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Tourism value chains revisited and applied to rural well-being tourism

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ABSTRACT

The tourism value chain is a popular and informative topic both in research and in the practice of destination planning and management. This article delivers a critical review of the conceptualizations of value chains in tourism. Two different approaches are identified. First, destination logic addresses the consumption steps and processes of the tourists and comprises the various needs for products and services. Second, supply chain logic, which, from an enterprise perspective, takes into consideration the composition of products and services with supplies from across business sectors, thus recognizes wider contributions to the economics of tourism. With reference to rural well-being tourism, the study outlines strategic alleys within these two logics. In the context of rural well-being tourism, gains for destinations can be achieved from both logics, but local rural areas may increase advantages of tourism with a profounder embrace of supply chain logic.

Introduction

Value is crucial in tourism, and even if the founding philosophy of value may be extremely intricate, the destination side can be stated very simply: if no value is created for the tourists, no demand will emerge. And if no value is created for the providers, they will withdraw from the field and allocate their resources and initiative elsewhere. In this conceptual article the issue of value and value creation is addressed through a value chain approach. Value chains are frameworks well-known from economic and business studies, influentially conceptualized by Porter (1985). The analytical advantage emerges from the distinct process view where the provision of a service is made up of a system with subsystems, each with inputs, transformation processes and outputs. At each step in a process additional value of some sort and amount is supposed to be generated. The carrying out of value chain activities in mutual dependency determines how and where benefits will eventually materialize (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001).

Created by economists, the value chain is usually comprised of monetary benefits. The value for business enterprises and, indirectly, for societies is measured in terms of profit,
referring to the margin between turnover and costs. Although it raises some methodological challenges, the same reasoning can be applied for aspects of the inputs and outputs of resources understood as being of a more qualitative nature. Additional benefits and social values—whatever they might be: pleasure, comfort, knowledge, relationships, etc.—could be values inspected in the process (Cerin, 2006).

Since the 1980s, the value chain has been used on many scales: from its application to continents, nations, sectors and industries down to single organizations. Tourism and tourism destinations are objects of analyses in different ways, as shall be illuminated in greater detail below. The purpose here is to critically discuss the value chain model in a rural well-being tourism context and to determine its potential contributions to problem diagnosis and policy making.

This article is a “think piece”, where rural well-being tourism as a phenomenon and challenge is the specific ground of inquiry. In this article, rural well-being tourism is defined as follows: it is a form of tourism that takes place in rural settings and that interconnects actively with local nature and community resources. Based on the rural tangible and intangible, openly accessible and commercial ingredients, well-being tourism is a holistic mode of travel that integrates physical and mental wellness and health and contributes to wider positive social and individual life experiences. The choice of this object reflects the needs for particularly peripheral areas of Northern Europe to investigate locally and landscape-adapted niche tourism opportunities, such as in wellness, well-being, outdoor adventure, etc. Developing tourism in remotely located and sparsely populated areas where visitation is heavily influenced by seasonal variation is a supplementary challenge. Such circumstances necessitate unorthodox approaches to the economics of and value creation in tourism.

**Two approaches to value chains in tourism**

Over the recent decades tourism practitioners and researchers have embraced the value chain model. However, looking in detail at the practice and research, it appears that the application of the model takes place in two rather incompatible ways:

- **Destination logic.** In this logic, the destination is analyzed as a composition or sequence of services that the tourists can benefit from during their entire holiday. When examining the destination logic, the researcher “walks in the footsteps” of the tourists and assesses the impact. Destinations with a varied amount of products that are transparently and accessibly linked together and cover all needs, from decisions prior to travel to after-visit services, are considered more likely to create higher value for tourists than destinations with weaker product coherence. Moreover, tourism businesses will benefit to the extent that a value chain satisfies the totality of the needs of tourists and providers will be more profitable if tourists pay for the additional and comprehensive services.

