

# The View of the Disobeyed Housing Phenomenon on the Contemporary Housing in Taiwan

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**Abstract-** The existing residences constructed with additions have long been considered synonymous with disobeyed buildings<sup>1</sup>, and those with iron roof additions are often associated with slums. Yet in Taiwan, it is a secondary construction activity, a long-existing way of residence addition constructing aimed to meet people's need for residency. This phenomenon of constructing residence additions highlights the fact that the space purchased from the housing market fails to fulfill citizen's need for residential space, the government's power to control and forbid unlicensed constructions appears weak, and that unlicensed construction activity has become common in modern residential construction. In order to interpret the spatial construction of modern residential buildings in Taiwan and its social value, this paper reviews the literature related to the history of unlicensed construction in Taiwan in order to set up its correspondent system which is later analyzed by means of the research into the construction of unlicensed residence additions. Then, the Field Study is applied to the photography and recording of the types of unlicensed residence additions, and the effect of the residence addition types is developed through the Induction Method. The results of this study indicated: 1) There is a long history of residence additions. 2) Building cost speculations behind unlicensed buildings. 3) The complete paragenesis mechanism of residence

addition building. 4) The two-stage construction process is one of the residence modes in Taiwan.

**Keywords-** residence additions; disobeyed spaces; typology; social-cultural significance

## I . INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of residences being constructed with iron roof additions is not considered an indication of slums in Taiwan but is simply seen as a construction activity of building residence additions which have become the ultimate form of construction constituting the major street landscape. This research is aimed to investigate the spatial structure of residence additions and the deeper architectural and social value it carries.

The homeownership rate in Taiwan is 87.83%[1] while the rate of residence addition building is up to 65.9%[2]. It is common in Taiwan that residences constructed with additions are the ultimate form of home building, and those houses are mostly constructed with additions and the building are carried out after being purchased by the resident from the constructor. Neither permitted by the building rule nor designed by professional architects, those buildings are informal and do not conform to the contemporary aesthetic criteria. And in terms of the construction materials, the simple frame covered with a layer of sheet metal, such as iron sheet roofing, fails to provide thermal insulation materials particularly needed in subtropical Taiwan. This

<sup>1</sup> This article refers to the disobeyed housings mean that the unauthorized constructions include the ground floor additions, the balcony extrapolation, and the roof layer additions.

seems to be a construction myth on the surface, but the distinctive street landscape with squatter houses built everywhere has become a form of residence which reflects the life of common people [3]. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the form of residence additions and the meaning behind such building behavior, and to further scrutinize its social value. The "residence mode" formed by the residence addition building serves as the basis for the investigation in this research; then "the spatial structure of residence additions" and "the architectural and social value" it carries are further discussed so as to provide a clear representation of the contemporary residential housing and its significance in Taiwan.

## II. METHOD

The housing form is the representation of the local life-style for the living needs, and it connects with the residential phenomenon on the contemporary analysis. To find out these points; the research uses three stages to discuss them.

First, this research reviews the literature related to the history of unlicensed construction in Taiwan to set up its correspondent system which is later analyzed by means of the research into the construction of unlicensed residence additions.

Then, for understanding the state of housing space extending phenomenon in Taiwan, the task of this study is investigating the formats and reasons extended space by the questionnaire and analysis.

Third, the Field Study is to take pictures of unlicensed residence additions, to analysis their types, and the effect of the residence addition types is developed through the Induction Method.

## III. RESULTS

All along, the issue of the housing additions is deal with the view of "Construction Act". The housing additions were deemed "illegal structures" to be prohibited. In 1957, the Government announced "The Regulations for Unlicensed

Buildings". But the ban work was ineffective; the Regulations continued to be revised In future. The housing sealers deemed the housing additions as "additional value" to promote their housing sales. They claimed their house was designed for "the second construction"[4]. The studying on the housing additions in the academic is some. They discussed this issue with the point of "the illegal structures", and also discussed on its historical process. They tried to come out a way to manage the housing additions, but it was not effective.

