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- **The consumption decision in rural tourism and models of rural tourism in South Transylvania**
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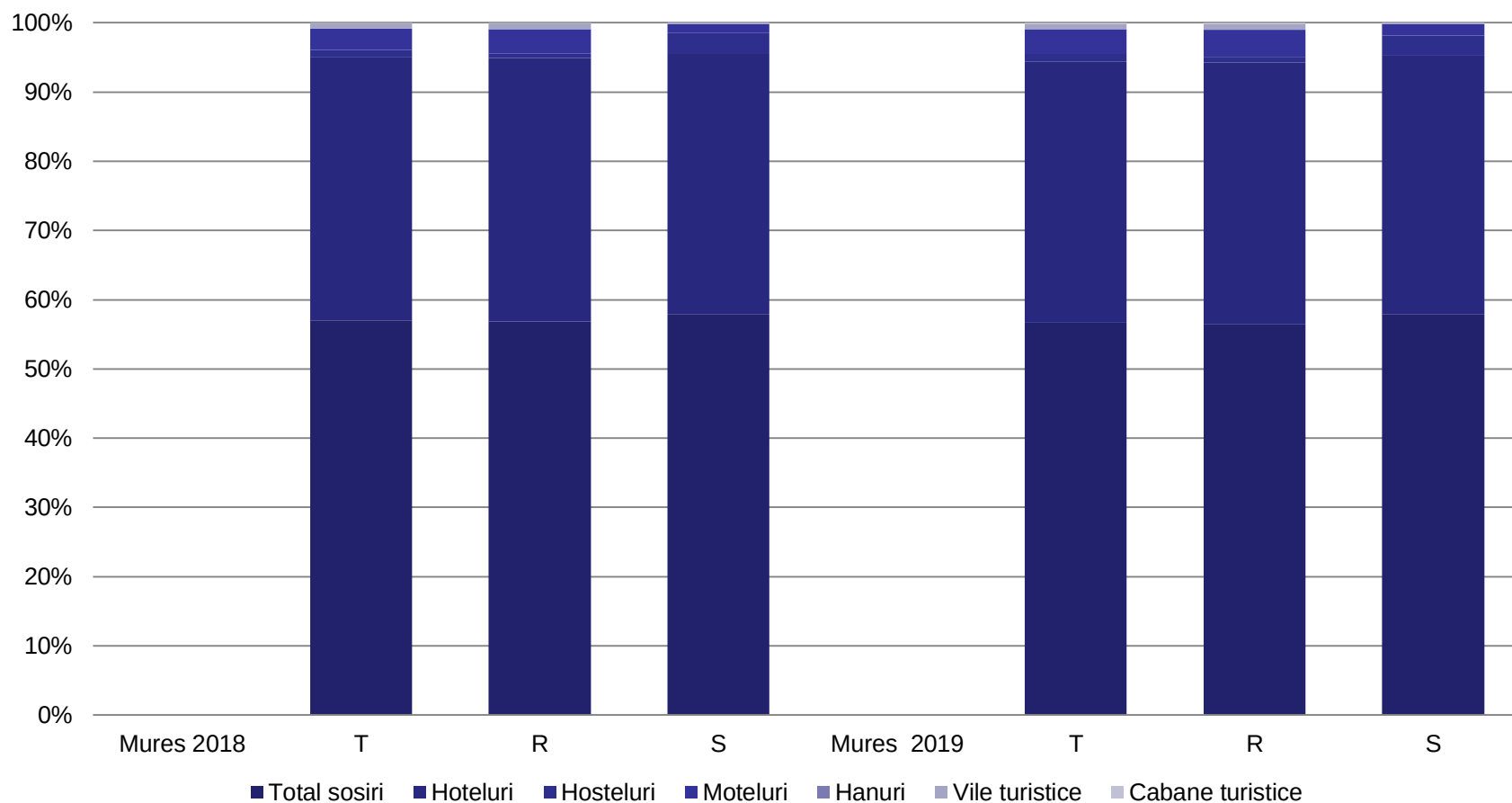
- **Abstract**
- Rural tourism has developed in the recent years due to the desire of people to return to their roots and to connect more to nature away from the crowdedness of the city. Moreover, the fact that a lot of entrepreneurs tend to develop their business in the rural area has lead to an extension of rural services and products. The growth of tourists' interest for visiting rural areas encouraged the residents of inland villages to the new development and new entrepreneurial orientation-tourism. Regardless of the rural area or the country where the rural tourism is practiced, the rural tourist profile tends to have a series of common elements. These include the desire to escape from the city and to integrate into the rural life from the village, the desire to relax, the desire to spend free time with family or any other person in a natural setting and not least, the desire to know the culture of the rural space, with all that it entails. In Romania the rural tourist bases its consumption decision on the intangible and tangible assets that can represent a heritage to be explored, mainly in the perspective of untouch and well preserved traditions at which one can assist. As a result, the tourist who visits these places is supposed to be eager to know the Romanian traditions, to participate in an active way in the life of the village, as it is lived by the members of the community and to enjoy beautiful scenery. So, the purpose of the paper is to analyze the rural consumption decision, the factors that can influence it and to recognize some general tourism models that can be applied in rural area.