- **Supply chain logic.** This logic relies more on Porter’s original production-oriented model. Any single tourism product consists of a chain of production steps, where material and immaterial resources are added subsequently. At each step, new value is added to the product. When examining this logic, the researcher follows not the tourist, but the service/product through the production process. The production may take place in a single organization from the very start to delivery, or it may be produced by a
number of actors in a supply chain. The focus in this logic is on business models and how value is generated across sectors by refining and developing products. The point of view the supply chain logic refers to business and production logic, and the value chain may be completely different from what the tourist will experience, and the supply chain may be “invisible” to the tourist as it transcends industries and geographies. Well-coordinated supply chains will enhance profits at each step in the chain and potentially also benefit tourists through lower prices.

The destination value chain logic seems to have received far more attention in the tourism context than the supply chain model. In the following, both models will be illustrated with examples from rural well-being tourism.

**The destination value chain**

The foundations of the tourism destination value chain seem to derive mainly from marketing discipline (Song, Liu, & Chen, 2013). When observing tourists’ behavior and perceptions, the destination as a service system in its comprehensiveness will, for the tourist, inevitably be the essential item of interest and purchase. Most often the tourists select the destination first and select specific hotels, particular restaurants, theme parks or any other single element as secondary choices (Dallert, Etterma, & Lindh, 1998). Tourists may visit Lapland in order to see the northern lights, pursue their interest in angling or enjoy trails for physical fitness purposes. They will need accommodation but an individual hotel will hardly be able to evoke an action of demand, no matter how comfortable or spectacular it might be.

The destination value chain (Figure 1) articulates that any tourist will need a range of different services during a holiday, for example travel services, transportation,

![The customer flow model of the value chain](image)

*Figure 1.* The customer flow destination model of the value chain (adapted from Weiermair, 2006).
accommodation, catering, experiences, shopping, etc. It also envisions that the consumption of these services takes place in some sort of logical order throughout the extended holiday. The figure shows a commonly seen mode of illustrating this sequence of service purchases (Weiermair, 2006). From this point of view, well-supplied destinations with a variety of providers will be able to generate better tourism with a higher value to tourists. Destinations with a variety of offers will also generate a higher turnover and economic value than destinations with fewer services to offer tourists. Tourists will benefit from the transparency of the components of the tourist product and, when closely coordinated, this will include the service concept, service process and service system.

Actors in charge of destination management, for example, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) or regional governmental agencies, are strategically occupied with the value chain model in three different ways:

- Product upgrading strategy
- Plentification strategy
- Horizontal coordination strategy

The product upgrading strategy may consist of adding quality to tourism products. Raising standards can consist of many different elements, depending on the character of the destination. Seaside destination actors can, for example, choose to enhance beach maintenance and cleaning, and destinations may also stimulate hotels to renovate and obtain higher levels of standards and certification. Additionally, upgrading can entail better accessibility, such as improved train or flight connections and enriched web-booking facilities. From this perspective of the value chain, upgrading should raise levels in ways so that no part of the value chain is significantly below level, assuming that tourists will expect somewhat uniform quality standards.

Plentification refers to closing gaps in the value chain. For example, in the case of a destination with good bicycle trails and rentals, and the strategy can be dedicated to stimulating entrepreneurs to establish relevant products and services (Mojić, 2012). Widening the capacity and the diversity of an accommodation can be part of an effort to address different target groups. Plentification can aim at prolonging the stay of customers, because there would be more to experience at the destination.

The horizontal coordination strategy deals with the efficient linking, including even genuine blueprinting, of the entire process. In such situations, tourists will experience an ease of access, such as the possibility to purchase a package consisting of travel, experience and accommodation elements. From the point of view of the providers, well-constructed packages or consumption sequences may increase sales and revenues, even if customers are offered price premiums or supplementary benefits. Resourceful creation of links also includes information and referrals that raise the likelihood of extra sales not only within a single enterprise, but also the destination as a whole. Horizontal coordination is embedded in the collaborative structures usually found in destinations. The destination chain bonds local resources for enhanced tourism value creation (Gibson, Lynch, & Morrison, 2005; Shtonova, 2011; Xu & Gursoy, 2015).

