Transforming Climate Resilience: A Case Study of Myanmar Migrants in Phuket, Thailand

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Planning
Department of Geography and Planning
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Climate resilience is a system’s ability to absorb climate change disturbances and reorganize in a way that the system retains the same function and identity. The concept of climate resilience is widely criticized for its neutral and post-political approach to planning for climate change. Resilience practitioners typically conduct vulnerability assessments to identify how institutions, systems, and actors are at risk from climate change. However, because practitioners focus on climate exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacities of essential infrastructure systems, such as settlement areas, water supply networks, and food systems, practitioners tend to overlook the inherently political nature of vulnerability and the broader social structures that create or reinforce it, especially for marginalized people.

My research on the lives of 80 Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand serves as a case study for the importance of taking a directly political approach to planning for climate resilience. In this thesis, I describe the vulnerabilities of Myanmar migrants in Phuket as embodied structural violence, which refers to the economic, political,
and cultural dynamics that systematically cause human suffering and constrain human agency to meet personal needs and goals. Resilience practitioners in Phuket can apply a structural violence lens, particularly during the vulnerability assessment process, to identify and address social structures that create vulnerabilities, including elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination in Thailand.

Unfortunately, people who are underrepresented in policymaking and planning process in Thailand, including Myanmar migrants, are often the ones to bear the disproportionate costs of climate change. Thus, resilience practitioners must advocate for an explicitly political, inclusive, and participatory approach; for example, one that incorporates the experiences and knowledge of all inhabitants in Phuket. Through my research, I also add to the discourse of planning for migrant communities, especially at a time when renowned international institutions, such as the United Nations, are highlighting significant planning and policymaking challenges linked to climate change-induced migration.
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*In loving memory of Francisco Buñing.*
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments........................................................................................................................................ iv

Table of Contents........................................................................................................................................ vi

List of Tables ............................................................................................................................................... ix

List of Figures ............................................................................................................................................. x

List of Acronyms....................................................................................................................................... xii

**Chapter 1** Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1

**Chapter 2** Literature Review ............................................................................................................... 13

2.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 13

2.2 Structural violence............................................................................................................................... 14

2.3 Climate resilience................................................................................................................................. 21

2.4 The politicization of the human-environment relationship: Political ecology and critical disaster studies ......................................................................................................................... 36

2.5 Comparing climate resilience, political ecology, critical disaster studies, and structural violence .............................................................................................................................................. 40

2.6 Conclusion............................................................................................................................................. 44

**Chapter 3** Research Design ............................................................................................................... 47

3.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 47

3.2 Scoping research visits, gatekeepers, and translators ....................................................................... 49

3.3 Ethnographic research ....................................................................................................................... 52

3.4 Ethics, validity, and reliability ............................................................................................................ 53

3.5 Six research villages ............................................................................................................................ 56

3.6 Qualitative research methods ........................................................................................................... 62

3.7 Sampling methods .............................................................................................................................. 67
Chapter 4 Thailand’s Political Economy, Climate Change, and Migration ................................................................. 76

4.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 76

4.2 Political economy of Thailand ...................................................................................................................... 78

4.3 Elitism and nepotism in Thailand and Phuket’s governance systems ......................................................... 89

4.4 Social and political fragmentation .............................................................................................................. 91

4.5 The limitations of climate change and migration responses in Thailand and Phuket ........................................ 97

4.5 Conclusion .................................................................................................................................................. 121

Chapter 5 The Structural Violence Experienced by Myanmar Migrants in Phuket, Thailand ......................................................... 123

5.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 123

5.2 Institutions ................................................................................................................................................... 124

5.3 Systems ...................................................................................................................................................... 138

5.4 Actors ......................................................................................................................................................... 142

5.5 Nuanced experiences of Myanmar migrants in Phuket ........................................................................... 144

5.6 Personal agency ......................................................................................................................................... 153

5.7 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................................ 156

Chapter 6 Conclusion and Recommendations ................................................................................................... 158

6.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................................ 158

6.2 Thesis outline ............................................................................................................................................. 159

6.3 Contributions to resilience theory and planning ....................................................................................... 161
6.4 Recommendations ................................................................................................. 164
6.5 The realities of Phuket, Thailand ........................................................................... 181

References .................................................................................................................. 184

Appendices .................................................................................................................. 212
  Appendix 1  Research consent forms and introduction letters .................... 212
  Appendix 2  Interview guides .................................................................................. 220
List of Tables

Table 1: Issues selected for resilience indicators in ACCCRN cities ..................... 36
Table 2: Total of male and female migrant research participants .......................... 51
Table 3: Total of participants per ethnic group ...................................................... 51
Table 4: Total of participants per age bracket ......................................................... 51
Table 5: Total of participants per number of years living in Phuket, Thailand ....... 51
Table 6: Total of research participants per village ............................................... 56
Table 7: ASEAN GDP nominal per capita. .............................................................. 79
Table 8: Recent changes to Thai labour laws under the new Royal Decree on Managing the Work of Aliens B.E. 2560 (2017) ......................................................... 115
Table 9: Strategies for addressing structures that shape structural violence in Thailand ........................................................................................................ 165
# List of Figures

Figure 1: Location of Phuket, Thailand. ................................................................. xiv

Figure 2: Map of Phuket and locations of six research villages and Diocesan Social Action Center of Suratthani Catholic Foundation office........................................... xv

Figure 3: Example of resilience planning cycle...................................................... 5

Figure 4: Conceptual linkages between vulnerability and resilience within three climate resilience frameworks.............................................................. 25

Figure 5: Conceptual framework of vulnerability.................................................... 27

Figure 6: The DROP model ................................................................................. 30

Figure 7: Urban Climate Resilience Framework..................................................... 34

Figure 8: Location of six research villages and DISAC Phuket office relative to Phuket Town......................................................................................... 57

Figure 9: Work site of a construction worker who lives in Muan Tong................. 58

Figure 10: Houses occupied by Myanmar migrants in Muan Tong....................... 60

Figure 11: Houses in Pesang .................................................................................. 61

Figure 12: Woman separating anchovies .............................................................. 65

Figure 13: Location of Thailand and Myanmar in the Mekong Region............... 77

Figure 14: Thailand’s GDP growth per quarter since 2013 ................................ 80

Figure 15: Administrative system of Thailand....................................................... 94

Figure 16: Flooding in Phuket Town .................................................................... 100
Figure 17: Myanmar states and divisions.............................................. 109

Figure 18: Myanmar housing unit in Ong Karn, situated in a mangrove ........... 113
## List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCCRN</td>
<td>Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCM</td>
<td>Asian Research Center for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAPPEDA</td>
<td>Badan Perencana Pembangunan Daerah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>Canadian Dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIM Plans</td>
<td>Coastal Infrastructure Management Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODI</td>
<td>Community Organizations Development Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISAC</td>
<td>Diocesan Social Action Center of Suratthani Catholic Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DROP model</td>
<td>Disaster Resilience of Place model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPP</td>
<td>Gross Provincial Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
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</table>
ISET-International  Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-International

M-BRACE  Mekong-Building Climate Resilience in Asian Cities

MoU  Memorandum of Understanding

NAMA  Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions

NCCMP  National Climate Change Master Plan

NESDP  National Economic and Social Development Plan

NLD  National League for Democracy

OECD  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PNCCA  Program of National Climate Change Adaptation

UCRSEA  Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia

UNDP  United Nations Development Programme

UNFCCC  United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UN-Habitat  United Nations Human Settlement Programme

USAID  U.S. Agency for International Development

USD  United States Dollars

YCO  Yaung Chi Oo Workers Association
Figure 1: Location of Phuket, Thailand (Cartographer: Allen, J., 2017).
Figure 2: Map of Phuket and locations of six research villages and Diocesan Social Action Center of Suratthani Catholic Foundation office (Cartographer: Allen, J., 2017).
Chapter 1
Introduction

Many policymakers, planners, and researchers [henceforth referred to as practitioners] working on climate change-related issues broadly apply the concept of climate resilience to complex systems, such as cities, provinces, or countries. Climate resilience refers to a system's ability to absorb climate change disturbances and then reorganize and learn in a manner that it is still able to retain the same function and identity (Adger et al., 2005; Cutter et al., 2008; Tyler et al., 2016).

Despite its popularity, climate resilience is criticized for its neutral and, in general, post-political approach to planning for climate change. I use the term ‘post-political’ rather than ‘apolitical’ because ‘post-political’ relates to the condition of neutrality in many contemporary political spheres around the globe. Post-politics refers to a democratic condition in which the political realm has been hollowed out (Beveridge and Koch, 2016). Political apathy, citizen cynicism and elite control of the formal democratic political systems are central concerns in many communities (Beveridge and Koch, 2016). The urban politics of today has been argued of as being reduced to the management and policing/policy-making of the consensus (Swyngedouw, 2010).

Throughout this thesis, I argue that contemporary approaches to climate resilience do not take an overtly political stance. Instead, climate resilience planning facilitates policy-making of the consensus. Climate resilience in practice does not speak directly to the deep-rooted issues of social inequities that create or reinforce the climate vulnerabilities of many poor and marginalized people, especially in the Global South (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Béné et al., 2012; Friend and Moench, 2015). This viewpoint links to environmental justice arguments that acknowledge the fact that poor and marginalized people disproportionately bear the impacts of climate change due to broader political, economic, social, and cultural factors [hereafter referred to as structures] (Kearney, 2010).
An emerging body of literature is, therefore, urging practitioners to combine resilience with other theoretical frameworks that specifically focus on social justice and equity so that structures that underpin climate vulnerabilities are not overlooked (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Béné et al., 2012; Friend and Moench, 2015). Thus, the principal objective of this thesis is to accommodate concerns about the post-political and neutral approaches of existing resilience theory and practice.

I also build on critical discussions on climate resilience. In particular, I argue that structural violence theory can push resilience scholarship in the needed political direction. Structural violence refers to the economic, political, social, and cultural dynamics that systematically cause human suffering, and constrain human agency to meet personal needs and goals (Galtung, 1969).

Burgeoning discussions are taking place around how to modify current resilience scholarship and practice in ways that consider the social construction of vulnerabilities. For example, Bahadur and Tanner (2014) support combining resilience with the concept of transformative actions\(^1\) to reconfigure social disparities at the local level. Furthermore, Friend and Moench (2015) acknowledge the ideas of Henri Lefebvre (e.g. the right to the city\(^2\)) and Amartya Sen (e.g. entitlements\(^3\)), and argue for changing institutions in ways that ensure equal access, rights, or entitlements to resilient enabling systems.

Still, critics have not explicitly identified which theoretical framework(s) could encompass the political viewpoint needed to identify the social determinants of vulnerability. Thus, my central research question asks: What in (Thai) society must

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\(^1\) Transformative actions refer to changing basic operating assumptions (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014).

\(^2\) Urban residents have rights over the decisions that shape their city (Lefebvre, 1991; 1996; Purcell, 2002).

\(^3\) Entitlements refer to commodities that people have rights to, such as food and education. Sen argued that famines, for example, are a result of extreme entitlement failure in society (Sen, 1983).
be transformed to address the social construction of vulnerability; and thereby ensure equal access, rights, or entitlements to resilience?

This wider question is best addressed through the following specific questions:

1. What are the political, economic, social, and cultural factors that shape climate vulnerabilities for institutions, systems, and actors in Phuket?

2. What are the political, economic, social, and cultural factors that shape climate vulnerabilities for Myanmar migrants in Phuket?

3. What coping mechanisms do Myanmar migrants enact to deal with these issues?

4. How are governance institutions, systems, and actors in Phuket responding to climate change and migration issues?

By answering these questions, we can understand the structures that create climate vulnerabilities for systems, institutions, and actors in Phuket. We also give explicit focus to the lives, experiences, and knowledge of Myanmar migrants. By assessing migrants’ coping mechanisms, we gain insight to an individual migrant’s personal agency in reacting to structures that create vulnerabilities. By exploring the impacts of climate change and migration on governance institutions in Phuket, we also uncover the structures that exist at broader scales (e.g. at the national level), which affect policy and planning responses to climate change and migration issues at the local level. And, by analyzing the social construction of vulnerabilities at multiple scales, including the individual level, we acknowledge the reciprocal relationship between different scales.

Similar to political ecologists, such as Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) and Watts (1983), as well as critical disaster scholars, such as Gillard et al. (2014) and Oliver-Smith (1996), I argue that environmental issues such as climate vulnerabilities are linked to broader social, political, and economic problems. However, political ecologists and critical disaster scholars primarily focus on impacts of broader structures upon local contexts. Structural violence theory, on the other hand, has
evolved over the years to recognize the fluidity of scale. It leads one to appreciate the personal agency of the individual to impact structural violence from the bottom up, either as an agent of change, a complicit person, or an enactor of structural violence (Bourgois and Schoneberg, 2009).

The concept of personal agency is usually unobserved when using locally-focused analysis frameworks, such as political ecology or critical disaster studies (Dixon and Stringer, 2015). I argue that theorizing on and planning for resilience must consider the reciprocal process of micro- and macro-level interactions given that not all localities are homogeneous. Places consist of individuals with similar or diverse sets of needs, interests, and vulnerabilities, which in turn impact broader scales. Resilience practitioners must, therefore, seek to understand the nuances in vulnerabilities so as not to assume that a single strategy will benefit everyone in one locality.

This thesis, therefore, highlights the importance of integrating structural violence theory during the vulnerability assessment stage of resilience practice (e.g. “Study climate impacts and vulnerabilities” in Figure 3). Resilience practitioners typically conduct vulnerability assessments to identify how components of complex systems (e.g. institutions, systems, and actors) are at risk from ongoing or pending climate change impacts. They then design resilience strategies around such assessments (Cutter et al., 2008; Tyler et al., 2016). Practitioners mainly evaluate the exposure, sensitivity, risk, and adaptive capacity of essential infrastructure systems, such as roads, water supply networks, food supply, and settlement areas (Cutter et al., 2008; Tyler et al., 2016).
Figure 3: Example of resilience planning cycle (Tyler et al., 2016).

For example, the United Nations Human Settlement Programme [UN-Habitat] conducted a climate vulnerability assessment for Hoi An, Vietnam (UN-Habitat, 2014). The report shows how infrastructures, such as drainage systems and housing are vulnerable to climate hazards (e.g. storms/typhoons, flooding, salinity, coastal erosion). The Government of Fiji (in partnership with the World Bank and the Africa Caribbean Pacific – European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program) conducted a climate vulnerability assessment for the island nation (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 2017). The assessment report primarily focuses on interventions to address land use planning issues, poor financial investments in health and education infrastructure, as well as social protection policies and plans for post-climate hazards.

Even though these types of technocratic interventions are necessary, especially with regards to public safety, resilience critics argue that these patterns of vulnerability assessments and their linked strategies promote welfarist approaches to resilience;
for instance, by improving water systems and resettling households to reduce climate risks (Friend and Moench, 2015). However, a conceptual problem exists in assessing and addressing vulnerability through post-political and technical approaches\(^4\). Such viewpoints fail to address the broader structures that are the root causes of vulnerabilities (Béné et al., 2012; Cretney, 2014; Kaika, 2017; Friend and Moench, 2015). In similar vein to post-Development scholarship\(^5\), critical resilience thinkers highlight that current resilience approaches mainly ease global socio-environmental inequities, which thus allow for people, especially the poor and marginalized, to merely absorb and withstand climate hazards (Béné et al., 2012; Cretney, 2014; Kaika, 2017; Friend and Moench, 2015).

Structural violence theory begins from the viewpoint that broader structures reduce a person's agency to meet personal needs or goals, thereby putting them in harm's way (Christie et al., 2001; Galtung, 1969). For example, Farmer et al.'s (2006) study of structural violence in clinical medicine highlights that racism, a form of structural violence, was embodied as excess mortality among African Americans in Baltimore who did not have insurance. The scholars argued that race, which linked to insurance status in the United States, determined who had access to adequate standards of health care (Farmer et al., 2006). I, therefore, explore my research questions from the notion that socially embedded structures put a person in harm's way by making them vulnerable to climate hazards, risks, or disturbances. Hence, climate vulnerabilities are embodied forms of structural violence.

