

THE INFLUENCE OF DECISION MAKERS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE BUILT HERITAGE IN THE LAND OF DORNA

IZABELA AMALIA MIHALCA¹

ABSTRACT - The present paper aims to describe the role that decision makers and inhabitants have in the evolution of the built heritage from the regional system of the Land of Dorna. In order to achieve this goal I analyzed and systematized all data and information relevant for this study. Data from different sources provided by literature and from the field research led to the identification of the local characteristics of the regional system. The analysis has revealed a number of inconsistencies between an optimal situation of a territorial system and the current state of the Land of Dorna system in which a number of monuments lie in an advanced state of decay. The improper management of the built heritage of the Land of Dorna by the local actors has led to a series of territorial dysfunctions. The conclusions of this paper have highlighted the urgent need to implement a series of measures aimed to revitalize the built heritage in the Land of Dorna.

Keywords: heritage, decision makers, responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

The built heritage is the result of the activities of several generations. These have added specific elements from every historical period, elements that are a part of the history and spirituality of that community. All historical monuments offer to a territory an idyllic image of the past and a clear image of the present and future. Regardless the area of provenance, the physical state of a historical monument can provide useful information about the community where it is located and about the involvement of local and national decision makers in the decision making process, highlighting the social reality of the territory.

The measures taken over time by the decision makers regarding the built heritage in Romania (including that of the Land of Dorna) have led to the deterioration or disappearance of some historical monuments from the cultural circuit. This state of decay is characteristic to the entire national territory (e.g. Herculane Spa, Bánffy Castle in Bonțida, the Casino of Constanța, the fortress of Rupea, etc.). The changes in the last decades (the property restitution, the change of the property status regarding construction or lands, the lack of education concerning material and immaterial cultural values, the lack of local interest, the "hunger" for money, etc.) have marked the built and the natural heritage from the Land of Dorna. In this study, I focus only on the built heritage seen through the eyes of both inhabitants and decision makers.

Why is the built heritage important for the Land of Dorna? Because it preserves and presents the history of a place and of a community. The destruction of the material values leads to the loss of the local identity within a territory. The conservation and protection of a monument is essential for maintaining the values of a certain period and place in the cultural circuit.

The purpose of this study is to perceive how the local community and decision makers are involved in keeping alive the cultural and spiritual values of the Land of Dorna and to assess the role they played in the degradation of the Casino of Vatra Dornei [Cazinoul Băilor]. To capture all the conceptual meanings, the built heritage has to be related with the entire community's perceptions and with the quality assigned. The relation is both with the historical past of the monument or group of monuments as well as with the present and future. The perception of an individual or a community

¹ Ph.D. candidate, Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography, 5-7 Clinicilor Street, 400006 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. E-mail: izabela.mihalca@geografie.ubbcluj.ro

upon an important cultural monument is influenced by a number of aspects: education, economic state of the respective territory, the principal influences and interests, etc., aspects that lead to the construction of the local identity with respect to the built heritage.

The Casino of Vatra Dornei presents a piece of the local history. In order to provide a clear picture of the existence and evolution of the Casino, a brief introduction into the history of the monument is required. The construction of the monument began in 1896 and ended in 1898. It was built in “an eclectic style, with a vague air of German Renaissance” by the architect Paul P. Brang (Țăranu, 1999, vol. III, p. 226). The Casino has architectural elements similar to the Casino of Baden, opened in 1809 (Figure 1 and 2).



Figure 1. *The Casino of Baden*

Source: <http://postcardscollection.wordpress.com/2011/08/24/vatra-dornei-casino/>, retrieved on 08.10.2012, at 11.22



Figure 2. *The Casino of Vatra Dornei*

Source: <http://postcardscollection.wordpress.com/2011/08/24/vatra-dornei-casino/>, retrieved on 08.10.2012, at 11.23

During the Austro-Hungarian period, the Casino of Vatra Dornei was used by the foreign elite for social purposes (gambling, cultural events, shows, parties, etc.). Thus, in a short time, it became the main attraction of the resort.