Analytically, the use of the destination chain strategy has been applied particularly intensively in third world development contexts (Cole & Morgan, 2010; Harrison, 2008;
Holden, Sonne, & Novelli, 2011). Pro-poor tourism initiatives aim at plentification as well as quality upgrading, and this process also aims to limit the influence and dependency of international tourism operators. Appropriate measures consist of stimulating local entrepreneurship, and ensuring solid and transparent governance systems. It is also profoundly about minimizing economic leakage and in this process creating tourism jobs for locals. The same logic is applicable in cases of tourism in peripheries and rural areas in the developed world (Bakucz, 2011).

This destination approach to the value chain model does have some benefits as a strategic framework for local action. It is easy to find support among actors for the logic that knitting the destination product closer together will elevate the coherence and quality of the product and ensure that products are adequately marketed. However, the model is insufficient if we want to comprehend production logic (Flagestad & Hope, 2001; Yilmaz & Bititci, 2006; Zhang, Song, & Huang, 2009). Accordingly, tourism researchers and practitioners have somewhat failed to make full use of the value chain model in Porter’s original sense, i.e. the business sense, and this dimension will be shown in the section below.

The supply value chain

The supply value chain distinguishes itself from the destination value chain in several ways. The supply value chain (Figure 2) is a description of the full range of activities required to bring a product or service through the different phases of production (including physical transformation and the inputs of various producers and services) in response to consumer demand. The chain may not be at all recognizable by the tourists and rightly should not be. The supply value chain envisages the full production of a product, not the consumption. A restaurant’s service to a guest is composed of many elements, including

![Figure 2. The supply value chain.](image-url)
food components at different stages of preparation and many other items, for example, the décor, the service sequences with the including narratives, and the entertainment. Value adding takes place at each single stage from the farmer to the guest. Principally, the more added value and the longer the service sequence the guest is willing to pay for, the better it is for the providing enterprise and the destination.

Any enterprise, including tourist enterprises, can choose to outsource elements in the production chain to suppliers and collaborative partners. On closer inspection most enterprises make constant choices between whether to make a product themselves or buy it from others (Espino-Rodríguez, Lai, & Baum, 2008). As shown in Figure 1, suppliers are seldom parts of the core tourism industry. Food and drinks are produced in specialized plants, and food and catering industries have specialized in the provision of pre-cooked items for tourism caterers (Hjalager, 1999; Sharma, Moon, & Strohbehn, 2014). The basic components of rides at amusement parks are manufactured in, for example, Italy and the USA and sold worldwide, only being modified on the surface for the local context (Milman, 2010). The information and communication technology sector delivers a large portfolio of products and services for hotels, museums and other attractions, and through these products tourism enterprises are capable of enhancing backstage productivity and front stage guest experiences and satisfaction (Berne, Garcia-Gonzalez, & Mugica, 2012).

Any type of tourism enterprise could be analyzed in this manner. In 1994, by analyzing the material composition of a hotel building and its services, Poon (1994) already demonstrated the massive globalization trend in tourism operations (Mitchell, Font, & Li, 2015). In tourism, as in other business sectors, some foreign materials are better or cheaper than local materials and are therefore imported. Much of the effort in pro-poor tourism, eco-tourism and the like has an emphasis on the shortening of backward supply chains in order to limit economic leakage (Meyer, 2007), and multinationals are particularly criticized for neglecting local welfare (Mitchell, Keane, & Coles, 2009). There are examples of efforts to create denser links between tourism dinosaurs and the local micro-scale supplying economy, and more tourism multinational corporations adapt this philosophy as part of their corporate social responsibility policy. The Swedish company, Skistar, is an example of a large and internationally operating company that has enhanced local networking and involvement (Nordin & Svensson, 2007).

Tourism enterprises may be in juxtaposition with forward value creation in a chain, as illustrated on the right side of diagram in Figure 2. In this case tourism enterprises are directly or indirectly (but not so transparently) suppliers to other value processes. Some tourism enterprises are proud of being incorporated in systematic trade training. For example, this is done traditionally in Swiss hotels and for them the training product is another value chain, beyond (although possibly intermingled with) the tourism service. There may be spin-offs of other kinds as well. Popular travel-related TV shows produce added value, for example, when enterprises or destinations deliver the scenery and symbolic images for traveling chefs. Destinations may see this as free and much appreciated marketing, but there is also a significant business element and value creation in its own respect when TV viewers are willing to pay for the services. In this situation, TV customers are not tourists to the destinations thus exposed in the media, even if they become so at a later stage (Hall & Mitchell, 2002).

