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# Degradation of urban nodes in East Jerusalem: from vibrant spaces to dead ends

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## ABSTRACT

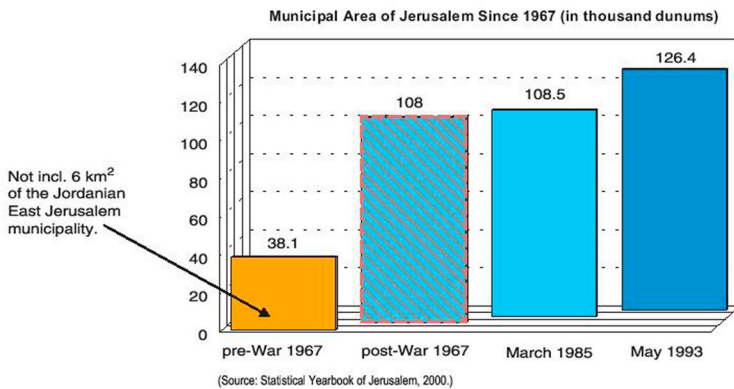
The article explores the impact of Israeli policies and practices on Palestinian urban nodes in occupied East Jerusalem focusing on Kubsu junction. It argues that the Segregation Wall has created spaces where Palestinian life is expendable and where the practice of eliminating the Arab Palestinian character of the city has transformed a once vibrant Palestinian urban node into a dead end. Kubsu Junction illustrates settler-colonial military spatial policies and urban planning to control the urban space of Kubsu Junction which have created a 'frame' to segregate and control the colonized Palestinians. Such policies, the article argues, are better interpreted by settler-colonial state strategies than racialized global capitalism. Yet, while different layers of daily lives and memory of the colonized on both sides of the Segregation Wall have been harmed, the spiritual and collective memory layers maintain meaning and purpose to the colonized's steadfastness or *Sumoud*.

## KEYWORDS

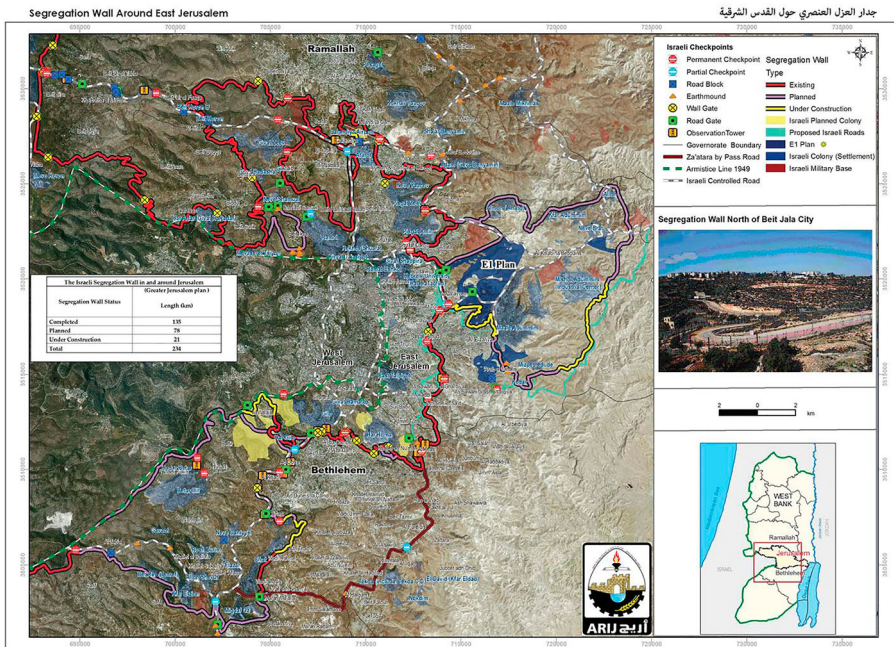
Jerusalem; Segregation Wall; urban nodes; settler colonial urban planning; frame; steadfastness (*Sumoud*)

## 1. Introduction

This paper argues that, as a result of the Israeli policies and practices in Jerusalem culminating with the construction of the Segregation Wall since 2002, a new layer of degradation of urban nodes of the city has emerged consistent with the Zionist project of alienation and elimination of the Palestinians. The case of Kubsu Junction is examined as the construction of the Segregation Wall runs through it and has surrounded Jerusalem rupturing it from its Palestinian urban environs. Its path selectively followed the illegally extended Israeli municipal boundaries of the city under international law given that East Jerusalem is part of the occupied territory from the 1967 War. Kubsu Junction is located at the Eastern part of occupied East Jerusalem at the entrance to Bethany and Abu Dis – a hilltop away from the Old City of Jerusalem and where the Segregation Wall now passes (see [Figures 1](#) and [2](#)). The paper argues that the dynamics influencing and affecting the Kubsu Junction and the Palestinians living there, are explained more effectively by the settler colonial paradigm than by for example racialized global capitalism. Additional concepts are used to enhance this analysis such as Judith Butler's concept of a frame and Michael Guggenheim's analysis of memory upon an object which is modified here to apply to a place as additional layers of memory are also introduced. These take on a particular dynamic in the settler-colonial context suggesting that to merely continue to exist and to practice everyday life in face of settler-colonial eliminatory onslaughts is the most basic form of resistance; Palestinians have called this *Sumoud* which means steadfastness. Along with this theoretical framework, a qualitative methodology was used through semi-structured interviews conducted between August and December 2019 with 10



**Figure 1.** Municipal boundaries of Jerusalem since 1923. Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) website: <http://www.passia.org/maps/view/55>.



