

Peacebuilding through Trust and Knowledge Exchange: A Case Study of the Balkan Museum Network

Ana Perez Lozano

**Degree project for Master of Science (two year) in conservation
60 hec**

**Department of conservation
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This case study places the work of a local capacity-building network dedicated to Balkan museums as a peacebuilding mechanism. Relying on theories of social networks, social capital and peacebuilding, the quality of ties between members at the dyadic and network levels were qualitatively assessed. The quality of ties between members was assessed by considering the kinds of knowledge exchanged and kinds of collaborations members engaged in. Members' collaboration patterns were gathered through review of past activities and official documents, interviews, surveys, and participant observation. This was complemented with a review of literature about the Balkan's historical and recent development- in order to holistically assess the Network as a grass-roots social capital and peace building mechanism. The focus was on the Balkan Museum Network (BMN), a strategic alliance aiming to exchange knowledge between members from different cultural heritage institutions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Greece— most of whom were formerly conflicting entities in the 1990. Findings revealed this network showed strong evidence for social capital production, here understood as trust and knowledge shared, despite low frequency of interaction. This can serve as further evidence in that the quality of ties is not solely dependent on the amount of interactions members have, but on more intangible factors like individuals' willingness to engage in networks.

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1. Introduction

The Balkan Museum Network (BMN) is a regional cultural network of over 35 museums (December 2015) in the western Balkan region¹ with the aim of exchanging knowledge and building trust between different cultural heritage institutions most of whom are located in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia— formerly conflicting entities. Though there is a general agreement among Network founders that the Network succeeds in achieving their goals of building trust and capacities among members, there has been little research to support these claims. This thesis provides concrete foundations to these claims by analyzing the network with a case study approach through literature review, surveys and interviews. In this way, the thesis explores the Network's impact on the level of cooperation, trust, and skill capacities among its members—a group of formerly conflicting and disconnected communities of cultural practitioners.

While many organizations work towards bridging communities in the Balkans, here defined as Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, most organizations are politically and economically oriented, like the South East European Cooperation Initiative (SECI) The South Eastern Europe Cooperation Process (SEEC) the Stability Pact, The Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) (Andreev 2009, Cottey, 2012). These internationally founded networks are understood in this paper as the common approach towards peacebuilding in the area as they are primarily political and economic in nature (Cottey, 2012) and exclude the culture sector. The Balkan Museum Network's roots in the cultural sphere distinguishes it from other organizations and its role in building in building social capital through knowledge exchange is what makes the organization interesting

Through researching the Network's role in trust building and capacity building, this study illustrates how capacity building networks dedicated to cultural heritage can provide building peace and social capital. Since this paper only focuses on one network, the findings must be viewed as case specific and without claims to a wider authority about network systems, social

¹ Western Balkan countries defined here as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015).

capital nor peacebuilding. While this research contributes to the growing amount of literature available on how trust and knowledge is exchanged in network systems- it helps fill the gap in literature that is sector specific to cultural networks. Moreover, the research shows how a network of cultural institutions can possibly contribute to peacebuilding while enhancing knowledge and capacities of network members —museum practitioners working in previously conflicting areas.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this paper is to explore how membership of the Balkan Museum Network (BMN) has enhanced trust and knowledge between museum practitioners. It concerns itself with the Network members' relationships, personal and institutional.

The main objectives were:

1. To critically analyze how the 1990s Balkan conflicts have affected collaborations in the Balkans
2. To explore organizational learning and social capital in network system as possible peacebuilding processes
3. To critically analyze the Network's origin, mission, goals and activities
4. To assess Network membership impact on members' knowledge and trust

2. Literature Review

This section addresses several topics that are relevant in identifying evidence of strong ties and trust in network systems, relevant for analyzing the Balkan Museum Network. Key amongst this is social network theory that provides important insights in understanding how tie strength affects an individual to transfer knowledge and resources in a social network. Relying on the work of social network theorists (e.g. Burt, 1990; Granovetter, 1973; Adler and Kwoon, 2001), the following sections will review how tie strength and trust similarly influence members' access to social recourses, like trust and knowledge. These concepts spill over into the work of social capital theorists (e.g. Putnam, 1993, 2000; Coleman, 1990, 1994; Hererros, 2004), and will be briefly reviewed in the context of peacebuilding. This review will build the theoretical approach that this thesis will take in assessing the strength of ties and trust between members in the BMN, and ultimately relate it to peacebuilding processes. Future sections will draw upon other literature that has to do directly with the Balkan Museum Network (BMN), such as gray literature, official documents, and history of activities found on the website.

2.1 Network Theory

This investigation into the BMN's organizational behavior is underpinned by social network theory, which began with investigations into socio-metrics, group structure and the flow of information in the 1930s (Jong, 2010). As a way to understand how knowledge is exchanged in a network, researchers studied structural holes at the network level (Burt, 1992), tie strength at the individual level (Granovetter, 1973) and the role of social capital in network systems (Adler and Kwoon, 2001).

The theory has taken the concept of a network, defined as a specific set of nodes, and replaced the concept of "nodes" with actors or groups of actors. This theory, like this research, focuses on the relationships, (or ties) between those actors or groups of actors to interpret social activity, instead of focusing on individuals themselves (Carolan, 2014). There are four different ties defined in network systems: non-directional (1), directional (2) or mutual (1). An example of non-directional ties includes two people in the same space, without speaking to each other. A directional tie can be someone asking a superior for advice, or a superior instructing subordinate- and counts as two different ties. A mutual relationship implies that the actors reciprocate each

other. The extent and quality of their reciprocal relation refers to tie strength, which lies on a continuum from weak to strong (Carolan, 2014). Where ties lie on that continuum is both a factor and effect in a network's structure and dyadic tie strength.

2.2 Network Structure

Networks have formal and informal structures that affect the communication flow between actors. The network structure is made up of ties, or human relationships. Formal structures are the formally established relationships within a network or organization, where certain individuals are given the power to coordinate activities and guide collective behavior (Stahle, 1999). For example, the structure of management positions, like CEO, President Vice President, is a formal structure. When visualized, a formal structure is represented neatly in chart form, mapping out hierarchal structures, like management positions (Carolan, 2014). Information is thought to flow through these formally established ties, though upcoming literature about trust and knowledge sharing explains that this is not always the case (Inkpen, 1998).

Informal network structures are made up of informal ties that exist in the same space that the formal structures exist, but its ties are more spontaneous and dynamic (Carolan, 2014). Informal network structures are made of interpersonal social bonds established when people interact with each other informally and on a personal basis. In other words, the informal network structure represents friendships that arise from interacting with each other, for example over a coffee, in the break room, etc. (Carolan, 2014). These informal interpersonal ties play a critical role in learning processes as they establish bonds that facilitate knowledge exchange throughout the network regardless of its formal structure.

2.3 Tie Strength

According to Granovetter, one can intuitively tell whether the strength of a tie is strong, weak or absent by considering “the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (1973). These factors are highly correlated, but are still somewhat independent. For example, a strong tie might be a result of involuntary work interdependence- yet not result in mutual intimacy or trust between the

actors (Levin and Crossan, 2009). This is why Levin and Crossan understand tie strength and trust as different concepts. However, other researchers have understood and made the two concepts synonymous in their research, where Gulati uses tie strength as a proxy for trust (1994) and Krackhardt defines tie strength in terms of trust (1992). Taking this into account, tie strength will also be used as a proxy for trust, when appropriate. Though the amount of time and frequency of contact can imply a trusting relationship, it cannot be automatically considered a tie full of trust. As a result, other factors should be taken into account, like through what activities they collaborate and what kinds of knowledge they communicate to each other.

2.3.1 Weak Ties

For Granovetter, an absent tie is a relationship without substantial significance (1973). For example, a “nodding” relationship between people living on the same street, or the “tie” between the storeowner whose shop you frequently visit would both be an absent tie; this kind of relationship may be present in the BMN as membership grows. Acquaintanceship, on the other hand would be an example of a weak tie (Granovetter, 1973), which the BMN probably has. Acquaintanceship is defined differently among different cultures, though the diagram that Granovetter uses below to describe a weak tie represents relationships across cultures and professional or personal contexts. It shows strong ties between actors A & B and actors A & C, while B & C are “unconnected.” Assuming that B & C both know of each other but have no substantial relationship, they would have a weak tie. As van der Gaag indicates in his book about network systems, weak ties are the natural beginning of any social relationship, and the term is usually used to describe less close relationships that lack the dynamics of a developed relationship (2005).

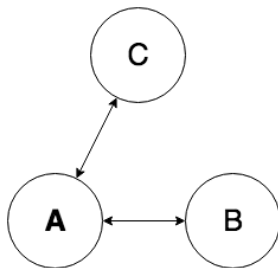


Figure 1

Outcomes

Having a network with weak ties allows for networks to be more open. Network openness has also been shown to benefit the overall performance of an organization by allowing new knowledge to be discovered (Granovetter, 1973). Open network structures contain “structural holes,” or unconnected parts of a network. On each side of the hole, actors access different resources, but do not directly access each other’s. This can be illustrated in the diagram above, where actors B & C are linked to A, but remain unlinked to each other. Bridging ties across structural holes (in this case between actors B & C) is especially conducive to developing new knowledge when those individuals share common third party ties (Tortoriello & Krackhardt, 2010). These actors across structural holes may have different interests and are thus exposed to different information.

Another factor that influences tie strength or a network density is geographic proximity of actors. For example, if members of an organization are far apart, they can experience more motivational and relational problems than those organizations that are geographically concentrated (Cramton, 2001). Moreover, the frequency of contact may be less in networks with geographically dispersed actors. The benefit of being geographically dispersed is the potential access to more diverse knowledge (Ahuja et al. 2004). Relating this to the BMN, it is probable that members’ geographic distribution across seven countries creates weak ties among members, though the advantage is that of being exposed to different information.

2.3.2 Strong Ties

According to Granovetter’s understanding of strong ties, strong ties are those that have a high level of intimacy, emotional intensity and history between actors (1973). According to van der Gaag, strong ties are usually characterized by trustworthiness (2005), or the perceived reliability or reciprocity of trust. In this paper, tie strength will be used as a proxy for trust when appropriate, taking into account the kind of activities that actors participate in with each other. Having a strong tie with an actor indicates a close connection, either through intimacy, emotional intensity or the time that actors have known each other. Like with weak ties, the presence of

strong ties has both advantages and disadvantages in a network's knowledge transfer and creation.

Outcomes

Strong ties in a network contribute to a high degree of closure or density in networks. A dense network or a network with a high degree of closure means that no one can escape the notice of others (Coleman, 1990). Since no one can escape the notice of others, networks with strong degrees of closure have an enhanced normative understanding and behavior (Coleman, 1990). An example that Michael Davern used to illustrate normative behavior is Coleman's discussion of a community of tightly knit jewelers who are allowed to look at each other's merchandise without supervision (1998). According to Coleman, it would be easy for one jeweler to take a piece of merchandise and replace it with one that is of lower quality (1988). The behavior of *not* replacing merchandise with lower quality merchandise is the normative behavior of this network. If a jeweler did, in fact, break the norms and replace merchandise- the jeweler's reputation of trustworthiness would be broken and that jeweler would be ostracized from the group. Since network members are trusted enough to look at each other's merchandise without supervision, those involved in the transaction have the advantage of making more efficient transactions. As a result, the presence of strong ties creates conditions for a dense network and can contribute to more efficient transactions.

2.4 Social Capital

According to Coleman, social capital was first used by Glenn Loury in 1977 to refer to the resources embedded in family relations, which affected the child's cognitive development. The research of Pierre Bourdieu (1985), James Coleman (1988 ,1990) and Robert Putnam (1993,2000) has developed the concept and made it relevant in the social sciences, in context of social network theory and peacebuilding.

For Bourdieu and Coleman, social capital is a range of resources available to participants of a network. Bordieu defines social capital as the sum of "real or potential resources that are associated to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relations of mutual recognition (1985:248). Social capital has been shown to contribute to organizations or a

firm's efficiency and effectiveness in reaching goals (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 1995). It has also been shown to play an important role in society at large.

Putnam regards the characteristics associated with social capital, like norms of reciprocity and trust, as a necessary resource in an active civil society (Putnam 1993). This is an important part of peacebuilding, which is increasingly focusing on strengthening the role of civil society in building community. Civil society aims to strengthen bonds between citizens, i.e., build social capital, by engaging participation and volunteering in associations (Paffenholz and Spurk, 2000). In peacebuilding contexts, when associations develop strong bridging ties, i.e., between members from different ethnic or social groups, good social capital is built (Putnam 2000). Social capital can also be harmful if it is inward and characterized by strong bonding ties, i.e. only between members in the same ethnic or social group (Putnam, 2000). This helps explain why building social capital has become relevant in peacebuilding and post-conflict contexts, where the main aim is to create positive peace or, a "stable social equilibrium in which the surfacing of new disputes does not escalate into violence and war" (Haugerudbraaten, 1998, pg 18). As a result, peacebuilding attempts to create conditions where members from other ethnic or social groups can form bridging ties, mend societal cleavages and contribute to social cohesion.

While Putnam regards trust as a characteristic of social capital (1993), Coleman believes that the information acquired and shared is another form of social capital (1990). According to Putnam characteristics of social capital can be both a source and an outcome of social capital (1993; Coleman, 1988). Hereros summarizes these points in his research, by stating that social capital is cyclically generated by the obligation one feels to reciprocate granted trust and the information acquired by being in a network (2004). If one does not feel the need to honor trust, neither share/receive information, there is little ground for social capital to grow from. The following sections will review how tie strength affects these two aspects of social capital: the obligation to reciprocate/ honor trust and share knowledge.

2.4.1 Trust

According to Mühl, "trust is an action that involves voluntary transfer of resources (physical, financial or intellectual) from the trustor to the trustee with no real commitment from the trustee" (2014, pg11). Mayer defines trust as the "willingness of a party to be vulnerable"

(1995, pg 715). Trust is granted (by the trustor) with the expectation that the trustee (grantee who receives trust) will follow the norms and behave in a certain way (Mühl, 2014). When the trustee behaves in the anticipated way, the tie is strengthened (Mühl, 2014).

For Herreros, trust can generate and be a form of social capital only if there is a degree of obligation to reciprocate, which would be done in order to maintain a reputation of trustworthiness or to influence the behavior of a person (2005). The interest to maintain a reputation of trustworthiness would be higher in networks with a high degree of closure, where no one can escape the notice of others. In the for-mentioned example of the close-knit community of jewelers, there was a need on behalf of the jeweler to maintain a reputation of trustworthiness when inspecting another jeweler's inventory without supervision. If network ties are weak, there is less obligation to reciprocate or honor that trust because other actors' opinions are less valued. This shows that networks with a strong sense of similar behavior/values, or normative behavior, have higher obligations to reciprocate/honor trust. In the process of reciprocating/honoring that trust, more trust is formed.

Types of Trust

Two main types of trust have been found in trust literature: benevolence, which is affect based, and competence, which is cognition based (Mühl, 2014). Benevolence refers to the cooperative nature of individuals or the willingness to support the person who grants trust (Levin, 1999). Benevolence has also been described as not intentionally harming another when given the opportunity to do so (ibid). Competence based trust is the trust in an actor's abilities or skills. It's based on how much experience and expertise an actor has (Medlin, 2009). When this trust is with an organization, it is based on the organization's experience and expertise. Another dimension of trust is integrity, which Mühl (2014) interprets as fairness, or when rules are applied equally to all individuals. In the context of an organization, integrity based trust depends on the organization's honesty, openness and concern (Medlin, 2009). When an organization is perceived to lack integrity, people are likely to be skeptical about the organization's missions and aims and consequently act against rather than with the goals (Medlin, 2009). When integrity based trust is low, people will become less positive about the organization and less invested.

