

STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS OF ECONOMIC PROFILE IN SPA RESORTS OF ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an economic component with a spectacular dynamics, the integrated analysis of this economic sector being a key element in understanding complex relationships that give sustainability to local economies with specific resources. The study aims to analyze the structural dynamics of the economic profile of spa resorts for the period 2000-2015 and identifying the role of the spa sector in the development of territorial systems with tourist functionality. In order to quantify this dynamics, a database was created at the resort level, with the main economic indicators (turnover, profit, number of companies and employees) at the four-digit NACE code (classification of activities in the national economy). Particular attention was paid to the analysis of the relationship between tourism and the other components of the economic system. The results of this study confirm the importance of spa tourism in the dynamics of local economies with specific resources and the prospects of increasing the complexity of the tourist function at the level of each analyzed territorial system. Also, the results highlight the differentiated dynamics of spa resorts as a result of the very different dynamic context they benefit from.

KEYWORDS: *tourism, SPA tourism, territorial system, territorial management.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *Z320, R12*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become today a real economic engine, the generator of functional complexity in territorial systems, which is based on the exploitation of tourism resources (Drăghici et al., 2016, Pintilii et al., 2015). The important role played at the level of local economies is also acknowledged by a series of studies confirming the socio-economic benefits of this activity (Kapczynski and Szromek, 2008; Silva Gustavo, 2010; Perić et al., 2017; Page et al., 2017). Additionally, through its development, an important objective of sustainable development can be achieved, namely, protecting and managing in an appropriate manner, natural and cultural resources (Todorovic, 2015).

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In the economic systems with tourism functions, which represent the exploitation of the spa resources, tourism is a fundamental part, participating in the development of other economic sectors (Drăghici et al., 2015). The economic impact generated by the spa industry on the global economy is both directly through income and employment generated by the spa sectors and indirectly, adding to these multiplier effects (Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor, 2014). In this context, establishing the economic role that balneary tourism can have at the level of territorial systems with specific resources becomes particularly important.

Mineral and thermal springs have been used by the population for a long time for multiple purposes, as healing, socializing and even spiritual, representing today the roots of the spa industry. Of the 203 countries where spa is present, 86% of the industry is concentrated in three major regions: Europe, North America and Asia Pacific (Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor, 2014). In Europe, spa tourism has evolved from classic to modern, offering a wider range of services besides medical ones, such as wellness, sports, leisure, food, etc. (Perić et al., 2017). For Romania, the development of this type of tourism is a strategic objective of great importance (Master Planul pentru Dezvoltarea Turismului Național 2007 – 2026), from the point of view of specific resources (1/3 of the natural mineral springs existing in the continent) and the number of localities and areas that have received the status of spa and balneoclimatic resorts (30 localities and areas according to H.G. No 926/2016). Taking into account the above mentioned, spa tourism can be a viable solution for development for the tourist localities with specific resources.

2. METHODOLOGY

Analysis of the structural dynamics of the economic profile for each spa resort in Romania, assumed the creation of a statistical database at the four-digit NACE code level, for four economic indicators considered relevant (number of companies, number of employees, turnover and profit), over a period of 15 years (2000-2014). Based on this, the importance of balneary tourism in the local economy was quantified, by calculating the share of the four economic indicators, previously listed, from the spa sector, in the total local economy. Subsequently, for each indicator were made the spatialization at the level of Romania and the matrix of trends of the variation of the ranks to follow, the evolutionary dynamics of the spa sector in the total economy at the local level.

3. RESULTS

From the point of view of the evolution of the number of companies in the spa sector in the total number of companies (Figure 1), in the year 2000, only 4 resorts exceeded 40% (Moneasa, Băile Tușnad, Eforie and Predeal) and 23 resorts recorded a share between 15-40% (e.g. Băile Herculane, Călimănești, Borșa and so on).

With the economic crisis in 2008, the number of spa resorts with over 40% and between 15-40% fell, Moneasa being the only resort with over 40% share for the number of companies.

The last year of our analysis, places the Băile Tușnad and Moneasa resorts on the first two places as the number of companies in the spa sector, most resorts, ranging between 5-15%.