Beginning with World War I until 1945, the building of the Casino underwent major modifications compared to the original design (from rearrangement of the interiors, to the construction of the terrace oriented towards the park, of the statues and the fountain in the courtyard, etc.). Along with these changes, the monument also received other functionalities: refuge for the foreign armies, hospital for the sick and the wounded during the war, etc. By the end of World War II, the building was seriously damaged and the resistance structure required some improvements (Țăranu, 1999, vol. III, pp. 227-228).

With the nationalization of buildings in 1948, once again the functionality of the monument changed. It was transformed into a cafeteria and used to serve the hospitalized patients. After 1980, the restoration work was approved, but the activities were interrupted by the revolution of 1989 (Țăranu, 1999, vol. III, p. 228).

The change of the political regime led to successive changes of the monument owners. These actions led to the devaluation and destruction of the building. During 1990-1995, the Casino passed from the property of the state to the property of a private firm. Later, according to the Decision no. 622 of August 1995, the ownership was transferred to the Vatra Dornei Local Council. During these years, the restoration works were interrupted. This generated serious damage to the structure of the building.

In 2004, by Government Decision no. 437 of 14 October 2004, the building was returned to the Archbishopric of Suceava and Rădăuți (the legal administrator of the Romanian Fund of the Orthodox Church in Bucovina). Today the monument is in an advanced state of degradation, thus affecting the image of the city.

THE INFLUENCE OF DECISION MAKERS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE BUILT HERITAGE
IN THE LAND OF DORNA

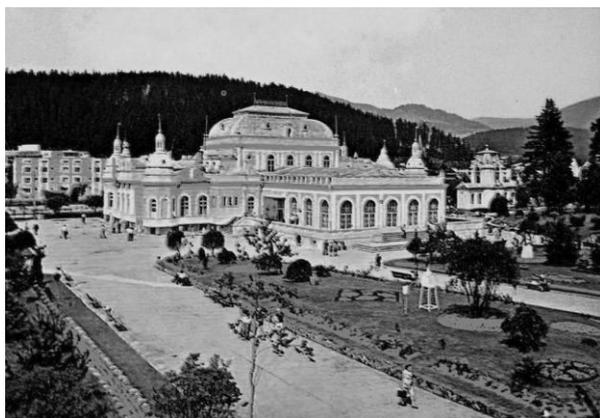


Figure 3. *The Casino of Vatra Dornei in the past*

Source: <http://www.google.ro>, retrieved on 08.10.2012, at 21

Figure 4. *The Casino of Vatra Dornei at present*

Source: <http://www.google.ro>, retrieved on 8.10.2012, at 21.24

METHODOLOGY

For a better understanding of the territorial reality concerning the built heritage of the Land of Dorna, a qualitative approach was employed (Grix, 2001, p. 33). Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection and the Casino of Vatra Dornei was chosen as a case study. This is due to the fact that this historical monument is a symbol of Bucovina Region, being ranked in the A group of the 2010 List of the Historical Monuments, but currently is in an advanced state of degradation.

Table 1. *The historical monuments in the Land of Dorna*

No.	Code LMI	Denomination	Locality, address	Dating
248	SV-II-m-B-05530	Gavril Candrea House (Casa Gavril Candrea)	Dorna Căndrenilor village; Dorna Căndrenilor commune	end of the 19 th century
249	SV-II-m-B-05531	School (Școala)	Dorna Căndrenilor village; Dorna Căndrenilor commune	1937
268	SV-II-m-B-05550	Wood mill (Moară de lemn)	Gura Haitii village; Șaru Dornei commune on Bâncea Dornei creek	1890
280	SV-II-m-B-05560	Ioan Nichituș household complex (Complexul gospodăresc Ioan Nichituș)	Iacobeni village; Iacobeni commune	end of the 19 th century
325	SV-II-m-B-05588	"Sf. Dumitru" wooden church (Biserica de lemn "Sf. Dumitru")	Poiana Stampei village; Poiana Stampei commune	19 th century
326	SV-II-s-B-05589	Ion Ivan household (Gospodăria Ion Ivan)	Poiana Stampei village; Poiana Stampei commune	end of the 19 th century
445	SV-II-m-A-05658	"Santinela" Mineral Spring building (Clădirea Izvorului "Santinela")	Vatra Dornei, in the municipal park	1896
446	SV-II-m-B-05659	Vatra Dornei Resort railway station (Gara Băi)	Vatra Dornei, 7 Dornelor Street	1910
447	SV-II-m-B-05661	Vladimir House (Casa Vladimir), today the Mining Company	Vatra Dornei, 1 Mihai Eminescu Street	end of the 19 th century

