

TOURIST INNS ON ROMANIA'S MODERN TOURISM MARKET

MONICA MARIA COROȘ¹, CORNELIA POP²
DIANA ROUA MICU (TĂUȚAN)³

ABSTRACT. The present paper investigates a less debated topic of the accommodation sector: the presence of tourist inns on the Romanian market. More than 20 years ago, authorities decided to exclude tourist inns from the official classification system. Relying on both official data, collected and processed based on the List of Accommodation Facilities (Lodgings and Food-service units) elaborated by the National Authority for Tourism, and on the information available on specialized websites (e.g. Booking.com) a thorough analysis has been performed in order to identify all structures that function on the local market pretending to be inns. The identified structures have been categorized and discussed according to various criteria: name of the hospitality unit, name of the enterprise that owns/runs the inn, type of unit, level of classification, lodging capacity; localization. The undertaken research and analyses led to the identification of 288 accommodation and/or food-service structures matching one or more criteria that link them to inns. One of the main findings establishes that in Romania's modern tourism industry there is a fully justified need to grant a special attention to inns. Further investigations have already been initiated in this field, continuing the current study.

Keywords: tourist inns, accommodation facilities, food-services, secondary data analysis, Romania

JEL Classification: L83

¹ Assistant Lecturer Dr., Department of Hospitality Services at the Faculty of Business, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, monica.coros@tbs.ubbcluj.ro, monica.coros@gmail.com.

² Professor Dr., Business Department at the Faculty of Business, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, cornelia.pop@tbs.ubbcluj.ro.

³ Master student, Master Program of Hotel Management at the Faculty of Business, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, roua.tautan@yahoo.com.

1. Introduction

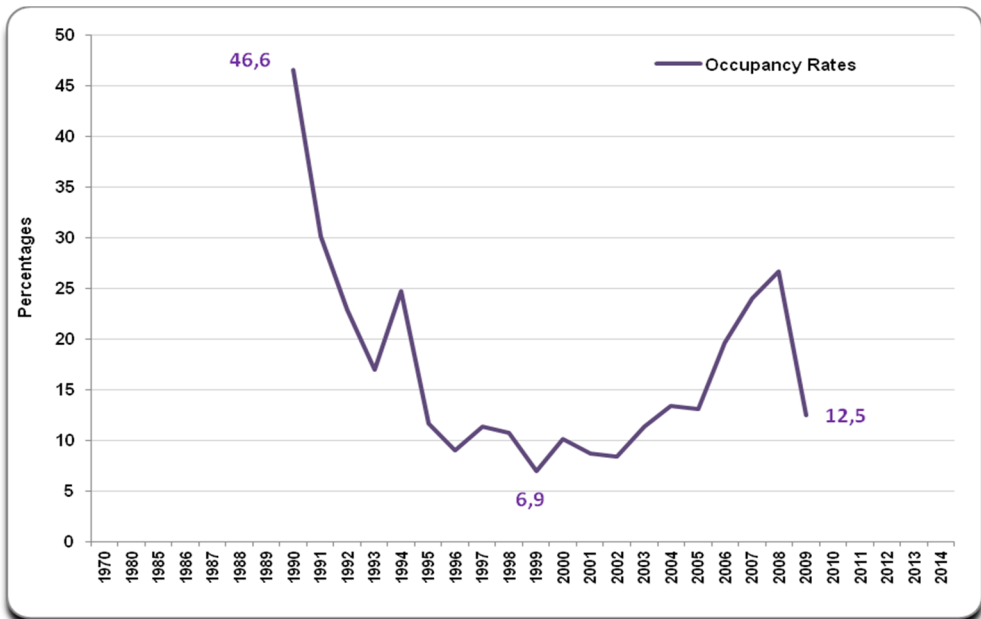
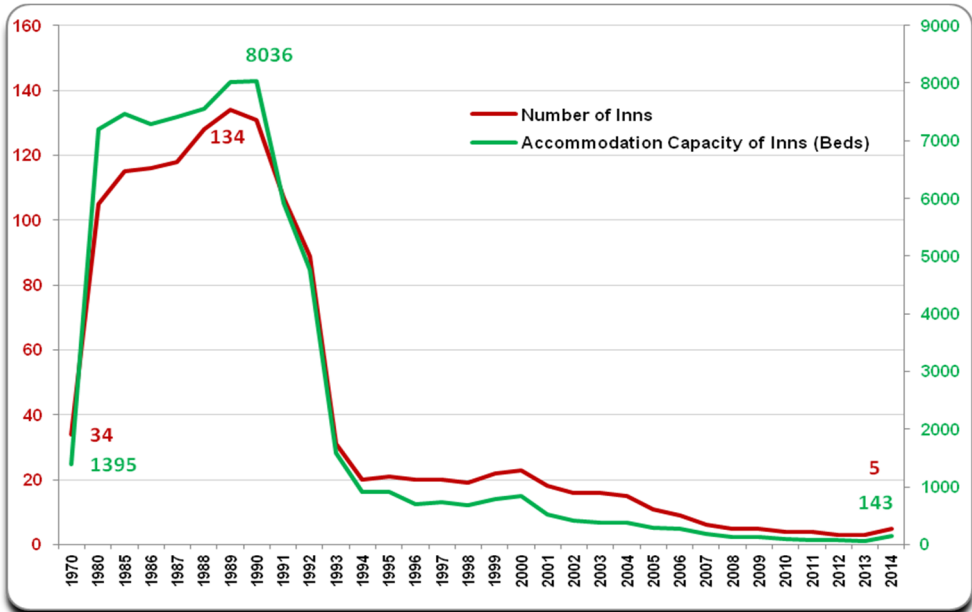
The fall of communism determined changes in many fields, including tourism. Romanian tourism industry was subject to numerous questionable and contrarian decisions during the past two decades. An example of such debatable decisions is that of excluding tourist inns from the officially defined and classified lodging facilities in 1993. Due to their distinctive features, tourist inns have an important potential in terms of attracting both Romanian and foreign tourists. This paper aims at creating a framework for further investigations concerning the presence of tourist inns on the Romanian market and how they relate to respectively differentiate from other accommodation facilities.

While the changes in accommodation classification forced inns to disappear from official rankings, the current research reveals that they continue to exist given the local entrepreneurs' sense and intuition regarding the inns' tourist potential. Therefore, there exist both willingness and interest in developing and running accommodation and food-service facilities under the name of inns. However, the reasons for choosing to build and operate such facilities need further and more detailed investigations.

Any discussion regarding this issue must consider a brief analysis of the development of the Romanian tourist inns throughout the past 45 years. By analyzing Graphs 1a and 1b below, the following remarks may be made. First, inns have registered a quick development, both in terms of number of units and lodging capacity, between 1970 and 1980, continuing the ascending trend until 1989-1990. Second, the changes in the legal framework, dating since 1992-1993 are reflected in the steep decrease of inns both in number and in accommodation capacity. Starting with 1994, some of the former inns were transformed and reauthorized, continuing to function as other types of facilities: motels, boarding houses, hotels, etc. Other units either closed-down and were abandoned or continued to function as unclassified structures. None of these last two options generated any positive economic impacts on the local tourist market. Moreover, the assimilation of inns (with their typical architecture) to other types of lodgings only contributed to the development of the visual and architectural chaos that tends to characterize the supply side of tourism and hospitality services in Romania. The disappearance of inns coincided with the first developments of tourist boarding houses (pensions) and of small hotels. These last two types of lodgings have developed under the conditions of an unclear and unstable legal framework. This vagueness has led to numerous compromises in terms of architecture, style, and overall accommodation services quality.