In recent years, the researchers studied continually the issues on the level of construction law. ( Yao, Jia-Wen,1967; Wang, Rong-Zhou,1973; Hou, Nian-Zu,1991; Lan, Yu-Wen,1995; Qiu, Hong-Zhe,2000; Hong, Cun-Shan,2001; Xie, Kun-Cang,2005; Lin, Ting-Yi, 2005; Zhang, Bi-Zhen, 2005; He, Shi-Zhong,2006 ) [5-14]. They did not clarify the real factors of the Review of research on the phenomenon of the disobeyed housing, There were a few papers proposed interpretation of social factors and cultural factors in the view of sociology. (Huang, Sun-Quan,1996; Yang, Zhong-Ying,1998; Chen, Ying-Jie,1999; Shi Mi,1999; Liu, Shi-Hong,2002 ) [15-19], there was also the interpretation of the living environmental quality ( Chen, Li-Ying,1980; Wang, Hui-Bin,1983 ) [20-21]. But they lacked of the reasons and the purpose for the disobeyed housing in the view of the residents. They did not clarify the real factors of the disobeyed housing. Therefore, the fundamental research into "the disobeyed house" is carried out to illustrate the problem in which the residential space provided by the housing market has little correspondence with the actual need of the resident.

### A. The History of Unlicensed Construction in Taiwan

*1) Historical causes and development of unlicensed construction: urgent residential arrangements for immigrants and the formation of the addition building culture.*

In his article, "Circulative Debts: A historical Perspective on Squatters and Urban Planning n Taipei," Yeou-ren Yang

indicates that “the formation of squatters in Taipei was brought about firstly by postwar political migrants, then was oppressed by the urban-regional process of dependent urbanization and unsuitable regulation of urban policy on land and housing. The state permitted the existence of squatters intentionally in order to relieve the pressure on urban collective consumption issues. Normative planning system unable to arrange spatial resources rationally, the bulldozer-like clearance of squatters caused the transference of slums, the “social morphine” of the green rhetoric even polarized the urban space and society. [22]” It can be obtained from this article that the emergence of unlicensed buildings can be traced back to the historical causes which would continue to affect later amendments to the housing policy and the building rules. This is also reckoned as the social and cultural factor contributing to unlicensed construction.

## *2) The change and development of the legalization of unlicensed construction.*

Among modern residences today, many of the existing residences are often “constructed with additions” after being purchased from the housing market, and such residences are synonymous with “unlicensed building” which has copious and confusing definitions in the construction law, such as old unlicensed construction (now legalized), new unlicensed construction (still illegal), non-permitted buildings (to be legalized), and illegal buildings (illegal). Also, the local communities have gradually become an obscure part of the law enforcement operation; such social phenomenon can be observed from the distinct street landscape formed by town houses with iron roof additions.

Today, the term “unlicensed building” is mentioned in Item 1, Article 25 of the Building Law that “buildings are not allowed to be constructed, used, or dismantled without being permitted and licensed by the municipal or county (city) authorities.” And according to Article 2 of the Regulations for Unlicensed Buildings, “the ‘unlicensed buildings’ mentioned in this Act refers to the buildings which are

constructed before being registered and licensed by the local competent authorities.” It can be comprehended from the abovementioned law interpretation that any buildings constructed or used without being licensed or registered are “unlicensed buildings.”

However, the definition of the term “unlicensed building” has been constantly amended with the changing legalization process. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1957, “The Regulations for Unlicensed Buildings” divided unlicensed buildings into old and new unlicensed buildings. In Taipei, the “old unlicensed buildings” referred to those constructed before 1963; in Kaohsiung, they referred to the unlicensed buildings built before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1968, while in Taiwan Province the unlicensed buildings built before February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1958, are considered old ones. Before the enforcement of dismantlement, the old buildings can be repaired but the construction, expansion, and renovation of the buildings are not permitted. The owner of such buildings are granted moving expense allowances and compensation for demolition, the prior right to purchase public housing, booth removal allowances, and so on.