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\(^4\) “Technical” approaches include structural adjustments (e.g. loans), infrastructure development, and technical assistance. “Post-political” contexts are devoid of politics and are subject to global economic forces, governed through managerial consensus-driven political systems (Beveridge and Koch, 2016). “Political” approaches involve the promotion and space for people to exercise their human rights and challenge the status quo (Abu-Zahra, 2005; Maiiese, 2013; Friend and Moench, 2015).

\(^5\) Gillian Hart (2001) distinguishes ‘big D’ Development, which she defined as the post-WWII interventions in the ‘Third World’; from ‘little d’ development or the development of capitalism, which creates division between communities and gives more power to some and less to others.
In this thesis, I describe the vulnerabilities of Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand as embodied structural violence. Phuket is a suitable location to explore climate resilience and structural violence since climate vulnerabilities and social structures, such as elitism, nepotism, social and political fragmentations, and discrimination⁶, remain significant throughout the province.

For example, increasing temperatures and sea levels threaten the coral reefs surrounding the island, as well as the local tourism industry, and water systems (Mekong-Building Climate Resilience in Asian Cities [M-BRACE], n.d.; Raksakulthai, 2003). Concomitantly, Phuket remains a renowned tourist destination with a bustling construction industry and an infamous fishing industry. The island attracts thousands of low-income labour migrants [henceforth referred to as migrants] from bordering countries, such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos (Arnold and Hewison, 2005; Walsh and Ty, 2011).

Myanmar migrants in Phuket are consistently oppressed and made vulnerable to climate change impacts due to structural violence. Many Myanmar migrants work in Phuket's precarious industries of fishing and construction. Migrants also experience discrimination and harassment in local villages and workplaces. Myanmar people live in inadequate housing located on hazard-prone land with limited access to essential services such as water.

International research organizations and aid agencies, such as the Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-International [ISET-International] and the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID], respectively, have reported on Phuket's vulnerabilities to climate change and its need for resilience strategies (M-BRACE, n.d.). However, a comprehensive resilience plan does not yet exist for the province. Thus, it is an opportune time for practitioners to consider applying an

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⁶ Elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination are defined in Section 2.2.
overtly political resilience planning approach in Phuket; for example, one that considers the social construction of vulnerabilities of all inhabitants on the island, including migrants.

Championing for migrants rights in decision-making and planning for resilience in Thailand is especially significant in today’s realities of escalating concerns regarding climate change-induced migration. Renowned institutions, such as the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] and the Overseas Development Institute (Stapleton et al., 2017), continue to emphasize major planning and policymaking challenges linked to the complex relationship between climate change and migration.

Researchers argue that because the climate has a strong link to the environment and livelihoods, climate change will worsen environmental degradation and livelihood opportunities; thereby trapping certain communities in one place or pushing others to relocate nationally or across borders (Bedarff and Jakobeit, 2017; Chapman and Tri, 2018; Hugo, 2013; McAdam, 2010).

Thus, this thesis is also a foundation for the considerations that practitioners must take when planning for resilience in an era of increasing climate change and migration concerns. For example, resilience practitioners in other parts of the globe must consider the increasing pressures and challenges that climate change and migration pose to existing systems, while at the same time taking into account the structures that create or reinforce vulnerabilities for all stakeholders, especially migrants in marginalized positions.

Environmental migration researchers, including Black et al. (2011) and Reeves and Jouzel (2010), caution that if climate migrants’ are not planned for, then violent

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"Although a universal definition of 'climate migrants' does not exist due to the complex dynamics between the environment and human mobility, climate migrants can refer to people who migrate due
disturbances may follow. For instance, climate migrants could face negativity and discrimination in receiving countries. In 2008, for example, 1.5 million Zimbabweans moved to South Africa because of droughts, as well as political and economic crises in their homeland. Unfortunately, after arriving in South Africa, Zimbabweans were not widely accepted. Migrants were attacked, which led to 65 deaths and 150,000 people being further displaced (Reeves and Jouzel, 2010).

Therefore, this thesis' combined discussion on climate change, migration, and structural violence in Phuket, Thailand is relevant to other island or coastal communities in Southeast Asia and other Global South regions. For instance, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] (2001) recognizes that because of their low elevation and small size, many small island states are threatened by climate change impacts, including sea level rise, coastal erosion, and social instability related to inter-island migration. Among the most vulnerable of these island states are the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tonga, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Cook Islands (in the Pacific Ocean); Antigua and Nevis (in the Caribbean Sea); and the Maldives (in the Indian Ocean) (IPCC, 2001).

Haiti and the Dominican Republic are also at risk from climate change (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2017). Each country ranks third and eighth, respectively, on the Global Climate Risk Index (Kreft et al., 2015). Experts predict that the depletion of local natural resources (linked to climate change) will play a significant role in internal displacement and international migration in the Caribbean (IOM, 2017). Thus, it is also reasonable to predict that future climate migrants from Haiti and the Dominican Republic, for example, who

to climate change-related risks and hazards (Boano et al., 2008; Waldinger and Fankhauser, 2015; Myers, 2002).
relocate internationally, will experience climate vulnerabilities as embodiments of structural violence in destination countries.

With regards to the Mekong Region, people whose livelihoods are strongly linked to the environment may choose to migrate to Thailand due to climate change disturbances or risks, considering Thailand’s relatively improved labour opportunities (Marks, 2011). However, due to systemic structural violence in Thai society, we can also postulate that future (climate) migrants who move to Thailand will likely fall into vulnerability traps. The aspiration of migrants to improve their own lives and/or the lives of their loved ones will most probably be inhibited due to structural violence in Thailand.

I provide evidence of this from my research in five additional thesis chapters, where I further advise and demonstrate how a structural violence lens during the vulnerability assessment stage can help resilience practitioners accommodate critical concerns about the post-political and neutral approaches to existing resilience theory and practice. Following this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2, I critically discuss the significance of structural violence theory to contemporary climate resilience scholarship.

I then describe my research design and outline its limitations in Chapter 3. I also explain the methodology of my field research, where I investigated the issues of climate change and structural violence in six villages in Phuket. Additionally, I reflect upon my positionality as a Filipino-Canadian academic researcher in Thailand.

In Chapter 4, I provide context to Thailand and Phuket’s political economy through a structural violence lens. I exhibit how structures, such as elitism, nepotism, and social and political fragmentation, reinforce structural violence in Thai society and thereby create or contribute to the vulnerabilities of institutions, systems, and actors at the national and provincial levels. I also address research questions 1, 2,
and 4 by discussing how structural violence limits Thailand and Phuket’s ability to respond to climate change and migration concerns in a socially-just manner.

In Chapter 5, I respond to questions 1, 2, and 3 by giving centre stage to discrimination against migrants and the embodied experiences of structural violence amongst Myanmar people in Phuket. At this micro-level analysis, I showcase the notion that even within a vulnerable group, nuances exist between the types of structural violence that are embodied amongst each individual. For example, women, migrants without ‘official documents’, and Myanmar people from different ethnic groups experience varying vulnerabilities. However, it is also at this level of analysis where practitioners have an opportunity to learn about the personal agency of an individual to react to structural violence, and appreciate the mutually impacting relationship between an individual and the broader society and environment.

In the sixth and final chapter, I reiterate that taking an overtly political and transformative approach to resilience planning is imperative, especially in Phuket, Thailand. I provide recommendations for addressing structurally violent norms, such as elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination, which create or deepen vulnerabilities within a complex system. In the final section of this thesis, I also give consideration to the realities of the political economy of Thailand.

Unfortunately, the structural violence that needs to be addressed in Thai society to remove root causes of vulnerability is also what obstructs practitioners from taking an explicitly political approach to resilience. Elite interests, such as those of the military and powerful business families, continue to promote industrial growth and business investments over environmental and social concerns (Gray, 2018; Marks, 2011).

Broader social and political transformations are needed to promote and sustain political resilience planning processes. On the other hand, explicitly political
resilience planning processes are also needed to mobilize social and political transformations. Thus, it is clear that Thailand’s current governance system is stuck in a cul-de-sac (Pongsudhirak, 2017). It is unrealistic to believe that Thailand will, at least in the near future, make any significant progress towards resembling a society that aligns national economic interests with the social, political, environmental, and economic wellbeing of all its inhabitants.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain why a structural violence lens is relevant for addressing critical concerns about the post-political and neutral approaches of existing climate resilience frameworks. A structural violence focus highlights the uneven distribution of inequities in society that produce vulnerabilities (Leatherman and Goodman, 2011). The theory considers the historical forces, as well as the social, economic, and political processes that create marginalizations within the local reality (Peña, 2011).

Following my discussion on structural violence theory, I provide insights and limitations of climate resilience theory and practice. I also critique climate resilience according to relevant discussions that have taken place within prominent theories about the human-environment relationship, such as political ecology and critical disaster studies.

Similar to political ecologists (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Paulson et al., 2003; Watts, 1983), and critical disaster scholars (Blaikie et al., 1994; Gillard et al., 2014; Oliver-Smith, 1996), I claim that environmental issues and climate vulnerabilities for Myanmar migrants in Phuket link to broader social, political, and economic issues; such as, inherent structural violence in Thai society towards Myanmar migrants.

However, where political ecology, critical disaster, and resilience scholars primarily focus on local level contexts, I contend throughout this chapter and thesis that a structural violence lens allows practitioners to dig deeper into the nuances of vulnerabilities at the individual level. For instance, resilience planning tends to focus on a household, community, or system scale. Personal agency, which is the
ability of a person to exercise choice or autonomy over their own lives, is often at times overlooked when using local-level analysis frameworks (Dixon and Stringer, 2015).

It is important to recognize that a place or communities within a place are heterogeneous (Perreault, 2008; Spivak, 1988). Local communities have inherent differences and conflicts between its members (Bakker and Semedi, 2014; Mihaylov and Perkins, 2015; Perreault, 2008). Thus, vulnerabilities and resilience to climate change are often asymmetrically distributed, even amongst individuals belonging to marginalized population groups or communities (Friend and Moench, 2015).

Resilience practitioners must, therefore, take a comprehensive approach to understanding vulnerabilities and building resilience. Practitioners must acknowledge the social construction of vulnerabilities, especially when conducting vulnerability assessments. Supporting the resilience for some might create vulnerabilities for others, even within the same community due to inequitable access to resources and political power, for example (Friend and Moench, 2012).

2.2 Structural violence

Johan Galtung first introduced the concept of structural violence in 1969 in his article, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research.” He defined structural violence as a form of violence that is not necessarily physical; for instance, physically hurting a person by punching them. Instead, structural violence is a form of unseen violence through social and institutional structures, which cause harm to a person by putting them at a disadvantage and getting in their way to meet basic needs (Galtung, 1969). The violence is indirect, as it functions through the replication of ubiquitous, normalized social structures (Shannon et al., 2017).

The theory informs the study of the social construction of oppression. It explicitly looks at the mechanisms that create or enforce the vulnerabilities and continued
marginalization of people (Farmer, 2004). The institutionalized discrimination towards Myanmar migrants in Phuket is an example of structural violence.

Structural violence is avoidable harm towards human life, where violence is defined as the cause of a “difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is” (Galtung, 1969). The harm from structural violence appears ordinary in our ways of viewing the world, which, thus, causes the harm to be repeatedly ignored (Galtung, 1969). However, unequal access to resources, political power, education, and health, just to name a few, are real forms of structural violence that reduce a person’s agency to meet their needs (Galtung, 1969; Farmer, 2004; Waltz, 1959).

Social structures, including economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural structures, make up the structural violence that obstructs people’s agency to reach their full potential (Farmer et al., 2006; Scheper-Hughes, 1996). Structural violence also encompasses institutional racism, disease-ridden environments, stigmatizing structures, and barriers preventing underserved populations from accessing adequate services, such as health care (Lane et al., 2004).

Individual actors, as well as macro-level entities, such as federal bureaucracies, institutions, and social environments, cause structural violence. It can also be produced by policies that form the context in which disproportionate marginalization, exploitation, and oppression regularly occur (Lane et al., 2004).

The theory is often linked to case studies on health inequalities (Lane et al., 2004). Structural violence has been applied only to a limited number of cases regarding environmental and planning issues (Morales et al., 2012). However, I contend that structural violence theory is relevant to planning for climate change and migration since people in the Global South disproportionately endure environmental burdens. Structural violence theory, therefore, helps practitioners focus on the social construction of vulnerabilities. The theory also highlights the social, political, and
economic roots of vulnerabilities for the purpose of taking action (Morales et al., 2012; Rhodes et al., 2012).

In this thesis, I refer to elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination, as examples of structures that are significant in Thailand and shape the structural violence within Thai systems. Experts of the Thai context, including Lebel et al. (2011), Marks (2011), and Mon (2010), have listed in their respective analyses of Thailand such examples of structural failings in the country.

Elitism in Thai politics, for example, indicates the preferences of elites taking prominence over the greater populations’ demands and needs (Hajnal and Trounstine, 2010; Farrelly, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2014). Control over political decisions in Thailand has for decades remained in the hands of the Thai elite (e.g. wealthy families, military officials, and capitalist business leaders) (Farrelly, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2014). I discuss nepotism as the unfair preferment of or favouritism shown towards family members, friends, protégés, or others within a person’s sphere of influence, which can extend to exploitation for one’s personal advantage or influential status (Jones, 2012).8

And, with regards to fragmentation9, I refer to both social and political separatism and competition; for instance, through closed organizational cultures in Thailand’s governmental systems and institutions (Lebel et al., 2011). Furthermore, Thai society is generally organized along hierarchies, which are often based on age, occupation, wealth, and nationality (Gullette, 2014).

For example, Thai peasant farmers are traditionally on the lower rungs of the social ladder. However, low-income migrants, such as those from Myanmar, are generally considered as the “other” in Thai society (Human Rights Watch, 2010), and are,

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8 I examine elitism and nepotism further in Section 4.3.
9 I discuss fragmentation in Section 4.4.
thus, treated cruelly. Migrants are placed at the lowest of the low in terms of social hierarchies in Thailand (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Consequently, migrant workers are heavily discriminated against in their day-to-day experiences in Thailand\textsuperscript{10} (Mon, 2010).

Discrimination, as defined by the United Nations and IOM (2001), refers to:

\textit{Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on a equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.}

Overall, I argue that the above listed structures produce structural violence in Thailand, which also essentially creates or magnifies climate vulnerabilities for many, including Myanmar migrants. At the same time, it also enhances the ability of others to benefit from a structurally violent system.

\textbf{2.2.1 Critiques of structural violence theory}

A critique of earlier iterations of structural violence theory is that it neglected to include the way people reacted to marginalization and repression, which also influenced structures of power that created violence (Slack and Whiteford, 2011). However, contemporary structural violence theorists argue that inequities and vulnerabilities that a person experiences are ‘produced by their location in hierarchical social orders, and its diverse networks of power relationships and effects’ (Quesada et al., 2011).

Anyone studying structural violence, therefore, ought to consider how a person is shaped by broader social, political, and economic processes; and also how a person reacts within the confines of a situation that is triggered by structural violence

\textsuperscript{10} I detail the discrimination experienced by Myanmar migrants in Sections 4.5.3.2 and 4.5.4, as well as in Chapter 5.
(Slack and Whiteford, 2011). The contemporary way of viewing structural violence implies analyzing actions undertaken by a person for mitigating the effects of their experienced precarious situation (Slack and Whiteford, 2011).

Contemporary structural violence analysis, also known as “structural vulnerability analysis” (Moran et al., 2014) or “post-structural violence” (Slack and Whiteford, 2011), looks closely at motivation, agency, and habitus (Bourdieu, 2000; Moran et al., 2014). Habitus is the embodiment, internalization, or deeply ingrained habits, skills, dispositions that we build up within ourselves due to our life experiences (Bourdieu, 2000). Habitus can shape our motivations, which can then influence our personal agency or reasoning for why we do certain things (Bourdieu, 2000). Experiencing vulnerability, for example, impacts a person’s perception, behaviour, and practices, which creates habitus (Moran et al., 2014).