Trust processes occur among different actors, like organizations (inter-organizational) and individuals (interpersonal). Medlin points out that interpersonal trust can be between

individuals in a firm, while inter-organizational trust can be between an individual and a firm (2009). While inter-organizational and interpersonal trust are different concepts, they are highly related. In the context of small entrepreneurial firms, inter-firm trust appears to be tightly linked to trust between individuals in those organizations (Howorth, Westhead & write, 2004; Larson, 1992).

In a network like the BMN, the line between interpersonal trust and interorganizational trust is blurred: members are affiliated with institutions, though not all individuals represent their organizations/institutions in their membership. In this research, trust is qualitatively assessed by analyzing the ways members interact with each other through their institution (working a joint exhibit, joint research project, etc) and also without their institution (sharing work experience, giving advice, etc). The interest to differentiate whether members have increased inter-organizational in contrast to interpersonal trust is out of the scope of this paper. However, one can assume that the interpersonal trust between members can be the first step towards inter-organizational trust between institutions, since interpersonal trust has been shown to play an important role in the development of inter-organizational trust (Zaheer et al, 1998).

2.4.2 Knowledge

The process of knowledge transfer and learning is increasingly recognized as a social process, as individuals are the ones who store, maintain and share knowledge. However, being connected to individuals with resources and knowledge does not necessarily mean that those resources are transferred from A to B (Inkpen, 1998). There is evidence that people are more willing to give useful knowledge (Tsai and Ghosal 1998) and are also more willing to listen and absorb other's knowledge (Levin, 1990) when there is trust. As a result, the quality of the network ties and amount of trust embedded in those ties are important factors in transferring knowledge. If an actor has weak ties and perceives their knowledge as unique and advantageous, they may not share it with others.

Types of Knowledge

According to Davenport and Prusak, knowledge is a "fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information (1998, pg 4). Knowledge consists of an explicit

element and a tacit element. When knowledge is systematic and can be communicated easily between individuals and organizations, it is known as explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is more factual, while tacit knowledge is intuitive. Tacit knowledge is synonymous to skill, which is gained through experience, thinking, and learning—it is difficult to express. In organizations and firms, knowledge that is stored in data bases and repositories is explicit knowledge, while tacit knowledge would consist of organizational norms, routines, and practices (Polanyi, 1966).

Providing documents, plans, and descriptions of organizations are some ways to transfer explicit knowledge, while tacit knowledge can be transferred by training members of an organization, allowing them to observe experts, and providing opportunities for communication between members (Argote, 2013). Networks with density and strong ties tend to transfer skills and other kinds of tacit knowledge more than networks that have weak and open ties (Levin, 1999; Hansen 1999). According to Polanyi (1966), tacit knowledge is hard to codify, express and communicate explicitly. As a result, it requires more effort and more trust between the actors. Transferring explicit knowledge, which is easily communicated through documents or databases, is facilitated through weak network ties, while tacit knowledge exchange is facilitated between members who have strong ties (Hansen, 1999). By assessing what kinds of knowledge members share with each other, one can gauge the strength of the ties between members.

Knowledge in Organizational Learning

Transferring knowledge is one of the three sub-processes necessary in organizational learning: creating, treating and transferring knowledge (Argote, 2013). Organizational learning is described as the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding (Fiol and Lyles, 1985) on three levels: individual, group, and organizational (Crossan, Lane and White, 1999). The organizational learning process thus follows: individual learning, intuiting, and institutionalizing (Crossan, Lane and White, 1999), with the understanding that organizational learning leads to changes in practices. Although organizational learning can be measured through behavioral changes, there is an understanding that organizations do not always change their behavior in spite of what they've learned; organizational learning can also be measures in the range of potential behaviors (Huber, 1991), or the capacity of an organization to act competently (Pentald, 1992). Researchers have also measured organizational learning by

analyzing an organization's products or services (Helfat & Raubitschek, 2000), as products show the company's technologies and skills.

2.5 Peace-Building

Violent conflicts dismantle these systems of communication or communities by damaging the interpersonal and communal relationships and consequently erode the amount of social capital in the area (Mason and Meernik, 2006). Peacebuilding, though it has many definitions and approaches, works to build these cooperative relations and social capital again. Lewis Rasmussen defines the general aim of peacebuilding: "peacebuilding, whether in the post conflict resolution phase or as efforts to prevent eruption of nascent conflict, depends on the ability to transform the conflict situation from one of potential or actual mass violence to one of cooperative, peaceful relationships capable of fostering reconciliation, reconstruction and long-term economic and social development" (1997, pg 47).

In order to begin these processes, one must first create conditions for negative peace, which is here defined as the absence of violence (Mason and Meernik, 2006). This is achieved by peace agreements at the international/national level, which are normally negotiated with third parties and without significant local representation (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). Once this peace agreement is formally reached between those individuals in the upper level of society, the ceasefire must also be reached in the minds of the greater population. Upon this negative peace or lack of violence, social change towards positive peace can begin through activities that foster democratization, human rights, and economic development (Mason and Meernik, 2006). This is the approach that peace building has in terms of aims, which is ideally achieved through different actors.

According to Lederach, most peacekeeping initiatives have been from top-down, with high-profile agencies patrolling the streets, delivering food or advice to the locals (1997). These methods used in isolation are not enough to sustain peace for long periods of time. Lederach emphasizes the need for permanent and continuous dialogue at multiple levels of society to create and maintain this constructive change towards peace (2005). In other words, peace-building efforts must come from a variety of sectors and sections of the population; the efforts taken by the elite must be accompanied by efforts of mid-level and grassroots leaders. Lederach

also emphasizes the challenge and need for leaders a wide public sphere to engage with “the other” (2005). Peacebuilding attempts to create conditions where members from other ethnic or social groups can form bridging ties to prevent conditions where bridging social capital is low and bonding social capital is high, which are more prone to outburst of violence (Ricigliano, 2015). Building platforms where people can gather and generate responses towards constructive change is a fundamental strategy that allows both the expression of conflict and relational reasons behind the conflict to be addressed (Lederach, 2005). Lederach equates agreements as “social and political antacids” that temporarily reduces symptoms of conflict and creates an opportunity to repeat destructive patterns in a different context (2005). For him, “platforms are much more akin to immune systems that stay the course and provide the movement toward long-term health” (2005, pg 48). For this reason, Lederach creating this platform is fundamental for long term and sustainable peace.

Evaluating Peacebuilding

While the BMN is a platform for communication, it is not an explicit peacebuilding program. However, it would be interesting to know whether it positively fulfills any of the three key indicators in assessing the impact of a peacebuilding program: vertical/horizontal integration, conjectural capacity responsiveness, and transformative capacity responsiveness (Lederach, 1997). Vertical/horizontal integration deals with how the peace-building program fits in the larger context of the society--- how it complements or opposes other institutions working in the area. Conjectural capacity responsiveness deals with how the locals perceive the peace-building program itself- whether they think it is effective or not. The transformative capacity responsiveness deals with whether the population’s culture has changed from a negative to a more positive/inclusive one.

While some of these indicators can only be accurately measure in retrospect, Lederach proposes that attention be paid to all of them during the project’s course. This also means recording how the situation was before program intervention. One can perhaps record how people relate to another, the number of collaborations between groups, the general political/social atmosphere” (Lederach, 1997). This qualitative information can be gathered through observation, or interviewing the local people—and through a series of research methods turn into quantifiable data at the time of final evaluation.

2.6 Summary

This review of social network theory focused on how strength at both the network level and individual level can either enhance or deteriorate access to social capital in the form of trust and knowledge exchange. A geographically dispersed network can create conditions for weak ties by creating relational and motivation challenges (Crampton, 2001). However, being geographically dispersed also has the advantage of potentially having new information (Ahuja et al. 2004). In a network like the BMN, which is dispersed over 7 countries, conditions for weak ties and exposure to new information would be present. However, if members have weak ties and perceive their information as advantageous over others, they may not share it. As a result, stronger ties facilitate more knowledge transfer. According to Granovetter “the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” contribute to tie strength (1973). As a result, one could expect stronger and more trusting ties among those who have been members of the Network for a longer time.

Moreover, having strong ties creates conditions for a dense network, which fosters a normative behavior between members (Coleman, 1990). Having a sense of normative behavior creates conditions where members are expected to behave a certain way (Coleman, 1990). Individuals with longer membership would probably have stronger ties because they would have worked with each other longer and towards Network goals with a more similar understanding/approach than newer members. When members meet each others expectations, there is a higher level of trust. Stronger and more trusting ties are implied when members transfer more tacit knowledge, i.e. skills, than explicit knowledge, i.e. documents (Levin, 1999).

Trust and dialogue (sharing information) are aspects of social capital, which peacebuilding initiatives aim to strengthen in post conflict societies. By asking members what knowledge they have learned through the network and how they have communicated with members, one can holistically assess the quality of ties within the network and relate it to the general peacebuilding process.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This case study explores the Balkan Museum Network (BMN) members' development of work-related knowledge and trust in each other. It fits both the models of instrumental and intrinsic case studies, because the purpose of this study was to gain insight and understanding of a particular situation while also realizing the Balkan Museum Network was of intrinsic interest (Baxter, et.al 2008). Like most case study research, the data came from multiple sources, which was later converged in the analysis process rather than handled individually. This single case study gathered information from: a literature review, an online survey, open-ended and semi-structured interviews with 12 of BMN members, and participant observation at the Network's annual Meet, See, Do Conference in Albania (April 13-15th 2016). The research underwent "member checking" throughout the whole process, where data was discussed with key members of the Network to "discuss and clarify the interpretation, and contribute new or additional perspectives on the issue under study" and ultimately strengthen the finding's validity (Baxter, et.al 2008). This information was converged into readable results and the following provides a chronological account of the process.

3.2 Theory Development

Since a core part of the research was to explore how the Network affected members' knowledge and trust levels, it was necessary to develop an understanding of network systems and how trust affects networks and organizational learning. Literature reviewed about network systems (see section 2) showed how one could expect a higher level of connectivity, trust and knowledge among those who have been members of the Network for a longer time. Individuals with longer membership would probably have stronger ties because they would have worked with each other longer and with a more similar understanding/approach to the network's goals more than newer members. Moreover, having a strong sense of normative behavior in a network is a sign of its high density, strong ties, and presence of the relational dimension social capital, like trust. Literature also suggests that normative behavior is higher in networks with higher connectivity (Coleman, 1990), and that members who are closer in geographic proximity tend to communicate more than members who are far apart (Cramton, 2001). These theories helped in

forming an approach on how to qualitatively assess members' trust and tie strength through looking into their communication and knowledge sharing patterns.

It is also necessary to understand where BMN operates in order to understand why it is unique in its role of increasing collaboration in the Western Balkans region.² Reviewing the region's historic political and cultural development, specifically those conditions that existed pre- and post 1990s war, was the first step into understanding the BMN's. While the literature review formed the basis of this understanding, members from the greater Balkan region³ also contributed by sharing their personal accounts about past and present conditions that museum professionals found or, currently, find themselves in. To understand the region's immediate post-conflict and future development plans, an overview of current collaboration in the region was reviewed. This led to an understanding of the international community's top-down approach in peacebuilding and promoting Balkan regionalism, or the body of ideas, values, and objectives that contribute to the creation, maintenance, or modification of a particular region (Söderbaum, n.d.). This was necessary to assess how the BMN operates differently from other collaborative networks with its grassroots approach to peacebuilding and regionalism.

To assess the BMN as a grassroots platform for communication, knowledge and trust, the BMN's history, goals, structure, and members first had to be understood. Official documents, past activities and conference proceedings found on the organization's website were reviewed, as well as grey literature and unpublished documents that key members provided, like a list of members and former pre-conference surveys (Appendix A). With this background information, the Network's formal structure could be understood and analyzed through the context of network connectivity. Moreover, the kind of knowledge transmitted within the Network was also analyzed to assess tie strength, as the kind of knowledge transferred reflects the strength of the tie: tacit knowledge sharing is facilitated more by strong ties than weak ones; so tacit knowledge sharing would reflect strong ties. Moreover, because having a strong sense of normative behavior in a network is a sign of its strong ties, it was of interest to see how similar members understood and approached the Network missions and aims reflected in the statutes. In

² Western Balkan countries defined here as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015).

³ The Balkans here defined as Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015).

order to do so, it was necessary to move beyond official documents and the network's formal structure and speak to members themselves about what they've learned and how they felt about the Network.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Survey

An online survey was distributed to 97 registered participants of the 2016 Meet, See Do (MSD) Conference⁴. The survey was both a preconference survey for the MSD organizers as well as for this research; this was meant to ensure that all registered members who were going to attend MSD would answer the survey (Appendix A). Out of 25 questions, 5 of them were formulated by the secretariat. The other 23 questions dealt with members defining the Network's value to them, rating the types of knowledge gained through the Network, their general communication patterns (frequency and with which members) and any noticeable changes in members' relationship with each other. Out of a sample of 97, 27 responded and out of those 27, 28% of them identified themselves as members. These 19 members were the sample of interest. As of April 24th2016, there were 44 members of the Network. As a result, 43% of members answered the survey and so this survey's representation of the entire network is limited.

Participant Observation

The second method of gathering members' opinion and input was through conducting participant observation at the fourth MSD in Albania (April 13-15th 2016). This provided the opportunity to observe participants, which followed methods expert Jorgensen's defining characteristics, "...usually involves casual conversations, in-depth, informal, and unstructured interviews, as well as formally structured interviews and questionnaires..." (1989). Casual conversation was had with MSD participants from different countries, like Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Serbia. While the conversations provided insight on how members relate to the MSD conference, their involvement with BMN was discussed, too. The conference was attended as a

⁴ Meet, See, Do Conference is an annual conference held by BMN. Aside from three days of talks and workshops, there is the BMN member meeting, where review of activities and voting process take place.

participant observer /volunteer, and most of the activities, like workshops, seminars, and the BMN meeting were attended as a normal participant. The overall atmosphere and participants' interactions with each other could be observed from an inside perspective, which provided an understanding of how members related to and approached each other.