Also, on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1975, the Interior Ministry defined and divided the unlicensed buildings into “non-permitted buildings” and “illegal buildings.” “Non-permitted buildings” refer to the buildings which are constructed without violating the urban planning and the building law, and the license can be legally reissued to the construction with land-use rights but without license. “Illegal buildings” refer to the buildings which are built against the urban planning and the related building law; no license can be reissued and dismantlement is required. In addition, there is a rule that “the local government should prioritize the dismantlement of unlicensed buildings which do no harm to public interest.” According to Article 14 of the Regulations for Unlicensed Buildings in 1983, dismantlement should not be performed on unlicensed buildings including unlicensed constructions on flat roof buildings, addition of window to the balcony, removable canopy, and so on, but this article

was abolished on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1992.

Although the abovementioned definitions of unlicensed buildings by the building law are made clear, the limits of unlicensed buildings remain vague in the society and the cognition is still unclear for nonprofessional citizens.

### *B. The contents of constructing residence additions with the purpose and type and origin*

For understanding the state of housing space extending phenomenon in Taiwan, the task of this study is investigating the formats and reasons of housing space extending by the questionnaire and analysis. The results of this study indicated:

Table 1 : The unauthorized building ratio of every region

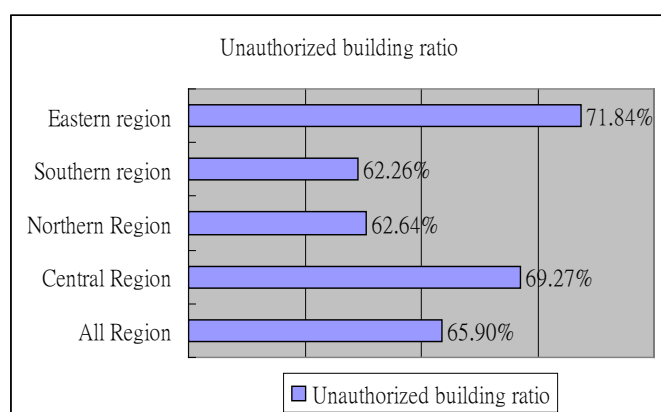


Table 2: The unauthorized building ratio of the education levels

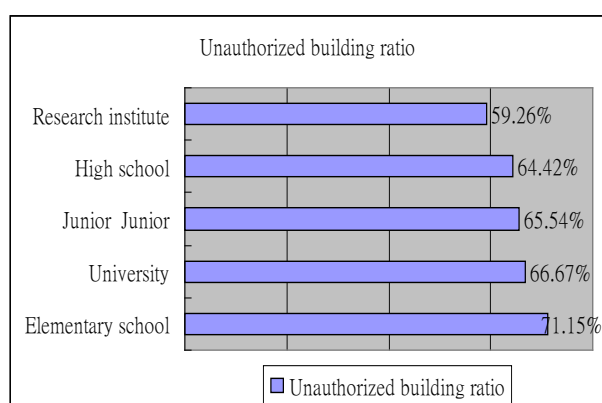


Table 3: The unauthorized building ratios of the residence age levels

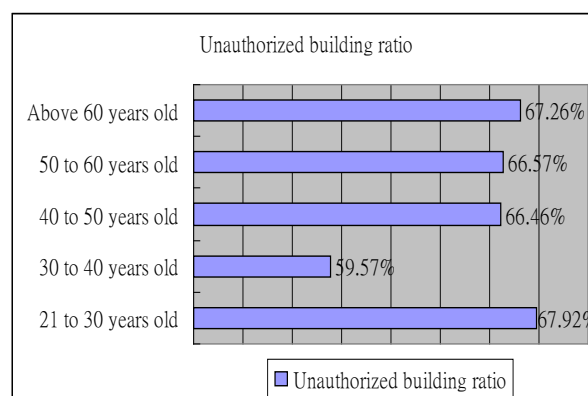


Table 4: The unauthorized building ratios of the income levels

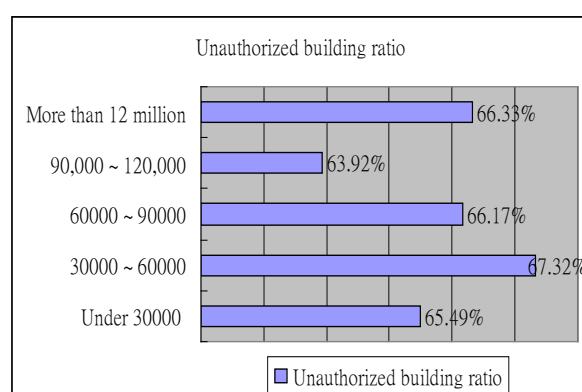


Table 5: The unauthorized building ratios of the housing types

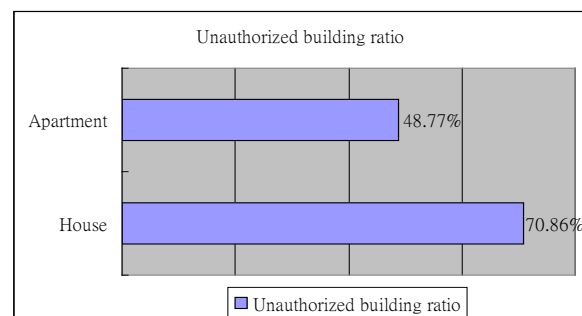


Table 4: The unauthorized building ratios of the housing age levels

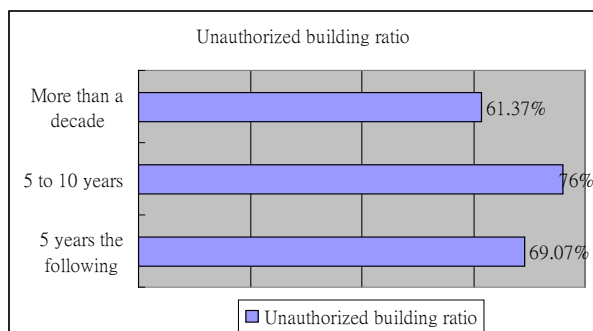


Table 7: The unauthorized building ratios of the area levels

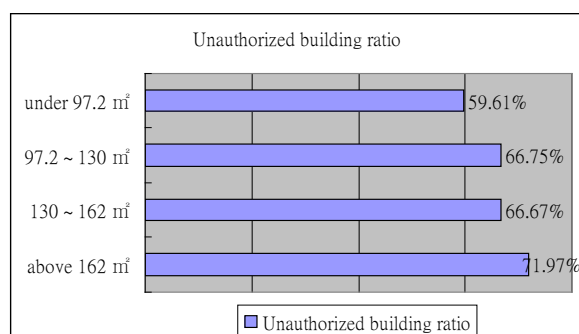


Table 8: The unauthorized building ratios of the reasons

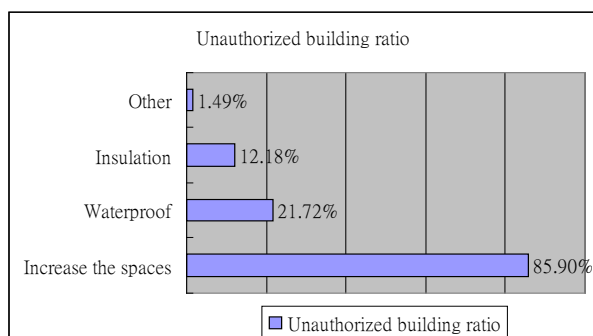


Table 9: The ratios of the locations

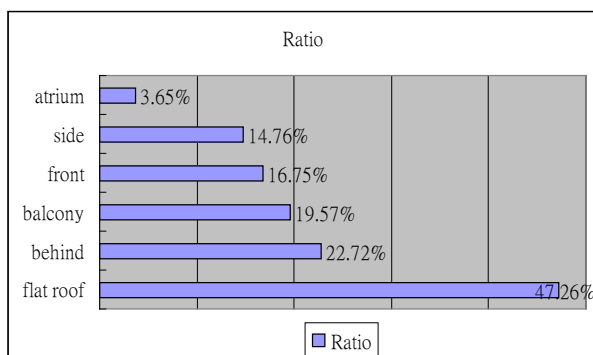


Table 10: The ratios of the additional purposes

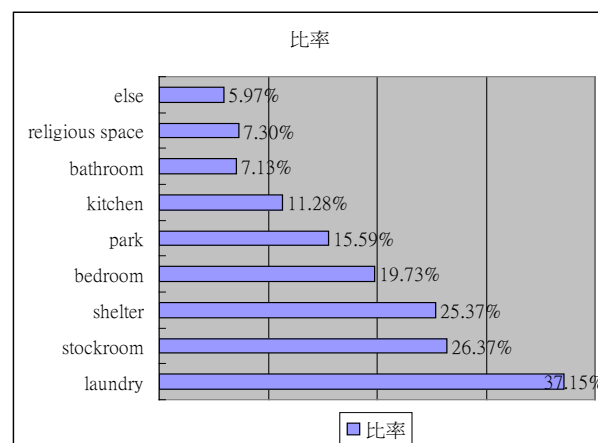


Table 11: The ratios of the additional types

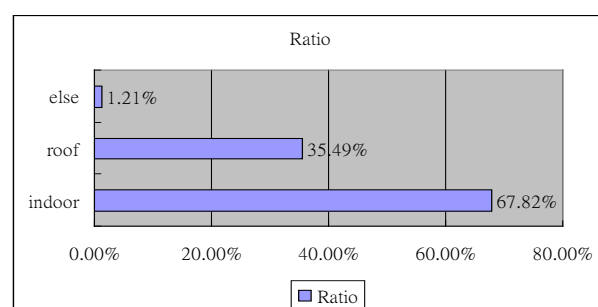


Table 12: The ratios of the additional sizes

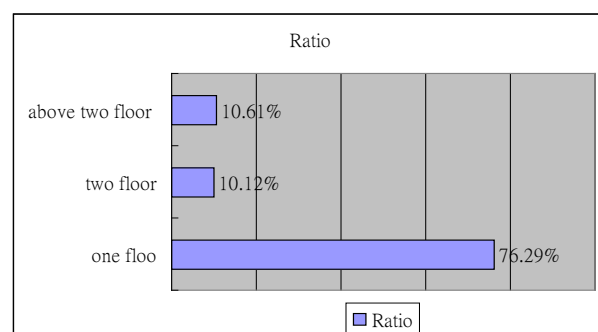


Table 13: The ratios of the practicability feeling

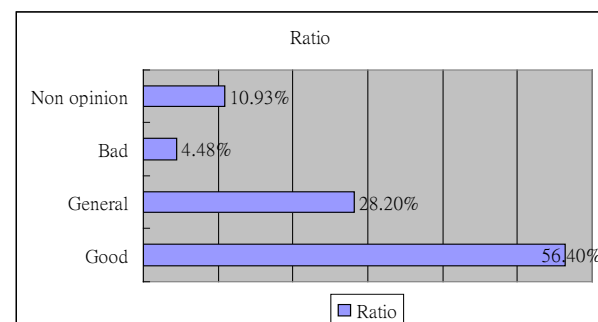


Table 14: The ratios of the additional materials

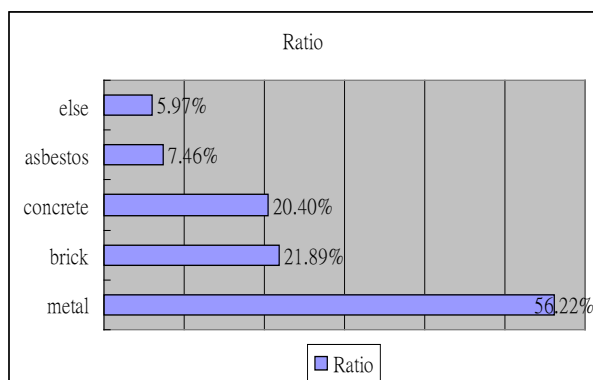


Table 15: The ratios of the durability feeling

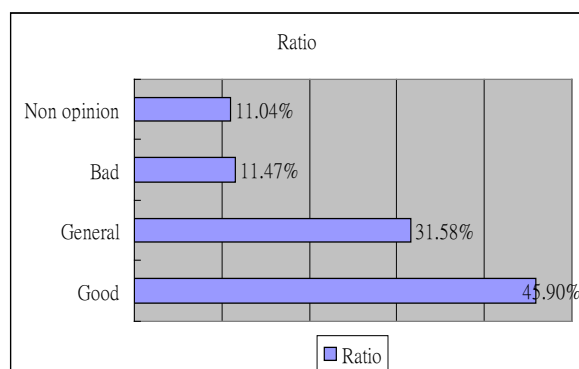
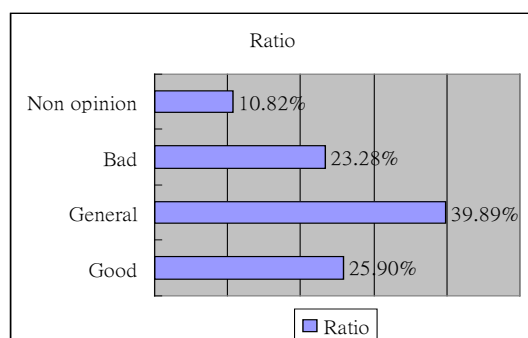


Table 16: The ratios of the artistry feeling



- The ratio of the residence addition building is up to 65.9%, and the region location doesn't effect the amount of the ratio.