448	SV-II-m-B-05665	Hotel	Vatra Dornei, 15 Mihai Eminescu Street	1896
449	SV-II-m-B-05662	City Hall (Primăria)	Vatra Dornei, 17 Mihai Eminescu Street	1897
450	SV-II-m-B-05663	The Post Office (Poșta)	Vatra Dornei, 24 Mihai Eminescu Street	1929
451	SV-II-s-B-05664	The old commercial part of the town	Vatra Dornei, 28-34, 23-31 Mihai Eminescu Street	19 th century
452	SV-II-m-B-05666	Library	Vatra Dornei, 56 Mihai Eminescu Street	1901
453	SV-II-s-B-05667	The old commercial part of the town	Vatra Dornei, 1-13, 4-14 Luceafărului Street	18 th century
454	SV-II-m-B-05657	Aurora Negrea wooden house (Casa de lemn Aurora Negrea)	Vatra Dornei, 2 Parcului Street	First half of the 19 th century
455	SV-II-m-B-05660	Vatra Dornei railway station (Gară oraș)	Vatra Dornei, 17 Podu Verde Street	1902
456	SV-II-m-B-05668	The baths building (Clădirea băilor)	Vatra Dornei, 1 Republicii Street	1898
457	SV-II-m-B-05669	"Unirea" Mineral Spring building (Clădirea Izvorului "Unirea")	Vatra Dornei, 3 Republicii Street	1896
458	SV-II-m-A-05670	Casino (Cazinoul Băilor)	Vatra Dornei, 5 Republicii Street	1898
459	SV-II-m-B-05671	Hotel Carol (former Vila 1)	Vatra Dornei, 5A Republicii Street	1896
517	SV-IV-m-B-05717	Statuary group: Eminescu, Caragiale, Sadoveanu, Enescu, Porumbescu, Kogălniceanu, Negri, Russo	Vatra Dornei, in the municipal park	1964-2000

Source: extract from the List of Historical Monuments, 2010

The interview guide was generated in order to cover the following points:

- the attitude of the community towards the protection and conservation of the monument;
- the attitude of the local decision makers towards the protection and conservation of the monument;
- the attitude of the regional decision makers towards the protection and conservation of the monument;
- the attitude of the owners towards the protection and conservation of the monument.

The method of the individual semi-structured interview was chosen based on its advantages: creating a familiar environment between the participant and the interviewer. This gives the interviewee the opportunity to express freely according to the topic, without being compelled to strictly answer predetermined questions. Another advantage is that the interviewer can choose a limited range of participants with extremely varied component parts (Rotariu, Iluț, 1997, pp. 49-51).

PARTICIPANTS

In order to collect reliable information on the protection and conservation of the Casino building, I included within the sample, representatives from different social groups: residents of Vatra Dornei, local decision makers, and tourists. Moreover, seven subjects aged between 18 and 50, and three subjects aged above 50 were interviewed. Out of the ten participants, four were female and six male. All had their residence in urban area. Out of the ten participants, seven were university graduates

THE INFLUENCE OF DECISION MAKERS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE BUILT HERITAGE
IN THE LAND OF DORNA

and three were high school graduates. The data in Table 2 were listed according to the order of interviews.