10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with BMN members at the Conference to assess how they felt about the Balkan Museum Network in general - how and why they got involved, how members' relationship with each other developed, and what work-related skills they've shared and learned through the Network through a similar format (Appendix C). Two more interviews were conducted outside of the MSD conference with the Secretariat and an old Steering Board member, which focused on similar topics. 10 out of the 12 interviews were recorded and transcribed, while notes were taken during two interviews. The interviews lasted between 20-40 minutes and were mostly with active/key members of the Steering Board and Access Group (for some of whom it was their first year as a member) and members who had been involved since 2006: one was both a BMAG⁵ member and Steering Board member, two were BMAG members, six were Steering Board members, one was both a BMAG member and Steering Board member, one was a founding key member, two were regular members. More original members were interviewed in order to gather information of how the Network and members' relationship with each other and their work developed throughout the years. However, it was also necessary to gather information about from new members to gather how newer Network members currently interact and approach the Network.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

Survey

The survey was designed to capture members' collaboration and learning patterns, which would reflect the strength of ties between members. Members were asked to rate how often and with who they did a range of activities, which varied in the amount of trust required. Survey

⁵ The Balkan Museum Access Group (BMAG) is working group made up of 8 museum practitioners from different Balkan countries that have an interest in becoming experts in Access and Inclusion. As of April 2016, there are 3 from Bosnia, 2 from Greece, one from Macedonia, 1 from Albania and 1 from Serbia.

respondents could choose from the following options, which evidence different kinds of ties and behavior:

Table 1 Activities and Qualities of Tie

a) Share work experiences, e.g. talk about work-related issues, give or receive advice about work issues, etc.	Evidence for weak/medium/strong ties
b) Share information about interesting upcoming seminar or conference opportunities e.g. pass along invitations, registration information, calls for speakers	Evidence of benevolent behavior
e) Share information about grant opportunities e.g. pass along open calls for grants to other members, information about grants, etc	
c) Cooperate on research project, .e.g. share publications, write joint research papers, etc	Evidence for medium-strength ties
d) Cooperate on an exhibition, e.g. plan a joint exhibition, loan materials, etc	Evidence for strong ties

Activities like sharing work experiences, information about interesting upcoming seminar/conference opportunities or grant opportunities (activities a,b and e) are facilitated by either weak or strong ties, meaning that it can happen with or without a lot of trust. Grant and conference opportunities resemble job opportunities, as both present the potential for financial gain and exposure to new networks. These opportunities resemble explicit knowledge as both can be stored in databases and are easily transferred by providing documents, plans, and descriptions of organizations (Argote, 2013). However, if a grant opportunity is passed along to someone who is eligible for the same grant, it is a sign of great benevolence, or willingness to help others. In this way activities that have to do with sharing resources is a sign of benevolence or trust. However, if someone asks for advice about a work-related issue, it can show that there is stronger amount of trust in that activity (depending on the gravity of the work-related issue). Cooperating on a research project (activity c) is an activity that evidences a bit more trust than

sharing resources. In cooperating, one needs to trust that the other person will do their job and contribute to the project in a timely manner. Cooperating on an exhibit (activity d) requires moderate to high levels of Gronavetter’s factors of what characterizes a strong tie: amount of time spent, actors’ emotional intensity, actors’ level of intimacy (mutual confiding) and reciprocal services (1973). Cooperating on exhibit is therefore understood as an activity that evidences the strongest ties.

Survey respondents were divided into two groups defined by the year they became a member. Members that joined from 2006 up to 2013 were labeled as “old members,” while members who joined from 2014 to 2016 were “new members”. Though there is a larger time window for old members than for new members (a window of 7 years versus 2), the discrepancy evens out because the number of members stayed relatively constant from 2006-2013. The year 2013 is chosen, because it was the year that the Network expanded beyond the original 6 countries funded by the Swedish International Development and Co-operation Agency (SIDA).⁶ The number of members jumped from 2014 onwards, and so the number of members joined from 2006-2013 is relatively the same to the number of members who joined after 2013.

<u>Type of Member</u>	<u>Membership Years</u>	<u>Surveyed</u>	<u>Interviewed</u>
Old	2006-2013	10	9
New	2014-2016	9	3

Table 2 Sampled Members

The 10 responses from old members were compared to new members’ 9 responses to explore whether old members had stronger ties and more frequent communication patterns than new members, or if old members had learned more than new members. This illustrates whether the Network has strengthened ties between members, by both strengthening their communication pattern and skill- capacities. Their responses were displayed in graph form and the survey’s data

⁶ SIDA helped fund the BMN through another NGO, Cultural Heritage without Borders. More information is covered in section 4.

was triangulated by responses gathered from members' interviews and conversations, and observations.

Participant Observation

Interviews and notes taken throughout the MSD conference were transcribed and coded according to themes. Interviewees' real names are replaced by calling them members A-E when quoting them throughout the paper, and are referenced with a gender-neutral "they."

3.5 Limitations

There are two major limitations in the survey that were mitigated through gathering members' input through interviews. The first is the relatively low response rate, which surveyed 19/44 members. Moreover, the list of members provided by key members seemed incomplete since it did not include members from outside the region, which one of the survey respondents identified themselves coming from the UK. Moreover, the survey design failed to specify the complexity or gravity of what work-related advice members may ask/receive from with each other. This lack of clarity spills over into trying to identify the strength of ties or trust that members have between each other. This was mitigated by asking members through interviews about the knowledge that they gained.

In approaching this Network from an international context, I realize there are limitations in my ability to understand all cultural aspects. However, spending 3 months in Bosnia exposed to me present conditions there, which helps provide some insight into the Balkan region in regards to the local culture and the international community's involvement in the region. While this provides some idea, all cultural and historical aspects still cannot be understood.

4. Results

4.1 History and Development of Region

This section reviews the history of the region from early 20th century to 2016 in order to understand the current context where the Network operates. This allows the research findings to be placed within the context of a region characterized by economic, political and social instability and the legacy of decades of conflict.

4.1.1 From a Political Standpoint

The western Balkans⁷ has a historical legacy that exemplifies how various cultural and ethnic groups can cooperate and conversely, conflict with each other. Throughout history, the western Balkans has been home to many different cultures and great territorial empires. The Austro-Hungarians ruled in one area from the 16th-20th, while Ottoman empire ruled adjacent territories from the 12th to 20th centuries. The aspiration for south Slavs to unify and run their own state was realized when the colloquially known “Kingdom of Yugoslavia” appeared after WWI, when the 1919 Paris Peace Conference⁸ was signed and the Austro-Hungarian empire dissolved (Hudson, 2003). The outburst of WWII led to another “break up” of Yugoslavia in which every republic acted independently: “Croatia created an independent state under the protection of Nazi Germany; a part of the Muslim Slavs of Bosnia and Herzegovina had their divisions fighting on the side of Germany; Serbia was divided ideologically between the remains of the monarchist Yugoslav army/nationalist Serbian forces (which were also collaborating at certain periods with Nazis, fighting together against partisans/communists) and the partisan/communist movement” (2011, pg 71). In the midst of conflict between both foreign powers and domestic Yugoslav ones, the partisan/communist movement led by Jozep Tito won (Hudson, 2003; Brkic, 2011). Communism had also won in Albania under the leader Enver Hoxha, whose regime secluded Albania from external relations from 1944 to 1985. Tito unified the Southern

⁷ Western Balkan countries defined here as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015).

⁸ The Paris Peace Conference allowed the establishment of other countries relevant to the present day BMN, such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Albania (Hudson, 2003).

Slavs again under the same framework as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, though in his version, all nationalities had equal representation and rights- a condition absent from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Hudson, 2003). As such, the Yugoslavian cultural landscape reflected Tito's ideal political framework where each republic could express their distinct culture under the umbrella of Communism (Brkic, 2011).

Tito's Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was made up of six different republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, with Serbia containing two autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Three south Slavic languages made up the country's official languages (Slovene, Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian), which could be understood easily among different republics, with the exception of those minorities in the previously autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, who were respectively ethnically Albanian and Hungarian (Hudson, 2003). Though these language barriers were generally easy to overcome, the six ethnic groups in the Federation had major differences between each other's cultural identities, historical backgrounds and traditions. These differences helped fuel and justify the nationalist movements driven by republics and consequently the 1990s wars of national independence along ethnic lines, which many of the BMN members remember as part of their own personal histories.

After the death of Tito in 1980 and the fall of communism, the central federal government was unable to respond to the extreme nationalist movements. Slovenia and Croatia were the first to declare independence in 1991. Slovenia's independence was accepted after 10 days of conflict, while Croatia's independence caused war with local Serbs until 1995 (History.state.gov, 2016). When Macedonia declared independence in 1991, a U.S. peacekeeping force was sent to monitor violence, though it was unnecessary. When Bosnia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1992, the Serbs in Bosnia declared their own areas as an independent republic (History.state.gov, 2016). The subsequent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina lasted for three years, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and became Europe's most horrific conflict since the end of World War II (History.state.gov, 2016). Conflict began again in 1998-1999, with Kosovo's majority Albanian population calling for independence from Serbia. A NATO bombing campaign against Serbian and Montenegrin forces led to international mandate over Kosovo. In 2008, Kosovo declared independence and was recognized by most European states while Yugoslavian ones, especially Serbia, still do not.

In the aftermath of these violent conflicts throughout the 1990s, both the EU and the US launched regional top-down initiatives to improve collaboration in the area, mostly through political and economic means (Cottey, 2012). The Stability Pact (1995) launched by the EU aimed to increase political dialogue (Bechev, 2004) and bring the South East European countries into Euro-Atlantic political and economic structures (Andreev, 2009). The Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), launched by the EU in the aftermath of the Kosovo war (1998-1999) (Andreev, 2009), aimed to promote regional stability through mutually beneficial economic and political incentives, like contracts, trade relations, and financial assistance (Ec.europa.eu, 2016). The South East European Cooperation Initiative (SECI), launched by the US, aimed to promote collaboration through trade and transport (Lopandic, 2001). This led to a locally owned cooperation organization: the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) (1996), which has been the only indigenous high-level forum at which pressing local issues, such as the preservation of religious and cultural heritage, the area's electricity and energy supply, and the fight of illicit human trafficking, have been discussed and resolved (Andreev, 2009). According to Andreev, the locally sourced South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), along with externally promoted initiatives like the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) have been particularly important in stabilizing the region (2009). While these three cooperations all aim to alleviate immediate political and economic needs, they also aim to create the necessary institutions to ensure stability and economic growth throughout the peace process (Andreev, 2009). In this way, these initiatives follow the suggestions posed by Lederach to ensure sustainable peace building. According to Lederach, most conventional peacekeeping initiatives have been top-down, with high-profile agencies putting them in place (Lederach, 1997). Though these peacekeeping methods are legitimate, there is evidence that these methods used in isolation are not enough to sustain peace for long periods of time (1997). Any meaningful peace process must rely on multiple tiers of leadership and participation within the affected population. In other words, peace-building efforts among the elite must be accompanied by efforts of mid-level and grassroots leaders. It also must come from a variety of sectors. The important development plans discussed have all excluded culture from their agendas, have been purely economic and political. Sustainable peace building should involve multiple actors and sectors from society, including the cultural sector.

4.1.2 From a Cultural Standpoint

The absence of culture in development plans does not mean that it did not play an important role throughout the conflict and reconciliation processes. On the contrary, culture played a pivotal role in the Balkan conflicts, where nationalist agendas profited from cultural management/manipulation. The dream of a united Yugoslavia partly depended on building a robust and resilient Yugoslav identity, which cultural institutions, like museums, help build. According to a 1972 UNESCO report of the Cultural Policy in Yugoslavia there were about 141 different kinds of museums (national, regional, and municipal) scattered across the republics, all of which were generally made to serve the political sphere more than the public sphere (Han, 2009; Majstorovič, 1972). Though each republic was responsible for its own cultural management, it was important for museums not to cross the ideological, political and aesthetic boundaries set up by the national communist government (Majstorovič, 1972). Museums collaborated with each other in a number of ways, by loaning materials, exchanging exhibits, etc. (Majstorovič, 1972). As ethno-nationalism grew within the loose federation through the late 1980s, museums would host ethno-centric events, such as the 'Day of Serbians' in Croatia. This could be interpreted as museums assuming their role agents for social change and/or an example of museums being managed to meet nationalistic/political goals. However, these cultural sites of collaboration became sites of destruction in the 1990s.

Cultural heritage came to symbolize ethnic groups and consequently became a primary target in annihilating their presence during the 1990s conflicts. Despite UNESCO's 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, colloquially known as the 1954 Hague Convention, many historical buildings, museums and their collections, churches, synagogues and archives in the former Yugoslavia were destroyed, damaged and pillaged (Detling, 1993). With the goal of erasing collective memories and identities of targeted ethnic groups, 75% of the common cultural heritage was destroyed in the areas of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo (Baumel, 1993). However, not many of the early international development programs addressed culture in their agendas. The progressive understanding of culture's crucial role in a society's development is now being explored through various regional cultural initiatives that aim to form open and pluralist societies- most of which are still externally supported. The Balkans Arts and Culture Fund (BAC), partly funded by the

European Cultural Fund, is a regional fund for Balkan artists and cultural organizations dedicated to “fostering inclusive, democratic, and prosperous societies- by strengthening the cultural sector, and encouraging regional collaboration and integration” (Balkans Arts and Culture Fund n.d.). The *Sharing Common Culture: Balkan Theatre Networks for EU Integration* Project was funded by the EU and aimed at bringing youth from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia together to create plays that promoted cultural and ethnic diversity (Centre for Common Ground, Macedonia, 2013). These initiatives, however, are all relatively recent and aren’t specifically geared towards development nor capacity building.

The Swedish International Development and Co-operation Agency (SIDA) understood culture as relevant resource to reduce poverty and create opportunities for sustainable development based on human rights (Indevelop, 2011). According to its 2004 evaluation, it was the only bilateral organization working in the region that strongly emphasized diversity, human rights, democracy and civil society as central themes (Indevelop, 2011). They supported the nongovernmental organization called Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB), which has been active in the Balkans since 1995. CHwB is a cultural heritage organization that is dedicated to ‘rescuing and preserving cultural heritage affected by conflict neglect or human and natural disaster’. Its uniqueness has been highlighted for different reasons. According to a CHwB evaluation, it differs from most cultural heritage organizations as it is the only one that attempts to use cultural heritage towards reconciliation and human rights in conflict prone countries (Indevelop, 2011). According to Sida staff in the Balkans, one of the characteristics that sets CHwB apart from other international NGOs is that its offices in Bosnia Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo are completely managed by a local national staff (Indevelop, 2011). CHwB in this regard advances a sustainable transition towards peace by empowering locals to establish a relationship- and skill-based infrastructure on their own.

It is from this NGO that the Balkan Museum Network, which works towards reconciliation with a mixed approach, grew. The Balkan Museum Network (BMN) works with a grassroots approach in engaging museums across the Balkans to build capacities, exchange ideas, and improve cultural institutions and relations in the region. In this way, the network brings former conflicting parties together at the local level by bringing individuals together. It also works with a midrange approach, as it builds the capacities of both cultural institutions and

individuals working there (Lederach, 1997). In this way, the BMN works towards peacebuilding through a comprehensive framework which combines different levels and sectors of society.

4.2 History and Development of BMN

The network was first sponsored by CHwB and people who are old members of the network recognize this close relationship between the two organizations. CHwB facilitated the 2006 meeting in Sweden, which established the first regional network of museums between 11 members from 6 countries: Albania, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (Bmuseums.net, n.d.). This regional network functioned with the same goals as today's BMN, which promotes cross border collaboration, capacity building and strengthening museum's roles in society. This original network created a joint exhibition, '1+1: Life & Love Simultaneous Exhibition' in 2011, between the original 11 members of the network. Many of the individuals involved regard the exhibit as inspiration for future collaboration and trust in the network. In 2013, CHwB was no longer able to support the regional network as it once did due to lack of funding from Sida. Over several years, an exit strategy to transfer the BMN's ownership to the region was created, and in 2013 there was an open call for members to form an official Balkan Museum Network- a NGO independent from CHwB. The open call was for interested individuals or institutions to form and join the BMN, which theory defines as a strategic alliance- where members voluntarily enter a contract with each other and are responsible for creating, maintaining and breaking communication ties (Gulati, 1988). An Albanian member who was involved says that there were not that not so many people who responded to the call (A, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April), which another key member attributes to fear of being exposed in such a public platform for collaboration or just insecurity about the Network's stability (D, 2016, pers.comm, 26 April). However, from the original network "saw what happened earlier and I knew it was going to be a success" (A, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April), which expresses trust toward the network.