- **International delimitation of the rural tourism**
- In *Finland*, rural tourism refers to the rental of peasant houses by tourists or the provision of food and transport services in rural areas.
- In *Hungary*, the term “village tourism” is used, indicating that the only activities and services offered in villages are found in this type of tourism, namely accommodation at low prices, involvement in agricultural activities or other types of local activities.
- In *Slovenia* the most important form of rural tourism is tourism at family farms, where guests live either in a family of farmers or in guest houses, but visit the farm to dine or simply to explore.
- In the *Netherlands*, rural tourism means in particular camping on farms where most of the services offered are related to activities such as: cycling, walking or horse riding.
- In *Portugal*, rural tourism has traditionally been associated with staying on farms with the farming family. In *Greece*, rural tourism means accommodation in traditionally furnished rooms with a traditional breakfast.
- In *Romania*, rural activities refers to the display of popular gastronomic products, leisure and animation specific to rural areas, transport by traditional means, pilgrimages to consecrated places of worship, visiting my workshops, etc.

- **Methodology**
- *Methods such as comparative description, analytical method and graphics have been used. These methods helped to translate data into charts, tables and charts using the Excel program. In the first stage, the documentary we consulted an extensive scientific bibliography which later served as a basis for the present study, providing in particular information regarding the physical-geographic characteristics of the study area. The integration of all information was presented using comparative analysis through complex interpretation of data, statistics and understanding of traditions and customs in Transylvania.*