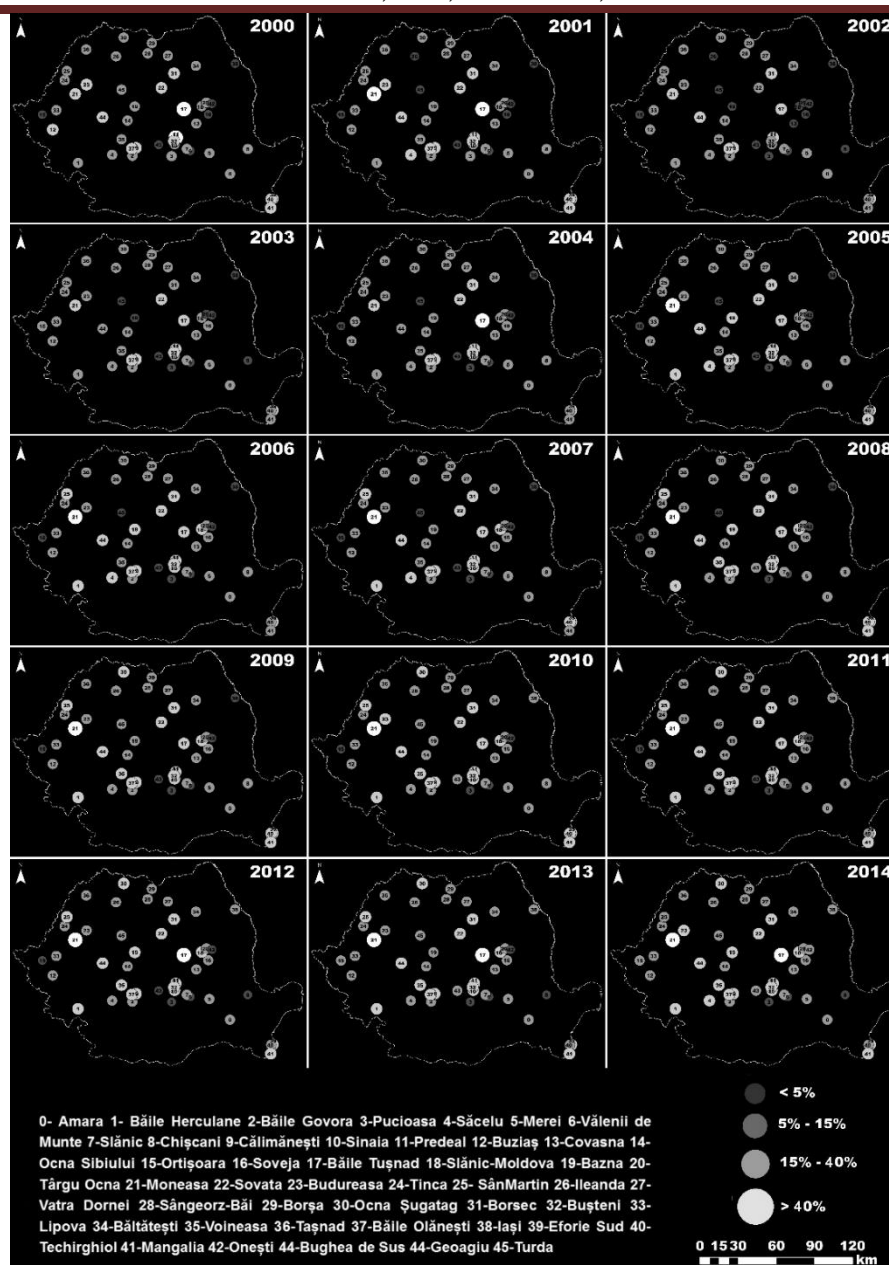


Figure 1. Evolution of the share of the number of companies in the SPA sector in the total number of companies

Source: project UB/1375

In the case of the evolution of the number of employees in the spa sector in total number of employees (Figure 2), in the first year of analysis, 8 resorts (SântMartin, Budureasa, Băile Herculane, Călimănești, Băile Govora, Slănic, Predeal and Băile Tușnad), records shares of employees over 50%, a resort between 30-50%, 15 resorts between 10-30%, and with a share below 10%, a number of 22 resorts (Săcelu, Ocna Sibiului, Borsec, etc.). The global economic crisis is causing changes in resorts that in 2000 recorded more than 50%, four of these resorts falling below this percentage, but the number of resorts with a 30-50% employment rate increased from a resort in the first year of analysis to nine resorts in 2008.

The largest number of employees in the spa sector in 2014 is registered in Călimănești with 797 employees, Slănic Prahova with 240, Govora with 148 and Băile Tușnad with 127 employees.

