

This article was downloaded by: [Pullan, Wendy]

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## The Journal of Architecture

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713703437>

### Frontier urbanism: the periphery at the centre of contested cities

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Online publication date: 13 February 2011

To cite this Article Pullan, Wendy(2011) 'Frontier urbanism: the periphery at the centre of contested cities', The Journal of Architecture, 16: 1, 15 – 35

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2011.546999

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.546999>

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# Frontier urbanism: the periphery at the centre of contested cities

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## **Introduction: urban frontiers<sup>1</sup>**

Historically the notion of the frontier has played a major role in military planning, empire building, the territoriality of states and the hegemony of political regimes. It has come rather late and second-hand to architectural thinking, and for cities, the frontier has gained meaning in modern times primarily as urban areas have become suburban or ex-urban, growing beyond established borders, sometimes into contested or otherwise threatening no-go zones. To a good extent, the awareness of and concern for urban frontiers has developed with globalisation debates, and as they, the frontiers, become more elastic, they develop profound spatial implications for the structure, orientation and growth of cities. In cities that experience extreme levels of ethno-national and/or religious conflict, this is particularly true.

The frontier is first of all about remoteness. The frontier does not exist alone, but is understood by what it is distant from; this in broad terms may be called the centre.<sup>2</sup> Anderson and O'Dowd have explained this relationship in disputed territories, where regions of 'infiltration, transition or separation, [act as] defences for the supposed "purity" of the "centre"'.<sup>3</sup> The spatial dynamic renders the frontier not as a borderline but as an area or zone, that may shrink, grow or move. It may be argued that unlike a borderland, a frontier is inherently contested, in its simplest form, 'a territory for two dreams',<sup>4</sup> but in more complicated situations, subject to 'exogenous and endogenous forces'.<sup>5</sup>

The relationship between frontier and centre may be dialectical, and any symbiosis is likely to be complex. In their 1999 discussion of borders and border regions, Anderson and O'Dowd distinguish between centre and periphery, if the latter is contested:

...the legacy of undemocratic and often violent origins—whether in national conflict, political revolution or the slaughter of native populations—needs to be played down or concealed for territorial democracy to perform its legitimizing functions. The contemporary relevance of the origins has to be officially 'forgotten'. The problem with contested borders is precisely that 'origins' remain a live issue and cannot be 'forgotten'.<sup>6</sup>

With a different approach but similar conclusion, James Ron's study of state violence in Serbia and Israel highlights the differences between the policing of ghettos and the relative lawlessness of frontiers, arguing that 'nationalist states tend to be most radical at their margins, not their core'.<sup>7</sup> This is not to say that the state is absent in either situation, and Ron suggests that variations will depend upon the different 'institutional settings' at frontiers or in central areas that are often controlled by the state.<sup>8</sup> Weizman points out that links between centre and periphery are not always what they seem for 'when the frontier seems to degenerate into complete lawlessness, it is because its "organized chaos" is often generated from the centre'.<sup>9</sup>

Most studies of contested frontiers (including the above) focus on states or regions rather than cities;

however, it is worth considering how cities could be relevant to the topic. Despite formal planning procedures, cities do not normally have the apparatus available to states to control frontiers. At the same time, ethno-nationally contested cities often experience regular support or interference (depending upon your point of view) from the state. They may also contain especially pronounced peripheral regions and rely heavily upon the seemingly homogeneous centre for security and identity. Hence, it can be revealing to consider whether the arguments for discrepancy between radical margins and established centres is true of urban entities. Contested cities regularly suffer divisions and fragmentation that directly affect their physical and social structure, raising questions of whether and how the radical frontier may be more firmly lodged within the urban body.

Jerusalem, a city that is nominally unified under Israel but divided between Palestinians and Israelis by occupation and ongoing violence, provides a valuable arena for considering these issues. My initial investigation will clearly establish radicalisation of the urban frontier in the city's outlying lands. But its historic centre has also been affected by prolonged conflict and is far from consolidation under one leadership; it too will require examination for the presence of radical frontiers. The findings from the inner-city research will begin to question whether the centre/margins pattern established in states pertains in the same way for cities.

Finally, my article will shift to a long-term view, deliberating whether frontiers, once established in contested city centres, remain in some form. To do this, I turn to two cities long partitioned: the

German/Polish border town of Guben/Gubin, whose World War II legacy is division, although it now enjoys open borders and attempts at reconciliation; and Nicosia, which is split between Greek and Turkish Cyprus with very little interaction between the two peoples and limited border mobility. Rather than concentrating on the most obvious hard-border manifestations, I focus on the temporal to consider how frontiers have become absorbed into institutions that identify and promote disputed interests inside the urban centres. In doing so, it becomes clear that architecture remains a critical factor for embodying such frontiers, even in cases where they have become largely symbolic over time.

In this discussion, various aspects of frontiers will arise; however, there are two that I should like to flag here. First, contested frontiers lack symmetry and homogeneity. Whatever is on the far side of the frontier is always regarded as the 'other', to be feared, distrusted or seen as alien. This is a key factor in distinguishing the frontier from a border and makes the possibility of the frontier as a well-balanced place of exchange more problematic.<sup>10</sup> More fundamentally, although frontiers incorporate the breakdown of laws and institutions, some protocols must remain in order for the region to be recognised as 'our frontier'; beyond this area of partial or intermittent order is the other side, and that, because it is unknown, is chaotic. Here, the second point arises. Borders are usually places of increased control and surveillance,<sup>11</sup> and in the context of a significant frontier, constraints and special security measures will be instituted to counteract the increased lawlessness of that area. Nonetheless, the frontier, and its accompanying levels of

lawlessness, often has its uses to the combatants, and if it were completely controlled, it would cease to exist. Thus the frontier is a place of contradiction, where the 'wild' and the 'tamed'<sup>12</sup> do not cancel each other but play out different roles, sometimes in reciprocity, and with different levels of impact.