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Graphs 1a and 1b: The development of tourist inns in Romania (1970-2014).



Source: Authors' calculations based on NIS data (Yearbooks 1975-2012, TempoOnline 2015).

Although officially inns have significantly decreased all over Romania (Graphs 1a and 1b, and Tables 1 and 2), as one may further note, the market-reality is not similar to the official statistics: 5 inns in 2014 as opposed to 288 identified units. For example, Arges, Brasov, Cluj, Harghita, and Suceava counties do not have any officially registered inns as of 2014, though, according to the findings of the present research these five counties account together for 90 (31.25%) of the 288 identified inns. The breakdown by each of these counties is the following: Harghita (22), Brasov (21), Arges (19), Cluj (15), and Suceava (13).

Table 1. The development of tourist inns in Romania by county (2001-2014)

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Romania	18	16	16	15	11	9	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	5
Arges	:	1	1	1	1	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Bacau	1	1	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Bihor	:	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	:	:	:	:	:
Brasov	1	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Braila	1	1	1	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Caras-Severin	1	:	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	:	:	:
Cluj	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Constanta	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	1
Covasna	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Dambovita	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	1
Hunedoara	4	3	3	3	2	2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Prahova	1	1	1	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Suceava	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Teleorman	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Timis	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tulcea	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Authors' calculations based on NIS data (TempoOnline 2015).

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Table 2. Romanian tourist inns' accommodation capacity development, by county (2001-2014)

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Romania	526	422	378	385	292	278	186	136	136	97	77	81	61	143
Arges	:	12	30	30	12	12	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Bacau	30	10	10	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Bihor	:	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	:	:	:	:	:
Brasov	45	45	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Braila	15	15	15	10	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Caras-Severin	16	:	18	18	18	18	16	16	16	16	16	:	:	:
Cluj	26	26	26	26	26	50	50	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Constanta	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	60
Covasna	44	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Dambovita	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	22
Hunedoara	164	104	104	104	98	98	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Prahova	26	26	26	46	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Suceava	18	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Teleorman	84	66	36	38	38	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Timis	20	40	40	40	40	20	40	40	40	40	20	40	20	20
Tulcea	38	38	33	33	20	20	20	20	20	21	21	21	21	21

Source: Authors' calculations based on NIS data (TempoOnline 2015).

The demand perspective is also relevant for the present analysis. Table 3 synthesizes the development of some useful indicators related to demand side.

Table 3. Demand development for Romanian tourist inns (2001-2013)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total arrivals	3,670	4,049	3,952	4,113	4,084	5,502	5,456	1,877	914	638	611	823	643
Romanians	3,402	3,815	3,806	3,989	3,984	4,826	5,020	1,703	797	591	606	818	643
Foreigners	268	234	146	124	100	676	436	174	117	47	5	5	:
Total overnights	6,142	4,668	5,162	6,048	6,585	8,061	8,751	5,133	2,132	3,304	1,586	1,099	790
Romanians	5,478	4,378	4,566	5,181	6,034	7,365	8,256	4,302	1,831	2,937	1,571	1,089	790
Foreigners	664	290	596	867	551	696	495	831	301	367	15	10	:

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Average length of stay	1.67	1.15	1.31	1.47	1.61	1.47	1.60	2.73	2.33	5.18	2.60	1.34	1.23
Romanians	1.61	1.15	1.20	1.30	1.51	1.53	1.64	2.53	2.30	4.97	2.59	1.33	1.23
Foreigners	2.48	1.24	4.08	6.99	5.51	1.03	1.14	4.78	2.57	7.81	3.00	2.00	:
Occupancy rate	8.7	8.4	11.3	13.4	13.1	19.6	24	26.7	12.5	25.1	10.8	10.6	10.8

Source: Authors' calculations based on NIS data (TempoOnline 2015).

Obviously, due to the fact that inns ceased to be officially defined and ranked, tourist demand for their services followed the same descending trend registered in the number of enterprises and in the dimension of their supply, in terms of available beds.

The present paper is one of the series of studies investigating Romanian inns and will focus on presenting the units identified as inns by types of provided services, by localization, by classification, by used names, and by types of operating entities. The study provides the framework for further researches regarding both the supply and the demand for tourist inns on the Romanian market.

2. Literature Review

Some of the most popular definitions of inns are presented below. Medlik (1996, pp.141) states: "Unlike in earlier times when the term [*inn*] was used, sometimes with legal sanction, to differentiate **establishments** providing overnight **accommodation** from taverns and ale-houses, no specific meaning attaches to it at present. It is used more or less indiscriminately for **hotels** and also eating outlets without overnight accommodation. Although probably more commonly applicable to smaller establishments, it is not confined to them, as shown by such **companies** as Holiday Inns". This point of view is highly consistent with the international urbanization trend; in fact, most Western societies face a continuous decrease of their rural spaces and, consequently, of their rural tourism.

Inn, Inns (in Romanian *han, hanuri*) – Establishment with food-service (*ospătărie*), located at the side of country roads or in the suburbs of towns; their function was to accommodate travelers overnight, horses and wagons included (Macrea, 1958, pp.354).

Inn (*han*) – (in the past in the Romanian principalities), building usually situated at a cross-road, serving for the accommodation of travelers and of their means of transportation. The **inn** played the role of hotel, restaurant and stable; it sometimes also possessed a small technical service unit for the repairing of the vehicles. Some inns used to be fortified, the rooms being often displayed around an inner courtyard (e.g. Hanul lui Manuc from Bucharest). The term *han* is of Turkish origin (Joja et al., 1964, pp.651).

From a historic perspective (Potra, 1985, pp.27-30), inns have developed alongside with trade and commerce, at cross-roads, along the roads, in suburbs, near town-gates/barriers, in the middle of markets and fairs. These structures have known many forms according to the area where they developed but basically they all provided more or less the same services: of accommodating tired travelers, of hosting political meetings and assemblies, of serving food and drinks. They provided the main source of income to their owners (nobility, merchants or monasteries).

Some of the most common classifications of inns in the Romanian principalities (Potra, 1985, pp.25) include from the perspective of their owners five categories: inns belonging to the governors/princes; monastery and church inns; inns of the nobility; merchant inns; and small suburban inns. Their roles involved: the provision of accommodation and food-services to travelers, and the granting of their safety; trade and logistics for merchant exchanges (shops and warehouses; real-estate investments; international relations (political and economic relations generated by international trade); political role (hosting of assemblies, meetings, reunions, etc.), social role (provided space for the local people's private events), etc.

As after 1990 inns ceased to be discussed, this paper belongs to a first series of studies dedicated to Romania's tourist inns. The definition considered the most relevant for the present study and for the further analysis of the identified inns is the one that follows. Hospitality services similar to those of hotels are provided within **tourist inns**, defined among the units providing accommodation services, with the single difference that these ones [*the inns*] provide tourist services in units with classic/historic architecture, furnished in a modern and functional style and comfort. Food-services are dominated by regional menus. They can be exploited permanently or seasonally (Donoica, 1989, pp.48). Moreover, due to their particularities, inns are highly valuable and can contribute to the development of Romania's rural tourism. Given their features, inns have the capacity to better adapt and to tune with Romania's rural traditions.