Thus, in scope the supply chain bridges tourism supply, creating benefits across tourism elements and—most importantly here—across industry sectors.
The perspective of the supply value chain dramatically enhances the ideas of a tourism economy. It illustrates the dependency of tourism on other segments of the economy—for better or worse. In terms of innovation, tourism is found to be a low performer (Hjalager, 2002; Sundbo, Orfila-Sintes, & Sørensen, 2007) but in alliances with suppliers and other partners, innovative ability is widely expanded. For example, hotels can implement innovative energy systems but the technical revolutions are likely to be located with the supplier, not with the hotels. In this respect, the economic development of tourism will benefit from taking into account the value chain from the supply chain perspective rather than solely considering the destination value chain (Rønningen, 2010).

Value chains in a rural context

By definition, rural well-being tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in rural settings. It depends on, and interconnects with local nature and community resources. Well-being tourism is a holistic mode of travel that integrates physical and mental wellness and health and contributes to wider positive social and individual life experiences. Accordingly, rural well-being tourism is an amalgamation of tangible and intangible tourism services that hold strong and clear spatial attributes. The notion of the “rural” evokes images of landscapes and outdoor activities using natural resources and adapting to the challenges of climatic conditions. Products and services are closely bound to a location and the natural environment, and they cannot easily be moved around.

However, “rural” is not a uniform concept, as landscapes and climates differ. Hence, well-being attributes may vary according to spatial contexts. As noted by Erfurt-Cooper (2013), even otherwise quite standard spa facilities attempt to diversify by relating carefully to the local ambience. Figure 3 shows a continuum of rural settings of relevance.

Figure 3. The landscape continuum.
for well-being tourism purposes. The continuum ranges from remote, sparsely populated wilderness areas with difficult accessibility at the top of the figure to the areas where human interference is strong, for example, because of agriculture, at the bottom of the figure (Bell, Alves, de Oliveira, & Zuin, 2010). The composition of a value chain for rural tourism depends on the types of landscapes and configuration of rural life and activity.

In the following, the two different approaches to value chains will be addressed with special attention paid to landscape and rural feature issues and mosaics.

**Rural well-being tourism and the destination value chain logic**

The development challenges in rural areas and the need for action are widely described in the research literature (Shucksmith, 2010). Particularly in terms of tourism-related developments, the low density of tourism facilities and strong seasonality create gaps in the value chain as tourists experience it. Being a tourist in peripheries and in wildernesses areas may require that the tourists are resourceful and possess abilities to improvise and compensate, and tourism products are constructed to help the more incapable and less well-equipped tourists to overcome such challenges and thus generate consumer value. In a destination value chain perspective, rural well-being tourism potentially provide services for tourists in the following ways:

**Well-being destination value chains in wildernesses, remote and protected areas, and abandoned zones**

In the most sparsely populated areas, guided tours are prevalent in the composition of tourism value chains. Bertella (2011) and Saarinen (2013) make inquiries into the activities organized for trips in the Arctic. They identify entrepreneurial plentification endeavors to make the value chain more accessible to tourists less familiar with rural and peripheral attractions and qualities. Not surprisingly, transportation is a key binding factor, and transportation may consist of boat trip facilities, as in the case of whale watching, or dog sledge trips. Plentification is not only about ensuring the means of transportation but in particular, there is an intense communication and interpretative element. It is essential to explain and create narratives in order to make the tourist appreciate the benefits of tourism in the wilderness and very remote areas. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to compensate for the inconveniences and lack of smoothness in the consumption process through action and information. Thus, guiding services with quite rigidly packaged elements come up strongly as part of the plentification.

The well-being ingredient in adventure tourism may not be entirely obvious, as the trips are often strenuous and not obviously soothing for the mind or the body. However, satisfactory travel experiences in remote and not easily accessible rural areas may include well-being elements such as learning, reflection and self-efficacy. Little (2012) mentions that using the rural to discipline and exercise the body can also be a mental therapy.