**Figure 2.** Map of Jerusalem. The Applied Research Institute- Jerusalem/ Society (ARIJ). [https://www.arj.org/maps-of-palestine/jerusalem-maps/#iLightbox\[884df2dc5fb902ade55\]/0](https://www.arj.org/maps-of-palestine/jerusalem-maps/#iLightbox[884df2dc5fb902ade55]/0).

inhabitants and commercial owners at the Kubsa Junction on both sides of the wall; these are combined also with the experiences of the authors as participant observers having lived there.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Settler colonial theory has evolved from what began in the 1960s and 1970s with Fayeze Sayegh (2013) (1965) and Maxime Rodinson (1973).<sup>1</sup> Both argued and concluded that the Zionist project in Palestine was to create a state at the expense of the existence of the people of the land- the Palestinians (Sayegh, 1–9), like what happened as a result of European colonization of North America (Rodinson, 91). Sayegh also observed that Palestine represented an anomaly in the trend of European colonial contraction during the mid-twentieth century (Sayegh, v). Patrick Wolfe identified settler colonial invasion in the settler colonial context as a structure, a means to eliminate the native (Wolfe 2006, 388). However, he did not clearly identify this structure as part of the settler colonial strategy of state creation as Sayegh and Rodinson did, but rather placed the settler colonization process in an assumed larger existing political settler-colonial entity- *a state*. Furthermore, it was assumed that the settler-colonial state would continue to exist and subsequently would include both the colonizer and the remaining colonized sooner or later (Wolfe 2006, 390). Yet, history points to the cases of former Rhodesia (Zimbabwe today) and Apartheid South Africa as failed settler colonial states which no longer exist. So, to maintain their existence, settler colonial states use various policies and practices to gradually eliminate the colonized, which include containment in segregated areas using geopolitical, spatial, and urban planning means. Hence, in settler colonial urban planning, the colonizer organizes and re-organizes spaces by its apparatus according to its own interests at the expense of the local inhabitants (Samman 2021, 332).

Recent scholarly work has proposed to situate settler colonial practices within the global paradigm of the neoliberal state that promotes capital accumulation. Eyal Weizman argues that the territorial and urban conflict can take place in other places as globalization brings the periphery to the

centre creating First and Third worlds in world cities (Lloyd and Wolfe 2015, 3). So, settler colonialism practices discriminate procedures 'encouraging the spatial confinement of populations targeted for repression' (Lloyd and Wolfe 2015, 4–5) as the neoliberal states promote a new regime of capital accumulation. Within the larger context of the global capitalism paradigm, the concept of settler colonial urbanism focuses on the ways that settler colonial dispossession and violence manifest in manifold ways in urban life such as the reproduction of particular forms of social, economic, and territorial inequality (Dorries et al. 2019, 2). In so doing, racial capitalism produces the settler colonial city (Lloyd and Wolfe 2015, 3), and recreates safe places and community infrastructures (Tomiak in Dorries et al. 2019, 98–99).

While such scholarship is critical of settler colonialism, the concepts of 'surplus population' and 'surplus land/property' are given currency (Lloyd & Wolfe, 2; Tomiak 2019, 97–99), suggesting that the colonized's land becomes up for grabs and their existence expendable. Wolfe observed that settler colonialism produces 'surplus' people whether Afro-American or First Nations/Native/Indigenous (Wolfe 2006, 404). Focusing on the racialized global capitalism paradigm suggests that the main drive for settler colonial state formation is racism and economic enhancement or the production of racialized difference and capital accumulation (Dorries et al. 2019, 1). Yet settler colonial usurping of the native land of the colonized is intrinsic to settler colonial creation and its continued existence.

According to Charles Tilly, European states engaged in war-making and state-making as some states transitioned from mediaeval to modern states (Tilly 1990, 67–126). In the settler colonial context, other scholars have analysed the role of white settlers' war upon the First Nations and Indigenous peoples in North America, the southern parts of Africa, and Australia (Kiernan 2007, 310–363, 374–390, 249–309; Moses 2007, 2010; Reynolds 2013). In this sense, settler colonial wars were the means to take over the lands of First Nations and Indigenous peoples through physical and cultural elimination over many decades, and to create new states on so-called new lands. So, the connection could be made that while war-making was intrinsic to transforming existing states in western Europe to modern ones, war-making in the settler colonial cases was intrinsic to creating new states. Settler colonial war-making was done through eliminatory practices against the peoples of the land, the First Nations or the Indigenous, to create the new settler colonial states. While Tilly's analysis also factors in global capitalism and colonization as dynamics which enabled war-making and modern state-making in Europe, state-making is not exclusively a racialized global capitalist endeavour. Socialism and fascism also contributed to creating modern states in Europe such as the Soviet Union, Germany, Spain, and Italy in the first half of the twentieth century. In the settler colonial cases, however, the wars for creating their states were eliminatory towards the peoples of the land simply because they were obstacles to achieving exclusive sovereignty not only as settler communities but as states in the international system.

In so doing, the eliminatory practices took on various forms including education. For example, the founder of the first residential school, or an off-reservation boarding school in the US in 1879 was officer Richard Henry Pratt with the approval of the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of War. His approach to the Federal policy of dispossessing the First Nations of their land was to use military-style regulations and punitive measures to erase all aspects of the First Nations' societies and to replace them with that of the settler colonizers. Children were particularly targeted after being ruthlessly separated from their families. This was a military campaign designed to transform the First Nation individuals from adversaries to citizens at a time right after the Civil War when it was costly to fight them (Lomawaima and Ostler 2018, 79–85; Crutchfield, Moutlon, and Bene 2015, 111–112). In fact, a 1969 report by the US Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education stated that the rationale behind this practice was that it was the

cheapest and safest way of subduing the Indians, of providing a safe habitat for the country's white inhabitants, of helping the whites to acquire desirable lands, and of changing the Indian's economy so he would be content with less land. Education was a weapon by which these goals were to be accomplished (Congress of U.S. 1969, 142).<sup>2</sup>

In Canada, Indigenous Residential Schools were established in the mid-1880s strongly influenced by the American experience (MacDonald and Hudson 2012, 431). Such policies of over 150 years which tore Indigenous children ‘from their families and stripped them of their social skin, identity and culture’, have been described as genocidal measures in which at least 150,000 children perished and more unmarked mass graves are still being uncovered in and around such schools (Levell 2018, 66; Grimes 2021, 10). In Australia, special legislation enabled the government between 1869 and 1970 to forcibly remove Aboriginal children from their families and place them in residential schools never to return to their communities (Fargher 2013, 58).

Thus, according to Deborah Bird Rose, all the native had to do to get in the way of settler colonization was to stay at home, or to simply exist (Rose 1991, 46; Wolfe 2006, 388). Holding onto their ‘social skin’, identity, culture, and sovereignty have been existentially intrinsic to surviving the settler colonial onslaught (Warrior 2015, 171–262). Settler colonial eliminatory war-making in its various forms was and has been intrinsic to creating new settler colonial states for the new settler groups by simultaneously erasing the existence of the people of the land, the First Nations and the Indigenous. So, even though racialized global capitalism may have been a motivating factor in the creation of new states which were settler colonial, it cannot be regarded as the main one since it has not led to the elimination of exploited and colonized peoples of the continents of Central and South America, Africa and Asia as a whole.

