Events across ASEAN: Product-oriented regeneration and value-added image promotion

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Abstract
This chapter offers a conceptual discussion of place event marketing by discussing product-oriented regeneration and value-added promotion, and complements this with insight and examples of events across the ASEAN region. ASEAN is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, comprised of ten member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) committed to 'one vision, one identity, one community'. However, looking at the development and promotion of events, there are a certain cities that stand out (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Bangkok and Manilla). As ASEAN looks to define its future, hosting large-scale events is an attempt to build international influence, promote cultural values and encourage business development. But as this chapter argues, there is a need for a strategy to equally promotes each nation so to spread the influence of events. A number of examples will be highlighted in the following sections to relate the development of events in ASEAN alongside conceptual discussions of regeneration, place image and competitiveness to address product-oriented and value-added) perspectives of destination marketing and branding in Asia. Examples from across the ASEAN region support and offer some practical insight to complement the conceptual discussions.

Keywords:
Event Impacts, ASEAN, Regeneration, Place Image, Competitiveness

Introduction

Events help places attract attention and media publicity, giving destinations a chance to display product and service offerings to international audiences (Stevenson 2013; Wise and Harris 2019). In this regard, events are increasingly playing a central role when it comes to place marketing and promotion (Cudny 2020). According to Cudny (2020), place event marketing is a strategic approach to diversifying event portfolios, planning future events, and communicating opportunities to wider audiences so that the events industry grows and is sustained over the long-term. In relation to this chapter, place event marketing is about place development and destination image, with a regional consideration of product-oriented regeneration that is turn helps us understand value-added image promotion. Building on this focus is the need to also consider alongside place marketing is how events also spark geopolitical debates, surrounding power relations, ideas of inclusion and exclusion, scalar relations and the role of everyday interactions in reproducing social, political and economic processes (Waitt and Gibson 2009; Wise 2017). From another perspective, spatial land-use planning for new stadium venues also impacts local populations, through both positive and negative development efforts (Wise and Harris 2017), as

well as selecting who will host an event (Wright 2018) each aid additional insight into place marketing and event promotion.

Traditionally many countries would identify the largest or capitol city based on influence, infrastructure and ease of transport connections, but there is an increasing trend to host events in lesser-known city's or region's as a way of using events to brand a destination and/or regenerate place images (see Lee 2017; Lee 2019; Wise and Harris 2019). While mega- and large-scale sporting events are becoming increasingly popular, they are considered as drivers of development and/or redevelopment planning and city branding strategies (Knott et al. 2015; Koch 2013; Wise 2020), they have been controversial recently in terms of amount of spend and criticized because public monies could be directed elsewhere (Lauermann 2019; Wise and Whittam 2015). Other scholars argue that there is also a need to focus on the role of events across wider geographical regions—including a range of different types of events and new infrastructures, spaces and places that enhance the capacity to host events, as evident in a recent collection by Wise and Harris (2019). While bidding, planning and delivering most one-off multi-sporting events is a venture of one host-city there are new attempts to extend the impact of large-scale events to include multiple hosts so that several cities can benefit and a regional brand can emerge with an enhanced service offering that is moving towards a collective and sustained agenda.

Large-scale events are mass gatherings attracting a significant international audience (Wise and Harris 2017), whereas smaller-scale events seek to engage communities and promote a new sense of community (Zhao and Wise 2019). Given the regular occurrence of events, Jackson (2013, p. 847) noted: "the expanding annual calendar of sport mega-events, both in terms of the bidding process and the actual hosting of the event, means there is rarely time for considered reflection". Mega- and major-events are described as large-scale mass cultural gatherings attracting a significant international audience (Horne and Manzenreiter 2006; Roche 2000; Rojek 2013; Wise 2017). While sporting mega-events such as the Summer Olympic Games and the Men's Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup attract much attention, other large-scale or hallmark events also require further consideration as these also play a significant role in international expansion and place development. It is such events used by destinations and places to create new opportunities to develop a destination, before, during and after a large-scale or hallmark event. Moreover, there is a particular focus on sporting mega-events when looking at wider impacts on cities and regions, and while this paper will bring in examples of major sporting events, it mainly aims to consider the wider role of events and how they impact destination marketing and branding from both regeneration (product-oriented) and place image promotion (value-added) perspectives.

