

**CAPITALIZATION POSSIBILITIES OF TOURISM POTENTIAL OF  
TRANSYLVANIAN VILLAGES THROUGH AGRITOURISM**

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*Abstract: Through the variety of landscapes, the richness of the natural heritage, the specificity of the different ethnographic regions, the liveliness of the traditions, and the hospitality of the inhabitants, the rural environment fascinates all those who love travel, also having the opportunity to discover the culture of those areas. The return to nature is the result of the need for relaxation, health, physical and spiritual comfort and is a valid motivation for all categories of age, sex, social status. The modern man does not break from the natural way of life, and his contact with the rustic environment has effects in maintaining the balance. Transylvania is a place where nature shows its pure beauty, almost untouched by the artificial, where the air is still fresh and the time does not rush to escape like elsewhere.*

**Key words:** village, rural tourism, agritourist potential, traditions

**INTRODUCTION**

Transylvania or Ardeal is a historical and geographical region located within the Carpathian Arch, one of the historical regions of Romania.

Transylvania includes the central parts of Romania, respectively the Depression of Transylvania and the Carpathian slopes that are inclined towards it. On the territory of Transylvania are the counties of Alba, Bihor, Bistrita-Nasaud, Brasov, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Mures, Salaj and Sibiu. [16]



**Figure 1. Transylvania - geographical location**

Parts of the Transylvania's territory itself are located in the counties of Bacau (Ghimes-Faget commune and the villages Poiana Sarata, Cosnea, Cadaresti and Pajistea), Caras-Severin (Bautar commune), Maramures (Targu Lapus), Neamt (Damuc, Bicz-Chei and, Bicazu-Ardelean), Salaj (east and north of the Meses mountains), Suceava (west of the Dorna and Bistrita Aurie, Cosna and Dornisoara rivers) and Valcea (a small part north of Lotru river).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To carry out this work we used different sources of information, starting from specialized materials regarding the notions of rural tourism and agritourism, describing the region from the ethno-folkloric point of view and the tourist potential and, continuing with the statistical data resources that allowed carrying out the analysis of the agritourism activity carried out in the studied area.

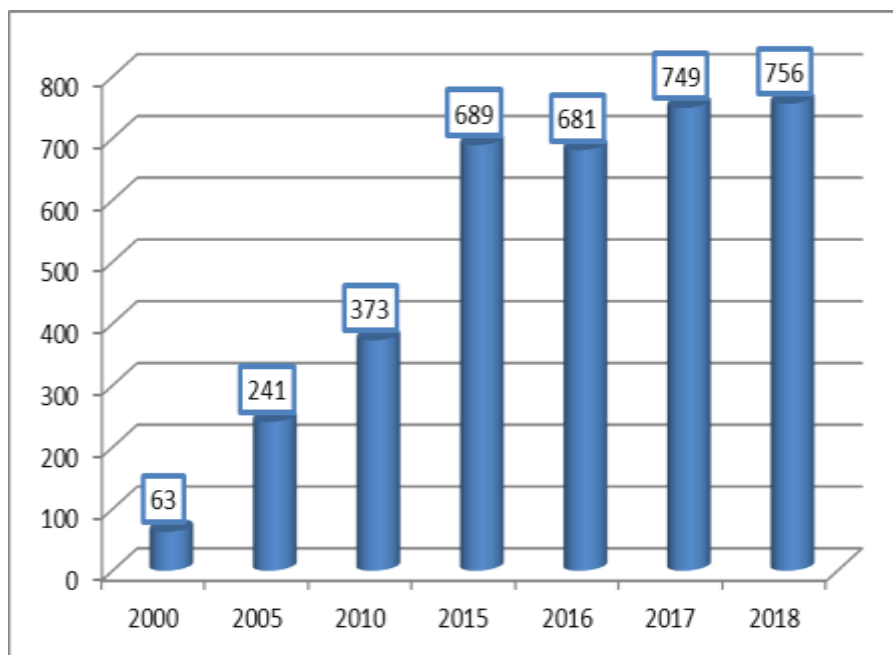
## RESEARCH RESULTS

Romania has a great tourism potential, whose value is recognized both nationally and internationally. The central area of the Carpathian arch has through its tourist resources it has an important role in strengthening domestic tourism. Transylvania-as a tourist destination, occupies the central place in the tourists' preferences for the Romanian tourist destinations, the appropriate use of this potential having a major positive impact on the development of the Romanian tourism. [1,4,6]

In the analysis of the tourism offer will be used indicators targeting the tourist accommodation units, the analysis of the existing and functioning accommodation capacity and the analysis of the indicator regarding the offers' degree of use.