Habitus can be considered as the basis of tacit complicity amongst people who are products of similar conditions and conditionings (Moran et al., 2014). Motivation is an essential aspect of analysis under a contemporary structural violence lens. Researchers using this framework can compare how and why persons experience structural violence differently or similarly (Slack and Whiteford, 2011).

Structural violence is fundamentally malleable in the hands of any person (Slack and Whiteford, 2011). However, because defining and shaping structural violence is fluid, I recognize the difficulty in creating a standardized definition of structural violence, which is necessary for facilitating research and practice uptake.

The structural violence approach, as applied by Farmer et al. (2006) for example, has been criticized for taking on the full spectrum of human inequality and conflating full-fledged domination with mere social disparity (Shannon et al., 2017). It collapses forms of violence that need to be differentiated such as physical, economic, political, and symbolic variants; or those exercised by state, market, and other social entities (Espinoza, 2009).
On the other hand, given that societies are complex, structural violence theory is appropriate for viewing environmental issues, given the theory’s acceptance of complexities within society (Bourgois, 2009). It is a conceptual framework that is sensitive to the various structural influences on a person’s vulnerability (Shannon et al., 2017). It also allows consideration and discussion of intersecting factors, such as gender, poverty, geography, and ethnicity (Shannon et al., 2017).

Structural violence theory recognizes that different processes are at work, creating vulnerabilities for specific populations (Shannon et al., 2017). For instance, individual reactions to repression can create structural violence or at least reinforce it (Bordieu, 2000; Slack and Whiteford, 2011).

Experiencing a polluted environment, per se, can be socially and politically produced. The meaning of contamination can be a result of power relations between people. Thus, who gets to produce and reinforce meanings shapes the structural violence experienced by people (Moran et al., 2014).

### 2.2.2 Relevance of structural violence theory to climate resilience scholarship and practice

One noteworthy aspect of structural violence theory is the implicit importance given to various scales. Macro to micro scales are all significant and related. For example, structural violence recognizes the global scale and how historical processes shape local cases (Morales et al., 2012). The theory also focuses on the body and suffering. A structural violence lens draws attention to how social disparities are embodied, even beyond health issues (Farmer, 2010).

Also, a structural violence mindset helps resilience practitioners attune to the issue of intentionality behind proposed or implemented strategies. For example, Farmer (2003) studied prisoners and health care within the Siberian prison system through a structural violence lens. He argued that the decision of health care providers within the prison system was grounded in the goal “cost-effectiveness.” However,
the intention of being cost-effective violated the rights of prisoners to safe and adequate medical treatment and brought avoidable harm to them. Health care workers were the ones to decide that appropriate drugs were “far too expensive” to be used on prisoners; thus implying that human lives and human suffering are given differential value depending on a person’s social position (Farmer, 2010).

By applying a structural violence lens to my research, I examine, theorize, and challenge the roles and decisions of Thai governance systems, institutions, and actors, who typically aim to maximize benefits for a few Thai elites. For example, in the case of Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thai locals devalue the lives of Myanmar migrants. Thus, I argue that social constructs and institutions in Thailand are framed around the notion that Myanmar people’s lives are ‘less valuable’ than Thai people’s lives.

For example, during informal conversations, local Thais described how Myanmar migrants are bribed or beaten to take the fall for crimes in Thailand. Such a controversial issue came to light in 2015, when two Myanmar men were found guilty of killing two backpackers in Thailand. The Thai police adamantly claimed that the culprit(s) “could not have been Thai” (Popham, 2015). The men were reported to have confessed to the killings. However, they reportedly only admitted to their involvement in the crime after what they described as brutal torture from the Thai police (Popham, 2015). The men were found guilty in court. The evidence against the Myanmar men was apparently circumstantial. Independent Thai forensic experts have gone on the record saying that the crime scene was poorly managed and that the evidence was improperly collected (Popham, 2015).

A structural violence framework, therefore, reminds practitioners that neutrality, which is often practiced by technocrats and is implied in contemporary climate resilience frameworks, comes at a high cost. The technical and neutral approach to
building resilience maintains the structures that create vulnerabilities (Rhodes et al., 2010). Unfortunately, people who are not represented at the policymaking, planning, and decision-making tables in Thailand, such as Myanmar migrants, are often the ones to bear the costs of neutrality.

### 2.3 Climate resilience

Since the 1960s, the concept of resilience has gained traction in academia, as well as in policy and planning circles. Resilience has become particularly prominent in domains where shocks, vulnerabilities, and risks are perilous; for example, in physics, psychology, geography, and planning (Béné et al. 2012).

It was not until 1973 that C.S. Holling introduced the word resilience into ecological literature to explain the non-linear dynamics of biophysical ecosystems (Gunderson, 2000). Ecological resilience was seen as an ecosystem’s persistence and ability to absorb change and disturbances while still maintaining its integral structures and variables (Holling, 1973). Others also considered resilience as a return to a stable state following a perturbation (Gunderson, 2000).

Resilience thinking is strongly linked to complex systems thinking (Gunderson and Holling, 2002). Resilience scholars and practitioners accept that within a socio-ecological system (e.g. Phuket), several connections between institutions, actors, and (sub-)systems occur at the same time at different scales (Kooiman, 2003; Pierre and Peters, 2005; Tyler and Moench, 2012). Thus, accepting unpredictability and uncertainty are essential, given that various processes, such as climate change, affect the various components of complex systems across multiple sectors and levels differently (Bulkeley and Tuts, 2013; Stockholm Resilience Centre, n.d.).

The term resilience communicates an impression of strength and resistance (Tyler and Moench, 2012). Resilience is often technically defined as the capacity to recover and the degree of preparedness (Béné et al. 2012; Cutter et al., 2008). Resilience
also means that a system can return to the state(s) that existed before a shock and move forward through learning and adaptation (Adger et al., 2005; Klein et al., 2003; Folke, 2006). Integral characteristics of resilience include adaptive capacity, robustness, safe failure, flexibility, as well as redundancy.

Adaptive capacity is a system’s ability to adjust to change, moderate effects, and deal with disturbance (Brooks et al., 2005; Burton et al., 1992). Robustness refers to a system’s ability to resist potential impacts (Sharifi et al., 2017; Temmer et al., n.d.). Safe failure is the ability of a system to absorb sudden shocks in ways that avoid catastrophic failure (Tyler and Moench, 2012).

Furthermore, the ability of a complex system to perform tasks under diverse conditions is linked to flexibility, while redundancy is the capacity of a system to deal with contingency situations (Tyler and Moench, 2012). Resilience with regards to climate change connects to earlier framings of resilience, particularly regarding a system’s ability to bounce back or bounce forward after a climate shock or stress (Meerow and Stults, 2016).

With empirical evidence mounting regarding the wide-ranging impacts of climate change on society and our environment, building the climate resilience of complex systems has become a prominent goal for practitioners at local, national, and international levels (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014). Multiple stakeholders and institutions have bought into the concept of climate resilience because its essential goal is to help societies cope with climate change-related challenges, such as reduced crop-yield, dried up water supplies, and population movement (Leichenko, 2011).

The need for strengthening a system’s resilience to climate change is rooted in the argument that the standard approaches to planning for climate change, which typically include planning for ways to avoid the negative impacts of hazards or adapting to hazards, are insufficient (Tyler and Moench, 2012). Proponents of
resilience argue that given the unpredictability of climate change, adaptation measures may not work (Tyler et al., 2016). Climate resilience scholarship promotes practitioners to move away from predicting and preventing climate change-related hazards and instead encourages them to build the resilience of systems to potential and ongoing climate change disturbances (Cutter et al., 2008; Tyler and Moench, 2012; Tyler et al., 2016).

2.3.1 Resilience and vulnerability

The concepts of resilience and vulnerability are interlinked, yet both are relative (Klein et al., 2003; Twigg, 2009). Typically, climate vulnerability is measured as a function of exposure to climate change impacts (e.g. droughts and floods), sensitivity to factors affecting the system, and the capacity of a system to adapt to changing conditions (Binita et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2016; Wilk et al., in press; Ibarrarán et al., 2009). Climate vulnerability is seen as a deficit and implies that identified vulnerabilities need correction through an increase in climate resilience (Füssel and Klein, 2006; Ibarrarán et al., 2009; Tonmoy et al., 2014).

Practitioners often conduct vulnerability assessments adjacent to their climate resilience work. Vulnerability assessments are meant to identify exposures and sensitivities of systems to climate change, as well as the (in)ability of system components to adapt (Füssel and Klein, 2006; Tonmoy et al., 2014).

In practice, vulnerability assessments focus on physical, social, and institutional vulnerabilities to climate change (Ibarrarán et al., 2009). Physical vulnerabilities, for example, can refer to the potential number of lives lost or the amount of land loss due to sea level rise (Ibarrarán et al., 2009). Social vulnerabilities can refer to the (in)ability of people to respond to climate change. Meanwhile, institutional vulnerabilities can include the lack of services related to health, water, and education (Ibarrarán et al., 2009).
Multiple climate resilience frameworks exist in literature and practice, which are used to identify vulnerabilities and priorities for climate resilience planning. Typically, the relationship between vulnerability and resilience varies in the literature (Cutter et al., 2008). Still, the relationship between the two concepts are normally presented in three different ways (Figure 4):

1. Resilience as a characteristic of vulnerability (e.g. the Conceptual Framework of Vulnerability presented by Turner et al., 2003);
2. Resilience and vulnerability as separate but related concepts (e.g. the Disaster Resilience of Place [DROP] model presented by Cutter et al., 2008);
3. Vulnerability and resilience inform and feed into one another (e.g. the Urban Climate Resilience Framework presented by Tyler and Moench, 2012).

In this section, I discuss the three prominent examples of resilience frameworks, which demonstrate the varying relationships between vulnerability and resilience. The historical progression from the Conceptual Framework of Vulnerability, to the DROP model, to the Urban Climate Resilience Framework, also showcases how climate resilience frameworks have transformed from a focus on disaster and hazards mitigation towards social protection.

In this chapter, I acknowledge that current work on climate vulnerability and resilience is not limited to only these three frameworks. Examples of additional frameworks include, for example, Marinucci et al.’s (2014) climate resilience framework for public health agencies (Building Resilience Against Climate Effects model); as well as Abdrabo and Hassan’s (2015) Integrated Framework for Urban Resilience to Climate Change, which focuses on building the resilience of the Nile Delta to climate change hazards and pressures.

I examine the three listed climate resilience frameworks because they are famous in resilience scholarship. Notably, the Urban Climate Resilience Framework has been adopted by different climate resilience initiatives in Southeast Asia, such as the
Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia Partnership and the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network [ACCCRN].

Understanding these three climate resilience frameworks is also meaningful for establishing my argument that multiple climate resilience frameworks mainly focus on climate change vulnerabilities and resilience at the local level or broader scales. They do not straightforwardly address the nuanced vulnerabilities at the individual level, and how an individual can also contribute to vulnerabilities across different geographical scales.

Figure 4: Conceptual linkages between vulnerability and resilience within three climate resilience frameworks. 1) Conceptual Framework of Vulnerability; 2) DROP model; and 3) Urban Climate Resilience Framework.
Furthermore, these examples of climate resilience frameworks primarily look at how or why specific components of a complex system, such as institutions or actors, are vulnerable to climate change. However, these frameworks do not critically evaluate if components of a complex system create or reinforce vulnerabilities for others.

The Conceptual Framework of Vulnerability links human and environmental conditions to the processes operating within them; including disturbances and stresses, as well as the inherent vulnerability within the coupled human-environment context (Turner et al., 2003). The basic architecture of Figure 5 consists of:

- Linkages to broader human and biophysical (environmental) conditions and processes operating in the system in question;
- Perturbations and stressors that emerge for these conditions and processes; and
- The coupled human-environment system of concern in which vulnerability resides, including exposure and responses.

A strength of this particular framework is its consideration of vulnerability across different spatiotemporal scales (e.g. place, region, world) (Turner et al., 2003). It draws attention to the complexity and interactions involved in vulnerability and resilience analysis. The Conceptual Framework of Vulnerability also acknowledges that vulnerabilities might not be the same between different yet interconnected systems.

The framework encourages practitioners to look at exposures to environmental shocks and stresses, as well as the various linkages operating at the different scales of human-environment systems. The authors also recognize that physical, environmental conditions are not the sole causes of climate vulnerabilities. Social factors, such as entitlements, coping capacities, and inherent resilience also affect vulnerability (Turner et al., 2003).
Figure 5: Conceptual framework of vulnerability. Components of vulnerability linked to various factors at different scales (e.g. place, region, world) (Turner et al., 2003).
Turner et al. (2003) refer to entitlements as legal and customary rights to exercise command over the necessities of life, which strongly influences a system’s sensitivity to a disturbance. Understanding entitlements helps explain why some systems, institutions, or actors are vulnerable to hazardous environmental conditions and why others are not (Blaikie et al., 1994).

Coping capacities influence how components of systems react to climate change shocks and hazards (Turner et al., 2003). Entitlements and coping capacities are linked and both are related to institutions, such as social networks, which can strengthen coping capacities. Resilience, within this framework, incorporates flexibility, adaptability, and learning (Turner et al., 2003).

Despite Turner et al.’s (2003) recognition that entitlements, coping capacities, and inherent resilience affect vulnerability, the authors do not go beyond acknowledging these social factors by asking which social constructs or structures affect them. For example, which structures affect the level of entitlement or coping capacities?

Furthermore, the authors do not make an explicit claim to addressing the social factors that affect vulnerability of a place. The confusing visual model of the linkages between different components of vulnerability also makes it difficult to operationalize.

The second framework I discuss is the DROP model (Figure 6), which is a response to Turner et al.’s (2003) framework. Cutter et al. (2008) designed the DROP model to advance comparative assessments of natural disaster resilience at the local or community level. DROP is a place-based model that provides a list of indicators for measuring resilience to natural disasters, which the Conceptual Framework for Vulnerability does not explicitly offer. For example, Cutter et al. (2008) present the following indicators of community resilience:

- Ecological (e.g. number of coastal defense structures, biodiversity);
- Social (e.g. social networks);
• Economic (e.g. employment, municipal finance/revenues);
• Institutional (e.g. hazard reduction programs, emergency services);
• Infrastructure (e.g. transportation networks, housing stock); and
• Community competence (e.g. local understanding of risk).

The DROP model was designed according to three characteristics. First, the model targets natural hazards. Cutter et al. (2008) argue that the model can be adapted to other onset-events such as terrorism, or slow onset hazards, such as drought. Second, the DROP model focuses specifically on the community level, thus, differentiating it from the Conceptual Framework of Vulnerability, which analyzes vulnerability across broader scales. Third, the DROP model centers on the social resilience of a place. According to this framework, resilience and vulnerability are inherent or antecedent conditions (Cutter et al., 2008).

Antecedent conditions interact with hazard event characteristics and create immediate events, which can vary in characteristics (Cutter et al., 2008). For instance, frequency, duration, and magnitude of an event can fluctuate depending on the antecedent conditions and the hazard event itself. The immediate effects of the hazard event are then mitigated or exacerbated depending on the coping responses of the community.
Figure 6: The DROP model (Cutter et al., 2008).
The full impact of a hazard is only realized after coping mechanisms are implemented. The absorptive capacity of a community also plays a vital role in shaping the cumulative impact of a hazard event. Absorptive capacity (or threshold) is a community’s capability of handling a hazard event’s effects through predetermined coping responses (Cutter et al., 2008).

However, if a community’s absorptive capacity is overwhelmed by a hazard event, the community can exercise improvisation and social learning as a means to adapt their inherent resilience for the next event. Both the degree of recovery and adaptive resilience influence the antecedent conditions for future hazard events (Cutter et al., 2008).

Despite being a community-centric model, Cutter et al. (2008) emphasize the importance of understanding the different spatial, social, and temporal factors that affect a community’s antecedent resilience to a hazard event, which mirrors lessons drawn from Turner et al. (2003). Turner et al. (2003), however, categorize influencing factors to vulnerability and resilience to broad environmental and human influences. Human influences can include institutions and economy, while environmental influences can include the state of nature and global environmental change.

Cutter et al. (2008), on the other hand, attempt to be more specific by listing a set of variables for analyzing inherent community resilience. As listed above, the variables are categorized into six dimensions: ecological, social, economic, institutional, infrastructure, community competence.