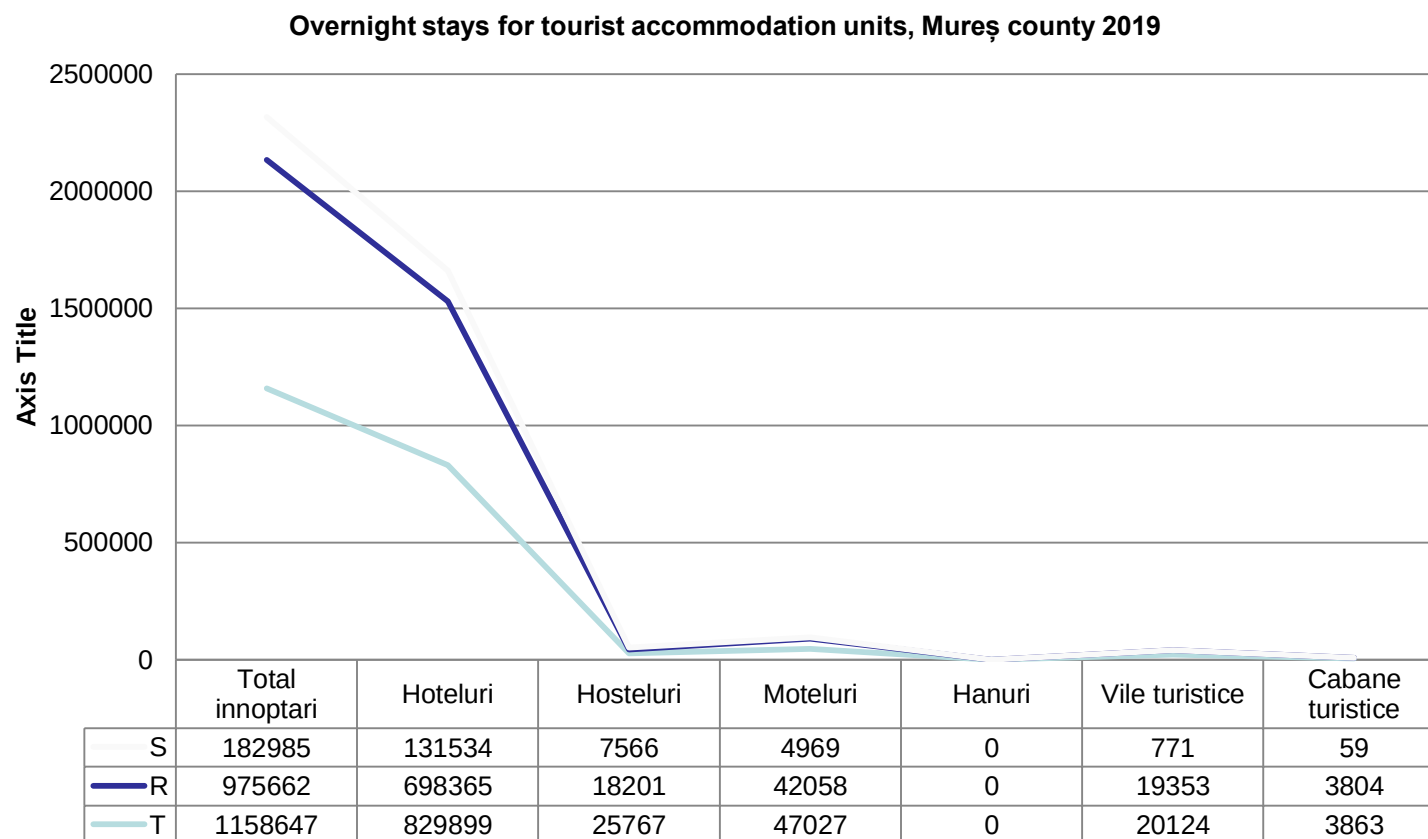
- The Transylvanian villages with Saxon fortified churches offer a lively picture of the landscape cultural heritage in southern Transylvania.
- One peculiarity of transylvanian village related to the *tangible patrimony* is the special **architecture** of the village with saxon influences. This can influence the consumer decision having into consideration internal factors such as the ethnicity of the tourists, its interest in saxon culture or architectural styles, the social background the attitudes and cultural convictions.
- One essential characteristic of the settlements from Transylvania was the land division in *Flemish plotting system*
- German colonists brought modern field cultivation methods (triennial rotation) and livestock
- Traditional household is set on a rectangular plot, narrow and long. With one or two rooms house, a small shed, barn and stable for cereals and animals, chicken coop, fountain, vegetable garden and fruit orchard.

- *intangible* patrimony of transylvanian area which is related to *customs and tradition*.
- The most known traditions of spring are: Mărțișorul, The Daffodils festival "blooms" the Brașovian tradition in Șercaia commune, the village of Vad.
- The Narcissus Festival takes place every year in May in the Dumbrava Vadului Reserve, unique in Europe as a dimension, "Chigala" as a traditional cake made for Easter, the habit of Călușul is very common in the Transylvanian villages
- summer traditions such as: "Harvest House", when the oldest villagers teach the youngest to cut wheat spikes and to bind wheat sheaves
- autumn tradition the wretched Sheep is one of the habits of the inhabitants of Bran, symbolizing the end of a pastoral year, the Wailing Sheep is a joyful celebration
- winter habit Butea Junilor