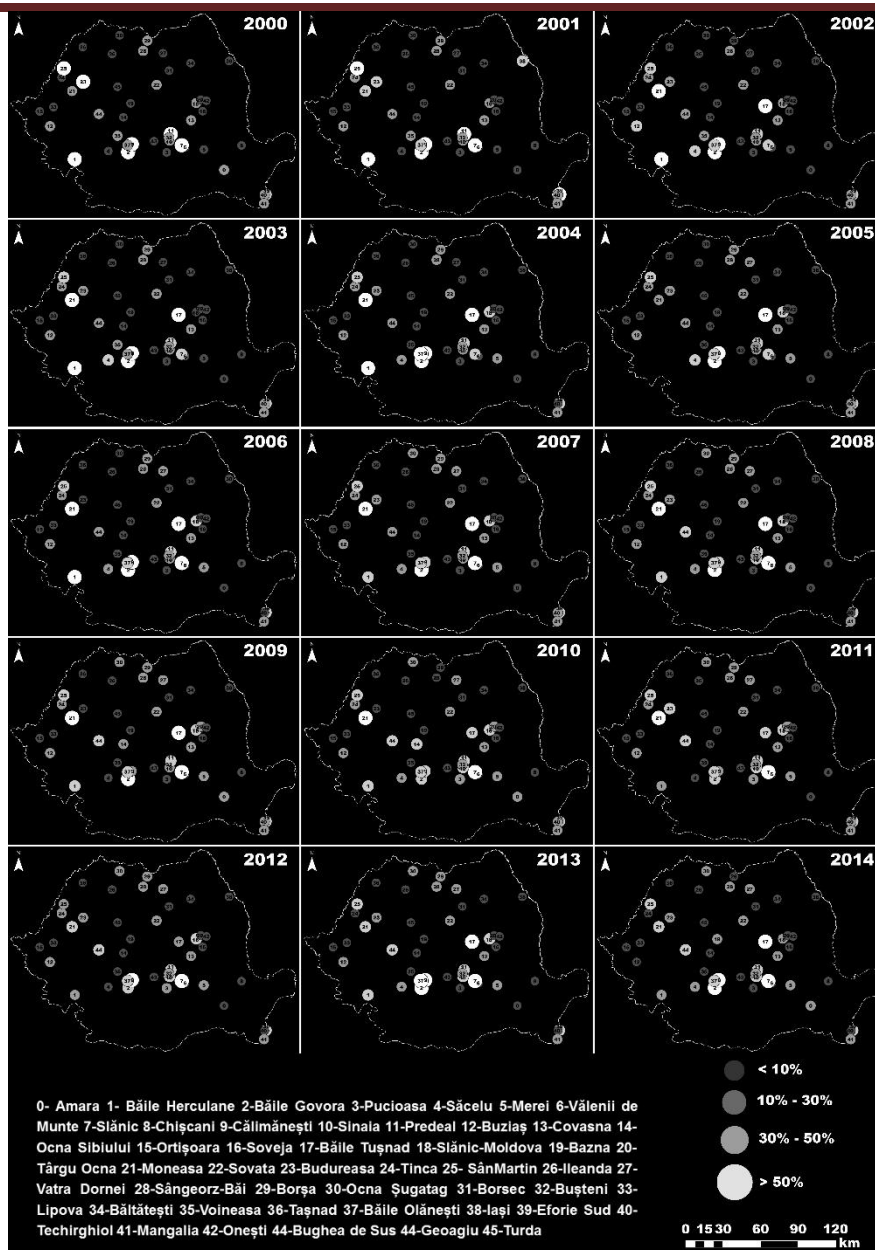


Figure 2. Evolution of the share of the number of employees in the spa sector in the total number of employees
 Source: project UB/1375

The evolution of the turnover, shows that for the entire period of analysis, 2000-2014, only two resorts registered a share of over 50% (Slănic Prahova and Băile Tușnad). Most spa resorts have a turnover below 10%: in 2000, there were 25 resorts, during the economic crisis (2008), 31 resorts, and in the last year, 29 resorts (Figure 3).