Tourism in the wilderness might also be self-organized. In that case, facilities may consist of well-communicated trails, shelters and other accommodation facilities, adapted catering, etc. The value chain may be a composite package of services provided at the place of departure—for example, fishing or hunting licences, gear for sale or rental for the trip, extensive guidebooks, emergency backup services, etc. Mordue (2014)
describes the human–nature connectedness in angling tourism and finds that an overreliance on guiding may even be counteractive in terms of well-being. Putting together the ingredients of a self-service package may be in the hands of the tourist information offices, however, in the case of special interests, gear shops are keen on organizing the product in a wider respect, foreseeing that the creation of services for tourists may benefit tourism business on other levels of the value chain (Cater, 2013). Accordingly, the retail features are essential in the plentification and upgrading strategies in the self-provided outdoor tourism destination value chains.

When talking about placing well-being facilities geographically “in the middle of nowhere”, it is possible to refer to Iceland for good examples. Spas utilize natural resources but also ensure a sustainable use of the resources and the environment (Huijbens, 2011). In many countries hubs for more active outdoor well-being consist of lodges and camps, for example, accommodation dedicated to the needs of bird watching. Like in other resorts, corporations providing such facilities will be likely to control the value chain and capture a large amount of the consumption in the locality.

Well-being destination value chains in agricultural and forestry landscapes

When assessing the potentials of well-being in these landscapes it is important to envisage that competition for spatial resources may arise and, potentially, lead to a conflict of interests (Frisvoll, 2014). Tourism activities are not necessarily welcomed warmly in agricultural and forestry areas, particularly not if the production paradigm requires monocultured landscapes and the operation is undertaken by noisy and even polluting machinery. However, even in such zones niches might occur for well-being tourism, and there are examples of tourism services that align very well with the concepts of health and well-being.

For many decades farm tourism has flourished and is regarded by customers as the ultimate way to get into an authentic “nature” mode. The rural tourism offerings are many, for example, participation in farm work, food preparation and garden work. Farms may also be equipped for a range of sports and fitness activities or offer merely passive relaxation or spiritual possibilities (Sharpley & Jepson, 2011). Cawley and Gillmor (2008) analyze attempts in Ireland to establish networks among rural providers in strategically concise destination value chains. The effect is that tourists visiting rural areas can experience a broader variety of products in a more transparent market.

Rural areas represent spatial opportunities for touring, for example, horse riding, paddling, mountain biking, dog training, etc. Plentification and upgrading strategies may consist of creating and ensuring feasible trails and tracks and minimizing the risks of conflicts with agriculture and forestry. A range of possible services can be offered related to this. For example, in the case of equestrian tourism, services include the renting of horses, hay hotels, riding lessons, riding therapy, etc. (Ollenburg, 2005).

Spas and other well-being resorts can be located in or near agricultural areas, for example, in zones with some amenity values such as coastlines, forest views, lakes, etc. The outmigration of the population and economic activities from rural areas has resulted in the vacancy of numerous buildings, not only of agricultural buildings but also of social institutions, etc. Some of these rural “brownfields” have turned out to be suitable for remediation and reuse as well-being resorts (Palmer, Ibáñez, Gómez, & Mattei, 2004; Skála,
Cechmankova, Vacha, & Horvathova, 2013). Resorts may also exploit particular microclimates generated as a consequence of the landscape, for example, humid or dry climates, sunny or shady zones (Daugstad, 2008).

**Well-being destination value chains in idyllic landscapes**

Idyllic landscapes close to larger urban or touristic areas are characterized by more heterogeneous land use, smaller scales and shorter distances. Organic cultivation is more prevalent within intensively cultivated zones and thereby possibly contributes higher landscape values in aesthetic and health senses than traditional agricultural landscapes. Thereby, such rural zones have prospects to create day-based well-being facilities to supply the (urban) leisure and tourism influx. The peri-urban landscape contains types of tourism facilities that rely on natural scenic views or succeed due to access to artificial landscapes. Tourism providers in such amenities add value by supplying catering, accommodation and interpretative services. Manufactured well-being landscapes may consist of, for example, multisensory gardens (Rickly-Boyd, 2009).

