#

# Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many colleagues, friends and students for all the stimulating and thought-provoking conversationswe have shared over the past five years. First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude towards those colleagues and friends who have stimulated my interest in the topic of capital city relocations. Letter exchanges, critical comments and personal conversations with Sidney Monas, Blair Ruble, Nicolas Pujol, Irina Labetsky, Göran Therborn, Edward Schatz, Vladimir Nikolaev, Joseph Rossman, Boris Glazov, Yaroslav Shramko, and Olga Tuluzakova have broadened my knowledge, provided helpful suggestions and contributed towards shaping the thesis of this book.

Very special thanks go to Leonid Storch for his critical reading of the manuscript, many valuable suggestions and corrections that helped to improve the book and for many years of our friendship.

# I am also thankful to Benjamin Payuk and Efim Shluger for their help with identification of articles related to the capital city relocation debate in Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. I am most indebted to the extremely friendly atmosphere on both a professional and personal level at the International College for Sustainability Studies, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand, and University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia. The colleagues there have created the congenial atmosphere to work on the manuscript of this book. The author is also thankful to Valery Anashvili, the Director of the Gaidar Institute of Economic Politics Publishing House in Moscow, for his abiding interest in the topic and his encouragement to produce the early version of this book that was published in Russian in 2013 but was substantially different from the current expanded edition. I am also highly grateful to Anna Rakitianskaya for providing me with hard-to-find journal articles.

This book was also produced in part by the capital cities themselves. The streets of Moscow, Tokyo, Beijing, Canberra, Ottawa, Jerusalem, Istanbul, Washington D.C., Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Prague, London, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Madrid, The Hague, Berlin, Lisbon, Tbilisi, Bangkok, Helsinki, Katmandu, Putrajaya, Phnom Penh, Vientiane, St. Petersburg, Naypyidaw, Bratislava, Astana, and many other cities and settlements have generously shared with me some of their secrets and presented me with new inspirations and fresh thoughts.

# Finally, special recognition goes to my wife, Marina Besson, for her support, encouragement and patience.

Vadim Rossman

Bratislava, Slovakia

September 15, 2015

# Preface

The purpose of this book is to study the problems of capital city relocations and provide a comparative analysis of them, as well as to review the issue of capital cities’ functions and changing role in the present day world.

Despite popular perceptions that the practice of changing capitals is singular and rare, it is, as we will see elsewhere in this book, quite widespread and worthy of a serious academic attention. Capital city relocation projects have emerged, and continue to do so, on all continents in countries having different levels of economic development and ruled by very different political regimes. Therefore, practices of this kind and the ideas on which they are based deserve a much closer attention, both theoretical and practical, than hitherto given.

The few figures provided below unambiguously demonstrate the high occurrence of capital city relocations in the political life of modern states. Thus, over the past 100 years worldwide, capitals have been relocated every 3-4 years; factoring-in smaller states and lesser capitals, this interval becomes even narrower, close to every 2 years. A historical view of the problem confirms such an observation. According to calculations made by the American urbanist Lawrence Vale, 74% of the 1900 capital cities were not capitals a century later[[1]](#endnote-1). Furthermore, over the past 100 years more than 30 relatively large states have successfully, or somewhat successfully, moved their capitals (Table 1). Arguably the best-known examples include Turkey, Australia, Brazil, Pakistan, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Germany, Burma, and Malaysia. The United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan have already initiated building their new capital cities. In 2015 Egyptian authorities also announced the beginning of a construction of a new capital. Several states, notably Iran, Japan, Indonesia, and Liberia, have committed to this undertaking in principle. While no final candidates for new capitals have been endorsed yet, and no final mechanisms for carrying out these plans have been selected, these countries are still working out details of their projects and continue to discuss various relevant options and possible scenarios.

In the course of detailing their plans or even after the constuction had already started, several countries encountered various problems – financial, legal or those caused by changes in political leadership and political continuity – and as a result the previosuly approved projects were suspended, halted, or frozen. Such were the cases of Argentina, Venezuela, Peru, South Korea, Mongolia, and some others. Nonetheless, political authorities of these countries periodically resume discussion of this issue, and it still remains on their national agendas.

In many states, the need for returning a capital city to its original location or rethinking the very function of the capital arose at the turning points of their history. To exemplify, after the fall of communism, Poland saw a debate of whether to move the seat of its government back to Kraków; South Africa, after the collapse of apartheid in 1994, raised the question of whether to replace the long-standing triple-capital system with a singular capital city[[2]](#endnote-2); and in the aftermath of WWII, in light of the changes in the international political environment, Finland faced the problem of moving its capital from Helsinki back to Turku.

Presently nearly 40 nations of the world are debating the issue of capital city relocation. Debates have taken place in numerous Asian (China, Taiwan, Thailand, Nepal, and Bangladesh), South and Central American (Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Haiti), and African states (Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ghana, and Somalia). The establishment of a new capital has also been on the agenda of several post-Soviet states including Russia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Ukraine. While this topic has sparked a lot of discussions, the degree of intensity of the discussions may have been different in each country. This book will analyze their causes and paradigms of these debates.

# The list provided here (Table 1) includes mainly the countries where the idea of a new capital has been enunciated by prominent government figures and leaders of major political parties and where the relevant debates have been conducted in parliaments and constitutional courts, thus making a strong public appeal.

# However, the interest to this topic is not limited to these nations. In some countries, notably Australia, India, Switzerland, USA, Italy, and Slovakia the debates over capital city relocation are in the purview of a rather small group of politicians and intellectuals who fiddle with the idea. Thus, in the course of a recent debate, Geoffrey Blainey, recognized as the most prominent Australian living historian, opined that the country’s capital should be moved to Perth, which would reflect an overall shift in concentration of Australia’s key political and business activities from the Pacific Coast to the Indian Ocean[[3]](#endnote-3). Furthermore, several decades ago, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, one of the authors of the Indian Constitution and leader of the untouchable caste, insisted on having to create a dual-capital system in India and relocating some of the major capital city’s functions to Hyderabad, closer to the geographical center of the country[[4]](#endnote-4). Today certain Indian politicians and followers of Ambedkar’s legacy also repeatedly propose to shift the capital closer to the geographical center[[5]](#endnote-5). In Italy and Canada, some marginal political parties have launched campaigns to relocate the seat of the government. Thus, Lega Nord (North League) and its leader Umberto Bossi have proposed to make Milan Italy’s capital city instead of Rome, and the Rhinoceros Party in Canada has proposed to move the capital eastward, to the middle of the country. In the US Republican Senate candidate Ben Sasses have proposed to move the capital to the geographic center of the country in Nebraska. Although these and similar marginal ideas are usually viewed by many as odd or unrealistic, they – along with the discussions presently having a limited audience – may eventually gain national publicity and develop into larger scale public debates.

Yet the importance and applied significance of the capital relocation subject are not limited to debates on the national-state level. Many principles of siting a national capital city are also, to a certain extent, applicable to the siting of subnational and supranational capitals or administrative centers. The debates over shifting a capital city are in progress in numerous provinces and member republics of nation-states, and the siting of the capitals of federal states, autonomies, provinces, regions, lands, prefectures, cantons, and territories has been widely debated. While the locational logic of subnational capitals corresponds to that of national capitals, the former have been moved as frequently as the latter. Among the most representative examples of subnational capital relocations one should mention those undertaken in such major countries as India, South Africa, Russia, Germany, and China. Notably, some of these subnational entities are larger in terms of territory than some European states. Since 1956 more than ten new states and union territories have been created in India, and ten new provincial governments have been created in South Africa[[6]](#endnote-6); in both cases, due to partition, consolidation, and reorganization of subnational entities. Most of the above examples have involved capital city relocation issues.

China’s administrative units have some history of capital city relocations – e.g., the shifting of Inner Mongolia’s capital in 1952. In Germany the capital of Thuringia was moved from Weimar to Erfurt in 1948. Furthermore, capitals of both union republics (e.g., Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Ukraine) and autonomous republics (e.g., Ingushetia and Karakalpakstan) were moved in the Soviet Union. Presently the possibility of capital relocation is being discussed in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Republic of Karelia, Transnistria, Gagauzia, and a number of major Russian regions. Some Indonesian, South African and Canadian provinces, US states have had similar experiences. Thus, a relocation of the capital of the State of Alaska has been under consideration for many years. A capital relocation is considered in British Columbia, Canada, and in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE.

Unfortunately, both the practical importance in understanding capital shifting processes and the need in criteria for the decision-making in this area have not yet been properly addressed by the academic community. To date, the phenomenon of capital city relocations has not been analyzed systematically in the literature on urban studies and political science. There is as yet no book-length study of this topic. There may be several reasons behind this.

Many historians and political scientists tend to believe that, driven by a combination of historical trends, capital cities are essentially sited randomly. Since the decisions on this matter are often made by individual rulers, one may be tempted to view the issue of capital relocation from the perspective of subjective and arbitrary decisions, which by definition have neither a roadmap, nor starting coordinates. As a result, some observers implicitly take a nihilistic position that no universal patterns, prescriptions, and conventional problem-solving models are applicable to this issue. They perceive the subjects of capital, metropolitanism, and capital shifting as something too broad, multifold, purely descriptive, and therefore unsuitable for generalizations and universal solutions.

It also must be noted that a study of various existing capital relocation models would hardly fit into a framework of a unidisciplinary and comprehensive research project. One of the difficulties associated with such a study is that it is multi-aspect, complex, and necessarily multi-disciplinary in nature. A selection of a new capital often entails too many variables that are difficult to completely take into account.

As a result, from the standpoint of skeptics, capital relocation is gaining a reputation of a topic more interesting to and more easily approachable by poets and politicians rather than by scholars. What else, if not a metaphor or an inspiring call, can better grasp the will of the people, nation’s dream of a new City, high-handedness of the tyrant, prophetic dreams of the dictator, charisma of the leader, elusive appeal of new yonder and passionate flurries of national willpower which suddenly, as some romantic historians claim, drive people away from their long-inhabited homes to search for the Promised Land of the New Capital? How does one capture these impulses and their God-inspired moves with the plain numbers and dry lingo of scholarly abstractions? And even if we assume for a moment that all of these may be quantified and cataloged, how should the mechanics of relocation, after it has been quantified and verified, be returned to where it came from – the depths of the people’s enthusiasm, the chemistry of the nation’s imagination, the spontaneity of actions, and the flame of this idea, and the collective intoxication with it?

This book is based on the opposite premises, i.e., that the complex of relocation motives is unitary while the problems which the states seek to resolve by relocating their capital, are quite universal. Although all decisions to relocate capital city are country-specific, they, nonetheless, are not solely driven by the unique problems of the country making this decision. It may be said that there exist universal models of capital relocation, generations of capital cities, and capital relocation cycles caused by new demands made by historical and political processes developing both internationally and regionally.

This book articulates the issues presented by modern political science itself. The objective of the book is at least to fill the gaps in our knowledge of capital cities and their patterns of relocation. First of all, these gaps involve practical issues related to intentional and unintentional consequences and implications faced by special committees’ members, heads of states, expert consultants, and other policy-makers and decision-makers.

Here one can point at several groups of issues that appear most relevant:

Is capital city location a neutral factor or does it have a major or perhaps even determinant impact on the success of the state and its social and economic development?

What political strategies and state-building problems can capital relocation help to solve? How often in the past did capital relocations, once completed, lead to solution of the problems faced by the government?

Which of the problems believed to be solved by relocating the capital can be solved within the framework of the existing capital? Can the new technologies such as intra-city transportation solutions or high-speed intercity routs assist to overcome the problems that supporters of capital relocation seek to solve?

What are the long-term consequences of capital relocation for the economy and political life of different countries?

What are the main problems, both general and pervasive, encountered by capital relocation plans? What are effective steps to carry out these plans and in what order should these steps be taken?

What factors can help decide whether to relocate a capital city? What circumstances and conditions justify putting this topic on the national agenda and when is this topic a false concern? How much weight do speculations of futurologists or tactical maneuvers of politicians, armed with populist and demagogic slogans, have in the ongoing capital relocation debates?

In what case should operations of a capital city be considered effective and what are the methods of assessing its effectiveness? Does the size of a capital city have a negative impact on the development of national economy?

What methods should be applied to assess feasibility of capital relocation projects and to select a location for a new capital? What decision-making procedures are most rational and what should be the correlation between the experts’ evaluations and people’s declaration of will?

While the answers to these issues may facilitate making an optimal decision, other factors – e.g., knowledge of relevant precedents and understanding of relevant facts, figures, budgets, motivations, and approaches – should be helpful too. This book contains a lot of such information and provides its comparative analysis. Furthermore, it proffers an explanation as to the causes of successes and failures of various capital relocation models, highlighting the lessons that can be learned from the experience of these models.

The issues enumerated above may hardly be fully appreciated and solved without addressing certain questions that are more theoretical in nature. These include matters pertaining to general history, general sociology, and general philosophy. Approaching the problem from the angle of more general and more abstract disciplines should facilitate choosing a more productive language, categories, and methods to be used for conceptualizing and proper understanding of the notion of a capital city. It is important to realize that addressing these general theoretical questions may also give an impulse and a system of premises for solving the issues and tasks we have set forth in this part of the book.

To what extent should the siting of capital city be determined by the specifics or particularities of the proposed geographical location? Are “good sites” or natural seats of power really identifiable in the process of search or are they socially constructed? Or perhaps they are formed by certain objective laws? What role does the concept of a capital city play in the genealogy of modern states?

To what degree do the assertions that the concept of a nation-state is declining and that global cities are rising, conform to the importance of the role which many nations, by and through their leaders or governments, attribute to national capitals and nation-building?

To what degree is capital city relocation a new phenomenon in the political practice? Do modern capital relocations replicate causes and motivations of such relocations in the premodern world? When and how do capital cities emerge and what is their place in the nation-building process? Does the very concept of a capital city change in the course of time?

The author does not undertake to give a conclusive answer to all of the above questions. He does, however, hope that the proffered theoretical framework and historical narrative will help to better define these issues, providing a context where one may find the answers. While capital relocation debates are often accompanied with poetic metaphors and political slogans and speculations, this framework will also give an opportunity to see structural elements, strategies, and motives that are common to capital relocations debates in different countries and that may be relevant or irrelevant depending on the circumstances.

In addition to this, the understanding of general trends in the evolution of the concept of a capital city will make it easier to see the historical paths of different nations and to appreciate their sometimes existential choice of capital relocation, made at the turning points and crossroads of their national destiny. Lastly, this theoretical framework will allow to evaluate relevant historical precedents in a systematic manner.

The practical and theoretical aspects of the capital relocation problem are barely separable. Nonetheless, the author hopes that by defining the relevant issues, it would be possible to break the deadlock of subjective and abstract approaches where the capital relocation problem has been caught, facilitating more constructive solutions to this problem. Although capital relocations may hardly become the subject of a rigid academic discipline, they may be useful and productive to lay out and discuss a theoretical system where this problem exists, as well as to determine what is at stake in the discussion of this problem and what its political, historical, and other implications are. This would avert a monologic, one-dimensional discussion of this subject within the tight boundaries of an academic field.

It should be stressed that one of the main issues to be addressed in this regard is the issue of the interplay between political regimes and capital city relocations.

The reasons for capital city relocations will be investigated in detail and illustrated with specific examples elsewhere in this book. However, it would be appropriate to highlight here, albeit briefly, some global development trends that both stimulate the growth of interest to this problem and call for its examination.

First, the problems related to capital cities have been becoming more and more topical because since the beginning of the 20th century the international arena has seen the emergence of numerous new states. Thus, while there were slightly over 40 sovereign-state capitals in 1900, their number increased to 190 in the year 2000, more than quadrupling in 100 years’ time. The emergence of new states necessitates the societal consolidation and the creation of new systems of intrastate communication, representation, and common symbols. Of course, the formation of a state assumes the choosing of a new political center with new symbols and new iconography reflecting the new identity of this state. Choosing a capital city is an organic and nontrivial part of this process. Even in the case when the seat of government remains in the same location, such a decision constitutes a rather definitive and nontrivial choice of several options. Over the past century, state unifications have been generally less frequent and less intense than state disintegrations; yet both of these processes have been putting the issue of a new capital on the agenda. А decision on this issue has a direct impact on the viability of a new state. Thus, Flemish nationalists insist on the establishment of two capitals in Belgium, one in Namur for the Walloons and one in Antwerp for the Flemish, whereas pan-Romanian nationalists call for the creation of a joint capital city for both Romania and Moldova.

Second, the process of urbanization has been such that capital cities have a tendency to a much faster growth than noncapital cities. Especially evident in the developing countries, this tendency further raises two sets of issues: (i) those of technological provisions of a new capital and (ii) political and social issues.

The growth of capital cities poses the problem of new urban development technologies and standards which meet the demands of a particularly large and constantly expanding city. As the old capitals are becoming obsolete in terms of their engineering standards and urban technologies that they use to address the issues of security and sanitation, the uncontrolled growth of primate cities is creating overpopulation and traffic jam problems leading to additional costs for the whole national economy. Triggering an increase of migration to primate cities, this problem is particularly pressing in the developing countries.

The disproportionately fast growth of primate cities, which are usually capital cities, exacerbates many political and social problems including the problems of social justice, political equality, as well as proportional access to power and representation. In many nations, the privileged status enjoyed by the capital city and its residents in comparison with the residents of other cities may have a destructive impact on the degree of solidarity in the society at large. The privileged living standards of the capital city residents involve better money-making and investment opportunities, property, wealth, job-creation pace, etc., casting a doubt on political stability in the nation and triggering unfavorable political and social consequences.

Lastly, one should mention here strong tendencies toward self-reproduction and self-perpetuation that are embodied in the hypertrophic role played by capital cities. Political centralism promotes a concentration of economic resources in a single city, further enlarging the gap between capitals and provincial cities in income and opportunities.

The accelerating growth of real estate prices in the capitals creates social polarization in general and negatively affects the availability of affordable housing for the middle class in particular, reducing the degree of social mobility. Also, the hypertrophic growth of the capital cities is often associated with the problem of quasi-urbanization, especially in the developing countries where migration to the large cities does not result in the growth of the actual urban occupations.

All of the above problems stimulate, in different states, debates on the new capitals. Supporters of a capital relocation believe that it may help to overcome the negative trends enumerated above and, thus, will unclog the streets of the old capitals, stop their seemingly uncontrollable growth, eliminate imbalances, as well as contribute to the solution of many social and political problems caused by the impact of large-city domination on the economy and the society at large.

# Introduction

## DISCIPLINES, CONTEXTS, AND CATEGORIES

As it has been already said, one of the difficulties of the subject of capital relocations is its multidisciplinary character. Different aspects of the problem have been discussed in different fields of social sciences, notably history, geography, and political science.[[7]](#endnote-7) Although the proposers of capital relocations by no means always rely on of the results of academic analysis, very often they advance arguments following from certain forms of this analysis. То avoid the enthrallment with one specific disciplinary approach to the neglect of others, it is necessary to describe, albeit briefly, possible disciplinary approaches to the subject being addressed. This description will help us identify the categories and factors considered by said proponents and intended to identify a group of candidates for a new capital city. It will also allow to define the place of these disciplinary approaches in our analysis and assess their relevance for our study. Identifying and selecting the most fundamental categories should make it easier to build a framework for the comparative analysis of capital relocations as we see it. Finally, this analysis will also assist us to develop the language describing the problem in question and to create proper analytical devices, patterns, and tools to be used in this book.

### *Political Philosophy*

First and foremost, the problem of capital cities is the problem of spatial localization of power, and the problem of correlation between power and space.[[8]](#endnote-8) Viewed from the more conventional disciplinary perspective, it is also the problem of interplay between politics and geography. Yet in addition to this, at the core of the capital cities problem are profound philosophical issues.

Most of the capital relocation debates are premised on the normative notions of state and nation, idealistic understanding of state tasks, perception of fairness, as well as on the boundaries and intensity of power. Both the very concept of capital and the proposals for capital relocation are often based on certain concepts of state and power.

Furthermore, the concept of a capital city inevitably reflects normative characteristics of the authorities, state, and political regime benefitted by this concept whereas characteristics of the capital stem from the normative perceptions of how the state should be ideally, or at least preferably, organized. Some political regimes are meant to broadcast and expand their power. Others tend to be characterized by efforts to limit their authority, and these efforts are embodied in the way a capital city is set up. Normative characteristics of power are also reflected in its geographical location, size, and inner workings, as well as in its symbolism and proffered forms of legitimation of power.

The subject of normative premises that often are not even hinted at in relevant discussions and analytical articles, lies in the purview of political philosophy. Since these premises are implicit, explicating the ideas underlying the corresponding capital relocation concepts appears to be particularly important.

### *Geopolitics and Military Strategies*

An important factor in siting a capital city has always been the security and defense capabilities of the state. At least, according to some interpretations, the siting of a capital city should take into account the possible expansion of the sphere of influence of the state and even the possibility of its spread beyond the national borders. The imperative of security necessitates that a capital city should be sited in such a way as to minimize the vulnerability of the state, safeguard its territorial integrity, and help it to gain a regional status guaranteeing its weight and importance in international affairs. This set of issues has been addressed in the works of some experts on geopolitics, military strategy, and international relations although the author of this book is not familiar with any study specifically focusing on the issue.

In the research on geopolitics, the problem of the core and periphery has acquired not just a national, but also an international dimension. Today the location of a capital city takes into account not only the position the capital holds in the region but also its position in the global distribution of power.

### *Structural Characteristics of Capital Cities*

The problem of a capital city has been discussed in a number of publications on social sciences, economic geography, spatial economics, political science, demography, urban planning, architectural history, and other allied social sciences. Policy-relevant studies focus on capital cities’ effectiveness and structural characteristics viewing them from the perspective of the normative criteria to be met by states. The significance of these studies to the topic at hand is that they proffer various criteria and formulas for the evaluation of various capital cities’ parameters and characteristics from the standpoint of their compliance with the normative tasks of the state. These studies examine the social and economic consequences, whether actual or possible, of having a particular city with particular characteristics as the capital. Very often they concentrate on the degree of correlation and interplay between certain characteristics of capital cities and the articulated normative expectations.

The causal relationships, important for our analysis, between the features of a capital city and the factors affecting the way it was shaped are further examined in many of these studies. Studies explaining the reasons why primate-city dominant capitals emerged in some states while small professional capitals emerged in others may serve as an example of this kind.

Such studies may be divided into two groups – those that are mainly economic and those that are mainly political in nature. While the former focus on the normative criteria of economic and public administration effectiveness, the latter relate to such normative criteria as fairness, social harmony, conflict resolution, and achieving civil peace.

Several studies on economic geography, spatial economics, demography, public administration, and urban planning pay a particular attention to economic and public administration effectiveness of capital cities. For example, they may point to the correlation between the capital city’s size or proximity to the nation’s demographic center on one hand and the level of corruption in the nation on the other. They may also examine such parameters as the demographic structure of a capital city, its ethnic composition, volume and rate of migration from the periphery to the capital city, distribution of economic resources between the capital and the rest of the country, and social and economic consequences of the above for the nation as a whole. By and large, at the heart of these studies is the category of capital city effectiveness as measured by the existing criteria.

Studies of the second group focus on how capital city characteristics affect possible settlements of regional, ethnic, religious, and internal tribal conflicts in various states. The studies that concentrate on such factors as political constitutions of states, the degree of social inequality, states’ resistance to civil protests, and the possibility of social conflicts, examining these factors from the standpoint of capital city status and its internal organization, are particularly interesting to our topic. Unlike the studies of the first group, they investigate moral and political issues as opposed to the issues of effective governance.

Although many of these studies are only descriptive, their conclusions may be used as a basis of, or reason for, the recommendation to relocate or not to relocate a capital city. Understanding the structural and causal relations between the structure of a capital city and social consequences created by the way the capital city function is organized may certainly serve as an argument in favor or against the relocation of a capital city; the choice depends on the extent the existing conditions promote or hinder the desired social and political outcomes.

## History

The problem of capital cities has also been discussed from a purely historical perspective in such disciplines as general history, archeology, theory and history of nationalism, symbolism studies, urban architecture studies, and some other disciplines related to the study of history and anthropology.[[9]](#endnote-9) The authors discussing it reconstruct both the notion of a capital city and its main attributes as they existed in different historical periods, and explain the ever-changing role of capital cities in the life of states. The value of these studies is that they describe the various traditions, entrenched forms of existence, and historical requirements pertaining to the operation of capital cities.

Historical discussions of the problem of states’ and nation’s identity are particularly important to the objectives of this book. As we will see, the ideas expressed in this regard have played a major role in choosing a capital city. While the concept of national identity has been acquiring a special status in the context of nation-building process, the places and cities related to the formation of this identity have often been proposed as candidates for a capital city.

Speaking of identity, one should at least touch on the problem of national perception of space. By no means is the concept of space universal, and there exist very culturally distinctive forms of capital city organization, administrative division, legitimation of power, and models utilized in the building of networks between capital cities, other cities, cores, and peripheries. Certainly, the elements of national spatial perception have an impact on choosing a capital. However, even the cultural forms that are quite nation-specific, reveal certain universal features to be discussed in this book.

## Miscellaneous Problems of Designing the Capital City Function

Some of the miscellaneous problems related to the organization of the capital city function include the problem of municipal governance in the capital, arranging a communication system both in the capital and nationwide, built environment, as well as development of tourism in the capital. The status of a capital city during the civil conflicts, along with the capital city clauses in the constitutions of many countries, has been analyzed by experts in international and domestic law. Тhe studies exploring the legitimacy of the claims for power are of particular importance to this subject.