3. Material and Method

A database of all inns active on the Romanian market was created relying on both official and commercial data. In this respect, a total of eight different versions of the official ranking lists⁴ of accommodation facilities, respectively of food-services were processed in order to identify all the lodgings, food-service units, and operating entities that use the name inn on the Romanian market. The oldest database available is the one containing accommodation facilities authorized and ranked at the end of 2005. The most recent lists of ranked lodging facilities and food-service units were downloaded in February 2015. The database contains both inns that are currently listed/registered as guest houses, hotels, motels, and other types of lodgings, or as food-service providers like classic restaurants, day bars etc., and also inns that were at some point ranked under such categories. The existence/functioning of the inns that are not currently ranked was further verified by cross-checking the available information on various websites (*e.g.* Booking.com and all of the other 86 ones included in the final section of References). Moreover, a thorough analysis has been run in order to identify all (as many as possible) entities pretending to be inns. In this respect, aiming to complete the list, a large variety of Internet sources were checked using (inn-related) key-words such as: *han*, *hangiță*, *hangiu* and *hanul nostru*; *jupâniță* and *jupân*; *cârciumă*, *cârciumăreasă*, *birt*, and *birtuț*; *făgădău* and *fogadó*; *inn*; *Gasthof*; *răscruce* and *la răscruce*. All of the identified inns were cross-checked in all available databases with the purpose of establishing under what type of unit they are currently operated or used to be registered, respectively under which classification type they are/used to be ranked. Given the fact that one of the well-known particularities of the Romanian tourism market is that a considerable number of hospitality facilities function and operate in the shadow economy, without any official ranking certificates⁵, all of the identified units are considered in this study. The identified inns have been categorized and discussed according to various criteria. Bearing in mind the historic and cultural dimensions of inns in Romania's historic provinces, the analyses are realized by grouping the identified inns both within the historic provinces and within the country's modern regions of development.

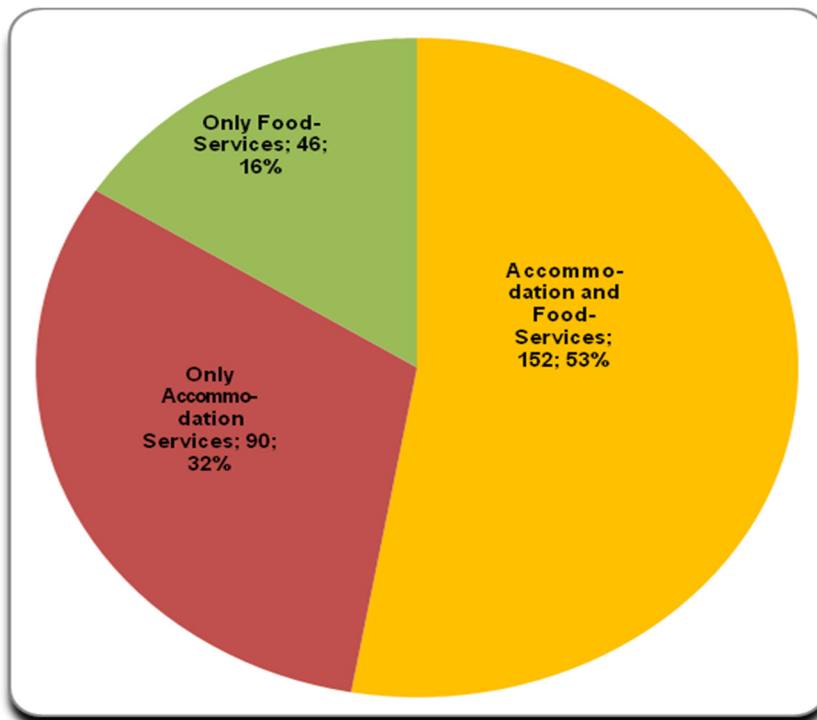
⁴ Unfortunately, the National Authority for Tourism/Ministry of Tourism updates the lists of officially ranked accommodation, respectively food-service providers, without a clear periodicity and by overwriting the existing list (without keeping/publishing any previous versions), therefore, such an attempt (as the one of realizing a database of inns) becomes quite a challenge.

⁵ For example, of the nearly 8,000 boarding houses, villas and chalets identified in 2014 by the National Foundation of Young Managers, over 3,000 units were functioning without official classification certificates [Cojocea; Coroș, 2013: 23-31].

4. Results and Discussions

The total number of inns identified in Romania is of **288** entities, of which 152 units provide accommodation and food-services, 90 units offer exclusively accommodation services, and 46 units provide only food-services. They account for approximately⁶ 3,310 rooms and 7,714 beds, respectively for about 30,992 table seats. Graph 2 and Table 4 below provide more data regarding the mentioned aspects. The majority of the identified inns (52 %) provide both accommodation and food-services. This distribution is consistent with the typical services historically provided by inns (as explained in the literature review section). These are followed by units focusing exclusively on accommodation services (32 %). Only less than a fifth of the inns (16 %) provide only food-services. These quotas seem to remain constant at the level of all analyzed regions.

Graph 2: Services provided by the identified Romanian inns



Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

⁶ It was impossible to find exact figures for all of the identified inns.

Table 4. Services provided in Romanian inns, by regions

		Accommodation and Food-services	Only Accommodation Services	Only Food-Services	Total
ROMANIA		152	90	46	288
Historic provinces	Transylvania	78	44	19	141
	Dobrogea	9	9	2	20
	Wallachia⁷-Oltenia	27	31	19	77
	Bukovina-Moldova	38	6	6	50
Modern regions of development	North-East	27	5	3	35
	South-East	20	10	5	35
	South-Muntenia	16	16	6	38
	South-West-Oltenia	8	10	5	23
	West	12	6	5	23
	North-West	20	9	9	38
	Center	46	29	5	80
	Bucharest-Ilfov	3	5	8	16

Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

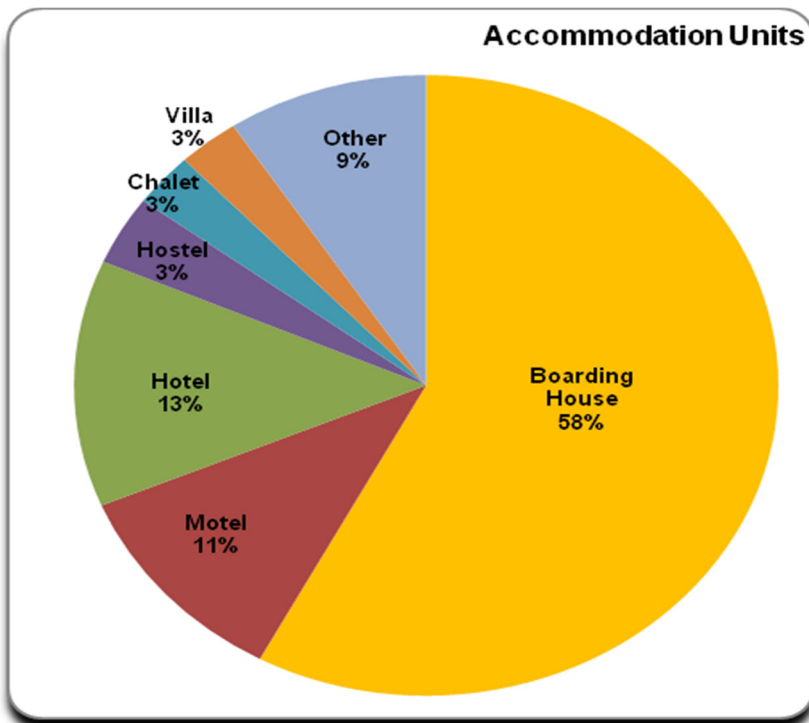
An analysis by types of units reveals (Graphs 3a and 3b below) that: for accommodation services, boarding houses are by far the most popular forms for running today's inns in Romania, while in the case of food-services, classic restaurants are the most frequent. A closer look shows that among the lodgings, which include in their name *inn*-related terms, boarding houses/pensions/guest houses represent approximately 58 % in the total number of accommodation providers; they are followed by hotels (around 13 %), motels (about 11 %), hostels, chalets, and villas (each accounting for about 3 %). The category "Other" includes: tourist complexes (units that are not officially defined by the Romanian tourist authorities but which are claimed by the entrepreneurs), camping sites and camping huts, bungalows and apartments/rooms to let and apart-hotels.