Table 2. *Sample characteristics of the subjects*

Subject	Gender	Age	Residency	Education	Data type
1	M	35	urban	university	interview
2	M	42	urban	university	interview
3	F	29	urban	university	interview
4	M	58	urban	12 grades	interview
5	F	54	urban	12 grades	interview
6	F	47	urban	university	interview
7	F	26	urban	12 grades	interview
8	M	46	urban	university	interview
9	M	28	urban	university	interview
10	M	63	urban	university	interview

PROCEDURE

The interviews were carried out individually at the participants' homes, offices and on the street. Each subject gave an oral agreement and an additional consent for the audio recording. In order to preserve the participants' anonymity, they will be subsequently mentioned as subject 1, 2...10, according to the order of the carried interviews. The participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the interview anytime they wanted, without the obligation to justify their decision. Each participant was interviewed once and each interview lasted approximately 1.30 hours. The interview guide was elaborated in order to cover all four guidelines:

- the attitudes of the community towards the protection and conservation of the monument (e.g. *To what extent were the residents of the city and of the region involved in the process of protecting and preserving the building? Can you give any examples of ways in which the public opinion fought back to protect the building? etc.*);
- the attitudes of the local decision makers towards the protection and conservation of the monument (e.g. *What actions have the local decision makers taken in order to protect the building? What were the most important measures they took regarding the future of the building? etc.*);
- the attitudes of the regional and national decision makers towards the protection and conservation of the monument (e.g. *To what extent do you think that the regional and national decision makers were involved in the protection of the building? Were there times when representatives of these institutions came to see the state of the building and take some measures to remedy the situation? etc.*);
- the attitudes of the owners towards the protection and conservation of the monument (e.g. *Who are currently the owners of the building? To what extent were they involved in the protection and conservation of the monument? etc.*).

For interpreting the qualitative data, QSR NVivo 7 software was chosen. The program helps the researcher, through the agency of the tools it disposes of, to systematize the information, to code it under various forms, and in the end, to quickly obtain a series of accurate data (Richards, 1999, p. 4). All interviews were transcribed in doc. format and then loaded as *source documents*. These documents were grouped into *cases* and each one received a series of *attributes*. By encryption, *free nodes* (which were not organized) were created and, afterwards, these were transformed into *tree nodes*. Based on these codes, *matrices* were generated. In the end of this process a final *model* was generated (Richards, 1999, p. 6). This reveals the role of all four dimensions played in the process of protection and conservation of the Casino in the last years.

RESULTS

In order to identify which factors had the greatest influence on the protection and conservation of the Casino, the questions and the participants' answers were grouped on each of the four dimensions. The subjects' answers have revealed the level of involvement that the local community had over time concerning the protection and conservation of the building: *locally we collected signatures that we sent to the Archdiocese so that we could prove that we don't agree with the actions undertaken by them regarding the state of the Casino (subject no. 9), any time televisions were making some cover stories about our region, some of us gathered there and said what we thought about the existing problem (regarding the Casino) (subject no. 10), some of us tried to fight for the building, not all inhabitants, of course, because they don't have civic spirit. However, we did our best, we can't do more because "they" have more power than us" (subject no. 8).*

Responses revealed also their attachment to the building and the desire to save it: *if you look closely you will see the architectural elements specific for the end of the 19th century. You will not find another architectural jewel like this in Suceava. Too bad that it is not properly maintained (subject no. 6), each of the old buildings of the town keeps a piece of the community history, at least I see it that way... when I look at it, my heart breaks because nobody does anything to save it (subject no. 5), the building still keeps the image of the past. The region is beautiful and every element counts in its development (subject no. 7), we must do something to save this symbol of the town and of the region too, until it is not too late. They have to understand that the Casino is part of the local history and not an asset they can use to negotiate something. If they want, they can change the functionality of the building (subject no. 2).*

According to the subjects, the actions taken by the local authorities related to the protection and conservation of the Casino were weak and insignificant: *everyone should know their responsibilities regarding the protection of a monument or object. But they stood with arms folded and were looking how the building was collapsing. Not only the Casino is in this situation (subject no. 9), Did they do something? No! They blamed each other and no one took any measures, so the time passed and the building is in this deteriorated stage (subject no. 5), in the '90s, I remember that they repaired the roof, but since that moment nothing else has happened. Authorities blame the owners and the state, the owners blame the state and the authorities and so on... (subject no. 4), it is not possible that after such a long time (over 20 years) no one takes any action. No official has gone further to plead the Casino's cause, they expect the inevitable: to collapse... (subject no. 8).*