Transylvania is an area with a rich tourism potential, fact proven by the number of accommodation units in this region, 35.75% from the total number of existing accommodation units at national level can be found in the territory of this region. [2,5]

In the period 2000-2018 the number of accommodation units increased more than three times, from 920, in 2000, to 3022 in 2018. [15]



**Figure 2. The evolution of the agritourist guesthouses number, Transylvania, 2000-2018**

Considering that in the studied area, there are areas recognized nationally and internationally as agritourism areas, the number of agritourism guesthouses concentrated in this region, represents 44.24% from the total number of agritourism guesthouses registered at national level. During the period analyzed, the number of these accommodation structures increased 12 times. [3,9,11]

In Figure 3 is presented the structure of the accommodation units, of agritourism guesthouses type, at the level of the Transylvania region, on the component counties, in the year 2018. [15]

From the figure presented above, it can be observed that Brașov County, recognized as the most important agritourism area of the country, holds 34.92% from the total number of guesthouses registered in Transylvania. The second place is held by Covasna County with 16.14%, followed by Harghita County with 12.17%. [12,15,16]

The accommodation capacity existing in the Transylvanian agritourist guesthouses represents 44.82% from the accommodation capacity of these tourist reception structures, existing at national level. During the period analyzed, the number of accommodation places increased steadily, in the year 20018, being registered a number of 16,056 places.[7,13]

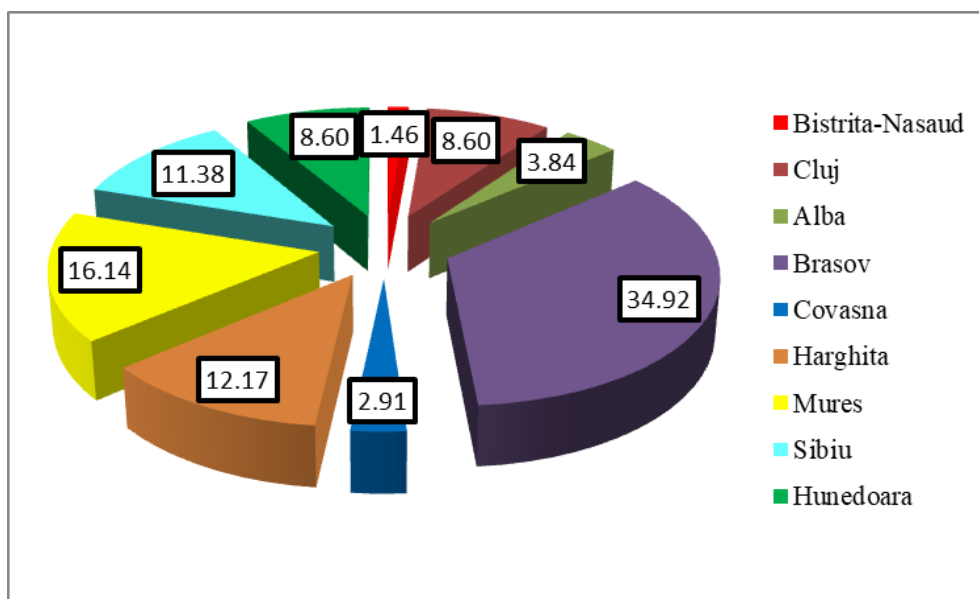


Figure 3. The distribution of agritourist guesthouses by counties, Transylvania

The distribution of accommodation places, from the Transylvanian agritourism guesthouses, is different from one county to another (figure 4.). [15]