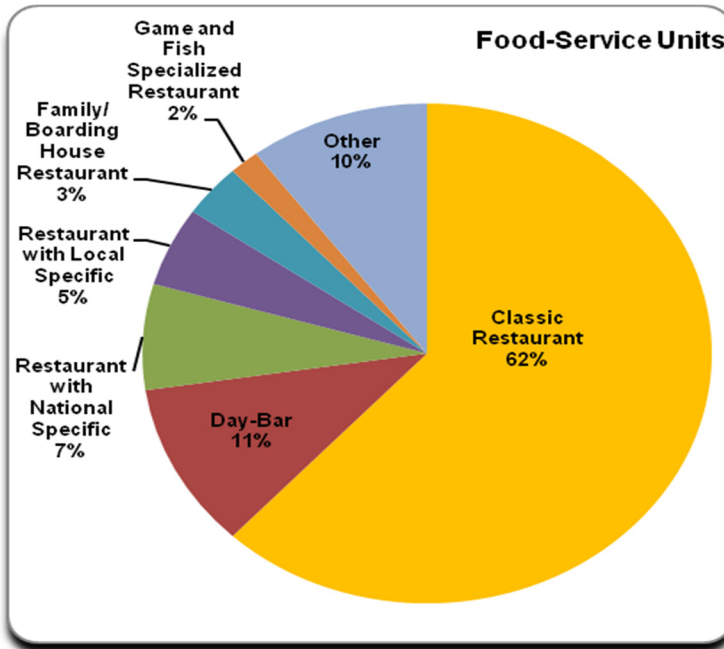
The analysis clearly reveals that of the 144 identified guest houses that declare themselves inns almost 73 % are located in rural areas, capitalizing on the potential of authentic experiences; the remainder of around 27 % are urban lodgings, some of them having the chance to valorize some heritage buildings. This aspect is also subject to further investigation.

⁷ Wallachia is the historical name of the modern Muntenia region.

Besides classic restaurants, accounting for about 62% of the food-service outlets, the following other types were identified: day-bars (around 11 %), restaurants with national specific (less than 7 %), restaurants with local and regional cuisine (slightly above 5 %), family/boarding house restaurants (around 3 %), restaurants specialized in game and fish dishes, mainly serving fresh water fish (nearly 2 %). In this case, too, the category “Other” is quite ample (of around 10 %), including: bistros, buffet-bars and snack-bars, coffee-bars and confectionaries, self-serving restaurants, fast-food units, summer gardens and terraces, wine-cellar and beer-pubs, respectively pizzerias.

Graphs 3a and 3b: The distribution of accommodation and food-service units by types





Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

Based on Table 5 below other observations concerning the identified inns need to be made. Some inns do not provide any accommodation services at all (92 units). Further, a number of 242 inns provide accommodation services as it follows: 235 inns have only one accommodation unit while 7 inns provide accommodation services in 2 lodgings each, located at the same address⁸. Similarly, 128 inns do not provide any food-services, while most inns (169) only operate one food-serving unit. Still, of the total of 198 inns operating at least one food-serving unit: 23 inns run at the same location 2 types of food-serving units⁹; other 5 inns operate 3 different food outlets¹⁰, and 1 inn has 4 types of food services¹¹.

⁸ Some of these inns run guest houses together with camping sites, motels with camping sites, motels with villas, camping sites/huts with bungalows, etc.

⁹ The most common associations are of classic restaurants and day-bars; there also are examples of inns having local or national restaurants and wine-cellars, etc.

¹⁰ In this case, the most frequent cases are of inns having classic restaurant, associated with day-bars and a snack-bar/buffet-bar or a coffee-shop or a fast-food unit, etc.

¹¹ Finally, the unit providing most food-services is Mariko Inn Hotel 3*, which operates 4 food-serving units, all ranking 3*: a classic restaurant, a traditional restaurant, a wine-cellar and a bistro.

Table 5. Services provided in Romanian inns

Number of provided services	Inns providing:	
	Accommodation services (242 units)	Food-services (198 units)
0	92	128
1	235	169
2	7	23
3	0	5
4	0	1
Total number of provided services	249	234

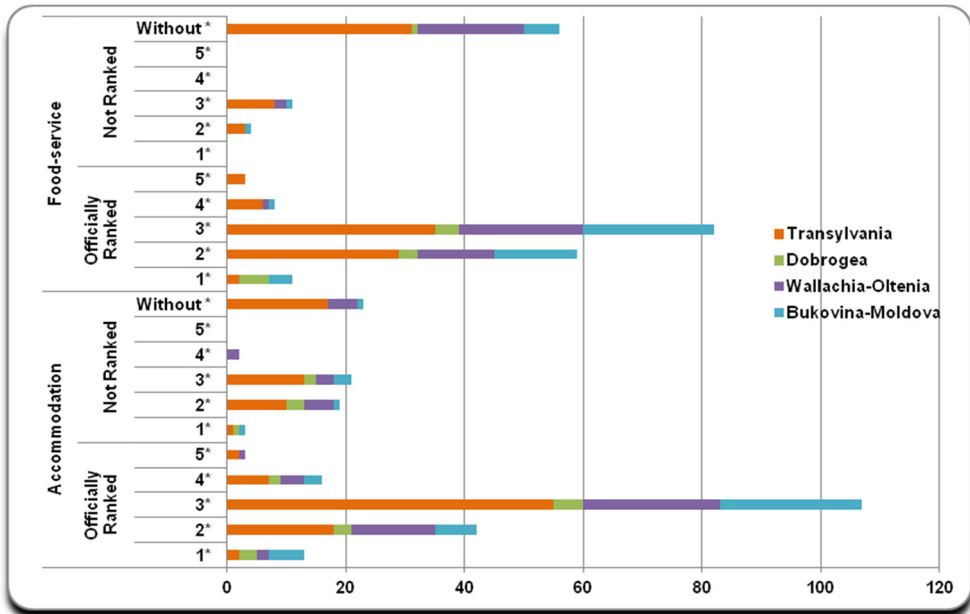
Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

Concerning the level of classification of the identified inns (Graph 4), the following remarks need to be made. First, one must note that from the 249 inns providing accommodation services (with or without food-services), only 72.7 % are officially classified by the National Authority for Tourism, the remainder of 68 inns (27.3 %) function without official authorization; moreover, a large majority of these last ones (66 %) pretend to be ranked in their promotional activities. Thus, given the fact that the official database does not register the accommodation units which applied for the renewal of their classification permit, it is not clear how many of these 68 inns are waiting for a new authorization and how many chose to function without a proper permit, risking high fines and closure.

From among the 234 identified inns that provide food-services (with or without accommodation services), only 69.7 % are officially ranked, while the remaining 30.3 % function without authorization; in their case the percentage of food-service providers that pretend to be officially ranked drops to 21 %. The fact that such a large number of inns function without official classification certificates has major implications upon the performance in terms of competitiveness and profitability of the providers who respect the legal provisions, and obviously influences upon the perceived quality of the Romanian tourism and hospitality services providers.