Cutter et al. (2008) also explain that each indicator requires different forms of measurement and can be enhanced through varied approaches. Social resilience, for example, can be strengthened through improvements in communications and risk awareness. Also, economic resilience can be measured through property loss and the
effects on businesses after a hazard event occurs (Paton and Johnston, 2001; Paton et al. 2000).

The strength of the DROP model is its view of resilience as a dynamic process that connects antecedent conditions, a hazard’s severity, the time between hazard events, and influences from several external factors. The DROP model also provides variables for assessing the inherent resilience of a community.

Cutter et al. (2008), however, acknowledge that further work is needed to operationalize the model. The DROP model and the set of indicators do not give further explanation as to how the suggested variables can be collected or assessed. Still, Cutter et al. (2008) explain that any approach attempting to operationalize the model should primarily be a means for empowering local communities to take hazard risks seriously and to look for ways to enhance community resilience.

The authors also encourage standardization of variables and indicators across varied approaches and frameworks to help bring together the disjointed body of literature focusing on resilience and to facilitate comparative analyses of community resilience between different places and time (Cutter et al., 2008).

To advance beyond a focus on disasters and hazards, and their prevention and mitigation, ISET-International developed the Urban Climate Resilience Framework (Tyler and Moench, 2012) (Figure 7). The Urban Climate Resilience Framework focuses on social protection by building the resilience of complex systems through learning about the vulnerability of actors (or agents), systems, and institutions (left side of the model), while also building the resilience of agents, systems, and institutions (right side of the model) (Tyler and Moench, 2012).

Actors within this framework, refer to people and organizations (Tyler and Moench, 2012). Institutions pertain to rules and conventions (Friend and MacClune, 2012). (Sub-)systems are a combination of ecosystems and infrastructure (Friend and
MacClune, 2012). The framework separates complex systems into three components so that practitioners can engage with the framework using multiple entry points. In this thesis, I continue to refer to these primary components, e.g. institutions, systems, and actors, of a complex system given that international organizations with influence over policymaking in the Mekong Region also accept such simplified categorizations (e.g. the Asian Development Bank (2013) and the Rockefeller Foundation (Ahn et al., 2013).

Planning for climate resilience with this framework involves conducting vulnerability assessments, developing and implementing interventions to build resilience, and taking an iterative shared-learning process (Friend and MacClune, 2012). In principle, a vulnerability assessment is conducted as a primary step towards designing resilience-building interventions, which then focuses on whoever or whatever is vulnerable to anticipated climate hazards. Planning for climate vulnerabilities requires iterative shared-learning processes between various stakeholders (Tyler and Moench, 2012).

Unlike the first two frameworks, the Urban Climate Resilience Framework has been applied to ten cities, particularly in Southeast Asia, which include: India: Gorakhpur, Indore, and Surat; Indonesia: Bandar Lampung and Semarang; Thailand: Chiang Rai and Hat Yai; and Vietnam: Can Tho, Da Nang, Quy Nhon (Tyler et al., 2010). ISET-International worked with local stakeholders to conduct vulnerability assessments, establish priorities, and to develop indicators for resilience. Collaborators included representatives of vulnerable communities, researchers, consultants, and local government representatives (Tyler et al., 2010).

The positive aspect of this planning process is that individuals and groups, who had not worked together before, especially with regards to building climate resilience, were brought together. As a team, different stakeholders learned about how to interpret the Urban Climate Resilience Framework and created relevant indicators (Tyler et al. 2016).
Figure 7: Urban Climate Resilience Framework (ISET-International, 2014).
Despite the collaborative process of planning for climate resilience, the issues selected as indicators for resilience in the eight cities are found to be technocratic (Table 1). The indicators to resilience do not include socio-political priorities, such as equitable participation or promotion of human rights, which critics of climate resilience argue of as fundamental elements to ensuring that climate resilience practices address the deeper reasons behind vulnerability (Esposito, 2013).

Another positive characteristic of the Urban Climate Resilience Framework is that it can be operationalized using diverse methods and tools (Tyler et al., 2016). Still, the open-ended applicability of the framework is regarded as both a strength and a weakness (Tyler and Moench, 2012).

On the one hand, a non-constricting framework leaves ample room for flexibility and innovation for creating new and improved vulnerability and resilience measures and methods. However, an open-ended framework also disconnects various approaches used in different locations by different actors. Having too many people doing different things undermines the need for a standardized definition, methodology, and set of tools for climate resilience, all of which could substantially make the operationalization of the concept of climate resilience that much more accessible (Cutter et al., 2008).

Another weakness of the Urban Climate Resilience Framework is that it does not account for what happens after priorities are listed. Trade-offs may occur, where resilience building in one area could lead to increased vulnerability in another (Tyler and Moench, 2012). Thus, it is imperative that resilience practitioners remain mindful of the potential consequences of such trade-offs by critically assessing whether supporting the resilience of systems, institutions, or agents creates or reinforces vulnerabilities for others.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Thematic Focus for Indicators</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gorakphur, India</td>
<td>Drainage, water supply, solid waste management, public health, per-urban agriculture</td>
<td>Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (non-governmental organization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandar Lampung, Indonesia</td>
<td>Flood protection, water supply, solid waste management</td>
<td>City Environment Agency and Badan Perencana Pembangunan Daerah [BAPPEDA] (planning agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semarang, Indonesia</td>
<td>Flood protection, water supply, public health</td>
<td>University of Diponegoro and BAPPEDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiang Rai, Thailand</td>
<td>Water resource management</td>
<td>Multi-stakeholder resilience working group sub-committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hat Yai, Thailand</td>
<td>Flood management</td>
<td>Multi-stakeholder resilience working group sub-committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Tho, Vietnam</td>
<td>Water supply, public health, resettlement</td>
<td>Climate Change Coordination Office (local government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da Nang, Vietnam</td>
<td>Water supply, flood protection, tourism sector</td>
<td>Climate Change Coordination Office (local government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quy Nhon, Vietnam</td>
<td>Mangrove protection, fisheries sector, tourism sector</td>
<td>Climate Change Coordination Office (local government)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Issues selected for resilience indicators in ACCCRN cities (Tyler et al., 2016).

2.4 The politicization of the human-environment relationship: Political ecology and critical disaster studies

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Environmental Justice Movement was dominant in policy and planning arenas. Environmental justice activists drew attention to the growing social differences and social inequities that influenced who in society dictated the human-environment relationship (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2015). Environmental justice activists also argued for working with local communities to understand how power inequalities, which play out through social dimensions, such as race, class, and ethnicity, shape environmental issues within a place (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2015).
At the same time, significant environmental theories, such as political ecology, critical disaster studies, and resilience were taking shape. Early writings in political ecology grew as a response to the revival of the Malthusian theory of global environmental crisis, where it was argued that population growth would soon outpace food production (Seidl and Tisdell, 1999).

Political ecology posits that unequal power relations and political, social and economic processes shape environmental issues, as well as biophysical, ecological systems. Detailed analyses of biophysical, ecological changes, such as land degradation in the Global South (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987) were characteristic of early iterations of political ecology studies (Walker, 2005).

E.R. Wolf (1972) was the first to use the term ‘political ecology’, which combined cultural ecology with human strategies of biophysical-ecological success to cultural adaptation, as well as community ecology, cybernetics, and systems theory. Political ecology was also influenced by the hazards school (Burton et al., 1978), which focused on managing environmental hazards. Hazards scholars saw natural hazards as an interaction of people and nature. They also primarily focused on biophysical ecology and earth sciences (Walker, 2005).

In addition to a clear focus on biophysical ecology, political ecologists emphasized the role of a global capitalist political economy in shaping and destabilizing human interactions with the physical environment. For example, Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) concentrated on the ways that the environmental actions of rural land users in the Global South influence their economic, ecological, and political marginalization from industrialization in the Global North. Other political ecologists, such as Watts (1983), also argued that globalization creates unequal relations of power, which, therefore, undermines the Global South actors’ environmental knowledge and localized adaptation strategies.
Such viewpoints of political ecology are broadly defined as the (macro-)structural phase of political ecology (Walker, 2005). Over time, however, such as in the 1990s, an increasing number of political ecologists, including Watts (1990) and Moore (1993), became interested in how people negotiated their relationships with the environment throughout their everyday interactions.

Political ecology, thus, progressed towards understanding the day-to-day struggles of local actors over the control of resources (Moore, 1993; Watts, 1990). The post-structuralist viewpoint of the 1990s phase of political ecology increasingly looked at local-level analyses of environmental activism, local politics, and the relationships between power, knowledge, and practice (Watts, 1997).

Progressively, political ecology focused less and less on biophysical, ecological changes, and more on politics (Walker, 2005). Discussions about the politics of access and control over resources had essentially taken centre stage, while the biophysical implications of these struggles received little attention (Peet and Watts, 1996; Vayda and Walters, 1999). It is said that by the mid-1990s, political ecology had shifted entirely away from environmental change towards the emancipatory ideas of the environment (Peet and Watts, 1996).

Contemporary political ecology is, thus, critiqued for its limited engagement with natural sciences and the very loose usage of the term ‘ecology.’ Some political ecologists do not engage with questions of biophysical ecology or environmental change, but instead use it as a backdrop for broader issues about politics and the environment (Walker, 2005).

For example, Schroeder (1999) evaluated how international agroforestry programs in the Gambia undermined village-level politics and the economic development of women in local communities. However, Schroeder (1999) only applied concerns about environmental degradation as a historical context that shaped the gendered social contexts at the village level in the Gambia.
One of the most significant contributions of political ecology towards knowledge development was the much-needed combination of social science with biophysical ecology frameworks, specifically during the 1970s when globalization grew to be a fundamental force in reshaping and threatening environmental conditions for many marginalized communities, particularly in the Global South (Walker, 2005).

Furthermore, the prominence of political ecology in the 1970s marked a shift in how nature was viewed with regards to natural hazards. For example, critical disaster scholars emerged mostly from a similar set of debates in political ecology but centred on the meaning and power of nature in environmental disasters (Gould et al., 2016). During most of the 20th century, disaster literature framed hazards and disasters as the culmination of extreme natural events, and poor planning and inappropriate technologies (Gould et al., 2016).

For example, Burton et al. (1978) argued that appropriate technologies, engineering, and centralized planning could mitigate the catastrophic impacts of extreme natural events, such as flooding. Critical disasters scholars, such as Blaikie et al. (1994) and Oliver-Smith (1996), echoed political ecology thinking and pushed forward the notion that ‘there is no such thing as a natural disaster.’

At the heart of the argument of critical disaster scholarship is that hazards can be natural (e.g. tornadoes and river floods) and human-made (e.g. industrial pollution) (Blaikie et al., 1994; Oliver-Smith, 1996). However, what makes hazards disastrous are how hazards intersect with social, political, and economic relations that make people vulnerable to such hazards (Blaikie et al., 1994; Oliver-Smith, 1996).

Thus, critical disaster scholars maintain that the indiscriminating acceptance of the idea of a ‘natural’ disaster in previous disaster literature (e.g. Burton et al., 1978) masks the causes of disaster risks; and, by extension the social, political, and economic solutions needed for reducing risk and mitigating the impacts of disaster on a place (Gould et al., 2016). Critical disaster scholars, therefore, see disasters as
political events—ones with political causes and solutions, and not simply as technological or planning failures (Perry, 2017). Overall, refusing to take ‘nature’ or ‘natural hazards’ for granted opens possibilities for analyzing the multi-dimensional processes and factors that generate vulnerability to hazards and disasters (Gould et al., 2016).

2.5 Comparing climate resilience, political ecology, critical disaster studies, and structural violence

Climate resilience is experiencing similar debates and critiques put forth in political ecology and critical disaster studies. For example, the broader social, political, and economic issues that produce vulnerabilities and resilience are typically overlooked in current resilience theories and practice (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Béné et al. 2012; Cretney, 2014; Friend and Moench, 2015; Kaika, 2017). This particular argument that vulnerabilities are socially constructed resonates with similar arguments made by critical disasters scholars, such as Blaikie et al. (1994) and Oliver-Smith (1996), who maintain that vulnerabilities to hazards and disasters are socially, politically, and economically produced.

Thus, climate resilience’s focus on strengthening a system’s ability to bounce back after a disturbance attracts criticism that climate resilience promotes maintaining the status-quo and, thus, takes a post-political and neutral approach to planning for climate change (Béné et al. 2012; Meerow and Stults, 2016). Where social issues do appear in climate resilience, it is often related to addressing the vulnerabilities of poor people to climate change shocks and crises through technical solutions, for example through resettlement or flood protection (Friend and Moench, 2015).

However, even though poverty does not always equate to vulnerability and vice versa, it is still essential for climate resilience to convey a political approach since it has long been acknowledged that marginalized populations, particularly in the
Global South, are disproportionately impacted by and made vulnerable to global climate change (Béné et al. 2012; Cretney, 2014; Friend and Moench, 2015; Kearney, 2010; Kaika, 2017). Poor and marginalized people suffer most from climate change because they tend to live in places prone to climate risks and they have limited access to resources and information needed to adapt to changing climate conditions (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Levy and Patz, 2015; Miranda et al., 2011).

Governing institutions in the Global South also usually lack the capacity needed to serve people most vulnerable to climate change. Furthermore, the people themselves who are most likely vulnerable to climate change typically have limited power and voice in decision-making processes (World Resources Institute, n.d.).

Notwithstanding climate resilience’s flaws, some critics of standard approaches to climate resilience do not advocate for discarding of the idea of climate resilience altogether. Instead, critics support a different climate resilient approach; for example, one that explicitly focuses on power, agency, and inequity within a system (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Béné et al. 2012; Cretney, 2014; Friend and Moench, 2015; Kaika, 2017).

Resilience practitioners must, therefore, balance the goals of social justice and building climate resilience. They must always keep in mind that if climate resilience is the primary focus of public policy and planning, those deserving of policy support, such as the poor and marginalized, must be considered (Friend and Moench, 2015).

Thus, these critical views of climate resilience mirror arguments in political ecology and critical disaster studies, which state that problem-solving for environmental issues, hazards, and disasters at the local level links to problem-solving for broader social, political, and economic issues. Political ecologists typically argue for changes and analyses to occur at the local scale (Brown and Purcell, 2004; Neumann, 2009).
For example, Bassett and Zueli (2000) affirm that decisions made by people at the local scale regarding forest resources in Côte d'Ivoire will lead to socially- and environmentally-just outcomes, as opposed to decisions made by national-level actors. Critical disaster scholars acknowledge the social construction of ‘natural hazards’ at the local level, and contend that ‘natural hazards’ within a place are due to broader social, political, and economic processes (Blaikie et al., 1994; Gaillard et al., 2014; O'Keefe et al., 1976).

However, as explained by Brown and Purcell (2004) and Neumann (2009), there exists a principal drawback in political ecology and critical disaster studies’ assumption of organizations, policies, and actions at the local scale being more likely to create desired socio-ecological effects than changes or actions at other geographical scales. Locally-focused theories tend to underplay the role of personal agency, as well as the reciprocal process of individual-environment interactions (Bourgois and Schoneberg, 2009).

Political ecology and critical disaster studies typically are place-based frameworks that target the local scale (Brown and Purcell, 2004; Neumann, 2009). However, the concept of ‘scale’ itself is socially constructed, relational, contingent, and contested (Neumann, 2009). Thus, political ecologists and critical disaster scholars are typically limited in not acknowledging the fluidity and relational quality of scale (Brown and Purcell, 2005; Swyngedouw, 1997).

Structural violence scholarship can therefore complement and add to political ecology. Structural violence scholarship recognizes the fluidity of scale and sees structural violence as an interaction of multiple scales (Galtung, 1969; Jacoby, 2008; Waltz, 1959). Structural violence theory, therefore, affords resilience practitioners a macro-level view as well as a micro-level view, if and when necessary.
Similar to political ecology and critical disaster studies, structural violence scholarship asserts that social, political, and economic conditions create oppression, marginalization, or vulnerability for specific groups of people (Farmer; 2004; Galtung, 1969; Moran et al., 2014; Quesada et al., 2011). Structural violence theory also helps to recognize the socially constructed patterns of vulnerability at varying geographical scales, including the individual level; which complements the local level analyses in political ecology and critical disaster studies.