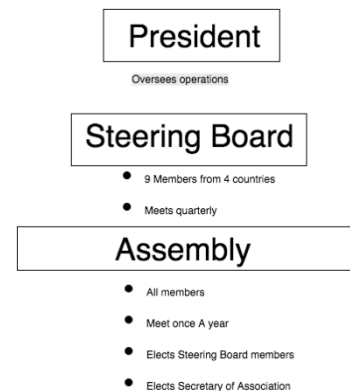
In the process of forming the BMN, the original group of 11 museums had external support from CHwB in the form of workshops and expert advice. They participated in many discussions and workshops- several held in Sarajevo, where the BMN office is now based. One of the members recalled that the workshops trained them on how to form and manage a branch

organization, how to draft statutes, etc. According to key member A, the trainer, a UK consultant “didn’t do anything! He just told us what we need to do! Because we were just talking and nobody had an assignment, and in this situation we really do have an assignment so we do that and after that it was easy” (A, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). In this way, even the process of forming the Network was a form of capacity building, as members learned how to manage and create a branch organization. Moreover, this ensured that the founding members had total ownership of the network’s values, goals and future formal structure, which came to reflect a commitment to international collaboration, democratic values, and transparency. The following section covers the Network’s origin, mission, goals and activities in comparison to assess Network membership impact on members’ knowledge and trust

4.3 Formal Structure

The statutes that were drafted divided the organization into three decision-making bodies:

the Assembly, the Steering Board, and the President of the Steering Board/the Association. The Assembly member group blankets all members who are neither the President nor part of Steering Board (Association Balkan Museum Network, 2011). The Assembly meets annually and have up until now, met at the annual Meet, See, Do conference sponsored by BMN since 2013. The Assembly members are allowed to check other members’ power as they can vote for and dismiss the Assembly’s Chairperson, the members of the Steering Board, and the Secretary of the Association (Association Balkan Museum Network, 2011). If two-thirds of the members are present in the voting process, a Steering Board member election or President and other statute changes can be finalized (Association Balkan Museum Network, 2011).



This Steering Board, headed by the Executive, is responsible for guiding the BMN to reach its goals, by taking decisions on creating new committees/working groups, resource management, preparing and suggesting amendments to the Statutes, plans or other documents (Association Balkan Museum Network, 2011). The Steering Board also decides on accepting or rejecting membership

Figure 2 Balkan Museum Network Formal Structure; Source: Author

applications. In May 2016, the 9th member has yet to be appointed, though the current 8 members are from Albania (3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Kosovo (1), Serbia (2) and the UK (1). As such, cross border communication is required by the Network's formal structure. The Steering Board is chaired by President of the Steering Board, who is also President of the Association. This individual has the jurisdiction to oversee the implementation of decisions, manage resources, and coordinate work with the Chairperson of the Assembly. They must also provide an account of their work to the Steering Board and to the Assembly.

This check and balance system creates a relatively horizontal hierarchal structure that is common in strategic alliances, and which creates conditions where connectivity is thought to be less straight forward than in inter-corporate networks (Gulati, 1998). In an inter-corporate network, one node or actor is usually responsible for the dissemination of knowledge (Gulati, 1998). In the case of BMN, while a specific group of actors, like the Steering Board or the Secretariat of the Network, is usually responsible for announcing opportunities or disseminating knowledge, the responsibility is not exclusively theirs. Rather, it is also up to the greater part of the members to initiate opportunities. In a strategic alliance, like the BMN, members often have compatible goals, though each member may have their own distinct goal (Gulati, 1998). According to organizational expert Gulati, a network that states its goals clearly, helps to establish a strong foundation for members to take a common approach to achieving these same goals (1998). The goals of BMN are outlined in the Statutes drafted in the meetings and outline what the organization's programs and members should strive for:

- *Improvement of the work of museums and other cultural institutions and well as professionals, and fostering their future development;*
- *Strengthening of museums and museum professionals by building human and institutional capacities;*
- *Creation of professional working groups that would work to overcome the problems that museum and cultural heritage professionals face;*
- *Strengthening the skills of museum and cultural heritage experts, as well as independent professionals, for the interpretation of cultural heritage and for internal and external communication;*
- *Training of museum and cultural heritage professionals;*
- *Organization of joint exhibitions and exchange of collections between museums;*
- *Training and promotion of digitalization of museum collections;*
- *Improvement of museum educational programmes aiming to contribute to the extracurricular activities of students, as well as to support the concept of lifelong learning;*

- *Improvement of museum and gallery content and access to institutions, in order to increase the number of visitors as well as attracting new segments of the public;*
- *Implementation of museum projects that advocate reconciliation, with the goal of protecting human rights;*
- *Application of knowledge, experiences and principles adopted in accordance with European Standards for museums and cultural heritage institutions;*
- *Advocacy for the improvement of the status of museums and participation in the policy making processes.*

(Association Balkan Museum Network, 2011)

When speaking to members at the MSD, it was apparent in their demeanor that they were committed to these values. In a strategic alliance, members often have compatible goals, though each member may have their own distinct goal (Gulati, 1998). Members recognized through casual conversation that the projects of BMN were secondary to their home institutions projects and not always compatible with the agenda set forth by the director. However, members seemed to approach these goals with the same understanding, possibly because members face similar challenges at their own institutions. Members are believed to benefit more from network systems, when member organizations are structurally equivalent and occupy similar positions with respect to third parties (Crossan, Lorraine & White, 1999). Since the Balkan Museum Network (BMN) members work with institutions dedicated to culture, there is a big potential for benefits.

4.3.1 Members

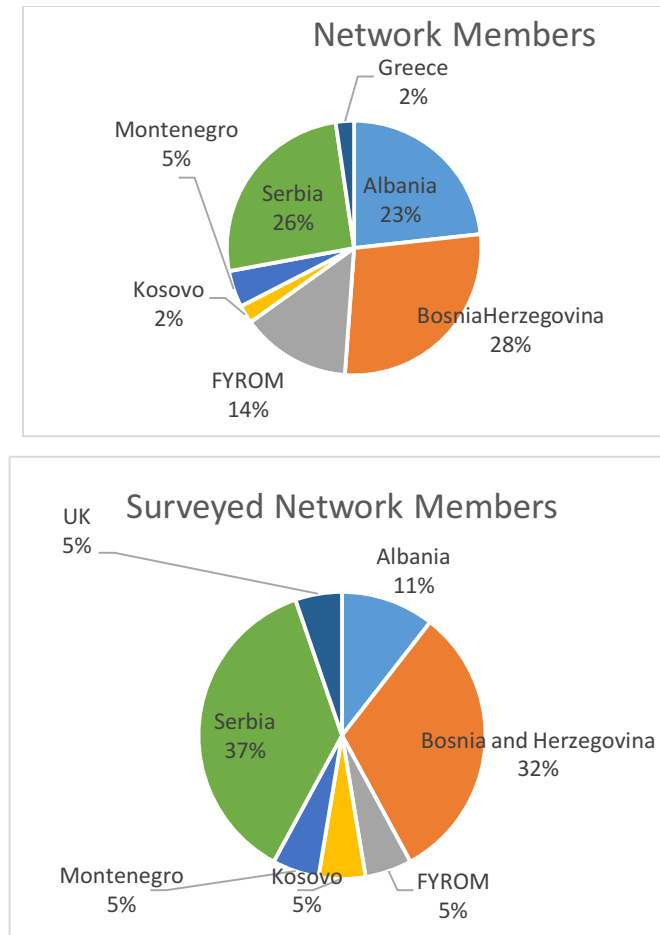


Figure 3 Demographics of Members vs Sampled Members

The survey administered before the fourth MSD found similar demographics of the general network, and so it is roughly representative of the general network

There are currently 44 members from 7 countries within BMN: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Former Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. Up until 2013, there were 11 members from 6 countries funded by Sida and from then on, 33 members from 7 countries have joined (April 2016). 9 new members came from both Serbia and BiH, 8 new members came from Albania, 5 from FYROM and 1 from Montenegro. Greece, a country that had not been represented in the original network joined in 2016. The general majority of

members are from Bosnia (28%), Serbia (26%) and Albania (23%). National and city museums make up the majority of the members, though there are also many museums exclusively dedicated to contemporary art, historical periods, and archaeology; there are also individuals representing smaller galleries, NGOs, and civil society that are members. Since the BMN members work in the same or similar field of culture, members can have stronger ties and learn a lot from each other.

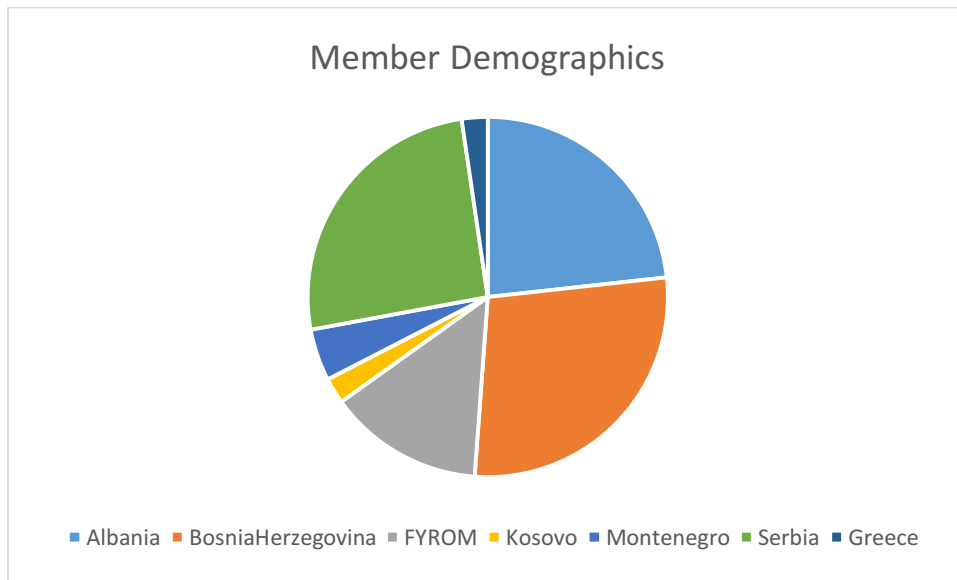


Figure 4 Demographics

Sharing a similar field of work is not the only strengthening tie that members have with each other. They also share similar histories: “We all suffered 1990s different circumstances, war, conflict, post war, break up, communist fall--different circumstances but more or less the same.” (E, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). Old and new members agreed that tensions from the 1990’s still affected social relations today, though newer members agreed less. According to the CHwB evaluation in 2011, many museum practitioners worked in similar contexts: “museums were inward-looking and academic rather than outward-reaching, and were very weak in engaging, informing and educating the public” (Indevelop, 2011). Key member A sees the network as a group of “brothers in need” who sometimes perceive official cultural policy as hindering the development of institutions (K, 2016, pers.comm, 15 April. “Museums are still very much political bodies,” key member E admits candidly (2016, pers.comm, 23 April). In countries like Albania and Serbia, many museum directors are appointed officials who sometimes have an education or interest in museology, and sometimes don’t. According to key

member E, this doesn't occur so much in Bosnian cultural institutions which possesses a set of particular financial challenges as there is no single state infrastructure (2016, pers.comm, 13 April). Research conversations showed that directors sometimes supported their staff's involvement in the BMN and sometimes didn't. Key member D attributes lack of support to fear of exposure of being involved in a such a public platform for collaboration (2016, pers.comm, 26 April). As a result, members face a range of similar political considerations that come with working in a museum.

Through participant observation, it was clear that member participants at the MSD were simultaneously trying to avoid the politicization of museums while strengthening museum's roles in society. While that "strengthening museums role in society" can be interpreted in many ways, members expressed a similar understanding of what museums' role in society should be. A new member from Bosnia said their institution was strengthening its role, "By being more active, almost working like activists rather than academics or scholars..." (E, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April) which is a combined effort to achieve the Network's stated goals of advocating museums' participation in policy-making processes and to advocate human rights. Many members understood that museums should also be more accessible and inclusive if they want to strengthen its role in society, which also matches the Network's goal outlined in the Statute to make museums more open. This issue is what a member from Albania as a problem similar for the region: "It's a challenge even in our countries, because in Albania, for example, this [accessibility] is a new topic. And before it wasn't even mentioned...Even now, people think that disabled people are not a priority..." (I, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). Another member from Kosovo also said that "the topic is still new in Kosovo" (F, 2016, pers.comm, 15 April). As a result, members not only face similar challenges, but they approach them a similar understanding and goal of strengthening museums.

Moreover, the sampled members shared a similar understanding of the Network as a platform for cooperation and getting ideas to later implement at their own institutions. When members were asked what value the BMN had for them in the survey, the most common response was that the Network was a source of ideas: the most common words that came up in interviews/conversation were "cooperation" and "ideas." When members were asked through casual conversation and through interviews why they joined the Network, most of them saw it as an opportunity to hear new ideas, share experiences and learn how to strengthen their museum.

As an observant participant at the MSD conference, it was apparent that members were interested in speaking to others as a way to get new ideas and connections. These all show that members have a homogenous understanding of the Network as a platform for cooperation and getting ideas to implement at their own institution. While these similarities show evidence for possible strong ties between members, the general communication frequency and pattern plays a role in tie strength.

4.4 Communication Patterns

4.4.1 Actors

Survey reports showed that both old and new members generally communicated the most with members in their country. Overall, the least collaboration happened between institutions in the same city. This lack of communication at the local level was noted when interviewing member E, who said the last time they met a museum practitioner from their same city was at the last year's annual MSD (2016, pers.comm, 13 April). They attributed this lack of interaction to the lack of opportunities that exist for collaboration at the local level (E, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). While it was unfeasible to distinguish whether MSD participants communicated with participants from their own country the most, exchanges between members of both the same and of different nationalities were witnessed. While work-related exchanges were witnessed, so were personal cultural exchanges between Kosovars and Albanians, who compared word usage in their shared language, and between Serbians and Bosnians who shared a similar traditional song. However, an old key member D said the crowd still usually groups by nationality (2016, pers.comm, 26 April). So, while the majority of surveyed members reported collaboration within their nation, the lack of cross-border collaboration might be explained by geographic and language barriers between members rather than unwillingness.