### **The frontier at the frontier**

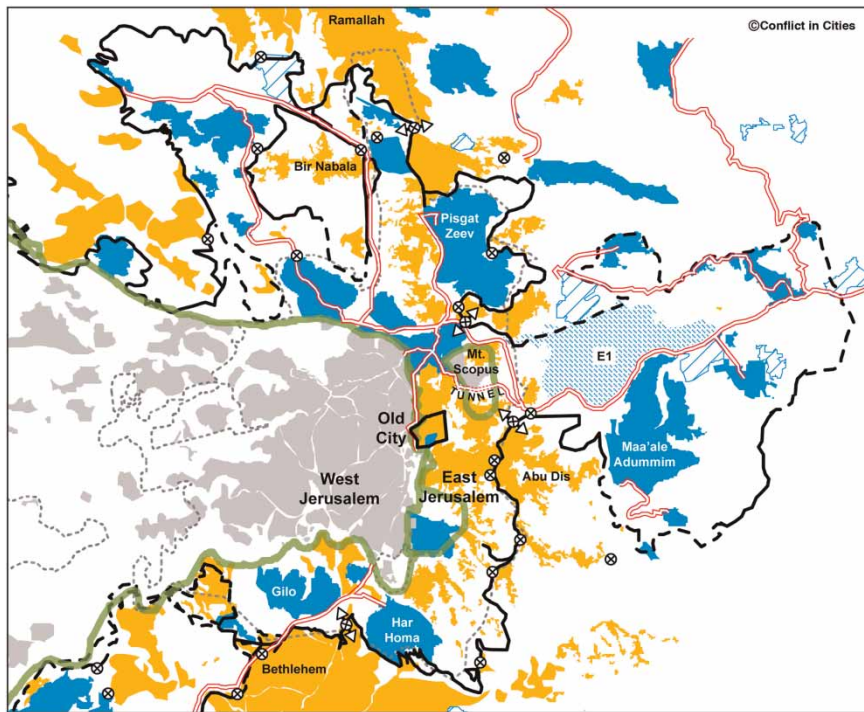
Radical planning of the frontier has dominated Jerusalem since 1967 when Israel conquered the eastern half of the divided city and annexed the territory but did not grant citizenship to the 70,000 Palestinians in it. In Israeli planning terms, Jerusalem's frontier may be understood as all of the Palestinian land incorporated into the north, east and south of the Israeli city that borders on one side with West (Israeli) Jerusalem and the other with the West Bank.<sup>13</sup> Planning of this area can be called radical for a number of reasons: the city grew by decree from 36 to 108 square kilometres and a large minority of the population is disenfranchised. The annexation has never been recognised internationally, thus any question of 'legal' or 'illegal' planning is in Israeli terms only; Palestinians have never been involved in planning decisions, both because they have not been invited to do so and because participation would acknowledge Israeli sovereignty. East Jerusalem lands have been covered with residential settlements intended for Jewish inhabitants only;<sup>14</sup> Palestinians live in their existing villages-turned-suburbs, with little or no planned growth and mostly substandard housing. But, for the purposes of this study, the most radical aspect of planning, and that which assures it as frontier urbanism, is

the intentional segregation of civilian populations in residential configurations designed to be not just separate but confrontational.<sup>15</sup>

A map of Greater Jerusalem (Fig. 1) shows that settlements have been built (mostly on Palestinian agricultural land) between Palestinian villages, restricting horizontal growth of the latter. The settlements function as an Israeli 'security ring' around Jerusalem, spelled out in a document prepared for Mayor Teddy Kollek's international advisory council, the Jerusalem Committee; it states: 'the ring of settlements will provide a necessary buffer in case of any political or military pressure'.<sup>16</sup> In the Greater Jerusalem map, the pattern of settlements and villages almost appears intermingled, except for one problem: the enclaves are unconnected. No access roads lay between them, and even some of the main arterial roads are separate. The settlements are designed as distinct and autonomous bedroom suburbs, and the villages have become that way because their agricultural land has been expropriated. From their respective positions, the enclaves oppose each other, and, from across the divide, now often marked by the separation barrier, Israelis and Palestinians eye each other, never to meet (Fig. 2).

Both populations live under the persistent gaze of the other and with no physical access, it becomes easy to vilify what they do not know.<sup>17</sup> The Israeli settlements are built like stone fortresses, with huge retaining walls, usually on hilltops where they maintain dominant positions. Yet when seen from within, the flats and houses are suburban and middle class, enjoying lush gardens, and slightly orientalist with arched windows and doors; in








Figure 1. Map of Greater Jerusalem.



Greater Jerusalem, 2009



KEY

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Palestinian built-up areas                              |  Green Line (1948-67)                              |
|  Israeli settlements                                     |  Israeli Municipal Boundary                        |
|  E1 - proposed Israeli settlement                        |  Separation barrier (built and under construction) |
|  Israeli military base                                   |  Separation barrier (planned)                      |
|  Israeli Jerusalem within the Green Line                 |  Checkpoints                                       |
|  Roads built or appropriated for use by Israeli settlers |  Checkpoints open to Palestinians with permits     |

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Figure 2. View of  
Palestinian *Hizmat* from  
Israeli *Pisgat Zeev*.

rather superficial terms the design is meant to communicate that these buildings are part of the land and its history, and in them one finds normal life, here to stay. The Janus-like architectural modes of fortress and suburban house simultaneously depict the wild and tame of the frontier, producing a rigid scenario unable to accommodate the deviations that help mixed cultures to flourish. Conceived of and approved at national level,<sup>18</sup> the

settlements form a major component of the Israeli institutional setting at the frontier.

Since 1967, frontier urbanism has determined the periphery of Jerusalem in a classic case of radicalisation at the margins. At the same time, state-led planning in the inner city has also been contentious and contributed to fragmented frontiers, including expropriation of Palestinian property for the rebuilding and enlargement of the Jewish Quarter,<sup>19</sup> and

the demolition of the Magharib Quarter at the end of the 1967 war in order to create a large plaza in front of the Western (Wailing) Wall.<sup>20</sup> Many of these acts of expropriation were justified as conservation projects in an historic city, and, as such, did not immediately attract as much attention and criticism as the settlements. Perhaps the largest contribution to making a frontier in central Jerusalem was the construction of the Road 1 motorway dividing East and West Jerusalem, but this state-sponsored project was generally accepted as necessary to relieve the city's traffic congestion.<sup>21</sup> More recently, however, other inner city frontiers have taken a different form in Jerusalem's Old City, and rather than being state-sponsored peripheral settlements, or absorbed and forgotten as 'rational needs' of the city centre, they are being generated from the two conflicting populations, with the purposes of religio-political activism and resistance.

### **The frontier at the centre**

Although Jewish settlement has been mostly associated with the West Bank and the periphery of Jerusalem, the 1980s brought the Ateret Cohanim, the first of the settler groups dedicated to procuring Palestinian property in the Old City, especially the Muslim Quarter.<sup>22</sup> Over time, acting through middlemen, and sometimes by coercion, they have been able to acquire a substantial number of properties, some owned by Jews before 1948; but many are new purchases.<sup>23</sup> The Jewish acquisitions are used mostly as theological seminaries (yeshivas) and residential accommodation, with a few synagogues. Unlike many of the settlers in Jerusalem's periphery, who reside there to take advantage of better,

cheaper housing,<sup>24</sup> the Muslim Quarter is home to Jews who are motivated through religious conviction coupled with political ideology; they believe in a divine imperative to settle all of the Land of Israel, regardless of who lives there.

