

FLOATING COMMUNITIES ON TONLÉ SAP LAKE, CAMBODIA:
SPATIAL PATTERNS AND ADAPTATION CAPACITY

Typical Floating House on Tonle Sap Lake, outside Siem Reap

INTRODUCTION:

This research investigates floating house communities on Tonlé Sap Lake and River in Cambo-

The spatial nature of the communities is highly dynamic and closely related to the local environment. These

PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE TO ADAPTING AND PROTECTING AUSTRALIA'S SETTLEMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

This research increased understanding of climate change adaptation issues in the Australasian region, specifically Cambodia. It has indicated some of the impacts that climate change will have on communities and the economy and demonstrated how some communities have already adapted to a dynamic environment. This research and some findings are also applicable to some other countries in the downstream section of the Mekong.

The increased understanding of how some communities have adapted to a dynamic environment, with both their community structure and infrastructure may also inform disaster mitigation practices in Australia. By utilising some features inherent in the floating house communities on Tonlé Sap it may be possible to increase Australia's capacity to be more resilient to extreme events such as flooding.

FURTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS:

Further research should be targeted at increasing the understanding of how floating communities on Tonlé Sap are impacting the water quality and health of the lake and river environment. This would allow management decisions to be better targeted to increase lake health, fish productivity and human health.

Further statistical analysis of the spatial patterns of floating houses on Tonlé Sap and the relationships with landscape features would develop understanding of the interactions between the floating and land based communities. This would increase capacity for governments and NGO's to respond to extreme events and tailor service providing such as schools and healthcare.

An increased understanding of the baseline of the fisheries would allow the impacts of environmental changes to be modelled more accurately. This would increase the capacity for fisheries management decisions to be scientifically tailored to improve fisheries outcomes.

Whilst the majority of respondents had access to schooling it was acknowledged that this was limited over a child's life due to cost, the impacts of this need to be more fully understood and research into how this could be changed to allow greater education for children and adults on Tonlé Sap should be investigated. This would increase understanding of how education can be improved which would increase community and individual resilience to change.

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