- The Owners' education, monthly income, and age do not affect the amount of additional ratios.
- The ratio of the house additions was higher than the apartment. It is up to 70.86%.
- Most sizes of the disobeyed spaces were one floor of the metal shacks. °
- The purpose of housing spaces extended to increase the use of spaces( 85.9% ), the space functions mostly were

laundry rooms and stockrooms.

- The evaluation of the practicability, the durability feeling, and the artistry feeling on the additions is that the positive comments are more than the negative comments.

C. The Field Study is applied to the photography and recording of the types of unlicensed residence additions

Table 17 : From the Google Map Satellite photos [23], we found the iron roof additions on the most housing nearby every train station region.













	
Nearby Keelung train station	Nearby New Taipei train station
	
Nearby Ilan train station	Nearby Changhua train station
	
Nearby Tainan train station	Nearby Kaohsiung train station

Table 18 : From the Field Study, we did find the iron roof additions on the most housing near the every train station region.



	
The unlicensed residence additions in Keelung city	The unlicensed residence additions in Taipei city
	
The unlicensed residence additions in New Taipei city	The unlicensed residence additions in Miaoli city
	
The unlicensed residence additions in Tainan city	The unlicensed residence additions in Kaohsiung city

The results of this study indicated: The main sources of the disobeyed space are the vacant by building coverage ratio, included the front of the house, the behind of the house, the side of the house, the flat roof, the balcony etc.