In the Zionist case, it is significant that the declaration of the creation of the state of Israel on May 15th, 1948 on part of Palestine came while the Zionist settler colonial groups were already waging war against the Palestinian population which took on an eliminatory dynamic through the massacres of Palestinians in the villages of al-Sheikh in December 1947, Deir Yassin in April 1948 and Abu Shousheh in early May 1948 (Daoud 2004). This war continued after the creation of the Israeli state to include several Arab states and lasted until 1949 (Schiff 1985, 51). As the British Mandate over Palestine (1922–1948) could not create a homeland for Jews on all of Palestine, the new Zionist settler colonial state set out to complete this task when it began to prepare in the early 1960s for the next war to take over the whole of Mandatory Palestine (Pappe 2013). Hence appropriate is Judith Butler’s scrutiny of state-violence and its impact on perceptions on whose life matters and whose does not, referring to examples including Israeli state violence towards the Palestinians (Butler 2009, 41–53).

So, as long as the people of the land continue to exist on their land, the settler colonial state project and its society remain as such and the eliminatory dynamic continues. While settler colonialism uses ideas about race, religion, ethnicity, and the western discourses of being more deserving beings, the primary motivation for displacement and elimination of peoples of the land whether First Nations or Indigenous is to seize a territory to create their state regardless of the costs (see discussion in Lamb 2015, 7–10). This means that placing the settler colonial paradigm within racialized global capitalism tends towards conflating the settler colonial state creation phase and its continued existence, to racism and economic profit. This overlooks various land-grab strategies including geopolitical, spatial, urban, and violence to erase Indigenous and First Nations and their claim to sovereignty, whether actual or potential, as independent states in or on the colonized land.

Another aspect within the racialized global capitalist dynamic and the settler colonial creation of urban borders attributed to separate settler colonial society from colonized ‘surplus people’, are the consequent First Nations’ protests. The work of Tomiak-McCreary-Hugil-Henry-Dorries on settler city limits examines First Nation’s protests over the isolation of their reserve/reservation from Winnipeg in Canada, and how settler colonial production of urban space imposes racialized division of space to usurp the First Nation’s natural resource – water (Tomiak 2019, 1–14). Another example, are First Nation’s protests against the US settler colonial infringements on their unceded land in North Dakota to run an oil pipeline (Plumer 2016). However, there is more to these protests than a racialized capitalist dynamic. Both cases preclude formalized treaties between the settler colonial states and the First Nations, and thus the First Nations’ mobilizations come in part to protest the breach of these formal treaties and infringements on their sovereignty within the federal

state to be deliberated by its courts, and not as an independent sovereign state which could bring such breaches to international forums such as the United Nations. In contrast, under the Oslo Accords between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel in 1993 and 1994, sovereignty has remained under Israeli control (Human Rights Watch 2019, 2021). Thus, the function of the Segregation Wall running around Jerusalem and passing through Kubsa Junction does not necessarily represent creating a border between sovereigns or states. Furthermore, the demarcation of the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem right after the 1967 war was not predicated by settler colonial economic profit. It was created to demarcate which areas would come under the Israeli civilian government from those that came under the control of the Israeli Military Government to control Palestinians. The plan for the latter had begun as early as 1963 (Pappe 2013) to complete the Zionist goal of an Israeli state on the whole of Palestine. Some of the areas within expanded Jerusalem were later used for Israeli settlement construction to consolidate Jerusalem as the settler colonial capital.

More relevant here is Rebecca Bryant's analysis of Cyprus referring to the separation between the northern and southern parts as a 'frame' – a manifestation of a mindset – using Judith Butler's term. This refers to a contour which delineates the space behind which people lives do not matter. Butler articulates frame as being used to separate who has the 'right to life', used in war to selectively carve up experiences implemented as structures for torture and imprisonment (Bryant 2012, 333; Butler 2009, 8–27). This approach informs more about the Segregation Wall as a means of the Israeli settler colonial state to separate the people under the rule of its civil government, from those who are under the direct and indirect rule of its military government in the West Bank. Hence, significant is Butler's analysis of the 'frame' as an apparatus of war and a physical structure manifesting this delineation of whose lives matter and whose do not during erasure. This demarcation has provided the frame for spatial and political dualities and segregations which have accentuated over the years in various forms, the most brazen being the Segregation Wall. However, in the settler colonial context, the function of 'frame' demarcates the space and people against whom a war of elimination is being waged to complete the creation and consolidation of the settler colonial state with exclusive sovereignty.

Other forms of settler colonial elimination include the transformation of space and place including their attributed meanings. Some scholars have emphasized that settler colonizers come with their histories, cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies to reimagine the Indigenous places because they come from somewhere else (Lamb 2015, 7; King 2003; Wolfe 2006, 2013). Influenced by Western philosophy which views the world in terms of subjects and objects and nature as a commodity to be controlled, Indigenous place is reshaped through strategic and urban policies according to settler colonial reimaginings of Indigenous/Native land. This is 'informed by a mechanistic and materialistic view of the world, according to which space is understood as matter in three-dimensional and volumetric form' and thus Indigenous places are transformed to spaces which are then reshaped to settler places (Lamb 2015, 17–18). In this sense, Indigenous/Native places are extracted from their historical, cultural, and spiritual significance and content, transformed to alienate the colonized.

For the colonized, place is also interwoven with memory with patterns of their everyday life over time. Michael Guggenheim discusses memory as being a conflation of different times upon an object – the time which the memory represents upon the time of the object in the present (Guggenheim 2009, 44–49).<sup>3</sup> While his analysis focuses on art and buildings, here it shall be applied on the location/place of Kubsa. Furthermore, while Guggenheim's analysis of individuals' memory produces one layer of time over the present time, two other layers can be added: the time of the collective memory which refers to events and happenings remembered by many people at a location, and the ever-present time of spiritual attachment to a place of holy significance including places of worship and sacred burial grounds. The conflation of these multiple layers of time over a place in the memory of the people of the land, stands in striking contrast with settler colonial processes of reimagining and reshaping space using segregation walls and other types of physical divisions.