Much can be said about the Old City settlers and support for them by the present Israeli government,<sup>25</sup> but here I wish to concentrate upon their presence in the Muslim Quarter as a new frontier. Most obviously, their desire to settle in the Muslim Quarter rather than the Jewish Quarter is provocative in a volatile environment. Effectively, every house they inhabit becomes a micro-frontier; space is tight and the urban fabric has developed eccentrically over many centuries, often exacerbating conflicts within tiny areas. The process of piecemeal acquisition means that sometimes only a small flat or a room is purchased, so a number of the buildings are shared with Palestinians, including joint entrances and stairwells; often settlers take the upper floors and the rooftops, which become security posts, allowing unimpeded views onto the Palestinian residents below. Overly confident yeshiva students and settler paramilitaries regularly harass Palestinian families and inflame the fragile situation.<sup>26</sup>

More recently, Islamic groups have become active in the Old City, especially those attached to a cleric from the north of Israel, Shaykh Ra'id Salah, who has managed to use the present leadership vacuum in Palestinian Jerusalem to his advantage.<sup>27</sup> The major rallying point is the Haram al-Sharif, third holiest place in Islam, but 'first in politics';<sup>28</sup> yet much of the Shaykh's support comes from the increasing activism of the Palestinian street where

youth are beginning to confront aggressive settlers. Both settler and Islamist groups profess to strong spiritual ties with the city, but, unsurprisingly, much of their efforts revolve around political activism based in ad-hoc groups grown into strategic and well-organised local movements. They form their respective institutional settings from the grassroots, each lauded in their own potentially explosive communities. Nonetheless, it would be misleading to see these frontiers symmetrically, for in terms of infrastructure and security the settlers are supported, both implicitly and explicitly, by the Israeli government, whereas the Palestinians act in resistance.

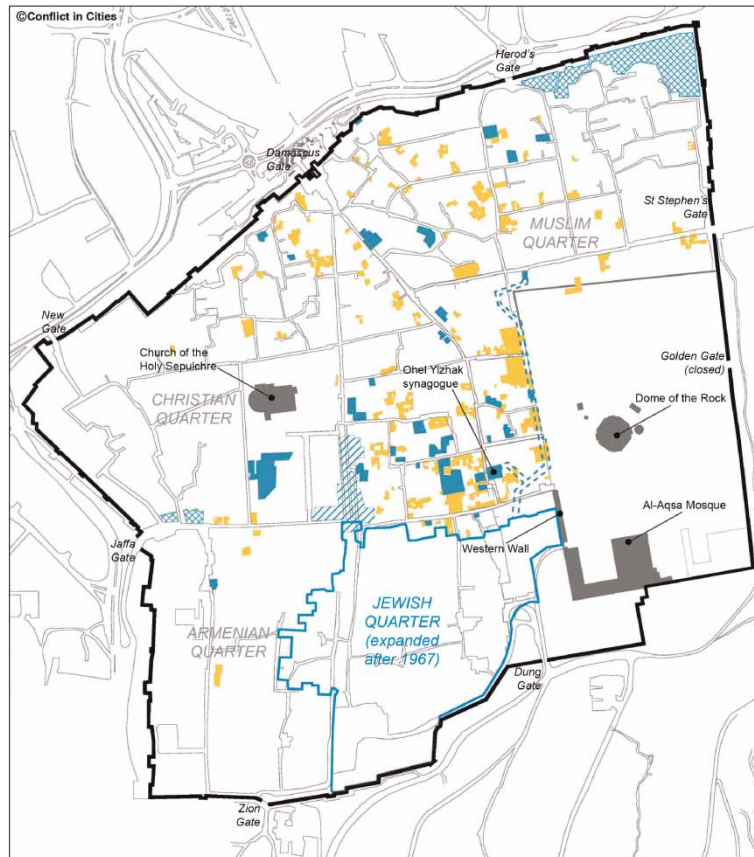
A voracious sense of territoriality dominates the Muslim Quarter: posters, flags, graffiti, the broadcasting of religious speeches, music, sermons, and through the centre of the Quarter, a market with ethnically identifiable goods, all help to etch out religio-political territories in this fragmented topography. Heritage sites, archaeological excavations and architectural renovations are also used and manipulated to gain the upper hand. Since 1995, Palestinian groups have attempted to counter settler takeovers by refurbishing traditional houses and courtyards, and initiating other community projects in order to support families and encourage them to remain in the city (Fig. 3).<sup>29</sup> The Palestinian organisations emphasise good restoration practice, both in the preservation of the stone building fabric and the maintenance of traditional family life in the courtyards.<sup>30</sup> The settlers, who are also anxious to house as many of their followers as possible, have no deep traditions in the area and care not at all for Palestinian architecture, making

no-frills yeshiva and flat renovations. Their hallmark security posts on the rooftops are barricaded shacks, bristling with surveillance apparatus, communicating that the battle is in process (Fig. 4); this architecture is clearly another world from the tame, middle-class suburbs of the peripheral settlements.

Archaeology is a favoured vehicle for attempting to legitimate the settlers' presence in the Old City, primarily in order to enhance their claim to biblical continuity. In doing so, they follow a long tradition of using archaeology for nationalist purposes,<sup>31</sup> and sometimes the excavations have resulted in violent clashes.<sup>32</sup> A number of these projects have involved extensive tunnelling and the creation of underground spaces for prayer and religious tourism, and for passage from one Jewish-held area to another. Recently, the Ohel Yizhak Synagogue, in the Muslim Quarter, was refurbished and enlarged to stand on top of Palestinian shops, with the building linked to excavations beneath it, making an exclusively Jewish route by tunnel from the synagogue to the Western Wall in the Jewish Quarter (see Figure 3).<sup>33</sup> The justifications for the archaeology itself cannot be debated here, but certain other points are relevant: the role of the Israel Antiquities Authority is not always clear; some of the work is illegal; and most of the digging and tunnelling is under Palestinian property, causing great anxiety to the residents for the dangers of subsidence.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the extensive tunnels and underground chambers create a new domain for the settlers, quite surreptitiously, underneath the city. Increasingly, the street remains Palestinian, sandwiched by settlers above and below.








Figure 3. Map of property clashes in Jerusalem's Old City.



Property Clashes in Jerusalem's Old City, 2009



**KEY**

-  Properties with Jewish settler activity
-  Areas planned for development by Jewish settlers
-  Palestinian residential rehabilitation (planned and completed)
-  Israeli built rooftop walkways
-  Settler controlled underground tunnel system

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Figure 4. Jewish settlers on a rooftop in the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem.