This chapter will lead with conceptual perspectives and understandings guided by the literature on regeneration, (place) development, place image and destination branding before addressing considerations of competitiveness to frame these different but overlapping conceptual components of product-oriented and value-added development. This chapter will frame these conceptual directions and contexts by looking at the role and influence of hosting events in the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Region. While it is not possible to cover all recent events and developments in this region, examples within each conceptual area will highlight important issues and considerations. Considering the links across theory and practice is useful for event managers and urban/regional policy makers to consider as they continually use events to brand

destinations or enhance place images as well as achieve regeneration agendas (especially in the larger urban centers across the region). One of the major factors here is regional competitiveness, and the need to promote a regional vision for events so that the region can collectively gain from the influence of events and the bourgeoning service economies that they create. However, if the market is over-saturated, this can in turn damage these eventful images and reputations because it in turn means that destinations may undersell themselves amid increased regional competition.

ASEAN Region

ASEAN is an "intergovernmental organisation aimed primarily at promoting economic growth and regional stability among its members" (World Economic Forum 2020, online) comprised of ten member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. In 2017, ASEAN celebrated 50 years of regional commitment, with a mission of 'one vision, one identity, one community' (Wood 2017). In 2015, the region looked to define their future vision and the role of hosting large-scale events continues to be a focus as the region looks to build its international influence outside the region to promote cultural values and encourage business development (ASEAN 2015).

Economically and politically, the ASEAN region has established and negotiated free trade agreements among the 10 countries, have eased travel and mobility for citizens of these countries and have built connections with China given their proximity to the world's fastest growing economy. According to the World Economy Forum (2020, online), "if ASEAN were a country, it would be the seventh-largest economy in the world, with a combined GDP of $2.6 trillion in 2014. By 2050 it's projected to rank as the fourth-largest economy". The same source adds: "The ASEAN region is "home to more than 622 million people, the region has a larger population than the European Union or North America. It also has the third-largest labour force in the world, behind China and India". Another focus and purpose of ASEAN is to promote regional peace and stability. There is also a collective effort to promote research cooperation and technological development to preserve the environment so that conservation efforts will lead to sustainable futures (ASEAN Heritage Parks is a joint effort looking after 37 protected sites/areas). In terms of socially dedicated efforts, there is a focus on education (through the ASEAN University Network founded in 1995) to promote cooperation and scholarship among youth, part of this was the University Games, a bi-annual event that commenced in 1981.

Given this regional growth and vision to define their place globally, cities across the region are investing in venues and facilities to attract people to the region using events as a driver to brand and re-brand destinations, enhance place images and build local, regional and national tourism economies, capacities and competencies. While a number of cities have hosted sporting events that have promoted inter- and wider-regional travel in Asia (e.g. the Asian Games held in Jakarta and Palembang in 2018), one of the key areas that ASEAN cities are investing in are conferencing and exhibition spaces to build a large-scale business or Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) events industry. This is widely regarded as largest and most sustainable form of events to invest in because they regularly held, opposed to most large-scale sporting events that are often times one-off events. If each country and region across ASEAN develop a regionally focused event that celebrates local culture, and brand that as a yearly hallmark event, this is a

chance to highlight the diversity of the wider region and see a regular flow of participants. This is also more cost effective as annual events can build on past successes and expand accordingly, larger-scale events that happen once require a lot of upfront initial investment and can result in over-supply, and can be an issue if the demand cannot be maintained later. For instance, events such as Brunei Gastronomy Week, Water and Moon Festival and Boat Racing in Cambodia or the Harvest Festival in Myanmar put these countries in a position to use events as a celebration that embraced opportunities and aligns with local and regional traditions that can also be enjoyed by new attendees and can help build a new tourism economy, thus expanding regularly held local events.