Green and blue gym facilities are spreading to rural zones but particularly to areas in the vicinity of urban agglomerations, where tourists share facilities with the citizens (Curry, 2008). Given denser geographies, the gym services are linked to an accommodation service portfolio, where hotels guests may borrow, rent or purchase gear and acquire guided access. Marine environments are comprised of both natural phenomena (Wyles, Pahl, & Thompson, 2014) and man-made facilities. Therefore they represent potential for value chains that consist of harbors, saunas, swimming and diving facilities, and also catering services with distinct marine features. Coastal tourism destinations are well-known for including such offers, some of which can be claimed to support the well-being agenda.

**Rural well-being tourism in the supply value chain logic**

In this section the three principal spatial characteristics will be addressed from a supply value chain perspective. A supply chain interpretation focuses on the bridging of the resource provision across sectors. The principal focus is on the production of well-being services rather than consumption. The business operations features are in focus, while the composition of tourist demands is excluded in this logic.

**Well-being destination value chains in wildernesses, remote and protected areas and abandoned zones**

Economic activities in such areas consist of, for example, extractive functions such as forestry, mining, hunting, etc. Some tourism activities may be related to these. Hunting may not only be for business but also for leisure, and there are distinct product and service linkages. For example, leisure hunting may be integrated in comprehensive wildlife management and protection, and the management of hunting may be integrated in a commercial flow, where hunters are not allowed to take away their bag. In these cases, tourists have to relate more to a hunting industry system than to a tourist destination.
The well-being dimension is not the most obvious in the case of mining (Conlin & Jolliffe, 2010). However, mining tourism is very popular, although mainly for the heritage elements. The remains of mining industries can be transformed into resources for tourism, for example, quarry lakes, which can create new landscape qualities or be the location of outdoor and well-being facilities. Salt mines are reused as spas. Well-being tourism in functioning mining areas may be more questionable, but there are Italian examples of utilizing marble quarries for spectacular pools and these may also attract interest in other marble products of the area (Cominato, Bottino, & Gambirasi, 2012).

Forestry and animal husbandry (for example, keeping sheep) are prevalent in remote areas and tourism can be aligned with these production functions. For example, in Denmark, in the spring tourists are invited to participate in bringing sheep to grassing fields on remote, tiny islands and to rope in the sheep again at the end of the grassing season. Tourists get an experience, but they also become part of the value chain for sheep farming.

Citizen science and tourism are becoming more interrelated. For example, diving tourists contribute to the whale shark research project ECOCEAN by taking pictures and sharing these on a joint website serving both tourism and research. In the northern peripheries the same concepts are implemented in connection with whale watching and bird watching (Hoarau & Kline, 2014). In terms of the environmental monitoring of vulnerable nature areas, environmentally dedicated tourists undertake reporting of questionable and hazardous incidences. Voluntary participation in conservation activities and local community work is a form of tourism activity blending with well-being, and new forms are emerging. Nature conservation projects attract volunteers, and the motivations for participating transcend individual needs and include the needs of others (Hjalager et al., 2011).

Spectacular landscapes and the activities in those landscapes attract media attention. Types of media include TV and newspaper launches, books, movies, dedicated websites, apps, etc. Good tourism holds the potential to transmute into excellent media products for a far larger audience, although this may affect local economies by an increase in tourism in specific places as a result of media attention. Thus, the media represent an extended value chain. Examples include meditation or angling DVDs that are embedded in and refer to specific locations and landscapes. Tourism research tends to have an emphasis on film-induced effects on local economics, but there is limited focus on the full value chain and the economics of the media industry.