While all of the above problems may be quite significant and far-reaching, they remain isolated problems for the purpose of our study. The auxiliary character of these problems is determined by the fact that they do not lead to a discovery of any fundamental normative categories, but rather, provide some kind of ‘technical support’ to ensure the priorities stemming from more fundamental objectives of the state.

### *The Four Purposes of Capital City*

By analyzing the subject discussed in this book, we have identified four fundamental themes or normative concepts which underlie the choice of a capital city. In our opinion, these fundamental themes and normative concepts are as follows: (1) the theme of state’s security, which also entails keeping its territorial integrity; (2) the theme of economic and administrative effectiveness; (3) the theme of fairness; and (4) the theme of identity. These four pervasive themes are interconnected with four distinct groups of issues: (i) Which capital city location will ensure the highest level of state security? (ii) which location will prove, economically and administratively, the most effective in achieving the state’s goals? (iii) which location will prove the fairest from the standpoint of different parts and constituent units of the state? (iv) which location will be the most organic, authentic and compatible with both the identity and sovereignty of the nation that the state represents?

These issues pinpoint the spatial aspect of the problems pertaining to general philosophy and general sociology and involving pragmatics, morals, and ontology of communities and social groups in their relation with spatial categories. How are power, fairness, and identity embodied in space? How does the space advance or hinder the implementation of these practical or ideal elements in real social and political practices? Can a spatial location effectively promote social changes and make power more effective, fairness fairer, and identity more authentic?

The above four parameters may not necessarily be always successfully combined.

Furthermore, viewing one of them as a priority of economic or social policies and solely relying on it in choosing a capital city will certainly make the choice imperfect from the prospective of another normative criterion. These situations trigger tradeoffs, whereby some fundamental normative parameters are sacrificed for the sake of the others. Different stages of the development of the state call for different priorities. However, these priorities are driven not just by preferences, but rather, by the concerns for viability and success of the state.

Thus, the most pressing tasks encountered by a recently independent state may be decolonization and the establishment of its identity and sovereignty. This situation would justify shifting a capital to the area which is deemed to reinforce the historical continuity of national history and emphasize the rootedness of the nation in a particular territory. In the case of a nation going through the process of modernization, the problem of reconstructing its identity, along with that of a new geopolitical positioning, may be more compelling. In yet another scenario, harmonizing various components of a state, coupled with building a capital city capable of balancing relations among different parts and constituent entities of the state, may present more importance.

While both the security and effectiveness of a capital city assume, first of all, the ability of the state government to organize itself rationally, the notions of fairness and identity are of direct relevance to the question of how legitimate both the power and emotional aspects of the nation’s existence are.

In the context of the debates on capital cities, the issue of fairness manifests itself in several perspectives: first, whether the regions, constituent states, constituent lands, as well as the ethnic and religious groups, are represented in the capital; second, whether the capital-city benefits are available to the majority of the nation; and third, whether all relevant groups enjoy a virtual presence in the capital city not just in terms of political representation but also in the symbols and iconography of the capital. The government that does not take the factors of fairness and identity into account loses or weakens its own legitimacy.

Building a new seat of government in a city where the nation’s cultural values were solidified and the key moments of its history took place, emphasizes the nation’s sovereignty even if the nation has been colonized or dependent for a long period of time.

## CERTAIN ASSUMPTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Before we begin to analyze the history of national capital building and exemplify it with specific case studies, a number of hypotheses and assumptions should be postulated here since, to a substantial extent, they define both the research design and logic of material presentation in this book. These preliminary suppositions and hypotheses foreshadow and give a partial preview of the conclusions made in this study and clarify the ideas behind it.

### ***Prospects of Nation-Building and State-Building***

Тhe dominant perspective that defines our approach toward capital city relocations is the concept of nation-building and state-building. Many articles on the subject of capital relocation concentrate mainly on possible economic advantages that may be gained by such relocation. However, in our opinion, the broad publicity received by this subject and the support it has sustained internationally go far beyond the issue of mere economic gains.

Nation-building and state-building, whose objectives underscore the importance of our topic, are closely interconnected to the extent they become sometimes inseparable. For the purpose of this study, the term “state-building” means, first of all, foreign policy related factors of the state’s existence including the factors of state security and national borders. The term “nation-building” refers to creating state institutes and symbols based on the perspective of intrastate interaction among various communities. The range of issues pertaining to nation-building includes identity, political fairness, and relations among parts of the state. The author of this book believes that the success of capital city relocations largely depends on the extent the relocation meets fundamental needs and challenges faced by the country in each given stage of national building. This success is further determined by whether or not the relocation is capable of answering more than one of these challenges, and whether – in the long, strategic run – the new capital will combine important advantages for the development of more than one aspects of the building process.

Our analysis is also premised on the social constructionist interpretation of the capital city phenomenon and the notion of a nation. There are no “natural centers” for founding a capital city; rather, they are chosen from a set of various factors so that the choice becomes one of the most critical steps in forming a new nation. This choice has a great impact on the very concept of a nation since nations do not just emerge in the course of natural processes but deliberately build themselves, and the development of the concept of a capital city catalyzes these processes.

### *Capital Cities and Political Regimes*

One of the theses of this book is that different political regimes view the problem of capital cities differently, focusing on different aspects of this problem. In any given country, the existing urban hierarchies do not just embody its political nature and the history of its emergence but also solidify the principles that this country is based on. Liberal democracies, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, as well as despotic states create conditions for the development of various urban hierarchies, and in many cases the structure of the urban network stems from the degree of political centralization in the state. Every so often an oversized capital city is an indication that the country’s political regime is particularly corrupt or that the pattern of corruption has been prevalent throughout its history. Such capitals monopolize resources of the country and its international economic ties, hampering its political and economic development.

Capital relocation plans undertaken by different regimes reflect the goals and priorities of these regimes.

The fundamental principles of liberal democracies – separation of powers, system of checks and balances, principles of federalism, and societal control over activities of the state and corporations – are also embodied in the structure of cities and that of urban hierarchies. In such countries, capital relocations usually serve as a reinforcement of these political principles.

As a rule, autocratic and despotic states possess both better methods of mobilizing resources and a more effective leadership to carry out political projects of this magnitude and cost. Since these states are less constrained by the prospect of a change of power, they are more inclined to make long-term investments.

In the states governed by autocratic or despotic regimes, capital city relocations may also serve as a tool of keeping these regimes in power, solidifying exclusivity, centralism, the lack of transparency, and other antidemocratic principles. This said, some autocratic regimes may also pursue broader objectives such as nation-building and be less concerned with self-preservation. Since sometimes the goal of self-preservation may fully or partly coincide with the goal of nation-building, a capital relocation accomplished by such a regime may become an important starting point for the development, modernization, or political transformation of the state.

Therefore, under certain circumstances and regardless of the initial objective, a new capital city built by a despotic or autocratic state may very well develop into a viable nation-state capital. By and large, however, the successful political regimes are more effective in transferring their capital whereas the corrupt regimes are less effective.

The relocation of a capital city is not a panacea for all of the ongoing overcentralization problems; nor is it a lever for achieving certain social or economic objectives. It may advance a positive political transformation as much as a negative one, accompanying both social revolutions and modernization programs, as well as religious and conservative revolutions.

## PLAN OF THE BOOK

*Chapter 1* will provide a typological classification of capital cities, both from the historical point of view and in the modern perspective. It will also discuss the issues of what constitutes a capital city and what the normative content of this notion is. It will provide a brief historical insight into the history and genealogy of the modern idea of a national capital. This insight will help us to formulate certain patterns of capital city formation and evolution on one hand and to revise and supplement the existing definitions and typologies on the other.

*Chapter 2* will provide a detailed description and analysis of capital city relocations in various countries, civilizations, and transcultural regions. It will identify the criteria for siting a capital city as determined by geographical, ecological, cultural and other specific factors, and will also illustrate the role capital cities played in the emergence of nations and nation-states. Among the issues to be addressed the following are two of special importance: To what extent were capitals effective in solving problems of particular states? To what extent were the different types of capitals suitable for solving vital economic and social needs of particular states?

*Chapter 3* will pay a special attention to the reasons, motivations, and arrangements for capital relocations, focusing on those in Turkey, Brazil, Malaysia, Germany, Nigeria, and Kazakhstan. It is the experience of these nations that has received the widest publicity internationally and had the strongest influence on the corresponding decisions made by other states. It will also present numerous case studies from different regions: Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe and beyond.

*Chapter 4* will focus on the comparison of relocations from Chapter 3. Examining budgets, administration, and the outcomes of these projects, this chapter will also highlight critiques of the completed relocations, made by urbanists, sociologists, and economists, as well as provide a critique of these critiques and detailed balanced analysis of these relocations.

Based on the results of this examination, we will, first, identify six strategies that were used by the relevant countries; second, point to lessons that could be learned from these historical experiences; and, third, present a comparative analysis of these projects.

We will also study several success factors of such capital relocations and examine the public policy objectives that they satisfy. While understanding the concept and historical forms of capital cities allows to understand the mechanics of and the motives behind capital city transfers, analyzing these transfers, likewise, ascertains and clarifies the objectives and functional role played by the capitals.

*Chapter 5* will investigate methodologies of and theoretical approaches toward capital city functions and decision-making models including the concepts of spatial economics, growth pole theory, world-system analysis, and geopolitical analysis. It will also address the problem of what categories should be used to evaluate this experience and to plan out these actions, taking into account the existing scientific and managerial models. Specifically, we will discuss the issues of economic effectiveness of capital cities, their federative structure, symbolic adequacy, and other significant assessment criteria. As part of this discussion, we will touch upon the problems of iconography and architectural language of several newly built cities, as well as the interdependence of this language and nation-building. We will pay a particular attention to the analysis of the interplay of globalness, primacy, and capitalness and consider the advantages and disadvantages of combining all of these characteristics in one city.

*Lastly, the Conclusion* will summarize the results of the analysis made in this book, underscoring the causes and rationales that drive the governments to undertake these projects, concentrating on the interrelations between these projects and the general trends or political and economic development, and pinpointing to the correlation between the nature of a political regime and the successfulness of its capital city relocation. We will also attempt to perceive to what extent the various aspects of the international experiences analyzed in this book is applicable to the analysis of the situation in the states where the issue of capital city relocation is in the process of being added to the agenda.

# Chapter 1

# History and Typology of Capital Cities

Until recently the problem of capital cities as a subject of *theoretical reflection* has not attracted enough attention from scholars; nor has it occupied a central place on the research agenda of the field of urban studies. Although numerous treatises and articles focusing on the history of specific capitals and addressing different aspects of city life have been published, capital cities have not made an especially popular topic for urbanists. The relevant research literature has been dominated by ideographic studies of metropolitanism and capital cities. Conducted within the framework of studies on national history or a particular city, they resembled a kind of biography of large capital centers. The historian Andreas W. Daum confirms this observation, noting that the study of capital cities constitutes a field of research that is still in an incubation phase[[10]](#endnote-10). The distinguished American geographer Scott Campbell also notes that “capital cities are an easily defined but poorly understood class of cities” and laments the lack of a single, explicit theory of capital city development[[11]](#endnote-11)*.*

These assessments of the state of affairs in the discipline, however, should not be construed to mean that the extensive literature on *specific* capitals is characterized by a noticeable lack, or deficiency, of factual and historical material. On the contrary, critics sometimes expressed worries that as a result of the biases shown by journalists, historians, and tourist guidebooks, the image of a capital city would overshadow the image of the whole country. Тhe topic of capital cities has remained unnoticed to the extent that to date it has not been integrated into a single discipline. The material pertaining to this topic is scattered in publications in different subject fields all of which have their own language, categories, standards, and models of explanation. Until recently only a few more or less general theoretical articles focusing on this subject were published.[[12]](#endnote-12) Notably, the existing studies are also marked by pronounced Eurocentrism, as Andreas Daum has noted, and a global and transnational view of capitals has still never been developed.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Clearly, a call for the creation of a new scholarly discipline, Capital City Studies, does not imply a mechanical, eclectic mixture of the data and methodologies taken from different disciplines; rather, it assumes the establishment of a new integrated field which, through comparisons, would create explanation models related to the emergence and functioning of capital cities and to identify more universal standards of understanding of the changing role played by capitals in the modern global processes. This outlook at capital cities would allow to integrate a variety of the existing disciplinary approaches – economic, political, and geographical – overcoming their internal limitations and resolving the differences in the way they explain the growth or relocation of capital cities. Comparative analysis methods could serve as a foundation for this integrated approach.

Assessing the situation in the study of capital city problems, Daum and Campbell also acknowledge a conspicuous tendency, developed in the urban studies over the past two decades, toward analysis and description of global cities and urban networks. One may say that in addition to urban hierarchies, there also exists a hierarchy of knowledge both about cities and their evolutions, and our knowledge of capitals is far from being on the top of this hierarchy.

Many urbanists and geographers have adopted the economic methods of analysis and focused on the discussion of such important phenomena and concepts as a world city, or global city, agglomerations, and development clusters. However, neither these concepts, nor theoretical paradigms of thinking are not always fully applicable to the analysis of capital cities.

Furthermore, the belief that nation-states are declining, often relied on as a premise, albeit not always articulated, for many of these studies, implicitly assume that today global cities and international corporations have become the main participants in the historical process and that capital cities are losing their role and former significance. Viewed in this theoretical paradigm, from a certain time on, capitals have been treated mainly as a place of localization of economic interests, their effectiveness being measured primarily on the basis of economic parameters. By the same token, the role of practically the only agents responsible for the formation of the existing urban networks and hierarchies has become attributable to the markets whereas the role played by autonomous political factors and political exchange networks has been systematically underestimated.[[14]](#endnote-14)

While economic models sometimes shed interesting and unexpected light on the ongoing processes, they can also distort the essence of many social problems. An exclusively economic approach to the problem does not factor in, among other things, the internal criteria of measuring the effectiveness of capital cities and assessing how they perform their tasks and functions. In recent years, there have been more studies focusing both on capital cities and the political networks forming them. It is noteworthy that not only do these studies examine modern cities, they also address the formation of medieval towns and other historical forms of urban networks.[[15]](#endnote-15) The relatively new comparative turn in urban studies literature is particularly interesting and promising in this regard.

## PRELIMINARY DEFINITION

The most common definition of a capital is that it is a city where the seat of the country’s government is located although capitals of some modern states do not fully meet this criterion. Thus, the government of the Netherlands sits in The Hague, outside of the official Dutch capital city.[[16]](#endnote-16) Furthermore, Sucre and Kuala Lumpur, the official capitals of Bolivia and Malaysia, respectively, are not the places where the governments of these nations are based. Such a mismatch between the nominal and the actual capital is, of course, an exception to the general rule.

The modern concept of a capital city is a relatively new political category, and it was not until the 17th century that it began to develop in its present-day form in Europe. Prior to this period, capitals had been either completely nonexistent in many societies or played a very limited role, fundamentally different from the role presently attributable to them. The rise of capitals stems from the emergence of nations caused by the processes described elsewhere in this book.

The main task of capital cities is to help the nation to visualize itself and to present the nation to the rest of the world. With this in mind, capitals represent the ideal image of the country and country’s history, а miniaturized version of the nation, so to speak. Because of this representation function capitals are sometimes perceived as the equivalent to the nation as a whole.

For this reason, the names of the capitals of some countries are based on the names of these countries; suffice it to mention Algeria, Tunisia, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Brazil, and Belize, where the name of the capital and that of the country essentially coincide, or did so in the past. Hitler planned to name the new capital of his proposed empire, which was also intended to become the capital of the world and to replace Berlin, Germania (*Welthauptstadt Germania*). Not only is this trend observable in the present, it is traceable back to the ancient world: Akkad, Babylon, Bactria, and Rome were all named after their capitals. Curiously, whereas ancient nations were known by the names of their capitals, this trend has reversed, and in the modern time capitals are given the names of the nations and peoples.

Based on the same principle of *symbolic representation or symbolic substitution*, the whole periods in the history of some nations have been named after their capitals – e.g., the St. Petersburg and Moscow Periods of the Russian history or Heian and Edo periods in the Japanese history. Historiographers have often attempted to present the entire history of a people or country through the kaleidoscope of its successive capitals. Such attempts have been made with regard to the history of China, Persia, Japan, and the Arab Caliphate, among other countries.[[17]](#endnote-17) Likewise, the Russian critic and historian Konstantin Aksakov viewed the whole history of Russia in the kaleidoscope of its various capitals, dividing it into the periods of Kievan Rus’, Vladimir Rus’, Moscow Rus’, and St. Petersburg Russia.[[18]](#endnote-18) This view had its appeal and justification; however, not every national history may be described using this framework.

The idea that being representative of the whole nation, a capital is its proxy or symbolic double is also reflected in various military strategies, many standard and accepted language practices (we commonly say “Washington or London has made a decision,” referring to a whole nation), as well as formal or informal conventions of international law and international relations.

In the case of a civil war, decisions of international organizations often invoke a presumption that a belligerent exercising stable control over the capital is both the most legitimate representative of the nation (proxy) and bearer of national sovereignty although *de jure* there are no international law instruments establishing or confirming such recognition. Marika Landau-Wells highlights this fact in her recent article addressing decisions on the legitimacy of power in four African countries, rendered by various international organizations.[[19]](#endnote-19) In the eyes of the international community, therefore, a *de facto* capital may often serve as a privileged locus of *sovereign authority* or sovereignty, especially during a civil war. This, by far, is only a tendency, not а rule.

Some classic works on military strategy also emphasize the importance of taking control over the capital of the enemy and even equate it with the victory in the war. This is pointed out by Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849-1930), a renowned military theorist of the past, in his fundamental treatise *On War of Today*.[[20]](#endnote-20)

Military historians have also drawn attention to the fact that capitals had had a much greater significance in highly centralized or premodern states. In those states, seizing a capital often meant winning the war as it could be illustrated by the examples of France and the imperial China.

As it has already been noted, many capitals also perform *symbolic representation* of the nation. While this point will be elaborated on in one of the following chapters, it should be stated here that in many countries the toponyms of the capital represent a geographical map of the entire country, so that a small piece of space replicates a much bigger one as it was typical of many archaic religious centers. For example, Moscow still has neighborhoods that, through their streets and avenues, reflect the physical geography of the entire regions or member republics of the former Soviet Union, e.g., the Crimea or Ukraine, in the south of the city. The toponymy of many capital cities, both European and non-European, feature a similar geographical symbolization of their respective countries, replicating larger physical spaces.[[21]](#endnote-21)

## FUNCTIONS OF CAPITAL CITIES

Researchers have identified a number of fundamental functions carried out by capital cities. According to the historian Andreas W. Daum, the most important functions of a capital city include the following: (1) *administration*; (2) *integration*; (3) *symbolization*; and (4) *preservation* of cultural monuments, history, and national cultural values. The integration he refers to has two aspects – social and ethnic.[[22]](#endnote-22)

*The integrative function* entails the ability of a capital city to capture and embody the elements and aspects of national unity, where the unity is often the result of a compromise. Among the most common and most important of these compromises one should mention a compromise reached by two or more ethnicities, religious, or ethnolinguistic groups that comprise the nation; those between the local and the national interests; those between or among the largest cities in the country, as well as those between the global and the national. Ideally these compromises are meant to make а capital city a temporary point of equilibrium among the different forces and interests that exist in the country; however, if certain groups do not have political, social, or symbolic representation, this equilibrium becomes fragile. Space, thus, is the form and locus of the embodiment of regulatory principles, both legal and moral. Not only does a capital city reflect the present and actual existence of the nation, it also represents its ideal image – the way the nation sees itself and what it would like to become; hence the multifaceted nature of the integrative function, performed by capital cities.

Carrying out its *performative function*, a capital city serves as a venue for national celebrations, mass processions, parades, rallies, and other events uniting the nation and essentially converting the claims of national identity into reality. Closely interrelated with the performative function, the symbolic function is reflected best of all in architecture and symbols of authority. Each national capital has a story reproducing a revised version of the national history. This story has its heroes, villains, and coded references to national holidays and festivals, and images of the past and the future. This imaginary community comprises not only the living heroes, but also the epic and mythological ones, as well as founders and defenders of the nation.

At the outset, each nation builds itself using its *imagination* and seeking to visualize itself *in one particular city*; accordingly, a capital becomes a manifestation of this visualization. It is expected that eventually this ideal model will be extended to the whole country. The arrangement of a capital city, its architectural forms and ensembles serve as construction materials for the creation of a nation just as national literature and music do, except the former process is more conscious and involves a much higher degree of participation on the part of the state.

While the above functions are universal, many other functions and tasks performed by capital cities are characterized by heterogeneity describable with anthropomorphic or anatomical metaphors. Thus, capitals of some countries function as the brain or the head of the state (this is even evidenced by the etymology of the word, which is derived from *caput*, the Latin for “head”), and serve as a sort of guiding force for the whole nation. In the countries that stress the cultural, spiritual, or religious significance of its capitals, a capital city functions as the heart or the soul of the state, playing mostly an observatory role. Accordingly, various authors have described capitals as the head, heart, face, or even eyes of the state (e.g., an Arab traveler referred to Baghdad as “the eye of Iraq”). Furthermore, while some capitals are turned outward (outward capitals), being the face of the nation, others are turned to the internal processes (inward capitals) and more likely serve as its heart.[[23]](#endnote-23) Continuing the metaphor, one may say that generally cities form the skeleton of the nation whereas major market cities form its backbone.

Typology of capital cities, provided below, will explain some of the patterns in the composition and distribution of capital city functions in different countries.

## TYPOLOGY OF CAPITAL CITIES

A popular typology of capital cities was proposed by the British geographer Peter Hall. He distinguishes the following seven types of capitals: *multifunctional capitals*, which play a combination of roles at the national level (Tokyo, Moscow, London); *global capitals*, which combine national and supranational functions (Paris, Geneva, Washington); *political capitals*, whose functions are reduced to national management (Lisbon, Kathmandu); *supracapitals*, which serve as the headquarters for major international associations and organizations (Brussels); *former capitals*, i.e., cities that have lost their formal role as capitals but continue to perform an important historical or religious function in the country; *former imperial capitals*, which used to serve as capitals of the entire empires; and *provincial capitals*, which only have only a regional significance.[[24]](#endnote-24)

Although often relied on by geographers, this classification, nonetheless, seems logically problematic since it divides concepts based on a comparison of incongruent grounds. We will attempt to make some adjustments and bring the division principles to a common denominator, supplementing this classification. The taxonomies proposed below take into account numerous characteristics of capital cities such as the level of scale they operate at, level of ambitions, historical and cultural forms, particularities of location, functional content, specific objectives, chronological cycles of their development, etc.

Viewing capital cities *in terms of* *geographical location and the tasks they serve*, one may distinguish *central*, *forward*, *retreat*, and *forward-thrust capitals*. *Central capitals* are typical for the states that are in the process of solving internal tasks of reconciling ethnic, confessional, or social group differences. *Forward capitals* are typical for the expanding empires or the states integrating new territories. *Retreat capitals* are a characteristic of the countries facing external threats or instability on the borders. Finally *forward-thrust* capitals are created in the states developing their hinterlands or interior areas. Change of a capital city may be driven by changes in the strategic position of these states, as well as their military victories or defeats.

*In terms of the functions* *performed*, capitals may be divided into administrative, military, cultural, business, religious, industrial, maritime, and transportation capitals (hubs).

*In terms of the level of scale*, we may distinguish regional, national, and transnational capital, as well as *supracapitals* (e.g., the capital of the European Union).

*In terms of origin*, urbanists often distinguish *evolved* and *designed capitals*, also referred to as *planned capitals*. The former include Paris, London, Tokyo, and Rome. It is believed that these cities became nation-state or imperial capitals, gradually evolving from important commercial, military, and religious centers and, thus, contain many historical layers.

Contrarily, *designed capitals* are built based on a specific plan and are intended for a specific purpose. This category includes, e.g., Washington, New Delhi, Canberra, Ankara, and Brasilia. In contrast to evolved capitals, they are, so to speak, built of a single ideological concept and do not have historical layers, usually present in other types of capitals.

*Designed cities* are approximated by some evolved capitals – e.g., Berlin and Tokyo, where most of the historical center, which had been destroyed during the war, was rebuilt and reconstructed. It may be said that Madrid should also be considered part of this group since it was badly damaged by bombings during the Spanish Civil War. The same, incidentally, applies to many other evolved capitals. Thus, a military fortress and a small military settlement occupying the site of present-day Helsinki had been burned to the ground in a fire in 1809, and the new capital of Finland was essentially built from scratch.[[25]](#endnote-25)

*In terms of the level of spatial unity*, *concentrated* and *distributed* capitals are distinguishable. The system of distributed capitals is associated with the separation of presidential, legislative, and judicial branches of power. In a number of countries such as Germany, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Russia, and South Africa, the constitutional court sits in a separate city: Karlsruhe in Germany, Brno in the Czech Republic, Batumi in Georgia, St. Petersburg in Russia, and Johannesburg in South Africa. In Chile, Georgia, and South Africa a separate city has been designated as the seat of the legislature.

Some of the ancient states also had *spatially distributed capitals*, each of them performing a distinct function. For example, medieval Tungusic-Manchurian states – the Kingdom of Bohai (Balhae),[[26]](#endnote-26) the Kingdom of the Khitans (Liao State), and the Kingdom of the Jurchens (Jin State) – located in the Far East and successively replacing each other, traditionally maintained five capitals each.[[27]](#endnote-27) Some historians attribute this capital city system to the Chinese Concept of the Five Elements, *Wu Xing*.[[28]](#endnote-28) China, however, never actually used the Concept of the Five Capitals, *Wu Jing*,[[29]](#endnote-29) but it is not unlikely that the people of Bohai had borrowed the long-standing Concept of the Five Cities, *Wu Du*, and reformulated it into *Wu Jing*, which, in turn, was eventually borrowed from them by other nations.