The larger cities, and arguably the most influential in ASEAN, are in competition with each other to attract larger business and MICE events. Cities that stand out in the region, investing heavily in venues and complexes include Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Bangkok and Manilla. This is not the first level of competition that these cities face, they are also the base for a number of global airlines, and these cities also compete for air traffic passengers travelling globally, so investments in modern airports with a wide range of transit amenities put these cities in direct completion. Singapore (Singapore Airlines), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysian Airlines), Jakarta (Garuda Indonesia), Bangkok (Thai Airways) and Manilla (Philippine Airlines) are in direct competition for passenger traffic, and other national carriers including Vietnam Airlines and Royal Brunei Airlines are gaining market presence, with Vietnam Airlines expanding rapidly in international markets. Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia are arguably more peripheral in such considerations of development in event venues and large national airline carriers, but cities in these countries are well connected to hubs in fellow ASEAN countries. Despite the heightened competition among ASEAN countries to attract events and air passengers, these cities and national air carriers also need to compete with major cities in China (such as Guangzhou, hub of China Southern Airlines), as well as Hong Kong (hub of Cathay Pacific and Cathay Dragon) and Macau (a major entertainment center). While this chapter suggest that a region-wide strategy is necessary to develop events for the purpose of holistically marketing more remote regions and smaller cities, the current COVID-19 pandemic will disrupt these plans and recommendations (at least in the short-term). In the immediate future, the larger cities with air transit hubs and large event venues are strategic for restating an event-oriented economy.

A number of examples will be highlighted in the following sections to relate the development of events in ASEAN alongside conceptual discussions of regeneration, place image and competitiveness to address product-oriented and value-added) perspectives of destination marketing and branding in Asia. Examples from across the ASEAN region support and offer some practical insight to complement the conceptual discussions.

The Product-Oriented Focus: Events, Regeneration and (Place) Development

Regeneration and place development is a widely debated holistic concept among social science, development and management scholars (e.g. Spirou 2011; Smith 2016). The topic has been the focus of research across a range of disciplines. Some studies looked at peoples' outlooks, attitudes, impact and support, whilst other works focus more on economic conditions and encouraging cohesive involvement in communities. The development literature is concerned with spatial

planning and transformations (e.g. Jones 2002; Thornley 2002), whereas entrepreneurial and management perspectives focus on encouraging people to create new enterprises (Hall 2006; Richards et al. 2013). A clearer focus that looks at the role of development in internationalising destinations, and framing this alongside national endeavors and sporting geopolitics that enable a place to host an event, is an attempt to develop events in a city and region is what is needed from a policy standpoint. Given the global endeavors to host sporting-events there is a need to focus on change and the pressure on places to keep up with the shifts in demand in the global economy so to maintain a competitive advantage. A point that is still accurate today is Richards and Palmer's (2010) argument that places need to keep up with the pace of global change or they risk stagnation and decline as increased competition is resulting in new products and more opportunities and choice for consumers.

Development is the process of change (also referred to as regeneration, renewal, or revitalisation among scholars in different countries). One of the main motivations of regeneration is to create new opportunities in destinations for investors, stakeholders and local communities. Around the world, hosting sporting events is driving development in cities and regions. Investments in sport, events and subsequent tourism opportunities play a role in image transition and transitioning economic bases (Richards and Palmer 2010; Cowan 2016). Planning events are a part of wider urban, regional and national development strategies is a way of defining a place and its strategic importance (see Poynter et al. 2016; Tallon 2013; Wise 2016). Place development has become an important and contested concept because spatial transitions can have impact on the local population as well as external perceptions (Spirou 2011; Wise and Whittam 2015). These external pressures can refer to marketing dilemmas, as places seek to promote a destination or a new sports product in a highly saturated and competitive market. While the focus on sport involves global competition, across Asia we are seeing different regions also compete to host large-scale events or build large conferencing venues to help publicise destinations (see Lee 2017; Buathong and Lai 2017). Thus, places undergo extensive physical regeneration projects as a way of keeping up with the status quo, as city/regional planners, private investors and practitioners deem them necessary to support economic development, competitiveness and the chance to host future events and increase tourism (Wise 2019). But regional competitiveness is a major factor today, and there can be for instance underlying tensions and/or geopolitical pressures behind hosting and promoting international events so that one destination can maintain a competitive advantage.