Both lodging facilities and food-service units are dominated by structures ranked at 3* (stars/flowers – depending on the type of unit), followed by 2* structures. All other levels of classification are poorly represented.

Graph 4: The distribution of inns by level of classification

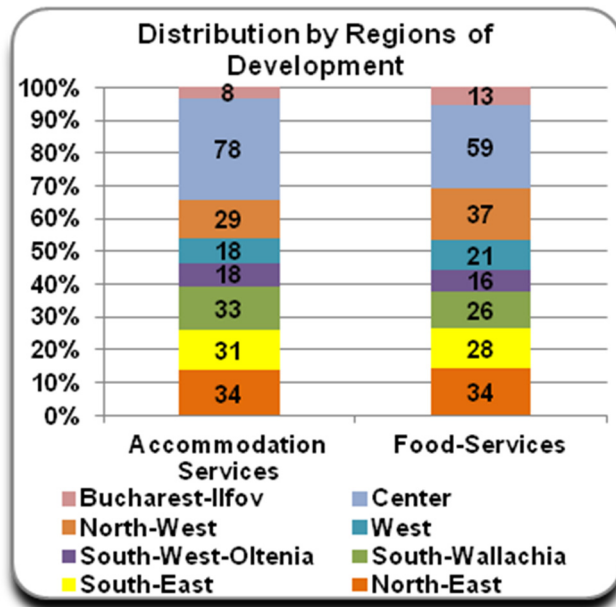
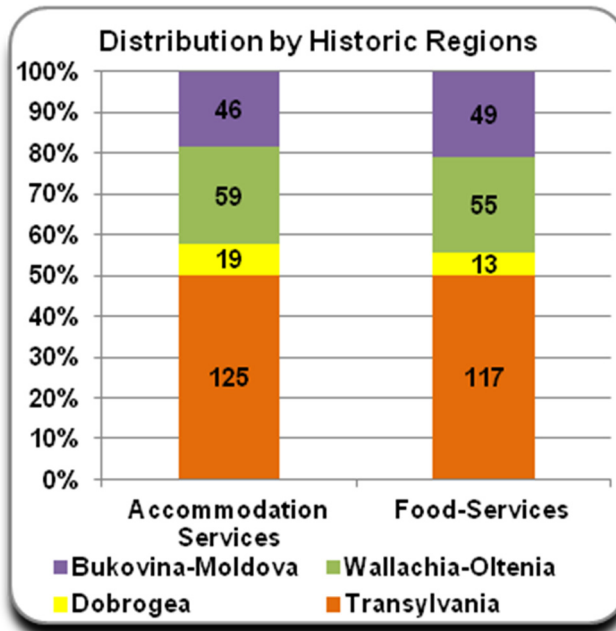


Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

In terms of regional distribution, two aspects have been considered as presented in Graphs 5a and 5b below, and Table 4 above. Except for four counties (Botosani, Calarasi, Ialomita and Vaslui¹²) all other counties have at least one inn. Because of the historic roots of inns, it has been considered that the distribution by historic regions is just as relevant as the one by today's modern regions of development. As expected the areas situated on the former historic borders/crossing points of Romania's historic provinces, respectively the counties crossed by today's major European roads (E 60, E 68, E 81, E 85 or E 87) and those located on some of the former commercial routes are the ones with the highest number of identified inns. In fact, 14 counties have between 10 and 22 inns: Harghita (22), Brasov (21), Arges (20), Cluj (15), Suceava (13), Constanta (12), Bucuresti, Buzau, Neamt, Prahova, and Sibiu (11 each), Alba, Dolj, and Mures (10 each).

¹² A peculiar situation occurs in the case of Vaslui county: an inn registered as hostel (Hanul Florilor) was identified in Ciortesti commune, Iasi county, nearby the border of Vaslui county. According to the National Authority of Tourism the hostel is located in Iasi county, while its classic restaurant appears in Vaslui county. Given the fact that the operating company (SC Gabriel SRL) is also located in Iasi county, it has been decided to include the inn on the list of the county of Iasi.

Graphs 5a and 5b: Inns' distribution by historic regions and by regions of development

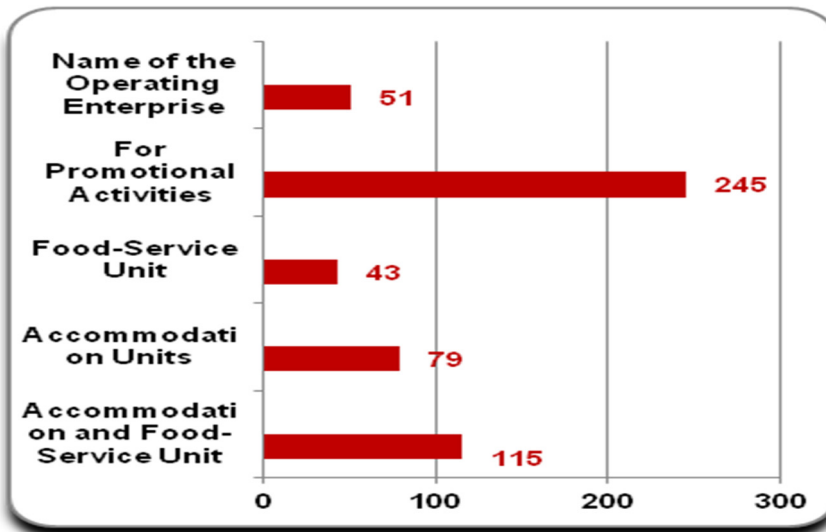


Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

Some of the counties with the lowest numbers of inns are also destinations with a rather poor tourist activity, in general: Bistrita-Nasaud, Braila, Giurgiu, Mehedinti, Olt, Satu Mare or Tulcea.

Another investigated aspect consists in the determination of the context and/or purpose of the use of inn-related terms. In this respect, five situations have been identified. Hospitality units use inn-related terms: in the hospitality units' names, in the names of the accommodation and/or of the food-service providers, respectively in the case of online promotion or in the name of the operating enterprise. The findings are presented in Graph 6 and Table 6 below:

Graph 6: The use of inn-related terms



Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

Table 6: The use of inn-related terms, by regions

		Accommodation and Food-Service Unit	Accommodation Units	Food-Service Unit	Promotional Activities	Name of the Operating Enterprise
ROMANIA		115	79	43	245	51
Historic provinces	Transylvania	58	39	18	120	18
	Dobrogea	7	8	2	17	1
	Wallachia-Oltenia	20	25	16	65	22
	Bukovina-Moldova	30	7	7	45	10

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		Accommodation and Food-Service Unit	Accommodation Units	Food-Service Unit	Promotional Activities	Name of the Operating Enterprise
ROMANIA		115	79	43	245	51
Modern regions of development	North-East	21	5	3	33	7
	South-East	16	10	6	29	4
	South-Muntenia	13	13	2	32	13
	South-West-Oltenia	5	7	4	16	5
	West	8	5	5	19	2
	North-West	16	9	8	30	6
	Center	34	25	5	71	10
	Bucharest-Ilfov	2	5	10	15	4

Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

One may easily note that most of the analyzed inns opt for using inn-related terms especially in their promotional activities. These are followed by the decision of the entrepreneurs to designate their hospitality units in a suggestive way, using inn-related terms when naming their facilities. Only 51 of the identified operating enterprises use inn-related term in the names of the firms. The operating enterprises/entities have not yet been identified for 42 of the analyzed units.