Each of the capitals in the Tungusic-Manchurian states had its own jurisdiction and functioned as the medieval counterpart of modern ministries based in five different places. Their jurisdiction was divided into financial matters, matters related to money and iron, matters related to salt and iron, and matters related to commerce and carriage.[[30]](#endnote-30) Only one capital was considered supreme and, as a rule, also served as the residence of the prince or supreme ruler.

Spatially distributed capitals are contrasted with *time-distributed capitals* although in some cases the existence of the latter had similar goals and led to similar results.

Мany Аsian states divided capital city functions on the basis of seasonality, maintaining both a summer and a winter capital. Examples include the cities of Mathura and Purushapura in the Kushan Empire, Ecbatana and Susa in Persia, Opis and Ecbatana in Parthia, Khanbaliq (present-day Beijing) and Xanadu in China, Kabul and Jalalabad in Afghanistan, and Thimphu and Punakha in Bhutan. Notably, in many cases these capitals were not just palaces located near the main city, but rather, were separated from each other by hundreds of kilometers.

Sometimes this dual capital structure had an important religious significance. Thus, in Neo-Assyrian states, the period of the ruler’s stay in Assur, both the winter capital and sacred capital, was scheduled in such a way that he could participate in sacral rituals while for the summer he would return to the political capital.[[31]](#endnote-31)

Every six months the government (Durbar) of the Indian state of Kashmir changes its seat from Srinagar, the summer capital, to Jammu, located 300 kilometers away, and back again. This practice, inherited from the 19th century, costs the government approximately half a million dollars a year, but from the perspective of its supporters, aside from being a tribute to the tradition, it also furthers interests of the communities living in remote parts of the state since it allows them to participate in the political life more actively. A similar dual-capital system also exists in the state of Maharashtra and has been proposed in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

An even more exotic, tri-capital system – one for the summer, one for the winter, and one for the monsoon season – operated in the west of the British India in Bombay Presidency comprising several states of present-day India and Pakistan.

*In terms of stability,* one can distinguish *long-term capitals* as opposed to *short-term* and *provisional* ones. While capitals migrated quite frequently in some countries, they remained in the same location for a long time in others.

The Roman Empire was so closely connected with the history of Rome, and its position as the capital seemed so unshakable that many historians still view the transfer of the capital to Constantinople as the demise of the empire. In contrast, capital city relocations appeared much more natural for the Persian Empire, a country of a comparable size.

In Korea, in the period between the emergence of the Three Kingdoms (1st century BC) and the rise of the Yi Dynasty (late 14th century AD), the capital was moved 22 times.[[32]](#endnote-32) On the other hand, Constantinople, Kyoto, Cairo, and Anuradhapura, the ancient capital of Sri Lanka, served as capitals for close to a thousand years each. Baghdad, London, and Madrid also have been capitals for many centuries.

It is interesting to note, however, that the rise of highly stable capitals was often preceded by a long, and sometimes multiphase, process of searching for a suitable location. Thus, a number of transitional or test capitals were established in the process of relocating the seat of the empire from Rome to Constantinople. Similar tentative capitals, Harran and Anbar, were set up while the capital was being moved from Damascus to Baghdad. In Japan, the transfer of the capital from Nara to Kyoto was preceded by more than 20 intermediate capitals. Dordrecht had been the first seat of the government of the Netherlands before the capital was moved to The Hague. The high mobility of capitals is quite typical for the early stages of nation-building, and numerous cities had served as tentative capitals of the US before it was finally moved from Philadelphia to Washington.[[33]](#endnote-33) The same holds true for the state capitals of the US.

*Provisional capitals* usually originate as a result of a threat posed to the main city of a country at war. To exemplify, during the Napoleonic wars, the capital of Portugal, was moved overseas, to Rio de Janeiro while the capital of Prussia was transferred to Memel (Klaipeda). During World War II, most of the Soviet government was evacuated eastward to the city of Kuibyshev (Samara) whereas the Republican government of Spain was relocated to Valencia.

*In terms of the degree of control exercised*, hard and soft types of capitals are distinguishable. The Italian writer Umberto Eco spoke on this distinction in his speech on the concept, model, image, and framework of the new pan-European capital in Brussels.[[34]](#endnote-34) *Hard capitals* – Eco called them “the Louis XIV type of capitals“ – are characteristic of a larger, centralized state; they dominate most of the living environment, being rather cumbersome and combining multiple functions.

*Soft capitals* are more typical of smaller polycentric European countries such as Belgium or Switzerland and are usually characterized by compactness. Using a computer metaphor, one may say that soft capitals provide the state with software whereas hard capitals serve as hardware, determining the totality of economic and social relations.[[35]](#endnote-35) Same distinctions apply to states. Thus, prior to the French Revolution, as well as in the first half of the 19th century, there were six *alternating soft capitals* in Switzerland: Lucerne, Bern, Basel, Fribourg, Solothurn, and Zurich. After the religious civil war in 1847 and as a result of the 1848 revolution, the confederation became a single nation, with Bern as its capital.[[36]](#endnote-36)

The criteria of hardness and softness have also played a significant role in the designation of the capital in many other countries. For example, in the 1864 debate over the new Italian capital, the Italian politician Ferrari spoke out against the hard model of a capital city: “The very idea of a preponderant capital has always been resolutely rejected by everyone. […] We do not want an Italian Paris, we do not want an Italian London”.[[37]](#endnote-37) During that time when the debate was still in progress, the choice was Rome as a new capital of Italy was neither predetermined, nor obvious.

Nonetheless, not all European hard capitals, however gigantic and megapolitan they may be, are comparable with each other. Likewise, there are substantial substantive differences in terms of status between Anglo-Saxon capitals and continental European capitals.

This could be illustrated by a sharp contrast between London and Paris. Although both capitals are characterized by a high concentration of functions, Paris has always overshadowed London in terms of splendor and monumentality. Even the British Stuarts envied the metropolitan magnificence of Paris, Madrid, and capitals of some smaller continental countries.[[38]](#endnote-38) The Stuarts were known to have made several attempts to turn London into a full-fledged royal capital using European princely baroque cities as a model; however, these attempts were not successful.[[39]](#endnote-39)

The reason for this difference was that the state and political power in France played a much more prominent role, whereby the latter could centralize planning more effectively, mobilizing financial resources and building its capital at the expense of the provinces. As a result, the urban planning models of Paris became exemplary not only for England but also for the majority of other European countries.

In England, the capital city was under control of private interests. Municipal authorities of the British capital could not possibly afford reconstructing London in the classical monumental style, especially on the same scale, with the same magnitude, and with the same degree of splendor as it was done in the Paris of George-Eugène Haussmann, the Prefect of the Seine Department during the Second Empire. With this in mind, observers have pointed to what they perceived as а contradiction between the status of Great Britain as one the most powerful industrial and colonial nations in the world and the image of its capital which was not in the position to compete with its continental counterparts.[[40]](#endnote-40) This Anglo-Saxon concept of *an economical or parsimonious capital*, apparently, has been subsequently reflected in the concept of a low-key capital city developed in other Anglo-Saxon countries including the US, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand.

Arguably, the Anglo-Saxon concept of an economical capital also gave rise to a distinctive municipal administration system. While London was governed through 33 city districts (*boroughs*), with an elected mayor playing the lead role in the process, governance of Paris was highly centralized and until recently concentrated in the hands of the prefect of the Seine.[[41]](#endnote-41)

Jean Gottmann, an eminent French geographer, also proposed to distinguish between two models of capital cities, which he referred to as the *Platonic and Alexandrine models*.[[42]](#endnote-42) Using another terminology, they could be also called the Continental and the Atlantic capitals.

The concept of the Platonic capital is rooted in the Plato’s dialogue *The Laws*, where the Greek philosopher describes the proximity to the sea as a disadvantage for any city of the country. It is agreeable enough to have the sea at one’s door in daily *life; but, for all that, it is, in very truth, a briny and bitter neighbor. It fills a city with* retail huckstering, breeds shifty and distrustful habits of soul, *and so makes a society distrustful* (The Laws, VII, 705a). The port-capitals following the Alexandrine model are distinguished both by the proximity to the sea and by the presence of commercial activity that corrupt cities by fostering love for money-making and by allowing close contact with foreigners. In contrast to the Platonic capitals, the Alexandrine capitals are cosmopolitan and combine politics with commerce.

The geographer Scott Campbell has proposed another interpretation of the Alexandrine model, construing it to include capitals of the states that have no single center. As the legend has it, Alexander the Great, when asked where he wanted to site the capital of his empire, presumably spread his hand on a map and used his fingers to point to several directions simultaneously. According to Campbell, if the Platonic model defines the modern capital, the Alexandrian defines the postmodern acentrism, a phenomenon which he attributes to the idea of a virtual decentralized administrative network of capital city functions.[[43]](#endnote-43) Albeit interesting and original, this interpretation, however, is factually and historically inaccurate. Alexander the Great is known to have dreamed of having a new seat of empire in the city of Babylon;[[44]](#endnote-44) furthermore, linking Platonism to the concept of modern capital cities deprives the original distinction made by Gottmann of its value.

What is more significant in differentiating between these two models is their orientation and the way they position themselves: While the continental Platonic capitals are inward capitals, Alexandrine capitals are outward-oriented. Given this interpretation, Kabul, Madrid, and Moscow may be viewed as examples of the former while Constantinople or Stockholm may be considered examples of the latter.

Speaking of the Platonic and Alexandrine models, a short digression may be in order here. Aristotle, who was a student of Plato and the teacher of Alexander the Great, does not have a separate work discussing the issue of capitals. However, his *Politics* contain fragments that may be interpreted as direct recommendations in this regard. In a famous passage of the *Politics*, Aristotle defends cosmopolitan cities on the seas (Politics, Book VII), obviously alluding to *The Laws* of Plato, and aiming at Alexander the Great, who dreamed of a new capital in the East. Polemicizing with both Plato and Alexander, Aristotle seems to water down their intransigencies into a typical Aristotelian compromise suggesting Crete as a new natural seat of power. This is how Aristotle describes this natural strategic center of the ancient Greece.

*The island seems naturally situated to rule in Greece. It lies across the entire sea, and most of the Greeks are settled around the sea; it is not far distant from the Peloponnese on the one side and on the other from the part of Asia around Cape Triopium and Rhodes. Hence Minos established rule over the sea, subduing some of islands and settling others*.[[45]](#endnote-45)

Given that Greece has numerous island territories, the fact that Aristotle chose an insular capital appears logical and strategically justified. It is also important to realize that Crete was the historical center of the Minoan culture standing at the origin of the Greek culture. Besides, the island also had several strategic advantages – mainly a convenient geographical location, making it an important center that connected Africa, Asia, and Europe. This connection went beyond the advantages noted by Aristotle and enjoyed in other parts of the Greek world. Lastly, this idea entailed the possibility of creating a capital of the entire Mediterranean region centered around an island, a vision embodying the archetypal European spatial model.[[46]](#endnote-46)

It is fair to say that in this passage Aristotle, to a substantial extent, reconciles the concept of Plato with that of Alexander. Like Plato, he keeps the capital within the historical boundaries of Greece but contrary to Plato, like Alexander, he makes it a cosmopolitan center open to other civilizations. This is the *Aristotelian capital*, built on his principle of the golden mean.

The typology of capitals provided above is particularly important because it is based *on the different concepts of capital cities, existing in different countries or civilizations*. It will provide the reader will a road map for further study of the subject and build a glossary required for further discussions.

It would be also appropriate to precede our further analysis by a short historical account illustrating the above listed types, determining the evolution of these cities, and outlining the trajectories of their development. All in all, five historical types of capitals will be discussed in the following chapters: mobile, sacred, royal, national, and imperial.

## HISTORICAL TYPES OF CAPITALS

### *Mobile Capitals*

In the ancient times and the Middle Ages, i.e., approximately until the Westphalian system was formed, capitals as residences of the rulers had not played a critical role in the life of states. Strictly speaking, until the 17th century capitals *in the modern sense of the term* did not even exist. In various languages, the word “capital” simply means a fortified city, fortress, royal residence (e.g., the Russian for *stolitsa*, “capital”, stems from the word *stol*, a “table” or a “throne”) or “mother of the cities”.[[47]](#endnote-47) Traditionally the mosaic of human settlements included military fortress, notable and successful commercial centers, residences of princes and kings, as well as city-states, important religious centers, and places of worship. However, capitals in the modern sense were not known even in the major imperial states of antiquity, notably the Macedonian Empire.[[48]](#endnote-48) They emerged in Europe as late as in the early modern period.

The mobile capitals are defined by the lack of permanent and single site for them. Two types of mobile or peripatetic capitals were identifiable in the premodern times: *itinerant capitals* and *wandering or roving capitals*.

Itinerant capitals were typical of many medieval states, where the “peripatetic” kings would move around their itinerant kingship, relocating from one city to another.[[49]](#endnote-49) For example, the Capets moved mainly between Orleans, Paris, and Laon. Aside from maintaining an official residence in Dijon, rulers of the Burgundian Kingdom could be also stationed in one of the cities of Brabant (Mechelen and Brussels), in Paris, or in the Flemish (Ghent and Bruges) or French Flanders (Lille).[[50]](#endnote-50)

Geographically speaking, itinerant paths of the German monarchs were much wider. Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire did not even maintain a permanent residence and headquarters; nor did they employ a regular staff of officials and recordkeeping clerks.[[51]](#endnote-51) For example, Charlemagne spent most of his time in Aachen, but sometimes could be also stationed in Worms or in the Rhineland. Depending on the location of the emperor, the capital functions passed from one city to another, wondering from Worms to Nuremberg, Prague, Vienna, Rome, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Mainz. It was in Mainz where the coronation originally took place. Names of some of the renowned rulers of the Holy Roman Empire were associated with their favorite cities although these cities were not necessarily capitals. Thus, Bamberg was associated with the name of Henry II, Würzburg and Nuremberg – with Frederick Barbarossa while Speyer – with Conrad III.[[52]](#endnote-52) Outside of Germany, Toledo under Charles II and Prague under Charles IV and then Rudolf II were important and rather stable capital cities of the empire.

These traditions of the Holy Roman Empire may have laid the foundations of decentralization and gave rise to the concept of capital pluralism and multi-centric polity at the time when the ancient unity of Europe was being formed. Nearly a decade ago, Romano Prodi convened a meeting with a number of notable figures to discuss the image of the European capital. An itinerant capital in lieu of Brussels was exactly what some of the invitees proposed. One of them was Bronislaw Geremek, a Polish dissident and expert on the history of the Middle Ages, eventually serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland and a member of the European Parliament. He supported his proposal with references to European feudalism and the experience of the Holy Roman Empire.[[53]](#endnote-53)

Certain elements of this approach can be seen in the current distribution of capital city functions among some European cities beyond Brussels, e.g., Strasbourg, Luxembourg, and Frankfurt. It is noteworthy that an alternative, monocentric US-modeled concept of European capital to be built on the artificial Europe Lake, on the border of France, Germany, and Luxembourg was offered in the 1960-s by the American architect James Miller.[[54]](#endnote-54)

The phenomenon of itinerant capitals and their rulers was not confined to Europe. Like the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, the Persian *shahs* also often moved from one capital city to another. Thus, a king of the kings usually spent the summer in his mountain residence in Ecbatanа. Several months a year he lived near the healing springs in Susa, sometimes staying in Babylon but always celebrating the New Year festivities in Persepolis (Parsa), the religious capital centered on the Temple of Ormuzd.

While itinerant capitals had a more or less constant path of movement, wandering capitals did not. These capitals had been characteristic of the early medieval Japan until the first permanent capital was established in Nara. The idea that each new ruler had his own unique charisma necessitated frequent changes in the capital location, which essentially acquired a ritual character.[[55]](#endnote-55) In the 15-17th centuries, wandering capitals also existed in Ethiopia, where they served as a strategic tool of waging а guerrilla war against the Muslim invaders. Functioning as a kind of temporary military headquarters, these capitals managed to remain important symbolic and intellectual centers.[[56]](#endnote-56) Wandering capitals also existed in Rwanda and Uganda in Africa.

Itinerant capitals were also characteristic of many nomadic peoples. The residence of the Mongol rulers had been wandering since the 17th century, changing its location more than 20 times before settling at its present site in Ulaanbaatar in 1778. However, contrary to popular belief, many nomadic tribes, e.g., the Uyghurs, Khazars, and Bulgars, developed relatively stable political capitals.[[57]](#endnote-57) Such political capital cities also emerged among the Scythians (Scythian Neapolis in the vicinity of Simferopol, Ukraine), Cuman-Kipchaks (Sharukan near Kharkov, Ukraine), and Tatars (Sarai Batu near Astrakhan, Russia). The Mongolian Ilkhanid dynasty in Persia established a capital Sulṭāniyya (“sultan’s capital”), continuing the practice of seasonal migrations and staying there only in summer.[[58]](#endnote-58)

Sacred and royal capitals played an important role in the ancestry of modern capitals, serving as both the precursors and antipodes of national capital cities. We will now try to trace the genealogy of sacred and royal capitals and their evolution path to national capitals.

### *Sacred Capitals*

In the context of the genealogy of modern capitals, the phenomenon of sacred, i.e., religious or ritual, capitals is particularly noteworthy. Many urban theorists, including such brilliant historians and anthropologists as Fustel de Coulanges and Paul Wheatley, have pointed to the *religious origins of urbanism*.[[59]](#endnote-59) The most revealing in this respect is the book of the latter entitled *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City*, which became a milestone in our understanding of urban history and anthropology. In one form or another, sacred capitals have developed on all continents: Teotihuacan in Mexico, Vilcas in Peru, Persepolis in Persia, or Great Zimbabwe, a ritual center of the ancestors of the Shona people in Africa, etc.[[60]](#endnote-60)

Sacred capitals were essentially temple cities, established and spread around temple complexes. Containing main sanctuaries and repositories of the most revered holy relics, they also served as a residence for priests, clerics, and representatives of the pontifical power, and sometimes as the burial place of the kings and rulers or the venue for coronation ceremonies.

One of the main reasons determining the importance of sacred capitals was that they were perceived not only as an instrumental part of the social order of the state but also as a part of the cosmic order of the universe, whereby their governance function was viewed as a continuation of the world-creating function of the gods and the ancestors. The significance of these cities was not as much in their geographical centrality in ancient states, but in the cosmic centrality, in their role as a link between Heaven and Earth, a connector between the divine order and the human order of the universe.

For instance, once Marduk, a leading deity of the Babylonian pantheon, put the chaos in order, he proceeded with erecting the sacred and primeval city of Babylon, which would serve as a dwelling for him and other gods.[[61]](#endnote-61) Sacred cities were built as a model of the universe, imitating a larger space on a smaller scale and linking the corners of the world. Traditional cosmographical images modeling sacred cities after Heaven reinforced the legitimacy of the ruler’s power. Such cosmographical schemes and forms of spatial organization are found in the civilizations of Egypt, Babylonia, and ancient China.[[62]](#endnote-62)

The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz describes the sacred Hindu capitals of Indonesia in the 13th-14th centuries as exemplary centers, noting that many of their traits have survived in much later periods:

*The capital city was at once a microcosm of the supernatural order —“an image of … the universe on a smaller scale”— and the material embodiment of political order.The capital was not merely the nucleus, the engine, or the pivot of the state; it was the state. In the Hindu period, the king’s castle comprehended virtually the entire town. A squared-off “heavenly city” constructed according to the ideas of Indic metaphysics, it was more than a locus of power; it was a synoptic paradigm of the ontological shape of existence. At its center was the divine king (an incarnation of an Indian deity), his throne symbolizing Mount Meru, seat of the gods; the buildings, roads, city walls, and even, ceremonially, his wives and personal staff were deployed quadrangularly around him according to the directions of the four sacred winds. Not only the king himself but his ritual, his regalia, his court, and his castle were shot through with charismatic significance. The castle and the life of the castle were the quiddity of the kingdom, and he who (often after meditating in the wilderness to attain the appropriate spiritual status) captured the castle, captured the whole empire, grasped the charisma of office, and displaced the no-longer-sacred king*.[[63]](#endnote-63)

Sacred capitals were seen as the promised or *chosen cities*, singled out from the rest of the natural and social worlds. Therefore, their symbolism emphasized not only the governance component but also the cosmic one, making them a part of the cosmological chronology and mythological narratives. Not only was a sacred capital believed to be located in the center of the state, it was also perceived as the center of the world and described as the navel of the earth or the *Axis Mundi*.[[64]](#endnote-64) For example, according to the ancient Inca, the ritual capital of Vilcas was located at the intersection of the four cardinal points of the universe.

Religious legitimization of the status of the ruler played an important role in all the states whereas the concept of spatial organization served as an important instrument of political control and propaganda. Ancient states were a kind of theocracies, with their supreme ruler described as a descendant of gods (Egypt), Son of Heaven (China), or Son of the Sun (Inca). Nevertheless, different civilizations have developed different models defining the relations between political and religious centers within a country.

Ancient states of Mesopotamia, as well as ancient Israel and Greece, developed a sort of division of labor between their religious and political centers. Ceremonial centers or spiritual capital played a crucial role in the cultural integration of various tribes and peoples, remaining a neutral territory, relatively autonomous in relation to a political center. They often emerged in a situation where political power was fragmented or where a federation to protect against common enemies was being created.

Examples of this could be Delphi in Greece, Shiloh in ancient Israel, and Nippur in ancient Mesopotamia, which served as *the main religious centers* of the pan-Hellenic, pan-Judaic, and pan-Sumerian civilizations, respectively. At that time, each of these peoples constituted a confederation of city-states, clans, or tribes. In the Era of the Judges (13th-11th centuries BC), Shiloh was where the Tabernacle of the Covenant (Joshua 18:1) was kept and where high holidays of the Israelites were celebrated while Delphi was the site of the Oracle, a prophet equally important for all Greek *poleis*.[[65]](#endnote-65) None of the entities comprising the confederation claimed a monopoly on these religious capitals; hence the neutrality of these religious centers and their role in the intertribal integration and resolution of intertribal conflicts.

Ancient China also knew a period when a sacred capital was separated from the centers of political power. Thus, in 9-8 centuries BC, at the outset of the Zhou Dynasty, there existed the sacred capital of Qixia in the west of the country, with the administrative capitals operating elsewhere.[[66]](#endnote-66) In the article focusing on capital relocations during the Zhou era, relying on an in-depth analysis of the relevant texts and archaeological data, Marina Khayutina, a sinologist and expert on this period of Chinese history, shows that, despite the rise of the new administrative capitals, the ancient city of Qixia (or Qishan, so named after the sacred Mount Qi) continued to serve as the sacred capital of the Zhou state. Having the main altar of the Zhou rulers, it was a site where the holy relics of their clan were kept and where the Mandate of Heaven to rule was revealed to them through the phoenix and the red crows.[[67]](#endnote-67) Qixia was similar to the sacred capital of both the Greeks and the Jews, separated – as Delphi and Shiloh – from the centers of political power. While the main relic of the Israelites was the Tabernacle, the main relics of the ancient Chinese were the Nine Tripod Cauldrons that embodied the nine regions of China and afterward served as the symbol of power of the emperor.[[68]](#endnote-68)

Eventually the rulers of these ancient states tried to acquire a monopoly on the religious legitimacy of their power by transferring the symbolism of the sacred capitals to the political centers. This transformation took place, for example, in Babylon under King Hammurabi and in ancient Judea during the reign of King David. In the third millennium BC, the rulers of Babylonia and Assyria transferred the characteristics of the city of Nippur’s cosmic centrality, primalness, and sacredness to their political centers, so that the characteristics of Enlil, one of the Nippur’s supreme deities, were applied to the Babylonian Marduk, as well as the Assyrian Ashur; Nippur’s topographical elements and the system of its temples were reproduced in the political capitals.[[69]](#endnote-69)

However, despite the few cases where the political capital and the sacred capital were merged into one entity, the division of powers continued to persist in many Mesopotamian and Middle Eastern states. For example, while Assur remained the sacred capital of Assyria, its political capital was migrating. For a long time, Nisa served as both the sacred capital of Parthia and the main religious center of the Saka tribes, as well as the coronation venue for the Parthian kings. A distinct separation of the sacred and political capitals was typical of Armenia, where King Yervand IV (Orontes IV) simultaneously founded both a political capital, Yervandashat, and a religious capital, Bagaran. After Petra, the old capital of the Nabataean Kingdom, had lost its function as the political center, it preserved its role as the sacred one. Petra remained a city-temple and a city-tomb in contrast to Avdat, located in the present-day Israel, and Bosra (present-day Syria), which in different times served as political capitals of the Nabataeans. After the Greeks had destroyed Persepolis in 330 BC, the sacred capital of Persia,[[70]](#endnote-70) the city of Istakhr became the spiritual center of Zoroastrianism, accommodating its main fire temple and the repository of the Avesta. Neither Mecca, nor Medina ever functioned as a political capital of the Arab Caliphate.

In contrast, in a number of other states, political capitals were much more closely linked to the religious cult and sacredness much more closely. Exemplified by Egypt, Byzantium, Russia, and Hindu kingdoms of Southeast Asia, these states tended to be more centralized, having a lesser developed commercial system, urban culture, and intercity network.