New stadia, arenas or conferencing venues not only represent (physical) infrastructural change but they contribute to new city images (Smith 2005; Vanolo 2015). Much work has addressed how image contributes to new city brands or new ways of welcoming tourists. A point relevant to Indonesia (and cities across Asia hosting large-scale events) is Gover's (2011, p. 227) argument that destination branding "should be about creating an overarching brand strategy or competitive identity that reflects a particular nation's, city's or region's history". Over the past 20 years, cities have transformed their urban images, thought or as a way to overcome any past negative images or associations linked to economic decline, deindustrialisation and/or regional restructuring (Wise and Harris 2017). Countries across the ASEAN region of Asia greatly vary in terms of geography, population, and economic influence. Despite these noted geographical differences and factors, each country is attempting to transform cities by investing in events (at all scales and types, including sport and major exhibitions) to lever future benefits that will enhance the image of destinations, play a key role in modernisation and grow the service/tourism economy—and thus

enhance marketing and branding strategies going forward. The challenge here is opposed to having one place that highlights sport and events, there is increasing competition among regions as many cities are adopting similar strategies. An over-saturation here, and a nation-wide shift towards sport and event service based economies, is resulting in what some might argue over-festivalisation, and urban development that can threaten future growth in cities across the ASEAN region as they are continually competing to attract tourists and event-goers.

The focus of urban development and destination branding is often on income generation and reviving or father sustaining the local and urban economy (Spirou 2011). Economic indicators drive change and development, and increasingly today events are one of these indicators that can help to publicise places. Economic development in its broadest sense not only considers urban income generation, but also how such developments create new cultural, social and employment opportunities for residents (Soh and Yuen 2011). Both public and private sector developments are done on the basis or long-term goals, sustainable planning and gaining returns on stakeholder investments. However, outcomes assessed and future consequences are dependent on present-day decisions—therefore changing trends are often based on speculation. Going back to the focus on sporting events and development, we are seeing a shift to the East and South as cities in North and West are not seeing the long-term benefits of one-off sporting events (Maharaj 2015; Wise and Hall 2017). Thus, relationships between sporting mega-events, host cities and associated development strategies has developed a burgeoning cross-disciplinary literature with discussions are almost entirely shaped by potential legacies of mega-events, including increased sports participation, social benefits though transformation, and (possible) economic returns on investments by host nations and cities (Wise and Hall 2017; Wise 2019).

Much work has looked primarily at Western developed nations but a shift in hosting mega-events is turning attention to developing emerging economy countries (see Hall and Wise, 2019). While Western developed countries may no longer see the sustained benefits, sporting-events are seen as legitimate strategies and catalysts for social and economic development in emerging economies such as India, China, South Africa and Brazil (Darnell 2012; Wise 2020). But when the focus shifts to social development which is widely criticized (Coakley and Souza 2013; Hall and Wise 2019), this is something that urban and regional policy makers across the ASEAN region need to consider if they are to promote socially sustainable futures alongside larger-scale events. Moreover, such events serve to enhance these nation's power, economic competitiveness, and prestige in global relations (Maharaj 2015) with the presumed outcome of attracting international investment, positive media and increased tourism (Curi et al. 2011). Broadly, however, there are still no satisfactory conclusions for clear positive development and legacies that occur for nations or cities hosting sporting mega-events (Coakley and Souza 2013), despite considerations that need addressed in Asia being highlight over a decade ago (see Close et al. 2007; Dolles and Söderman 2008). Given the strong desire for cities across the ASEAN region to construct venues and host events (Henderson 2015), it is important that planners and those who market cities compare their situation and potential to sustain with that of other cities who have also (recently) hosted events.

There is a growing focus on case in different emerging economy countries; for instance, Wise and Hall (2017) focus on Brazil's attempt to develop their international events profile. In this case, until 2007, Brazil had not hosted any mega or major international sporting events since the 1950 FIFA World Cup and the 1963 Pan American Games. The 44-year hiatus ended following a series

