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PROGRAM

TERRACED HOUSES ON THE MOVE

THE MULTIPLE REALITIES OF AN URBAN
OBJECT'S HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

Within a postcolonial country such as Malta, identity is an undefined quality. The description of heritage is a non-linear historical value system, a presentness not based on objective, historical fact; within this description, heritage is linked to identity. I have observed that this question is problematic when describing the heritage of urban objects whose link with identity are not obvious. Through a critical architectural historical lens at the intersection with the urban field, I aim to present a multivocal definition of heritage of the terraced house in this thesis.

The terraced house was assimilated in the Maltese urban field through an **appropriating translation**. This thesis focuses on a case study of a modernist terraced house built in the 1960s, with a surrounding public discussion on its value as a heritage building and the current state of the Maltese built environment.

The fieldwork for the thesis includes a historical/legislative analysis of the case study, the tracing of its appearance in social media and interviews with several practitioners. Through this methodology, I observed how each interviewee provided multiple realities to the same terraced house, mentioning its coloniality in the subtext of the discussion but never acknowledging it. This raises the question of who decides what is the value of heritage?

Through my thesis, I have identified the complex value system of heritage of a colonial object within a postcolonial country. I observed through the field work the network of objects used to enact heritage, the multivocal quality of the discussion of heritage, the effect on the development of the typology, the effect on the Maltese urban environment and the need for decoloniality of the typology.