In ancient Egypt, the status of the capital city entailed a strong association with religion. The rise of the specific *nomes* and cities where capital functions were transferred to, was accompanied by the rise of religious cults peculiar to these entities. Thus, Heliopolis was known for his cult of the god Ra; Memphis, for the cult of Ptah; Thebes and Amarna (Akhetaten), for the cult of Amon and Aton, respectively. It can be inferred from the consolidation of political power with religious cults that in Egypt the nexus between state and religion was closer than in the Mesopotamian states.[[71]](#endnote-71)

The consolidation of religious and secular elements was also typical of capitals in the Caesaropapist Byzantine Empire. Similarly to ancient Egypt, where priests were in fact officials of the pharaoh, pontifical power in Byzantine was subordinate to political power. The system of *pentarchy* that developed here comprised five Orthodox patriarchates, those in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Rome. Rather than being viewed as sacred centers of their own, they were mainly perceived as extensions of the administrative authority exercised both by the Byzantine emperor and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, his seat being in the Hagia Sophia cathedral. The nonreligious, administrative nature of the division among the five patriarchates is exemplified by the fact that initially the Church was dominated by the Alexandrian and Antiochian patriarchates while Jerusalem, despite being the cradle of Christianity, was merely afforded the status as a diocese, upgraded to a patriarchate only as late as in 451 AD. The final word in the election of the patriarch and the five major patriarchal officials belonged to the emperor.[[72]](#endnote-72)

A similar trend existed in Russian history, traditionally characterized by the merger of the religious and secular capitals. In Russia, the ancient religious center in the Kremlin, which still has the appearance of a church complex, evolved over the centuries into a center of political power. During the pre-imperial era, the dominant model of relations between Russia’s sacred and political centers was essentially the Caesaropapist model. Thereafter, in the imperial period, Moscow was stripped off its status as the political capital and functioned mainly as a religious center. Paradoxically, when in the post-imperial period it became the political capital again, the pre-imperial pattern was restored, and nowadays the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church still resides in Moscow.

Certainly, religious centers of the modern world are not sacred in the sense they were in the ancient times. Nonetheless, the tendency to separate religious centers from political capitals, persisting in the present-day Europe, is to some extent reminiscent of the historical experience endured by ancient Greece and Rome. The role of Rome as the pan-European religious center was somewhat consistent with the role played by Delphi in Greece, and the division largely determined the nature of the relations between the secular and clerical authorities within nation-states.

Numerous European cities became *religious centers, physically* *separated from the centers of political power*. The list includes Canterbury, England, where St. Augustine’s Abbey operated; Toledo, Spain, where the residence of the primate was located; Reims, France, where the ceremonial anointing of the French kings took place; the Vatican, Italy; Mtskheta, Georgia; Etchmiadzin, Armenia; Gamla Uppsala, Sweden; Niš*,* Serbia, serving as the residence of the Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church; Gniezno, Poland, the traditional seat of the Primate of Poland and Archbishop of Gniezno; Trnava, Slovakia, where the Archbishop of Trnava resides; Esztergom, Hungary, where the seat of the primate is situated, etc. Every so often the old political capitals were converted to religious centers. Some of the examples of this practice, extremely common to both European and Asian states, include Toledo, Gniezno, Mtskheta, Nara, and Kyoto.

Given the realities of the modern world, the argument that the sacred status of a city warrants making it the official capital is a clear anachronism. Nonetheless, such an idea has been expressed in the debates on capital city relocations. Thus, the appeal to recognize Jerusalem as the political capital, whether of Israel or the Palestinian State, has been often justified by its status as a sacred city.[[73]](#endnote-73) Likewise, many conservative groups discussing the problem of moving the capital of Russia argue that the purported sacredness of Moscow affords it a unique and indisputable right to be the capital.[[74]](#endnote-74) In today’s world, such arguments are rather rare examples of the view that *a political capital must necessarily have the attribute of holiness.*

One should note parenthetically that in many traditional civilizations the designation of a holy place or sacred city was a much more pragmatic and arbitrary act than it may appear to modern historians and commentators. Historically the selection was always made from a huge pool of qualified sacred areas. The analysis of the location of major ancient religious centers – Delphi, Mecca, and Jerusalem, to name a few – shows that their heavenly status was conferred on them for very earthly reasons including considerations of pragmatism and political profit.[[75]](#endnote-75) In fact, today many fundamentalists seem to be more religiously motivated in their attempts to reinstate the old sacred centers as the official capital or to establish control over them.[[76]](#endnote-76)

### *Royal Capitals*

Although monarchical power has manifested itself in diverse forms in various societies, capitals of the monarchies share distinct common characteristics allowing to classify them as a separate group that we will term *royal capitals*.

In ancient and medieval time, capital cities were, so to speak, inseparable from the body of the king or emperor. Royal or princely capitals were usually cities where the royal family resided (*sedes regni*, “the seat of the king”), which made them more mobile in comparison with sacred capitals. The examples of royal capitals include Burgos, Toledo, Segovia, and Valladolid in Spain; Newcastle, Irving, Stirling, and Perth in Scotland; Clichy, Tours, Blois, and Fontainebleau in France; and Płock, Kraków, and Poznań in Poland. For the purpose of establishing a royal capital, the presence of the ruler was more important than the geographical location of the ruler’s residence. In some cases, the royal residence may have also served as the sacred center of the state, whereby aside from fulfilling government tasks, the king could also perform various religious and ritual functions.

Often located in the immediate vicinity of the largest cities in the country, the royal power was not always sufficiently rooted in these cities and sort of stayed away from them, as if vaguely feeling their hidden hostility. In France, Spain, and England, the countries that still remain highly centralized, the royal capital and the court, albeit located in the proximity to major cities, never mingled with them and were often in conflict with their interests. It took a long time for the political power to settle firmly in the largest and main city of a particular country.

The history of relations between the royal court and the main city was characterized by a confrontation between the crown and the urban classes. According to Jean Gottmann, it is this confrontation that, among other reasons, laid the foundations of modern democracy.[[77]](#endnote-77)

In Paris а collision between the crown and the urban classes began as early as in the Middle Ages. As a result, the University of Paris on the Left Bank of the Seine managed to obtain a special charter from Rome, granting it self-government privileges. On the Right Bank, the court was opposed by merchants, and to ensure a better control over them, the royal palace was removed there. However, ever since the 16th century, the court would rarely stay in the capital, migrating from one royal *château* in the Loire Valley, Saint-Germain, and Fontainebleau to another. Stationed in Blois in the era of Marie de’ Medici, the court made two moves in the 17th century: first to Saint-Germain-en-Laye and then to Versailles. Practically the only reason the King would visit the Louvre was to give a formal audience.[[78]](#endnote-78)

A similar confrontation between the crown and the main town was also characteristic of England. The attempts of the English kings to “tame” London and turn it into a royal capital failed. In the 13th century, the Treasury moved from Winchester to Westminster, which gradually became the capital and headquarters for the royal administration. At that time, Westminster was a small town near London, the commercial center of the country. Only in the beginning of the 17th century did Westminster and London merge into a single entity, and yet despite the persistent efforts of the first Stuarts, the English kings did not succeed in making it a full-fledged, continental-style capital. A series of conflicts and the civil war, which in fact was not as much a war between the King and the Parliament as it was a war between the King and the city, completely destroyed the royal ambitions and plans related to London.[[79]](#endnote-79)

In Spain the relations between the authorities and the cities was somewhat analogous to those in England. The antiroyal opposition and the Revolt of the *Comuneros* in Toledo and Valladolid aimed at the protection of municipal rights were largely responsible for provoking the Spanish court to move from Valladolid and Toledo to Madrid (1561), from Madrid to Valladolid (1601), and then back to Madrid (1606).[[80]](#endnote-80) Located in Escorial, 50 kilometers northwest of Madrid, the royal capital of Spain – as the Spanish historian David Ringrose puts it – was perceived only as some kind of “an optional addition to the court,” a theatrical stage to demonstrate its splendor. Madrid’s role as the capital was essentially confined to hosting processions and ceremonies legitimizing monarchical power. Ringrose stresses that before 1561 the Spanish kings did not have a fixed court, and it was not until the rise of the Bourbons in the 18th century that monumental royal buildings began to appear in Madrid. The fact that the Habsburgs – Philip II, Philip III, and Philip IV – always consistently and deliberately avoided this city was no accident.[[81]](#endnote-81)

All of the above examples illustrate what Jean Gottmann refers to as “an obvious will to separate the big city from the center of political power that could not be entrusted to the turbulent metropolis ....”.[[82]](#endnote-82) ”This arrangement, – he notes further, – lasted a century. One of the first acts of the Revolution of 1789 was to bring the king and court back from Versailles into the city. To make the central city safer for the government after the troubles of 1848, the Second Empire supported the huge urban renewal directed by Haussmann”.[[83]](#endnote-83)

Thus, regardless of whether the royal palace was located inside or outside of the capital’s boundaries, political power was not an *integral part of the capital*.

With the royal capitals in existence, the monarchical power and the city were divided and opposed to each other so that the city, given its cellular memory of the Magna Carta and medieval forms of self-government, presented an alien and often hostile environment for the localization of power. However, the royal court and the city were growing to meet each other, and eventually, with the emergence of nation-states and new national identities, political power became consolidated in capital cities.

One has to admit that in some European countries the very growth and ambitions of royal capitals were a precursor to nationalist movements. With their power mobilization resources, their practice of income redistribution between the core and the periphery, and their tendency toward overcentralization and bureaucratization of political power, the absolutist regimes of Europe laid the foundation for the emergence of national capitals and nation-states. The monarchs’ attempts to bring their grace to the cities led to an eventual nationalization of the monarchies. What the kings and queens failed to accomplish, was finally accomplished by the nations, a new subject of history.

As it will be shown in the following chapters, national capitals owe many of their most important forms and ideas to their predecessors, sacred and royal capitals. The next several sections of this chapter will examine *various aspects of the history and arrangement of national capitals*. The other two forms of capital cities, imperial and disembedded capitals, which we have already mentioned above, will be discussed in Chapter 2, mainly in the context of their relocations.

## HISTORY AND ARRANGEMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITALS

### *On the Wealth of Capital Cities: 17th Century*

In the 17th century, it was capital cities that enjoyed a particularly high growth rates compared to all other European cities. While in the previous periods all European cities had been growing at a more or less equal proportion and pace, the 17th century, however, saw a transition from the domination of the *world-economies* centered around mercantile cities such as Genoa, Venice, and Antwerp, for example, to the rise of major national economies, concentrated in the capitals. In his treatise on the history of European capitalism, Fernand Braudel was the first to point out this fact.[[84]](#endnote-84) While some modern historians call this view and the related observations ‘impressionistic’,[[85]](#endnote-85) the relatively recent studies on urban dynamics – the works of Jean de Vries, in particular – have provided a reliable quantitative substantiation of Braudel’s ‘impressionism’.[[86]](#endnote-86)

According to the historians of European urbanization, *one third of the total growth of European cities* in the 16th-17th fell on the capital cities.[[87]](#endnote-87) Economically dependent on the expansion of the royal courts and state bureaucracy, the influx of large landowners, and the development of the luxury items industry, capital cities became international centers of fashion and role models, setting standards in clothing, lifestyle, architecture, manners, leisure activities, and methods of material goods consumption.

From 1600 to 1700, the urban population in England grew from 8% to 17%. During this period, the share of London in the total population of the country increased from 5% to 11.5% while the percentage of London residents in the urban population of England went up from 60% to 67%.[[88]](#endnote-88) Such a dynamic growth of the city was of concern to King James I, who ironically remarked that “with time England will only be London, and the whole country will be left waste”.[[89]](#endnote-89)

The case of London, however, was consistent with general European trends, and in continental Europe, the growth rate of capital cities was equally high. Thus, the population of Paris grew from 200,000 inhabitants in 1590 to 550,000 in 1700; Madrid showed an increase from 40,000 in 1560 to 170,000 in 1630; and Berlin, from 10,000 in 1650 to 170,000 by 1800. Other European capitals with the population more than doubling over the same period of time included Copenhagen, Dublin, Stockholm, Vienna, Lisbon, and Rome.[[90]](#endnote-90)

As we know, Adam Smith called his *opus magnum* *The* *Wealth of Nations*. The acclaimed American social urban theorist Jane Jacobs made a significant amendment to Adam Smith’s theories; from her point of view, the real historical beneficiaries of growth and wealth are not nations, but rather, cities. Therefore, she opines, due to the uneven economic development within national borders, it would be much more accurate to juxtapose the rich and the poor cities (or regions), rather than the rich and the poor nations.[[91]](#endnote-91) As it follows from the above figures, however, in terms of the 17th century, it would be even more accurate to speak not of the wealth of the cities but of *the wealth of the capital cities* since it were the capitals where in this period practically all resources and capabilities of each given country were concentrated. Accordingly, the concentration of the wealth in the capital cities largely determined the trajectory of the further development of Europe.

Many economic historians have traditionally attributed the dramatic growth of European capitals primarily to market development, viewing them merely as sprawling commercial centers. From the perspective of these historians, the key economic centers inevitably turn into political centers, converting their economic power into political power. Thus, to them, the market network structure explains the broad integration of the 17th century urban market and political spaces, which replaced the old fragmented urban systems and networks.

According to David Ringrose, this explanation is rooted in the disciplinary prejudices of economic historians. Ringrose believes that it was political factors, not economic urban networks, that created preconditions for growth of major European capitals, which eventually became the engines of economic development of both their countries and Europe as a whole.[[92]](#endnote-92)

Describing the system of supplying capital cities, Fernand Braudel explains the mechanism of this process as follows: The development of major capital cities would always reach a point where the local, medieval-style agricultural markets could no longer satisfy the economic needs of capital cities. The standard supply zone for medieval cities covered an area within a radius of 40-50 kilometers of the city,[[93]](#endnote-93) not enough to provide for the rapidly growing population of the capitals. This situation led to the development of long-distance trade and the rise of large business structures, capable of maintaining it. It was in their capacity as consumption machines that capital cities contributed to the consolidation of the capitalist system, intensifying activities of large retail chain suppliers. In this regard, Braudel sarcastically observes that the greatest credit for innovations must be given to the stomachs of London and Paris, which revolutionized the supply and manufacture of food products, carried out by big sellers.[[94]](#endnote-94)

Following Braudel, David Ringrose further emphasizes that the growth rate of capital cities was driven by the industries that were economically low efficient. The demand for luxury goods and exotic goods consumed by the royal courts and delivered by the sea and by land, formed the configuration of global markets. All these processes redistributed wealth in favor of capital cities, where the royal court sat and where the demand for these products was localized, impoverishing and neglecting the cities and other areas adjacent to the capital.[[95]](#endnote-95)

### *Centralization and the Concept of Nation: Advantages*

Centralization processes in Europe were accompanied by abrupt social changes, considered unfavorable by many theorists and affecting the nature of relations between the core and the periphery, as well as those between the capital and the provinces. For example, as noted by Alexis de Tocqueville, the centralization process in France, which had begun as early as in the time of Richelieu, i.e., the era of absolutism, gradually transformed the country into a system of provinces, similar to the eastern satrapies.[[96]](#endnote-96) Although this trend often caused distress to the provinces, it gave important advantages to the state at large.

*In terms of economy*, a major centralized state served as a political sponsor for national merchants and provided for a formation of a larger domestic market ensuring, in its turn, a more successful trade on international markets. In addition to this, since the new projects, where innovations were playing an increasingly important role, required a narrow specialization and the availability of substantial capital, the larger states were receiving a competitive economic advantage over the old commercial cities-states. Venice, Genoa, and Florence, which had dominated the European economy in the Renaissance, were not in the position to develop the level of long-term specialization necessary for large-scale industrialization.

Large capital cities were part of this economic success, as the agglomeration of population in one city led to spatial consolidation of demand, reduction of transportation costs, and expansion of business structures supplying these cities.

*In terms of the ability to resolve internal conflicts*, large centralized states also had a number of advantages. Thus, they had the ability to exercise a tighter control of civil and religious conflicts and tensions, minimizing the level of violence in the country and maintaining stability and strength of the domestic market. This ability was one the main reasons why the idea of a strong state power gained a tremendous popularity in the 17th century.

*In terms of military capacity*, these states had the most essential and decisive advantages, as they were able to effectively mobilize financial capital to wage a war. As many historians have opined, it was primarily military advantages that determined the transition from an absolutist state to a nation state.

Compared to a nation state, an absolutist power with its monarchical system of personal dependence was much less effective in waging wars. As the basis of the new notions of identity and social solidarity, the concept of a nation was more suitable for meeting new historical challenges. With major economic changes occurring in the society, the three pillars of loyalty that had grown up in the womb of feudalism – cities, religion, and vassalage – sustained major damage and no longer met the interests of the states. The new idea of a nation that replaced the old forms of identity allowed to carry out administrative and military tasks more efficiently. Nation-states became more effective as “war machines” and less vulnerable to external enemies. While in premodern – especially despotic – states, the fall of a capital as the center of power usually meant defeat in the war, in European countries of the modern age, the concepts of citizenship and nationalism made states more stable, significantly reducing the probability that the seizure of a capital would necessarily entail defeat in the war.

Originated as an ideological trick, the concept of a nation was gradually taking possession of the minds of the masses until it finally turned into a solid political reality. The nations, which had been brought to life by calls to defend the motherland and engage in hostilities, reached a point when they perceived themselves as real agents of history and began to create their own political institutions. In large centralized states of Europe, the nations built themselves through opposition to religions and monarchies, with the growth of civil consciousness accompanying this process. Ultimately, the nations “nationalized” the states themselves, including the economy, religion, and system of political power.

### *Capitals and the Nation-Building Process*

Unfortunately, to date, social theorists have not fully understood or articulated the role capital cities played in the formation of the idea of the nation and the other processes mentioned. Even the fathers of the theory of the nation-state – Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Anthony Smith – are almost silent on this subject. Thus, while discussing the role of the newspapers, cartography, and European novels in the construction of a new identity, Benedict Anderson practically makes no mention of the capitals.[[97]](#endnote-97) However, the role the European capitals had in the emancipation of people from the interests of religion, aristocracy, and monarchy, as well as in the process of constructing a new identity, has been equally important, if not crucial. The capital city became a true center of national unity and a visual *laboratory of national imagination.*

To engender itself, a nation needs a center that can unite various disparate groups and create symbols legitimizing the current regime and providing it with a broader social base. Such centers, as we have seen, began to emerge as early as during the period of absolutism. However, they were not yet sufficiently effective since their urban nature did not allow them to become a reliable stronghold of the monarchical authority. The rise of the nations changed this situation.

National capitals emerged as a *new model of localization of power*, an alliance of the nation, cities, and political power. Such an alliance was made possible only by the creation of a new national identity.

Given these developments, the capital became a state agent of its kind, entrusted by the state with mobilizing the population and distributing political power throughout the whole country. It evolved into a very special city, which was not closed on itself, but rather, was actively engaged in reorganizing the state economy at large, as well as the very relationship between the political authorities and the people, and becoming *a mediator between the state and the nation. Being the physical body and the engine of governance, the state found its soul and legitimacy in the face of the nation* whereas the nation received its visual representation in the capital, which became a collective propagandist and a collective agitator.

Before national capitals emerged, political power embedded in the royal court had migrated around the country or been situated in the vicinity of the main city. In nation-states this power was localized in the main city or urban network, which had been previously alien or even hostile to it, and in many cases the location of a capital was fixed by the constitution. Premodern states with their amorphous frontier borders were being replaced with modern states that had strict borders and fixed capital cities, and multiple capitals were becoming a rare exception.

With a progressively larger share of population concentrating in capital cities, and the population of capitals growing rapidly, these cities were becoming more insistent on positioning themselves as representatives of the interests of their entire country.

In addition to the above changes, as a result of increased social mobility, capital cities became “a melting pot of the nation”.[[98]](#endnote-98) Pulling people from different regions and provinces of the country, capitals were symbolically replacing the face-to-face interaction, which was the basis of social solidarity in physical communities, with a new type of social ties and interaction, thereby nurturing the idea of an imaginary community.

The alliance between the state and the city, however, was being made based on mutual concessions.

The strengthening of centralized states, along with the rapid expansion of capital cities, created problems that were much greater than the resources in the possession of the capitals. This prompted the state machine to actively intervene in the capital’s life, stripping it off its traditional urban functions and turning it into *something other than just a city*. As a result, not only did the capital come to embody the urban spirit as such, it now represented the spirit and interests of the whole country. This transformation caused profound changes in the system of loyalty so that the key determinant of the people’s identity became loyalty to the state or the nation, superseding that to the city.

Likewise, alterations affected the social image of a capital city. The rise of capitals consolidated the rise of social classes other than the aristocracy and clergy. In a traditional society, each class had its own space: The king had the palace, the clergy had the church and monastery, the aristocracy had the castle, the peasants had the village while the bourgeoisie and artisans had the city. The rise of the absolutist state and the subsequent birth of national capitals led to the emergence of a new class, state bureaucracy, i.e., administrative and civil servants, with whom the old urban classes were forced to share their living space. The servants of both the king and god had to give way not only to the bureaucracy but also to other growing urban classes and professional communities. In this regard, of a particular interest is a description of the rapidly developing Madrid, which was attracting officials, king’s messengers, patronage seekers, lobbyists, and royal guards from across the country.[[99]](#endnote-99)

This compromise started a new far-reaching process that was destined to transform the state itself so that it would eventually cease to be absolutist and gradually give way to the prerogatives of the parliament and all the social classes who were seeking representation in the parliament and in the capital.

In the course of time, many of the privileges enjoyed by townspeople were extended to the rest of the residents of the territorial states. As the city-states were being replaced with the *state-cities*, urban forms of self-government, self-identity, and even certain day-to-day activities were transferred to the whole country. As a result, the entire population became to some degree townspeople, that is, citizens, and this significantly expanded loyalty to state power.

The Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt noted that the emergence of national capitals was one of the most important results of the nation-building process.[[100]](#endnote-100) It would be much more accurate, however, to view national capitals as *one of the most important catalysts and instruments of nation-building*. Preparing the ground for national revolutions and transformation of the state, capitals of the absolutist states served as the tools that the nations used in o cities, religion, and vassalage to create or reinvent themselves, as well as to present themselves visually through their architecture; these capitals became a sort of *a screen on which the nations would project images of their identity.*

As a material for utopian art and architectural experiments, one single city was quite rewarding and easy to use. Imitating the great utopians Tommaso Campanella and Thomas More, nations attempted to build their own *social utopia in a single city*, its size commensurate with the objectives of this utopia. Initially, a nation presented itself in urban forms of the capital, where the alienation of urban life could be removed with the metaphor of the “imaginary community.” The capital city became the national laboratory of creativity, testing the ideas and generated by the nation and analyzing its visions of the past and the future. Like midwives, capitals were bringing to life imagination of the nation.

Thus, the capital united the three previously disparate elements – *political power, reverence, and urban environment* – which gave rise to new forms of the collective consciousness spreading throughout the country. It was this combination that determined the might of the nations, their viability and sustainability, as well as the cardinal features of the capital as a distinct urban category.

### *Sources of Architectural and Other Forms*

Separation from both religion and royal power, as well as (in the case of colonized and dependent states) from external political dominance, became the main launching pad for the process of shaping the image of national capitals. Dynastic and religious forms of identity, which traditionally had been more universal in nature, were striving to compete with or challenge the new national identity. Despite this confrontation, however, both the nations and their new capitals were actively adopting the old forms and ideas from the cultural reservoirs and repertoires of the royalty, aristocracy, and clergy. These old forms became construction material for national substance, iconography, and architecture. As it is often the case, the victors imitate the vanquished, and, thus, rejecting old identities, the national capitals came to imitate the royal courts and sacred capitals.

Louis Mumford sees the origin of national capitals in the 17th century baroque capitals.[[101]](#endnote-101) Certainly, some elements of the royal court’s way of life, traditions, and design were transposed, albeit in a modified and heavily exaggerated version, to national capitals.

Architectural forms of the national capital are reminiscent of *an inside-out palace* stretched along the entire length of the capital city’s central avenues and squares. The royal theater gave birth to the national drama theater, opera, and concert hall; the royal and aristocratic art and curiosities collections gave rise to the national museums while the royal parks and menageries engendered the public landscape parks and zoos, respectively.[[102]](#endnote-102) The classic Latin of royal architecture evolved into the vernacular of the capital’s streets and shopping districts. In a sense, the court had unintentionally tested and endorsed all the major urban functions and elements of the urban experience, which subsequently became classic expressions of the capital city’s *ethos*. The squares of the transformed capitals absorbed the splendor and the spirit of the royal parks, palaces, and mansions. Finally, the newly emerged nations came to mimic the aristocracy by displaying (or perhaps only pretending to do so) excessive concerns over the issues of their origin, ancestry, and pedigree in recording their national history. Thus, by and large, all the substantive elements of royal and aristocratic culture were gradually nationalized and democratized.

Developing their ritualistic forms, the nations increasingly imitated sacred capitals, modifying the old rites and ceremonials and creating the new, civil cults, along with numerous symbols, paraphernalia, and ceremonies intended to substitute their religious predecessors. Terence McGee aptly calls national capital cities “modern cult *centres*,” acknowledging their role as symbolic theaters of nationalism.[[103]](#endnote-103) Indeed, the design elements and ceremonial components of sacred capitals became building blocks in the devising of the iconic forms of holidays, solemn processions, parades, festivals, and the very cult of both the nation and national history, around which they were formed.

In the newly constructed pantheon, the old Christian saints and martyrs were replaced with the new characters, i.e., victims of the struggle for national liberation and national unity, immortalized in mournful memorials. Temples of national fame were built across the countries, commemorating new national saints, especially writers and poets who had usually died young. Majestic monuments glorified the sacrifices these heroes had made to ensure that the triumphant sun of glory would shine on the nation. One may say that the central squares of the capitals were turned into *inside-out churches featuring the national iconostasis*, monuments to the heroes of the struggle against foreign oppressors and invaders, religious dogmatism, or absolute power of the king. These heroes were perceived as the atoning sacrifice on the altar of the national cause.