### 3. Israeli settler colonialism and geopolitical planning

Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory in 1967 has been analysed as colonial by R. Reuveny (2003, 349) and Gershon Shafir (1996, 24). However, as Sayegh, Rodinson and Wolfe analysed, settler colonialism is different from colonialism which exploits colonized lands for the primary purposes of colonial powers such as in British, French, and Spanish. Settler colonialism replaces to create a new political entity on the land of the First Nations/Indigenous people eliminating them in the process (Sayegh, 3–4; Wolfe 2006). Similar analysis of Zionism as settler colonial is done by Uri Davis (2003, 159), Lorenzo Veracini (2006, 86), Ilan Pappé (2006, 8), Eyal Weizman (2007, 8–9), Jeff Halper (2008, 33–34), (Samman 2013), Elia Zureik (2016), and others.

The dynamics behind Israel extending the municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem to include occupied East Jerusalem suggest state considerations to secure Jerusalem as its capital rather than racialized global capitalist dynamics. Two days after the 1967 War had begun on June 5th, Military Order numbers one and two were announced by the Israeli Chief of Staff stating that Israeli military forces had taken over, controlled and imposed a curfew on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The second order established that all powers and authorities of previous regimes came under the Israeli Military Governor (Pappé 2013, 343; Raz 2012, 19; Rabah and Fairweather 1995, 1; ARIJ 2007, 1). This meant that East Jerusalem, being part of the West Bank, initially came under this Military Government. Also on June 7th, the Israeli Prime Minister declared both Jerusalem and the West Bank as ‘liberated’, and the defence minister added at the Western Wall that they would never leave (Raz 2012, 38, 54; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007). In the early days of the war there had emerged an Israeli consensus to annexe the Arab part of Jerusalem, and while the defence minister was concerned about securing ‘ideal borders’, it was under the Military Government that the municipal boundaries were hastily drawn. Officially, the Israeli cabinet extended the municipal boundaries into the Occupied West Bank on June 11th and ratified it into law swiftly in the Knesset on the 27th (Raz 2012, 51, 53). Occupied East Jerusalem was formally annexed in 1980 when it was declared as part of the Israeli capital (UN 1997, 3).

The topography of the extended municipal boundaries of the city reflects clear military considerations to maximize Israeli ability to control. Zionist militias’ previous experience with Palestinian resistance in March of 1948 was that without control over the higher grounds, they could sustain heavy casualties and defeats by even modestly armed villagers (Schiff 1985, 31). So, the inner defensive circle within the municipal boundaries was around the Old City itself securing the high ground of the hilltops of Jabal al Mukabbir to the south, Ras al ‘Amud to the South-East, At-Tur (the Mount of Olives) to the East, and Sheikh Jarrah to the north. A second high-ground defensive semi-circle controlling access to the city from the East starts from the hilltop overlooking Beit Jala from the south-west, extending to Jabal Abu Ghneim overlooking Bethlehem and Beit Sahour and extending along the hill-tops to the north to include Qalandia and Kufr Aqab which overlooked the entrance to Ramallah and Al-Bireh while also securing the Jerusalem airport (see Figures 1 and 2).<sup>4</sup>

In so doing, the municipal boundaries were enlarged by 60 square kilometres [1 square kilometre – 247.11 acres], with a remaining Palestinian population of at least 70,000. Furthermore, around 3000 Jerusalemites from Magharbeh quarter were evicted and their 135 homes bulldozed to make way for the Wailing Wall Plaza (UN 1997, 12, 13). All the above point to the Israeli state settler-colonial practices to consolidate its control over Jerusalem for which racialized global capitalism to maximize profit and investment, provides limited explanation. Rather, the municipal boundaries have functioned as a ‘frame’ in which the Palestinians behind it would live under a military government while those inside it would be subjected to settler colonial discriminatory urbanization policies to maximize Israeli settlement (see UNOCHA-OPT 2017). Indeed, the settler population in East Jerusalem increased from none before 1967 to around 220,000. In all Jerusalem (East and West) the percentage of Palestinians is 39% (358,000), and that of Israelis is 61% (557,600) (Peace Now 2021).

In 2002, construction of the Segregation Wall began around Jerusalem, conforming with the purpose of the boundaries which was and remains to protect settlers and to suppress Palestinians. Over a century ago, the founding father of Zionism Theodore Herzl had articulated the purpose of such a tactic towards the colonized:

Supposing, for example, we were obliged to clear a country of wild beasts, we should not set about the task in the fashion of Europeans of the fifth century. We should not take spear and lance and go out singly in pursuit of bears; we would organize a large and active hunting party, drive the animals together, and throw a melinite bomb into their midst (Herzl 1896).

The above is reminiscent of what Jeff Halper has called the matrix of control which evolved from plans drawn by the Israeli Minister of Defense at the time, Ariel Sharon. These were published in early 1982 as his *Masterplan for Jewish Settlements in the West Bank Through the Year 2010*. Also known as the Sharon Plan, it was a strategy to ensure Israeli control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and to immobilize the Palestinian population by controlling key points forming a defence network functioning as a spatial trap. It allowed Israeli forces and settlers a high level of mobility while being able to paralyse Palestinian movement (Halper 2008, 149–153; Weizman 2004, 225–237). The plan used strategic geography and settlements with five other means of control. The first was the Military Government and its administration, bureaucracy, planning, and law tools including military orders. The second was economic warfare combined with the first to subordinate the Palestinians economically. The third was the building of over 250 Israeli settlements in the OPT. The fourth was and is the use of the military to control and force to strike the Palestinians (Halper 2008, 153–174). The Segregation Wall added another fifth aspect to this matrix by creating physically isolated areas where Palestinians have been gradually ‘rounded up’ through Israeli planning policies and various regulations for potential elimination or expulsion. In 2010, 10 human rights organizations appealed against 2 amendments to Israeli military orders which entered into force which classified Palestinians living in the West Bank as being ‘infiltrators’ because they do not have Israeli permits to be in this OPT. Amendment No. 2 to Order regarding Prevention of Infiltration and Amendment No. 112 to Order regarding Security Provisions make it ‘permissible to carry out mass expulsions and grave violations of international law’ (HaMoked 2010a, 2010b).