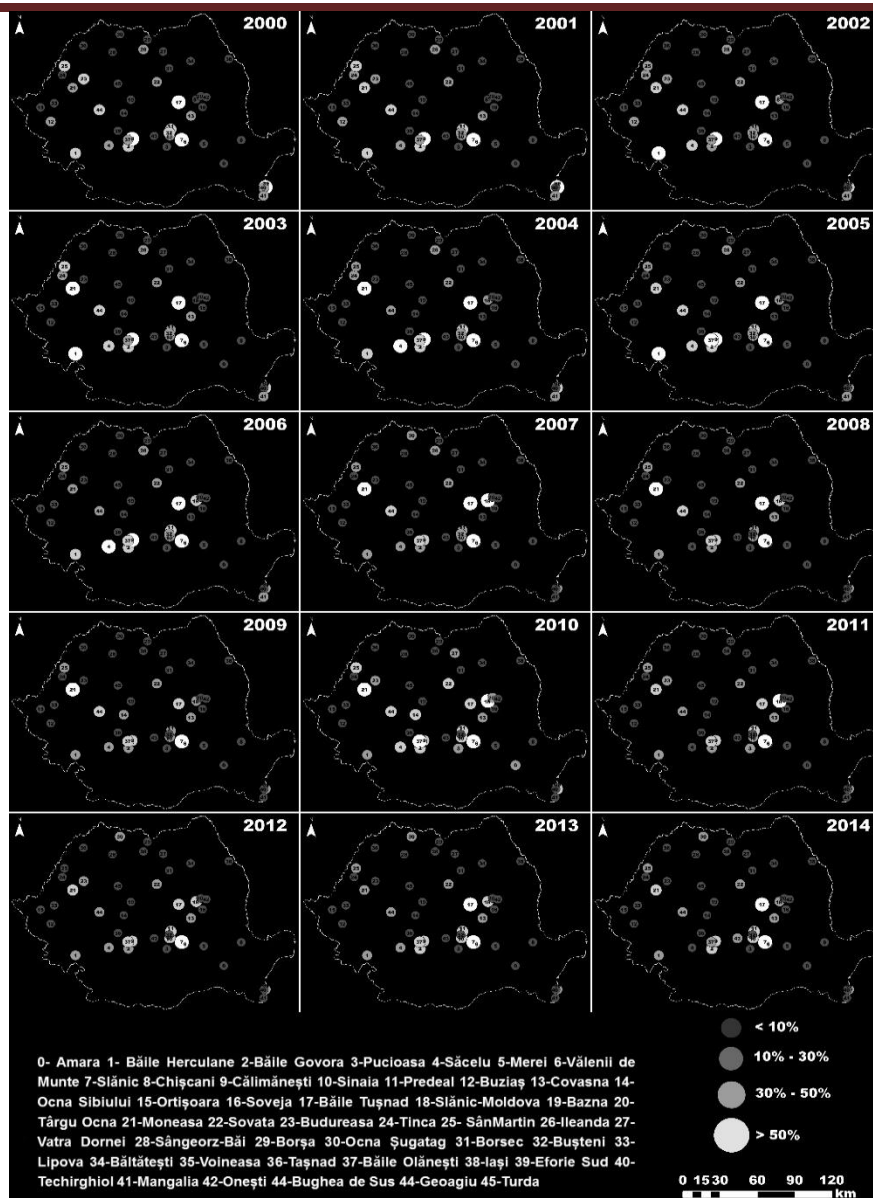


Figure 3. Evolution of the share of the turnover of the SPA sector in the total turnover
 Source: project UB/1375

In the analysis of the evolution of the profit share in the spa sector in the total profit, we can see for the entire analyzed interval, a higher concentration for the resorts with a share of the profit below 10%. Sporadically, there are resorts with a high share of profit, over 50% - in 2000 a number of 5 resorts (Budureasa, Geoagiu, Călimănești, Băile Tușnad and Eforie), in 2008 - 6 resorts and 2014 with 2 resorts (Slănic Prahova and Bughea de Sus).

Table 1, shows the variation in the number of companies in the spa sector, from the total number of companies, where is remarkable a high share of the resorts that have a relatively constant evolution, of 73.9%, of the total, 15.2% of the resorts have a general downward trend and only 10.8% of the total spa resorts have a growth trend. The first three positions are occupied by resorts that have as dominant economic activity, the tourism, and the last positions are held by those resorts where spa resources do not represent a sustainable development for the territorial system itself.