of successful bids to host the 2007 Pan American Games and the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro closed out Brazil's sporting decade (see Gaffney 2010; Reis et al. 2013). Event-led and still on-going development initiatives in Brazil focuses on developing cities and regions away from the coast as part of the country's attempt to modernising peripheral cities and regions (see Gaffney 2008; Wise 2019). To reiterate the point made about economic and social development, Brazil has been nominated host cities in more peripheral regions. It can be a challenge to host larger-scale events in peripheral regions due to transportation and supplementary services that are necessary and a consideration that needs addressed is places may suffer later if the short-term demand has no long-term impact. Across the ASEAN region, while many second-tier and even smaller cities are looking to host larger events (e.g. Palembang as co-host of the 2018 Asian Games; Chonburi, Thailand will host the 2025 Southeast Asian Games). But smaller (or lesser-known internationally) cities do not always benefit from continual hosting, and this presents an issue because the larger (capital) cities in these countries (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Manilla, Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh City) have a strategic advantage being major global airline hubs with well-developed (often much better developed) inter-urban and immediate regional transportation networks. There remains a concern around widespread event developments in smaller markets as this can result in a challenge for cities, and can over-saturate market demand for events. This in turn can threaten the growth and sustainability of the events economy in the longer term, as more venues means more choice and more competition to bid or attract events and this can mean that they need to undersell themselves. Major urban centers do not need to worry as much because they have economic (and political) influence as well as larger (and oftentimes much more modern) facilities.

The Value-Added Focus: Events, Place Image and Destination Branding

Research on place and destination branding is well-established in the tourism marketing (e.g. Baker 2012; Kladou et al. 2016) and destination development literature (e.g. Dinnie 2015; Zenker and Jacobsen 2015). Such work is also seeing an increased focus in the urban and regional studies literature (see Cudny 2019; Hultman et al. 2016), especially because places seek to have a lasting impact on public perception (Salman 2008). This chapter is concerned with bringing these approaches together because branding a destination contributes to place marketing and promotion as a form of value-added for a place (Kozak and Baloglu 2011), and builds on the product-oriented considerations of place marketing and development addressed in the previous section of this chapter. Destination branding and destination image are two conceptually different areas of research, despite there being some clear links and associations (see Qu et al. 2011). The notion of branding differs from image, because image is a situational condition that is important to assess when considering how a destination is perceived – and is important when considering communication, consumer demand and ability to attract visitors. From a psychology standpoint, brands and images are associations, framing associations with places, particular events or points in history (Bassols 2016; Wise and Mulec 2015).

Place branding is important to consider because it highlights a particular awareness aligned with a particular vision of a geographical areas (see Tiwari and Bose 2013). Aligned with the above discussion on regeneration, Cudny (2020, p. 1) argues: "branding in the case of cities is most often understood as a multidimensional urban development strategy" and further adds "the development

of a city brand should lead to the creation of an attractive offer, which is often called a city product."
Events regeneration has been referred to as events-led, events-themed or events-focused, but given the increasing importance of events for cities to attract consumers, cities are seeking to brand destinations around events, which in turn can also enhance place image (Smith and Fox 2007). Arguably this is much more straightforward when we consider a larger scale event such as the Asian Games. Jakarta and Palembang as hosts of the 2018 Asian Games benefitted from the exposure, including in some of Asia's larger travel markets such as China, Japan and Korea. Not only do larger-scale events benefit from media broadcasts, they gain from the spectacle created and the lasting effects of the event as a brand image. Nevertheless, beyond larger scale events, smaller or even annual hallmark events are also gaining presence as places are branding more traditional events in a manner that increases their visibility regionally (or internationally). Some examples of such events from ASEAN include the Elephant Festival in the Sayaboury Province of Laos each February, Deepavali celebrations among Hindu and Indian communities across Malaysia and Singapore, Brunei's Gastronomy Week, or Thailand's VERY Festival that gains the likes of sponsors such as Singha Corporation.

Destination branding aligns with destination marketing and promotion, to inform the place/destination offer (Kozak and Baloglu 2011). Similarly, corporations use branding to attract customers using recognizable logos, as we see with Singha and the VERY Festival in Thailand. Destination branding therefore, according to Kladou et al. (2016), refers to naming or developing recognizable logos or taglines to identify a destination, which can play a role in image regeneration. Likewise, Hanoi Pride which saw its first parade in 2012 is Vietnam's first pride event and an opportunity for the LJBT community in Vietnam is using the event as a way to change social attitudes and policies nationally and regionally (see Oosterhoff et al. 2014). Hanoi Pride resembles similar events to help give the event more publicity to promote the event and the awareness it intends to create. The Legacy Festival in Singapore's Sentosa Island blends event, place and destination branding. The slogan 'A New Dawn' positions the nighttime experience of the event, it works as place promotion for Sentosa Island, and promotes Singapore's destination/city brand as the 'Lion City' all as part of the marketing package on websites and social media advertisements.