Aside from explicitly adopting old forms, national-states were also creating new forms and shifting the emphasis in the structural composition of capital cities. Thus, the center of capitals gradually drifted from the main cathedral and main palace to the stock exchange and parliament. After fortresses had lost their military significance and status as the protector of the city, they were transformed into symbols of military might, embodied in the grandeur of the capital city, albeit sometimes cyclopean in form and size. Symbolization and exaggeration of military power, thus, replaced actual military fortifications. Production, exchange, and consumption were allocated between different parts of the capital city.

The narrative of national history also changed. Transformed by the imagination, *chronos* of this narrative streamed into the visual *topos* of the capitals, forming sinkholes of national achievements represented with victory squares and monuments to the heroes of liberation movements. The capital city became a national history book in miniature format where the old symbols of royal or imperial power were adapted to the new realities and presented as chapters or decorative elements of the new historical narrative.

The ideology of nationalism was shaped in the process of opposition, whether it was the opposition to the royal power, religion, foreign invaders and colonizers, or local separatism, and all these emphases and aspects of nationalism were reflected in the iconography of capital cities.

As observed by Michiel Wagenaar, planners of the 19th century European capitals were seeking to create “open-air national museums”,[[104]](#endnote-104) subjecting old meanings and symbols to mandatory *museumification*. Accordingly, not only did the capital city functioned as the display of the national time, it also served as the map of the national space so that iconography and toponymy of the capital reflected the variety of parts and constitutive elements of the nation. Authorities used the capital to sing the praises of their own greatness and glory. As a result, metaphorically speaking, the capital city became the national anthem, its streets and squares full of military-band bravado.

To summarize, nationalization of capital cities ended the process of nation-building. *State power, religious reverence, and urban environment – the three previously disparate and spatially separated components – were finally united in the capital city*. Emerged shortly before the rise of the nations, the capital allowed the nations to consolidate, perceiving themselves as something real and unified and condensing their ideas and symbols.

### *Philosophical Reflections on National Capitals*

In the 17th – 18th centuries, two traditions of intellectual reflection on capital cities originated in the works of the leading philosophers of that time. While the first tradition presents a sort of apologia of the capital city, the second one is a romantic reaction to this apologia.

Describing the functions of the capital in his treatise entitled *La Métropolitée* (1682), Alexandrе le Maître was probably guided by Thomas Hobbes’ ideas of the absolute state as well as by geometrical preoccupations and sensitivites of his century.[[105]](#endnote-105) If the cities and settlements constitute the body, then, in relation to them, the capital must act as the head. It must also be the absolute capital of the society, playing the leading role in carrying out all state functions including those in the fields of economy, politics, morality, and intellectual developments. The capital should be the center of commerce and the richest of the cities since the economy cannot function normally unless it is directed by the suzerain. The capital gives to receive and receives to give away. Thus, the provinces supply the money to the treasury; in return, the capital gives greatness and glory to them, protecting them and serving as the guarantor of the fairness in the state.[[106]](#endnote-106)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau represents the opposite, romantic approach toward the rise of capital cities, pointing out the burden that the very existence of capital cities imposes on the rest of the state and state’s population. He also calls attention to the problem of unequal distribution, inherent in the interaction between the capital and the provinces.

*The more our capital cities strike the vulgar eye with admiration, the greater reason is there to lament the sight of the abandoned countryside, the large tracts of land that lie uncultivated, the roads crowded with unfortunate citizens turned beggars or highwaymen, and doomed to end their wretched lives either on a dunghill or on the gallows. Thus the State grows rich on the one hand, and feeble and depopulated on the other …. [[107]](#endnote-107)*

Rousseau equates each site where a palace is erected to a desolate wasteland. In his mind, capitals, as exemplified by Paris he disliked heartily, are a much greater source of degradation and decay than any other city.

As an alternative to the dominance of capitals, Rousseau, in *The Social Contract*, suggests “to allow no capital, to make the seat of government move from town to town, and to assemble by turn in each the Provincial Estates of the country”.[[108]](#endnote-108)

It is most likely that this idea was inspired by the six-rotating-capital system, which had been implemented in his native Swiss Confederation long ago. It is interesting to note that in France Rousseau’s ideas continuously influenced the concept of territorial development for centuries, even as late as the 20th century, and were relied upon in laying out a number of plans for downsizing Paris. The Rousseauistic resentment against large capital cities also has often fostered the argument and the feeling that small towns are the most appropriate venue for capitals.

### *Stein Rokkan’s Theory*

The theory developed by the Norwegian sociologist Stein Rokkan (1921-1979) provides the answer to the question as to why “hard” political capitals emerged in some countries while “softer” capitals emerged in others.

As it has been noted above, two types of capital cities may be distinguished in Europe: (i) those that are characterized by a complete dominance over the national urban system; and (ii) those that may yield to other cities – for example, in terms of economic supremacy. Following Umberto Eco, we term these types as “hard capitals” and “soft capitals,” respectively.

Stein Rokkan offers a novel explanation of the reasons for the difference between the countries having *a monocephalic urban structure* and those having *a polycephalic structure*. According to him, this difference is determined by whether a given country occupies a peripheral or central position in relation to the continental urban epicenter, where the density of cities is particularly high and where trade routes and commercial cities are traditionally concentrated.[[109]](#endnote-109)

Rokkan points to the North-South axis in Central Europe, which housed the most important trade routes linking its northern part, the Hansa, with Italy and the Mediterranean, calling this axis “*the belt of cities*.” Today this belt still encompasses the cities of Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, northern Italy, and southern France.[[110]](#endnote-110)

The farther from major trade routes a political center leading the state-building process is, the more dominant and significant a capital city it becomes, both in terms of population concentration and in terms of the role it plays in comparison with the rest of the country. Worded differently, the closer major trade routes are, the less dominant a capital city is.

Another thesis Rokkan sets forth is that the denser the networks of cities in a given country, the lesser the role of the capital city, and the higher the chances of forming a polycephalic urban structure. Conversely, the thinner the network of cities, the greater the role of the capital city. According to Rokkan, the development of the territories to the east and west of the belt of cities was driven by the strong urban centers involved in the state-building process, distant from the established trade routes, and having no serious competitors among the cities close to those routes.

Following this pattern, centralized monocephalic states such as France, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, and Scandinavian states emerged west of the city belt[[111]](#endnote-111) while the area lying east of the belt saw the emergence of Austria, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia, all of which were also centralized and monocephalic.

Of all the states formed to the west of the city belt, Great Britain was by far the most centralized one. This led its capital city, whose supremacy had a long historical tradition, to reach a very higher degree of primacy. Arguing that this primacy was deeply rooted in the historical past of the country, the British historian John Morrill compares London with other European cities:

*Paris, the largest city in France, had 350,000 inhabitants in the mid-seventeenth century. The second and third largest cities were Rouen and Lyons with 80,000-100,000 inhabitants. In Europe, there were only five towns with population of more than 250,000, but over one hundred with more than 50,000 inhabitants. In England, however, London had more than half a million inhabitants by 1640 or 1660; Newcastle, Bristol and Norwich, which rivalled one another for second place, had barely 25,000 each. London was bigger than the next fifty towns in England combined*.[[112]](#endnote-112)

In contrast to the fragmented economies of autonomous commercial cities, large centralized states transformed into nations and were industrialized much faster. This allowed them to participate in large-scale industrial and commercial projects, as exemplified by business activities of such a corporate giant as the English East India Company.

Rokkan did not analyze operations of urban networks outside of Europe. However, many countries of the world had their own trade routes and their own “belts of cities” defining their international trade, affecting their level of centralization, and influencing their urban structures. Aside from the Silk Road, the examples of the international trade routes that gave rise to the belts of cities include the Grand Trunk Road in India, the Armenian trade routes in the Middle East and Asia Minor, and many others. Although the topic of configuring non-European political spaces in the context of the size of their capital cities is highly promising, it, nonetheless, requires a separate analysis.

### *The Westphalian System and Non-European Countries*

The Westphalian system formed the basis of the concept of a *territorial state*, defining the boundaries of state authority. At the heart of this concept was the idea that jurisdiction of state authority is determined only by territorial borders, and not by other factors such as religious denomination or the ruler’s relations with his subjects. In modern states, modern territory replaced bounded political space that was characteristic of the supremacy system in premodern states.

The concept of the territorial state was naturally complemented with the new concept of the nation. From that moment on, the identity of the state’s population would be determined neither by religious concepts, nor by ties with the royal dynasty, nor by association with a particular city, but rather, by association with a particular nation. National capital cities became an instrument allowing to mobilize a nation and creating a locus of identification for the population of a given territory.

Edward Schatz offers an innovative hypothesis that without the historical experience of the Westphalian systems, the non-European capital cities in their capacity as agents of the state interests were less effective than their European counterparts.[[113]](#endnote-113)

In the case of Europe, the Westphalian system merely gave a legal recognition to the then existing actual situation. Leading to the emergence of a new system of loyalty, the processes of state-building and nation-building preceded the creation of a modern state. In contrast, outside of Europe, the processes involving both nation-building and the formation of a new loyalty system achieved their peak after the rise of independent states although by the time these states gained independence, they had already been recognized as nations within the meaning of international legal system formed on the basis of the Westphalian system. Peoples of the majority of non-European countries had yet to develop into a nation in the European sense of the word.[[114]](#endnote-114)

Schatz believes that under these circumstances European capitals served as much better instruments of establishing political and territorial control. According to him, postcolonial non-European states were predisposed to capital city relocations because they were attempting to create more effective national capitals similar to their European prototype.

Albeit quite interesting, this hypothesis needs some extra assumptions and modifications. Schatz’ analysis is based on the concepts of nation-building and state-building, and he rightly excludes capital city relocations in premodern states from it. However, such states as the US, Australia, and Canada fit into this analysis quite well. Furthermore, they have introduced an important alternative form of nation-building that has become wide-spread and attractive to many other countries. Contrary to the European model of national capitals, which was premised on a highly centralized model of the state, federal capitals were more suitable for a decentralized model. In the mid-19th century, many Latin American countries were seriously considering the concept of a neutral federal capital as one of the possible scenarios of their development. By and large, the nation-building process in Latin America was also much closer to the experience of European countries than to that of Asian and African countries.

It is noteworthy that some European peoples did not quite develop into full-fledged nations. Thus, many historians have concluded that the pace of the nation-building process in Russia has been delayed and too slow compared to the level of its development as a state.[[115]](#endnote-115)

It should be also emphasized that non-European countries often lacked not only the concept of a nation but some other notions that they also had to adopt and that were closely related to it, e.g., the citizenship and the city.

The most fundamental categories of a European political consciousness have been traditionally based on the normative concepts related, whether logically or linguistically, to the notion of the city. Some of the examples include the concept of citizenship (derived from the word “city”), politics (derived from “*polis*,” the Greek for “city”), civilization, civism, and civics (derived from “*civis*,” the Latin for “city-dweller” and related to “*civitas*,” Latin for “community”). The very concept of the European state originated from the idea of the city; furthermore, the modern state was modeled after the city, *made in its image, after its likeness*. The city-related norms of political life – first and foremost, the concept of self-government – were gradually spreading among all the people living in the state and turning them from mere residents into city-dwellers, that is, citizens.

Many plans for the construction of new capitals in non-European countries may have taken into account the gaps in the historical experience of these countries. The new capitals were intended to compensate for the lack of a developed urban system and to foster the formation of new political institutions. Even building just one city was highly important to the states where there were but a few economically prosperous cities and where the economy was strongly dependent on agriculture. In these cases, the state, by and through the capital city, had a particularly vital need to penetrate the periphery, where political loyalty often remained rudimentary.

As it has been shown, in most of the European countries, the change of political regime or the conquest of independence was accompanied by a rather radical change of the capital city’s iconography. For non-European countries, such a change was often insufficient. There geographical location of the capital city played a more important role than in Europe, which had a substantial historical experience of nation-state building. Proximity to the territories where loyalty to the nation-state had not yet been formed, was more essential for non-European countries.

To illustrate and to test the above theses, chapter 3 will look at capital city relocation plans and scenarios that have been set forth in different parts of the world.

# Chapter 2

# Capital City Relocation Experience

## PRINCIPLES OF CAPITAL CITY SITING

So far this book has focused on the history of different types of capital cities, leaving aside the issue of their siting principles. However, it is mainly these principles that give rise to capital city relocations, and, therefore, identifying them would certainly help to better understand the motivations behind these relocations. One of such principles appears to be the implicit principle of centrality, often appealed to today by the supporters of capital relocations.

Intuitively, this principle seems quite logical since the central location allows a capital city to control both the population and the territory of a given country more effectively. Furthermore, such an arrangement seemingly stems from common mythological concepts based on the mythologem of the Center. As it has been demonstrated above, some systems of national mythology perceived capitals as the center of not only the state but also the whole world.[[116]](#endnote-116)

The idea that geographical centrality is a norm for the state-building process dominated even state theories of the modern age. Thus, Alexandre le Maître in his *La Métropolitée* prescribes a centrally located capital city. Likewise, in Thomas More’s Utopia the capital is sited in the very center of the island.

A central location also appears to be most rational from the prospective of general economic principles. The economic theory generally predicts that a capital city should be centrally located to maximize tax revenue or improve governance.[[117]](#endnote-117) To select the most optimal location for their headquarters or a production facility, corporations must analyze a whole complex of factors, e.g., the availability of raw materials, power supply, qualified labor, transportation network, and potential markets for the products to be produced; the proximity of end-users; the distance to competitors; and the possibility of effective communication among the participants in the processes of production, sales, and management. In many cases, this is the logic of a transportation hub serving customers in different parts of an evenly populated and relatively homogeneous area. If one applied production facility siting principles to the task of selecting a capital city, the most decisive principle would be the proximity to the end-users, that is, proximity to the citizenry consuming public benefits produced by the capitals. Ideally these benefits would have to be equally available to all the citizens, thus justifying the idea that a capital city should be sited in the center of the state.

However, for modern states, centrally located capitals are an exception rather than a rule. State territories are rarely homogenous, and sometimes the very question of what constitutes the center of the state becomes problematic too.

Although many capitals were originally sited based on the principle of centrality, boundaries changes caused by territorial losses or gains often turned centrally located capitals into peripherally located ones. This phenomenon is illustrated by the cases of Vienna and Istanbul, both of which, as a result of major territorial losses, found themselves situated at the very edge of Austria and Turkey, respectively. Moscow was once located in the center of the European part of the Soviet Union but, after the union collapsed, moved much closer to the western periphery of present-day Russia. Paris also lost its original central location as the capital of the Capetian possessions in northern France but did so not as a result of losses, but rather, as a result of territorial expansion of the state.

Despite its shortcomings, the principle of centrality represents an important ideal model and as such is helpful for the purpose of our study. This model may serve as a reference point to determine the degree of deviation of modern capitals from the ideal center.

In the course of history, capital city siting has been affected by a set of diverse factors, not all of which can be easily identified today. However, four groups of factors – geographical, military, cultural, and political – appear to be of utmost significance. Not always determinative in selecting the optimal site, they have always imposed constraints on capital city siting, often leading to deviations from the principle of centrality.

### ***Geographical Factors***

Physical geography – including *the landscape and climate conditions* – has always played a greatly important role in placing a capital city, affecting the nature of the populating process and creating the geometry that gives meaning to the concepts of centrality of intermediacy. In the countries where the ecumene significantly differs in size from their total territory – e.g., Russia, Australia, or Algeria – the central location of the capital does not necessarily imply its geographical centrality.

Capital cities were often sited in the locations where food supplies from the outside storehouses could be easily delivered using natural transportation routes. In this regard, rivers linking the capital with food suppliers were of particular importance. Sometimes a capital city could be built at the intersection of different landscape types, for example, the forest and the steppe, the mountains and the plain, or the desert and the oasis. The natural nodality of the city was always taken into account.

These natural geographical reference points and physiography often went through some sort of a symbolic adaptation, and the intersection areas could acquire a special meaning if they coincided with the natural boundaries of composite ethnicities or other groups.

In many countries, capital city relocations were directly caused by natural cataclysmic events such as an earthquake, diversion of the river channel, or even climatic changes. Thus, in 1598 the capital of Khwarezm was moved from Gurganj (now Urgench) to Khiva because the Amu Darya River channel diverted from the old river bed. Furthermore, a diversion of the Euphrates led to the relocation of the capital from Babylon to Seleucia-on-the-Tigris. Also known as the New Babylon, the latter had been founded by the Seleucus I Nikator, a former general of Alexander the Great, and located in a short distance from the old Babylon. Climate changes – e.g., general climatic cooling – could also lead to the relocation of a capital city.[[118]](#endnote-118)

Lastly, the availability of construction materials, most notably building stone, associated with the notion of power, was also one of the factors affecting the siting of capital cities.[[119]](#endnote-119)

### ***Military Factors***

Throughout the centuries, military considerations have been the biggest factor causing the deviation of capital cities from the geographic center.

Certain geographical factors played a vital role in state defense. Thus, elevated locations surrounded by natural water reservoirs or ravines provided ideal natural fortifications.

The British geographer Vaughan Cornish, whose theory will yet be discussed in more detail below, believed that the eccentric location of most of the imperial capitals are explained by military factors. As a rule, capitals were situated on the frontier which served as a springboard for further expansion of the state or, contrarily, which was exceedingly susceptible to external attacks.

For example, no capital city of China has ever been located in the center of the country. Historically, practically all of the campaigns to reunify China have started in the north where the borders were extremely vulnerable and frequently invaded by various northern nomadic tribes, the Mongols, Turks, and Tungus, to name but a few. Due to this factor, most of the prominent Chinese capital cities were sited on the dangerous northern frontier despite the fact that, as early as the 10th century, the economic center of the country had shifted to the south, the Yangtze River Valley.[[120]](#endnote-120) Some historians have opined that siting China’s capitals near the northern border, at the gateway to the steppe, was justified by the need to control the army and its generals, who would have otherwise organized a coup d’état and taken the power in the country. This logic, however, was hardly universal since many other states, both ancient and modern, have tended to do exactly the opposite, moving their capitals away from the border to less vulnerable locations.

### ***Cultural Factors***

*Cultural factors* that may affect capital city siting are not inferable from or solely explained by the geographical location of the country. Although geography certainly affects them, it does not exhaust their content. Relevant cultural factors include first of all, *fundamental orientations, values, visions, religious beliefs, and spatial organization schemes*. This list may be supplemented with numerous other factors such as the symbolic meaning of the cardinal points, proximity to religious centers, nature of economic activities, level of universal or global ambitions of a given state or civilization, etc. The capital’s location with respect to the sea and the model of a land-sea relationship may also play a significant role defining the difference between land and maritime empires.

The Chinese Empire had a convenient access to the ocean and the seas, and its coastline was well suited for navigation and sea-port siting. It is interesting to note in this regard that regardless of these geographical advantages, *none of the numerous China’s capitals except Lin’an* (present-day Hangzhou), the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), *was located on the sea coast*.[[121]](#endnote-121) Many sinologists believe that this situation stemmed from the fundamental continental orientation of China, lengthy historical period of isolation from the outside world, and the lack of world domination ambitions.

The Russian sinologist Artemiy Karapetyants explains the differences between the European Mediterranean and Chinese civilizations by fundamentally conflicting spatial models underlying these civilizations. While the European political space was centered around the Mediterranean, surrounded by various lands and countries, China saw both itself and the whole civilized world as a piece of land washed on all sides by four seas.[[122]](#endnote-122) Karapetyants maintains that this opposition also gave rise to two different types of primary civilizing activities defining these cultures: (i) irrigation in the case of Europe and (ii) land reclamation from the water bodies in the case of China. Accordingly, the efforts of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations were focused on irrigating land and providing water supplies whereas, by contrast, the Chinese civilization, as exemplified by its mythological and cultural heroes, strived to conquer the element of water, reclaiming land from the seas and the oceans.[[123]](#endnote-123) These spatial perceptions, along with other factors, made the siting of China’s capital cities in the coastal area undesirable and unlikely.

Some historians attribute the decline of the Ming Dynasty to the fact that its capital, Beijing, was located in the extreme north of the country. Such a location made the cost of supplying Beijing very high, resulted in a loss of influence in the southern regions, and prevented China from developing a successful maritime geostrategy.[[124]](#endnote-124)

Many countries and regions have had distinctive cultural practices associated with the relocation of a capital city. Thus, China and some other oriental cultures developed the concepts of corporeality and energetic “fullness” of space. Geomancy, a branch of science studying these problems allowed to identify the most favorable sites for cities and, of course, capital cities. The geomantic approach to this topic will be discussed in more detail in one of the following chapters. In some African countries the royal villages were founded on selected and sanctified sites and there were some rules and rituals that governed their selection and symbolic organization.[[125]](#endnote-125)

Speaking of cultural practices, one should also mention capital relocation concepts based on religious beliefs. Various states have had mythologies grounded in covenants related to capital city siting. Sometimes the notion of chosenness stemmed not from religion, but rather, a protective *genius loci* associated with a capital city. The concept of sacred space or “the natural capital,” albeit appearing anachronistic today, continue to influence the ongoing capital city relocation debates in many states and affect decisions on the shifting of capital cities.

When siting a capital city, the above mentioned factors were always taken into account although they were not always in harmony. Furthermore, one should realize that because different political regimes favored different siting and relocation logics, these factors did play the identical role in the respective processes.

Unquestionably, the siting of a national capital city tended to take geographical, military, and cultural factors into consideration; yet, by and large, it was based on political reasons which we will analyze below. For empires and despotic states, military effectiveness and retention or strengthening of political power were more decisive parameters of capital city relocations.

The next two sections will discuss two logics of capital city relocation, the first of which is characteristic of empires and is primarily concerned with military confrontations while the second one involves despotic states and is intended to establish a new balance of power and authority within the state affected by internal political confrontation brought about by political factions. The goal of these despotic regimes was to create new technologies of governance, legitimizing their own political dominance.

## CAPITAL CITY RELOCATION IN EMPIRES

The British geographer Vaughan Cornish and the British historian Arnold Toynbee have attempted to analyze the principles of capital city siting and relocation followed by great powers and major empires.

Examining how *great powers* sited their capitals, Cornish introduces the concept of a *forward capital*. According to Cornish, the siting of capitals of great powers was determined by three basic elements: (i) Storehouse or production zones supplying food and human resources to the state; (ii) Crossroads, which ensured the delivery of these supplies; and (iii) Strongholds, which served as protection devices ensuring the safety of this delivery. In most cases, the location of the state’s Storehouse determined the location of both the Crossroads and Strongholds. Usually imperial capitals were sited on the states’ most active and at the same time most vulnerable frontier that dictated its foreign policy.

The geographical center of the state was an extremely unusual location for imperial capitals; usually they were situated either inside the production zones or near the frontier, at the forefront of protecting the access to the Storehouse. Changing the state borders led to the search for a new site ensuring that the position of the capital with respect to the three fundamental elements would remain the same. If the borders did not undergo changes, the geographical location of imperial capitals was stable; sometimes, however, they migrate, in a very conservative way, within the boundaries of a single strategically important region.

Cornish illustrates his theory with numerous historical examples. Thus, most of the capitals of India were located in the Delhi area, a vulnerable northwestern region which conquerors from Central Asia and Afghanistan frequently used as the gateway to invade India. The Indian capitals often migrated within this strategically important region but did not leave it since doing so would have greatly increased the risk of the country’s being conquered.

Likewise, nearly all of the capitals of China were sited in the north, where the main threat to the security of the empire, nomadic invasions, was particularly high. Migrations of the capitals were confined to a small northern region while “the rice bowl of China,” – the rice-producing areas – was centered south of Beijing, in the plains between the Huang He and the Yangtze rivers.[[126]](#endnote-126) Following the same patterns, the location of Ctesiphon, the capital of Persia, reflected the western orientation of the country while providing a connection between the Persia’s demographic center with the Mesopotamian Delta, which served as the granary of the empire. Another example involves the Roman Empire, where the throne was moved from Rome to Byzantium. Cornish attributes this move to the new, eastern orientation of the empire, as well as to the need to ensure protection of this vulnerable area from the barbarians.[[127]](#endnote-127) It might be added that with their southern border constantly threatened by the Persians and by the Greeks, and finding their northern enemies far less formidable, the Armenian kings entrenched themselves strongly in the south by siting most of their capitals there. Furthermore, the cases of the Austro-Hungarian, British, French, and Inca Empires, according to Cornish, reveal similar trends in placing their forward capitals.[[128]](#endnote-128)

In his treatise entitled *A Study of History*, in the section studying “universal states,” Toynbee formulates a principle providing that both the siting of a new capital and the direction of the shifts in political power essentially depended on who the builders of the empire were – alien invaders, barbarians, marchmen, or metropolitan inhabitants[[129]](#endnote-129) The litmus test of his classification is the origin of ruling dynasties that built capital cities of *universal empires*. Toynbee points out that the dynasties of foreign extraction sited a capital city in near proximity to their original point of invasion to facilitate a reinforcement of men and a replenishment of food supplies. He substantiates his thesis with the examples of the capitals of barbarian dynasties in north China, those of the Arab and Greek conquerors in the Middle East (Damascus and Antioch, to be precise) and the Parthians in Babylonia; and the capital of the Hyksos in Egypt.[[130]](#endnote-130) Toynbee further develops and details this theory in his later book, reaching conclusions similar in many ways to those made by Cornish.