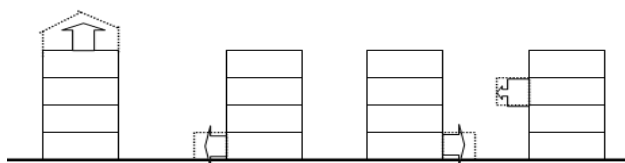


Figure 1 : The extended types of the disobeyed houses

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The right to design post-industrialized residences is practiced by professional urban planning organization or architects. City governance and landscape architecture seem to be effectively controlled and managed; however, by observing the street landscape in Taiwan, it is obvious that

illegal residence additions are common; the additions built to rooftops and balconies are the most dominant factor affecting the image of the street architectures. Thus, it is understandable that the bulk of residences in Taiwan are constructed to be the ultimate building and form the street landscape via a “two-stage” construction process, which is explained as follows:

1) *Two-stage planning: construct the residence with different themes.*

The residence constructed with additions indicates that the residence is built by means of a two-stage construction process. The first stage of the construction process is performed by professionals including urban planning, architecture design, institutionalized housing market, and the constructor; during this stage, the construction focuses on the bedrooms and the living room. The second stage of the construction process is then carried out by the resident and low-skilled construction workers; the construction points in this stage include clothes drying areas, storage rooms, canopies, recreation areas, parking lots, and so on. The difference between the first and the second stage lies in the additions constructed to the legal built-up land, balconies, and terraces.

