


# Chapter 11

## Mega Events and Their Effect on Meso-economics: The Case of Plovdiv as Holding the Title European Capital of Culture 2019

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### ABSTRACT

*The chapter proposes an analysis that claims the importance of phenomena successfully revealed only in view of mesoeconomics. The authors argue that the economic processes in the field of organizing events should not be conceived merely as resulting from macro- and micro-level relationships but rather as resulting from relationships on mesoeconomic level (where a large number of unresolved and unexplored issues still exist), discussed by the authors in terms of the black box relationships on the mesoeconomic level. The main aim of this study is to investigate a specific mega event so as to trace and analyze the roles of the operators at the three levels of social-economic activity, and finally to identify the specific roles of the operators functioning at the mesoeconomic level. Making up a small part of scientific investigation in interdisciplinary research, the chapter proposes further perspectives for a proper application of mesoeconomics when discussing issues bridging micro-economics and macro-economics.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, most of the socio-economic phenomena depend on both phenomena, closely connected to the macro environment and micro-business characteristics (micro environment), and the well-established connections between them. The present research discusses the organization of mega events, while focusing on the scope of their relevance to the mesoeconomic level. The study deals with a Europe-wide initiative - the case of the European Capital of Culture, and in particular the 2019 choice of the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv as being awarded this title. As the essence of such a large-scale event might suggest, much effort is needed in order to organize and run the initiatives in the most effective way on the part of institutions and organizations, both formal and informal, at the European, national and municipal level (macro economy). On the one hand, a more dynamic interaction between the organizations is needed as well, and hence more reliable socio-cultural service providers have to be involved, so as to meet the expectations of the visitors to the various cultural events, making part of Plovdiv, ECoC 2019.

Moreover, the role of the visitors to the city has not to be neglected because they, in fact, make the greatest contribution to economic growth. We assume that a large number of interactions are required when conducting mega events of such a scale, and also that the interactions between the persons engaged lie in the sphere of mesoeconomics and are of paramount importance. Therefore, any border-type phenomenon could also be of particular interest for the present study, even more so when a culture phenomenon lies in its milieu.

The present study is devoted to the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) initiative which awards cities for their cultural environment, historical heritage and contribution to European diversity and gives them the opportunity to strengthen their image and to be located constantly on the world eventmap, to attract more tourists and to magnify their development through the lens of cultural events and program occasions. The title ECoC has a long-term impact not only in terms of cultural development but also in view of a large scale of socially and economically motivated processes whose role and function we are going to investigate herein.

Most of the activities carried out in relation to the European Capital of Culture initiative have a direct and medium-term effect for the development of the socio-cultural sector and the tourism industry and this brings about huge consequences for the city's economy. A regrettable fact that we have found out is the failure of many Plovdiv hotels to provide information on the cultural events and activities on their official websites, i.e. we have identified a gap that lies within the scope of mesoeconomics.

This chapter is structured as follows: part two outlines the reviews of the relevant literature on mesoeconomics and our conceptual framework for subsuming and discussing mega events under this level of economics. Part three presents the initiative European Capital of Culture and the nomination of Plovdiv for holding the title for the year 2019. The following part presents the nature of mesoeconomics, while the next one outlines the research setting and the methods used. It describes the four main clusters of the one year' events in Plovdiv and proposes content analysis of these events. Drawing upon this analysis, a discussion of the economic meso-level is proposed. Part five contains some concluding remarks that recapture the concept view of mesoeconomics, its practical implication on the grounds of the events held in the city of Plovdiv as holding the title European Capital of Culture, and it also suggests some areas of future research with respect to the black box of the zone between macro and microeconomy.

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