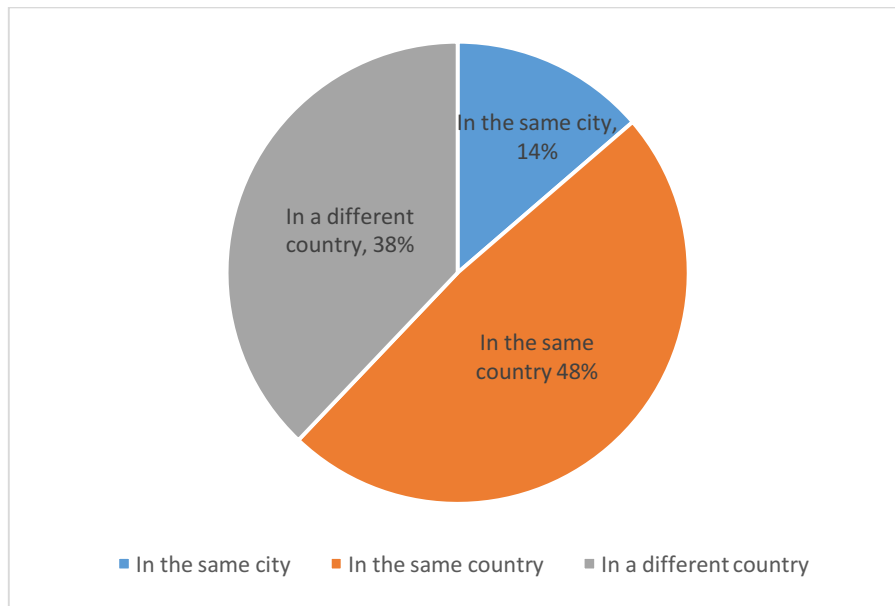


Figure 5 General Collaboration Actors

Members were asked to rate how significant another’s’ location, language, personality, and shared experience were in collaborating with them. Both old and new members recognized that personal preference was the most significant factor in collaborating, though they did not specify any characteristics. Old members seemed more opinionated than new members, while new members distributed significance more evenly in their ranking. For new members, geographic proximity was the second most significant, while old members thought that was the least significant. New members thought having a history of collaboration was the least significant, while old members thought that was the second least significant. However, both old and new members perceived “history of collaboration” to be one of the least significant factors of the four, which shows that they are similarly open to collaborate with those that they have little or no history of collaboration with. An old member from Kosovo also notes how the network had become “much more collaborative” and explains how there were not so many applicants to become a Steering Board member in the first MSD conference, but they’ve received many more applications for the latest open position in 2016 (F, 2016, pers.comm, 15 April). This also reflects a growing interest in actively participating in the Network.

Old Members	New Members
personal preference (4)	personal preference (3.4)
ease of language (3.8)	geographic proximity (2.7)
history of collaboration (3.1)	ease of language (2.6)
geographic proximity (3)	history of collaboration (2.4)

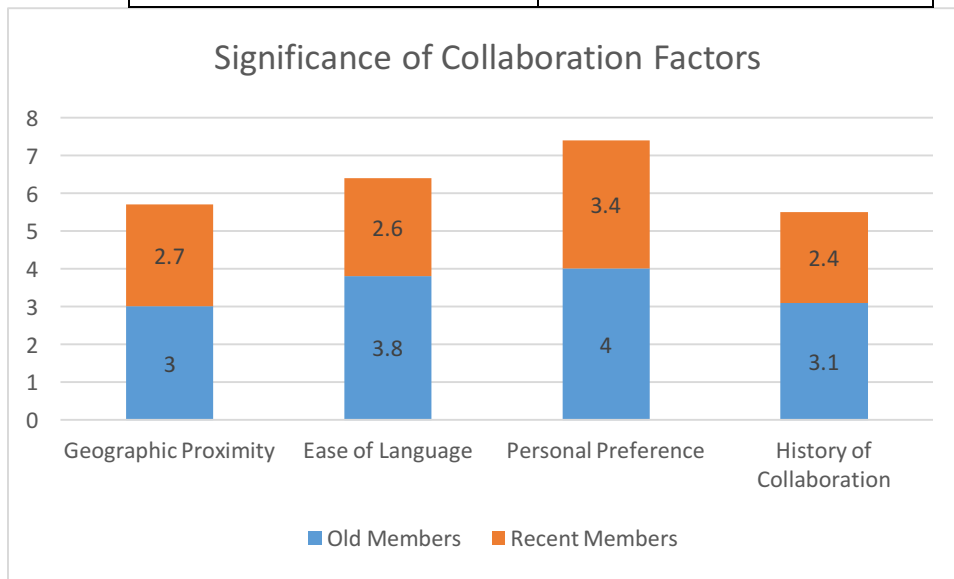


Figure 6 Significance of Collaboration Factors

4.4.2 Frequency

Members were also asked to rate how often they participated in the following activities on a five-point scale ranging from once a week to once a year. The following graph shows an overview of how often surveyed members contact each other. The majority of members collaborated either once a year or once every three months (or 4 times a year). Though this seems quite low, similar meeting schedules are found when companies like Hewlett-Packard form strategic alliances, which normally require executives in the alliance to meet quarterly (Iveybusinessjournal.com, 2016). The BMN Statutes similarly requires Steering Board Members to meet 2-4 times a year and all members to meet once a year and, so in this regard, the

Network's requirement in the number of contacts is met. A minority said they contact other members at least once a week. An old member from Kosovo notes that they had not witnessed so many collaborations because museums are not politically nor financially independent to initiate collaboration projects (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). This again alludes to similar conditions across the Balkanas, where museums are still very much political bodies (E, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April).

When members were asked if there has been a general increase in collaboration, the majority responded positively. None of them agreed strongly with the statement. 80% of old members agreed "very much" with the statement, while new members were equally divided between "very" and "somewhat." This difference in opinion shows that new members were less certain about the increase in collaboration than old members. This can represent new members' lack of experience in the network. None, however, chose "not at all," which shows that the Network has increased regional communication to an uncertain extent. This was confirmed through interviews, when members shared similar experiences in that, the network provided their institution opportunities to contact other museums in the region and that there was little to no contact between cultural institutions before they joined the network. An old member from Serbia said their regional museum didn't have "any connection within the region" (G, 2016, pers.comm, 15 April), while a new member from Greece said, "For Greece, in specific, it was a bit crazy, because we made connections with countries in main land Europe and far away. We didn't know anything about the neighborhood" (J, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). Another old member from Kosovo said that the network "was a bridge between people who had been fighting a couple years ago" (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). This points favorably in that contact between museum practitioners has increased.

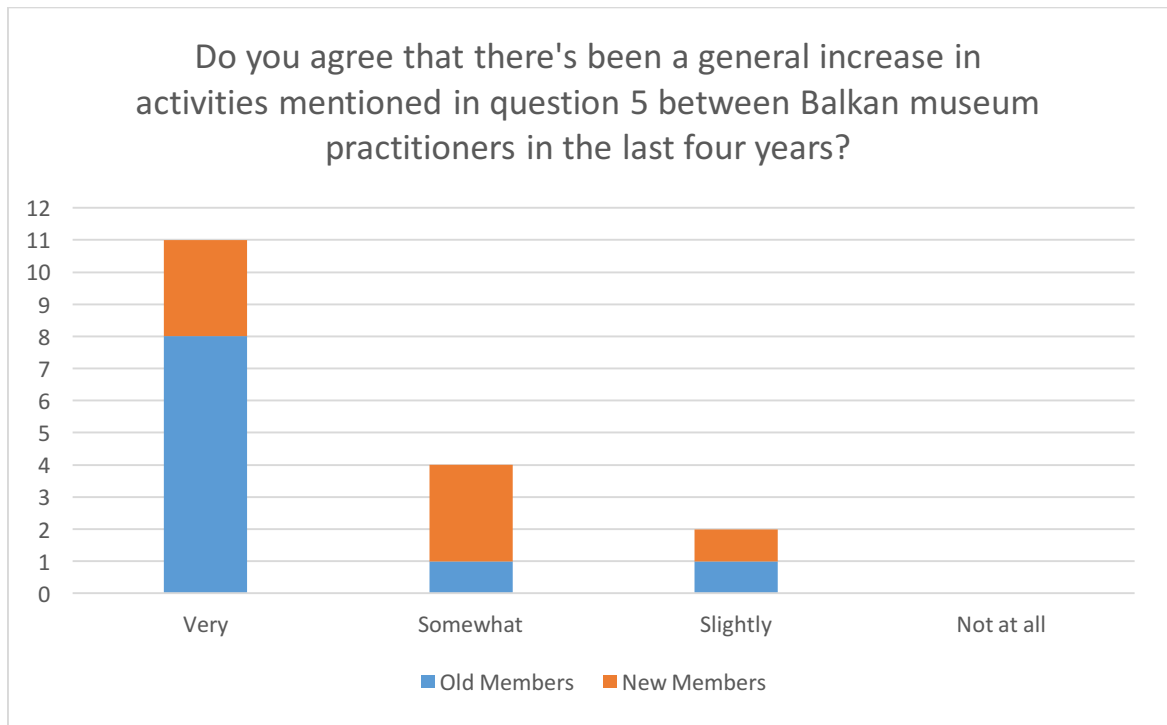


Figure 7 Increase in Collaboration

Furthermore, one member notes that while their institution is part of other networks, those networks only connect cultural practitioners within the same nation and according to their profession, like curators, ethnologists, archaeologists, art historians, etc. They “weren’t involved in an organization that is as complex, that collects different sorts of professionals from different types of museums from different countries in the Balkans...” (C, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). This also points favorably in that the BMN improves contacts between museum practitioners of different kinds and individuals from different sectors of society, which can contribute to bridging social capital and positive peacebuilding processes. According to the same member, the national network of their country does not foster such innovative and progressive work as members of the BMN (C, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). This section showed an overview of how often members generally communicate with each other. However, the kinds of activities members participate in have not yet been specified, which vary in the kind of trust and relationship that is needed for each activity.