While the actions of the local authorities were insignificant, the answers given by the subjects showed that regional and national authorities were not involved in the process of protection and conservation of the Casino, except for a particular interest: *when X (author's note: name of a politician) was in Suceava, he talked about the building only to appear on TV. He never did something specific to save the Casino (subject no. 10), when the discussion regarding the restitution of the building appeared, a commission from Bucharest came to the town. They rated the building and decided that the Archdiocese is the new owner (subject no. 8), they came and followed all their interests and left satisfied because everyone was a winner (subject no. 2), why don't they come here to impose some sanctions for breaking the law? Neither they nor the local authorities and the Archdiocese obey the law. Why are there any laws if they are not applied? The guilty parts need to be held accountable for their actions (subject no. 9).*

The responses regarding the measures taken by the current owners were full of indignation: *the Archdiocese of Suceava and Rădăuți is the current owner of the Casino and of other buildings and lands in Bucovina. How good does it sound: the priest and the casino, right? (subject no. 7), they got the ownership in 2004 and since then they haven't put a finger on it. Nevertheless, they say they act only in the interest of the monument (subject no. 2), all of them are just fakers who pursue their own interests and destroy anything that stands in their way. The current owners demanded 189.000 ha of forest from the state in exchange of the building. Maybe under these circumstances they will allow somebody to restore the building. We live in a democratic society... (subject no. 6), no one saw a situation like this in which the law is being infringed and the authorities are not taking any measures. Each owner of a historical building has certain duties mentioned in the law. It doesn't matter if the*

THE INFLUENCE OF DECISION MAKERS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE BUILT HERITAGE IN THE LAND OF DORNA

owner is the state or a private person, the law it is very accurate (subject no. 9), after the Revolution (1989) none of the so-called owners did anything to save the Casino building and give it a chance (subject no. 10).

Based on the interviews it emerged that the current state of the building (the advanced stage of degradation), in conjunction with its central position in the locality, influences the perception of tourists regarding the resort and puts Vatra Dornei into a bad light: *the building is located on the main street of the town and it is covered with that blackened canvas. Everyone passing by the resort notices the ramshackle building and probably has a low opinion of us (subject no. 4), it was a symbol of the town, being located in the centre of Vatra Dornei. Because of its current image it is a disgrace for the entire community (subject no. 6), the building still retains the idyllic image from the past, when everything was much simpler and nicer. I think that its position fits perfectly into the resort landscape, the only inconvenient being the state of degradation (subject no. 3), the first thing that caught my eye when I came into the resort was the Casino building, maybe because of its size and position. I honestly believe that it jeopardizes the image of the town and that someone should take some measures to improve this (subject no. 1).*

DISCUSSION

The interview results reveal that all ten subjects consider that the biggest responsibility for the protection and conservation of the Casino goes to the current owners and that they need to comply with the laws. Eight out of ten subjects stated that the owners' actions and obligations are the most important. The state also plays an important role.

After 1989, the building had four owners: the state, a private firm, the Vatra Dornei Local Council, and the Archbishop of Suceava and Rădăuți. None of them were sufficiently involved in protecting and conserving the building, which has been treated with indifference for 23 years.

The current owners break all the moral and legal norms. Why moral norms? According to the interviewees' answers, corroborated with the information gathered from several documents, the legal representatives of the Casino are using it to achieve certain proprieties and lands from the Romanian state. They repeatedly stated that they would not give up the building or restore it unless they repossessed those goods (see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zn_R7r_rXxM&feature=relmfu, accessed 09/10/2012, at 11.52).

Why legal norms? Because of the obligations for the owners of a historical monument stipulated in Law no. 422/2001, Article 36 (Official Gazette, Part I, no. 936 of 20 November 2006). None of these obligations have been enacted since 2004.

Seven out of ten subjects claimed that the local decision makers did not fulfil their duties regarding the well being of the Casino building and they did not take into consideration the preservation of the monument in the local and national cultural circuit. On the one hand, the current state of the building is due to the local decision makers. During 1995-2004, the monument was the property of Vatra Dornei Local Council. This period is characterized by little rehabilitation work to the building mainly of the masonry and roof (1998). Since 2004, the measures taken by the local authorities have included meetings, negotiations with the legal representatives of the Archdiocese, and actions to get funds and restore the building. All these actions remained without any real results. Regarding their legal duties stipulated in Law no. 422/2001, Article 45 (Official Gazette, Part I, no. 938/20 November 2006), these were not fully applied.