Table 7. The use of inn-related terms, by types of services provided

Inn-related Terms	Han/Hanu'/ Hanul/ Hangița	Birt/Cârciumă/ Jupâniță/ Ospătărie	Făgădău/ Fogadó	Inn	Gasthof	TOTAL
Accommodation Services	162	3	9	27	4	205 (of 249)
Food-Services	139	2	4	16	1	162 (of 234)

Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

The results of the analysis of the terms considered relevant for the present research are synthesized in Table 7 above. Thus, 205 of the 249 identified accommodation units have opted for the use of inn-related terms when naming their lodging facilities, according to the official databases and to the inns' promotional activities. Similarly, 162 of the 234 inns providing food-services use inn-related terms in their units' names. By far, the terms derived from *han*, the Romanian correspondent of *inn* like: *Hanul*, followed by *Han*, *Hanu'* and *Hangița* are the favorite choices. Words used more frequently in the past also occur: *Birt*,

Cârciumă, *Făgădău*, *Jupâniță*, and *Ospătărie*, respectively *Gasthof*, the German version of *inn* and *Fogadó*, the Hungarian term. Derived from the Hungarian *Fogadó*, *Făgădău* is used mainly in Transylvania.

When it comes to the English term, *inn*, the present analysis reveals two situations. The first one occurs when the word is used properly, in order to name an accommodation and/or food-service unit similar to the concept. The second one is, in fact, a quite frequent situation of misunderstanding. The term *inn* is inappropriately used, being misapplied and mistaken for the concept of *all inclusive services*. Moreover, the confusion goes even beyond this level, entrepreneurs using the term *inn* when naming their apart-hotels and/or apartments/rooms to let. Another peculiar situation is registered in the case of Sunset Tour Inn which is the operating company of a 5* resort nearby Cluj-Napoca and of a 4* complex from the town of Turda, both located in Cluj county. Obviously, the two locations have none whatsoever to do either with the traditional concept of inn, or with any modern such establishments.

Regarding the use of inn-related terms in the promotion activities of their hospitality units, deeper analyses have revealed that of the 288 identified facilities:

- 129 units (44.79 %) have their own websites; moreover, as already pointed out, 245 units (85.07 %) use inn-related terms in the promotional activities they carry out; thus, it results that almost 53 % of these enterprises promote their offers both directly and by the means of intermediaries/platforms, while the remainder opt for national but also international booking platforms;
- 127 units (44.1 %) use personalized e-mail addresses, associated to their official websites or to public providers such as Yahoo or Gmail;
- 51 enterprises use in their names inn-related words; some of these companies (8 enterprises) operate more than one unit, while some inns have accommodation facilities operated by an enterprise and the food-service units by another one (6 situations), therefore calculating percentages is not relevant.

When it comes to the inns' impact upon local communities, one cannot but notice that one of Romania's most famous inns, Hanu Ancuței, has led to the adoption of that name for the village where it is located. Other five inns that have given their own names to villages, streets or other locations were identified as follow: Hanu Conachi (village Hanu Conachi, Fundeni commune, Galati county), Hanul Cotul Donului (Timisul de Sus resort, belonging to Predeal town, Brasov county), Hanul Reci (Reci village, Covasna county), Imobil Hanul dintre Sălcii

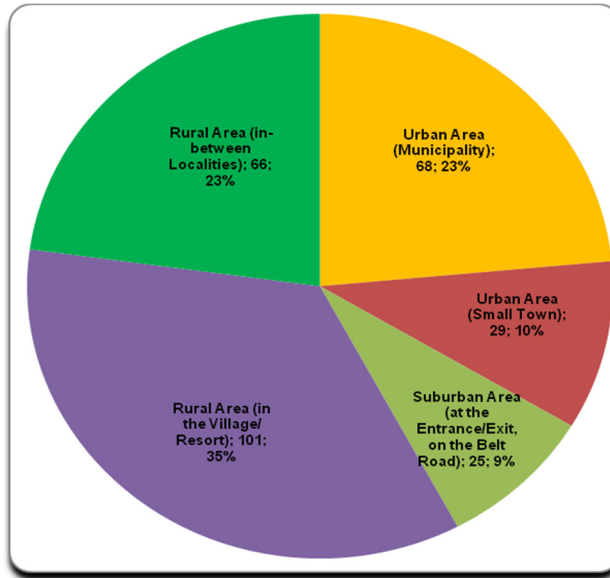
(Oarda village, belonging to Alba Iulia municipality, in Alba county), and Popas Hanul Morilor (Horia village, on National Road N° 1 Constanta-Harsova, at km 64, Constanta county).

Unfortunately, this first analysis has revealed that in most cases, managers/entrepreneurs-managers do not acknowledge the importance of being coherent in any attempt of managing, branding and promoting a hospitality unit, an moreover in those cases related to valorizing and enhancing the potential of tourist inns. There are many examples of identified inns that are not coherent at all when it comes to the use of inn-related terms in their branding and promotion strategies; some of the most notorious examples are:

- Hanul Rotbav (rural boarding house, ranked 2 flowers) which incorporates KM 22 (classic restaurant, ranking 2 stars), both located on National Road 13 at km 22, in Feldioara village, Rotbav commune, and both operated by the same enterprise from Brasov, Mido-Lux SRL;
- Hanul Dâmbu Morii (4* officially ranked boarding house), Dâmbu Morii (3* officially ranked hotel) and Dâmbu Morii (3* officially ranked classic restaurant), all located in Sacele town Braşov county and all promoted by the same website but operated by two firms: the boarding house by Flodem Mobil SRL, respectively the hotel and the restaurant by Dâmbu Morii SRL;
- Gobe (3* officially ranked boarding house and 2* officially ranked boarding house restaurant) located in Oradea city, Bihor county and operated by Han Tengri SRL; both the pension and the restaurant are promoted as Hanul Gobe;
- Poienița 2006 (3* officially ranked Motel and Classic Restaurant) located in Ramnicu Sarat municipality, Buzau county, is operated by Poienița Societate Cooperativă; the unit is promoted as a tourist inn, using the name Hanul Poienița both for the lodging and for the restaurant, respectively promoting the unit's activity by the means of its own website: <http://www.hanulpoienita.ro> and of a personalized e-mail address: hanpoienita@yahoo.com.

A brief analysis of the addresses of the identified inns leads to the possibility of splitting them into five large categories (Graph Chart 7 and Table 8). Thus, these facilities are located in: municipalities, small towns, suburban areas (at the entrance/exit, respectively on the belt roads), villages and resorts, and in-between localities).