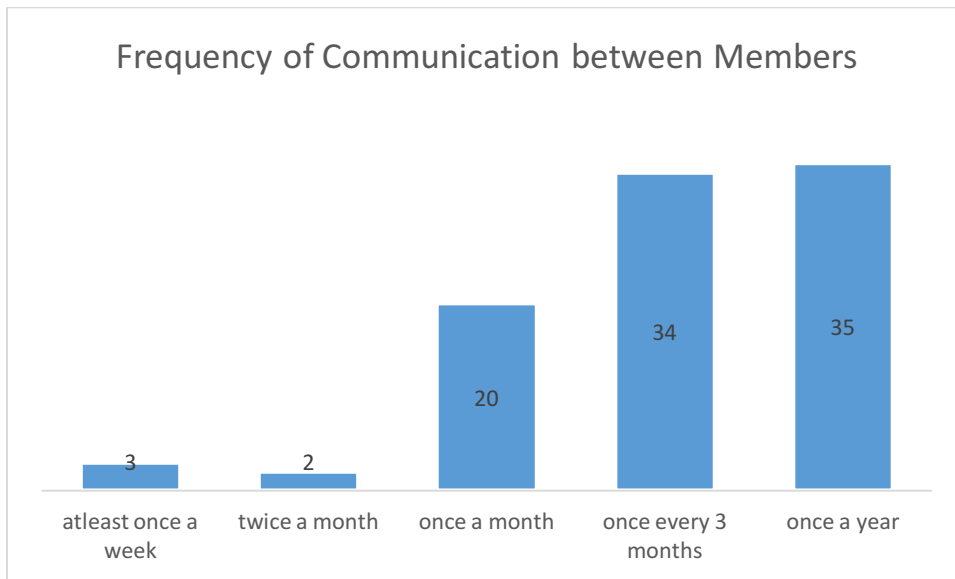


Figure 8 Frequency of Communication

4.5 Types of Activities

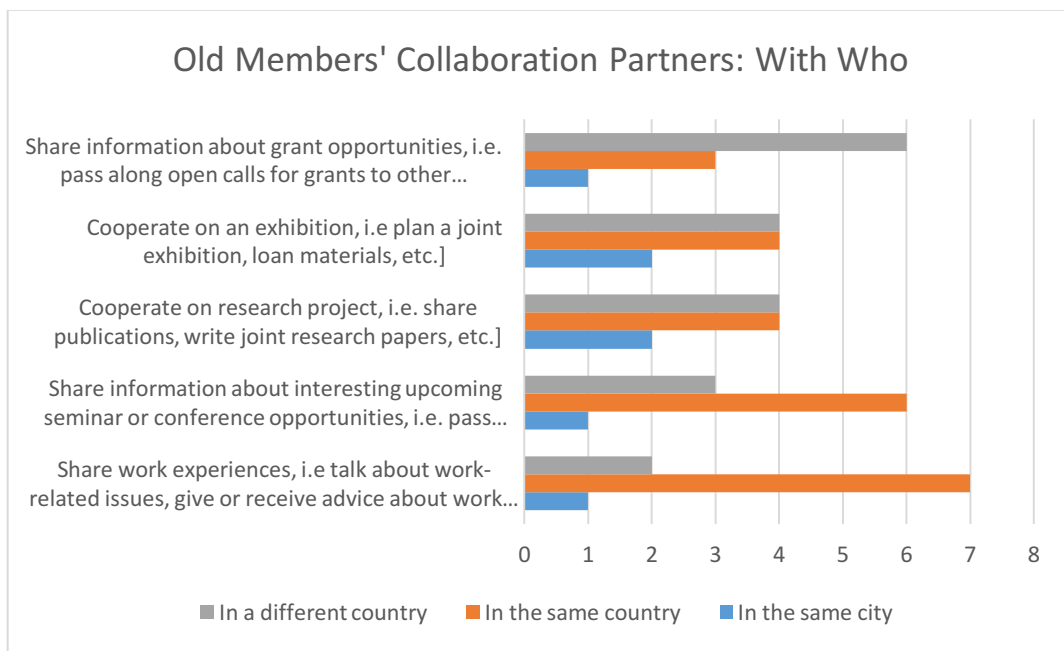


Figure 9 Old Members' Collaboration Partners: With Who

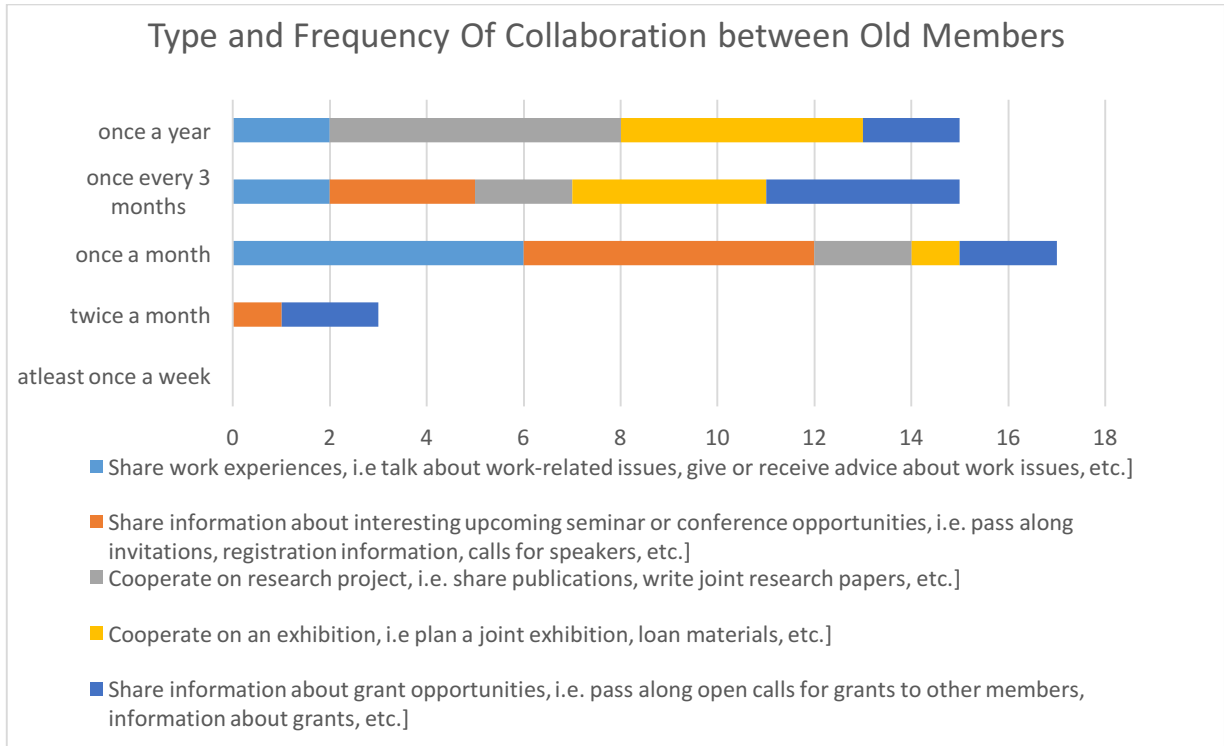


Figure 10 Type and Frequency of Collaboration between Old Members

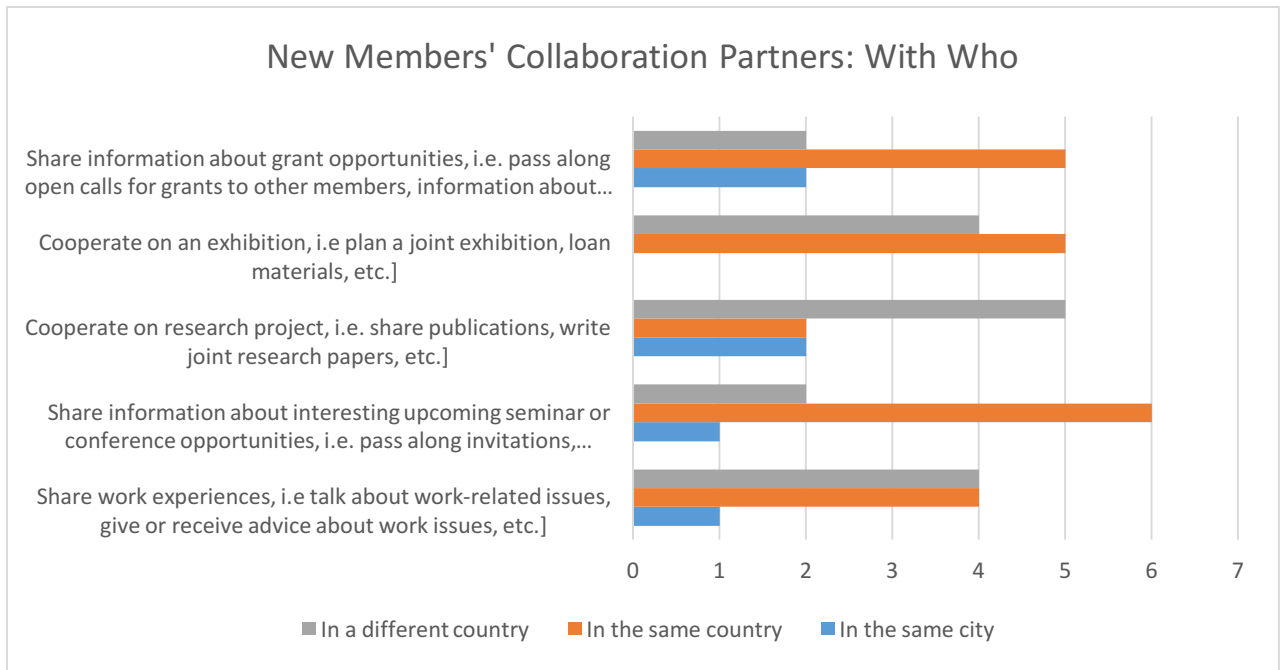


Figure 11 New Members' Collaboration Partners

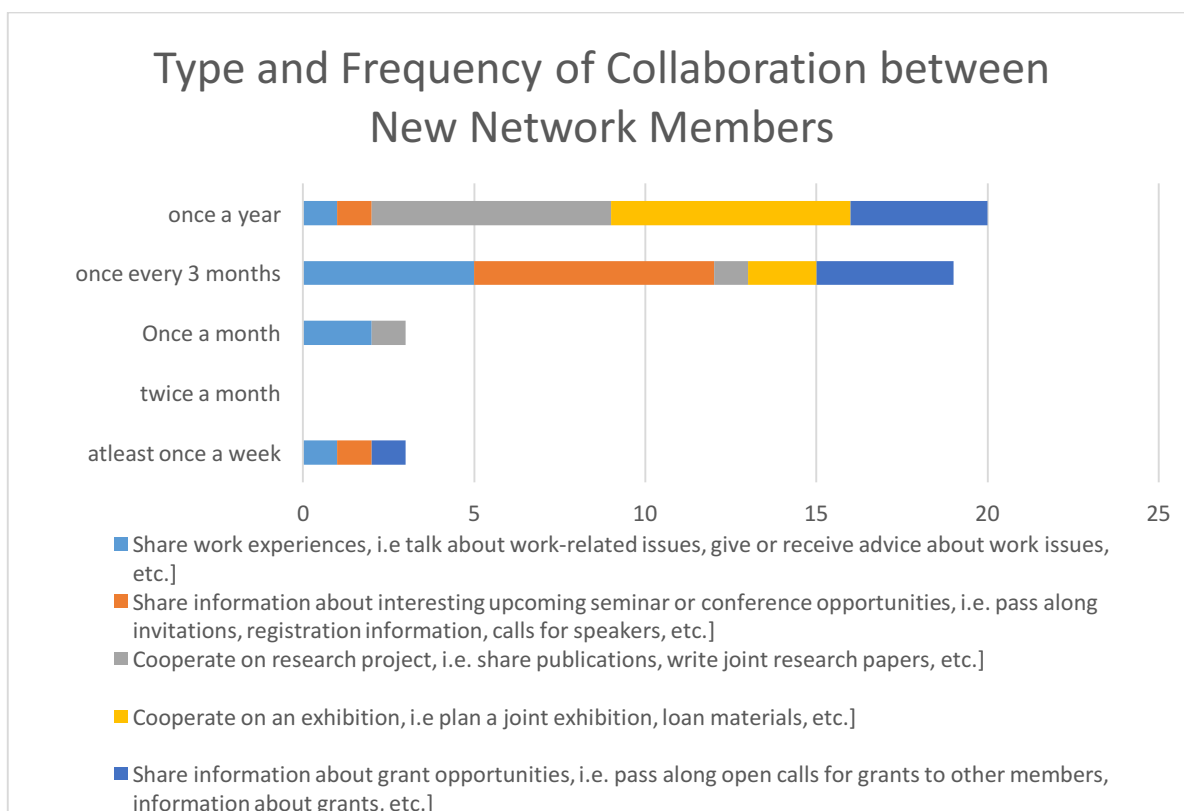


Figure 12 Type and Frequency of Collaboration between New Members

The following outlines the survey results about with whom and how often new and old members carried out the following activities:

a) Share work experiences, e.g. talk about work-related issues, give or receive advice about work issues, etc.

The majority of old members shared work experience the most with those in the same county and once a month. New members did this activity equally with members in the same and different country, once every three months. This shows that old members shared work experiences more frequently but only with those in the same country.

b) Share information about interesting upcoming seminar or conference opportunities e.g. pass along invitations, registration information, calls for speakers

Sharing information about conference opportunities was most common activity that both old members and new members did, though old members did it more often. Old members did this

once a month with members in the same country - while new members did it once every 3 months mostly with members also in the same country.

c) Share information about grant opportunities e.g. pass along open calls for grants to other members, information about grants, etc.

Old members passed along grant opportunities the most to members in a different country 4 times a year- though members also reported doing it twice a month and once a year. New members passed that information along the most to members in their own country equally between 1-4 times a year.

d) Cooperate on research project, e.g. share publications, write joint research papers, etc.

Old members cooperated on research project equally as much with members from the same or a different country. New member cooperated on research project mostly with members from different countries once a year. Both members did this once a year.

e) Cooperate on an exhibition, e.g. plan a joint exhibition, loan materials, etc.

Old members cooperate on an exhibit the most with members from the same or a different country once a year. New members cooperated on an exhibit almost equally between members from the same or different country, also once a year. Both members did this activity the least.

Overall, this survey showed that old members communicated more frequently than newer members. One founding member said that they still keep in contact with the original members very often but also sends their objects to other museums for cleaning and preservation purposes (G, 2016, pers.comm, 15 April). Others said that they've accepted other members' invitations and have visited their museums in other countries (A, 2016, pers.comm, 15 April; B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). As a result, this survey gives a rough but incomplete picture of the kinds of collaborative activities that members participate in.

4.6 Types of Knowledge Transferred

The preconference survey also asked members to what extent they were more aware of best practices in the museum and heritage field and the majority responded very positively. Old members agreed more than new members, which again can be a result of the difference in time

that they have in been involved in Network activities. Both responded positively, which was also understood through surveys and participant observation at the MSD conference.

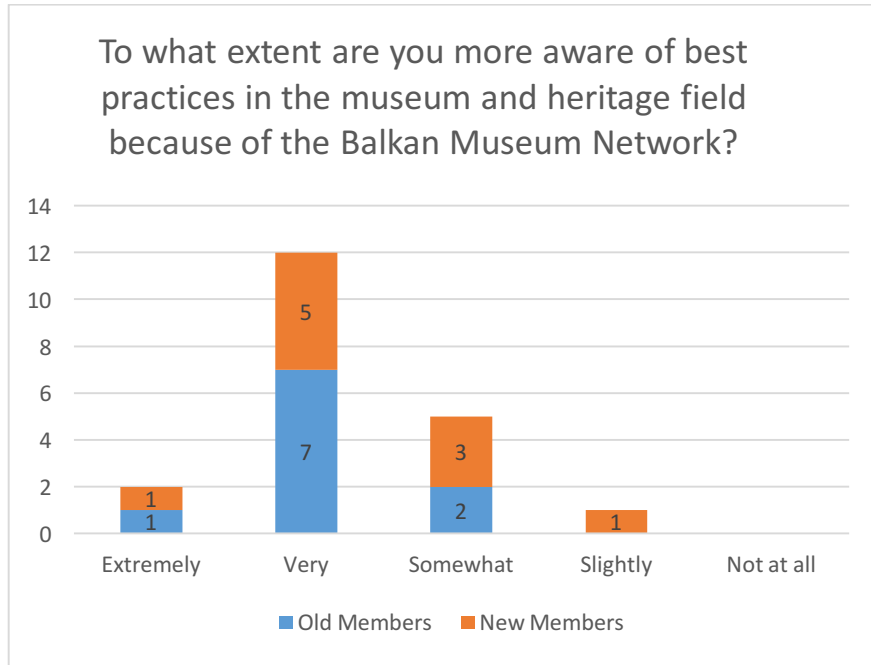


Figure 13 Extent of Best Practices Learnt

One topic that both groups of members learned the most about was “access and inclusion.”⁹ A review of BMN’s past activities shows it was active in projects that made museums more accessible¹⁰ - especially to deaf and disabled people. Workshops, programs and other events that promote access and inclusion development were implemented, like the 3-year project “Spreading the Word: Sustainable Accessible Museums for Disabled Children and Adults in the Balkans” (Bmuseums.net, n.d.). The project aimed to urge museum practitioners to consider principles of inclusion in their institution. This was confirmed throughout the interviews

⁹ Projects that have to do with access and inclusion have been funded by a Greek foundation, which facilitates learning about the topic.

¹⁰ An accessible museum is one that facilitates both physical and intellectual access to its galleries, exhibitions and programs, consequently makes it more inclusive.

with members of the Access Group, the working group made up of 8 museum practitioners from different Balkan countries that have an interest in this topic. As of April 2016, there are 3 from Bosnia, 2 from Greece, one from Macedonia, 1 from Albania and 1 from Serbia. This group attends special trainings where they learn about the social model of disability and practical applications from experts in the field. These trainings are usually held at other members' institutions, which allows for members from different countries to interact and collaborate. Through the trainings, members of the Access Group become a pool of experts on the topic, who can share the knowledge they gained at their own or different museums in the region. One member, for example, gave the same workshop they attended to their fellow staff (H, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). Another has also been sent to other member institutions to provide workshops about access and inclusion based on the Social Model of Disability (I, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April).

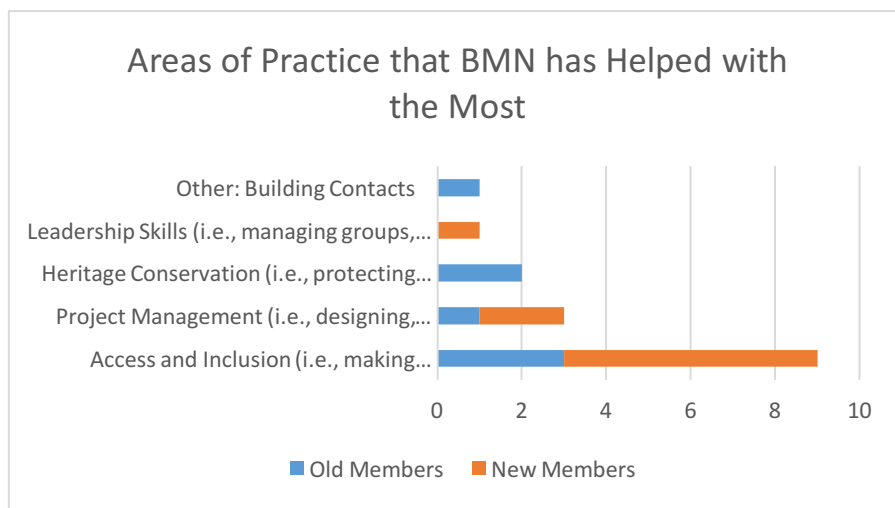


Figure 14 Topic that's Benefitted Members

According to members of both the Access Group and the Network at large, many of their colleagues and themselves have implemented what they've learned about in their institutions. It is not so expensive to improve access at the institutions, like changing color schemes for text to be read more easily or adding a ramp for people in wheelchairs to be able to enter the building, they said (H, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). These interventions are not so expensive and are

actions that staff can implement without undergoing major administrative processes, that other activities like interpretation and exhibit design may call for. Though taking away physical barriers is a big part of providing access to museums, BMAG members explained it was also important to remove intellectual barriers. A museum practitioner from Serbia, who has been in the Network from the beginning said that they learned it was important to use “common words that visitors could have written them selves-this is the key point and we’ve tried it at my museum and I’ve told colleagues that we have to find some kind of words that people have to understand. That we see this items with different eyes, that the item is representing something and can speak for itself, and you have to speak for it but the words have to be understandable for most people who come to museums” (A, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April).