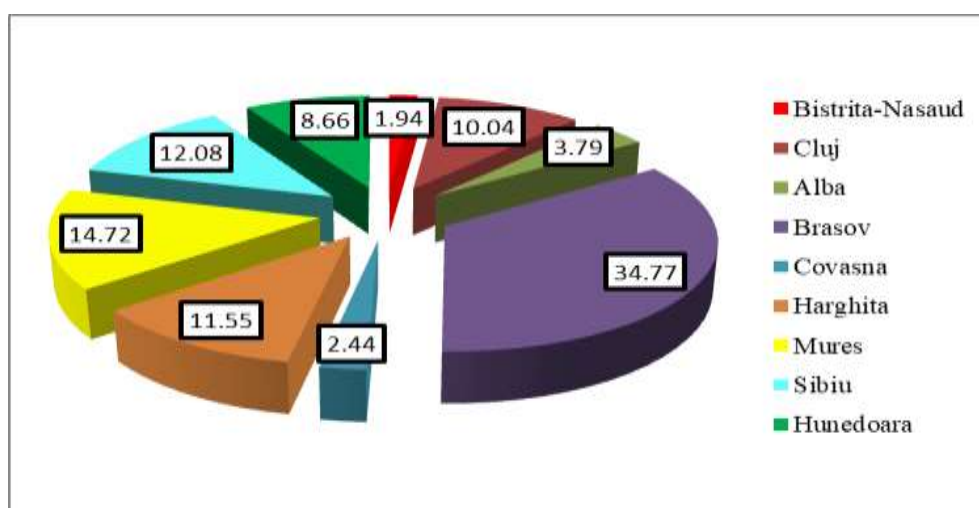
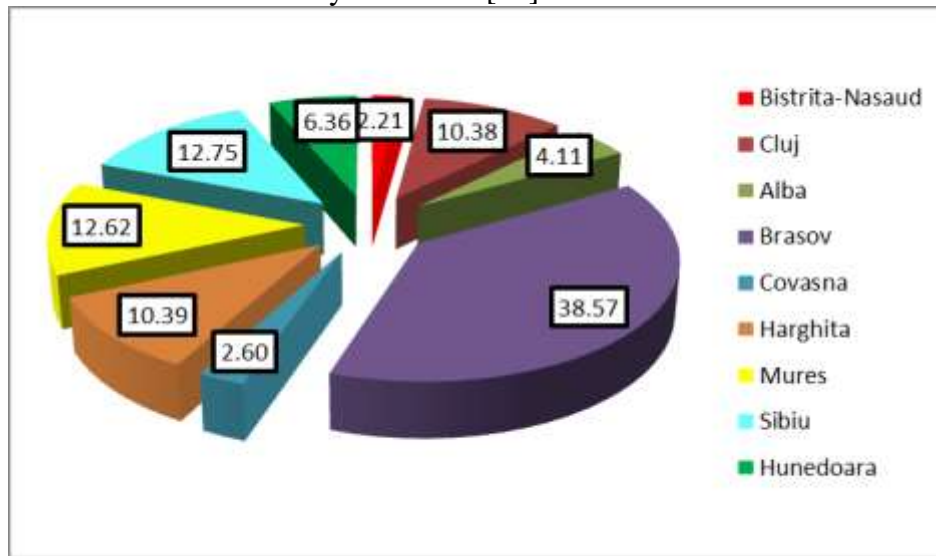


Figure 4. The structure of the accommodation capacity existing in the agritourist guesthouses from Transylvania, 2018

From the analysis of the data presented in the graph above it can be observed that Brașov County holds 34.77% from the total number of accommodation places existing in

agritourism guesthouses, being the first place, in the top of the Transylvanian counties that have accommodation units of this type. The following places are occupied by Mures County - 14.72% and Sibiu County - 12.08%. [15]