Each person within a community can experience oppression, marginalization, and vulnerabilities differently from another person within the very same community (Slack and Whiteford, 2011). Thus, I argue that impacts and dynamics on an even smaller scale, such as the individual level, can be critically examined through a structural violence lens.

Structural violence theory is, therefore, relevant for analyzing vulnerabilities at the individual scale. It does not see individuals solely on the receiving end of structural determinants of vulnerability. Contemporary structural violence scholars argue that individuals have personal agency and can shape the political, environmental, social, and economic conditions that they are a part of (Bourgois and Schoneberg, 2009). As previously mentioned, an analysis of structural violence encourages practitioners to consider personal agency or habitus, which is the embodiment of dispositions and tendencies (Bordieu, 2000; Moran et al., 2014).

Parallel to climate change impacts, structural violence is argued of as linking to longstanding, universal social structures that are normalized by institutions and day-to-day experiences at the individual level (Galtung, 1969). Climate change is a global problem, with effects felt across different strata or geographical scales, including the individual level. Explicitly focusing on the individual helps to highlight the nuances between embodied vulnerabilities within local places or communities.
Resilience practitioners must, therefore, combine bottom-up approaches with macro-level approaches to help ensure that learning and changes take place at the individual scale all the way to the macro scale. Planning for climate resilience can, therefore, be strengthened by explicitly recognizing the reciprocal relationships between personal agency, structural violence, and vulnerabilities across multiple scales.

### 2.6 Conclusion

Four critical reasons explain the prominence of climate resilience in today's policy and planning contexts. First, resilience allows us to think holistically (e.g. complex systems), especially at a time when climate shocks and stresses are more commonplace (Béné et al. 2012). Resilience acknowledges the interdependency of people on other people, institutions, resources, and services (Béné et al. 2012; Tyler et al., 2016).

Second, connecting resilience to complex systems also has value for social protection (Béné et al. 2012). For example, with regards to climate-induced migration across national borders, resilience theory helps argue for more transnational approaches in dealing with migration systems across national boundaries given that a complex system can go beyond a nation-state (Béné et al. 2012).

Third, the idea of resilience, in principle, is very attractive. Strengthening the ability of societies to deal with climate shocks or stresses sounds like the right thing to do. Fourth, an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving is usually a good thing. Resilience has become commonplace in policymaking and planning for climate change because it advocates for bringing together actors from different disciplines and organizations (Béné et al. 2012).

As previously explained, the argument for building climate resilience is usually grounded in the need to address a system's vulnerabilities to climate change, which
include high exposure to climate shocks and stresses, the limited capacity to cope, as well as inadequate access to basic services such as safe water, sanitation, and health care—all of which are typical problems in systems in the Global South (Archer, 2016; Friend and Moench, 2015; Leichenko, 2011). Many resilience practitioners, therefore, advocate for building climate resilience in the Global South by partnering with different sectors and communities to improve living conditions through technocratic solutions (Archer, 2016; World Resources Institute, n.d.).

However, as discussed in this chapter, vulnerabilities are uneven and socially constructed across different scales. Thus, practitioners must specifically target social structures that create or reinforce vulnerabilities for marginalized groups. Echoing arguments from political ecology and critical disaster studies, which state that environmental issues or disasters are linked to broader economic, political, and social issues (Blaikie and Brookfield, 1987; Gillard et al., 2014; Oliver-Smith, 1996; Paulson et al., 2003; Watts, 1983), I maintain that structural violence theory is a relevant framework for analyzing the social institutions and norms that systematically causes vulnerabilities (Khan, 2014).

A structural violence framework helps practitioners recognize the negative characteristics of a system by drawing attention to the structures that create or reinforce vulnerabilities as embodied forms of structural violence. A political viewpoint also allows practitioners to assess if supporting the resilience of an institution, system, or actor could inadvertently create vulnerabilities for others (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Béné et al. 2012; Friend and Moench, 2015; Kaika, 2017).

In Chapter 4, I explore the institutionalized structures of elitism, nepotism, and fragmentation in Thailand and Phuket’s governance systems. I argue that such institutionalized norms propagate structural violence towards other systems, institutions, and actors; and, thus, gets in the way of a governance system’s ability
to adequately respond to climate change and migration in a socially-just and equitable manner.

In Chapter 5, I explore how structures, especially discrimination, lead to individual harm and vulnerability of the Myanmar migrant. Through my case study of Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand, I describe the nuances of structural violence and vulnerabilities at the individual scale.

I describe how different Myanmar migrants practise their own personal agency by responding to structural violence, either as a passive actor, an enactor of structural violence or as a hero against structural violence. In the following chapter, I describe my research methodology and research methods for collecting and analyzing data on the day-to-day experiences of Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand.
Chapter 3
Research Design

3.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I contend that a structural violence lens affords resilience practitioners the opportunity to address concerns about the post-political approaches of existing resilience frameworks. By explicitly identifying structural violence within a system during the vulnerability assessment stage, practitioners can bring to the forefront the voices and experiences of stakeholders who are often left out of decision-making and planning processes, such as Myanmar migrants in Thailand.

To showcase the structural violence that creates or reinforces climate vulnerabilities at multiple geographical scales, including the national level, provincial level, and individual level, I conducted a combination of primary and secondary research. For example, I analysed the political economy of Thailand and Phuket through grey literature, as well as through primary data collected from interviews with professionals and Myanmar migrants in Thailand.

I interviewed six professionals in planning, public health, the environment, and migration. Speaking to professionals enabled me to learn about the structural violence in policy and decision-making practices within Thailand and Phuket’s governance systems\(^1\). These methods address questions 1 and 4 as outlined in Chapter 1\(^2\).

\(^1\) I further discuss in Chapter 4 the structural violence within Thailand and Phuket’s governance systems, particularly with regards to how it magnifies challenges linked to climate change and migration in the region.

\(^2\) To reiterate, my specific sub-questions are:
Additionally, I focused on the personal experiences of Myanmar migrants, who are oppressed, marginalized, and exploited in Phuket. I carried out ethnographic research with 80 Myanmar people in September 2015 to March 2016. Researching the day-to-day lives of Myanmar migrants in Phuket enabled me to address questions 1, 2, and 3.

While in the field, I gathered Thailand- and Phuket-based policies and plans, including the Natural Resources and Management Plan (2016-2021) (Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, 2015); the Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Plan (2016-2021) (Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in Phuket, 2015); and a sustainability development report prepared by SEEK-Phuket (2013); a Phuket-based research organization. I also obtained a population report from the Phuket Provincial Statistical Office (2015), as well as an information handbook for labour migrants in Thailand from the Rak Thai Foundation (2014).

I also reviewed online policy and planning documents, including Thailand’s National Economic and Social Development Plan [NESDP] (2017-2021); National Climate Change Master Plan [NCCMP] (2015-2050); National Adaptation Plan (2017); the new Royal Decree on the Management of Alien Workers (2017); and, the Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] Between the Government of the Kingdom of

1. What are the political, economic, social, and cultural factors that shape climate vulnerabilities for institutions, systems, and actors in Phuket?
2. What are the political, economic, social, and cultural factors that shape climate vulnerabilities for Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand?
3. What coping mechanisms do Myanmar migrants enact to deal with these issues?
4. How are governance institutions and actors in Phuket responding to climate change and migration issues?

13 I describe the personal experiences of Myanmar migrants through a structural violence lens in Chapter 5.

In this chapter, I justify why ethnography is most fitting as my methodology. Also, I discuss my qualitative research methods, including interviews, observations, and photovoice, which allowed me to learn about the day-to-day lives of Myanmar people in Phuket.

In the latter sections, I discuss my positionality, as well as the ethics, validity, and reliability of my research and analysis. Finally, I explain the limitations of my research and findings. Overall, I describe my research design for assessing structural violence at various geographical scales (e.g. national, provincial, individual), which, I argue, creates vulnerabilities for different systems, institutions, and actors in Phuket, especially Myanmar migrants.

### 3.2 Scoping research visits, gatekeepers, and translators

Before officially starting field research, I conducted two scoping research trips in Thailand in 2013 and 2015, for a total of four months. I also studied Thai in Chiang Mai for two months during the summer of 2015.

During the second scoping research trip to Thailand, I met one of my three research assistants and translators, Miss Sumana Phakbulawat, who works for a local non-profit organization in Phuket, the Diocesan Social Action Center of Suraththani Catholic Foundation [DISAC]. Based on field observations, DISAC is an essential resource for many Myanmar migrants when they need relevant information, such as how to acquire and renew Thai documents and permits; where to seek professional medical advice; and where to get financial help if ever in a difficult situation.

Before leaving Phuket and returning to Toronto in 2015, I informed Miss Phakbulawat of my interests in learning about Myanmar migrants in Phuket. Miss
Phakbulawat was gracious in agreeing to help me research with migrants. She supported my getting in touch with Myanmar people by acting as my gatekeeper and translator. On the days that she was unavailable, Miss Phakbulawat arranged for a volunteer, Miss Hay Mar Thein, to accompany me while I visited Myanmar people in their homes.

The caveat, however, was that Miss Phakbulawat and her volunteer only spoke Thai and Burmese. I, therefore, also researched with a Thai-English translator, Miss Urai Samakkarn, who is an experienced qualitative researcher and translator. She is proficient in translating for other international graduate students researching vulnerable populations in Phuket. For example, Miss Samakkarn has translated for a Chinese graduate student who studied the lives of sex workers in Phuket.

Before conducting official interviews with participants, I explained the University of Toronto’s Ethics Protocols to all three team members. I emphasized the importance of confidentiality during the entire research process. To facilitate the interview process, I reviewed my interview questions and practised the translation process twice with my research team.

Each member of my research team was instrumental to the successful completion of my qualitative data collection. Thanks to them, I was able to interview 80 Myanmar migrants in Phuket (Tables 2 to 5). And because of my translators’ networks throughout Thailand, I was also able to interview six professionals (e.g. government and non-profit workers) specializing in climate and weather, migration, environmental planning, public health, and disaster prevention. I refrain from revealing the names and places of employment of professionals to protect their identities. Professionals on migration are referred to as Professional A and B, respectively; the professional on disaster prevention is Professional C; the professional on environmental protection is Professional D; the professional on
public health is Professional E; and the professional on climate and weather is Professional F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Total of male and female migrant research participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bamar</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chin-Hakha</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawei</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kariang (Kayin)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakhine</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Total of participants per ethnic group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age bracket</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years old</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 30 years old</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 40 years old</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 50 years old</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 60 years old</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 to 70 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Total of participants per age bracket.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years living in Phuket, Thailand</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Total of participants per number of years living in Phuket, Thailand.

14 It was difficult for many migrant research participants to report how long they have been in Thailand (e.g. living in other provinces outside of Phuket) because many had crossed the border
3.3 Ethnographic research

The guiding philosophy behind ethnography is that a researcher’s participation in daily life allows a researcher to uncover issues, tensions, and violence that are hidden (Ortner, 1995). Thus, it was through ethnography that I could identify and describe the context of structural violence in Thailand and bring to light the social and embodied suffering endured by Myanmar migrants in Phuket.

Ethnography has a well-established history in qualitative research (Moran et al., 2014). Ethnographic researchers use many methods, activities, and perspectives to explore a social group in the natural context. Ethnography advances our understanding of the world by researching people’s lives while taking into account their flaws, restrictions, and opportunities (Serrant-Green, 2007). This methodology also recognizes that human experiences and human behaviour are complex and require close and sustained observation (O’Reilly, 2005).

The meaning of ethnographic research varies between disciplines, but the defining feature is participant observation through extended fieldwork (O’Reilly, 2005). Ethnography can be applied to any small-scale research, using different methods and it can evolve in design throughout the study.

Ethnographic research primarily focuses on the meaning of individuals’ actions and experiences rather than their quantification (Savage, 2000). The focus is on learning about people’s interactions with other people as well as with the societal context in which they live. Ethnography can help bring together the day-to-day embodied realities of climate change and migration (Moran et al., 2014).

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several times without documenting dates and processes. For example, one participant lived in Ranong and then returned to Myanmar, and then eventually returned to Thailand.
3.4 Ethics, validity, and reliability

The University of Toronto’s Ethics Review Board labelled my research as “medium research risk” with a “highly vulnerable group.” Therefore, throughout my entire research and analysis process, I did my best to ensure that ethics and protections to participants were carried out. For example, the research team and I read and explained consent forms and introduction letters to each participant, including Myanmar migrants and professionals.

We also asked for each participant to sign or initial their respective consent document. Professionals granted permission to use their names and job titles. However, for ethical purposes, I have used code titles for each professional throughout this thesis. Also, official names of migrant participants were not recorded to comply with ethics protocols.

For organizational purposes, however, I numbered each interview transcript. All research-related digital documents are safely encrypted and password protected on my laptop, while hard copies of documents are stored in my apartment.

I attempted to be as clear and transparent as possible with research participants when explaining the purpose of my research. With the help of my translators, I described to each person what it meant for them to be part of my research. I emphasized that participation was voluntary, and that research participants could choose to answer whichever questions they were comfortable with answering. I also informed participants of their right to stop the interview anytime, if necessary, with no consequences. At the end of each interview, I summarized points that stood out to me and asked confirmation questions to participants.

15 See Appendix 1 for research consent forms and introduction letters.
At the end of data collection in March 2016, I hosted a lunch meeting at DISAC’s office with approximately 20 research participants to present my preliminary observations. I asked for their input on how to improve my understanding of their lives in Phuket. People who attended the meeting included my research team, as well as 18 female participants. Only two meeting participants were male. Since the meeting took place during the day, most male research participants were at work. The meeting was conducted during the day to accommodate the availability of my translators.

Additionally, I strengthened my analysis and arguments by triangulating sources to look for similar findings. The four significant ways of triangulation include using multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). I applied source, methods, and theories triangulation. For example, I corroborated my findings by talking to different participants.

In addition to making my research practices transparent, I found it necessary to outline to participants my personal views and positionality as a female Ph.D. student from the University of Toronto. Before each interview, I introduced myself to participants and explained my background: I was born in the Philippines. My family moved from Manila to Toronto when I was six years old, and I grew up in Canada. I explained to participants that while in Thailand, I was often mistaken for a Thai person.

Being from a mixed cultural upbringing provided me with a unique perspective for my research. My ‘in-betweenness’ of being visibly from the Global South with ties and identities linked to the Global North might have possibly worked in my favour (Miraftab, 2004). For example, as a Southeast Asian person, I had a slight ability to relate to and understand some Myanmar and Thai cultural norms, including social hierarchies.
Originating from a Global South country could have helped to diminish the nationality-based hierarchies often found in cross-cultural research (Miraftab, 2004). However, by being from another country outside of Thailand, I may have been perceived by migrants as an outsider. Still, by being born in another Global South country, such as the Philippines, and not being Thai, I may also have been perceived as being more relatable and approachable.

Another identity that enabled my meeting of participants was that of a university student. Many participants conveyed an interest in supporting my studies after I informed people that I was “only a student” and not affiliated with any government or non-governmental organization. I gathered that studying and education were fundamental values for Myanmar people after hearing from many participants that they too wanted their children to attend school.

Overall, throughout my time in the field, I remained considerate when interacting with professionals and migrants. Cross-cultural researchers studying vulnerable populations are advised to continuously provide space for dialogue and negotiation throughout the entire research process (Wilson and Neville, 2009). Researchers must acknowledge the weight of building partnerships with vulnerable groups, protecting vulnerable groups from harm, ensuring participation and input from the vulnerable groups, and being mindful of the power dynamics between the researcher and those being researched (Chotiga, Crozier, and Pfeil, 2010; Howitt and Stevens, 2005; Jacobsen and Landau, 2003; and Swartz, 2007).