When old key member E was asked whether they noticed other members implementing lessons learned through the BMN, they responded positively. “I see it. For example, for small Bosnian museums who passed through trainings and education received by or offered by BMN or CHwB, or these two together [...] I really see it in Bosnian museums- even in small ones that you would not expect them to be so... progressive but this helped them a lot. And I see it also with colleagues from Shkodra, Albania, Kosovo... So you see, people are talking about things that we have heard and learned here...” (2016, pers.comm, 13 April). This sentiment was echoed by most members of the Network at the MSD, when they pointed out that raising awareness was the first step in learning and implementing new lessons (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April; H, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April; I, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). This parallels the process of organizational learning: individual learning, intuiting, and institutionalizing (Crossan, Lane and White 1999). Members noticed that “I see that people start thinking, first of all, and then gradually they start implementing some of these things. So raising awareness is really like, the first and maybe the most difficult step” (E, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April). Many also talked about going to MSD Conference as a way to exchange work experience, listen to their colleagues’ projects and learn from them (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April; H, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April; I, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April), especially because the “lessons about museums [are] from the crème de la crème” (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). Another old member from Serbia said “We hear ideas about other people in other museums, so you can implement something in your museum. And you also go to museums to see- I saw [their] ideas in Sarajevo, what they’ve done...I have to admit [they’re] a great director. So, I try to implement similar things in Novi Sad” (A, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April)

5. Discussion

This paper investigated whether the Balkan Museum Network developed members' knowledge and trust between each other by analyzing the historic dimensions of the region and the origins of the Network, and by asking members about their own professional and personal development as a member. This case study analyzed the ties within the Balkan Museum Network within a theoretical framework based on the theories of social network systems (e.g. Burt, 1990; Granovetter, 1973; Adler and Kwoon, 2001), social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1993, 2000) and peace building (Lederach, 1999, 2005). The theoretical framework reviewed how to assess tie strength and trust by assessing the relationships between members on a dyadic level and a network level.

The data was collected through various means; literature about the BMN was reviewed, an online survey directed at BMN members was distributed, and a total of 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted. While survey response was low, the possibility of misrepresenting the BMN was mitigated through interviewing members and fact-checking with key members throughout the process. Interviews and surveys gathered information about members' collaboration patterns and knowledge gained. Interviews also provided understanding of how the BMN developed and how members collaborated with each other, which sometimes was not included in the survey's options, like exchanging exhibits, loaning objects and sending objects to other institutions for collection care. With this information, one could holistically interpret the extent of trust that exists in members' ties and how the overall operations in the Network contribute to social capital and peacebuilding. The interdependency of knowledge exchange and trust makes it impossible to separate the two concepts. As a result, the following provides an integrated account of actors' trust and knowledge exchange to illustrate the network's role in building social capital.

Weak ties

Results showed that both old and new members participated the most in activities facilitated by weak ties. From the options provided by the survey, members passed along information about grant and conference opportunities to each other the most. As both present the potential for

financial gain and exposure to new networks, grant and conference opportunities similarly resemble job opportunities. Information about job and conference opportunities resemble explicit knowledge as both can be stored in databases as documents, plans, and descriptions of organizations (Argote, 2013). Explicit knowledge is easily transferred and does not require that many tangible or intangible resources- its ease in transferability may explain why it is the most frequent. Though sharing explicit knowledge has been shown to be facilitated the most through weak ties because it is easily transferred (Granovetter, 1973), more dimensions of the ties should be taken into account like mutual confiding and intimacy (Granovetter, 1973).

It is also evident that sharing this kind of explicit knowledge, like grant or conference opportunities, stems from a dimension of trust, benevolence, or the willingness to support another (Levin, 1999). However, not knowing the context in which members passed this information along, makes it difficult to assess the extent of benevolence and hence the strength of trust in the ties; maybe members passed grant opportunities along to another because they weren't eligible or maybe both parties were eligible for the same grant. If both parties were eligible for the same grant, the level of benevolence would be higher since it might jeopardize their own chances of getting the grant. While this activity shows benevolent behavior, it is still not an example of the strongest possible ties. According to Granovetter, one can intuitively tell whether the strength of a tie is strong, weak or absent by considering, "the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (1973). As sharing information about grant opportunities was reported the most common activity, one can assume that there is a level of reciprocity in benevolence towards each other, which does not necessarily reflect high levels of emotional intensity or mutual confiding. However, because the decision to trust an actor, or not, is evaluated on the actor's past displays of credibility or benevolence (Medlin, 2009), this display of benevolence can lead to stronger trusting ties in the future - ones that are characterized by emotional intensity and intimacy (Gronavetter, 1973). Since members share similar profiles (cultural institutions working in the same region), there is a greater chance for ties to strengthen. In this way, this benevolent activity can create conditions for more benevolent behavior in the future.

Strong Ties

While there is evidence of benevolence within the network, both old and new members reported that they collaborated the least in activities that evidence strong ties, like cooperating on research or joint exhibits. The survey reported that joint research projects and exhibitions occurred on average once a year. Collaborating in such an activity requires moderate to high levels of Gronavetter's factors of what characterizes a strong tie: high levels of amount of time spent, actors' emotional intensity, actors' level of intimacy (mutual confiding) and the tie's reciprocal services (1973). While this activity's low frequency can be interpreted as a result of weak ties that can come from relational and motivational problems found in geographically dispersed networks (Crampton, 2001), it is more likely due to the high cost of collaboration (i.e., time, money, political constraints) that comes with planning, meeting and collaborating with members in remote locations. This is supported by members' opinions about the nationalist politicization of museums and their financial challenges. Members, however, show and have shown a strong motivation to collaborate with each other: several member institutions have recently overcome geographic and political barriers by creating online virtual exhibition between seven museums and have also done so in the past, in the 2011 1+1: Life & Love joint simultaneous exhibit between 6 countries. This shows that there is a willingness to cooperate despite the challenges that geography and politics may present. This is also apparent in members' reported openness to collaborate with people they've never worked with before. For an organization, being open to others is a very big sign of benevolence as they are putting themselves in a vulnerable position, where they don't really know how their business partner works (Medlin, 2009). This is a sign that even though ties are not strong in how frequently members communicate with each other, there is a strong sense of reciprocal benevolence and desire to cooperate, which contributes to understanding that the strength of the ties lie closer to strong rather than weak. Members' commitment in attending conferences, and sharing information is evidence for even stronger ties since they are so geographically dispersed, in areas where positive communication was scarce a few years ago.

While relatively weak ties allowed members to transfer explicit knowledge, like grant and conference opportunities, and activities that required strong ties were infrequent, like cooperating on exhibits and research projects, overall the BMN members' tie strength is still not entirely perceived as weak, as there is evidence for trust in past joint exhibits and openness to future collaboration. There is more evidence for growth of trust in their ties, in that they share

tacit knowledge with each other, especially about the topic access and inclusion. Unlike explicit knowledge, which can be easily stored/accessed through databases, tacit knowledge is more intangible and made of mindsets or skills (Polanyi, 1966). Through interviews, it was apparent that both new and old members learned new skills on how to make their museum more accessible in physical and intellectual ways: some have implemented lessons learned at their institutions, like including a ramp for wheel-chair users and using easy-to understand language. These lessons were taught by Access Group members, who shared this knowledge through methods that Argote has identified as typical for transferring tacit knowledge: by training members, allowing them to observe experts, and providing opportunities for communication between members (2013). Sharing tacit knowledge requires more personal attention and effort on behalf of actors. As interviews revealed, Access Group members attended trainings abroad as participants and later on became trainers of the same workshop for other members. According to Polanyi (1966), tacit knowledge is hard to codify, express and communicate explicitly and requires more effort and more trust between the actors to transfer. As a result, this activity shows more evidence for ties being more strong than weak.

Network Level

On a network level, tie strength can translate to the network's enhanced normative understanding and behavior (Coleman, 1990). While normative behavior is found in networks with high density, i.e. where no one can escape the notice of others (Coleman, 1990), it can also be found in networks that have higher levels of trust that stem from members' similar behavior/values (Herreros, 2005). While the level of contact is relatively low between members, surveyed members still understand the role of the BMN as a platform to exchange ideas and cooperate as it was the most common response when they were asked about the value that the BMN had for them. Members also approached the goals of strengthening museums from the similar angle of accessibility and inclusion (I, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April, F, 2016, pers.comm, 15 April), which also matches the Network's goal outlined in the Statute to make museums more open to wider audiences. This could have been a result of stating clear goals in the Network's statutes, which is recommended to help build a common understanding and thereby increase trust levels (Mühl, 2014). This normative behavior can also come from members' sense of shared history and current work contexts in similarly post-communist societies; issues relating to the

politicization of museums, their lack of access and inclusion, and their general lack of support by society and the state at large. In this way, trust building is assisted by members' shared challenges and consequent shared approach to strengthening museums in society.

While a shared understanding helps create conditions for reciprocal trust and understanding in each other, there was also evidence of trust towards the organization. Both new and old members spoke highly of the Network, which can be evidence for integrity-based trust in the organization. Members spoke positively about the BMN as a platform for ideas (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April; H, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April; I, 2016, pers.comm, 13 April), and learning "lessons about museums from the crème de la crème" (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). This positive reaction towards the Network reflects members' integrity-based trust towards the Network's activities and quality of information shared. There was also evidence for actors becoming more invested in the Network, which Medlin also indicates as a sign for integrity based trust (2009). According to an old member who has been active in the last 4 MSD conference, members were now "more collaborative" and showed more interest in leadership positions than before (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). When an organization is perceived to lack integrity, people are likely to be skeptical about the organization's missions and aims and consequently act against rather than with the goals (Medlin, 2009). Considering members' growing engagement, overall positivity toward the Network, and how their activities in knowledge exchange align with Network goals of strengthening museums, members' integrity based trust in the network is shown.

Time and Trust

Overall, results showed that there had been a broadening of contacts in the region. This growth reflects the Network's role in developing bridging ties, i.e., ties between members from different ethnic or social groups- which contributes to good social capital in peacebuilding contexts (Putnam 2000). From 2006 to 2013, there were 11 members from 6 countries and in April 2016 there were 44 members from 7. This 400% increase in members also suggests an increase in civic engagement, which Putnam emphasizes as an important role in building a robust democratic, and civil society (2000). Surveys and interviews showed that the majority of members also felt a general increase in collaboration, which is a positive sign of increasing ties in the region. However, new members seemed more skeptical than older members about whether

there was an increase in activities, since new members' responses were divided among the weaker positive options: "very" and "somewhat." This could be explained by their lack of experience in the network; old members had collaborated much more in contrast to new members as they had worked on the 1+1:Life & Love exhibition and were also part of the process of creating the network. New members' perceived uncertainty about the increase in collaboration in comparison to older members' responses can simply represent new members' more recent entry into the network, which has a relatively low frequency of collaboration—members generally contacting each other 1-4 times a year.

While there is low frequency of interaction, this does not necessarily mean that there is not social capital within those ties. Trust is a characteristic of social capital (Putnam, 1993) which is apparent in members' activities: benevolence towards each other in exchanging grant opportunities, exchanging of tacit knowledge about access and inclusion, history of joint exhibits, and their openness to future collaboration. The ties resemble what Burt calls trusted network-bridging ties—ties that have trust but do not require much effort in maintaining ongoing contact (e.g. frequency) or any actions by third parties (e.g. structural holes can be left open) (2000). The low frequency of contact suggests that members' access to each other's social capital, i.e. trust and knowledge, isn't based on the quantity of contact but the quality of contact.

Throughout the results, subtle differences between old and new members were apparent. On average, older members communicated with each other more regularly than new members. While frequency of contact is not a sole indicator of strong ties nor trust (Granovetter, 1973), the activities that older members engaged in also indicated more intimacy: they shared information about conference opportunities, grant opportunities, and exchanged work experience more often than new members. While information about conference and grant opportunities were labeled as activities that are facilitated by weaker but benevolent ties, sharing work experiences is more nuanced. According to Granovetter, "the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" contribute to tie strength (1973). Exchanging work experience does not necessarily require long periods of time, but it may require some extent of mutual confiding, emotional intimacy, and reciprocity. Since trust is generated cyclically (Putnam, 2000) one can assume that exchanging work experience can contribute to higher intimacy with time and frequency. Moreover, since old members shared more work experience with each other and have even collaborated before on joint exhibits, one

can assume that trust has been positively accumulating throughout the years. As Mühl writes, trust can increase or decrease based on cumulative history of interaction between parties (2014). If parties' history was positive, as in the case of old members who exhibited praise for other older members whom they've had to chance to work with, then trust thickens (Mühl, 2014). In this sense, the BMN has facilitated ties to strengthen trust and create social capital between individuals from former conflicting countries.

Bridging vs Bonding

Old and new members also differed in whom they collaborated with: old members passed along grant opportunities more to members in a different country, while new members passed that information along the most to members in the same country. As mentioned before, passing along grant opportunities has been understood as an activity facilitated by weak ties, which have also been called the beginning of relationships (Hereros, 2005). Knowing that collaboration was low in the region for members before joining the Network, members passing explicit knowledge to members across borders suggests new bridging social ties being formed. Since new members pass along explicit knowledge within their country the most, it too suggests that ties within countries are benevolent but also not so strong either. Another way that old members and new members varied in their collaboration partners was when old members reported cooperating on research projects as much with members from the same or a different country while new members did this mostly with members from different countries. It is interesting that new members reported that they cooperated on research projects the most with different countries, as they also reported through interviews that they did not have much contact with other countries the region.

The survey did not specify if collaboration partners were in the region, which could be an area for future research. However, interviews with new members suggested that the countries cited might be non-regional (beyond the Western Balkans region¹¹), as one new member said they had many contacts with countries outside the region but none in their "neighborhood" (I, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). The possibility of new members being more active with countries outside the region may also be supported by the international community's involvement in the

¹¹ Western Balkan countries defined here as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015).

region. While the same misconception of collaboration partners' locations can be applied to old members' responses, it could be assumed that older members understood that the question referred to only to other members as they are more familiar with the Network and its efforts in promoting regional cooperation. However, more information is needed to make conclusions about whom new members cooperate with on research projects. This does however support the view that new members are more open to collaboration, as they also reported that the least significant factor for them was history of collaboration. New members rated it the least significant factor in collaborating, while old members rated it the second least important factor. This suggests that new members are more eager to collaborate with a wide range of people.

Whilst there was evidence for bridging social ties in the Network's growth in members across different countries, there was also a trend for members to communicate the most with members in their own countries. So while bridging social capital is being fostered in the form of knowledge exchange and trust, so is bonding social capital. If social capital is built only between members in the same ethnic or social group, strong bonding ties are formed. This can be seen as a harmful kind of social capital (Putnam 2000), especially in peace building which Lederach says should aim for wide engagement with "the other", former antagonizing party (2005). Though this kind of bonding social capital is apparent in members' collaboration with members in their own countries, bridging social capital is also apparent in the cross-border knowledge exchanges and trust built between formerly disconnected/conflicting parties. The reason behind the trend to collaborate within country borders could be the general lack of cross-border collaboration opportunities rather than lack of motivation, which is evident in their history of collaboration.

