

Abstract

This thesis deals with issues concerning national capitals and examines crucial factors for their choice. Usually, the capital is seen not only as an administrative centre, but it also plays a vital role for both the society's development and an individual's identity. The Federal Republic of Germany is specific in the European context. Its center is not historically rooted and was repeatedly moved according to regime changes. This applies also for the considered situation after the World War II. Disputes between the occupation powers resulted in the formation of two individual states with West Berlin being an isolated island surrounded by East Germany. A provincial city of Bonn was chosen to serve as a temporary seat of the West German government, while favored Frankfurt am Main surprisingly failed to qualify. The objective of this case study is to scrutinize whether it was a decision determined by external geographic factors, an internally motivated political plan, or a mere coincidence. The answer is based on a thorough analysis of arguments and motivations of the main players. It tracks the development of the whole process especially focusing on the period 1948-1949 while searching for its milestones. The fact that Bonn was able to provide all the desired prerequisites appears to be crucial. Due to its relative insignificance, Bonn matched perfectly with the idea of temporary capital. Moreover, it also suited the decentralization so typical for federalism. Political reasons soon gain importance in the discussion and initiated the creation of the factual ones. The Federal Chancellor Adenauer represented a central, but not the only, important player. Although having never directly intervened, the attitude of Allies also played an important role. Unlike the earlier studies, this thesis accounts for the development after the German reunification, when the capital was again moved to Berlin and the role of Bonn was reconsidered.