2) *The built-up structure of the residence*

Building additions to the residence is performed in the second residence construction stage during which the residence is expanded and enlarged by means of partly expansion, partly extension, party coverage, and renovation.

3) *The weather and the folk craftsman are the factors contributing to building additions to the residence*

To deal with the subtropical climate in Taiwan and to meet the need for waterproof function, the resident's need for residence built with roof additions is strengthened.

4) *The exterior look of residence additions has formed the building image of residences in regional communities.*

The iron-roof addition is constructed to the main house whose exterior look is made of concrete and Er-ding hanging bricks. This not only clearly demonstrates the image of landscape architecture and city streets but also manifests the two-stage construction system owing to different building techniques such as material use and aesthetics.

#### 5) *The social consensus and paragenesis mechanism of construction expansion*

It has long been practiced that additions are built on the open land on front and back side of the house or to the rooftop terrace and balconies by means of simple iron and cement job. This unspoken consensus affects the original intention of the constructor who therefore reserves the land required for building coverage ratio so that later construction can be performed.

### V. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, there are four explicit characteristics of residence additions in Taiwan:

#### 1) *There is a long history of residence additions*

This phenomenon derived from the illegalized action taken by the government to make postwar urgent residential arrangements and the chaos in which unlicensed buildings were randomly legalized. The government thus gradually lost its governance over residential construction, which further reinforced the free will of the resident to use or build residence additions.

#### 2) *Building cost speculations behind unlicensed buildings*

The main reason for building additions is the need for space; however, from the actual space use and the construction material, the selective consideration used to fulfill this need for space is due to the resident's "need for space" and "money value" rather than the "formal space" provided by the housing market.

#### 3) *The complete paragenesis mechanism of residence addition building*

According to the design of building coverage ratio for vacant land availability in the building law, secondary construction activity is hidden behind the actual saleable area and later performed by folk iron craftsmen to satisfy construction speculations.

#### 4) *The two-stage construction process is one of the residence modes in Taiwan*

The residence constructed with additions is the ultimate building form which not only reflects the building law but also dominates the street landscape and urban skyline; this is one of the contemporary residence modes in Taiwan.

"Type as a Social Agreement" [24] • Space additions have become a space mode whose constituents can be studied to help understand the life of common people and the culture consciousness of social space, and to further represent the real life of the community and to comprehend the potential cultural consciousness of social space behind the community's life. Residences constructed with additions are examined based on the concept proposed by Rapoport that "residence has its power over social control." In Taiwan, the activity of building residence additions without a doubt indicates that to a certain extent urban management and social control are disunited. The appearance of residence additions may serve as a supplement to the undesirable residential environment since "the creation of an ideal environment is achieved by means of special space design [25]," and residence additions exactly bring into play the mechanism of such space design.

The behavior of building additions to residences in Taiwan not only reflects the unconsidered response made by the common resident to the industrialized residential system but also indicates that urbanization has turned the ground floor cottage into skyscrapers and apartment buildings. Residence addition building follows the construction activity in traditional life experience that residence additions are built on lands within the limit of the owner's land rights. Although failing to meet the modern requirements of professional



design and construction technology, this type of construction activity indeed provides a new way as a compensation for the split modern life. We still need to take a more positive and active attitude towards the construction activity of residence addition building in Taiwan; we need to see it as the wisdom of common citizens to deal with their need for space. This research is expected to help examine the effect of the current urban planning law and building management on the residence mode in Taiwan as well as the social and cultural value it brings about.

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