The Muslim Quarter is quite different from the segregated open spaces of peripheral settlements and villages. The dense urban fabric of the historic centre and the nature of the settlers' incursions have forced the two peoples together (Fig. 5). The ideological mixture has made it a highly charged atmosphere where many groups and individuals wish to impose their national and religious identities upon the city, clearly at the expense of the rest of the

population. Here, where the city is considered to be most meaningful and coveted, it is also most radical and subject to the strengths and desires of quasi-political organisations; this runs contrary to our earlier propositions about the controlled and/or measured nature of the centre with respect to the frontier in state or regional situations.

The conflict in Jerusalem is ongoing and raw as the struggle to grab or maintain territory and

Figure 5. Muslim *Hajj* (pilgrimage) painting over-painted with a Jewish star, Muslim Quarter.



establish influence continues. Effectively, we are witnessing frontiers being created. This observation raises questions of whether city-centre frontiers formed by the current conflict are unusual and whether they will be enduring. Jerusalem itself is fluid and cannot offer further answers, but it is worth probing the problem further by looking at the possibilities of urban-centre frontiers in other cities at different stages of conflict. The long-

divided but no longer violent cities of Guben/Gubin and Nicosia provide interesting opportunities for this.

#### **Transnational frontiers: Guben/Gubin**

German Guben and Polish Gubin have been not so much contested as fully divided by an international border since the end of World War II. War and displacement have resulted in long-term resentments

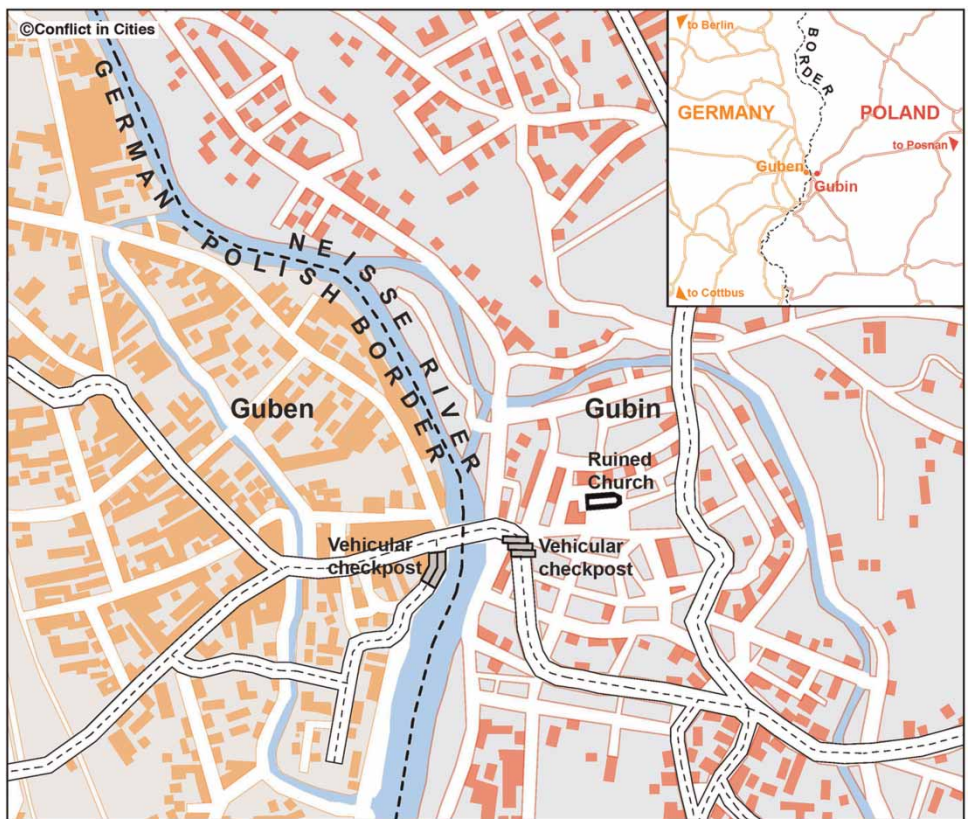
and this border, despite Cold War alignments, was one of the hardest in Europe between 1945 and 1989. Since then, as Europe expands eastward, whole towns along the Polish-German divide at the Oder and Neisse rivers have been rendered transnational borderlands.<sup>35</sup> Poland's admission to the Shengen region in 2007 has given free border access; still, at the local level, reconciliation has been elusive, and cities that had been one since the Middle Ages and then divided for a matter of only decades, now turn their backs on each other. In Guben/Gubin, Matthiesen and Bürkner refer to an imbalance in the two sides' capacity for institution building that 'contributes to further vicious circles of peripheralisation of the border region'.<sup>36</sup> Such an analysis points to aspects of the asymmetrical frontier at work; this is clearly apparent on a map which shows the highly uneven density of the two town centres (Fig. 6).

Recently, a high-street development across the bridge linking the two sides of the city, and a proposal for transforming the large mediaeval church, left empty with extensive war damage in the centre of Gubin, into a German-Polish communications centre, have been seen as iconic architectural projects, symbolic of the reconciliation of the two sides of the town.<sup>37</sup> However, a different sort of architecture has dominated the townscape; this is the border crossing point between eastern and western Europe with its large terminal buildings on each side. To combat decline in Guben and Gubin, the transnational scenario was believed to be the key for generating income.<sup>38</sup> The checkpoints were built on either side of the river next to the bridge, that is, right in the town centres; these fron-

tier structures may have promised riches, but have also been a regular reminder of the city's division.<sup>39</sup> Such shed-like buildings are distinguished by pure functional ordinariness and clearly were never intended to contribute as important architectural features of the townscape. But centrality has made them prominent, and, astoundingly, the checkpoint and queue of cars and lorries takes centre stage in a postcard sending greetings from Guben (Fig. 7).

In pointing out the links between the built environment and public life, Dürrschmidt states 'it is no exaggeration to claim that the downward spiral for Guben/Gubin will have to be tackled from within its core—not just in real but in symbolic terms'.<sup>40</sup> Granted, crossing the border has eased considerably with the incorporation of Poland into Shengen. Nonetheless, in orienting the town toward the discrepancies in European geopolitics<sup>41</sup> and articulating the border crossing right at its centre, care for the core has not been forthcoming, and effectively the city has been handed over to a transnational economic vision and rendered as a frontier. This accentuates the imbalances and may augment the weaknesses of locality as a situated community.<sup>42</sup> Any sort of serious reconciliation of the city depends upon many factors. Whether the church-communications project will have the desired effect remains to be seen, but it is fair to say that a single building can transform a city only in the company of larger, more extensive meanings. Ironically, the checkpoints, which embody unpleasant memories associated with hard borders and reinforce the frontier in the centre-edge of this city, may have some of that capacity.