The above conforms with the concept of the ‘frame’ in which the purpose of the Segregation Wall serves to demarcate a political landscape where Palestinian lives are expendable and where human rights violations such as summary executions, rampant military raids into all Palestinian areas are frequent and potentially mass expulsions. It is also consistent with the structured eliminatory dynamic of settler colonialism towards the colonized as Wolfe emphasized (Wolfe 2006, 338). Thus, the purpose of Israel’s containment and isolation of the colonized Palestinians, suggests elimination simply for existing in the way of the Israeli settler-colonialism (Mansour 2018, 10–11).

#### 4. Israeli settler colonial Segregation Wall and the case of Kubsa

The construction of the Segregation Wall running through the Kubsa separated Palestinians under different governing systems. These systems include the Israeli municipality in East Jerusalem, and the Israeli Military Government on the other side of the wall into the West Bank. Here, the Israeli Military Government is a *de facto* sovereign, which suppresses the Palestinians and protects the Israeli settlers in the West Bank, even though some Palestinian areas are under the Palestinian Authority administration. Thus, the Zionist settler colonial conception of the Segregation Wall as a means to first isolate before applying the next step of elimination becomes evident with summary executions, rampant military raids into Palestinian areas, and settler violence against Palestinians under military protection. Similar policies and practices have become more common in the Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem itself.

Before the construction of the Segregation Wall that surrounded the city of Jerusalem rupturing it from its Palestinian urban environs, the Kubsa Junction served as an urban node. Kevin Lynch

defines urban nodes as ‘points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling’; they may be primarily junctions, or concentrations (Lynch 1960, 47). While there are other nodes within East Jerusalem where the urban fabric has been affected by the Segregation Wall such as Dahiyeh/Ram areas located along the northern redrawn municipal boundaries and at the entrance to Bethlehem in the south, Kubsa is the closest to the Old City as it is a hill-top away within walking distance. So, while dead-end spaces were created in other vibrant urban nodes, the impact of the wall on Kubsa Junction has had a more profound impact on the everyday life, activity, and mobility of the people. The impact has also been on the various layers of their memories of the place and proximity to the sacred places for prayer and worship in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Planning policies and constructing segregation elements have been used to change urban territories, cities, and sites as perceived by newly established settler colonial states to consolidate their political power. Implemented through various forms, settler-colonial urban planning policies are used to manifest their ideologies while at the same time wiping out the topography of the previous inhabitants (Leuenberger 2016, 18). Furthermore, settler colonial urban planning has been used throughout history to segregate, surveil and control the colonized people. New settlements often cut territories into pieces, creating new forms of boundaries within the same territories. Hence, demarcation and segregation lines were not only based on security requirements but hid more comprehensive state motives (Saddiki 2017, 6) such as settler colonization itself. Gradual implementation of these processes to actualize the newly established settler colonial state meant putting it on the map to transform the knowing and imagining of the state as real, and therefore creating a reality (Leuenberger 2016, 15; see also Agnew 2007, 401; Monmonier 1991).

Using physical barriers to demarcate colonized land and establish control over it, is a physical realization of a ‘visual rhetoric [that] includes the use of various graphical, symbolic, and linguistic tools to invoke authority, appeal to particular audiences, elaborate social concerns, and make political statements’ (Leuenberger 2016, 15), in this case to the advantage of the settler colonizer. Saddiki points out that on ‘the two sides of the wall, there is always a significant potential imbalance of power, as well as asymmetric confidence. Walls are never built against an equivalent power’ (Saddiki 2017, 4; Ritaine 2009, 21). Walls and barriers can emphasize socio-ethnic geographies on either side of the dividing line. The urban surroundings of such areas become sites of contention as the geopolitical barriers are contested. In physically divided cities, the spaces, infrastructure, locales, and streets of such areas represent geopolitical power relations determining which places are visible and which are invisible in maps. These consequently shape the cities, their people, and their geographies in multiple ways (Leuenberger 2016, 15; see Hacking 1998). Again, Saddiki’s point is that the asymmetrical imbalance of power and confidence is evident between the powerful (or colonizer) and the disadvantaged (or colonized) (2017, 4).

In settler colonial dynamics, all the above manifest a deep more comprehensive policy of elimination in its various forms. These include the isolation of the colonized into ‘other’ expendable spaces and people, and imposing the settler colonial imagination onto a place. Here the place is regarded by the settler colonizer as a space void of historical and cultural content and context, and is transformed into space that is reshaped by settler colonial imagination and function (Lamb 2015, 17–18). The following focuses on the Kubsa Junction and the impact of the Segregation Wall upon the control over space, the everyday lives of the people, and their memory using the above-mentioned multi-layered analysis.

### *a. The control over space*

The boundaries of the city of Jerusalem have been transformed several times (see Figure 1). After 1967, the new imposed municipal boundaries were demarcated in such a way to include vacant lands and to exclude highly populated areas in the Eastern part of the city. The vacant lands were gradually constructed with Israeli settlements and populated with Israeli settlers now

comprising nearly 39% of the population of East Jerusalem (Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research 2020, 4). While the municipal boundaries after 1967 were not physically felt and areas around it were accessible, their presence gradually increased and became more substantive particularly after enforcing the closure policies particularly after 1991 through checkpoints set up around the city.

The re-enforced closure of 1993 sealed off indefinitely the Palestinian areas occupied in 1967 from East Jerusalem; areas within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip also became isolated from within, from one another, and from the pre-1967 borders. For example, for months, it could take a whole day to move from one Palestinian city to another, such as Ramallah to Bethlehem (30kms apart), because of the additional internal Israeli military roadblocks within the West Bank areas isolating main Palestinian cities from one another. Palestinians had to walk distances through valleys and hills to reach other parts of roads where public transport would be waiting to take passengers to the next point of blockage and to the next transport vehicle while commuting to work, going to the main hospitals, attending university and meeting family (PHRIC 1995). The Kubsa Junction became a connecting point for anyone travelling from the northern to the southern parts of the West Bank. People who were on the move were therefore strained from the hardships faced on the way to Kubsa Junction. People who needed to enter Jerusalem had to obtain Israeli permits and still needed to wait a long time to pass the military checkpoint located initially at Kubsa Junction. Palestinian Jerusalemites were also targeted by Israeli policies including the 1997 'Centre of Life' policy, which required them to provide extensive documented proof that they lived within the Jerusalem boundaries to maintain their residency status in the city (B'Tselem & HaMoked 1997, 14–15).