Relying on the motives that led to the foundation of a capital, Toynbee also proposes an alternative classification of capital cities, wherein capitals are distinguished by the motives leading to their establishment: geographical convenience, considerations of prestige, and strategic reasons.[[131]](#endnote-131) This classification, however, does not seem to be sufficiently accurate and logical. For example, considerations of convenience include excessively numerous and sometimes conflicting factors, both economic and political in nature. “Capitals оf prestige,” аs described by Toynbee, encompass cities whose sacredness and significance transcended the borders of a specific state and specific time, cities that played a unique and special role in the history of their state, and cities that retained their capital status merely by force of historical habit, e.g., Rome of the late Empire.

Overall, both Cornish and Toynbee, in a very informative, colorful, and interesting way, illustrate and detail the principles that they believe to be crucial for understanding the subject. Both present their concepts not as normative descriptions, but rather, empirical laws of capital city relocation and capital city functioning. However, real historical geography has many cases that do not confirm their principles, and the universality of their analytical schemes is not always convincing. For example, while Spain undoubtedly meets the definition of a “great power,” the central location of its capital, Madrid, refutes the universality of the concept of a forward capital. Sometimes the principles proposed by Toynbee sink in the details that do not even support his generalizations. It was in part for these reasons that the well-known Indian sociologist G.S. Ghurye strongly criticized Toynbee’s analysis of the migration of India’s capitals.[[132]](#endnote-132)

Interestingly enough, the empirical laws Toynbee discovered did not prevent him from making two unsuccessful predictions on capital city relocations. Thus, in 1935 he claimed that in accordance with these laws, the capital of China would never be returned to Beijing.[[133]](#endnote-133) In the period between the two world wars, China’s capital was located in Nanjing; however, after the communists came to power in 1949, it was safely moved back to Beijing. In another instance, during the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922, Toynbee, who then was serving at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, predicted the relocation of the Turkish capital to Izmir. In fairness to him, it should be admitted that at that time he had not yet completed formulating his laws of capital relocation.

The direction of imperial capitals relocation is determined not as much by who founded the empire, but rather, by general direction of the expansion and the need to consolidate territorial gains, or, on the contrary, by territorial vulnerability and the need to locate a firmer social and political base, loyal and committed to the existing governance system. Transferring capitals in the empires was driven by the *logic of empire-building*, and within this logic one can distinguish several distinct objectives.

The first logic is the logic of absorption and incorporation, represented by imperial states in the phase of stability and military expansion. To facilitate the military command process, supply of the troops, and communication system, these states often moved their capital closer to the frontier, to the forefront of their conquest and expansion.

An example of this type of logic is Prussia, which in 1648, after the Thirty-Year War, moved its capital from Konigsberg to Berlin, in parallel with its expansion westward.

The first capital of the Norwegian kingdom was located in Trondheim, in the center of the historical ecumene of the Vikings, north of Sognefjord. However, when the Vikings began their penetration into the south, conquering the British Isles and Normandy, Trondheim became too distant from the targets of the conquest, and the capital was transferred to Bergen, which was much closer both to the these targets and to the theater of military operations.[[134]](#endnote-134)

In 77 B.C. the Armenian king Tigranes the Great moved the capital from Artashat (Artaxata) in the east to a newly founded city of Tigranakert (Tigranocerta) located in the southernmost region of Armenia, close to the border with Mesopotamia, into which his kingdom was expanding. He forcibly resettled residents of the Greek cities and other frontier areas to the new capital.[[135]](#endnote-135)

This capital relocation strategy, illustrated by the above examples, was described by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), an Arab historian and sociologist. Exploring the anatomy of political power, he wrote in his fundamental treatise *An Introduction to History*:

*Each nation must have a home, (a place) ... from which the realm took its origin. When the realm expands and its influence grows, it is inevitable that the seat of government be amidst the provinces belonging to the dynasty, because it is a sort of center for the whole area. Thus, the (new seat of government) is remote from the site of the former seat of government*.[[136]](#endnote-136)

A more radical, albeit quite common form of the same strategy, is the *transfer of a capital city directly to the territory of the recently annexed states*, not yet fully integrated into the empire and still alien to it, whether ethnically, religiously, or both. The type of capital cities created by such a relocation may be termed as *incorporated capitals*.

King David moved his throne to Jerusalem, situated on the land that had been recently seized from the Jebusites.

In 762 the Arabs shifted their capital to Baghdad, the area that had previously belonged to the Persian Empire and was located not far from Ctesiphon, the summer residence of the Persian *shahs*.

Expanding to the west, the Ottoman Turks were also transferring their capitals. Since around 1300 their first capital was Yenişehir where they moved from Konya; then from Yenişehir to Bursa (1335-1363) and then to Adrianople, Thrace, in 1363, renaming it to Edirne; and later to Constantinople, which after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, became Istanbul.[[137]](#endnote-137)

As the Persian Empire was growing westward, the *shahs* often founded new capitals on the territories recently taken from the conquered peoples. The list included Ecbatana, the former capital of Media; Susa, the former capital of Elam; and Ctesiphon, the former capital of Parthia and Babylonia. These relocations were respectively effectuated by the Achaemenids – in 550 BC and 521 BC – and the Sassanids in 227 AD (notably, the capital of Parthia was seized in 224 AD). Perhaps, the unusual mobility of the ancient Persian capitals should be attributed to the nomadic past of the Persians.

The Parthian capitals were also moved east to west: from Nisa, located on the territory of present Turkmenistan, to Dara; then, in 216 BC, to Gekatompil, eventually renamed to Mitridatkert; thereafter, in the middle of the 1st century BC, to Ecbatana, and finally, in the middle of the 1st century AD, to Ctesiphon. Enlarging their territorial possessions, the Yuezhi, the founders of the Kushan Empire, transferred their capital from Linshi, located near modern Dushanbe, to Kushania in Sogdia; then to Bagram, a district of modern Kabul; and then, for a short period of time, to Taxila in the northwestern part of modern Pakistan. In the heyday of the Kushan Empire, its capital was Purushapura, situated on the territory of modern Indian State of Peshawar.

Alexander the Great followed a similar logic. According to the testimonies of the ancients, he planned to site a future capital of his Hellenistic state in Babylon, thereby seeking to consolidate his territorial acquisitions and integrate the East into the Macedonian state.[[138]](#endnote-138) This plan probably reflected both the influence and strength of the view presenting Babylon as the axis of the world, a widely accepted concept in the ancient East.

Political reorganization of the Mongol Empire pursued the same objectives. Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, moved his throne from Karakorum to Beijing in China, thus integrating this huge territory into his empire and absorbing China’s population, culture, and state administration technologies. At a later time, the Manchus, after they had conquered China, followed the example of the Mongols and moved their capital from Mukden (Snenyang) to Beijing.

Another example illustrating this political power technique involves the Empire of Turan. In 1369 Tamerlane moved its capital to Samarkand, located on the newly conquered land that had been previously dominated by the Persians, Khwarezmians, Kara Khitans, and Turkish Karakhanids. Prior to Tamerlane, in 1212, the Khwarezmians had done the same and after defeating the Kara Khitans, transferred their capital city from Gurganj (Urgench) to Samarkand.

In 969 AD, the Fatimids (909-1171) conquered Egypt and built a new capital of Cairo far from their ancestral lands while in 1170 the Almohads (1121-1269) transferred the seat of the caliphate to Sevilla. Thereafter, the Berberian Arab empires of North Africa, which absorbed both the Fatimid Caliphate and the Almohad Caliphate, also sited their capitals far away from their Algerian or Tunisian homeland.

In 1161 the Afghan conquerors Ghaznavids moved the capital from Ghazni in southern Afghanistan to Lahore, located in the Indus Valley, on the territory of modern Pakistan.

In 1485 Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus captured Vienna and made the city his capital.

In 1712 Russia’s Peter the Great transferred the capital of Russia to St. Petersburg sited on the territory seized from Sweden, an act that by nine years predated the official recognition of the annexation of this land.[[139]](#endnote-139) In the 10th century, the Russian Prince Svyatoslav, who had defeated the Khazars, was entertaining the idea of turning Preslav (Pereyaslavets), the old capital of the Bulgarian khans on the Danube, into a new Russian capital. In the letter to his mother, Princess Olga, he described his plans as follows: “I do not care to remain in Kiev, but should prefer to live in Pereyaslavets on the Danube, since that is the centre of my realm, where all riches are concentrated; gold, silks, wine, and various fruits from Greece, silver and horses from Hungary and Bohemia, and from Rus’ furs, wax, honey, and slaves”.[[140]](#endnote-140)

Following the same strategy, in 1832 Said bin Sultan moved the throne of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman thousands of kilometers away to East Africa’s Zanzibar, which had been colonized by the Omani Arabs.[[141]](#endnote-141)

Following his vision of Great Britain’s future as represented in his novel *Tancred*, the British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli insisted on transferring the capital of the British Empire from London to Delhi and strongly recommended that the Queen and the entire imperial administration also move there. The new location was meant to reflect the new nature of the state as the true world capital and underscore the special role that the East was playing in its imperial structure and political design.

Similarly, the program of many Russian imperial ideologists and pan-Slavists called for the transfer of the capital of the Russian Empire from St. Petersburg to Istanbul. According to them, Russia as the rightful heir of the legacy of Byzantine Empire had to revive Constantinople as the capital of this empire. In the 19th century, Fyodor Tyutchev, a poet and diplomat, and Nikolai Danilevsky, a historian, emphasized the need in consolidating Russian conquests and Russian Orthodox identity in the southern part of the Black Sea and advocated the unification of the Slavic peoples under the Russian emperor. Notably, the plan to relocate the throne to Constantinople had been formulated earlier, in the 18th century, by Catherine the Great.[[142]](#endnote-142)

Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852), a German nationalist writer, claimed that the geographical position of Vienna made it not very suitablefor the role as the capital of a vast empire. “Vienna, which is one of the causes of the decay of Austria, is not a central point to the provinces of the empire”.[[143]](#endnote-143) He believed that the capital of the Austrian Empire would be much better sited in Belgrade or Semlin, that is, in Serbia or Poland. The formation of one federal empire from these provinces could be carried out more effectively if it were accompanied by the change of the capital city.

Although these daring, fanciful plans never became a reality and appear to be historical curiosities, the proposal of Disraeli, the intentions of Catherine the Great, as well as the ideas of Jahn were quite consistent with the capital siting concepts typical of many strategies of empire-building.

The state-building strategy presented in the above examples and involving capital city relocation to the newly conquered territories was formulated as early as by Niccolo Machiavelli, who wrote in his treatise *The Prince*:

*When states are acquired in a country with a different language, different customs and different institutions, then there are problems; great good fortune and great abilities are required in order to keep such states. One of the best and most efficacious solutions would be for those who acquire them to go and live there. This would make their possession more secure and lasting; and this is what the Turks have done with Greece: even if they had used every other method of keeping hold of that state, they could not have held onto it without going to live there. The reason is that, when one is there, one sees troubles as they arise, and can deal with them immediately; when one is not there, one hears about them when they are full-grown and there is no longer any remedy*.[[144]](#endnote-144)

He proceeds pointing out general governance considerations behind this strategy.

*In addition, the province is not looted by one’s officials; and one’s subjects are happy to have immediate recourse to their prince; consequently, those who wish their prince well have more reason to love him, and those who do not wish him well, more reason to fear him. Any potential external aggressor will think twice, for he who lives there can only be dislodged with extreme difficulty[[145]](#endnote-145)*.

Associated with *high risks*, sometimes this tactic of empire-building led to vulnerability of the empires having a capital city of this sort. For example, to build a new seat of empire on alien lands, the Persians had to leave their stronghold in the mountains and descend to the valleys, the move that left their ancestral lands unprotected and ultimately resulted in their loss. The legend has it that as early as the 6th century BC, Cyrus the Great warned the future Persian *shahs* of this danger.[[146]](#endnote-146) The history of both Greek Bactria and Parthia reveals the same pattern of losing the original land base due to imperial expansion.

Similar strategies – at least in the form of political statements and slogans – can be seen in the modern world. Today’s radical Islamists of the Mursi-led Muslim Brotherhood that recently were in power in Egypt dream of restoring the Arab Caliphate (of the United Arab States). They envision Jerusalem as the capital of this new political entity and believe that siting the capital in Jerusalem will allow the caliphate to absorb the entire territory of Israel.[[147]](#endnote-147) Another example worth mentioning in this regard entails political programs of radical Albanian nationalists with their plans of creating Greater Albania on the territory of Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro. The maps of Greater Albania show Skopje, capital of Macedonia, as the capital of the united pan-Albanian state.

Driven by the unfavorable political climate in the empire, the opposite type of logic led to the establishment of a *retreat capital*.

Under the onslaught of the Muslims, the capital of the Khazar Khaganate was gradually shifting from the south to the north, to the safe haven of the regions far away from the southern frontier. First, it was moved from the original capital of Balanjar, situated in a dangerous proximity to the border, then to Samandar, in the coastal area of Dagestan, and therefrom to Atil (Khamlij), located in the Volga River delta, just above the modern Russian city of Astrakhan.

Around the same time, under the onslaught of the Muslims advancing from the seacoast, the capital of the Kingdom of Axum, precursor of today’s Ethiopia, began to shift from the coastal region to the inland. Once a rival of the Byzantine Empire, this Christian state even developed some sort of special tactic of guerilla war against the far superior forces of the enemies, whereby it was constantly moving its capital around the country. It was not until the end of the 19th century that with the foundation of Addis Ababa in the far south, at the maximum distance from the coast, the state finally stabilized.[[148]](#endnote-148)

The 1126 Mongol invasion of China triggered the relocation of the throne from Kaifeng to Lin’an (presently Hangzhou). This move marked the beginning of the Southern Song Dynasty.

In the 15th-16th centuries, yielding to the advance of the Siamese forces, the rulers of Cambodia were moving their capital south-west, to the inland – from Angkor Thom, destroyed by the Siamese, to Phnom Penh, therefrom to Longvek and Udong and then, at the end of the 19th century, back to Phnom Penh.

Similarly, under the onslaught of Dai Viet, a Vietnamese state that had recently freed itself from the yoke of China, the capital of the Hindu Kingdom of Champa, located in the central and southern regions of Vietnam was gradually relocating southward. From the northern city of Hue, which eventually became the capital of Vietnam, the seat of the kingdom was successively transferred to My Son, Indrapura, Vijaya, and a number of other cities until it finally reached Cha Ban, the last site of the Champa Kingdom.

Under the offensive of both the Hindus and the Tamil Muslims coming from the north, the capital of the Buddhist Sri Lanka was shifted to south. The main goal pursued by the Sinhalese was to preserve the sacred relic of the Buddha’s Tooth kept in the capital city.

In 1563 King Setthathirat, ruler of Lan Xang, a country that was predecessor of present-day Laos, moved his throne from Luang Prabang to Vientiane, fearing an advance of the Burmese from the north.

In the 18th century, pressured by the advance of the Afghan troops, the capital of Persia was relocated. After the liberation from the control of the Safavid Dynasty, the Afghans attempted to reign in Persia and, seizing one city after another, even established an Afghan dynasty in the country. As a result, the throne was moved from the centrally located Isfahan, where it had been since 1598, to Shiraz in the south (1766-1791) and then to the safe haven of Teheran, near the Caspian Sea. The Teheran area was primarily inhabited by the Turkic peoples, which was an additional factor winning loyalty of this area to the Qajar Dynasty, Turkic in origin (See Table 5).

In the 15th century, pressured by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, the capital of Montenegro was transferred from Žabljakto the better fortified town of Obod and therefrom to Cetinje. By the same token, due to the expansion of Ottoman Empire in the early 16th century the capital of Hungary was moved from Buda to Pozsony (present-day Bratislava, Slovakia).

This defensive logic is comparable with some capital city transfers in Poland, effectuated to strengthen its defense capability against the aggression of German principalities.[[149]](#endnote-149)

Another fairly common principle of capital city siting, characteristic both of empires and despotic states, was a search for *more reliable and loyal centers of state power*. Empire-builders sought to consolidate their authority by gaining support of the most loyal region in the country. The task of a new capital city was to neutralize or weaken the influence of hostile or competing social and religious clans, factions, families, and elites. This logic drove the transfer of the capital of the Arab Caliphate from Medina to Kufa in 657. At that time, during the civil war, Kufa was the only city supporting Ali, who was fighting against the rebels.[[150]](#endnote-150) Likewise, in Japan, the objective to secure support of the area most loyal to the ruler led to the relocation of the throne from Nara to Nagaoka.[[151]](#endnote-151)

Loyalty to the metropole was an important criterion for capital city siting in colonies or dependencies. Furthermore, geographical proximity to the metropole constituted an additional favorable factor in the siting process.

After Russia had conquered Finland from Sweden, the capital was moved from Turku to Helsinki. Because anti-Turkish sentiment was widespread among the Romanian *boyars*, i.e., aristocrats, in the old capital of Târgoviște, and due to the proximity of Bucharest to the Ottoman Porte, the capital was transferred to Bucharest. Norway’s increasing dependence on Denmark shifted the center of the country’s political life to Christiania (Oslo), and the city’s proximity to Copenhagen played a decisive role in this process. In the Hellenistic period, the Greek conquerors of Egypt moved the capital from Thebes to Alexandria. In 1887 the Japanese relocated the seat of the administration of Taiwan from Tainan to Taipei because the latter was located closer to the metropole in Japan.[[152]](#endnote-152)

It sum, it may be said that there existed two most common tactics of imperial capital siting, the one contrary to the other. The first tactic entailed a search for a more loyal base for building a capital city in a period of domestic political instability while the second one was aimed at the siting of a capital city in a potentially separatist area, least loyal to the empire, in a period of stability. In both cases, military and strategic considerations played the decisive role in the process.

Other important factors included the proximity of food supplies, sources of manpower reinforcement, and transport system. In the empires that were expanding and seeking to annex new territories, capital cities were usually sited *on the forefront* of the expansion, ensuring an effective mobilization of military resources for the use on the border and beyond.

### *From Rome to Constantinople: Reasons*

Given the tremendous and unique influence exercised by the Roman Empire both on the formation of the European urban system and the nature and logic of the European imagination, it is appropriate to examine, in a separate section, the specifics of the Roman metropolitan life and analyze the reasons leading to the *transfer of the capital from Rome to Constantinople.*

Rome was the first in Europe to discover the idea of centrality, that is, state’s concentration in a single city, and this idea has defined certain features of the entire European history. While the capitals of Persia, the most powerful empire of the ancient East, were often moved, the stable capital city location was a major characteristic of the Roman state. Playing with the words *urbis* and *orbis*, Roman poets and politicians sometimes equated a city to the world, and in the mind of numerous notable personalities and ideologists, Rome was synonymous of the whole state. The City was so central to the identity of the empire that many perceived the fall of this city as the demise of the entire state although in actuality the Roman Empire did not vanish, but rather, just shifted its center of gravity. In retrospect, it would be accurate to say that Rome failed to resolve the contradiction between the city and the citizenship and perished, unable to handle this strategic dissonance.

Transferring the throne from Rome to Constantinople, Constantine the Great was driven by weaknesses of the former and *military and strategic strengths* of the latter, which was less vulnerable to the attacks of the invaders and situated deep in the interior. Indeed, compared to Rome, Constantinople had significant and obvious advantages both in terms of defense capabilities and topography, which was subsequently proved in the course of many military campaigns.[[153]](#endnote-153)

Centuries earlier Rome had enjoyed the advantages of being located on the Apennine Peninsula, which facilitated military operations on land. In the course of time, however, these advantages became less obvious as the Roman state developed maritime power, started sea wars against Carthage, and gradually conquered the entire Mediterranean basin. The control over the mouth of the Tiber River and the adjacent areas ensured both a success in land military operations and a stable delivery of food supplies from Central Italy.

However, over the centuries, this location became less convenient. Firstly, with the development of trade and new technologies, marine vessels grew bigger in size; secondly, the Tiber shoaled, and its waterway was heavily silted up. As a result, navigation of larger warships and merchant vessels was no longer possible. To transport goods to Rome, suppliers had to reload them on smaller boats and barges, which highly increased the total cost of the goods. The artificial harbor built on the Tiber did not solve all the problems completely.

When the entire Mediterranean perimeter fell under the direct or indirect control of Rome, the main resources of the empire had already been concentrated not on the Apennine Peninsula, but rather, in the Levant, which encompassed Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor and which became the principal industrial and commercial engine of the empire. *However, these three key regions were located much closer to Constantinople than to Rome*.

Much earlier, Julius Caesar and Octavian Augustus had already been contemplating building a new capital in the East. During the visit of Cleopatra to Rome, rumors of the capital transfer to Alexandria began to circulate around the Rome, and Troy was seen as another possible candidate for the new capital. These two cities provided control over the Aegean Sea and the Dardanelles, which were the key transit points on the way from Europe to Asia. By the time Constantine assumed the throne, the main route from Europe to Asia had already shifted to the Bosporus, thus making Byzantium an important hub between the Aegean and the Black Sea. Another reason why Byzantium was preferable to Alexandria was that the former had a massive natural harbor, Golden Horn, protecting it on both sides. Thus, topography of the city was highly favorable for both the deployment of the fleet and the anchoring of merchant vessels, giving the area a tremendous advantage in resisting the attacks of the barbarians.[[154]](#endnote-154)

It should be also noted that contrary to some present-day views, by the time the new capital was established, the economic advantages of Byzantium had already diminished to some degree. When the Greek city-states dominated the region, Byzantium was an extremely important trade center, linking these cities with their colonies on the north coast of the Black Sea. Supplying Greece with grain, these colonies served as a major market for Greek industrial and artisanal products. According to some historians, it was the trade with the Black Sea region that triggered the economic revolution in Greece, which ultimately led to the transition from the agrarian economy to the industrial and commercial economy.

At the time the new capital was founded, this *grain route* had already been in decline, and eventually, as a result of the Goths’ invasion into what is now Ukraine, ceased to exist. Afterward, Byzantium was supplied with grain from Egypt and other areas that were supplying Rome itself. As to the other economic advantages Byzantium presumably had, they were quite ephemeral.

Roman historians and writers talked about the burden the second, “parasitic capital” imposed on the empire: Constantinople had to be fed with “bread and circuses” at a very unfavorable moment, when the empire’s cost of maintaining the military dramatically increased. The capital transfer coincided with an immense economic crisis that hit the Roman Empire in the 4th century. All of this indicates that the main and only motives for moving the capital were military advantages of Constantinople, as well as the new strategy of the state, rather than economic causes or reasons related to the change of religion.

This is not to say, however, that the new capital did not have any other significant advantages. This area did have a certain volume of internal resources to ensure provision of food supplies and various communication needs, functioning as a natural connection link between different regions. Jean Gottmann notes in this regard:

*The capital is not only the hinge between the country it governs and the outside, but a pluralistic hinge, articulating the various sections, networks, and groups of interest within the territory. Constantinople was to be a hinge between Europe and Asia, Mediterranean and Pont, Romans and Greeks, land and sea power. That was probably why it remained for so long a great capital under very different regimes* (emphasis added).[[155]](#endnote-155)

It is interesting to point out that *de facto* Rome had lost his status as the capital long before the relocation, when the actual center of the empire shifted toward the Balkans and Asia Minor. As early as the reign of Diocletian (293-305), the empire had been divided into four prefectures with administrative centers in Trevorum (Trier), Antioch, Mediolanum (Milan), and Nicomedia. This system of government became known as the *tetrarchy*. Being the head of the tetrarchy, Diocletian moved his throne to Nicomedia in Asia Minor; thus, Constantine merely continued the reform initiated by his predecessor, extending its vector east of Rome. It should be noted, however, that neither the siting of the new capital, nor the relocation path was a predetermined matter, and prior to the foundation of Constantinople, Constantine had tried many other sites, successively transferring his residence to Trevоrum, Mediolanum, Sirmium, and Serdica (Sofia). Thus, over the span of one century, the empire had a roving capital city, the situation approximating the one in the Holy Roman Empire.[[156]](#endnote-156)

Constantinople did not become the capital immediately after Rome; even after the foundation of the former, it was still unclear whether it would remain the long-term capital of the empire. With the demise of Constantine the Great, Trevorum, which became the residence of his son, Constantine II, began to rise. Calling it *Roma Secunda*, the Romans rightly regarded it as their capital north of the Alps. Constantinople temporarily lost its status as the “second Rome,” and under the reign of Juliane the Apostate, Constantine’s nephew who attempted to revive the cult of pagan gods, the actual capital city of the empire became Antioch. By making his quest to the East, he apparently hoped to fulfill the dream of Alexander the Great, whom he identified himself with, and establish a new capital in Babylon (Ctesiphon). It was not until after Constantine’s grandchildren ascended to the throne that Constantinople’s status as the capital was restored, to be retained for centuries.

### *Disembedded Capitals: Despotic States of the Ancient East*

The so called *disembedded capitals* constitute a distinct category of capital cities.

This term originated in the depths of archeology – more specifically, in publications related to excavation of the ancient cities of the New World, Mesoamerica (Monte Albán), in particular. Initially, it was mainly used to describe *a* *special type of administrative capitals located in some distance from major economic centers and excluded from direct economic activities and product exchange processes.* Subsequent excavations revealed, however, that Monte Albán was in fact a commercial center, supplying itself with agricultural products and, thus, did not meet this definition. Accordingly, archeologists rejected this term as unsuitable and abandoned its use in reference to administrative capitals of the Mesoamerican cultures.