Figure 6. Map of Guben-Gubin, German-Polish border.



Guben - Gubin

KEY

-  Guben (Germany), streets and buildings
-  Gubin (Poland), streets and buildings
-  German-Polish border, Neisse River
-  Major roads



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Figure 7. Postcard from Guben (courtesy of Bild und Heimat publishers).

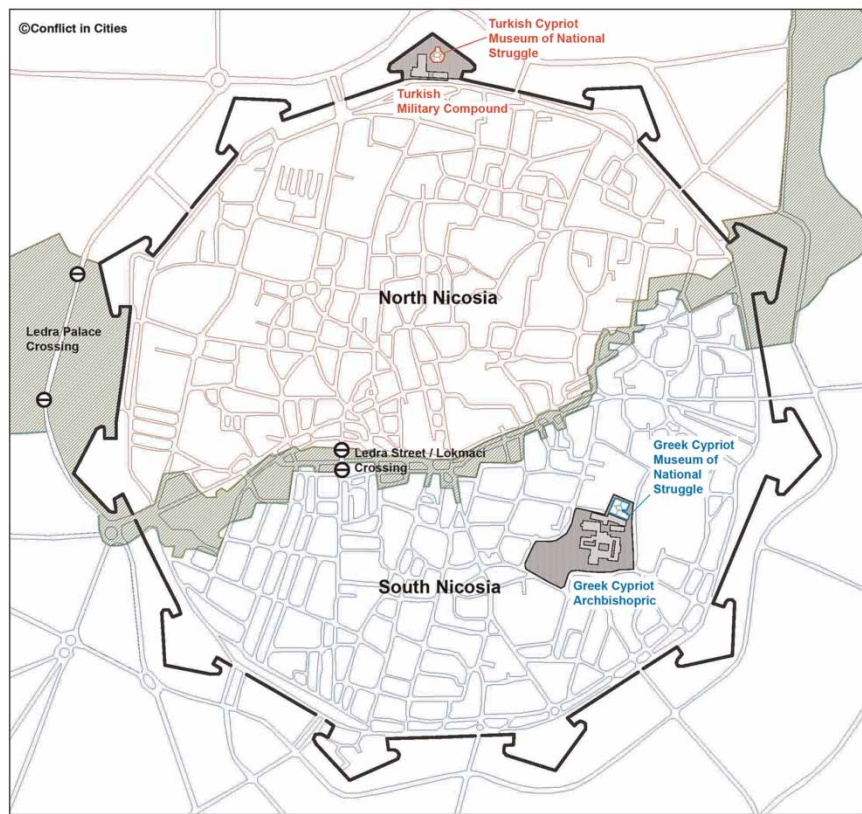
### Cultural frontiers: Nicosia (Lefkosia/Lefkoşa)

Cypriot Nicosia is also an internationally divided city, with some mobility in its city centre since the Ledra Street/Lokmaci checkpoint was opened in 2008 between the Greek Cypriot south and Turkish Cypriot north. Inter-communal violence had become common in the 1960s and the Turkish invasion in 1974 led to full division of the country; Nicosia was split with a 'buffer zone' of abandoned properties several blocks wide (Fig. 8). Now devoid

of any human activity and subject to UN control, it symbolises the breakdown of Greek/Turkish civic life which otherwise exists only in the memory of its people; this dead zone, as it is known, dominates the living to perpetuate national divisions and hatreds.<sup>43</sup>

Within the small, pedestrianised spaces of the historic walled city, the dead zone is a particularly powerful reality.<sup>44</sup> It would be fair to say that this very deliberate injection of the frontier into the

Figure 8. Map of the walled city, Nicosia.



Nicosia's Old City, 2009:  
Greek & Turkish Cypriot Museums of National Struggle



**KEY**

	Turkish Cypriot Northern Nicosia
	Greek Cypriot Southern Nicosia
	United Nations Buffer Zone
	Border Crossing Checkpoint
	Old City Walls and Bastions

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centre has spawned other related urban frontiers, none so commanding or literally divisive, but nevertheless revealing for the present discussion in their representational capacities. Good examples are two remarkably similar museums, located on either side of the dead zone, each named the 'Museum of National Struggle'. Both have been established to maintain memories of conflicts that still dominate their respective societies,<sup>45</sup> and although located inside the historic city, and symbolically central to their cultures, they establish frontiers through their design and content.<sup>46</sup>

In the Turkish north, the museum was built in the Barbaro (Musalla) bastion of the city wall, near the main northern gate (see Figure 8). The museum itself is typical of its genre: archival material, photographs, paintings, and personal artefacts such as clothing, weapons, typewriters and wirelasses, illustrate the struggle, in this case, against the Greek Cypriots between 1963 and 1983, with the invasion by Turkey in 1974 and finally the declaration of the independence of northern Cyprus in 1983. Like many commemorations of nation-founding, the focus is on civilian struggle through paramilitary groups. The building is centrally-planned; visitors are led through exhibits to the core, a space of commemoration with the names of all the Turkish Cypriot dead (civilians, not only fighters), a stained glass panel and the two flags of Turkey and Turkish Cyprus (Fig. 9). This religio-political space is the culmination of the museum and illustrates the partnership of the Cypriot TMT (Turkish Resistance Organisation) and the Turkish army as their protectors, leading to the TRNC, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. But this fusion becomes cemented

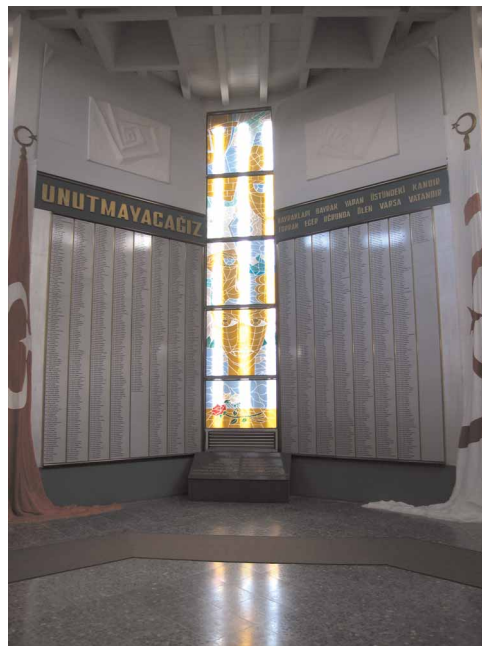


Figure 9. Turkish Cypriot Museum of Struggle, northern Nicosia.

by the museum's location in the courtyard of the Mucahitler Sitesi (Warriors Complex), an inner-city army command post. One enters the white marble compound from the street up a large bank of steps, almost as if approaching a temple precinct; the museum is in the rear.<sup>47</sup> The new military compound itself stands within the old defensive bastion of the city wall, giving an extra injection of historic legitimacy (see Figure 8).