The idea of implementing a strategy of a physical permanent separation form and within the settler colonial military-controlled Palestinian areas was introduced by then Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1992. However, the construction of the wall was not implemented officially until summer 2002 (International Court of Justice [ICJ] 2004, par. 80). Initially the partitions began to appear in the aftermath of the Al-Aqsa Intifada of 2000 along the previously invisible demarcation. At the Kubsa Junction, plastic barriers were first placed to prevent vehicles from crossing into Jerusalem in 2002 and were constantly patrolled and monitored from the ground and air. Then two-layered concrete blocks replaced these. People would climb over when no patrols were around and parents would pass their infants between the openings of the concrete blocks to by-passers on the other side so they could climb over. These blocks were then replaced with three-metre-high T-shaped concrete slabs which were difficult to climb over by elderly and women. In 2004, eight-metre-high T-concrete slabs were fixed into the middle of the street moving along the 1967 demarcation line in the Kubsa Junction. This came after successive Israeli governments had failed to capitulate the Palestinian leadership and people despite heavy military operations and incursions into the Palestinian areas following the Second Intifada of September 2000.

In other parts of the city, the Segregation Wall did not follow the municipal boundaries but was tilted to include Israeli settlements and to exclude some Palestinian populated areas such as Kufr Aqab and Shufat Refugee Camp. While the Israeli pretext for building the Segregation Wall was to prevent Palestinian attacks, it took on a settler colonial dynamic. Neighbourhoods were isolated cutting them off from the surrounding West Bank areas by taking up more Palestinian land in the West Bank and by breaking up the Palestinian metropolitan character of Jerusalem (Chiodelli 2013, 418–420). In contrast, the Israeli metropolitan area being created in Jerusalem includes settlement blocks, illegal under international law, around the city located in the occupied West Bank (see Figure 2). In so doing, the Israeli metropolitan version of Jerusalem projects the Palestinian metropolitan area as heading towards entropy replacing and consequently removing the Arab existence in the city (Chiodelli 2013, 420, 423). In this sense, the Segregation Wall took on a function beyond its physical structure to separate, but also to isolate and to contain the colonized Palestinians isolating them from their land while allowing secure settler access to these lands particularly along the Eastern part of the West Bank along the Jordan Valley (see Arieli 2004). Hence, the Segregation Wall has

continued to function as a force multiplier, a capability employed by the settler colonial forces to significantly increase the probability of accomplishing the settler colonial strategy (see definition in Joint Chiefs of Staff 2007, GL-11).<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Segregation Wall along with its surveillance and control infrastructure has replaced several forms of military control measures such as sieges and closures, and their dire economic, social, and political effects upon the targeted population. This considerably reduces the number of military personnel and equipment needed to achieve such effects upon the colonized.

The Segregation Wall in Kubsa Junction ruptured the social and economic vibrancy of the location. Before the closure, it was the main route to Jerusalem from Bethany and Abu Deis; it was on the historical road from Jerusalem to Jericho. It became known as the ‘Kubsa Junction’ as thousands of people would mention it daily while transiting. The wall cut off this historical access and the daily interconnection of these villages with Jerusalem (see next section). Only very few people holding Jerusalem IDs could access Jerusalem from this area through a nearby temporary gate – later sealed, for school children and some elderly. Only those from the West Bank with Israeli permits and Jerusalem IDs could pass after being checked by foot-patrol border police.

Patrick Wolfe termed settler colonial elimination of the native as a structure, not an event (2006, 388). Gradual implementation of colonial strategies to achieve control of land and people are aimed towards this goal. Also informing the above are the dynamics of the settler colonial approach to the location and land, which include the imagination, and control over nature, transforming places with meaning to the people of the land, First Nations or Indigenous, to new spaces imagined by the settler colonizer (Lamb 2015). During such a process, the colonized face segregation and collective punishment for being in the way of settler colonial exclusive control over the land for itself. Thus, the Kubsa Junction is a case of one of the urban nodes around Jerusalem that has been subjected to gradual successions of different kinds of settler colonial oppression including the construction of the Segregation Wall. Consequently, this vibrant urban node has been transformed into two separate urban entities as both sides of the wall face chronic degradation and Palestinians on either side experience a strained daily life.

### ***b. Palestinian everyday lives and memories***

Kubsa Junction being on the historical access point to Jerusalem along the eastward road to Jericho also connects Abu Deis and Ezariyah (Bethany) with Ras El-Amoud and Silwan, Al-Shayyah and the Mount of Olives which overlook the Old City of Jerusalem. In terms of social, commercial, and religious interactions Bethany and Abu Deis were interwoven with the Old City as its viable extension. Children from these areas went to schools in Jerusalem, people went for medical treatment to the main hospitals in the Eastern part of the city. It was very common to take the 15-minute commute to buy everyday products from the Old City markets, to visit exhibits, attend cultural activities and festivals in the Palestinian cultural centres there.

With regard to layers of memories of the place, Kubsa carries four layers of time/memory which conflate upon the place: the first is the spiritual/sacred by being so close to the Old City of Jerusalem and its holy sites. The second layer is the collective memory of happenings related to facing Israeli oppression and aggression. The third layer represents individual experiences and memories on this specific place, and the fourth is the conflation of the present time upon the place. From the first layer of time/memory, Kubsa carries an ever-present spiritual attachment to the Holy City of Jerusalem. It was common for Muslim and Christian Palestinians to frequently visit the holy places of worship in the Old City. Sometimes this layer of memory of time merged with the second layer of time of the collective memory. For example, from Kubsa Junction, people saw the smoke coming up from the Al-Aqsa Mosque set on fire by a pro-Zionist tourist on August 21st 1969 (Middle East Monitor 2017). Another example was on Monday morning of October 8th 1990, when people heard the machine-gunning of the worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli forces (Higher Islamic Council 1990). People jumped into cars and public transport rushing to the site of the massacre

and to donate blood for the injured at the Maqased Hospital on the Mount of Olives. Many families in the area have and continue to bury their family members in the cemeteries around the Old City walls. On the collective time/memory layer, the local people from the 1970s into 2021, witnessed at Kubsa Junction the scene of numerous confrontations between Palestinian school children and Israeli soldiers with injuries and fatalities incurred on the protestors.