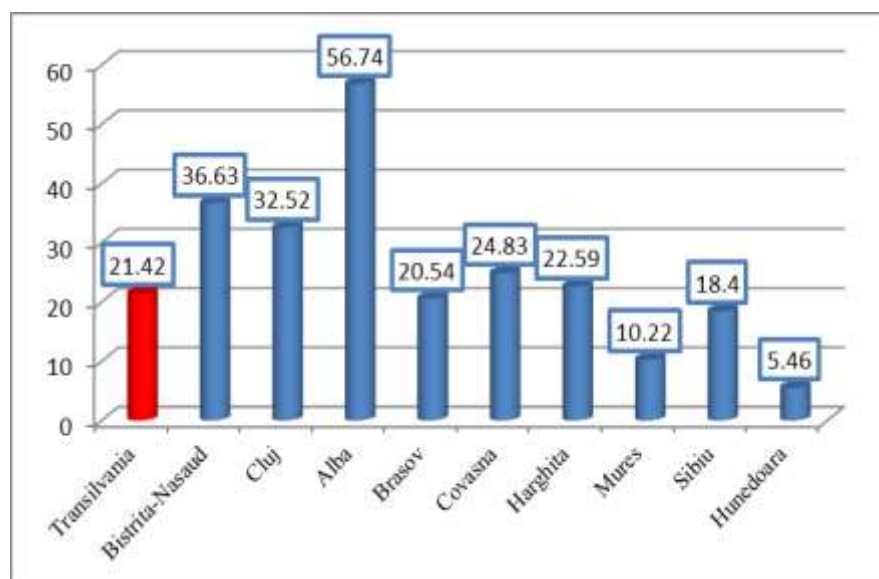


**Figure 5. The structure of the accommodation capacity in operation in agritourist guesthouses in Transylvania, 2018**

In the Figure 5 is presented the situation of the capacity in operation for agritourism guesthouses from Transylvania. Analyzing the presented data, it is observed that, this time on the first place, Brasov County is located with a weight of 38.57%, followed by Sibiu County with 12.75% and Mures County with 12.62%.

An important indicator of the agritourism offer is the index of net use of the capacity in operation, determined as a percentage ratio between the number of nights and the number of days-places related to the capacity in operation. [8,10]

In Figure 6 is presented the degree of capacity utilization in operation, for the year 2018, in agritourism guesthouses, from Transylvania.



**Figure 6. The net use index of accommodation capacity, Transylvania, 2018**

In 2018, the agritourism guesthouses from Transylvania, the value of the capacity utilization index in operation are 21.42%, a value approximately equal to the one registered

at national level-21.19%. However, the degree of utilization of the accommodation capacity is different in terms of analysis at the county level. The highest value of the capacity utilization index in operation is recorded in Alba County-56.74%, well above the region average. Values higher than the regional average are registered in other counties such as: Bistrita Nassud - 36.63%, Cluj - 32.52%, Covasna 24.83% and Harghita 22.59%. The lowest value - 5.46% is registered in Hunedoara County. [15,16]

The tourist demand is represented by the number of tourists visiting the analyzed area. Regarding the number of tourists lodged, in 2018, Transylvania, recorded 41.53% from the total number of tourists arriving in agritourism guesthouses from Romania.

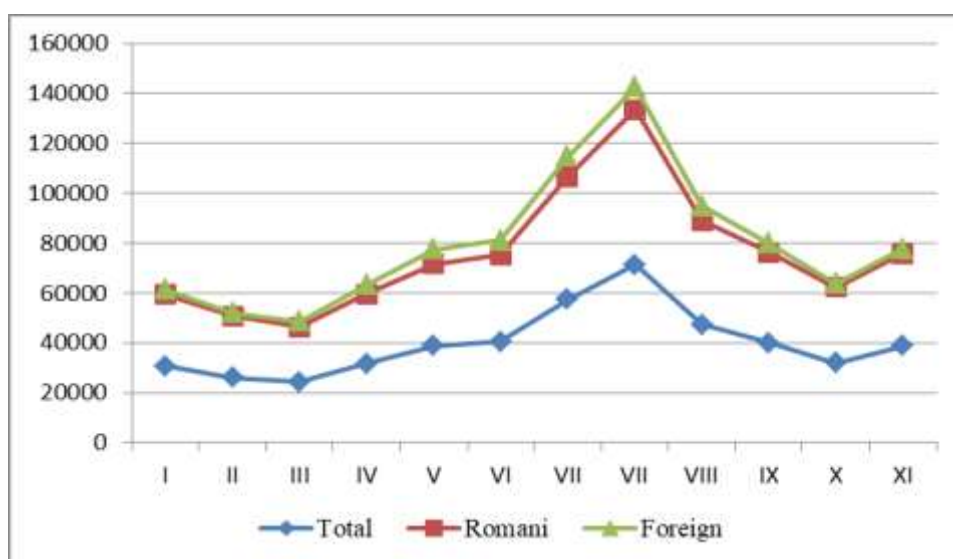
The structure by categories of tourists shows that 88.47% of the tourists staying in the agritourism guesthouses from Transylvania are Romanian tourists, the remaining 11.53% being foreign tourists.