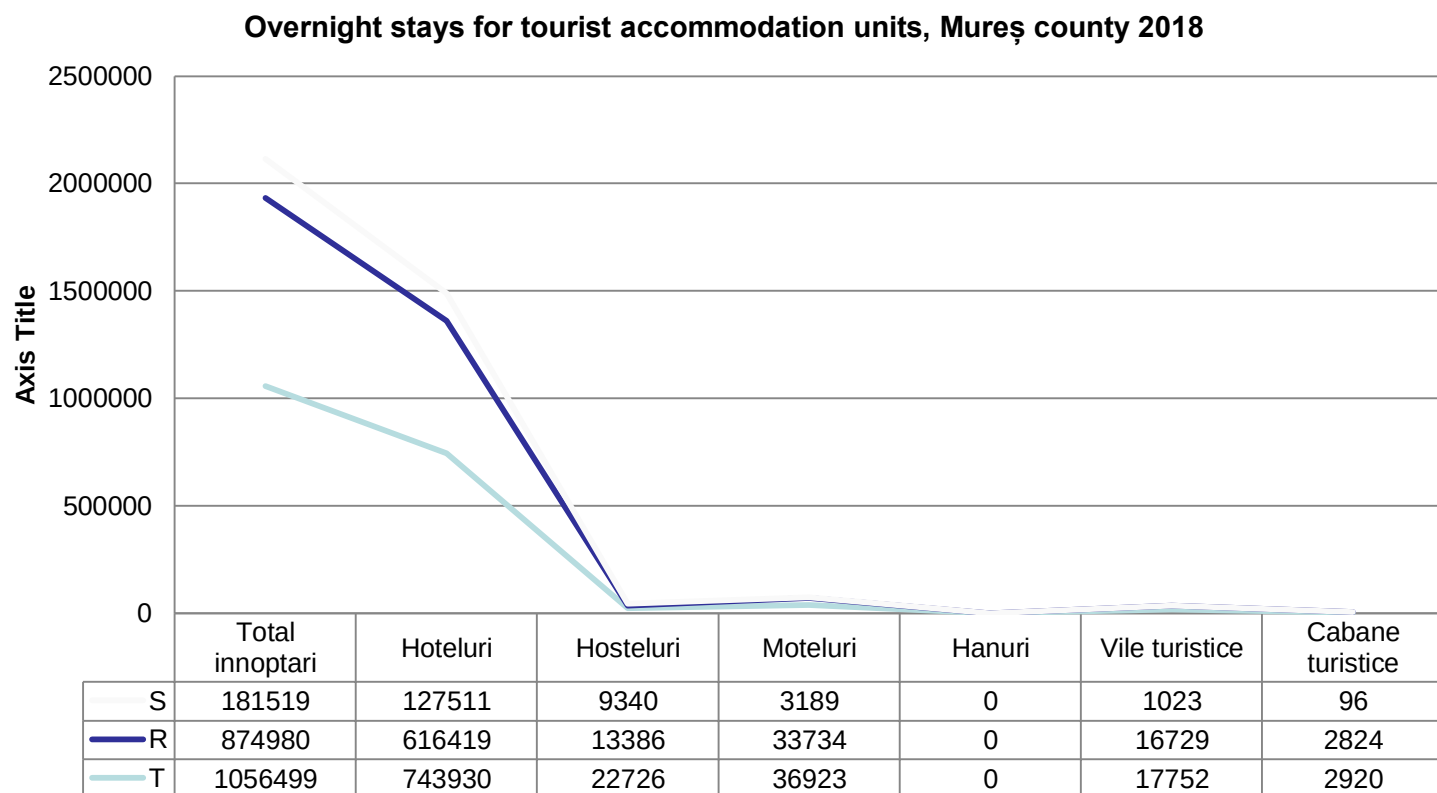


Arrivals of tourists in tourist reception structures with tourist accommodation functions in Mureș county years 2018/2019

- On counties, the indexes of greater utilization of touristic capacity in which concerns south Transylvania were in Covasna (46,3%), Mureș (39,3%), Cluj (34,7%), Sibiu (31,7%).
- The highest scores are registered in Brașov, Mureș and Sibiu, closely followed by Harghita.
- the number of hotels, touristic villas, cabans continuously rising from 2018 to 2019 as it can be seen in the charts. As well, the touristic has a favorable evolution in which concerns the total number of arrivals (T) in which concerns the Romanian arrivals as tourists (R) but as well the foreign tourists (S). The number of overnight stays also increased in terms of hotels, hostels and touristic villas.