After the Israeli closure in 1993, Kubsa Junction became the hub where public-transport cars from the north and south of the West Bank would meet. Through Kubsa Junction, Palestinians would commute regularly into the city at the risk of being caught by Israeli patrols, upheld, detained, and beaten, their IDs withheld for not having Israeli permits from the Military Government to enter the city. For Palestinians, including those living in Jerusalem, it was, and continues to be, almost impossible to move from one place to another without carrying the ID at all times, especially when passing through checkpoints. The topography of the Kubsa area made it difficult to enforce the closure as people found ways to walk between the houses or to walk for distances away from the main checkpoints to try to get access to transport into the city. The main checkpoint at Kubsa Junction was later moved a few hundred metres further up the road to Jerusalem so as to control the traffic from several alternative paths. Later it was moved again two kilometres up to Ras El-Amoud next to a police station where it remained until 2015. Further elements of settler colonial urban planning were implemented to advance closure policies and tighten control of access to the city. Physical segregation barriers were installed and large checkpoint terminals were constructed, where Palestinians from the West Bank underwent thorough searches and ID and permit checks.

Kubsa Junction, with its commercial activities on the main access route to Jerusalem was an urban spot where people met, interacted, and prayed together in the nearby mosque. Fresh vegetables, fruits, and produce from different parts of the West Bank were sold in groceries and shops. In short, it was a central urban node vibrant with activities and commuting people stopping there to buy what they needed before moving on to their destinations into the city or into the West Bank.

With the fixing of the high concrete slabs, people living in the area realized their lives would change. The Segregation Wall prevented those on its eastern side to enter Jerusalem. Although segregation had extended from the closure policies for over a decade, the continuous row of tall concrete signified a hermetical separation from Jerusalem, and end to a life with Jerusalem (see [Figure 3](#)). The lives of the people living on both sides of the Kubsa Junction changed dramatically as the place lost its spark and life. Their numerous accounts attest to the deep impact inflicted over a decade and a half.



**Figure 3.** Kubsa Junction, the Jerusalem side of the Segregation Wall.

The older generation that had witnessed the vibrancy of the junction still compare the current situation with before the construction. It signifies a disaster that has been difficult to overcome (see [Figures 4 and 5](#)). They remember being able to enter Jerusalem and especially the Old City and the



**Figure 4.** Kuba Junction, the Abu Deis-Ezariyah side of the Segregation Wall.



**Figure 5.** Kuba Junction, the Jerusalem side of the Segregation Wall.

holy sites. One of the interviewees mentioned that when the city was open, he used to go to Al-Aqsa Mosque every Friday, buy pastries and falafel and enjoy the walk in the Old City. He added:

This is now history to me. I can go only on certain occasions and need to take two means of transport to reach there; I wait in long queues to pass through the Zaytouna [Mount of Olives] checkpoint. It is not easy for me anymore.

Other people expressed the restrictions on mobility and access to education, and how many people had to transfer their children from schools in Jerusalem to others in Abu Deis and Ezariyah.

On the layer of the personal time/memory of the place onto the present time of the place, an elderly woman living at the Kuba Junction on the West Bank side said about the day the eight-metre concrete slabs were installed:

That day in January 2004 was one of the most difficult days of my life. Standing at Kuba Junction to watch how long concrete slabs completely blocked the way to Jerusalem. I stood there and cried and cried ... I realized that my visits to Jerusalem shall stop; I realized that life shall change in this area. People were suffering and now shall suffer more. I remember the 1967 war, but this wall cuts deep in the area and inside myself.

The wall has impacted the existence of the people in Kuba on many levels. One of the interviewees living on the Jerusalem side referred to how the environment had changed saying:

Since the construction of the wall, the morning sunlight has not entered into my house; it became full of damp walls and my children developed breathing difficulties. I remember taking my son when he was a child several times to hospital at night. The apartment became an unhealthy place to live in, but I could not afford to move to another.

The wall also ruptured the social fabric of the Palestinians. Many families found themselves forced to live apart. Here the personal layer of memory time conflates over the place and produces an experience of the place that is degenerating in the altered situation. One of the interviewees living on the West Bank side said:

My family has Jerusalem IDs but I don't. We were living in the Kuba area and I used to spend most of my time with them. The wall was built between us. Now I need to request an Israeli permit to visit my family, which is

often rejected. I can only get one during holidays or Ramadan. And I have to travel a long way to reach their house which is only 500 meters away. This is unfair. I pray every day that this wall shall come down and I can be united with my family again.

In terms of the personal memory of family and home when conflated upon the place as a result of the wall, many people had to change their place of living and their work. Many shops remain closed till today. Here the personal memory also interconnects with the collective memory of the place upon the people still living in the area. The economic standards and incomes deteriorated. Many could not work in Israeli areas after the construction of the wall because they could not acquire permits, and had to find other less-paid jobs in Abu Deis and Eizariyeh or further in the West Bank. A shop owner on the Jerusalem side expressed his loss, by saying:

Before the construction of the wall, hundreds of people entered my shop every day. I used to open as early as 5:00 am when workers going to their work in Israeli areas used to buy their cigarettes and drinks before they were picked up. Then there were the school children who bought their morning sweets, then house-wife's, then employees in the area, and people changing cars also entered and bought snacks ... and many others. I had two workers, and unfortunately, I had to lay them off. I couldn't afford to pay them after the construction of the wall. I am lucky now if 25 persons enter and buy from my shop every day; they are only the people who live nearby. I am also lucky when on some days tourists come here by buses to see the wall or to write something on it.

Some interviewees compared their lives before and after the construction of the wall. One living on the Jerusalem side expressed how this area has become dead and silent after evening (see [Figure 4](#)):

Nobody comes except people who live here and Israeli soldiers who guard Israeli settlers living in the Israeli settlement at the top of the hill. In the evening it is dark, and silent. My daughters are not allowed to leave the house in the afternoon alone, and if for some reason they were late I or their brother would wait for them at the Kubsa Junction. The area is not safe anymore.