Thus, I provided opportunities for participants to voice any concerns with taking part in my research. I also remained open to answering any questions that participants may have had about me. For example, I obliged to requests to show pictures from my iPhone of my family and friends in Toronto.
3.5 Six research villages

I researched six villages in Phuket (Table 6). I collected data in Kingkaew, Muan Tong, Ong Karn, Pepoh, Pesang, and Saphan Hin (Figure 8). As further discussed in Chapter 4, accurate statistics of how many Myanmar migrants live in Phuket are challenging to acquire. Thousands of migrants are mostly unaccounted for in reports due to some migrants not having proper documentation or some migrants choosing not to register with the local authorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingkaew</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muan Tong</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ong Karn</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peh Poh</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesang</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saphan Hin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Total of research participants per village.

I was unable to count precisely how many Myanmar people live in each village. The 2015 Provincial Statistical Report also does not specify population counts for Myanmar migrants (Phuket Provincial Statistical Office, 2015).

Because Miss Phakbulawat was the gatekeeper of my research, I acknowledge that selection biases occurred when she decided which villages were appropriate to research. I attempted to overcome this bias by explaining to Miss Phakbulawat that I aimed to speak to people from different Myanmar ethnic groups working in distinct sectors.

I was especially interested in learning about migrant workers in construction and fishing because I sought to understand how climate change affects migrants in these two sectors. For example, workers in fishing and construction are exposed to extreme weather. In addition to the rainy season, Phuket experiences a hot and humid season.
Figure 8: Location of six research villages and DISAC Phuket office relative to Phuket Town (Cartographer: Allen, J., 2017).

Construction and fishing boat workers are consistently outside in the extreme heat (Figure 9). The physical impacts of such working conditions link to adverse health effects (Levy and Patz, 2015). If rainstorms are too intense, construction projects and fishing boat work are put on hold. However, workers go unpaid when this
happens. Migrants are only paid for each day that they work. Thus, if work is interrupted because of climate conditions, a migrant’s livelihood is also suspended.

Overall, Miss Phakbulawat selected six villages with a high representation of workers from construction and fishing industries. The research villages represent a long-term Myanmar community, which facilitated my process of visiting precarious migrant participants several times over the course of six months.

Subsequently, what is not represented through these villages are migrants who live in temporary housing settlement areas built for construction workers; for instance, those who are required by a construction company to live on-site. Therefore, findings from interviews with migrant workers do not represent vulnerabilities embodied by migrant workers who live in temporary housing.

Figure 9: Work site of a construction worker who lives in Muan Tong (Photographer: Photovoice participant no. 78, 2016).
Miss Phakbulawat also selected villages where she is well-known, which simplified my participant recruitment process. However, I did not collect data from other villages on the island where Miss Phakbulawat did not have established connections. My overall findings are, therefore, limited in generalizability towards all migrants across the island of Phuket.

### 3.5.1 Comparing the research villages

When comparing the six research villages, I observed that some villages clearly segregated Myanmar people in clustered housing areas. However, in other villages it was difficult to pinpoint a Myanmar housing area from a Thai housing area. Muan Tong, for example, has a separated permanent housing area for Myanmar persons, which was provided by one construction company for its workers and families (Figure 10). The housing area is on a large site, and likely has, at least, 200 residents.

Participants confirmed that everyone living in these housing units is from Myanmar. Houses in this site are generally in poor condition and are made from scrap pieces of wood and corrugated tin. Each house consists of a single room, approximately less than four meters by four meters. Communal taps and bathing areas are located at two spots within site, while communal toilets are available near the fringes of the site. The housing area is demarcated by sheet metal fencing, which separates Myanmar housing from the surrounding village.

On the other hand, the other five villages do not have physical demarcations that show a clear division between Thai and Myanmar houses. Myanmar people live in alleyway units, in rooms above or behind stores owned by Thai people, or in units next-door to Thais (Figure 11). Myanmar people are geographically mixed-in with Thai locals throughout Phuket; although there is a tendency for at least five Myanmar households to cluster together.
Ong Karn, Peh Poh, and Pesang are located within a five to 15-minute drive from one another. These villages are close to piers, fishing boats, and seafood factories. Participants in these villages work in the fishing sector or have a household member who does. Housing units in these villages are either one or two stories.

The street-facing units are mostly small shops or businesses owned by Thai people. The areas have a mix of houses made of brick, cement, or scrap pieces of wood and corrugated tin. A majority of Myanmar houses in these areas have a water tap outside of the housing unit. The water from these taps is mainly used for bathing, cooking, and cleaning. Each housing unit is billed for utilities such as electricity and water.
Kingkaew is a 20-minute drive north of Ong Karn. The housing units in this area are quite similar to Pesang, Peh Poh, and Ong Karn. Myanmar occupied houses in Ong Karn, however, are directly in mangroves. Participants in this village described instances when water levels have increased during rainy seasons, which then pushed the garbage that littered the outside of their units into their homes. Three mothers in the village recollected a time when a child in Ong Karn drowned in the dirty water.

The sixth village is Sapan Hin. The area is south of Pesang and has very few residential units. Restaurants and other business buildings are visible in the area. Miss Phakbulawat introduced me to Myanmar people in Sapan Hin to show how
Myanmar people also live in “not-so-obvious” housing units. In Sapan Hin, a small number of Myanmar people live in a rundown warehouse. Residents pay rent to a Thai business owner.

3.6 Qualitative research methods

Because ethnography lends itself to qualitative research techniques, I focused on mainstream qualitative and ethnographic methods, including semi-structured interviews, photovoice, and observations; each of which I explain in further detail below. Qualitative research captures rich data better than most quantitative research methods (Harris, 1992). For example, through interviews and observations, I learned about people’s insights, opinions, and knowledge.

Also, photovoice enabled me to hear and see things about migrants’ lives that I could not have heard or seen during face-to-face interviews. By allowing migrants to take the lead on the things that they wanted to share and discuss through photovoice, I learned about different moments of migrant’s villages and workplaces through pictures and verbal descriptions. One important benefit of photovoice was that it allowed me to gain access, through photographs, to places where I was unable to go, including migrants’ workplaces.

3.6.1 Interviews

An interview is a discussion between two or more people, where an interviewer elicits information from one or more persons (Dunn, 2005). The art of interviewing in social sciences is much more than talking to someone (Dunn, 2005; O’Reilly, 2005). For ethnographic research, interviewing and listening go on all the time (O’Reilly, 2005). There is no clear difference between observing and conducting an interview (O’Reilly, 2005). Interviews, unlike questionnaires or surveys, are unstructured or are semi-structured.
Interviews supported my ability to obtain descriptive and insightful data. Acquiring insights is challenging to achieve directly from observation and completing surveys or questionnaires (O’Reilly, 2005). A significant criticism of interviews is that findings cannot be generalized to a broader population (Valentine, 2005). Still, understanding how people experience their lives through their voice is essential to gaining rich and descriptive information, which can then be used to advocate for social change (Valentine, 2005).

Furthermore, feminist approaches to research encourage interviewers to treat participants as complex people with invaluable research contributions, rather than merely as objects to be exploited and mined for inquiry (England, 1994). Interviewing also shows respect for participants and helps to empower them by allowing participants the opportunity to voice their opinions and learn about the research subject matter (Dunn, 2005).

I conducted all interviews, site visits, and photovoice discussions with my research team. Meetings with migrants mostly took place between 5 pm to 9 pm on weekdays so as not to interrupt migrants’ work schedules. On the other hand, I visited professionals during business hours. I requested an hour of time from each participant. Each research participant received tokens of appreciation for their participation.

After an interview session with Participant no. 13, he expressed that he enjoyed answering the interview questions because the opportunity allowed him to tell his story. He said that he was surveyed in the past by another organization but was limited in how he could respond. He expressed:

The other organization’s questionnaire was mostly about facts and how many children I had, but your interview questions are nice because I think it is good for people from other countries to really hear about what life is like here.
Additionally, Participant no. 19 said he enjoyed being interviewed because he found the interview questions simple. He said: “It was easy for me to answer your questions about how I live and work in Phuket in many details.”

Participant no. 21 also expressed that our discussions served as a therapeutic process for her. She said:

   I experienced a lot of terrible things recently and I do not have anyone close by to listen to my problems. I appreciate being able to get the bad feelings off my chest.

3.6.2 Observations

Watching people in their daily situations is an essential aspect of ethnography (O’Reilly, 2005; Brockmann, 2011). Ethnographic research requires spending quality time in the field with participants and immersing oneself in the community through active involvement (Brockmann, 2011). For example, for six months, I visited Myanmar people in their homes. I also walked and drove around the different villages of Phuket.

Before asking my interview questions, I often sat with my research team and participants and listened to their translated conversations. Participants usually had questions about health issues to direct to Miss Samakkarn or questions about documentation to direct to Miss Phakbulawat.

I used my observation time as an opportunity to hear about migrants’ concerns without actually directing the conversation. During this period, I also noted the physical conditions in which migrants lived. I processed what their homes and villages looked like to assess if location also factored into the vulnerabilities of participants.
During some interviews, I helped separate dried anchovies in the homes of female participants. Removing the heads of the dried anchovies was a means for some Myanmar women to earn extra cash from seafood companies while staying at home with children. The task is labour-intensive yet it pays very little. Migrants earn only 80 baht (approximately 2.99 CAD) for every ten kilograms of dried anchovies (Figure 12).

I attended two village meetings at DISAC Phuket’s office to hear about issues that Myanmar people encounter in Phuket. The conversations concentrated on drug and alcohol abuse in the villages and the need to raise money for emergency loans for migrants.
### 3.6.3 Photovoice

Photovoice is an arts-based and participatory research method that has grown in popularity in social sciences (Haque and Rosas, 2009). Photovoice consists of two stages: 1) individual participants taking photographs, and 2) individual participants and the researcher discussing the photographs (Kwok and Ku, 2008). Notably, this method is not useful for quantitative inquiry but it is significant for demonstrating people’s observations (Kwok and Ku, 2008; Haque and Rosas, 2009).

I implemented photovoice to enable underrepresented and marginalized people, who are usually subjects of research, to become active participants in the research process (Haque and Rosas, 2009). By using photovoice, I aimed to put participants in the driver’s seat to tell their stories about their living environment, as well as various aspects of their daily lives, and the places they frequented. Photovoice was useful for allowing me indirect access to places where I may not have been welcome, for example a construction site or a seafood factory where migrants work.

After conducting interviews, I recruited ten photovoice participants. Similar to interviews, I recruited photovoice participants until data saturation; meaning, I continued to recruit participants until no new information was learned (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I employed photovoice during the last two months of fieldwork, after having spent significant time in the villages.

After four months, I built a friendly rapport with a few Myanmar migrants. I selected participants based on their willingness and availability to participate in photovoice. A few declined without expressing an apparent reason why, while others were enthusiastic about taking on the project. For example, Participant no. 71 said: “I like artistic things and I like being given a way to show my creative side through [photovoice].”

Participants were each given a disposable camera and were taught how to use it. I instructed photovoice participants to take pictures for up to two weeks. They were
directed to describe their life in Phuket through pictures. Instructions about what participants could photograph were kept open-ended to do justice to the essence of the photovoice method, which is to put the participant in charge of the story that they want to tell (Kwok and Ku, 2008).

Participants were informed that a third-party would see the film since pictures were developed in a store. After photographs were printed, I sat with each photovoice participant and asked them to explain the significance and stories behind their photos.

Overall, I learned through carrying out photovoice that my open-ended instructions garnered a broad range of photographs from participants. I deemed some photographs relevant to my research; for example, pictures of the working conditions of some participants, which include photographs of construction workers not wearing safety equipment. At the same time, I acknowledge that some photographs were simply ‘nice to see’, including photographs of fruit stalls.

Lessons for future photovoice research include balancing the act of guiding the participants with specific-enough instructions but also providing them with opportunities to direct the conversation and photo-story by allowing them to take photographs of what they deem appropriate. Still, I argue that photovoice is a useful research method to see and hear about what interested participants in their villages and work places. Seeing brief instances of participants’ lives through photographs helped add depth to the stories of migrants’ day-to-day routines in Phuket.

### 3.7 Sampling methods

Whether it is quantitative or qualitative methods that are employed in research, sampling methods are expected to maximize efficiency and validity (Morse and Niehaus, 2009). During data collection, I conducted purposeful, non-probability
sampling. Purposeful sampling that is based on specific criteria is used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases linked to the research focus (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposeful sampling is also meant to continue until data saturation is achieved.

Qualitative research methods place primary emphasis on gaining rich and thorough descriptions of one thing (Palinkas et al., 2015). A fundamental difference between quantitative methods and qualitative methods is that quantitative research methods focus on generalizability, which means that the information learned is representative of a broader population group from which the sample population was selected (Palinkas et al., 2015).

On the other hand, sampling in qualitative research – particularly with regards to vulnerable and hard-to-reach population groups, such as Myanmar migrants – usually consist of non-probability sampling, such as convenience and snowball sampling (Bryman et al. 2009). Convenience sampling is used for selecting case study communities and participants that are readily available (Bryman et al. 2009; Chotiga, Crozier, and Pfeil; 2010; Cohen and Arieli, 2011; Heckathorn, 2011). Snowball sampling involves making initial contact with one research participant and then asking them to introduce new participants, and so forth (Bryman et al., 2009).

Research findings in this thesis were reached through convenience and snowball sampling methods, and are, therefore, not generalizable to a broader population (Palinkas et al., 2015). Due to the non-randomized nature of my sampling methods, holistic representativeness of the Myanmar population in Phuket is not possible. Sampling biases occurred when each participant chose the next appropriate person to take part in the research (Heckathorn, 2011).

Despite these limitations, I maintain that such sampling methods were best for my study. As a foreign researcher working in Phuket for the very first time, I
acknowledge that the target population of migrants would have been difficult to engage on my own. Therefore, remaining purposeful yet flexible in my sampling approach allowed whoever was available and interested to participate in my research.

To comply with the University of Toronto’s Ethics Review Board policies, my primary criterion for sampling research participants was a migrant's documented status during the time of the interview. For example, all 80 migrant participants were technically documented at the time. However, many, if not all of them, had entered Thailand outside of the MoU documentation process. Thus, migrants were able to describe past experiences as undocumented migrants, which I detail further in Chapter 5.

My guidelines for selecting professionals to interview related to the sector in which professionals worked; particularly concerning planning, climate change, and migration. I explored the roles of government officers and non-profit workers in environmental planning, weather, migration, public health, and disaster and risk mitigation.

3.7.1 Sampling dates and times

In Phuket, monsoon season takes place from September to November. In September, the average rainfall is approximately 400 millimetres (Thai Meteorological Department, 2014; Professional F (climate and weather), Interview, January 19, 2015). During this time, the climate is wet with high humidity due to abundant rain and warm temperatures (Thai Meteorological Department, 2014).

In December, the rainy season tapers off, while dry and warm weather begins to cover the island. From December to March, average temperatures rise to approximately 31 to 33 degrees Celsius (Thai Meteorological Department, 2014). This period is commonly known as the hottest time of year in Phuket and the rest of Thailand.
Data collection took place from September 2015 to March 2016. Therefore, I observed people, their villages, and the island of Phuket during two very distinct climate conditions: extremely wet and sweltering. Researching during these two seasons provided insight into how climate conditions affect lives of migrant participants in Phuket.

Qualitative researchers note that decisions around dates for conducting research or sampling are usually influenced by when a phenomenon of interest takes place (Bryman et al., 2009). However, my research does not focus on a specific event. Therefore, I considered instead the importance of getting acquainted with participants over several months.

As mentioned, the majority of interviews took place during weekday evenings. However, some interviews were conducted during the day and weekends to accommodate some migrant participants’ availability. In general, I reassured all participants of my willingness to set meeting times according to their schedule (Bryman et al., 2009).

The benefits of visiting migrant participants during different times of the day and different days of the week include steady response rates, as well as insights to the changing dynamics and characteristics within villages according to the time of day. For example, Muan Tong and Pesang are quiet and empty during the day. However, at around 5 pm, villages are rather lively. In the evenings, migrant workers arrive home in groups, and the atmosphere changes quickly from still to busy.

### 3.8 Research limitations

One of the most significant challenges I faced during data collection was the limited standardization in data sources. Migrant research participants belong to a precarious population group who are generally at risk of having to relocate at a moment’s notice. Therefore, I acknowledge that experiences and dynamics in
villages change considerably from one week to the next. I strengthened data collection by interviewing participants in villages with an established group of Myanmar people.