When reviewing the BMN in terms of a peacebuilding program, Lederach suggests assessing how the program fits in the larger context of society--- how it complements or opposes other institutions working in the area (Lederach, 1997). Considering that the international community has set up mostly political and economic organizations to stabilize the area (Cotter, 2012), the BMN's peacebuilding through the cultural sector upholds Lederach's recommendation to engage all sections and sectors of society in social constructive change towards peace (1997, 2000). By incorporating the often marginalized sector of culture and specifically museum practitioners in engaging with each other through knowledge exchange and trust building, the peace process set up in the economic and political spheres can be complemented. The second indicator Lederach suggests assessing is how the locals perceive the

peace-building program itself - whether they think it is effective or not (Lederach, 2000). While BMN is not an explicit peacebuilding program, one can gather from members' positive opinion about the Network in how it facilitates productive and positive collaboration between formerly conflicting members. It was also apparent that the network allowed for the humanization of the "other" - old member B from Kosovo shared an anecdote about this: "when someone comes to a museum [in Kosovo] and asks about how old the object is you have to say oh no, this is a replica- the authentic one is in Serbia. And then you meet the Serbian director here, at MSD, knowing that one of the objects is in their museum and you can't do anything about it... But you also realize that it's not their fault... It's also a matter of perspective, because for them we took away all of their objects that are in our museums" (B, 2016, pers.comm, 14 April). The last indicator to consider is transformative capacity responsiveness, or whether the population's culture has changed from a negative to a more positive/inclusive one. As mentioned before, the Network has expanded in numbers and consequently bridged isolated museum practitioners in the region. In this way, the Network has become more inclusive by bringing in more members. It has also been promoting inclusive values outside the network parameters, by implementing lessons learned about Access and Inclusion in their institutions. Museums are increasingly aware of including wider audiences into their exhibits. In these ways, the BMN fits the model of a successful peacebuilding program, even though it's main goal is to exchange knowledge and strengthen museums.

Further Research

While the network shows an increase in social capital and positive change towards peaceful relations, this can not be generalized to regional collaboration outside of the network. Whether the network in some ways promotes regional collaboration outside the network would be an interesting field to research. Perhaps the network's built social capital spills over into society through members' institutions and thereby contributes to museums as a source for social capital. Research into museums' social capital production in post conflict areas could promote cultural institutions to engage in peacebuilding.

Further research can also compare similar capacity building networks in post conflict societies to determine whether those networks unknowingly contribute to peacebuilding, too.

This comparison can also recognize any similarities across different political and cultural contexts. It would be also interesting to expand on how culturally rooted networks compare to political/economic networks in how they stabilize relations between formerly conflicting parties. Whether networks bring just its members closer together or the different societies they represent can be done in small scale groups multiple times.

Recommendations

While members seemed eager to collaborate, many noted the lack of opportunities and resources to do so. The internet could be a useful platform to overcome high collaboration costs that come with geographically dispersed networks. In this way, communication can be less costly. The frequency of collaboration can also be improved by making collaboration less costly and more casual: perhaps with a discussion forum dedicated to different topics where people can post inspiring actions and/or opportunities.

Another challenge for the Network is to keep new and old members active and interested. Investment in the network can be raised by creating more benefits (like access to courses, online webinars, certifications, participating in interesting activities, etc.) and creating opportunities for more members to manage Network activities themselves (like providing opportunities for members to organize courses, online webinars, etc.). These activities can mutually benefit the Network's and member's own professional capacities.

To mitigate the building of bonding capital between members of both the same country and of the same years of members, more collaboration between these groups should be promoted. A mentorship program between older and newer members, and from different countries, could foster positive bridging social capital between different member groups.

6. Conclusion

This paper explored the work of a capacity-building network of cultural institutions within the context of peacebuilding. This was done by reviewing theories related to social network theory, social capital and peacebuilding. The understanding of these concepts was applied to an assessment of the level of trust between members at the dyadic and network levels in the Balkan Museum Network in order to explore the network's contribution to social capital and peacebuilding processes. The Balkan Museum Network (BMN) is a strategic alliance aiming to exchange knowledge between members from different cultural heritage institutions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Greece — most of whom were formerly conflicting entities in the 1990s. Members with an interest in strengthening their museum voluntarily entered the alliance to increase their capacities through collaboration. The amount and kind of knowledge and trust in each other was assessed through interviews, surveys, and review of past activities and official documents. Complemented by a review of literature about the regions' historical and recent development, a holistic exploration of the Network and its impact on members' ties was undertaken.

Overall, the kinds of ties that were found was what Burt calls trusted network-bridging ties—ties that have trust but do not require much investment in ongoing maintenance (e.g., as with closeness and frequency) or any additional actions by third parties (e.g., it does not require closure to form around a bridging tie) (Burt, 2000). Collaboration was found to be infrequent and members mostly shared explicit knowledge, which does not require nor exhibit characteristics of strong ties like, time, emotional intimacy nor reciprocity (Gronavetter, 1973). Despite these indicators for low levels of trust and weak ties, there was a substantial amount of evidence that supported the presence of trust in the ties. This affirms Levin and Crossan's findings that although characteristics for strong ties are highly correlated, they are still independent factors (1994). Despite low contact frequency, members exhibited trust by acting benevolently towards each other, expressing integrity based trust towards the Network, and sharing tacit knowledge with each other. Members reported learning the most about access and inclusion, which resembles tacit knowledge as it is difficult to codify and express (Polanyi, 1966). Members also

shared a sense of norms and approach to achieving BMN goals, which also suggests strength at the network level between members in countries who were previously fighting.

Old members, having more history of collaboration and experience with the Network exhibited more trust and stronger ties in engaging more in activities that required more trust. This points favorably that the Network has allowed ties to strengthen in a post-conflict area. Older members exhibited more integrity based trust towards the Network's role in bridging communities. They also shared work experience more often than new members, which requires a level of trust and mutual confiding- characteristics of stronger ties (Granovetter, 1973) Older member were however, less open to collaboration in comparison to newer members of the Network. This raises the issue of the risk of creating more social bonding capital than bridging social capital within the network.

The network has expanded significantly since it was founded, demonstrating the BMN's role in facilitating bridging social capital, which is an important aspect in humanizing the "other" in building peace in post conflict areas (Lederach, 2000). It also points favorably in the growth of civic participation in society, which is a sign of social capital (Putnam, 2000). However, there was a trend for both old and new members to collaborate the most with members in their own country. Evidence suggests that members lack the necessary resources for cross-border collaboration, like time, financial and political support. To mitigate the building of bonding capital between members of both the same country and of the same years of members, more collaboration between these groups should be promoted. If bonding social capital becomes stronger than bridging social capital, more harm than good can be accomplished in the context of peace building (Putnam, 2000). Despite this, the BMN shows strength as a peacebuilding mechanism. It has facilitated bridges across formerly conflicting communities, and promoted inclusive behavior towards all kinds of people. Moreover, it occupies a sector that is underrepresented by most top-down political/economic peacebuilding organizations, which is one way to incorporate all sections and sectors of society and build constructive change towards peace (Lederach, 2000).

These insights about capacity building networks dedicated to cultural heritage can provide inspiration to strengthen the cultural sectors role in building peace and social capital. In a growing multicultural society, the need for communication between different groups of people is

becoming more relevant and needed. A network similar to the BMMN can provide a platform for different social and cultural groups to enter dialogue with each other and work towards the same goal. The challenge for both the Network and those interested in creating such a platform, would be to get people interested and engaged. This can be done by highlighting the benefits of being part of such a network: being exposed to progressive ideas and inspiring actions.

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Interviews

- Member A. Old founding member from Serbia, Steering Board. (13 April 2016).
- Member B. Old member from Kosovo, attended the last 4 MSD meetings. (14th April 2016).
- Member C. New member from Serbia. Interviewed by: Perez, A. (13th April 2016).

Member D. Old founding member from UK, Steering Board. Skype interviewed by: Perez, A. (26h April 2016).

Member E. Old member from BiH, Steering Board. Interviewed by: Perez, A. (13th April 2016).

Member F. Old founding member from Kosovo, Steering Board, attended 4 MSD conferences. Interviewed by: Perez, A. (15th April 2016).

Member G. Old founding member from BiH, BMAG. Interviewed by: Perez, A. (14th April 2005).

Member H. New member from Greece, BMAG member. Interviewed by: Perez, A. (13th April 2016)

Member I. Old member from Albania, Steering Board and BMAG member. Interview by: Perez, A. (13th April 2016)

Member J. New member from Greece. Interviewed by: Perez, A. (13th April 2016)

Member K. Old member from Bosnia, Secretariat. Telephone Interview (13th April 2016)

Member L. Old member from Albania, Steering Board. Interviewed by: Perez, A. (13th April 2016)

Appendix A

List of Members

Country	Institution	Year
serb	City Museum of Novi Sad	2006
al	Historical Museum of Shkodra	2006
ko	Museum of Kosovo	2006
bih	Museum of Republic of Srpska	2006
al	National Historical Museum of Albania	2006
serb	National Museum in Belgrade	2006
bih	National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina	2006
fyrom	National Museum of Macedonia	2006
monte	National Museum of Montenegro	2006
ko	Regional Museum of Gjakova	2006
bih	Zenica City Museum	2006
bih	Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina	2013
serb	Museum of African Art in Belgrade	2013
serb	Museum of Yugoslav History	2013
serb	Muzej u Smederevu (Museum in Smederevo)	2013
serb	National museum Zrenjanin	2013
fyrom	OSTEN Museum of Drawing Skopje	2013
bih	The Bosniak Institute – Adil Zulfikarpasic Foundation	2013
bih	Museum of the City of Sarajevo	2013
al	Museum Kokalari, Gjirokastra	2013
fyrom	City Museum - Kriva Palanka	2014
fyrom	Museum of the Macedonian Struggle	2014
fyrom	Association of Paraplegics of Podgorica	2014
bih	Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska	2015
serb	Homeland Museum of Knjazevac	2015
al	Bratko Museum of Oriental Art, Korça	2015

serb	National Museum Kikinda	2015
bih	Regional Museum Travnik	2015
bih	International Gallery of Portraits/Tuzla	2015
fyrom	Prilep Tobacco Museum	2015
serb	The Pavle Beljanski Memorial Collection	2015
serb	NGO Center for Urban Antropology	2015
monte	Museum of the Town of Perast	2015
bih	Museum of Literature and Performing Arts of BiH	2015
bih	The Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina	2015
al	Fototeka Kombetare "Marubi"	2015
al	Erseka Museum	2015
greece	National Historical Museum Greece	2016
al	Muzeu Historik Tepelene	2016
al	Centre of National Museums Berat	
al	Archaeological Museum Durrës	
serb	Museum of Vojvodina	
al	Archaeological Museum of Apollonia	
bih	Museum of Tešanj	

Appendix B

Survey

Balkan Museum Network

Dear participants of the “Meet, See, Do 2016” conference in Shkodra.

In order to learn more about you and the Network we would kindly ask you to take 15 minutes of your time to fill in this pre-conference survey.

Please turn in your answers before the first Conference day begins.

Thank you!

1. Please state your country. * *Mark only one oval.*

Albania Bosnia and Herzegovina

FYROM Greece Kosovo Montenegro Serbia

Other:

2. How long have you been a member of the Network? * _____

3. How many MSD conference have you attended? * _____

4. What outcomes do you want from Meet, See, Do 2016 (please choose two priorities) *

Mark only one oval.

To strengthen my museum

To develop new partnerships in the Balkans

To develop new international partnerships

To gain new knowledge and skills

To find support for my project

To develop myself

Other: _____

4. Which kind of member are you? * Mark only one oval.

Assembly Steering Board President Other _____

5. Rank how often you contact other Network members for each activity. *

Mark only one oval per row.

	At least once a week	Twice a month	Once a month	Once every 3 months	Once a year
Share work experiences, i.e talk about work-related issues, give or receive advice about work issues, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share information about interesting upcoming seminar or conference opportunities, i.e. pass along invitations, registration information, calls for speakers, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperate on research project, i.e. share publications, write joint research papers, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperate on an exhibition, i.e plan a joint exhibition, loan materials, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share information about grant opportunities, i.e. pass along open calls for grants to other members, information about grants, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

a. Please specify and give brief examples of your most common cooperation style with other museums (in your country or abroad). *

.....

.....

6. Do you agree that there's been a general increase in activities mentioned in question 5 between Balkan museum practitioners in the last four years? * *Mark only one oval.*

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all

Other: _____

7. To what extent are you more aware of best practices in the museum and heritage field because of the Balkan Museum Network? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all Other: ____

8. To what extent do implement best practices learned through the Balkan Museum Network in your institution? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all

Other: _____

9. Through which means did you gain the most knowledge from the Balkan Museum Network? * Mark only one oval.

Attending Meet, See, Do Conferences

Working with the Access Group Working with the Interpretation Group

Implementing collaborative projects, like "1+1 Life & Love" and "My Museum and Me" exhibitions

Other: _____

10. In which areas of practice has the Balkan Museum Network helped you with the most?

* *Mark only one oval.*

- Access and Inclusion (i.e., making collections accessible to all types of people) Education Programs (i.e., designing educational events and programs for schools and the community)
- Heritage Conservation (i.e., protecting objects/sites from natural deterioration, etc)
- Project Management (i.e., designing, developing, implementing & evaluating projects)
- Leadership Skills (i.e., managing groups, motivating people)
- Other:

11. Generally, how significant are the following factors in collaborating with a partner? 1 being the least significant, 5 being the most significant.

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
Geographic Proximity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of Language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal Preference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History of Collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Do you agree that the Network has enhanced members' capacities while strengthening bonds between members? * *Mark only one oval.*

- Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all
- Other:

13. Considering the past 3 years, how many independent projects do you implement in your museum each year? * *Mark only one oval.*

- 0 1- 5 6- 10 10- 15 More than 15
- Other:

14. Specify the location of the institution you do the following activity with the most.

** Mark only one oval per row.*

	In the same city	In the same country	In a different country
Share work experiences, i.e talk about work-related issues, give or receive advice about work issues, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share information about interesting upcoming seminar or conference opportunities, i.e. pass along invitations, registration information, calls for speakers, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperate on research project, i.e. share publications, write joint research papers, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperate on an exhibition, i.e plan a joint exhibition, loan materials, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share information about grant opportunities, i.e. pass along open calls for grants to other members, information about grants, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Do you agree that you've visited places that you wouldn't have gone, as a result of Balkan Museum Network? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all

Other:

16. As a result of the Balkan Museum Network, has your perception about people from other countries and ethnicities changed? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all Other: _

17. Do you feel that your relationships with other Network members has become more relaxed/safe/open? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all

Other:

18. How comfortable do you feel contacting other Network members for advice on a work-related issue? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all

Other:

19. How much do you trust the advice or information that Network members give you? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all

Other:

20. What is your primary source of information about museums in the Balkans? Please include the journal name, link to the web site, newsletter, etc. *

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21. Which field would you like the Balkan Museum Network to focus on in the future? * Mark only one oval

Collection Management (i.e., object conservation, archives, etc)

Access and Inclusion (i.e., making collections to different public groups, including, those with special needs, non-visitors, migrants, families, and older people

Social role of museums (i.e., making museums more active in discourses about social issues, like human rights, migration, etc)

Interpretation (i.e., making pluralistic narratives, etc)

Other:

22. How confident are you that the Network will grow in activities? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all Other:

23. Which is the greatest challenge to the Network's growth in the future? * Mark only one oval.

International Support National Support Local Support Funding

Other:

24. To what extent do you feel that tensions from the 1990s conflicts still affect social relations outside of the Balkan Museum Network environment? * Mark only one oval.

Extremely Very Somewhat Slightly Not at all

Other:

25. What value does the Balkan Museum have for you? *

Appendix C

Sample interview questions

- How and when did you get involved?
- What changes have you noticed between members?
- Do you feel that members collaborate more with each other now than when the network first started?
- Do you feel that your relationships with other Network members has become more relaxed/safe/open?
- Do you feel that you've learned how to be a better museum practitioner from other Network members? From who and in what ways?
- How has the BMN affected the development of your institution?
- Do you notice any change in Network members' capabilities as museum practitioners? In which field/topic?
- What value does the Balkan Museum Network have for you?