Destination images, alternatively, comprise of numerous components, including popular attractions, accessibility, facilities and infrastructures. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) note that place and destination images involve personal factors (values, age, particular motivations/interests) and stimulus factors (information sources, previous experiences), whereas branding is promoting 'consumption' factors (product, appeal, marketing). There is a clear difference here in the types of events promoted. For example, sporting events seem to focus more on youth and experience (in the case of Jakarta and Palembang using cartoon images to appeal to and inspire younger attendees), whereas business events are strictly and professional (in the case of the Philippine International Convention Center which promotes a more formal atmosphere or events and galas on its website). Factors offer working knowledge of who travels to particular destinations, and disseminated experiences encourage people to go out and create their own experiences (Camprubí et al. 2013), and part of the appeal is promoted through branding. Deepavali in Malaysia and Singapore received much attention with communities linked to the Indian diaspora, and this has likewise emerged into significant local celebrations in both countries.

Competitiveness: Over Competition or a Regional Vision?

Wise and Armenski (2020, p. 1) argue that "the contribution of events to destination revitalisation and competitiveness is an area of research that needs more attention, especially as events can have either lasting or contesting legacies". Wise and Harris (2017, 2019) add place image and destination branding have been issues of increasing international importance for decades now, and this continued focus here now on competitiveness frames the importance of driving new visitor economies using events against back-drops of economic uncertainty, demographic change and technological innovation (see also, Smith 2016). In the 1990s, the Asian Tiger economies came to an abrupt halt with the 1997 Asian financial crisis that started in Thailand with the collapse of the Thai Baht currency, this caused a shockwave in the region and countries in ASEAN were significantly impacted very negatively by the sudden economic recession (Kaufman et al. 1999). In terms of competitiveness, Singapore has an advantage. The small city-state has a high quality of life and a high-income economy. Singapore stands out from the perspective of investing in events space. The city planned and built the south of the Marina Bay area for events, completed in 2010. By building and branding a 'new' downtown area for hosting events, this gave Singapore a unique and strategic advantage to show their presence as an international host (Gwee 2013). While Singapore designated a particular space for event, Indonesia, which sits in the shadow as a major-events host, used the Asian Games co-hosted by Jakarta and Palembang, seen as a chance for Indonesia to promote the growth and increasing significance of the country in ASEAN and Asia (Davies 2014).

Destination competitiveness is a well-researched area, especially in tourism (e.g. Crouch 2011; Crouch and Ritchie 1999; Dwyer and Kim 2003), with more work recently looking at the impact of events (see Aquilino et al. 2019; Wise 2020). Linked to the context of this chapter, there needs to be not only a place-focused consideration to destination competitiveness but also a regional focus because no research has consider the development of a regional events portfolio because destinations are continually competing with each other opposed to having a regional vision or strategy. ASEAN is a regional brand that connects members through this shared identity, but each city and the examples discussed here are operating independently to attract major events and conferences. Considering the examples of different events across ASEAN, each destination provides a wide-product offering, but there is a need for each country to perhaps focus on a key hallmark event that stands out across the region and internationally. Myanmar, for instance, does not host many events that promote an international audience, but one approach is to embrace the local approach to event planning. Leveraging local culture and promoting local authentic experiences is a competitive advantage. The Golden Hilltop Festival for instance has a long tradition of connecting locals from surrounding villages who converge upon the Kyaik Khauk Pogoda to buy and sell local products, and this event is a chance to experience local life, traditions and celebrations just outside Yangon.

