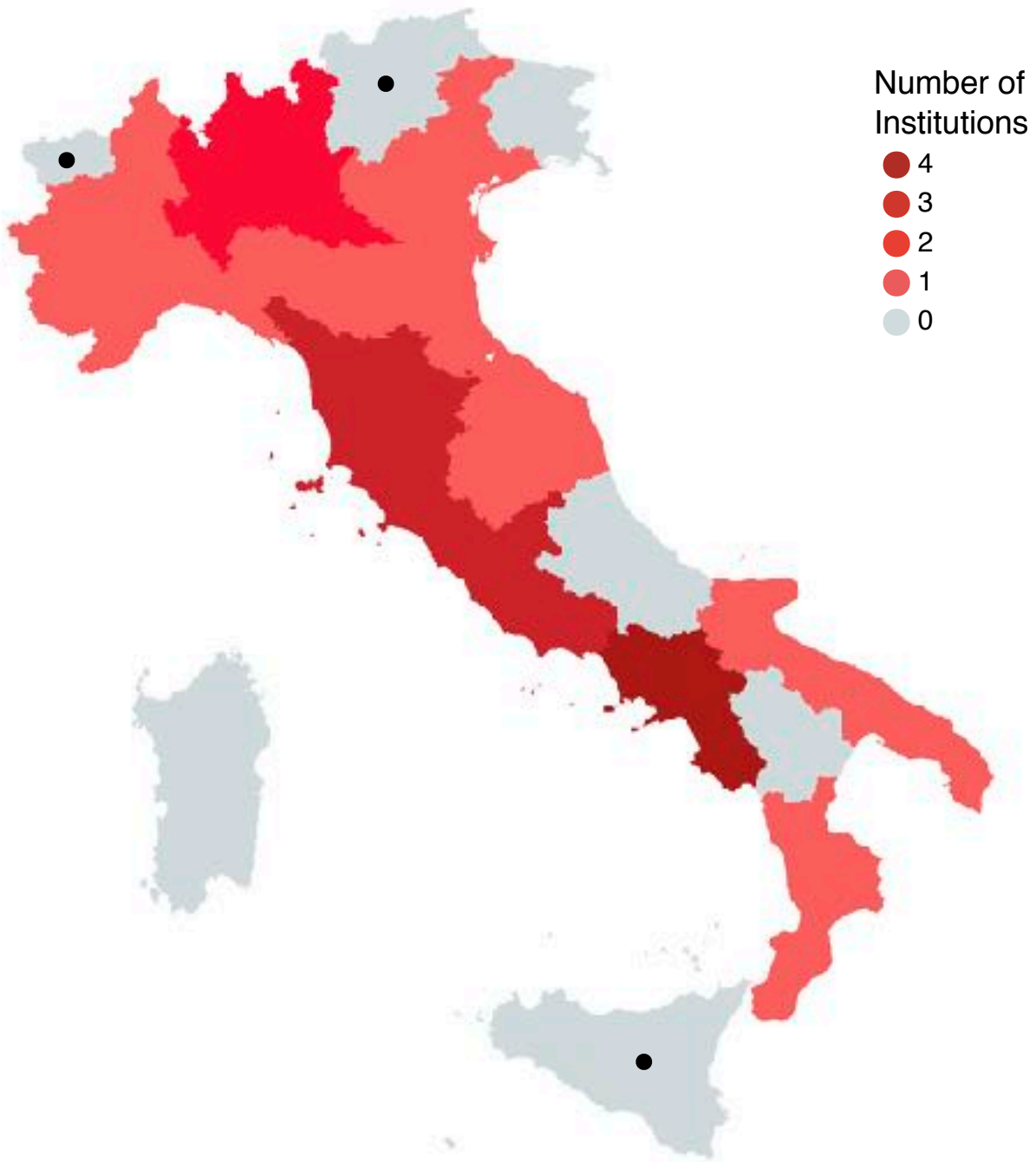
Appendix 2: categories

The graph shows the categories in which the twenty museums have been divided, using the total number of visitors as the criterion. The data are referred to the year 2016, the numbers are in thousands. It is clear how most of the museums are of medium size, only one venue has less than 50.000 visitors and seventeen between 50.000 and 750.000. There are two outliers, attracting more than 1.000.000 visitors (in fact, one has more than 1.5 million visitors and the other more than 3.3). As discussed, the sample was made accordingly to this distribution as well as to other factors.



Appendix 3: distribution

The maps provides a visual representation of the distribution of autonomous museums in Italy. In grey the regions without institution of this kind, the black dot signals those autonomous region with a special statute where cultural policy is different from the one at the national level.



Appendix 4: format

The questions listed here served as the format for the interviews. It must be noted, however, that ample space was left to the interviewees to focus on the aspects that were considered more important, and that consequently some questions were briefly answered or not even asked, depending on the situation and the time available.

1. What have been the most significant changes for the museum following the reform?
2. Are the traditional systems of management accountability important for the museum?
Do you evaluate each project from an economics point of view?
3. Have you made any changes in opening hours and entrance fees?
4. Do you organize temporary exhibition? How are they connected with the permanent collection? Do they have an impact on the total number of visitors?
5. Do you organize special events? Of what kind? Were they successful?
6. Are you working to create a diversified offer and/or a “tailor-made” experience for the visitors?
7. Which are the most significative collaboration (with privates, events and other cultural institutions)?
8. Is there an ongoing process to internationalize the museum, both in the sense of accessibility for a foreigner visitor and in term of relationships with institutions outside Italy?
9. What effort are being made to digitalize the museum (website, social networks, interactivity of the visit...)?
10. One of the main goals of the reform is to create synergies between museums and the world of education and research. What have you done in this direction? What are the most significant collaborations with schools and universities?
11. What additional services do you offer (or plan to offer in the future) to your visitors?
12. What part of your expenses is covered by museum’s activities? Have you set a certain percentage as a goal?
13. How is the museum’s personnel composed? Did you introduce new professional figures?
14. The fact that museums still have to depend on the Ministry for human resources as often been mentioned as the main problem of the reform, do you agree?

Appendix 5: sample

The graph provides a comparison between the twenty institution, represented in blue and divided into categories based on the total number of visitors in 2016 (in thousands), and the sample, represented in red. As it can be seen, only the one of the seven categories, the first, has at least one item in the twenty museums and is not represented in the sample, while no museum falls in the sixth - between 750.000 and 1.000.000 visitors - and thus none is present in the sample.