Alexander H. Joffe, an American archeologist and expert on ancient Middle Eastern civilizations, has attempted to rehabilitate and to recycle this term by demonstrating its more accurate applicability to ancient and medieval capitals of Western Asia – Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Arabia. He showed, among other things, how the newly emerged disembedded capitals of Mesopotamia and Egypt, created from scratch, developed into centers of power for the new elites and functioned as *institutional alternatives* to wandering capitals and provisional capitals.[[157]](#endnote-157)

According to Joffe, the main purpose of disembedded capitals was to acquire competitive advantages in the internal factional struggle, incubate new elites, and consolidate state power.[[158]](#endnote-158) It could be said that in contrast to the more common integration strategies, royal founders of disembedded capitals were pursuing *strategies of disintegration* and alienation from the existing centers of power.

To illustrate his thesis, Joffe gives three groups of examples from the history of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, respectively.

1. The primary examples of disembedded capitals in Egypt are Memphis and Amarna (Akhetaten). Seeking to integrate the various lands along the Nile River, the rulers of Egypt developed a system of common rituals intended to adopt local deities into the official state religion. To secure a better access to trade routes and resources of the Lower Egypt, the Upper Egyptian elites established Memphis in the north.

Amarna was located between Memphis and Thebes and built by Akhenaten (1379-1362 BC), a pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty. Its foundation was triggered by the religious reform of Akhenaten, who had introduced a worship system centered on Aten, the Sun, and stressing the divine origin of the ruler. For the reform to take effect, it was necessary to isolate the new capital from the older generation of priests.

2. Capitals of the Akkadian Empire fall into the same category. In 2300 BC, the Akkadian ruler Sargon the Great moved his throne to the city of Agade. After Tukulti-Ninurta I, an Assyrian conqueror reigning from 1244 to 1208 BC, had destroyed and deserted Babylon, in fear of the revenge of the conservative part of his subjects, who believed that the destruction of Babylon was a sacrilege (the Assyrians revered the Babylonian gods), he moved the capital and the cult statue of the god Marduk to the newly built city of Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta, several kilometers away from the ancient Assur. Shortly thereafter, as a result of a plot organized by his outraged subjects, the king was imprisoned in his own palace and subsequently murdered.

In the 9th century BC, another Assyrian ruler Ashurnasirpal II (reigned in 883-859 BC) moved his throne to Kalhu (Nimrud), a small and previously unknown city 65 kilometers north of the old capital. In the 8th century BC, Sargon II transferred the capital therefrom 20 kilometers northeast, to Dur-Sharrukin (Fortress of Sargon). After he had been killed during one of his military campaigns, his son, Sennacherib shifted the capital to the ancient city of Nineveh, located between Kalhu and Dur-Sharrukin.

3. The next group of disembedded capitals involves the Arab Caliphate and includes Baghdad, Raqqa, and Samarra. In 762 the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur founded Baghdad to broaden the support of his reign. Unlike the Umayyads, the Abbasids were attempting to create a universal empire and integrate the Persians into it. To forestall tribal wars, Harun al-Rashid transferred his throne to the city of Raqqa in Syria. In 835 his son al-Mu’tasim founded Samarra. Deprived of the support of Baghdad, he relied on the army of the Turkish slaves, as well as the doctrines of Mu’tazilism. The new disembedded capital was meant to become the stronghold of the new religious teaching and distance itself from commercial, cosmopolitan Baghdad.

Joffe provides yet other examples of disembedded capitals emerged in this region. Speaking of their common features, he points to their short lifespan caused by the very nature of their origin.

*Because the legitimacy and efficacy of a capital were so closely tied to a particular individual or dynasty, successors often found it necessary to break away and recreate new capitals. With such an urban pattern in full play, disembedded capitals were often extremely short-lived and highly unstable, not to mention expensive to build and operate…. Only a developed urban society could shoulder the various costs involved but the option created conditions that necessitated more expensive and extractive policies which often undermined other processes …. [T]he needs of cities frequently run counter to those who comprised the society in them. In most cases it appears that disembedded capitals were short-term solutions and long-term burdens. Their instability and degrees of spatial and social artificiality are reflected in their ultimate fate, which minimally and almost invariably included the loss of status as capitals and, at the extreme, complete abandonment*.[[159]](#endnote-159)

The concept of the disembedded capital is quite interesting and provides a valuable synthesis of the experience of Western Asian civilizations. Nonetheless, Joffe’s explanation of the phenomenon is inconclusive, and this concept requires important qualifications.

The examples Joffe gives are somewhat contradictory. Noting that a short lifespan was a common feature shared by all disembedded capitals, he puts into this category the cities of Memphis and Baghdad, each of which served as the capital of Egypt and the Arab states, respectively, for centuries. Although he does state that in some cases disembedded capitals could be *reembedded* into the social and economic system of the country, both Memphis and Baghdad are still clearly distinguishable from the rest of his examples not only by virtue of being long-standing capitals but also by virtue of having a completely different task assigned to them. This task was to create a new format of the state as opposed to isolating the old elites. In the case of Memphis, this was intended to be achieved by integrating Upper and Lower Egypt while in the case of Baghdad, by integrating new cultures and newly acquired lands, most notably Persia, under the authority of athe Abbasids.

Furthermore, Joffe unreasonably limits the region where disembedded capitals emerged to Western Asia. Interestingly, however, most of the cases he describes involve political regimes situated far beyond the region. Although according to Joffe, the type of capitals in question was specific to despotic states, prevalent in the ancient East, examples of these capitals may be found in the history of China, Russia, and the Middle East. In ancient China, disembedded capitals were represented by the new capital of the Qin State, Xianyang, established by the vision of Shan Yang (390-338 BC), a famous philosopher of the Legist School. The city faced the task of weakening the influence of the old clan elites. After King Zheng of Qin unified the Chinese states under its control and proclaimed himself Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the city of Xianyang became the capital of the new empire. In Russia an example of a disembedded capital was Alexandrov Kremlin, the 16th century *oprichnina* stronghold of Ivan the Terrible. In Parthiа the city of Vologesocerta (Valashabad) functioned as a very short-term disembedded capital founded to eliminate the influence of the Hellenized elites of the state.

To some extent, Joffe dilutes the very concept of a disembedded city, drawing parallels between it and some modern designed capitals, notably Washington D.C. Apparently, the basis of the comparison is that like some disembedded capitals, these capitals were built from scratch and, in a sense, were disembedded from the economic life of their countries and distanced from their economic centers. The main difference between disembedded capitals and modern designed capitals, according to Joffe, is that disembedded capitals were “designed as tools of factional competition” *while modern designed capitals were designed to balance different factions and political forces*.[[160]](#endnote-160) However, these two types of capitals also have other equally important differences, the most significant of them being the methods of their creation and the nature of the identity they epitomized.

Many of the above enumerated disembedded capitals were constructed in a way typical for the despotic states of the East (the German historian Karl A. Wittvogel calls them “hydraulic civilizations”) – using the labor of numerous foreign slaves.

Furthermore, while the modern capitals attempted to reflect identities of various ethnic and other groups, the new capitals of the despotic states, by contrast, sought to diminish or neutralize the old historical and particularistic identities. Very often disembedded capitals tried to win greater loyalty by destroying local identities or by incorporating sacred symbols of the subdued or conquered states. Another common tool used by despotic rulers was their special demographic policy of massive resettlements of particularly recalcitrant tribes and residents of other kingdoms. This tactic was followed by Emperor Qin Shi Huang, who drove members of the most prominent families from the newly conquered states to his capital Xianyang.[[161]](#endnote-161) Likewise, Armenia’s Tigranes the Great resettled numerous Greeks living in the kingdom and inhabitants of the areas he had conquered to Tigranakert (Tigranocerta), his new capital.[[162]](#endnote-162)

Thus, despotic regimes built disembedded capitals mainly to isolate themselves from most influential political and religious elites, as well as to create new forms of loyalty required of the state subjects.

Interestingly enough, the process of relocation to such a capital was often accompanied by both fundamental religious reforms and the rise of heterorthodox and heretical movements. The Egyptian cult of the Sun, the construction of the new Babylon in Assyria, and the ideas of Mu’tazilism in the Umayyad Caliphate led to the formation of the new forms of power legitimation for the rulers and marginalized the old elites of the old political and religious centers. These elites – the Theban priesthood, old clan nobility of the conquered Chinese states, the Persian elite (aristocracy of Khorasan) in the court of the Abbasids, and major *boyar* families of Russia – were to be replaced by the new servicеmen elites, which built from scratch a base of loyalty to the new regime. In the cases where the relocation to a new capital was not associated with religious reforms, it was often meant to emancipate the regime from undesired cultural influences and using new cultural grounds to create new elites. For example, by moving his throne to a new capital, Tigranes the Great sought to Hellenize his kingdom and do away with the influence of the Persian culture. Likewise, by building a new capital in Raqqa, Harun al-Rashid intended to emancipate the country from the influence of the Persian elites in Baghdad.

Most of the disembedded capital projects failed. The reason for their failure was the disproportionate scale of the goals (mostly tactical ones) to the tools used by the rulers to achieve these goals. Tactical tricks and moves of the rulers were made by using strategic and very expensive instruments.

The concept of a disembedded capital is extremely important as a capital-building strategy different from the capital city model of universal empires. Erecting a new capital gave a despotic ruler an opportunity to establish a new base of loyalty, to develop his own special identity and language of symbols, and to surround political power with an atmosphere of mystery and secrecy. Certainly, it is not always easy to draw a clear distinction between the strategies used by empires and those used by despotic states. Thus, Tigranes the Great built his capital on the far edge of his territories to ensure control over the conquered lands in accordance with the above imperial strategies. At the same time, it was established as a disembedded capital with the use of despotic methods and tools. Nonetheless, in most cases the difference between strategies of despotic states and those of empires was quite obvious: The former were based on domestic political considerations whereas the latter were centered on foreign policy considerations.

The list of examples set forth by Joffe may be supplemented with several more examples of the despotic states of the East, illustrating how unfavorable the results of such relocation projects could be.

In Japan the 794 transfer of the capital to Kyoto was preceded by 25 unsuccessful attempts. In 645 the emperor’s residence was shifted from Asuka, to the seaport of Naniwa, near Osaka. Seven years later, however, it was moved back to Asuka since temples, monasteries, and influential clans had refused to relocate. In 667 the seat of the empire was transferred to Otsu, only to be returned to its previous location. In 710 it moved to Nara, modeled after the then capital of China, Chang’an (presently Xi’an). However, the extraordinary influence of the Buddhist monasteries and clans in Nara destabilized the position of the emperor. To strengthen his loyalty base, in 784 Emperor Kanmu erected a new capital in Nagaoka, Yamashiro region, which was his mother’s native area, but the assassination of the city’s chief builder was deemed a bad omen. As a result, despite the ten years of hard work (784-794) and the expenses equal to the whole country’s annual budget, the project was abandoned.[[163]](#endnote-163) Finally, with the financial support of the Chinese immigrant weavers, the capital was moved to Kyoto. To neutralize the monastic influence, only few of the monasteries were permitted to relocate to the new capital.[[164]](#endnote-164)

Subsequent periods of Japanese history saw similarly problematic and ill-considered capital city relocations. The epic *Heike Monogatari* (*The Tale of the Heike*) contains an important narrative describing the unsuccessful transfer of the capital from Kyoto to Fukuhara undertaken in the 12th century by lord Kiyomori, the head of the Taira (Heike) clan at the peak of its prosperity and glory. Bypassing the legitimate heir, he enthroned his minor grandson and attempted to put an end to the influence of the opposition Buddhist clergy in the old capital of Kyoto. Furthermore, Fukuhara was located on the lands owned by the Taira clan, and the relocation was intended not just to provide Kiyomori with a stronger loyalty base but also to generate lucrative profits from leasing out the Taira lands. The epic represents the moving of the throne to Fukuhara as yet another link in the chain of crimes committed by Kiyomori:

*Most splendid and auspicious was the Ancient Capital [of Kyoto] …. But now few wagons plough their way over the deserted roads, and but an occasional passer-by is to be seen in some lowly equipage. The houses of the city that formerly jostled each other for room are now daily becoming fewer and more ruinous; broken up and made into rafts … and the furniture and possessions of their owners are piled up on boats and brought down to Fukuhara. Ah, how sad to see the Flower Capital thus turn into an expanse of rice fields.[[165]](#endnote-165)*

Within several weeks Kyoto was turned into a ghost city, scattered groups of paupers and vagrants eking out a meager existence on its wrecked streets. The temples and palaces were dismantled, most of the houses were untiled, and the income of monasteries plummeted. The aggrieved were petitioning for the return of the capital, and the popularity of the Taira clan began to decline. A few months after the beginning of this unsuccessful project, the throne was moved back to Kyoto.

Another interesting example of this kind is an attempt to transfer India’s capital from Delhi to Daulatabad (also known as Devagiri), made at the beginning of the 14th century by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. In the opinion of the sultan, Daulatabad had a number of obvious strategic advantages, lying roughly equidistant from Delhi, Gujarat, Lakhnauti, Telingana, and other important centers of medieval India. Striving to isolate the Hindus, who often provoked riots and uprising in Delhi, as well as to strengthen both the Muslim presence and missionary activities in the south of the country, the sultan believed that the Muslim clergy would be able to convert huge masses of the Hindus living in the Delhi empire, especially the poor and the members of the lower casts. For this reason, among those who was required to move to the new capital, there were a lot of Islamic mystics, the most successful preachers of Islam at the time. Sultan also took a series of reasonable preparatory actions; thus, he built a broad road to Daulatabad, planted shady trees on both sides of the road, and established a regular postal service between Delhi and the new capital. Since the residents of Delhi did not wish to relocate, he ordered a forcible resettlement of the Muslim elites, *ulemas* (Islamic scholars), and civil servants. Since the relocation was carried out during the hot summer months, many people died on the way.[[166]](#endnote-166)

This move greatly damaged the Sultan’s popularity. The Mongol invasions in the north and possible revolts of the Hindus put the country in a dangerous situation because now its capital was too remote from the northern regions. Realizing his mistake, the sultan initiated the transfer back to Delhi. Many of those who had survived the first relocation, did not survive the second one. As a result of these events, Delhi fell into decay, losing its wealth and splendor. Although thereafter the sultan attracted new men of letters, merchants, and traders to the city, a substantial part of it remained desolated. Many Muslim graves at Daulatabad cemeteries keep the memory of these sad events alive.

A possible lesson to learn from the above examples is that even the unlimited power and resources of the despotic rulers were not always sufficient to compensate for the lack of a reliable strategy. While building disembedded capitals wr as tremendously costly, they tended to destabilize both the state political course and the very political regime, often remaining the capitals only for a very short period of time. As we will see below, some modern rulers have repeated these mistakes.

1. Vale, L. “The Urban Design of 20th Century Capitals. ” In: Gordon D.(ed.) *Planning 20th Century Capital Citie*s (London: Routledge, 2006), 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Du Preez, P. et al. *One Nation: One Capital, the case for Pretoria* (Pretoria: Adams & Adams, 1995). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Orr, A. “Move over eastern states – Perth could be moving on up,” *WAToday*, October 26, 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Ambedkar, B.R. “India and the necessity of a second capital: A way to remove tension between the North and the South,” In: *Thoughts of Linguistic States* (Bombay: Ramkrishna Printing Press, 1955). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Anandan, S. “Make Mumbai Second Capital of India, city forum petitions PM,” *Hindustan Times*, June 26, 2012 ; Gupta, H. “Pataliputra: The New Capital?”, *Swarajya*, June 1, 2015, <http://swarajyamag.com/ideas/pataliputra-the-new-capital/>; Kumar, N. “Decapitate Capital tag from Delhi- Commemorating a century of Coronation,” Perspectives on Pan-Asianism, 2009, Aug 29 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Mabin, A. “South African Capital Cities,” In: *2011. African Capital Cities. Power and powerlessness* (Cape Town and Dakar: HSRC Press, 2011), 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. The pioneering theoretical studies in this field have been produced by the historian Arnold Toynbee and by a geographer Vaughan Cornish (Toynbee, A. “Capital Cities: Their Distinctive Features” and “Capital Cities: Melting-Pots and Powder-Kegs” in *Cities on the Move* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 67-78, 143-152 ; Toynbee, A. A Study of History. Abridgement of Volumes VII-X by D.C. Somervell (NY & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Cornish*,*V. *The Great Capitals: An Historical Geography* (London and New York, 1923). Three other notable works are the collections of articles “Das Hauptstadtproblem in der Geschichte,” published by Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1952) ; “Capital Cities/Les Capitales: Perspectives Internationales/International Perspectives,” edited by J.Taylor, J.G.Lengelle & C.Andrews (Ottawa: Carleton University Press,1993); and Sohn, Andreas & Weber, Hermann (Hg.). Hauptstädte und Global Cities an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert (Verlag Dr. Dieter Winkler,2000). Jean Gottmann has produced two important articles on this topic. Gottmann, J.“Capital Cities.” In: After Megapolisis. The Urban Writings of Jean Gottmann (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1990). Among more recent contributions are the papers by Géraldine Djament, Goran Ternborn, Amos Rappoport, Scott Campbell and Kenneth Corey (Djament-Tran, G. "Les scénarios de localisation des capitales, révélateurs des conceptions de l’unité nationale," Confins. Revue franco-brésilienne de géographie, no.9 (2010) ; Therborn, G.  “Monumental Europe. The National Years. On the Iconography of European Capital Cities,” *Housing Theory and Society*, no. 1 (2002) ; Therborn, G. “Eastern Drama. Capitals of Eastern Europe, 1830s-2006: An Introductory Overview,” *International Review of Sociology – Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, 16(2), 2006, pp. 209-242 ; Therborn, G. “Identity and Capital Cities: European Nation and European Union,” *The Search for a European Identity: Values, Policies and Legitimacy of the European Union*, ed. by Furio Cerutti & Sonia Lucarelli (Routledge: NY, 2008); Theborn, G. & Ho, K. C. (eds.). “Capital Cities and their contested roles in the life of nations,” *City,* vol. 13 (1), 2009 ; Rappoport, A. “On the Nature of Capitals and their Expansion,” John Taylor, Jean G. Lengellé and Caroline Andrew, eds., *Capital* Cities/ Les capitales (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993) ; Campbell, S. “The Enduring Importance of National Capital Cities in the Global Era,” University of Michigan, *Working Papers Series*, 2003 ; Corey, K. “Relocation of National Capitals,” *International Symposium on the Capital Relocation* on September 22, Seoul, 2004: 43-107 ; Corey, K. “Planning and Implementing Capital Cities – Lessons from the Past and Prospects for Intelligent Development in the Future: The Case of Korea,” In: Brunn, S. (ed.) Engineering Earth. The Impacts of Megaengineering Projects (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011)). Valuable insights about the capital cities are found in the works by Edward Schatz, Michiel Wagenaar, and Andreas Daum (Daum, A. & Mauch, C., eds. *Berlin-Washington. 1800-2000. Capital Cities, Cultural Representations, and National Identities* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009) ; Schatz, E. “What Capital Cities Say About State and Nation Building,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 9(4), 2003 ; Wagenaar, M. “Townscapes of Power,” *GeoJournal*, 51(2000) ; Wagenaar, M. “The Capital as a Representation of a Nation”. In: Gertjan Dijkink and Hans Knippenberg (eds.), *The Territorial Factor: Political Geography in a Globalizing World* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers, 2001). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Hirst, P. Space *and Power: Politics, War and Architecture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. The following books studying the historical nexus between architecture and political power and the way power represents itself in the capital city are particularly notable: Minkenberg, Michael (ed.). Power and Architecture: The Construction of Capitals and the Politics of Space (Berghahn Books, 2014); Parker, Geoffrey. Power in Stone: Cities as Symbols of Empires (Reaktion: London, 2014) and Vale, Lawrence. Architecture, Power, and National Identity. Second edition (Yale University Press: Yale, 2008). Another book focuses on the ways that planning in the capital cities has evolved: Gordon, D. (ed.). Planning Twentieth-Century Capital Cities (London: Routledge, 2006). Particular cases of capital city relocations also have been discussed in conference proceedings Konovalova, I. (ed.). Perenosi stolits. Istoricheskii opit geopoliticheskogo proektirovania (Moscow: Institut vseobschei istorii, 2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Daum, A. & Mauch, C. , eds. *Berlin-Washington. 1800-2000. Capital Cities, Cultural Representations, and National Identities* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Campbell, S. “The Enduring Importance of National Capital Cities in the Global Era,” University of Michigan, *Working Papers Series*, 2003, 3-4. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Eldredge, H. *World Capitals : Toward Guided Urbanization* (NY: Anchor Press, Garden City, 1975) ; Hall, P. “The Changing Role of Capital Cities: Six Types of Capital City.” In J.Taylor, J.G.Lengelle and C.Andrew (Eds*.), Capital Cities/Les Capitales: Perspectives Internationales/International Perspectives* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993) ; Campbell, S. “The Enduring Importance of National Capital Cities in the Global Era,” University of Michigan, *Working Papers Series*, 2003 ; Gottmann, J. “The Study of Former Capitals”. *Ekistics* 314/315 (Sept./Oct.-Nov./Dec, 1985): 541-46 ; Tyrwhitt, J. & Gottmann, J. (eds.). “Capital Cities,” *Ekistics*, 50, March/Aprial (1983) [Oslo, Warsaw, Rome, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C.]. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Daum, A. & Mauch, C. , eds. *Berlin-Washington. 1800-2000. Capital Cities, Cultural Representations, and National Identities* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. ##  Ringrose, D. “Capital Cities, Urbanization and Modernization in Early Modern Europe,” Journal of Urban History, vol.24 (2), January 1998, pp.155-183.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Ringrose, D. *“Capital Cities, Urbanization and Modernization in Early Modern Europe,”* Journal of Urban History*,* vol.24 (2), January 1998, pp.155-183 ; Daum, A. & Mauch, C., eds. *Berlin-Washington. 1800-2000. Capital Cities, Cultural Representations, and National Identities* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009). [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. In the case of the Netherlands, this situation was created by a post-revolutionary compromise between the House of Oranje, whose residence was traditionally located in The Hague as the royal capital of the state, and the Amsterdam patriciate favoring this richest and economically developed city of the country. Today the constitutional position of Amsterdam as capital is honorific. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Hitti, P. *Capital Cities of Arab Islam* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973) ; Fiévé, N. & Waley, P. *Japanese capitals in historical perspective: place, power and memory in Kyoto, Edo and Tokyo* (Routledge: London, 2003) ; Geil, W. E. *Eighteen Capitals of China* (Philadelphia: Lippinkot Co, 2005) ; Cotterell, A. Imperial Capitals of China (Overlook Press, 2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. #  Aksakov, K. “Znachenie stolitsy,” *Moskva-Petersburg: Pro et Contra. Dialog kultur v istorii natsionalnogo somosoznania* (Saint-Petersburg, 2000).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Landau-Wells, M. “Capital Cities in Civil Wars: The Locational Dimension of Sovereign Authority,” *Crisis States Occasional Papers*, London School of Economics, April 2008. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Bernhardi F*. Sovremennaya voyna*, vol. 1-2 (Sankt-Peterburg: V. Berezovsky, 1912), 196. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. For examples, see Radović, S. 2008. “From Center to Periphery and Vice Versa: The Politics of Toponyms in the Transitional Capital,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnography*, 56 (2), pp.53-74. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Daum, A. & Mauch, C., eds. *Berlin-Washington. 1800-2000. Capital Cities, Cultural Representations, and National Identities* (Cambridge University Press: NY, 2009), 5-8. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Shevryev, A. “The Axis Petersburg-Moscow: Outward and Inward Russian Capitals,” *Journal of Urban History*, 30(1), 2003, pp.70-84. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Hall, P. “The Changing Role of Capital Cities: Six Types of Capital City.” In J.Taylor, J.G.Lengelle and C.Andrew (Eds*.), Capital Cities/Les Capitales: Perspectives Internationales/International Perspectives* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993), 176. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Kolbe, L. “Helsinki: From Provincial to National Centre.” In: Gordon, David (ed.). *Planning Twentieth-Century Capital Cities* (London: Routledge, 2006). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. The Kingdom of Bohai (698-926) included the territory of modern Russia’s Primorsky Krai and the Amur River Region, North Korea, and most of Northeast China (Manchuria). [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Ye Longli. *Istoria gosudarstva kidanei*. Translated by V.Taskin (Moskva: Nauka, 1979), ch. 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Zadvernyuk, L., Kozyrenko, N. “Migratsia stolits v Kitae i fenomen pustogo goroda”, in. Rossia i Kitay na dalnevostochnyh rubezhah, Vol. 6 (Blagoveschensk: AmGU, 2002), 154-159. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. In China, during the West Han period, the Concept of the Five Cities, *Wu Du*, which represented the five largest cities in the country – Luoyang, Handan, Linzi, Wan, and Chengdu – in addition to the capital, and probably corresponded to the five elements in Chinese natural philosophy. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. *The History of the Khitan* *State* (*Qidango zhi)* describes the five capitals as follows: Yan Capital has the three financial departments, Western Capital – Administration of the Chief of Carriage, Middle Capital – Bureau of Accounts and Finances, Upper Capital – Administration of Salt and Iron; and Eastern Capital – Money and Iron Administration of the Department of Finance” (Ye Longli, 1979, ch. 22). [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. #  Maul, S. "Die altorientalische Hauptstadt – Abbild und Nabel der Welt," in *Die Orientalische Stadt: kontinuitat*. Wandel. Bruch. 1 Internationale Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft. 9.-10. Mai 1996 in Halle/Saale. Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag (1997), S.109-124.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. #  Yoon, H.-K. *The Culture of Fengshui in Korea: An Exploration of East Asian Geomancy* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006.), 332 p.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Fortenbaugh, R. *The Nine Capitals of the United States* (York, *Pa*., Maple Press Co., 1948). [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. #  Therborn, G. “Identity and Capital Cities: European Nation and European Union,” *The Search for a European Identity: Values, Policies and Legitimacy of the European Union*, ed. by Furio Cerutti & Sonia Lucarelli (Routledge: NY, 2008), 70.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. European Commission & Belgian Presidency. Brussels, Capital of Europe. Final Report, October 2001, 10-11. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. #  Therborn, G. “Identity and Capital Cities: European Nation and European Union,” *The Search for a European Identity: Values, Policies and Legitimacy of the European Union*, ed. by Furio Cerutti & Sonia Lucarelli (Routledge: NY, 2008), 63.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Djament, G. “Le débat sur Rome capitale,” *L'Espace Géographique*, no.3 (2005), 376. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. As James Robertson notes, a piece of advice for appraising a 17th-century town included... “estimat[ing] the largeness of the Bird by the Nest” (Robertson, 2001: 38). [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Robertson, J. “Stuart London and the Idea of a Royal Capital City,” *Renaissance Studies*, Volume 15, Number 1 (2001): 38-41. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Wagenaar, M. “Townscapes of Power,” *GeoJournal*, 51 (2000), 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Röber, M. & Schröter, E. “Governing the Capital – Comparing Institutional Reform in Berlin, London, and Paris,” *Working Paper PRI-8* (2004), 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Gottmann, J. “Capital Cities,” In: *After Megapolisis. The Urban Writings of Jean Gottmann,* (Baltimore, 1990), 67. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Campbell, S. “The Changing Role and Identity of Capital Cities in the Global Era,” *Paper presented at the Association of American Geographers*, Pittsbourgh (2000), 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. ##  Boiy, T. Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon (Peeters Publishers: NY, 2004), 97.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. #  Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by Carnes Lord (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 2013), 53.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Russian sinologist Artemy Karapetyants has contrasted the Chinese model of the country and the universe as the land surrounded by the four seas to the predominant European model of the universe where the sea (Mediterranean) is surrounded by land (Karapetyants, A. “Kitaiskaia tsivilizatsiia kak alternative Sredizemnomorskoi,” *Obschestvennie nauki i sovremennost*, no.1(2000), pp.132-138.) [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Emet, C. “The Capital Cities of Jerusalem,” *Geographical Review*, vol.86, no.2 (1996). [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Unlike many capitals of the ancient states, which were named after their royal founders, Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great, was not intended to serve as a new capital of his empire. Jean Gottmann, a French geographer, writes about an attempt to build Megalopolis (Big City), a joint capital for all of the Greek city-states, undertaken by Epaminondas (410-362 BC), a Theban general and a Pythagorean. Epaminondas began to build the new capital in Arcadia in southern Greece, but his plans for the unification of the country were destined to fail (Gottmann, J. “The Study of Former Capitals”. *Ekistics* 314/315 (Sept./Oct.-Nov./Dec. 1985.): 67). [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Boucheron, P. (ed.), Les villes capitales au Moyen Âge. XXXVIe Congrès de la SHMES (Istanbul, 1-6 juin 2005), (Paris: Sorbonne, 2006). [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. #  Maizlish A. “V konkurentsii s Parizhem: Burgundskie goroda v borbe za rol politicheskogo tsentra,” *Perenos stolitsi*. Ed. by I. Konovalova (Moscow: Institut vseobschei istorii, 2013), 81-84.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Berges, W. Das Reich ohne Hauptstadt. Pp. 1–30 in *Das Hauptstadtproblem in der Geschichte*, ed. Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953), 2-29. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. #  Although some authors still erroneously view the Holy Roman Empire as a largely fictitious, artificial formation that played a nominal role in the political destinies of Europe, addressing it in this context is relevant and important due to the essentially federal nature of the empire. The nihilistic assessments largely consonant with the well-known formula of Voltaire (“It was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire”) are somewhat witty but hardly accurate since they rely heavily on the clichéd idea of empires as extremely rigid political formations. Many modern historians consider the Holy Roman Empire the herald and precursor of the European Union, maintaining that the legacy and mission of Austria-Hungary in the European and international politics and diplomacy was a direct continuation of the mission of the Holy Roman Empire (Nedrebø , T. “City-belt Europe or Imperial Europe? Stein Rokkan and European History,” *[Europæus norvegicus](http://torenedrebo.wordpress.com/%22%20%5Co%20%22Europ%C3%A6us%20norvegicus)*, [30. mars 2012](http://torenedrebo.wordpress.com/2012/03/30/city-belt-europe-or-imperial-europe-stein-rokkan-and-european-history/) (originally published in Nervegian at *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift*, no.3, 2012). Brussels, located not far from Aachen, carries on the legacy of the empire and, to a substantial extent, is based on its values.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Wise, M. “A Capital of Europe?”, *New York Times*, March 2, 2002. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. #  Miller, J. M. *Lake Europe: A New Capital for a United Europe* (New York: Books International, 1963).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Wheatley, P. & See, T. “From Court to Capital: A Tentative Interpretation of the Origins of the Japanese Urban Tradition” (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp.242. See also *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol.111, issue 2, pp.181-200 ; Goethem, E. von. *Nagaoka. Japan’s Forgotten Capital* (Brill NV: Leiden, 2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. ##  Horvath, R. J. “The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia,” The Journal of African History, vol.10, Issue 02 (1969), 215.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Durand-Guédy, D. Turko-Mongol Rulers, Cities and City Life (Brill, 2013), 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. ##  Blair, S. The Mongol Capital of Sulṭāniyya, "The Imperial", Iran (British Institute of Persian Studies), vol. 24 (1986):139-151.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Coulanges, F. de. *The Ancient City* (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001); Wheatley, P. The Pivot of the Four Quarters: a preliminary enquiry into the origins and character of the ancient Chinese city (Chicago: Aldine Publishing House, 1971). [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. For a detailed review of Asian sacred capitals, see an article by Frank Keytinga (Keiting, F. “Sacred Capitals of Asia,” *The Asian City: Processes of Development, Characteristics and Planning.* Ed. by Ashok Dutt (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994) . An interesting discussion of the sacred capitals of Indonesia and the Hindu sacred capitals as a whole is presented in a book authored by the famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Geerz, C. *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays* (NY: Basic Books, 1973)

