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Dr Martin Coward  
Politics, Newcastle University  
martin.coward@ncl.ac.uk

Jon Calame and Esther Charlesworth, forward by Lebbeus Woods, *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009, ISBN 9780812241341 (cloth), 280 pages, 44 illustrations.

*Divided Cities* is an examination of a dynamic characteristic of the contemporary urbanised era: urban partition embedded in a wider contestation of the state. This dynamic is epitomised by the five segregated cities that are the subject of analysis in this book: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia. This book is the outcome of the authors' research in the cities under consideration between 1998 and 2003. More specifically, the book draws upon the authors' 'direct observation and...original interview[s]' (p.x) in these cities. As such the book is rich in references to the perceptions that citizens of these cities have of the divisions that shape their lives.

Calame and Charlesworth introduce the problem of divided cities with a series of observations about the nature and history of urban segregation (pp. 19-36). In particular they trace a certain evolution of the morphology of urban segregation from the medieval city wall to the present day 'peace line' found in Belfast via the 'ethnic urban ghetto' epitomised by the sixteenth century Venetian Jewish ghetto (pp. 29-32). The book then examines the historical evolution of the division of each of the cities under consideration. These histories are necessarily brief and focus on the broad dynamics that have given rise to the fault lines in each city. The divisions themselves are well illustrated with photographs of key urban barriers or separation points. The book concludes with an attempt to synthesise the insights into the dynamics of urban division and the challenges for the planning profession offered by the empirical material.

Overall the authors contend that urban division, while offering perceived short-term security from harm, violates an 'urban contract' that gives city managers the responsibility to provide security for diverse and plural ways of life without resort to segregation and the concomitant loss of freedom this entails. Furthermore, they advocate the planning profession being more actively engaged in contesting dynamics of division instead of hiding behind notions of neutrality that obscure the properly political nature of interventions into the built environment.

While this advocacy of professional engagement is compelling, the idea of the 'urban contract' that the authors see being broken in divided cities seems more questionable. According to Calame and Charlesworth, this contract originates in the medieval walled city. In the latter the function of the wall is to divide urban order from a threatening chaos perceived to lie beyond. The need for such division arises from the perception that those within the city walls share a common fate vis a vis threats emanating from outside. Under such circumstances it is possible to envision citizens entering into an implied contract according to which they contribute to fortification of the walls in exchange for urban security (both from external threat and internal

unrest). However, global interconnection erodes such a sense of the common fate of any particular urban community. As such the idea of the urban contract outlined here seems anachronistic.

Furthermore, even if contemporary urban life were characterised by a contract between citizens and urban managers, the point about most of the cities that qualify for divided status is that the urban management strata is either displaced, eroded or de-legitimated. Part of the problem, therefore, is a perception that those with whom a contract might be forged (i.e., to whom some loyalty might be given in exchange for security and freedom) are either absent or untrustworthy. In such circumstances no contract can be forged. As such, the division represents a grassroots solution to a context in which no sovereign authority exists to guarantee security. It is not a violation of an urban contract so much as an acknowledgement that no such contract is possible.

To the extent that it argues for the reinstatement of a supposedly violated urban contract, *Divided Cities* seems to idealise a notion of urban community bound by a common fate. Division represents a disavowal of such common fate and, hence, a dysfunctional and unproductive erosion of urban community. This ideal of an indivisibility of urban community seems problematic, however. City life is characterised by a plurality of ways of life (and perceived fates) which give rise to various points of friction that are legible in the urban landscape. It is of course important to reduce violence and maximise freedom, but we should not romanticise an idealised vision of an urban community without legible fault lines. As such, then, instead of seeing division as an affront to an idealised notion of urban community it is worth asking what the process of making some divisions more legible than others reveals about the political formations at work in urban space.

Overall *Divided Cities* is an interesting interjection into a growing debate about violence in contemporary cities. It comes at an important time in which international politics and urbanisation are increasingly intertwined. Interestingly, given these circumstances, the book does not engage the growing literature concerned with what Stephen Graham has called an 'urban geopolitics' (indeed the lack of reference to the work of Eyal Weizman is notable). However, despite this, the book provides food for thought for both scholars of international politics and practitioners of urban planning at a time when violence in and against the city is rising up the agenda for both.