Arrivals of tourists indicate different values, depending on the county. Thus, regarding the Romanian tourists, the most number of tourists were registered in Brasov County - 48.98%, followed by Cluj County with 16.57% and Sibiu County - 11.71%.

If we analyze, however, the number of foreign tourists, most of them were registered in Harghita County - 23.8%, followed by Sibiu County - 18.52% and Cluj - 14.70%.

In the specific conditions of the agritourism activity, besides the characteristic aspects of the dispersion in space of the tourist flows, it is frequently noticed also an unequal distribution in time of the demand for services that, in different areas of tourist interest, result in a pronounced concentration of tourist arrival in certain periods of a calendar year and, respectively, the decrease of tourist arrivals in the other periods. These seasonal variations have serious economic-organizational implications for tourism activity. [8,14]

Regarding tourists staying in the agritourism guesthouses from Transylvania, it can be observed (figure 7) a higher concentration of tourist arrivals between June and August, in the rest of the year the tourist activity being present, but at lower rates. This is due to the variety of relief forms and tourism resources existing at the county level, which make it possible to practice various forms of tourism.



**Figure 7. The tourists arrivals in agritourism guesthouses, by categories of tourists, by months, Transylvania, 2018**

The evolution of the number of nights is a fluctuating one, consisting in increases and decreases of the number of nights during the period analyzed. In 2018, the value of this indicator is 36.78 times higher than in 2000, in the area studied. In the case of Romanian tourists, overnight stays increased by 45.28 times, and in the case of foreign tourists by 4.23 times compared to 2010. [15]

The overnight stays of tourists in the agritourism guesthouses from the Transylvania region represent, at the level of 2018, 46.08% foreigners, from the total number of overnight stays registered this year. Overnight stays of Romanian tourists from Transylvanian pensions represent 43.54% and in the case of foreign tourists 86.38%. The high share of overnight stays of foreign tourists registered in Transylvania, out of total foreign overnight stays in the agritourism guesthouses, comes to support the idea that Transylvania is an international tourist destination, important for our country. [15]

The average length of stay is an important indicator in the analysis of tourism activity. In figure 8, this indicator is presented for the period 2010-2018, in the agritourism guesthouses of Transylvania.



**Figure 8. Average length of stay, in agritourism guesthouses, Transylvania**

The average length of stay in agritourism guesthouses from Transylvania, recorded during 2010-2018, a fluctuating trend marked by increases, decreases and increases of this indicator. For the entire agritourism activity, the average length of stay, in 2018, is 2.18 days/tourist, value higher than the average achieved in the case of Romanian tourists - 2.09 days/tourist, but lower than that registered for foreign tourists - 2, 84 days/tourist. [15,16]

## CONCLUSION

Due to the landscapes of unique scenery but also to the customs and traditions still preserved in this historical region, the agritourism knows a quite accentuated development in this area, especially in Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Sibiu and Alba counties.

With the development and modernization of the region's infrastructure and the surrounding areas, tourism will become one of the most important business opportunities from Transylvania. This statement is based on the existence in the area of the many tourist attraction points (nature reserves, nature monuments, tourist resorts, spa resorts, etc.), but also on customs, traditions, preserved with sanctity and at present, areas of remarkable scenery, in which rural tourism and agritourism and they can be arranged locations for winter sports.

We must specify that rural tourism and agritourism can be combined with the cultural one by including in the tourist circuits the multitude of cultural customs and events that take place in the life of the region, with mountain tourism, spa tourism and last but not least business tourism.

In order to further develop the agritourism activity in Transylvanian villages, together with the modernization, diversification and development of a competitive tourism offer at national and international level, some measures are needed to improve the marketing and promotion, Transylvania as a new tourist destination.

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