 223-230). [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. #  Eisenstadt, S. *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (NY: SUNY Press, 1986), 186-187.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Meyer, J. F. *Peking as a Sacred City* (Taipei: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 109 ; Westenholz, J. G. (ed.). *Capital Cities: Urban Planning and Spiritual Dimensions* (Bible Lands Museum: Jerusalem, 1998). [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Geerz, C. *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays* (NY: Basic Books, 1973), 222-223. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Rossman, V. “Misteria tsentra: Identichnost i organizatsiya sotsialnogo prostranstva v sovremennykh i traditsionnikh obschestvakh,” *Voprosy filosofii*, no.2 (2008), pp.42-57. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Iannaccone, L.; Haight, C.; Rubin, J. “Lessons from Delphi: Religious Markets and Spiritual Capitals,” *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 77 (2011), 333-334. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Khayutina, M. “Did the first Kings of the Zhou Dynasty Relocate their Capital? The Topos of the *Central Place* in Early China and its Historical Contexts,” [*XVII Conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies*](http://www.lu.se/eacs), 6-10. August 2008, Lund ; Khayutina, M. ”Zur Konstruktion der imperialen Hauptstadt im frühen China“, *Workshop ”Metropolen“ of the interdisciplinary project “Comparison of Empires“ at the Ruhr-University Bochum*. 2. February 2007, Bochum. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Khayutina, M. “Did the first Kings of the Zhou Dynasty Relocate their Capital? The Topos of the Central Place in Early China and its Historical Contexts,” [*XVII Conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies*](http://www.lu.se/eacs), 6-10. August 2008, Lund. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. #  Maul, S. "Die altorientalische Hauptstadt – Abbild und Nabel der Welt," in *Die Orientalische Stadt: kontinuitat. Wandel*. Bruch. 1 Internationale Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft. 9.-1 0. Mai 1996 in Halle/Saale. Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag (1997), 118-12.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Cut off from the economic life of the rest of the country, Persepolis was situated in the middle of a rocky plain, in a barren terrain dependent on food supplies from other regions (Perrot, J. “Birth of a City: Susa,” in *Capital city: urban planning and spiritual dimensions* (Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 1998). While this factor approximates Persepolis to political *disembedded capitals*, discussed in Chapter 2, its role, nonetheless, was more ritual than political. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. #  In his book entitled *Memory and the Mediterranean*, Braudel juxtaposes the nature of urbanism in Egypt with that in Mesopotamia. While the Mesopotamian cities were quite autonomous and primarily commerce-oriented, the Egyptian cities functioned mainly as religious centers. This difference is partly explained by the dead-end geographical location of Egypt, contrasted with a greater market exposure of the Mesopotamian states, which lay on the major trade routes. The economy of ancient Egypt was predominantly rural, and therefore, writes the French historian, its main urban potential was centered around the capital cities controlled by temples and priests. In contrast, Mesopotamia was more deeply rooted in commercial activities and even saw the development of a kind of urban patriotism as reflected, for example, in the Epic of Gilgamesh. According to Braudel, these differences were determinative in shaping the Mesopotamian economy, making it more dynamic and more diverse than its Egyptian counterpart (Braudel, F. *Memory and the Mediterranean* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 66-69). Babylonia, located in the southern part of Mesopotamia, featured the most extensive and most densely populated urban network in the area (Eisenstadt, S.*The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (NY: SUNY Press, 1986), 186-188).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. For a discussion of some aspects of the Byzantine urbanism and capitalness, see the book *In Search of the Fourth Rome* (Rossman, V. “In Search of the Fourth Rome: Visions of a New Russian Capital City,” Slavic Review, vol.72, no.3 (2013), pp. 505-527.) focusing on capital relocation debates in Russia. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Melman, Y. “Israel should give up Jerusalem as its capital,” *Haarez*, 06.12.09. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Rossman, V. *V poiskakh Chetvertogo Rima* (Moskva: Vysshaia shkola ekonomiki, 2014), 140-141. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Joffe, A. “Disembedded Capitals in Western Asian Perspective,” *Society for Comparative Study of Society & History (*1998). [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Pipes, D. “The Muslim Claim to Jerusalem,” *Middle East Quarterly*, September, 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. Gottmann, J. “Capital Cities,” In: *After Megapolisis. The Urban Writings of Jean Gottmann*, (Baltimore, 1990), 69-71. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Robertson, J. “Stuart London and the Idea of a Royal Capital City,” *Renaissance Studies*, Volume 15, Number 1 (2001), 44-48. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. In 1208 the royal court had moved from Burgos to Valladolid, the city that in 1492, with the completion of the Reconquista, became the capital of the unified Spain. Thereafter, Toledo, which had been the capital of the Visigoths in the 5th – 8th centuries, also served, albeit sporadically, as the residence of the Spanish kings. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Ringrose, D. *Madrid and Spanish Economy. 1560-1850* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983), 232-233. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Gottmann, J. “Capital Cities,” In: *After Megapolisis. The Urban Writings of Jean Gottmann*, (Baltimore, 1990), 68. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid, 70. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Braudel, F. *Aferthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism* (John Hopkins University: Baltimore & London, 1977). [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. ##  Ringrose, D. “Capital Cities, Urbanization and Modernization in Early Modern Europe,” Journal of Urban History, vol.24 (2), January 1998 , 155.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. Vries, J. de. *European Urbanization, 1500-1800* (London: Methuen, 1984). [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. [Clark](http://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Peter+Clark%22), P., [Lepetit](http://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Bernard+Lepetit%22), B. *Capital Cities and Their Hinterlands in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1996) ; see also Hohenberg, P. & Lees, L. *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. Vries, J. de. *European Urbanization, 1500-1800* (London: Methuen, 1984), 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. Cited in Robertson, J. “Stuart London and the Idea of a Royal Capital City,” *Renaissance Studies*, Volume 15, Number 1 (2001), pp. 37-58(22). [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. ##  Ringrose, D. “Capital Cities, Urbanization and Modernization in Early Modern Europe,” Journal of Urban History, vol.24 (2), January 1998 , 177.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. Jacobs, J. *Cities and the wealth of nations: Principles of economic life* (New York: Random House, 1984). [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. Ringrose, D. “Capital Cities, Urbanization and Modernization in Early Modern Europe,” *Journal of Urban History*, vol.24 (2), January 1998 ,156, 181. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. Fields, G. “City Systems, Urban History, and Economic Modernity,” *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 13 (1999), 110-112. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. Braudel, F. *Aferthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism* (Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University, 1977), 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. Ringrose, D. *Madrid and Spanish Economy. 1560-1850* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983), 177 ; Ringrose, D. “Capital Cities, Urbanization and Modernization in Early Modern Europe,” *Journal of Urban History*, vol.24 (2), January 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. Tocqueville, A. de. The Old Regime and the Revolution (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1856) [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. #  Anderson, B. *The Imagined Community* (Verso: London, 1991).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. Toynbee, A. “Capital Cities: Their Distinctive Features” and “Capital Cities: Melting-Pots and Powder-Kegs”, in *Cities on the Move* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 67. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. Ringrose, D. “Capital Cities, Urbanization and Modernization in Early Modern Europe,” *Journal of Urban History*, vol.24 (2), January 1998, 179. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. Eisenstadt, S.N. and Shachar, A. Society, Culture, and Urbanization (Newbury Park: Sage,1987), 178. Charles de Montesquieu attributed more active role to the capitals: “it is above all a great capital which creates the general spirit of a nation; it is Paris which makes the French...”Montesquieu, C. *My Thoughts (Mes Pensées).* Translated, edited, and with an Introduction by Henry C. Clark (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012). [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. Mumford, L. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (NY: Harvest Books, 1968), 356, 380, 391-392. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. Ibid, 381. [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. McGee, T. *The Southeast Asian City: a Social Geography of the Primate Cities of Southeast Asia* (London: Bell & Sons, 1967). [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. Wagenaar, M. “The Capital as a Representation of a Nation”. In: Gertjan Dijkink and Hans Knippenberg (eds.), *The Territorial Factor: Political Geography in a Globalizing World* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers, 2001), 350. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. #  Le Maître, A. La métropolitée, ou De l'établissement des villes capitales, de leur utilité passive et active, de l’union de leurs parties, de leurs anatomie, de leurs commerce (Amsterdam: B. Boekholt, 1682)

 [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. Cited in Roche, D. France in the Enlightenment (Cambridge UP, 1997), 641-642. [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. Rousseau, J.-J. The Social Contract (JM Dent & Sons: London & Toronto, 1913), 245. [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. Ibid, 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. Rokkan, S. *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe*. Ed. by Peter Florida (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) ; Rokkan, S. "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations Within Europe." In: Charles Tilly, ed. *The Formation of National States in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) ; Rokkan, S. "Territories, Centers and Peripheries: Toward a Geoethnic, Geoeconomic, Geopolitical Model of Differentiation Within Western Europe," in Jean Gottman(ed.) *Centre and Periphery. Spatial Variations in Politics* (Sage: Beverly Hills, 1980). [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. Rokkan, S. *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe*. Ed. by Peter Florida (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 128, 145, 156. [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
111. Ibid, 159. [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
112. Morrill, J. *Stuart Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2000), 87. [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
113. Schatz, E. “What Capital Cities Say About State and Nation Building,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 9(4), 2003, 3-4. [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
114. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
115. Hosking, G. *Russia and the Russians: a History from Rus to a Russian Federation* (London, 2001). [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
116. Rossman, V. “Misteria tsentra: Identichnost i organizatsia prostranstva v sovremennih i traditsionnih obschestvah,” *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 2 (2008): 42-57. [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
117. Olsson, O. & Hansson, G. “Country Size and the Rule of Law: Resuscitating Montesquieu,” *European Economic Review*, 55 (5), 2011, 613-629. [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
118. Hsu, S. “From Pingcheng to Luoyang — Substantiation of the climatic cause for capital relocation of the Beiwei Dynasty,” *Progress in Natural Sciences*, vol.14, no.8 (2004). [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
119. Parker, G. *Power in Stone: Cities as Symbols of Empires* (London: Reaktion, 2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
120. Turchin, P. “A Theory for Formation of Large Empires,” [*Journal of Global History*](http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=JGH) , vol. 4, issue 2 (July), 2009, 2-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
121. ###  Eisenstadt, S.N. and Shachar, A. *Society, Culture, and Urbanization* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1987), 132-134.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
122. #  Karapetyants, A. “Kitaiskaia tsivilizatsiia kak alternative Sredizemnomorskoi,” *Obschestvennie nauki i sovremennost*, no.1 (2000), 133-134.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
123. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
124. Grygiel, J. *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* (John Hopkins University, 2006), 142-145. [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
125. Kuper, H. “The Language of Sites in the Politics of Space,” *American Anthropologist*, no.3 (74), 1972, 416. [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
126. Cornish*,*V. *The Great Capitals: An Historical Geography* (London and New York, 1923), 23. [↑](#endnote-ref-126)
127. Ibid, 46. [↑](#endnote-ref-127)
128. Interestingly, Baron de Montesquieu has made an observation about Paris that attests well to the idea of Cornish: “France’s strength consists in the fact that the capital is closest to the weakest border. That makes her pay more attention to that which demands more, and enables her to send aid there more easily.” Montesquieu, C. *My Thoughts (Mes Pensées).* Translated, edited, and with an Introduction by Henry C. Clark (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2012). Fragment [561] [↑](#endnote-ref-128)
129. Toynbee, A. *A Study of History*. Abridgement of Volumes VII-X by D.C. Somervell (NY & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pt. VI, ch. XXV. [↑](#endnote-ref-129)
130. According to world system theorists, this pattern of development often takes place in so-called “semiperipheral marcher states,” where the older core cites lose dominance to semiperipheral cities due to the rising centrality of the former semiperiphery. The Akkadians, the Assyrians, the Persians, and the Islamic Caliphates are often cited as cases of semiperipheral marcher states. [↑](#endnote-ref-130)
131. Toynbee, A. “Capital Cities: Their Distinctive Features” and “Capital Cities: Melting-Pots and Powder-Kegs” in *Cities on the Move* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 67-70. [↑](#endnote-ref-131)
132. Ghurye, G. S. *Cities and Civilization* (Bombay:  Popular Prakashan, 1962), 182-186. [↑](#endnote-ref-132)
133. Kedourie, E. "Foreign Policy: A Practical Pursuit," in *The Crossman Confessions and other Essays in Politics, History, and Religion* (London: Mansell, 1984), 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-133)
134. Tarkhov, S.A. “Perenosy stolits”, *Geografia*, no.5-6, 2007. [↑](#endnote-ref-134)
135. Mommsen T. *Istoria Rima*. Vol.3. Ot smerti Sully do bitvy pri Tapse. Translated by I.Masyukov (OGIZ: Moskva, 1941), 44. [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
136. [Ibn Khaldun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Khaldun). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal ([Princeton University Press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princeton_University_Press), 1967), 4:19. [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
137. Parker, G. Power in Stone: Cities as Symbols of Empires (London: Reaktion, 2014), 57 ; Toynbee, A. *A Study of History*. Abridgement of Volumes VII-X by D.C. Somervell (NY & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) , VI, XXV. [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
138. ##  Boiy, T. Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon (NY: Peeters Publishers, 2004), 97.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
139. #  Contrary to common belief, St. Petersburg did not rise on the uninhibited banks of the Neve, “a wave-swept shore, remote, forlorn” as the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin described; rather, it was sited on the location of the Swedish fortress Nyenschatz (Nyenskans) and the town of Nyen that controlled the edge of the Swedish territory near the mouth of the Neva River. In 1610, after having taken control of the Neva River delta, the Swedes built a fortress here, reconstructed in 1644. In the middle of the 17th century, according to some estimates, the population of this area reached 2,000 people. Kotilaine, J.T. *Russia's Foreign Trade and Economic Expansion in the Seventeenth Century* (Brill: Leiden, 2005), 41. Note that as early as the 14th century, the Swedish fortress Landskrona was erected on these lands.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
140. The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text. Translated & ed. by Samuel Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge: Massachusetts, 1953), 86. [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
141. Plekhanov, S. *Reformator na trone* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnie otnoshenia, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
142. Rossman, V. *V poiskakh Chetvertogo Rima* (Moskva: Vysshaia shkola ekonomiki, 2014), 86-89. [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
143. #  Jahn, F.-L. “An Essay on Capital Cities,” *Essai sur les Moeurs, la Littérature, et la Nationalité des peuples de l'Allemagne*, Paris, 1832. The Gentleman's Magazine, vol. 103, (Jul-Dec), part 2 (1833), 228.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
144. Machiavelli, N. *The Prince*. Translated by J.G. Nichols (Alma Classics: London, 2009), 7-8. [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
145. Ibid, 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
146. Toynbee, A. *A Study of History*. Abridgement of Volumes VII-X by D.C. Somervell (NY & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), VI, XXV. [↑](#endnote-ref-146)
147. In his informative and well-reasoned article, Daniel Pipes, an American historian and expert on Middle East, explains that *by and large the idea of Jerusalem in the Arab history has been politically motivated*, whereby the narrative of the religious significance of the city has been manufactured or adjusted to accommodate political ambitions of the Arab rulers. He points out that political campaigns of various Arab dynasties periodically led to a sharp rise of interest in Jerusalem while during the periods of political hiatus when the city fell into decay and disrepair, this interest disappeared. Not even once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Qur’an or any Muslim prayers; nor did it play any role in the earthly life of Muhammad. Religious passions about Jerusalem flared in the Muslim world each time the city became politically important to the Muslims whether it was in the Umayyad period, during the wars against the Crusaders, under the British administration, or during the so-called “occupation by Israel.” For example, in the 7th century, confronted by the Mecca-based rebels, the Damascus-based Umayyad rulers strived to aggrandize Syria at the expense of Arabia, seeking to glorify Jerusalem, make it equal of Mecca, and possibly transform it into their administrative capital (Pipes, D. “The Muslim Claim to Jerusalem,” *Middle East Quarterly*, September, 2001). [↑](#endnote-ref-147)
148. ##  Horvath, R. J. “The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia,” The Journal of African History, vol.10, Issue 02 (1969).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-148)
149. Tarkhov, S.A. “Perenosy stolits”, *Geografia*, no.5-6, 2007. [↑](#endnote-ref-149)
150. Hitti, P. *Capital Cities of Arab Islam* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973). Many historians attribute idealistic or ideological motives to the action of Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, and claim that he sought to protect Mecca and Medina from the corrupt political and cosmopolitan influences or perhaps wished to preserve the integrity of both the language and way of life of Muhammad’s time. According to this interpretation, giving political status to these cities would have inevitably undermined their status as sacred cities and the cradle of Islam. Notwithstanding this argument, considerations of loyalty appear to be a more plausible reason for the relocation. As it is known, neither Mecca, nor Medina supported Ali in his military confrontation with the opposition. It is noteworthy that probably following the example set by Ali, none of the Abbasid caliphs dared to use Mecca and Medina to pursue political goals (Carmichael, J. *The Shaping of the Arabs* (New York, 1967), 194). [↑](#endnote-ref-150)
151. Goethem, E. von. *Nagaoka. Japan’s Forgotten Capital* (Brill NV: Leiden, 2008) [↑](#endnote-ref-151)
152. Wang, J. & Huang, S. “Contesting Taibei as the World City,” *City*, vol.13, no.1, 2009: 103-104. [↑](#endnote-ref-152)
153. Dagron, G. *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974). [↑](#endnote-ref-153)
154. Dagron, G. *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974); Mango, C. “Constantinople: Capital of the Oikoumene?” Presented at *‘Byzantium as Oecumene’* Conference, Athens, Greece 2001. Published by the *Institute for Byzantine Research*, Athens, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-154)
155. Tyrwhitt, J. & Gottmann, J. (eds.). “Capital Cities,” *Ekistics*, 50, March/Aprial [Oslo, Warsaw, Rome, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C., 1983], 89. [↑](#endnote-ref-155)
156. Mango, C. “Constantinople: Capital of the Oikoumene?” Presented at *‘Byzantium as Oecumene’* Conference, Athens, Greece 2001. Published by the *Institute for Byzantine Research*, Athens, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-156)
157. Joffe, A. “Disembedded Capitals in Western Asian Perspective,” *Society for Comparative Study of Society & History,* 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-157)
158. Ibid, 543. [↑](#endnote-ref-158)
159. Ibid, 573. [↑](#endnote-ref-159)
160. Ibid, 574. [↑](#endnote-ref-160)
161. Lewis, M. E. *The Construction of Space in Early China* (NY: SUNY Press, 2006), 191. [↑](#endnote-ref-161)
162. Mommsen T. *Istoria Rima*. Vol.3. Ot smerti Sully do bitvy pri Tapse. Translated by I.Masyukov (OGIZ: Moskva, 1941), 44. [↑](#endnote-ref-162)
163. Toby, Ronald P. “Why Leave Nara? Kammu and the Transfer of the Capital,” *[Monumenta Nipponica](http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=monunipp" \o "Monumenta Nipponica)*, [Vol. 40, No. 3, Autumn, 1985](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/i316646).   [↑](#endnote-ref-163)
164. #  Southhall, A. *The City in Time and Space* ([Cambridge University Press](http://books.google.com/url?client=ca-print-cambridge&format=googleprint&num=0&id=gapUlA6smS0C&q=http://www.cambridge.org/9780521784320&usg=AFQjCNHYqveoFd2hWI0_0unJ0KfhD-MO3w&source=gbs_buy_r), 1998), 160-161.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-164)
165. Heike Monogatari. *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, vol. XLVI, Part II (Keiogijiki, Mita, Tokyo, 1918), 182. [↑](#endnote-ref-165)
166. Ernst, C. *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2003), 111-114. [↑](#endnote-ref-166)