

Review of: "The Spatial Politics of the Tonle Sap: A Multi-Scale Analysis of Conservation and Development Challenges"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper 'The Political Ecologies of the Tonle Sap: Global, Regional and National Framework for Conservation and Development' by Mak Sithirith delves into the influence of human actors on the management of the natural resources offered by the largest freshwater lake in Southeastern Asia, the Tonle Sap.

The paper presents several intriguing data and offers insights into the strong interrelationships, across time and space, among human activities, natural rhythms, and the pressures resulting from the exploitation of natural resources in the studied basin, where the connection between the lake and the Mekong River is ruling both the ecosystem and the economics of the area.

While being interesting, the paper in its current form (December 2023) exhibits some flaws that might concern readers well-versed in sustainability and ecosystem-based management science. Primarily, there is ambiguity regarding whether the paper represents a research work report or a review of literature and available data concerning the study area. To aid readers in grasping the paper's design and relevance, I would recommend clarifying the purposes of the paper and explicitly stating the geographical location of the study area in the abstract.

In the Introduction section, the 'Flood Pulse Concept' should be contextualized better, highlighting its relevance for the Mekong River from both the ecological and the social perspectives.

Within the Material and Methods section, a significant concern arises from the perceived disjointed temporal phases of the study. The sentence 'from 2013 to 2013, the researcher conducted research work for WorldFish' is unclear and adds to the confusion. Please note that Figure 1 presents geographical coordinates that are difficult to read, and the geographical reference system is not reported.

Moving forward, I appreciated the decision to separate the Results section from the earlier combined section with Discussion. However, despite this separation, the Results section currently contains several introductory concepts that might be more fittingly situated within the Introduction. Additionally, paragraph 4.4 appears redundant and does not align as a result, but more like information needed from the beginning: all this requires revision for manuscript improvement. Moreover, note that Figure 2 has an overlapping label, and the solid color trendline hides the numbers in the graph. Lastly, the excessive use of acronyms makes the latter part of the paper challenging to read.

In conclusion, this paper explores a captivating case where the policy may strongly influence an entire social-ecological system and presents a wealth of interesting and valuable data. However, it requires restructuring and proofreading to fully showcase its potential.