**Well-being supply value chains in agricultural and forestry landscapes**

Food is the principal item that efficiently bridges the value chain gaps between agricultural and forestry landscapes on the one hand and tourism on the other. Food is not only a mere necessity, the health industry and massive media attention on uncovering foodies’ holiday lifestyles, raise the attention given to particular food items and food habits as key matters for human well-being. Food is an agent of well-being and thereby value-creating links to agricultural areas are shaped. Looking at the food and health issue in detail, it can be implemented in well-being tourism in a great number of ways, most simply as healthy and local food in spas, hotels and restaurants (Green & Dougherty, 2008). However, the integration of food and tourism has many supplementary elements, such as the establishment of health food events, learning activities and participation in the
production activities (Yoo, Lee, & Lee, 2015). Creating direct and personal relationships between tourists and food producers may enhance the marketing value of the food sector, increase the exposure of the product in urban areas, and eventually lead to changes in food delivery systems (Kline, Knollenberg, & Deale, 2014).

Agriculture, forestry and the traditional and new bioenergy and renewable energy exploitation may co-exist and co-develop creatively with well-being tourism products. Firewood from forests can, for example, contribute to the heating of spas, and sun and wind add more sustainable categories (Nawrocka, 2013). Many components of spas have their origins in bioresources, developed and used for medical and cosmetic treatments, and as remedies in relaxation. The cosmeceutical industry is emerging and the links to tourism seem to not yet be fully exploited (Hjalager & Konu, 2011; Sarmidi & El Enshasy, 2012).

**Well-being supply value chains in the idyllic landscape**

Basically, the idyllic landscape will be more supportive to the ideas of well-being than traditionally and extensively cultivated agricultural areas. The idyllic landscape offers a variation in flora and fauna, and the aesthetic dimensions contribute to a healthy feel-good factor (Smith & Reisinger, 2013). However, in a supply value chain visual impressions are not enough. Sensory benefits—feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting—are supplemented by enhancing interpretative services, such as therapeutic offers, healing and curing. The medical aspects of the idyllic landscapes are many faceted but not integrated into value chains until supplemented with human services and auxiliary products. The innovative creativity is emerging, as demonstrated by Stigsdotter et al. (2011).

Sometimes tourists not only enjoy landscapes, but also accept participating in the creation and development of landscape resources. Well-being emerges from taking part in the community and “giving back” (Hjalager et al., 2011). Such “transcendence” activities consist of making it possible for tourists to lend a hand in gardening and landscape maintenance. Along the same lines, Smith and Puczkó (2014) identify “charity landscapes” that allow tourists to contribute to a good human or environmental purpose. Organized leisure husbandry can also be integrated in well-being services, for example, including looking after chickens, bees, etc., in the totality of a rural well-being tourism product. The product from the participation may be items for purchase and not necessary at a lower price to compensate for the manpower put into the production.

Increasingly, traditional spa facilities are objects of keen design efforts so as to create distinctive images and marketing values. Spas can be set in idyllic landscapes—such as vineyards, orchards, rural fishing quays, manor houses, greenhouses, etc.—exploiting the extra value of the surroundings.

The two previous sections elaborate on the connections between landscapes and the value chain. Table 1 summarizes the logic and the examples, and illustrates the importance of connecting ideas about value creation in rural well-being tourism with the spatial characteristics.

**Using value chain logic for rural well-being tourism policies—a discussion**

As illustrated above, the value chain can be helpful for a more inclusive analysis of rural well-being tourism. In the case of the destination value chain, the logic helps to see the
provision of well-being services mainly from the customer points of view and challenges issues about product quantity, variation and quality. In the case of the supply value chain, the focus is on the sector-overarching production system that includes suppliers and other collaborating actors in a systemic tourism context (Rønningen & Lien, 2014).

The value chain can open the analytic mind, but more operatively and practically, it can be seen as a diagnostic tool accounting for both the destination logic and the supply chain logic, but in different and supplementary ways. Hence, the chain model can assist in identifying:

- The dynamic linkages between productive activities. How are different links in a chain held together; what is the “glue”? What is the geographical distribution of the different links in the chain? When one link in a chain changes, what happens to the prior and subsequent links? Will new value windows for profit arise, or will the opportunities be closed in the case of change?
- Constraints and levels of inefficiencies that prevent the further addition of net value, innovation and competitiveness. What missing links prevent the emergence of an