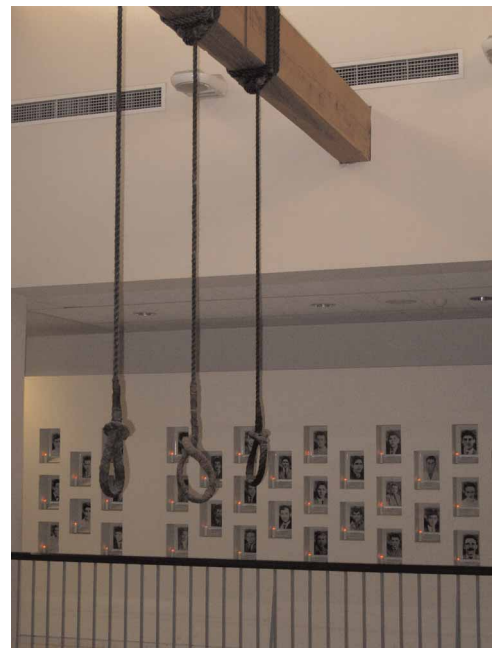
The Greek Cypriot Museum of National Struggle is also located within the walled city (see Figure 8). It is dedicated to the period 1955–1960, when the Greek Cypriots fought against the British for



Figure 10. Greek  
Cypriot Museum of  
Struggle, southern  
Nicosia.

independence, especially charting the movement for *enosis* (unification with Greece) and the efforts of the paramilitary Eoka (National Organisation of Cypriot Struggle). Again, the museum is designed to lead the visitor through exhibits to the centre, this time with ramps rising up around an open space to form a continuous ascent in a processional manner. Near the top, the struggle ends with the independence of Cyprus in 1960; yet one more ramp continues upward, documenting the execution of Eoka members, each fighter commemorated with a photograph, a brief description of the circumstances of his death and an perpetually-burning electric candle. In the centre, hanging down into the space from a beam above, are three hangmen's nooses (Fig. 10). The shrine-like space, with small heroes' icons, is reminiscent of Greek Orthodox churches. And, as in the north, the location of the Museum is revealing; this time it is embedded in the Archbishops' quarter, a neighbourhood dedicated to Greek culture and religion, with the Archbishop's Palace, Greek Gymnasia and Byzantine Museum.<sup>48</sup> The Museum of National Struggle looks Greek with whitewashed walls and red tiled roofs, and a single flag, Greek, not Cypriot, reflects the nationalist desire to unite with Greece.

Although these museums are similar in the way they identify their goals, there is a disjuncture in the telling of their histories. Both favour the long view to help to establish present-day legitimacy, the Turkish Cypriot museum beginning in the early Ottoman period and the Greek Cypriots starting as far back as the Bronze Age. But the modern events they choose as seminal for explaining



today's situation vary: the northern museum, takes on the conflict with the Greek Cypriots directly, which helps to detract from its own colonial position *vis à vis* Turkey; the southern museum ends its story at liberation from British colonial rule, yet its professed interest in *enosis* makes any union with Turkish Cyprus impossible. Each narrative has its own preoccupations, but the desire of each to reinforce the structures that resist reconciliation is the same.<sup>49</sup>

The location of both museums ensures their links with the strongest national institutions—the army and the church—in their own communities, both

of which are oriented by their own 'motherlands' of Turkey and Greece. As the museums are visited less by tourists than their own citizens,<sup>50</sup> these connections would be more than evident. The museums represent national conflict and division, and, as cultural institutions, they are dedicated to disseminating their messages in the centres of their respective cities. They do this by specific histories of civilian struggle to appeal to a present-day civilian sense of injustice, victimisation and heroism. Whilst they do not replicate the frontier in the direct urban confrontations of Jerusalem's Old City, or the overbearing border crossing in Guben/Gubin, the Cypriot museums, designed as national shrines, bring the partisan historical frontiers to a highly visible and enduring form.

### Conclusions

At the contested margins of Jerusalem, it is not particularly surprising to find radical urban frontiers, these having been created by segregationist planning policies that have dominated the city since 1967. The presence of even more contentious frontiers in the centre of historic Jerusalem is less expected and more complex; here appears to be a conflation of urban centre and periphery that structures communal tensions and violence in the Old City. Such phenomena, both at periphery and in the centre, form a type of urbanism oriented by the radical frontier. This leads me to the term 'frontier urbanism', which can be characterised by two primary conditions: the settling of civilians as frontier populations, and the use of urban spaces and structures to promote a particular power and to foster confrontation.

In revealing that the centres of contested cities are receptive to disruption from the peripheral frontiers, the Jerusalem example appears to deviate from the conditions found in contested states or regions. To some extent this may have to do with scale: there is normally much less physical distance between centres and peripheries in cities than in those of states. But it is also worth remembering that the self-correcting democratic processes noted by Anderson and O'Dowd are skewed in a city like Jerusalem where in all parts only some citizens enjoy democratic participation. The Jerusalem example suggests the possibility that in cities where the space and spatial politics of the centre are overly exposed to and influenced by the frontiers, there may be a distortion of urban order between centre and periphery. This is a potentially worrying situation that would need to be confirmed and better understood with more research on the presence of frontiers in other cities that experience extreme levels of conflict.

The persistence of inner city frontiers in Nicosia and Guben/Gubin, despite decades of non-violence, does not bode well for Jerusalem. In these two rather different towns, various sorts of frontiers have hardened over time yet still fester. Frontier institutions that monitor transnational borders or narrate paramilitary histories have been absorbed into their respective urban fabrics and although the institutions have become largely 'normalised' they continue to underline ethnic rivalries; in doing so, they may contribute to the longevity of the urban divisions. It could be argued that the fissures in these societies need to be expressed in some form, and museums and open border checkpoints

are preferable to more violent options; nonetheless, the institutions are sustained by unmediated difference and, especially the museums, narrate savage histories and are not equipped with any mechanism for aiding reconciliation. Given the lengthy persistence of frontiers in divided cities, and the difficulties in reuniting them, one might rightly question the wisdom of dividing such cities in the first place.