While each country may/will host similar events, if ASEAN planners can create a regional events calendar whereby each uniquely different yearly event is promoted they a regional promotional events strategy, this will not only work to achieve the mission of ASEAN from a creative and cultural sector standpoint, but also reduce competition so that a regular events cycle emerges. Then ASEAN countries promote the region as a whole opposed to an over-consumption approach based on competition. Competition will continue of course for events such as conferences and exhibitions,

but the focus on achieving a holistic strategy whereby each country promotes a particular hallmark event from each country is a way to capture and achieve regional integration, regional celebrations and regional spectacle. Part of the spectacle refers back to place images and power relations, whereby event venues as symbols of power convey to international audiences the increasing importance of events, this is seen in the case of Beijing (Broudehoux 2010) but is an increasing trend across Asia and within ASEAN as the cities have an advantage. What we are seeing around ASEAN is many second-tier and smaller cities also building significant complexes and hosting annual hallmark events to build event-hosting capacity outside the larger/capital cities. Take for instance the Big Mountain Music Festival in Thailand, this event that takes place in Khao Yai proximate to a national park and is the largest outdoor festival in Southeast Asia, attracting crowds of more than 25,000. Held several hours from Bangkok, such events in more peripheral areas is a way to try and overcome issues surrounding scalar relations. This spreads exposure and promotes hosting in more places outside the core (capital) cities. Now the countries that dominate the events industry use their product-oriented successes to add value to other nations who need extra assistance promoting. This is a form of events capacity building and reinforcing links whereby best practices are also disseminated which is another form of added value from a future marketing, promotion and branding standpoint.

Here, the notion of spectacle aligns with image, which remains a popular topic of inquiry regarding perception, awareness and knowledge of attractions, places and nations. Considering music festivals in Indonesia, this has created event spectacles aimed at attracting younger travelers. As these festivals have gained in international exposure and popularity in recent years, the hosting of the Asian Games in two cities was a chance to use a major-event to leverage opportunities for the wider events industry. We The Fest has been considered a 'pioneer' festival because it overlaps art, music, fashion and food. While this appears a hodgepodge, this diverse approach allows festival-goers to have blended experiences and is viewed as an accommodating approach to planning events. We The Fest is held in Jakarta, but in line with the point above about spreading event hosting geographically, the LaLaLa International Forest Festival in Bandung and the Air Festival in Gili Air are extending popular events beyond Jakarta and using music as a strategy to enhance the marketing of music festivals across Indonesia.

An important conceptual link joining this focus on regeneration, image change and competitiveness is scale, and some ASEAN nations are emerging as core players economically and politically, such as Indonesia (G20 member nation). Only little research to date has addressed events and scalar relations looking at where power and governance are concentrated, based on established hierarchies (Wise 2017). In ASEAN, Indonesia is emerging rapidly, but it is really the core cities that have invested in platforms and venues to build a sustainable events profile, especially Singapore's Marina Bay South area developed to host event or the expansive >100,000 sq. ft. Philippine International Convention Center in Manilla. It must be noted that there exist similar sized convention centers across ASEAN, for instance in: Jakarta, Tangerang, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Pattaya, Bali, Nonthaburi, Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Ayer Keroh, Kota Kinabalu and Pasay).

Concerning events and scale is what is relevant from a regional context is there are two divisions, which appear as scalar spectrums of cores and peripheries, and the semi-periphery, aligned with Wallerstein's (1974) world-systems theory. One way to consider this in ASEAN is through cities

that hold higher profile events and the countries that are not as competitive. For instance, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia as peripheral from a regional standpoint, Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei Darussalam are arguably semi-peripheral while the other countries have strategic advantages in terms of hosting events. This said, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand see their (capital) cities continually seeking opportunities to upgrade facilities, promote modern amenities and world-class hospitality, this giving them an advantage in the bidding process. Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand also have a strategic advantage given air transit access and connectivity with more connections, but Vietnam is looking to increase their global connections.

Some nations in ASEAN have or are rapidly emerging, growing or gaining new influence. Within this context, a focus on scale and scalar relations is a consideration is often discussed by economic and political geographers who assess globalization—and this links to the international expansion of hosting mega-events. According to Smith (2000, p. 724), scale refers to "one or more levels of representation, experience and organisation of geographical events and processes". Geographical and regional scales therefore align to competitiveness because there always exist political and economic complexities of power, control and hierarchies (Wise 2017) which plays a role in what nations and cities can invest and place attention on enhancing image, opportunities and capacities. With the regional commitment of ASEAN, what the 'core' event hosting nations can do is help build closer ties so that influence and opportunities can be more dispersed. However, this might be difficult to realise given the rise of Singapore and Malaysia and more recently Indonesia, who are looking to invest future in larger venues. This has positioned these destinations as key global competitors as event hosts. Competing at a global scale can mean that these are the premier ASEAN host cities can put regional members in a position where they are not competitive, and thus need to compete with the other smaller economies to attract smaller events, but these might lack the investments that destinations such as Singapore can achieve. Scalar shifts are dependent upon economic diversification, and while the region has been able to attract manufacturing and industry and contribute to the global supply chain, the countries that invest in events are aiming to grow the service section as a way to attract further basis economic activity through visitor spend. This increase spend means these destinations can invest in attractions and bids, which leads to the establishment of a place brand, new spectacles and increased cultural influence–and this is where large-scale events are significant.