Graph 7: The location of the investigated inns



Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

Table 8. The location of inns, by regions

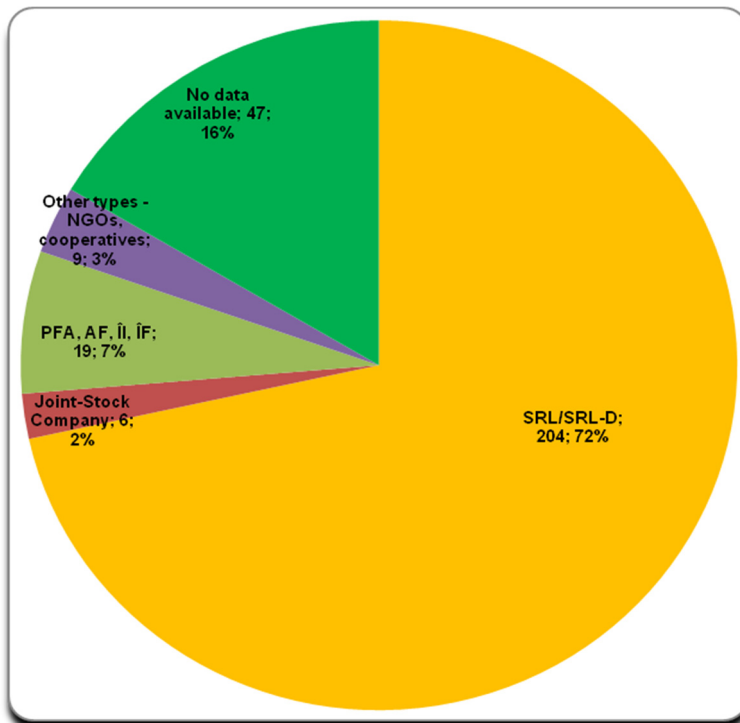
		Urban Area (Municipality)	Urban Area (Small Town)	Urban Area (at the Entrance/Exit, on the Belt Road)	Rural Area (in the Village/Resort)	Rural Area (in-between Localities)
ROMANIA		68	29	24	102	65
Historic provinces	Transylvania	34	13	12	53	29
	Dobrogea	3	5	2	5	5
	Wallachia-Oltenia	23	6	6	25	17
	Bukovina-Moldova	8	5	4	19	14
Modern regions of development	North-East	7	5	2	15	6
	South-East	4	5	4	9	13
	South-Muntenia	6	5	5	13	9
	South-West-Oltenia	6	1	1	8	7
	West	6	2	4	4	7
	North-West	13	3	2	11	9
	Center	15	8	6	38	13
Bucharest-Ilfov	11	0	0	4	1	

Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

One may easily observe that the majority of Romania's inns are located in rural or suburban areas (cumulated, 66 %; more exactly: 35 % in villages or in rural/spa/sea/mountain resorts, 23 % rural areas in-between localities and 8 % nearby urban areas). As expected, there is a significant number of inns in large towns and municipalities (accounting for nearly 25 %), while small towns have a lower contribution, being somewhat poorly represented (10 %). This distribution is respected within all regions.

The last aspect considered for investigation throughout this paper refers to the identification of the type of business for which entrepreneurs have opted in order to run their inns.

Graph 8: Preferred types of business for operating the Romanian inns



Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

Table 9: Types of businesses for operating Romanian inns

		Limited Liability Company (including SRL-D)	Joint-Stock Company	Authorized Individual/Family Businesses	Other types - NGOs, cooperatives	No data available
ROMANIA		204	6	19	9	47
Historic provinces	Transylvania	101	2	12	1	26
	Dobrogea	15	0	3	2	1
	Wallachia-Oltenia	53	1	3	2	14
	Bukovina-Moldova	35	3	1	4	6
Modern regions of development	North-East	25	3	1	3	2
	South-East	25	0	3	3	5
	South-Muntenia	26	0	2	1	6
	South-West-Oltenia	19	0	1	1	2
	West	14	1	1	1	6
	North-West	27	0	2	0	8
	Center	60	1	9	0	12
	Bucharest-Ilfov	8	1	0	0	6

Source: Authors' calculations based on the collected data.

As Graph 8 and Table 9 reveal, a large majority, of nearly three quarters (72 %) of the investigated inns are owned and run by limited liability companies (SRL); this type of enterprise is very popular in Romania for most fields of activity due to the easiness to establish it. Family businesses¹³, run by individuals or family associations, have a lower but not negligible contribution (7 %) to the development of inns in Romania. Cooperatives still occur in certain cases, while joint-stock enterprises are the least chosen type. It is expected that the 16 % attributed to "No data available", once identified, shall respect the current distribution.

As previously mentioned, a small number of enterprises control two or more inns, therefore they have been taken only once into consideration (*e.g.* Îl Stanciu Cristina controls the entire Dracula Domain from Danes village, Mures

¹³ The following types of businesses were included in this category: authorized person/independent person (*persoană fizică autorizată* or PFA), individual enterprise (*întreprindere individuală* or ÎI), family association (*asociație familială* or AF) and family enterprise (*întreprindere familială* or ÎF).

county – one hostel, two boarding houses, some camping-type huts and a classic restaurant; SC Hanul lui Matei SRL operates two boarding houses, several camping-type huts, and two buffet-bars from Sanduleni village and commune, Bacau county, etc), while other cases have led to the inclusion of two businesses into calculations – one operating the accommodation services and the other one the food-services (*e.g.* Hangița 3* ranked boarding house, operated by Îl Bucur Elena, with 2* restaurant and 2* pizzeria, both operated by SC Hangița SRL; in the case of Classic Inn Hotel, with day-bar and classic restaurants, Petrol Grup SRL controls the hotel and the day-bar, while the classic restaurant is run by ArcoRCI SRL; when it comes to Hanul Dâmbu Morii, the boarding house and the hotel are operated by SC Flodem Mobil SRL, while SC Dâmbu Morii SRL operates the classic restaurant, etc.). Sunset Tour Inn is a limited liability company that, as previously mentioned, does not have anything in common with inns and operates two hotels, four classic restaurants and two day-bars.

In order to complete the picture and to properly assess this situation, one ought to determine the attractiveness of the identified inns among both Romanian and foreign tourists, respectively, to identify the triggering factors of the entrepreneurs who opt for the identification and differentiation of their hospitality businesses based on inn-related aspects. At the same time, the demand side is also going to be investigated, as understanding the perspective of the consumer is crucial for the future success of these lodging facilities.

5. Conclusions

The interest for a revival of Romanian inns was induced by their long existence in Romania until the beginning of the 1990s. Their continuity has been interrupted by force due to the changes in tourism regulation of the 1993. Inns were demoted in a trial to cut the ties with the (communist) past and in a quest for updating the classification of Romanian accommodation facilities, the tradition and authenticity were overlooked.

Romanian inns have continued to exist throughout all historic periods and to evolve independently or to be assimilated to the newly created, modern lodging facilities that respond to the more and more diversified contemporary needs. One ought not to forget that the image of inns specific to some historic regions is fully and highly detailed described and immortalized in the literary works of various Romanian authors, the best known being Slavici¹⁴ and

¹⁴ Due to the difficulty to adequately translate the literary fragment, this is resumed in English and quoted afterwards as it was originally written. As halting and resting place, gaining notoriety because of the humans' needs to socialize and to keep traditions alive, *Cârciuma de*

Sadoveanu. Likewise, the inn *Hanul Ancuței* is the idyllic place where life takes its course softly and enveloped in the mysteries, in the lights and shades of stories in which history, people and tales become one and the same, melting into each other.¹⁵

Despite inns' historic roots, their authentic feature that could generate a source of differentiation for Romania's (rural) tourism, the reforms undertaken in post-communist Romania until now have only led to the decrease in the number of inns and in their lodging capacity. By eliminating inns from the official classification system, Romanian authorities hindered the development of a specific/niche tourist potential. It is not clear how many historic inns were lost by closure and deterioration of their building or how many have lost their authentic features by being included into inappropriate lodging and food-service categories.