Another limitation of data collection was my inability to collect accurate statistics, demographics, or maps about Myanmar migrants in Phuket because often at times accurate data was not available. As previously mentioned, most Myanmar migrants live in the shadows. It was difficult to acquire accurate information on their geographical location or statistical representation in Phuket.

The tense political climate regarding working with or researching Myanmar migrants in Thailand also made it difficult to attain reports or interviews with professionals. For instance, in July 2015, an Australian web editor and his reporter colleague were put on trial in Thailand for reporting on Thai naval officers’ alleged involvement in human trafficking of Myanmar (Rohingya) migrants (Holmes, 2015).

During fieldwork, a non-governmental worker also claimed that his organization had a report on human rights abuses that Myanmar migrants faced in Phuket. However, this person worried about sharing the report due to the tension surrounding the arrests of people who publically reported on human rights abuses against Myanmar people.

I did not press this person to share the report, but I proceeded with caution going forward when meeting professionals. I emphasized that my research analyzed Myanmar migrants and environmental issues. I provided examples of such issues, including access to water and how climate change could affect the daily lives of migrants.

Another challenge I faced was conducting qualitative research in Thai and Burmese. Carrying out cross-cultural research in two languages outside of English
was especially challenging. Meanings, nuances, expressions, and emphases got lost during the translation processes (Lopez et al., 2008).

Working with three different translators was also particularly complicated. I acknowledge that each translator has their positionality and biases. Each person may have filtered out or added extra information on what they felt was most important during interviews. To overcome this, I noted when I thought information was being filtered by my translator(s), and thus, asked clarification questions as much as possible.

When interviewing Thai government officers or representatives of non-profit organizations, discussions were carried out in English or Thai and then translated into English. My understanding of these conversations was better than my understanding of conversations with Myanmar migrants. Having studied Thai before my data collection allowed me to follow along during Thai conversations and assess if specific words or phrases were lost during the translation process.

Engaging in translation processes did, however, benefit my research. Translation periods during interviews afforded me the time to consider follow-up questions carefully. It also enabled me to take detailed notes during the extra minutes when I was not speaking.

Overall, conducting interviews in Burmese, Thai, and English with two to three translators during each session required patience, curiosity, and a sense of humour. For example, on the days that I was not accompanied by Miss Phakbulawat for my field visits and was instead accompanied by Miss Tein, it took slightly longer and more convincing to get people to participate in my research. I observed that Miss Phakbulawat was better known than Miss Tein amongst Myanmar people in the six villages.
There were also instances when people declined to participate in my research because they assumed my association with World Vision International, an organization that had previously researched the same villages. Five to ten participants told Miss Phakbulawat that they thought I was researching about safe sex, as World Vision International had previously done. At first, they said they did not want to answer the same questions again. However, after explaining to migrants that I was a University of Toronto student who was not affiliated with any other organization, more people became receptive to participating.

The final limitation to my data collection involves the professionals whom I was unable to reach. For instance, I wanted to speak with Thai landlords and representatives of water delivery truck companies. I hoped to learn about housing and water issues from the perspective of the Thai service providers.

However, when asking the research team and a few people in the Myanmar communities if they could connect me with landlords and water truck drivers, I was cautioned many times that such people would not want to speak with me. I eventually decided against seeking out landlords and water truck drivers so as not to endanger the housing and water services of the Myanmar migrant communities.

3.9 Data analysis

While in the field, I transcribed all my interview transcripts. I reviewed policy documents and plans, and open-coded by hand the interview transcripts using a structural violence theoretical lens (Crang, 2005). After returning to Toronto, I used ATLAS.ti coding software to categorize quotes and passages into emerging themes. Reaching eventual insights through careful and repetitive review of the data took several months (approximately one year). Reading literature and presenting my preliminary ideas at conferences during my data analysis phase helped me to distinguish the key themes to focus on. Generally, I primarily looked for examples of elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination in policies, plans, and
practices, which created vulnerabilities for institutions, systems, and actors in Phuket. I also coded according to whether a system was vulnerable to climate change, as well as whether and how a system reinforced vulnerabilities.

I used additional codes to categorize the geographic scale at which the structural violence occurred. Structural violence can be analyzed as an interaction of different geographic scales, including the individual, the state, and the international (Galtung, 1969; Jacoby, 2008). Substates and supranational groupings are also possible, depending on the research question posed (Galtung, 1969; Jacoby, 2008). I primarily analyzed structural violence at the national and provincial levels, as discussed in Chapter 4; and structural violence at the individual level (of a Myanmar migrant), as discussed in Chapter 5.

Given the complex notion of scale, in that it is also socially constructed and contested (Neumann, 2009), I observed that structural violence at one geographic scale often linked to other scales. Actors also had different power dynamics contingent to where they stood in Thailand’s elitist, social hierarchy. Social, political, and bureaucratic fragmentation, being critical sources of structural violence, which I explore further in Chapters 4 and 5, were observed to “take on vertical characteristics with an increasingly unequal exchange,” mainly between the disjointed facets (Galtung, 1990).

**3.10 Conclusion**

Overall, I rooted my research and analysis in social constructivism by focusing on the value and significance of findings in a particular context (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Social constructivist or interpretive research assumes that reality is created through social processes and has various meanings (Burgess, 2006; Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).
A positivist approach to data collection and analysis would have meant applying the scientific method towards investigating a social issue and working from the perspective that knowledge is gained only through observable and measurable facts (Dubé and Paré, 2003). Positivists do not find subjective experiences significant (Dubé and Paré, 2003). Qualitative data collection and subjective analysis help researchers gain a more in-depth understanding of local knowledge by engaging with people, which I agree to be the most significant value of qualitative methods (Dubé and Paré, 2003).

During data analysis, I was subjective in my interpretations of the qualitative information gathered. As a researcher, I am a co-constructor of meaning, along with my translators and participants. Interpretations of research findings in this thesis are, therefore, influenced by my translators’ positionalities as well as my own.

In the end, I attributed my subjectivities to people’s stories to assemble knowledge, particularly about Myanmar migrants’ lives in Phuket (Schiellerup, 2008). However, by providing rich descriptions, reasons, and challenges of my methods as I have done in this chapter, I hope to have enhanced transparency, accountability, and credibility of my research approach, not only for purposes of academic standards but also for ethical integrity.
Chapter 4
Thailand’s Political Economy, Climate Change, and Migration

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, state actors and other technical experts support general characteristics of resilience, including adaptability, flexibility, and redundancy\textsuperscript{16} through top-down, technical approaches (O’Malley, 2010). At the same time, various scholars have also critiqued resilience theory and practice to be neutral (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Béné et al. 2012; Cretney, 2014; Friend and Moench, 2015; Kaika, 2017).

Therefore, I argue in this thesis that although the concept of climate resilience is important, practitioners must critically evaluate the dualistic nature of systems during the vulnerability assessment stage to assess the potential trade-offs that could occur when supporting resilience (Friend and Moench, 2015). Strengthening components of a complex system could create or reinforce vulnerabilities for others, especially marginalized populations such as Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand (Figure 13).

In this chapter, I analyze Thailand and Phuket’s political economy through a structural violence lens to demonstrate the existing vulnerabilities that governance systems experience regarding responding adequately to climate change and migration challenges. I also show through structural violence theory that governance systems, particularly in Thailand and Phuket, have the dualistic nature of being vulnerable while also being catalysts of structural violence, thereby causing vulnerabilities for other institutions, systems, or actors within and between different scales. I discuss elitism, nepotism, and fragmentation as institutionalized

\textsuperscript{16} Adaptability, flexibility, and redundancy are defined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3).
structures that reinforce structural violence within Thailand and Phuket's governance systems.

Figure 13: Location of Thailand and Myanmar in the Mekong Region (Cartographer: Allen, J., 2017).
In the first half of this chapter, I provide an overview of Thailand and Phuket’s respective and related political economies. I then discuss how elitism, nepotism, fragmentation create or reinforce vulnerabilities for certain governance institutions, systems, and actors between scales.

Following this, I discuss how such institutionalized forms of structural violence limit Thailand and Phuket’s governments from adequately responding to climate change and migration, especially with regards to protecting and promoting the needs, rights, and perspectives of marginalized populations, specifically labour migrants from Myanmar.\textsuperscript{17}

## 4.2 Political economy of Thailand

With a relatively well-developed infrastructure, a free-enterprise economy, and pro-investment policies, the Thai economy is one of the strongest in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] according to Gross Domestic Product [GDP] nominal per capita (Trading Economics, 2018). Thailand ranks fourth, following Singapore, Brunei, and Malaysia (Table 7) (The International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2017). In 2016, Thailand’s GDP nominal per capita was 8,169 CAD (IMF, 2017)\textsuperscript{18}. On the other hand, Myanmar had the lowest GDP nominal per capita, reported as 1,640 CAD.

Thailand’s economy highly depends on exports and international trade, with exports accounting for approximately two-thirds of the GDP (The World Factbook, 2018). Thailand’s estimated national GDP in 2016 was 508.53 billion CAD (The World Factbook, 2018). Thailand’s top three exports include machinery (17.4% of total exports), electronics (13.9%), and vehicles (12.7%) (IMF, 2017). Also, approximately

\textsuperscript{17} As previously noted, the structure of discrimination is briefly exemplified in this chapter but it is discussed extensively in Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{18} Canada’s GDP nominal per capita in 2016 was 57,728 CAD (IMF, 2017).
3.5 million migrants from bordering countries are reported to be working in Thailand, making up approximately 10% of Thailand’s workforce (IOM and Asian Research Center for Migration [ARCM], 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASEAN country</th>
<th>GDP nominal per capita in CAD (2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>69,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>35,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>12,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>8,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>4,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>3,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>3,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>2,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>1,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>1,640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: ASEAN GDP nominal per capita (IMF, 2017).

In the past few years, economic growth in Thailand was slow (Figure 14). However, Porametee Vimolsiri, Secretary-General of Thailand’s National Economic and Social Development Board, reports that, during 2017, the Thai economy had expanded by approximately 3.9%. Thailand’s economy is poised to increase some more by 3.6% to 4.6% in 2018 (Yuvejwattana, 2017).

The end of a yearlong mourning period for King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s\textsuperscript{19} death has improved the outlook for consumer spending in Thailand in 2018 (Yuvejwattana, 2017). For example, the Thai government has recently passed a new tax law, which allows up to 15,000 baht (approximately 566 CAD) in tax breaks for Thais, for year-end shopping, helping to encourage consumer spending (Reuters, 2017).

Concurrently, Thailand’s economic growth is also supported by the expansion of manufacturing, tourism, and transport and storage industries (Yuvejwattana, \textsuperscript{19} King Bhumibol Adulyadej ruled Thailand for seven decades. He was widely revered and regarded as a father figure to the nation (Bangkok Post, 2016).}
For example, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha’s military government\(^{20}\) has recently adopted a 1.5 trillion baht (approximately 57 billion CAD) infrastructure-spending plan, which includes building and expanding national railways, roads, airports, and ports throughout the country (Reuters, 2016).

Figure 14: Thailand’s GDP growth per quarter since 2013 (National Economic Development Board, 2017).

Despite Thailand’s seemingly positive economic development, it is important to note that a widespread shadow economy exists within Thailand, which is unconstrained by government taxation (Schneider and Enste, 2013). A shadow economy refers to underground businesses, where dealings take place off the books, away from government’s taxation systems. It includes unrecorded income, including street-

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\(^{20}\) The army seized control of Thailand’s national government in 2014 (Nguyen et al., 2014). The country is ruled by a quasi junta-civilian system. Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha is a retired Thai army officer (ibid.).
vendors who are paid in cash, as well as earnings from illicit activities such as drug dealing, human trafficking, and prostitution (Schneider and Enste, 2013).

Thailand has one of the largest shadow economies in the world. Between 1999 and 2007, the percentage of Thailand’s shadow economy within the country’s real GDP remained at a relatively steady average of 50.6% (Schneider and Williams, 2013). The very same time-series data reveals that Zimbabwe had the most extensive shadow economy between 1999 and 2007, at 61.8% of the country’s real GDP. Meanwhile, Canada’s shadow economy was estimated at 15.7%, and Myanmar’s was 50.3% (Schneider and Williams, 2013).

Many business owners who contribute to Thailand’s shadow economies often hire foreign labourers, including those from Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (Bajada and Schneider, n.d.). I observed that the shadow economy in Thailand, or at least in Phuket, includes different actors, including local Thais, migrants, and even those in public service who expect to be paid-off by business owners or employees in exchange for looking the other way.

The junta has frequently spoken of cleansing Thailand from corruption, not only within the government but also throughout society at large. For example, the military government has arrested a handful of persons accused of human trafficking. In 2015, for instance, two middlemen were charged for trafficking slave workers for Thailand’s fishing boats (Associated Press, 2015).

However, there is little evidence on the policy front that the Thai government has progressed concerning improvements on government accountability towards the public, especially regarding those who live in poverty. For instance, in 2016, Thailand’s number of people living below the poverty line, which is 1,586 baht (approximately 64.94 CAD) per person per month, increased by nearly 20% from the previous year (Draper and Pasanasethpong, 2017). Approximately 6 million people
in Thailand currently live below the poverty line (Draper and Pasanasethpong, 2017).

More crucially, perhaps, the 2016 Global Wealth Report also indicates that Thailand is the third most unequal country in the world, concerning wealth disparity; following Russia and India in first and second place, respectively. Nearly 58% of Thailand’s wealth is controlled by only 1% of the people (Credit Suisse, 2016).

Even though Thailand’s current government has acknowledged this socio-economic disparity, their actions regarding these matters are widely viewed as symbolic in gesture (Library of Congress, 2016). For example, to address social inequalities in Thailand, the junta implemented the Inheritance Tax Act and Gift Tax Regulations in 2016. The new law is designed to generate revenue for the country.

The ultimate goal of the government is to increase social equality by taxing wealthy heirs (Library of Congress, 2016). The new tax is, therefore, applied to inheritances worth more than 100 million baht (approximately 3.5 million CAD). Lineal heirs will be taxed 5% of their inheritance, while other heirs will be taxed by 10% (Library of Congress, 2016). The gift tax is applied on gifts that are worth more than 10 million baht (approximately 348,643 CAD) at 5% tax for family gift recipients, and 10% tax for non-family gift recipients) (Deloitte, 2017).

Despite these efforts by the government, the new laws have been critiqued as unlikely to quell the stark economic inequalities throughout the country (Library of Congress, 2016). Some estimate that the new laws will likely only impact no more than 10,000 people in Thailand (Library of Congress, 2016). The new taxes will mostly affect the upper-middle-class, as opposed to the billionaires in Thailand who control a majority of the wealth in Thailand (Library of Congress, 2016).
It is also relevant to note that exemptions have been included in the legislation. For example, the inheritance tax laws do not apply to spouses who inherit money or to charitable organizations. Gifts worth more than 10 million baht in a single year from parents, spouses, or children are also exempt from taxation; while gifts from other family members are only taxed if the value is more than 20 million baht (approximately 697,286 CAD) in a single year (Library of Congress, 2016). Thus, such exemptions create room for the wealthy to attempt to file themselves as charitable organizations for tax purposes.

In general, the Thai government has a history of placing a narrow focus on a limited selection of social and pro-poor policies. The national government is also known for its weak efforts towards good and transparent governance, as well as its continued interests in profit-making as a means towards spurring trickle-down economic effects21 (Persky et al., 2004).

For example, after World War II, the Thai government focused primarily on industrialization and internationalization (Webster and Maneepong, 2009). During this era, Thailand’s peasant population made up most of the industrial labour force. The state promoted local leaders in the rural parts of Thailand who supported global, pro-capitalist market growth (Webster and Maneepong, 2009).

Investment in education and taxation policies discriminated against poor people, especially in the rural parts of Thailand (Webster and Maneepong, 2009). For example, in the 1980s, only 8.8% of university students in all of Thailand comprised of people from farming households, even though farmers constituted 85% of the total population (Hewison, 2015).

21 Trickle-down economics refers to the eventual spread of economic benefits to all people through investments in businesses and wealthy members of society (Persky et al., 2004).
For decades, taxation policies also discriminated against the agricultural sector to protect Thailand’s industrial sector. For example, an aggressive rice tax in the 1950s transferred money from the rural areas into urban and industrial development, especially in Bangkok (Hewison, 2015).