### Table 1. A summary of actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination value chain Bonding resources, plentification and unification of the product image</th>
<th>Supply value chain Bridging resources, creating value and innovations in tourism and other sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Wildennesses, remote and protected areas, low population density rural zones, and abandonment zones | • Guiding services that link sights, services and experiences into flows and packages  
• Self-service provision, retail, renting, angling permits, trails and related (paid) services  
• Theme-based wilderness all-inclusive hubs, for example, hunting, health, and spa | • Embedding tourism in extraction functions quarries, forestry, and hunting  
• Citizens/tourists science, investigative tourism, participation in well-being research projects  
• Media productions in connection with tours, for example, expedition bulletins  
• Conservation holidays co-creating healthier landscapes or environmentally safe tourism facilities |
| Agricultural and forestry landscapes and competition for resources | • Farm relaxation and participation in farm life activities, for example, growing/gathering/preparing food, etc.  
• Touring, animal-related well-being services (for example, horse riding and dog training)  
• Forestry spas and resorts that exploit microclimatic conditions in a composite product | • Healthy food development and subsequent new delivery systems that include tourism  
• Bioenergy exploitation for well-being tourism products, for example, when bioenergy is used for the heating of spas and in spa products and ingredients |
| Idyllic rural landscapes, closer to urban areas | • Artificial landscaping and the provision of catering, accommodation and other services in connection with sceneries  
• Sensory garden services, barefoot gardens, silent landscapes, etc.  
• Green and blue fitness areas and related services | • Participative landscape arts and landscaping, creating and amending the landscapes for well-being  
• Urban or close-to-urban leisure husbandry—chicken, bees, etc.  
• Traditional spas in untraditional settings |
efficient and attractive rural well-being cluster? What elements are underperforming? What additional links could be of importance for a changed product profile? What landscape-related resources are inactive in the tourism value chain, and could they be activated?

- Recognition of value created in and beyond tourism. What are intrinsic interdependencies and flows created in the supplier’s part of the value chain? From a rural development perspective, is the economic turnover larger among suppliers than in core tourism actors? Are jobs in the supply sector more favorable in terms of payment, competence requirements and seasonal issues? Can outsourcing or insourcing benefit the local tourism labor market?

From a wider perspective, value chain analysis can inform policymakers at local and national levels. For example, both the destination value logic and the supply value chain can assist in the correct identification of points of entry for policy, but in different ways. Behind the scenes the logic can map incentives to collaborate and exploit values lacking at any specific points in the value chain. The policy bodies that are in charge of the specific points of entry can be framed in the chain perspective. Particularly supply chain logic has raised awareness of whether it is necessary to activate policy bodies beyond the traditional tourism policy organizations and DMOs: in the case of rural well-being tourism, for example, policy makers in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, landscape and planning, extractive sectors, etc.

The value chain perspective may lead to re-assessments of the economic power of target beneficiaries and the “rules of the game” in the value chain. In this respect, it is of interest to know, how, when and why actors are likely to react to policy incentives. Further, the chain perspectives can be of importance for the identification, selection and commitment of the right enablers, i.e. those who can promote and enhance processes.

Both value chain logics can enhance the focus on structural impacts, meaning how policies will impact/affect broader social and economic processes in local areas, including the leakage into and out of the local areas. Potentially this can result in the development of policies that contribute to the building of persistent and beneficial relationships between rural and urban areas.

Eventually, the scrutinizing of value chains can lead to a better understanding of chain stewardship, including how a continuous value chain stewardship is installed, and who takes responsibility for this in local areas (Cerin, 2006). Generally, there is a need for a better insight into what constitutes tools in value chain stewardship in a rural well-being tourism setting.

This article illustrated the potential of two categories of value chain analysis for examining the phenomenon. It raises the level of attention paid to the analytical power in the supply value chain approach, which is still somewhat underutilized in tourism studies. The two chain perspectives have different analytical advantages. In practice, individual destinations may want to use one at a time, or a creative mixture.

The article also took into account the different types of landscapes that decisively affect the composition of the value chains and the logic of their development. In tourism literature, the landscape and spatial aspects still lack more significant integration into the specific examinations. In future empirical studies there will be a need validate and to
enrich the concepts with more concise empirical studies and to test the diagnostic as well as the policy prospects.

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**References**