Institutions are a key component of frontiers. They come in many forms: officially sanctioned at municipal, national or international levels, or, they may evolve from *ad-hoc* grassroots movements to become well-organised and influential. In the Jerusalem frontiers, both peripheral and central, even the housing is institutionalised due to the manipulative and partisan organisations that control it. Architecture clearly plays a major role in embodying frontiers through institutional structures, in the iconicity of the buildings and their decoration, as well as by their locations. In cities, architecture and its accoutrements bring frontiers to visibility.

Finally, and at the risk of appearing contradictory, I think it is worth suggesting that although we may be surprised or dismayed to find frontiers in the centres of contested cities, there may be certain parts of the cities that are vigorous enough to absorb, at least to some degree, the worst impacts of frontiers.<sup>51</sup> This is surely to do with a fundamental paradox where the centre of a city, more than its suburbs, is intense, rich and well-mediated and therefore attractive to radicalised factions who wish to control or influence it. Concurrently, it may be these same positive qualities of the centre that provide the urban possibilities for resisting or overcoming the worst excesses of frontiers.

### Acknowledgement

All images are the property of Conflict in Cities©, except Figure 7 for which grateful acknowledgement is made to Bild und Heimat publishers.

### Notes and references

1. This article forms part of a larger research project, 'Conflict in Cities and the Contested State', supported by the ESRC's Large Grants Programme (RES-060-25-0015). I am grateful to Ulf Matthiesen, for very kindly taking the time to arrange a visit to Guben/Gubin, to Lefkos Kyriacou, who has drawn the maps and contributed to the research on Nicosia and to Peter Carl, for a discussion on the frontier.
2. Basic definitions characterise the frontier as the 'front' or 'forepart', the 'furthest limit' from settled or inhabited regions, from the centre: 'remote from the comforts of civilisation' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Meanings vary according to place and language: see, Joël Kotek, 'Divided cities in the European cultural context', *Progress in Planning*, 52 (1999), pp.227–37; Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, 'Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective', *Geopolitics*, 10 (2005), pp.633–49; pp.634–35.
3. James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, 'Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance', *Regional Studies*, 33.7 (1999), pp.593–604; p.596. On the perceived purity of the centre, see, David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London, Routledge, 1995).
4. J. Kotek, 'Divided cities', *op. cit.*, p.228.
5. Koen Vlassenroot and Karen Büscher, 'The City as Frontier: Urban Development and Identity Processes in Goma', Cities and Fragile States Working Paper 61, Series 2 (November, 2009); Crisis States Research

- Centre, London School of Economics, p.2: [www.crisisstates.com/Publications/phase2papers.htm](http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/phase2papers.htm)
6. Anderson and O'Dowd, 'Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality', *op. cit.*, p.596.
  7. James Ron, *Frontiers and Ghettos. State Violence in Serbia and Israel* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 2003), p.xv.
  8. *Ibid.*, pp.8–9.
  9. Eyal Weizman, 'Principles of Frontier Geography', in *City of Collision. Jerusalem and the Principles of Conflict Urbanism*, eds, P. Misselwitz and T. Rieniets (Basel, Boston, Berlin, Birkhauser, 2006), pp.83–92; p.91.
  10. Frederick Jackson Turner's famous 1893 theory that posited the American frontier as a place of exchange and therefore opportunity, is particularly asymmetrical in view of the subsequent demise of America's indigenous peoples; for Turner's paper, see, chapter 1, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/turner/>; for critical readings of the theory, see, Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds, *The Frontier in History. North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1981).
  11. Anderson and O'Dowd, 'Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality', *op. cit.*, p.596.
  12. I take these terms from: Jörg Dürrschmidt, 'Between Europeanization and Marginalization – "Nest Urbanism" in a German-Polish Border Town', in *Declining Cities-Developing Cities: Polish and German Perspectives*, eds, Marek Nowak and Michal Nowosielski (Poznan, Instytut Zachodni, 2008), pp.57–76; p.63.
  13. The Palestinian West Bank is occupied by Israel, with many Jewish settlements. The separation barrier (wall) extends a considerable distance east of the 1967 municipal border of Jerusalem to include more settlements.
  14. All Israeli development across the green line is here referred to as 'settlement'; most Israelis distinguish between East Jerusalem and the West Bank, with the former containing 'new neighbourhoods' or 'satellites'; Palestinians usually use the term 'colonies' for all settlements.
  15. The Israeli authorities recognised the radical nature of their planning, believing it would produce an undivided Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty: 'in the last few years Jerusalem has been moulded into a greater Jerusalem that is altering the physical and political character of the region': David Kroyanker, *Jerusalem Planning and Development 1979–82* (Jerusalem, Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1982), p. 27. There has been a great deal written on the settlements. For a useful discussion of the political content inherent in their architectural functionality see, Rachel Kallus, 'The Political Role of the Everyday', *City*, 8.3 (2004), pp.341–61.
  16. D. Kroyanker, *Planning and Development, op. cit.*, p.27, in a chapter entitled 'The Future of Jerusalem—For and Against the Satellite Security Belt Around the City'.
  17. D. Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion, op. cit.*
  18. All major planning decisions on Jerusalem are made at national level.
  19. Simone Ricca, *Reinventing Jerusalem. Israel's Reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter after 1967* (London and New York, I B Taurus, 2007).
  20. *Ibid.*, pp.113–118.
  21. Road 1 serves Jerusalem and the settlements: see, Wendy Pullan, Philipp Misselwitz, Rami Nasrallah and Haim Yacobi, 'Jerusalem's Road 1: An Inner City Frontier?', *City*, 11.2 (2007), pp.175–97.
  22. On Old City settler groups see, Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Sacred Space. The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* (Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp.39–74.
  23. Some Jewish properties in the Muslim Quarter had been abandoned before 1948 and reclaimed after 1967. But Palestinians have not been allowed to reclaim any of their property lost in 1948. Many of