Concluding Remarks

The points offered in the above sections align with Dwyer and Kim's (2003, p. 369) point that to achieve a competitive advantage that meets appeal, a place "must be superior to that of the alternative destinations open to potential visitors." But the point being made here is to try and limit this alternativeness regionally by offering distinctly different hallmark events to grow the region's wider competitiveness. What can then happen is such a distinct regional events appeal can create/re-create a new image (for the region and for each place where the event is held, and can help promote less travelled destinations). There is also a need to forego any negative associations linked to developments in ASEAN nations, as sometimes these happen rapidly but miss promotion windows. Thus, and hosting a range of large-scale events, of culturally focused hallmark events can attract media attention to help transform the image of these countries, cities and attractions— which can help shape future tourism legacies as well (Wise and Mulec 2015). However, it must be

noted that large-scale events are not so regular, but the promotion of smaller MICE oriented events can create a wider impact in terms of marketing destinations.

Looking at the future and direction of events in ASEAN, the most sustainable path is more specifically MICE events given the abundance of infrastructures in place (as cities with large conferencing and exhibition centers noted above). While these venues are scattered around the region, the five cities that stand out as leaders in event delivery and promotion in this chapter are Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Bangkok and Manilla. The advantage these cities have is they are core capital cities of their respective countries, and so they have the power to sustain place marketing strategies through investment in 'national' venues and being hub cities for major airlines they have a benefited from this strategic advantage and the ability to attract visitors and host events with large crowd capacity. Going back to the points about working towards a regional strategy to promote events, the COVID-19 crisis may put a delay in these plans. However, this region-wide approach is not instantaneous, and needs considered as a necessary long-term strategy (looking to develop events over the next several decades). If national governments of the ASEAN region want to extend the impact and promotional capabilities of events to grow this industry in cities and regions, then a plan to build appropriate sized venues and support bids to host more small- and medium-sized events. This is one way forward for lesser-known areas to build a new service based economy and subsequently promote tourism—then these places can further invest in marketing capability region-wide beyond the key cities that gain from more exposure. If events in this region can support the growth of tourism and place product development, then MICE events are key because they attract not only larger numbers of attendees, but business events and conferences are opportunities for short breaks and many attendees travel with family members who in turn contribute to the tourism economy.

Once concern that Crouch (2011) addresses is the difficulty to manage rapid change. The issue is rapid change can increase competitiveness because places then need to rapidly respond to changes and need to respond with an alternative or similar offer. This is especially true going forward, when it comes to marketing and planning for events post-COVID-19 because of uncertainty over the desire to gather in large crowds and air travel. Going forward this will be an issue for smaller cities, especially. The five cities noted in the previous paragraph from a post-pandemic standpoint have large venues so they will be able to market events that will meet future spacing and social distancing requirements. Moreover, and being capital cities, each with strategic airline hubs, any reduction in flight demand will still see these cities operating as they handle flight connections through each city. From a regional product development standpoint, it is ideal to look at the events offering, identify a particular hallmark event for each country, and begin to promote then as a regional events calendar so that places can build on the success of the event and regional events over time and work towards a strategic product and promotion strategy. Doing this can help countries have a clear focus on end goals because there is a desire to meet consumer appeal and demand, and an events calendar can help increase inter-regional mobility and international travel from outside the region. ASEAN nations each have differing motives, which may involve vastly different financial (of social and environmental) demands and consequences. A strategy forward is to work towards a clearly defined hallmark event in each country held on regular intervals through the year so that an events rotation sees each country providing a unique offer without compromise and direct competition that instead displays inclusion among all nations and a diverse offering of events.

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