Five of the respondents stated that the representatives of the regional and national decision makers were not enough involved in the problem arisen between the Archbishop-State-community and for that matter in any actions that led to the protection and conservation of the historical monument. Since 1998 they have not transferred any funds for the rehabilitation and restoration of the monument. In the same time, they have not taken any measures to sanction the responsible person or institution for the destruction of the building. Therefore, they did not comply with the legal obligations stipulated in Law no. 422 of 2001 on the protection and conservation of a historical monument.

As for the attitude of the community regarding the protection and conservation of the Casino, six respondents considered that the actions of the protest group were commendable and appreciated.

Four subjects stated that the actions taken by the community are useless because they do not have any power and that they are not taken into consideration by the authorities. The decision makers and the Archdiocese are the only ones who can solve the problem.

The unanimous opinion of all those interviewed was that is necessary to find viable and suitable measures to restore and protect the Casino monument which is unique by its history and architecture. It is an urgent need to enforce the law regardless of any personal interests.

In conclusion, results show that the actions of the current owners, followed by the local decision makers, the regional and national decision makers and the community has had the greatest influence in the evolution of the Casino in the last 20 years. Based on the developed model, we can observe the influence of the four dimensions in the evolution of the building and the relationship established between them (Figure 5).

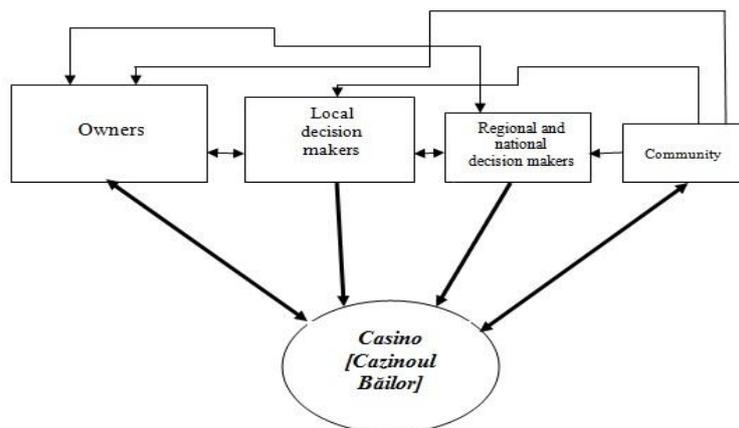


Figure 5. *The influence of the four dimensions and the interrelation between them in the development of the Casino building*

Source: Nvivo export

This model might represent a starting point for similar future studies. To generalize the generated model, the number of participants coming from the regional and national decision makers and representatives of the Archdiocese might be increased for a further study. Also a mixed design will increase the validity of the results.

REFERENCES

- GRIX, J. (2001), *Demystifying Postgraduate Research. From MA to PhD*, University of Birmingham Press, United Kingdom.
- RICHARDS, L. (1999), *Using NVivo in qualitative research*, Sage Publication, London.
- ROTARIU, T., ILUȚ, P. (1997), *Ancheta sociologică și sondajul de opinie. Teorie și practică* [Sociological Investigation and the Opinion Poll. Theory and Practice], Polirom Press, Iași.
- ȚĂRANU, P. (1999), *Memoria Dornelor. Stațiunea balneoclimaterică* [The Memory of Dorna. The Spa Resort], vol. III, Biblioteca Bucovinei, Suceava.
- *** (2006), *Legea privind protejarea monumentelor istorice nr. 422/2001*, Monitorul Oficial al României, Partea I, nr. 938/20 noiembrie 2006 [Law on the protection of historical monuments no. 422/2001, Official Gazette, Part I, no. 938/20 November 2006].
- *** (2010), *Lista Monumentelor Istorice 2010*, Monitorul Oficial al României, Partea I, nr. 670 bis/1octombrie 2010 [The 2010 List of Historical Monuments, Official Gazette, Part I, no. 670 bis/1 October 2010].
- *** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zn_R7r_rXxM&feature=relmfu.
- *** <http://postcardscollection.wordpress.com/2011/08/24/vatra-dornei-casino/>