- the Jewish reclamations in the Old City have been extensively reported and documented: see the Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, especially articles by Nadav Shragai and Meron Rappaport, [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com); also, PASSIA (Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs), 'Jerusalem Settlement Activities and Related Policies' (June, 2009), [www.passia.org](http://www.passia.org)
24. Greg Myre, 'The Suburban Lure of the West Bank', *New York Times* (20th June, 2004).
  25. Meir Margalit, *Seizing Control of Space in East Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, Sifrei Aliat Gag, 2010).
  26. This is a common complaint, most recently voiced to Conflict in Cities in interviews carried out October, 2009-May, 2010.
  27. Mick Dumper and Craig Larkin, 'Political Islam in contested Jerusalem: The emerging role of Islamists from within Israel', Working Paper 12, Conflict in Cities and the Contested State, 2009; [www.conflictincities.org/PDFs/WorkingPaper12\\_10.11.09.pdf](http://www.conflictincities.org/PDFs/WorkingPaper12_10.11.09.pdf). The power vacuum is mainly due to Israel's closure policies which isolate Jerusalem from its West Bank hinterland.
  28. Yitzhak Reiter, 'Third in holiness, first in politics: Al-Haram al-Sharif in Muslim eyes', in *Sovereignty of God and Man: Sanctity and political centrality on the Temple Mount*, ed., Y. Reiter (Jerusalem, The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2001).
  29. Most prominent is the Old City Revitalisation Programme: see *The Old City of Jerusalem Revitalisation Programme 1995–2009* (Jerusalem, Welfare Association, 2009). The Jerusalem Society for Welfare and Development is also active, although without publications; interviewed, Jerusalem, 2010. Much of the population of the Muslim Quarter is the urban poor: if they have the possibility of leaving, many do.
  30. The Welfare Association works with conservation groups like ICOMOS and has won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.
  31. Neil Asher Silberman, *Digging for God and Country. Exploration, archaeology, and the secret struggle for the Holy Land 1799–1917* (New York, Knopf, 1982).
  32. Most notably in the opening ceremonies of the Western Wall tunnel in 1996 when over 80 people, the majority Palestinian, were killed.
  33. Visited 10th January, 2010.
  34. Reuters and Meron Rappaport, 'City of David tunnel proceeds without proper permit', *Haaretz* (4<sup>th</sup> February, 2007, [www.Haaretz.com](http://www.Haaretz.com)); 'What's lying behind Jerusalem's secret tunnel', *Middle East Online* (27<sup>th</sup> March, 2008), [www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=25056](http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=25056); Emek Shaveh, alternative archaeology, [www.alt-arch.org/](http://www.alt-arch.org/).
  35. Randall Halle, 'Views from the German-Polish Border: The Exploration of Inter-national Space in *Halbe Treppe and Lichter*', *The German Quarterly*, 80.1 (2007), pp.77–96.
  36. Ulf Matthiesen and Hans-Joachim Bürkner, 'Antagonistic structures in border areas: Local milieux and local politics in the Polish-German twin city Gubin/Guben', *GeoJournal*, 54 (2001), pp.43–50; p.48; see also, Ulf Matthiesen, 'Transformational Pathways and Institutional Capacity Building: The Case of the German-Polish Twin City Guben/Gubin', in *Urban Governance, Institutional Capacity and Social Milieux*, eds, G. Cars, P. Healey, A. Madanipour and C. de Magalhães (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), pp.70–89.
  37. J. Dürrschmidt, 'Between Europeanization and Marginalization', *op. cit.*, pp.64–67. On the joint projects, see Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) Fürst-Pückler-Land, [www.iba-see2010.de/en/projekte/projekt23.html](http://www.iba-see2010.de/en/projekte/projekt23.html).
  38. On the transnationalisation of Polish-German border towns see: R. Halle, 'Views', *op. cit.*; Andrew D. Asher, 'A Paradise on the Oder? ethnicity, europeanization, and the EU referendum in a Polish-German border city', *City & Society*, 17.1 (2005), pp. 127–152;

- Dürschmidt, 'Between Europeanization and Marginalization', *op. cit.*
39. Asher, *ibid.*, p.131, remarks upon the dominance of the bridge in Frankfurt an-der-Oder/Stubice, where the river is wider, as 'symbolic of both European connection and national separation'.
  40. J. Dürschmidt, 'Between Europeanization and Marginalization', *op. cit.*, p.65.
  41. J. Dürschmidt, ' "They're worse off than us"—The social construction of European space and boundaries in the German/Polish twin-city Guben-Gubin', *Identities: Global Studies and Culture and Power*, 9.2 (2002), pp.123–50.
  42. Arjun Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', in *Counterworks. Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed., Richard Fardon (London, Routledge, 1995), p.213; see also, J. Dürschmidt and Graham Taylor, *Globalization, Modernity and Social Change. Hotspots of Transition* (Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.42–46.
  43. Yiannis Pappadakis, *Echoes from the Dead Zone. Across the Cyprus Divide* (London and New York, I B Tauris, 2005).
  44. *Ibid.*; Resmiye Alpar Atun and Naciye Doratli, 'Walls in Cities: A Conceptual Approach to the Walls of Nicosia', *Geopolitics*, 14.1 (2009), pp.108–34. Cypriots on both sides have turned away from their historic centre in favour of newer, less memory-laden parts of the city; such neglect is a problem repeatedly voiced in interviews held in north and south Nicosia with the Nicosia Master Plan team (Conflict in Cities, March, 2009). For information on the Master Plan, from a Greek Cypriot viewpoint, see The Nicosia Municipality, [www.nicosia.org.cy/english/epikoiononia.shtml](http://www.nicosia.org.cy/english/epikoiononia.shtml).
  45. The following descriptions of the two museums are taken from my own visits in March, 2009. On the museums see: Yiannis Papadakis, 'The national struggle museums of a divided city', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17.3 (1994), pp.400–419; Y. Pappadakis, *Echoes, op. cit.*, pp.175–78; Debbie Lisle, 'Encounters with Partition: Tourism and Reconciliation in Cyprus', in *Contested Spaces. Sites, Representations and Histories of Conflict*, eds, Louise Purbrick, Jim Aulich, Graham Dawson (Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.94–117.
  46. On the postmodern propensity to invert the centre and periphery in certain urban functions, see Francesco Pellizzi, 'Airports and museums: New frontiers of the urban and suburban', *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53-54 (2008), pp. 334–344.
  47. No photographs were permitted of the military complex.
  48. When I visited in 2009, the Byzantine Museum advertised an exhibition of photographs of Greek Cypriot treasures 'looted by the Turks and sold to German museums.'
  49. Lisle notes, despite official Greek Cyprus's desire to belittle it, 'the conflict is always present' and earlier struggles can be updated: 'Encounters', *op. cit.*, pp.104–5).
  50. The northern Museum is also of interest to visitors from the Turkish mainland (Lisle, 'Encounters', *op. cit.*, pp.100–101). The southern Museum uses only Greek in its displays.
  51. As is evident in Jerusalem, even with some of the worst effects of the occupation: see, Wendy Pullan, 'Locating the Civic in the Frontier: Damascus Gate', in *Did Someone Say Participate? An Atlas of Spatial Practice*, eds, M. Miessen and S. Basar (Cambridge Mass., and London, The MIT Press and Frankfurt, Revolver, 2006), pp.109–22.