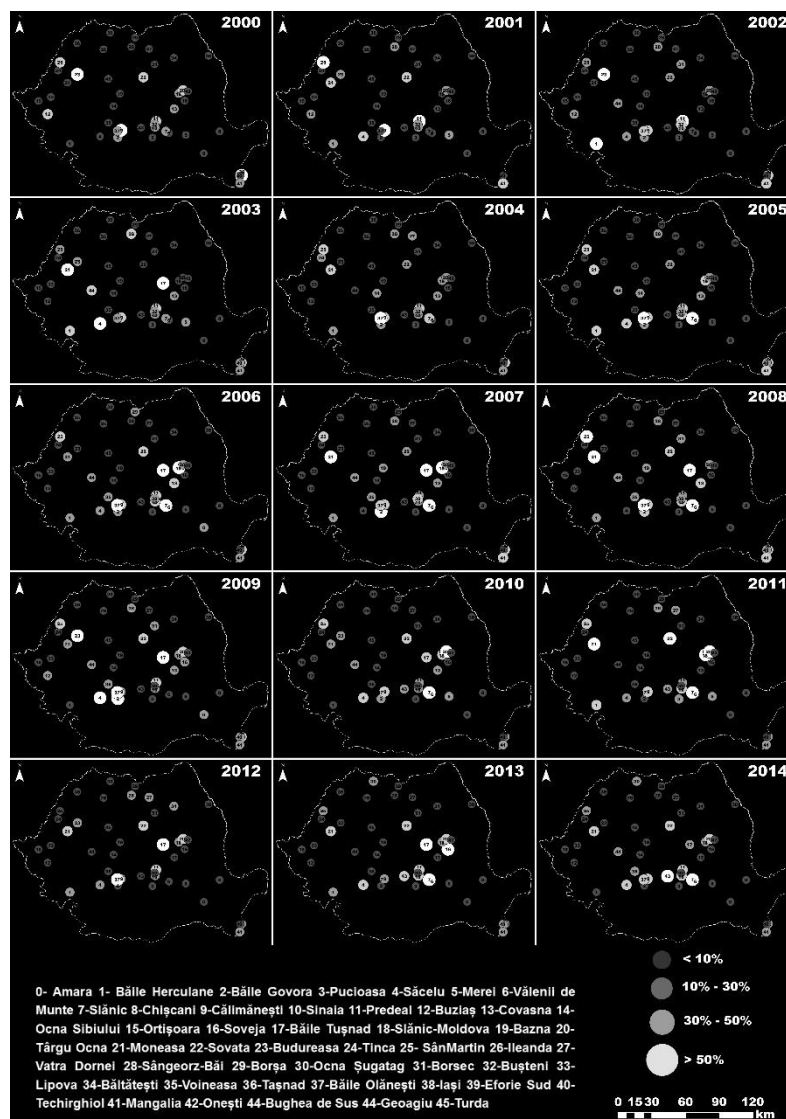


Figure 4. Evolution of the profit share of the spa sector in total profit
 Source: project UB/1375

Table 1. Changes on the percentage of companies number from spa tourism sector in the total companies number

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Moneasa	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Baile Tusnad	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2
Predeal	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Eforie	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Olanesti	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
BaileHerculane	24	18	15	14	10	6	13	11	6	6	8	7	7	6	6
OcnaȘugatag	33	33	25	28	16	18	25	27	22	18	15	12	12	7	7
Geoagiu	8	9	6	9	14	14	15	12	11	11	11	9	8	10	8
Sacelu	18	7	13	11	12	11	16	14	19	23	21	23	26	21	9
Borsec	11	12	8	12	9	13	7	10	13	8	6	6	6	9	10
Busteni	10	11	11	8	7	10	12	15	12	13	12	10	9	8	11
Slanic Moldova	30	31	35	34	26	16	9	6	7	7	7	8	10	11	12
CalimanestiCaciulata	7	8	7	6	6	7	6	7	8	9	9	11	11	12	13
Sinaia	15	17	18	13	13	9	10	9	10	10	10	14	14	13	14