Although more than a decade and a half have passed, the people living in the area still talk about the Kubsa Junction as a lived memory and hope for a change for the better in the next generation. An old man expressed his wish that he hoped that his daughters could continue their school life in Jerusalem. He said:

The quality of the education was not as good as their school in Jerusalem, but they managed, and then went to university and now they are educated women. They will be there when the wall falls; I am now old and shall not have the chance to live this moment ... This wall has been there for over fifteen years.

The interviews above illustrate the multiple layers of time over the place of Kubsa Junction. The spiritual and physical connection of the people living there to the Old City of Jerusalem, its holy sites, and the sacred burial grounds. The collective time/memory of people living at the Kubsa Junction is also interwoven with Palestinian protests against Israeli settler colonialism. Regarding the third layer of the personal time/memory, people living on both sides of the Kubsa Junction expressed how their social life modalities deteriorated rupturing their cultural, commercial, health, and educational interactions. The Israeli settler colonial political decisions using elements of urban planning, have indeed changed the urban character of the city and reshaped the urban node of Kubsa rupturing the community. This has led to a dead-ending on multiple aspects of the colonized's lives in stark contrast with the vibrant interaction and activity Kubsa Junction once held.

The conflation of the multiple layers of time over a place in the memory of the people of the land, stands in contrast and even in contradiction with settler colonial processes of reimagining and reshaping space for the settler colonizer. Kubsa Junction shows how settler colonial urban planning has affected and continues to affect the daily lives of the colonized. Yet, despite these dynamics generating memories and grief on the layers of the spiritual/sacred, the collective and the personal time/memory, the compound conflation of the layers of time on the colonized generate meaning and purpose which accentuates steadfastness or what Palestinians have called over the years *Sumoud*.

## 5. Conclusion

The Kubsa Junction, located in the territory taken over by Israel through a war for completing its state-creation on the whole of Mandatory Palestine, has been transformed. The Israeli urban planning policies including the Segregation Wall has served to create another layer of degradation of urban nodes of Jerusalem consistent with the Zionist project of alienation and elimination of the Palestinians. These processes have impacted the spatial, social, economic, legal, and temporal aspects of their daily lives (Mansour 2018). The Israeli settler colonial military considerations and urban planning have produced several layers of injustices, severely and increasingly affecting people's experiences in such urban nodes. Each layer signifies a developed settler colonial military and urban strategy that has slowly transformed Kubsa Junction to degradation. The cumulative impact of these policies and practices is a perishing of such urban nodes making them dead-ends. The impact on the daily life of the people is multi-layered impacting the human and environmental contexts of both sides of the wall. The perishing process continues to impact the meanings, memories, and relations of the inhabitants in the surrounding areas on both sides of the Segregation Wall and the wider Palestinian community. These add insight to the function of the wall as a 'frame' within settler colonial strategy to eliminate the colonized people of the land by making them and their lives dispensable. These settler colonial policies are also designed to eliminate the Palestinian metropolitan character of Jerusalem as an integral part of the rest of the West Bank while increasing Palestinian hardships. Affected has been the Palestinian relation to places in the city, as has their perceptions of past and present memories and meanings. Hence, the strategies and role of the settler-colonial state is evident over the globalized racial capitalist dynamic in reshaping the urban nodes and social fabric of the colonized. Furthermore, on the political level, the Segregation Wall 'risks making a negotiated solution to the conflict even more difficult to achieve precisely because there is the risk that, from an urban point of view, an Arab *city* will cease to exist' (Chiodelli 2013, 423). Indeed, the case of Kubsa Junction shows how the Segregation Wall is more than a concrete structure, but rather a force-multiplying means to manage the Palestinian-Israeli conflict until it can be ended to the exclusive advantage of the settler colonizer. Yet, because of the spiritual/sacred memory layer of having been a lived extension of Jerusalem and still today being able to see the Old City and its holy sites, the colonized still withstand the imposing and degenerating settler colonial physical urban planning and military strategies. Furthermore, they have also contributed to forming Palestinians' *Sumoud* or steadfastness in face of settler colonial eliminatory policies and practices.

On the planning theory and practice levels, the genealogy of the political systems drawing and implementing planning policies and practices has particular relevance. The motives and goals of settler-colonial systems in using such policies and practices utilize a variety of means at their disposal often to target or eliminate certain peoples or populations. Such actions are done using seemingly mundane pretexts such as modernization, development, and protecting or providing security for certain groups of people from others.

In this Palestinian case, as in other cases where peoples are victims of and continue to face settler colonial policies and practices, mere survival on a daily basis has been and is, in and of itself, a basic form of resistance. This is simply because the existence and continuing to exist are constantly threatened and cannot be assumed as givens. Furthermore, for the colonized, maintaining their 'social skin', culture, identity, and sovereignty over their land is intrinsic to existence. This state of being in a constant survival mode may also resonate with people who have continued to be targeted by settler colonial policies in other regions such as North America and Australia.

## Notes

1. While Maxime Rodinson used the term *colonial settler* rather than *settler colonial*, he concluded that the Israeli control over Palestine was similar to what occurred to the First Nations suggesting that his analysis falls within

the latter type. The difference being that in *colonial settler* cases such as the British in India and the French in Algeria, the colonial contraction leads the settlers to return to the colonizing country, while in settler colonial cases they come to stay (Wolfe 2006, 338).

2. Authors wish to thank Professor Robert Warrior – Hall Distinguished Professor of American Culture at University of Kansas, for his assistance in obtaining material for this section.
3. Guggenheim focuses on analysis of art work and then builds a theory of memory which he applies to buildings which he argues can have many times simultaneously as different people use and experience different parts and functions of the same building. His insight about the conflation of the layers of times are used in the analysis of a place, and two additional layers are added relevant to the Kubsa case: the collective memory and the spiritual/sacred layers.
4. This second defensive circle usurped several Palestinian villages into the new Jerusalem municipal boundaries including Sawahreh al-Gharbiyeh, parts of Abu Deis and Beit Hanina, the Mount of Olives, Al-Isawiya, Shu'fat, Qalandia, and Kufr Aqab.
5. Definition: 'Force multiplier. A capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment.' (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2007, GL-11).

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