Overnight stays for tourist accommodation units, Mureş county 2019



Overnight stays for tourist accommodation units, Mureș county 2018

- The existing accommodation structures in Mureș County were, between January 1 and September 30, 2019, the host of a number of 466,832 tourists, with 29,111 more than the corresponding period of 2018, respectively an increase of 6.7%, which made a number of 903,547 overnight stays, with 90,071 more than in the corresponding period of 2018, respectively an increase of 11.1%, and the average length of stay was 1.9 overnight stays / tourist, according to the figures held by the Mureș County Directorate of Statistics.
- According to the country of origin of foreign tourists, the highest shares were held by those from Hungary (20.6%), Germany (12.3%), Italy (7,3%), Spain (7.3%), Republic of Moldova (6.6%)
- The analysis continues with the presentation of numbers for Mureș counties having into consideration that furthermore will follow an analysis of touristic attraction in Saschiz and Idicel Pădure as representants of cultural heritage in the area.

- It can be resumed that the tourist consumption can be developed having into consideration the main advantages of the area:
- number and value of targets built cultural heritage: rural UNESCO site, category monuments in all component villages of the south Transylvania (there is a Zonal Urban Plan made for the protected area / rural site UNESCO).
- fortified evangelical church, several actions took place for the promotion and awareness of preserving the traditional landscape of villages, both by the local administration (making a Good Guide practices for traditional architecture and the Local Heritage Code assumed by HCL) as well as by NGOs: ADEPT Transilvania Foundation, MET, Monumentum Association, existence of a craft workshop of "Saschiz pottery".
- socio-cultural infrastructure and religious at the commune level: orthodox churches in each component village, cultural centers, etc. The drawback would be that the buildings with heritage value are in an advanced condition of degradation, which is harmful the general appearance of the commune and in some cases endanger the safety of passers-by (ex: former German school in the center of Saschiz).

- Natura sites 2000 SCI and SPA, signaling the tourist objectives from joint project carried out by the EAFRD project, connecting the commune to the bike path made by the ADEPT foundation on the route Viscri – Sighisoara, the possibility to rent bicycles to tourists for practicing cycle tourism
- NGOs active in the area for tourism promotion, the existence of local brands (eg Casa de pe Deal, Grandma's Cellar), zonal tourist brand: Târnava Mare
- inclusion of the commune in the potential ecotourism destination Transylvania Hills.
- The implication of the local administration and local entrepreneurs to European and national project in order to include Saschiz area or Idice-Pădure area in contact with touristic development opportunities is another important point. Saschiz takes part at "Green infrastructure - Promoting an integrated sustainable development of the commune - part of the Natura 2000 sites Târnava Mare and Hârtibaciului Plateau

- Conclusions

The main direction that were outlined regarding the cultural heritage were ethnographic and folklore tourist villages, tourist villages of artistic and craftsmanship, landscape tourist villages, that focus on the idea that multiculturalism

centered model of mono-culturalism rural entrepreneurship that has into consideration the village-hotel concept that emphasizes the collaboration between all inhabitant entrepreneurs of the location that provides separately accommodation, food, culture consumption.

The current situation of the transylvanian village is related to depopulation, local population disappearance or decrease is due to expatriation, urban migration or aging

The advantage is that sociologists notice a social phenomenon emerging in the rural areas.

As far as we analyzed the principal attraction in the studied area (Mureș district) are intangible assets in cultural heritage, ethnographic traditions, customs followed by the beautiful scenery, landscape which represents coordinates for *leisure tourism*.