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Sovata	6	6	9	7	8	8	8	8	9	12	13	13	13	14	15
Mangalia	12	13	10	10	11	15	17	18	17	17	17	15	16	15	16
Voineasa	19	24	28	25	27	33	26	22	14	16	14	16	15	16	17
Bazna	25	25	34	38	22	12	11	17	16	29	28	28	17	26	18
Budureasa	9	10	12	17	21	23	22	25	21	25	19	18	19	18	19
Sanmartin	16	16	16	15	18	17	14	13	15	14	16	17	18	17	20
Govora	26	26	24	24	24	21	21	24	27	28	27	26	24	19	21
Soveja	41	41	33	30	30	30	30	39	39	32	33	29	32	30	22
VatraDornei	21	22	19	20	23	25	24	23	24	20	25	27	25	22	23
Merei	27	19	23	22	28	26	27	28	28	26	26	25	27	25	24
Baltatesti	28	30	29	26	19	24	18	20	25	24	24	24	20	20	25
Tasnad	22	21	20	21	29	27	28	26	26	22	23	22	23	27	26
Buzias	13	15	17	19	15	22	23	21	23	19	20	19	21	23	27
Borsa	20	27	21	18	17	20	20	19	20	21	22	20	22	24	28
Techirghiol	14	14	14	16	20	19	19	16	18	15	18	21	28	28	29
Bizusa	39	39	41	35	25	32	35	30	32	35	39	34	35	33	30
Sangeorz Bai	23	20	22	23	31	28	32	37	37	39	38	36	36	29	31
Covasna	38	37	38	37	35	34	33	34	33	33	36	35	33	34	32
TarguOcna	34	34	36	39	38	35	37	35	35	36	35	31	30	32	33
Lipova	17	23	26	27	33	31	34	33	34	34	32	32	34	31	34
OcnaSibiului	37	38	30	31	37	37	36	31	30	30	29	33	31	37	35
Bughea de Sus	46	46	46	46	46	46	42	45	36	46	34	45	46	35	36
Tinca	31	28	32	33	34	36	38	36	40	38	37	38	38	39	37
Amara	32	32	31	29	32	29	29	32	31	31	31	30	29	40	38
Slanic Prahova	29	29	27	32	36	39	31	29	29	27	30	37	37	38	39
Calacea	45	45	40	36	40	44	44	41	41	41	43	42	43	36	40
Onesti	43	42	44	42	42	42	43	42	42	43	45	43	41	43	41
Turda	40	40	42	43	43	43	45	43	45	40	41	40	39	41	42
Iasi	44	44	45	44	44	41	40	40	43	42	42	41	40	42	43
Pucioasa	36	36	39	41	41	40	41	44	44	44	44	44	44	45	44
Valenii de Munte	42	43	43	45	45	45	46	46	46	45	46	46	42	46	45
Chiscani	35	35	37	40	39	38	39	38	38	37	40	39	45	44	46
Linear trendline					Relatively constant trend					Overall growth trend					Overall downward trend

Source: project UB/1375

Table 2. Changes on the percentage of employees number from spa tourism sector in the total employees number

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Calimanesti Căciulata	8	4	5	5	4	4	6	10	12	13	13	13	2	1	1
Govora	4	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	5	5	3	4	2	2
Slanic Prahova	3	5	9	10	10	8	5	4	4	4	2	2	1	3	3
Baile Tusnad	1	1	4	4	1	2	1	1	2	3	4	8	16	4	4
Olanesti	24	12	12	11	6	5	7	6	6	7	6	4	5	5	5
Predeal	7	7	6	9	9	7	10	9	10	9	8	6	3	7	6
Moneasa	19	9	1	2	5	15	4	2	1	2	1	1	6	6	7
Sanmartin	6	6	7	8	7	6	9	7	5	6	3	5	13	8	8
Eforie	9	8	8	7	8	10	11	11	11	10	12	10	7	9	9
Geoagiu	17	17	17	12	14	12	14	12	7	8	7	7	8	10	10
Sinaia	16	15	18	14	15	14	13	13	13	14	9	11	10	11	11
Busteni	10	13	13	13	13	13	12	14	14	1	15	16	12	14	12
Slanic Moldova	20	21	19	28	11	11	8	8	9	11	11	9	9	13	13
Baile Herculane	5	3	2	1	2	1	3	5	8	12	14	14	14	12	14
Sovata	15	20	23	15	17	18	18	22	16	17	16	15	15	15	15
Merei	32	30	32	25	19	19	23	19	25	24	23	23	21	20	16
Vatra Dornei	25	29	26	26	25	25	19	17	19	16	17	17	18	17	17
Budureasa	2	11	14	21	24	26	25	24	20	30	29	12	11	21	18
Sacelu	44	44	11	6	16	9	24	15	22	29	27	30	28	23	19
Covasna	14	16	21	19	20	21	21	20	15	22	18	22	19	18	20
Ocna Sugatag	45	45	45	44	36	38	30	27	26	20	24	18	17	16	21