The collected and analyzed data reveal that, at least in name, inns did not disappear and that they deserve to be taken into consideration as a distinct class of lodging or food-service units. The undertaken researches and analyses have led to the identification of 288 accommodation and/or food-service structures matching one or more criteria that link them to inns. This proves an obvious interest of entrepreneurs towards such lodgings. Without the support of a proper legal framework, most of the identified entrepreneurs express and assume their facilities' classification using terms from the lexical family or related to inn (especially, *han*) in most of their own promotional activities, in the communication and promotion process intermediated by reservation sites and platforms, or in the personalization of the tools provided by Yahoo or Google.

la Moara cu Noroc (The Tavern/Pub from the Mill with Luck) is the symbol of a place capable of changing the destiny of people: all travelers stop at the mill... Little by little, the mill turned into a tavern and a shelter place for tired travelers, and especially for those who were caught by night on the road. Eventually the tavern was moved/rebuilt in a more adequate spot. "... aici se opresc toți drumeții, ..., și oarecum pe nesimțite moara a încetat a mai măcina și s-a prefăcut în cârciumă și loc de adăpost pentru tot drumețul obosit și mai ales pentru acela pe care noaptea-l apucă pe drum. În cele din urmă, arândașul a zidit cârciuma la un loc mai potrivit..." (Slavici, 1967, pp. 34)

¹⁵ For the same purposes as above, the quotation from Mihail Sadoveanu is rephrased in the following lines; the original fragment is included afterwards. Sadoveanu insists that *Hanul Ancuței* was not an inn, it was a fortress. It had thick walls and locked gates as one had never seen before. It enabled the shielding of people, cattle and wagons, who were protected of any thieves, whom they had no thought about. Its gates would stay open, just like at the Seat and, during the calm autumn days one could see the valley of Moldova. Sometimes, the fiddlers' lines would stop; it was then, that the stories would begin... and such stories could only be heard at such an inn... "Trebuie să știți dumneavoastră că hanul acela al Ancuței nu era han, era cetate. Avea niște ziduri groase de ici până colo, și niște porți ferecate cum n-am văzut de zilele mele. Pe lângă adăpost, hanul oferea și prilej de petrecere. În cuprinsul lui se puteau oplosi oameni, vite și căruțe și nici habar n-aveau dinspre partea hoților... Porțile stăteau deschise ca la Domnie. Și prin ele, în zile line de toamnă, puteai vedea valea Moldovei. /.../ Contenea câte un răstimp viersul lăutarilor, și porneau poveștile... /.../ asemenea povești numai la un asemenea han se pot auzi..." (Sadoveanu, 1928, Chapter I. Iapa lui Vodă)

More than half of the identified inns offer combined accommodation and food-services. They are followed by the providers (around a third) who only focus on accommodation services. Another observation worth to be made is that some entrepreneurs have understood the need of developing their businesses by the means of diversification. Consequently, some of them have completed their offer with leisure services (fishing, riding, spa, swimming pools or traditional activities).

Most of the inns offering accommodation and food-services are registered as guesthouses. Nearly three quarters are located in rural areas and in-between villages. Worth to point out is also the fact that regarding the inns located nearby towns (in neighboring villages or in the towns' suburbs), two different types can be distinguished. A first category includes those that match the rural profile and try to exploit it on behalf of urban tourists. The second type consists of some rather kitschy inns, that are neither rural, nor urban, mainly focusing on organizing events and that aim at attracting local people, claiming to provide authentic services.

Other categories of lodgings that offer an umbrella for inns are hotels and motels. They cover a lower percentage of the identified inns, about 10% each. Their distribution reflects both the specific features of transit lodgings, in the case of those located on the sides of the roads, and also the potential to capitalize on historic and specific architectural heritage, in the case of both urban and rural units (e.g. Hanul lui Manuc from Bucharest). The location of inns mainly within the old historic provinces, with a high concentration in Transylvania, shows that this potential is sensed by their operators.

On the other hand, the supply of food-services is represented at a great extent (more than half) by classic restaurants, followed at a significant distance by other types of food-service providers. The research revealed that restaurants with national, regional and local specific, respectively specialized restaurants are not representative from a quantitative perspective; therefore, one may conclude that this segment offers a generous potential in terms of encouraging the development of such restaurants as inns; they can become highly valuable in Romania's attempt of differentiating on the international tourism market.

The identified inns are operated mainly (about 71%) by limited liabilities companies which are largely associated with small and microenterprises. This situation reflects that the developing potential of these entities is low, given their limited access to financing resources. Nevertheless, the availability of European funds can contribute to the creation and maintenance of niche and authentic tourist services and products offered by the units labeled as inns.

The findings of this study show that inns, as distinct structures for lodging and/or food-services, did not disappear and that, consequently, their niche potential should not be ignored. Currently, Romanian regulations do not include any specifications for inn classification. It will be maybe too much to ask for the re-introduction of this category among the (too many) existing ones. Thus, it will not be unreasonable to recognize inns as a subcategory for any of the appropriate

structures. Therefore, a set of criteria could be established in order to preserve inns' specific features (mainly when historic buildings are concerned) and to give operators the possibility to use in the name of their unit the term inn standing alone and not to create confusion and hilarious situations with compulsory names like Motel Inn XX or Guesthouse Inn YY, as the present regulations require.

While abroad, inns may have been assimilated to other types of accommodation facilities, on the Romanian market they might provide an important opportunity for the further development of (rural and heritage) tourism, by integrating them into authentic experiences.

Further investigations regarding the supply side (starting from the reasons to develop an inn to the in-depth analyses of the provided services) and the demand side are necessary in order to create a solid base for supporting the development of inns on Romania's tourist market.

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- 1) <http://amfostacolo.ro/>
- 2) <https://www.bedandbreakfast.eu>
- 3) <http://cazare.info/>
- 4) <http://cazare.infocons.ro/>
- 5) <http://cazareinbucovina.com/>
- 6) <http://fly-ticket.ro/>
- 7) <http://mancare.vascau.rou.ro>
- 8) <http://propensiuni.ro/>
- 9) <http://restauranteromania.blogspot.ro/>
- 10) <http://salaj.transilvania-localitati.ro/>
- 11) <http://turismintern.com/>
- 12) <http://turismintern.com/>
- 13) <http://www.25h.ro/>
- 14) <http://www.agoda.com/>
- 15) <http://www.antrec-se.ro/>
- 16) <http://www.apari.ro/>
- 17) <http://www.besthotels.ro/>
- 18) <http://www.besttourism.ro>
- 19) <http://www.booking.com/>
- 20) <http://www.business-cream.ro/>
- 21) <http://www.busteni.info.ro/>
- 22) <http://www.calatorintransilvania.ro/>
- 23) <http://www.casefaraintermediari.ro/>
- 24) <http://www.cautpensiuni.ro/>
- 25) <http://www.cazareinsecuime.ro/>
- 26) <http://www.culinar.ro/>
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- 39) <http://www.info-cazare.ro/>
- 40) <http://www.infocompanies.com/>
- 41) <http://www.infopensiuni.ro/>
- 42) <http://www.karpatinfo.net/>
- 43) <http://www.kazare.ro/>
- 44) <http://www.lapensiuni.ro/>
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- 46) <http://www.localbiz-salaj.ro/>
- 47) <http://www.mergilasigur.ro/>
- 48) <http://www.moldaviantour.ro>
- 49) <http://www.newhotels.ro>
- 50) <http://www.pensiuniromania.info/>
- 51) <http://www.pensiunisihoteluri.ro/>
- 52) <http://www.pensiuni-vile.ro/>
- 53) <http://www.pescaresc.ro/>
- 54) <http://www.plaja.ro/>
- 55) <http://www.portaldecizare.ro/>
- 56) <http://inchirieriregimhotelier.net/>
- 57) <http://www.restograf.ro/>
- 58) <http://www.revistatur.ro/>
- 59) <http://www.romaniaroute.ro>
- 60) <http://www.romaniaturistica.ro/>
- 61) <http://www.romania-turistica.ro/>
- 62) <http://www.sibiu.info.ro>
- 63) <http://www.skytrip.ro/>
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