

Spatial Patterns of Shop-Houses:

A Case Study of Traditional and Contemporary Shop-Houses in Southern Thailand

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0 Abstract

The Shop-House is one of the most common type of dwelling in Asian cities. The combination of living and working environment suggests certain social and cultural aspects embedded in this unique type of dwelling. This study examined the pattern of spatial configuration based on the use of space and the type of activities performed in shop-houses in Thailand.

Space Syntax analysis was applied to a sample of 74 shop-houses in three areas in southern Thailand. The study focused on nine primary function of activity patterns; i.e., buying and selling, washing, laundering and drying clothes, food preparation and cooking, entertaining; sleeping; bathing; family living; and circulation.

Among the findings are the underlying principles of social and cultural dimensions that govern the pattern of spatial configuration of Thai shop-houses. High difference factors across the samples indicates the weak degree of differentiation among space use patterns as a result of a uniform spatial structure and multifunctional use within the shop-house. The results show that if forms or elements of the dwellings are altered over time, the patterns of spatial configuration and space use, as the indirect expression of social and cultural aspects, generally prevail.

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