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Bazna	34	35	33	41	45	44	45	41	38	40	40	35	37	39	20
Mangalia	17	17	21	19	18	18	18	23	24	25	26	24	22	19	21
TarguOcna	22	24	30	32	32	28	31	26	26	26	21	18	21	20	22
Busteni	11	11	13	14	15	15	15	17	18	21	30	21	19	18	23
Merei	27	28	28	29	36	34	36	35	34	35	39	37	34	25	24
VatraDornei	25	23	23	24	21	21	22	19	20	19	20	19	20	21	25
Sangeorz Bai	12	12	12	13	19	16	17	16	16	28	37	38	42	24	26
Buzias	13	19	17	22	25	27	29	31	32	32	28	26	25	27	27
OcnaSibitului	36	36	35	37	33	37	42	38	40	15	12	20	28	28	28
Techirghiol	21	22	24	20	24	24	24	22	19	23	38	42	38	30	29
Voineasa	26	27	26	26	34	40	35	36	31	30	34	33	39	38	30
Turda	31	33	31	34	29	29	32	33	36	37	32	31	27	32	31
Borsa	23	26	27	27	22	19	21	21	22	22	24	25	23	26	32
Iasi	39	39	40	38	38	35	38	37	37	38	35	34	29	33	33
Soveja	33	34	36	30	31	41	37	42	44	39	43	45	43	31	34
Baltatesti	42	43	42	40	39	33	34	30	29	34	36	28	31	34	35
Tinca	38	14	16	15	14	23	27	24	25	27	25	32	32	35	36
Tasnad	29	25	25	25	26	26	25	27	28	29	29	30	33	36	37
Budureasa	6	16	19	21	30	31	30	29	27	41	18	14	13	29	38
Chiscani	43	40	38	35	37	36	39	40	41	42	42	40	40	37	39
Pucioasa	32	31	37	36	35	32	33	32	30	20	19	15	30	41	40
Lipova	37	38	34	31	28	30	28	34	35	33	33	36	36	40	41
Onesti	41	42	41	44	43	43	41	39	39	36	41	41	41	42	42
Borsec	35	37	39	39	40	38	40	43	43	44	44	43	44	43	43
Calacea	44	44	43	42	41	42	43	44	42	43	45	44	45	44	44
Valenii de Munte	40	41	44	45	44	45	44	45	45	45	46	46	46	46	45
Bizusa	28	32	32	33	23	22	26	28	33	31	31	39	35	45	46
Linear trendline						Relatively constant trend					Overall growth trend				Overall downward trend

Source: project UB/1375

Analyzing the change in rankings on the share of the turnover, for the period 2000 - 2014, we find that approximately 19.5% of the spa resorts have a general tendency to decrease of the turnover from spa tourism, compared to about 67.3%, which registered a relatively constant trend and only 5 resorts registered a general growth trend (Slanic Prahova, Govora, Sinaia, Ocna Sugatag, Bughea de Sus) (Table 3).

Table 4. Changes on the percentage of profit from spa tourism sector in the total profit

Spa	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bughea de Sus	42	43	45	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	14	15	29	8	2
Sinaia	11	17	12	11	10	8	7	12	12	22	10	11	9	5	3
Moneasa	36	9	35	2	4	5	15	5	4	15	15	5	7	7	4
Olanesti	16	23	6	12	3	3	2	7	6	2	1	3	2	1	5
CalimanestiCaciulata	3	5	7	10	5	12	8	8	11	16	9	12	16	13	6
TarguOcna	9	15	14	21	19	18	20	17	23	8	3	6	5	6	7
Sacelu	43	7	10	3	1	10	14	29	44	5	8	17	8	10	8
Sovata	8	8	16	27	17	20	10	18	8	9	5	8	4	11	9
Predeal	6	4	4	8	9	6	6	13	15	11	12	14	6	9	10
Eforie	5	3	5	7	8	9	9	11	9	10	13	13	11	12	11
Slanic Moldova	15	36	36	32	15	11	3	1	1	24	4	7	18	19	12
OcnaSugatag	44	44	40	43	44	40	35	27	25	31	22	31	24	17	13
Baile Tusnad	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	3	2	4	7	1	3	3	14
Mangalia	17	10	9	19	12	13	12	9	7	14	17	16	15	15	15
Sanmartin	7	6	13	14	7	4	5	6	5	7	6	10	26	14	16
Voineasa	46	46	28	35	30	32	17	19	16	17	44	33	32	40	17
Geoagiu	2	2	15	5	24	15	13	20	14	13	18	22	23	24	18
Busteni	14	14	8	13	16	16	18	10	19	27	30	30	22	23	19
BaileHerculane	19	18	3	9	14	7	16	14	20	34	34	9	14	16	20
Techirghiol	34	26	26	17	25	19	25	31	17	20	23	23	19	18	21
VatraDornei	23	24	27	36	22	24	23	22	24	33	24	18	17	20	22
Amara	26	39	38	38	32	30	22	37	26	12	42	28	25	22	23
Sangeorz Bai	21	12	11	6	18	22	30	21	21	25	38	19	10	34	24

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Covasna	13	21	21	16	11	17	11	16	13	21	19	27	28	25	25		
Govora	12	19	18	1	20	14	19	4	10	6	11	32	31	29	26		
Soveja	28	35	34	22	41	44	38	42	41	19	46	39	33	4	27		
Pucioasa	32	31	39	34	39	29	33	28	33	30	28	21	36	33	28		
Turda	27	25	30	31	31	31	39	36	37	40	21	29	27	30	29		
Merei	22	11	22	20	27	26	31	23	30	36	20	20	20	27	30		
Baltatesti	30	38	41	44	38	39	28	40	32	37	27	37	13	28	31		
Borsec	29	34	19	42	40	38	41	43	22	18	37	24	21	26	32		
Borsa	20	28	23	24	23	23	21	24	29	29	29	35	30	38	33		
Chiscani	40	33	29	30	28	36	34	30	39	35	26	36	40	39	34		
Iasi	33	30	31	37	35	33	32	33	35	38	31	38	34	32	35		
Buzias	10	16	17	33	26	27	29	26	27	23	25	26	35	31	36		
Tasnad	25	27	24	29	29	25	36	41	38	43	41	42	39	43	37		
Tinca	35	22	25	23	13	28	24	32	31	44	39	43	41	36	38		
Sibiului	45	45	46	26	21	21	27	38	43	28	35	34	45	21	39		
Onesti	38	37	33	39	37	41	42	35	36	39	36	40	42	37	40		
Bazna	31	32	42	45	45	45	45	15	18	26	43	25	38	44	41		
Budureasa	4	13	2	15	43	37	37	34	28	3	16	2	12	35	42		
Lipova	24	29	32	25	33	34	26	25	34	32	32	41	37	41	43		
Calacea	37	41	43	40	36	42	44	44	42	42	40	44	43	42	44		
Valenii de Munte	41	40	37	41	42	43	43	39	40	41	45	45	44	45	45		
Bizusa	39	42	44	28	34	35	40	45	45	45	33	46	46	46	46		
Linear trendline					Relatively constant trend						Overall Growth trend					Overall Downward trend	

Source: project UB/1375

The variation of the ranks, regarding the share of the profit in the spa sector presents the following situation: six resorts have a general decreasing trajectory, with a share in the total spa sector of 13.04% the same number of resorts has a general growth trajectory and a number of 33 resorts, meaning 71.7%, indicates a steady trend.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Following the analyzes carried out, we can hierarchize the tourist resorts in the spa sector in three categories depending on the contribution of the SPA sector to the local economic system:

- Resorts where the spa function brings the most important economic contribution to the local economy, representing the main economic sector. There are resorts in which investments have been made consistently, implying a positive economic trajectory.
- Stations where the spa function is declining, its contribution to the local economy is insignificant and so the basic function is unclear, presenting the risk of moving away from it.
- Resorts where the spa sector is replaced by other economic sectors, as its contribution to the local economy is becoming less and less.

The analysis of the role of tourism in the structural dynamics of territorial systems with specific resources is particularly important due to the need to model the capacity of tourism to give sustainability to local and regional economies (Peptenatu et al., 2012; Braghină et al., 2011). These approaches can also contribute to consistent methodological progress in modeling functional disruptions in territorial systems (Andronache et al., 2016; Braghină et al., 2012; Prăvălie et al., 2014; Pintilii et al., 2016).

Tourism, which is based on natural resources, can be a decisive factor in the structural model of the local economic profile, and increasing the role of this spa tourism in Romania can only be achieved with the support of local authorities and consistent financial investment.

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