More recently, Thailand’s NESDP (2017-2021) continues a focus on top-down social and economic development. For example, even though the government has acknowledged social inequalities throughout the country, it states that it will focus on technical and economic strategies as a means to decrease social inequalities (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017). The NESDP reads (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017):

The spatial development of cities and the realization of their economic potential has the purpose of spreading economic and social opportunities and creating new economic and income-generating bases, thereby decreasing social inequality in Thailand and increasing competitiveness [...].

Thus, similar to Thai political experts, such as Marks (2011) and Pongsudhirak (2017), I maintain that it seems unlikely that the Thai government will move away, at least anytime soon, from prioritizing profit-making goals over human rights and social justice.

4.2.1 Political economy of Phuket

The complex governance challenges of balancing social development with economic development at the national level also reverberate into Thailand’s provinces, including Phuket. Phuket is Thailand’s only island-province, and it consists of rainforests, mountains, rice paddies, rubber tree plantations, and beaches. Phuket Town or Phuket City is the capital of the province.

The island is located in the southern region of Thailand. It is separated from the mainland by the Chong Pak Phra channel to the north. Sarasin Bridge connects Phuket to the rest of Thailand. The island offers many high-end resorts,
restaurants, and shopping centers for visitors and residents. Behind the scenes of the luxury beach resorts are migrant workers, including those from Myanmar, who eke out a living in Phuket’s various industries, including tourism, fisheries, and construction.

In addition to local Thais and migrants, Phuket is home to a mixture of different people, including expats, Buddhists, Muslims, and Sea Gypsies (Mackay, 2013). Sea Gypsies were originally nomadic fishers and have since settled in three Sea Gypsy villages in Phuket (Know Phuket, 2014). They practice their own religion and speak their own language (Mackay, 2013). Local Phuket residents communicate using a southern Thai dialect, which is spoken more quickly than Thai and consists of abbreviated Thai words (Mackay, 2013).

In Southern Thailand, the ethno-religious conflicts in the southernmost provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Songkhla have been ongoing for centuries (Boonpunth and Rolls, 2016). Nearly 80% of the population in these provinces are Muslim and speak Malay as their first language. The remainder consists of Thai or Sino-Thai Buddhists (Wheeler, 2014). Insurgent violence is mostly confined to the southernmost provinces (Wheeler, 2014).

However, Phuket is not immune to violent attacks and mass protests. For example, in 2013, two bombs were detonated on the island. One car bomb damaged several vehicles but caused no injuries, while the other malfunctioned (Wheeler, 2014). Also, more recently, on 11 October 2015, an angry crowd of nearly 300 people hurled homemade firebombs and torched police vehicles to protest against the deaths of two young men who were killed in a motorcycle crash while being chased by the police (The Guardian, 2015).

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22 Buddhists make up 94.6% of Thailand’s total population. Approximately 4% of Thailand’s population is Muslim, and they primarily live in Thailand’s Southern provinces, including Phuket (The World Factbook, n.d.).
According to the 2014 registration records, approximately 378,364 people live in Phuket (Phuket Provincial Statistical Office, 2015). However, in reality, two to three times more people live on the island, including Thai people who are registered in other provinces but live and work in Phuket, as well as migrants who are undocumented and are, therefore, officially unaccounted for (Mackay, 2013). Tourists and long-term foreign residents are also not counted in reports (Mackay, 2013).

In 2013, Phuket ranked tenth out of Thailand’s 76 provinces regarding highest Gross Provincial Product [GPP] nominal per capita. Phuket’s GPP nominal per capita was estimated at 10,528 CAD, while Rayong had the highest GPP nominal per capita in Thailand at 44,400 CAD. Bangkok had the second highest GPP nominal per capita at 19,587 CAD (Knoema, 2017).

Today, Phuket’s economy relies primarily on tourism. Nearly 13 million tourists visit the island each year (SEEK-Phuket, 2013). In the past, Phuket’s economy depended on tin mining. However, in the 1980s, demand for tin declined, and restrictions were placed on tin dredging to protect coastal areas (Phuket.net, 2017). Rubber plantations then grew to be a substantial export earner for the province (Mackay, 2013).

Other contributors to the local economy include agriculture, fisheries, seafood processing, and residential housing development for foreigners (Mackay, 2013). Between 1998 and 2012, more than 10,000 villas and apartments were built in Phuket, many of which are owned by foreigners (Mackay, 2013). Between 2011 and 2012, villa sales increased by 20% (SEEK-Phuket, 2013).

Phuket’s natural landscape was also altered to support the island’s burgeoning tourism industry (Mackay, 2013). In 1976, Phuket airport was upgraded to become an international airport. Also, in the late 1980s, Phuket’s tour
were developed to cater to up-market tourists, including brand name beach hotels such as Club Med in Kata and the Méridien in Karon (Mackay, 2013).

Since the 1990s, the pace of hotel development has been frantic (Mackay, 2013). In 1995, there were less than 8,000 hotel rooms on the island. Today, there are more than 50,000 registered hotel rooms. The substantial growth in Phuket’s tourism industry has also spurred growth in related services and facilities, including restaurants, bars, shopping centers, and tour operators (Mackay, 2013).

4.2.1.1 The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami

On 26 December 2004, Phuket was struck by the Indian Ocean Tsunami, which killed more than 230,000 people from different countries (Taylor, 2014). Before 2004, Phuket’s exponential development for tourist and expat infrastructures, such as hotels, condominiums and resorts, was characterized as uncontrolled, overzealous, and lacking in public participation (Rice and Haynes, 2005). Still, post-tsunami reconstruction in Phuket was also considered similar to pre-2004 development patterns, if not worse (Rice and Haynes, 2005). Comparable to the rest of Thailand, business interests are strong in Phuket. The private sector often circumvents the authority of the local government (Kasemsook and Paksukcharern, 2005; Rice and Haynes, 2005).

Given that Phuket’s tourism industry is vital to Thailand’s overall economy, the Thai government dedicated 19.5 million United States Dollars [USD] (approximately 24.4 million Canadian Dollars [CAD]) towards reviving Phuket’s tourism industry after the tsunami (Rice and Haynes, 2005). In 2005, the World Tourism Organization also produced the Phuket Action Plan, which was a recovery action plan for Thailand and other countries affected by the tsunami, including Sri Lanka and the Maldives (World Tourism Organization, 2005).

The primary goals of the plan were to speed up recovery processes and to restore travellers’ confidence in visiting the devastated areas. The plan promoted disaster
reduction strategies, as well as environmental conservation, and community involvement in the planning process (World Tourism Organization, 2005).

Despite the good intentions of the Phuket Action Plan, Thai and Phuket governments have been criticised for giving little consideration to the strategies laid out in the plan, particularly with regards to participatory decision-making processes (Lindberg Falk, 2014). For example, after the tsunami, the Thai government swiftly implemented a policy in 2015 to provide free housing and title deeds to inland locations for tsunami-affected fishing villagers, who were located along the coasts of islands impacted by the disaster (Lindberg Falk, 2014).

However, what the government argued of as a means to help those impacted by the tsunami was criticised as a way of removing fishing villages from coastal areas, which were targeted by the government and investors as prime locations for tourism development (Rice and Haynes, 2005). The policy was created and implemented without consulting affected communities and civic groups. Many fishing villagers did not want to move inland, as they did not want to be separated from their only livelihoods by the sea (Lindberg Falk, 2014).

In addition to the Phuket Action Plan, Phuket also implemented the Town Planning Policy in 2005 to guide redevelopment, reconstruction, and conservation of forest and agricultural lands. However, instead of conserving forests and agricultural land, it was found that, in 2009, forest, rural, and agricultural areas significantly decreased due to encroaching urban infrastructure, such as housing development, hotels, resorts, and roads (Boupun and Wongsai, 2012).

It is said that business interests contribute to the rapid decline of forests and rural and agricultural lands in Phuket (Boupun and Wongsai, 2012; Larsen et al., 2011). Buffer zones, building regulations, and other stipulations outlined in the Town Planning Policy are typically ignored by developers (Boupun and Wongsai, 2012; Larsen et al., 2011). For example, after the tsunami, many resorts were once again
built along the coastlines to capitalize on seaside views. Construction projects, however, disregarded wildlife conservation areas and guidelines and recommendations regarding foothill slopes (Senrit and Wongsai, 2013).

During post-tsunami re-development, private sector actors criticized the local government for moving too slowly (Boupun and Wongsai, 2012). Thus, instead of going through the local government, businesses apparently dealt with local mafia members to make deals and trades regarding public land on the island (Rice and Haynes, 2005). It is locally known that powerful mafia families allegedly control a lot of what happens in Phuket, including ordering where and what vendors sell, as well as overseeing human trafficking systems, prostitution, and land rights control (Dickinson, 2017; Kontogeorgopolous, 2005).

4.3 Elitism and nepotism in Thailand and Phuket’s governance systems

Elite control over Thai politics and competitive nepotism are, unfortunately, rampant in Thailand; which, as a result, institutionalize corruption within Thai governance systems (Raquiza, 2012). It has been found that high levels of corruption in government are strongly correlated with high levels of social inequality (Heinrich, 2017; Loveless and Whitefield, 2010; Rothstein, 2011; Uslaner, 2008).

For example, the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International (2017) reports that Thailand is the 101st least corrupt country out of 176 nations. This ranking represents an increase in corruption levels since 2008 when Thailand was listed in the 80th spot for the least corrupt country in the world. In 2016, Denmark and New Zealand tied for first place as the least corrupt countries, while Canada ranked ninth (Transparency International, 2017).
As previously mentioned, the Thai elite, which primarily consists of wealthy families, military officials, and prominent business leaders, have, for generations, held power over political decisions in Thailand (Farrelly, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2014). For example, military leaders continue to play powerful political roles in the country despite the claim that the country is democratic in practice (Farrelly, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2014). Tellingly, there have been 12 successful military coup d’états in Thailand since 1932. The military also uses its influence to take control of the Thai government or to promote a leader to rule in its place without a popular election (Berstein, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2014).

In addition to the military elite, Thai business leaders also have a strong influence on the political system (Callahan and McCargo, 1996). For example, for at least 70 years, business-elite members and their families who run for political office have been engaging in vote-buying to win elections (Fuller, 2007).

Vote-buying is primarily rampant in the rural parts of Thailand since rural votes influence as many as 90% of the seats in Parliament (Bowie, 2008). In the simplest form, votes are bought with cash or gifts (Bowie, 2008). To this day, the commercialization of the electoral process has become a public issue in Thailand and is seen as a significant hindrance to good governance and democracy (Fuller, 2007).

Although not particularly shocking, Thai business leaders also earn high profits through rent-seeking activities, usually by engaging in nepotism and using political connections to gain privileged, oligopolistic positions in the market (Chaiwit and Phongpaichit, 2008). For example, the former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (2001 to 2006), a telecommunications billionaire, attracted votes of the rural majority through populist policies, such as debt write-offs, affordable health care, and village loans (Webster and Maneepong, 2009).
However, Thaksin has also been accused of manipulating government regulations for the benefit of his businesses and allies (Marks, 2011). Thaksin's telecommunications conglomerate is reported to have received $US 1.9 billion (approximately 2.49 billion CAD) in tax breaks during his term in office (BBC News, 2011). The former Prime Minister was also found guilty of violating Thailand’s conflict-of-interest laws. Thaksin allowed his wife to buy government land for a fraction of its estimated market value (Fetini, 2008).

### 4.4 Social and political fragmentation

Thailand has a long history of political conflict, ideological clashes, and power plays, which has reinforced social and political fragmentation, and thus resulted in many decades of political turmoil and unstable governments (Fong, 2012). Since 1932, when Thailand first became a constitutional monarchy, the country has experimented with a range of governments, including military dictatorships and democratic rule.

For example, in 1992, civilian demonstrators violently protested against the military-headed government and demanded that government leadership be returned to a democratically elected prime minister (Choi, 2003). In recent years, a growing number of citizens have also participated in frequent nationwide political conflicts (Webster and Maneepong, 2009). For example, in 2014, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and several ministers were forced out of office for alleged irregularities in appointing a security adviser.

Over the past twenty years, Thailand’s general population has become increasingly vocal about questioning the roles of elites in political decision-making (Farrelly, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2014). For example, in 2006, the Red Shirts, formally known as the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship, came together in support of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his populist agendas (Nguyen et al., 2014). This social movement is primarily made up of rural workers and activists...
who stand for their view of democracy and campaign against the elite and military control of politics in Thailand (Phongpaichit and Baker, 2008).

Standing in opposition to the Red Shirts are the Yellow Shirts, formally known as the People’s Alliance Democracy. The Yellow Shirts comprise mainly of royalists, ultra-nationalists, and urban, middle-class people (Berstein, 2014; Phongpaichit and Baker, 2008). Similar to the Red Shirts, the Yellow Shirts also united in 2006 during Thaksin’s term. However, the Yellow Shirts vehemently opposed Thaksin (Berstein, 2014; Phongpaichit and Baker, 2008).

In 2006, both camps organized massive protests in the streets of Bangkok to contest or support the Prime Minister. The protests eventually caused the capital to shut down. Amid political and social deadlock, the military removed Prime Minister Shinawatra from office (Shay, 2014).

Today, the military continues to keep a stronghold over the Thai government, after repeated delays to a general election. Also, the junta now controls 143 out of 250 seats in parliament. This has grown from the military controlling only 67 seats after the 2006 coup (Thempgumpanat and Tanakasempipat, 2017).

Thailand’s current government system has also acknowledged that it aims to strengthen the military’s influence over future elected governments, even going so far as to draft a constitution in 2017 that weakens political parties in favour of non-elected bodies, which would then appoint a Prime Minister. Through the constitution, the military junta gets to select who is allowed to appoint the Prime Minister (Gray, 2018).

4.4.1 Thailand’s bureaucratic separatism and competition

In the 1990s, substantial political and fiscal state structure reforms, also known as decentralization, were introduced in Thailand (Unger and Mahakanjana, 2016). Thailand’s decentralization process was meant to improve democratization by
creating governance and service delivery that was closer to the people (Ahmad and Brosio, 2009).

Political decentralization involves devolution of political authority to subnational levels (Ahmad and Brosio, 2009; Beard et al., 2008). It also includes transferring political power to local government bodies and civil society organizations, as well as widespread participation in governance and planning. Fiscal decentralization means the transfer of expenditure responsibilities to lower-level local governments, financed by a combination of local and other sources of revenues, including national government transfers (Ahmad and Brosio, 2009; Beard et al., 2008).

In Thailand, local government bodies were created on the principles of good governance, transparency, accountability, and efficiency (Unger and Mahakanjana, 2016). Nearly 8,000 government bodies in provinces, districts, sub-districts, and villages currently operate in the country (Unger and Mahakanjana, 2016).

The ambitious decentralization goal of the central government, however, was only partially implemented due to central bureaucratic regulations that continue to dictate how local governments in Thailand ought to operate. For example, Thailand today remains a highly centralized state, primarily due to Thailand’s Ministry of Interior having firm control over lower levels of government (Haque, 2010; Unger et al., 2016).

Academics argue that decentralization in Thailand is de-concentration rather than devolution of central authority (Sudhipongpracha and Wongpredee, 2016). De-concentration moves central government offices and administrative uses to more localized government bodies, whereas devolution is an extensive transfer of authority and responsibility to local government (Ahmad and Brosio, 2009; Beard et al., 2008). A danger of de-concentration is the risk of further centralizing state power. Devolution is needed for a more democratic decision-making process that is
supported by accountable, political structures with adequate financing (Beard et al., 2008).

For example, today, governance in Thailand is organized under the central, provincial, and local administrative systems (Figure 15) (Sakkayarojkul, 2013). The central administration consists of ministries, departments, and bureaus. The Department of Public Works and Town Country Planning, which sits within the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for land management and public works. The provincial administration covers the 76 provinces of Thailand.

![Administrative System Diagram](image)

Figure 15: Administrative system of Thailand (Sakkayarojkul, 2013).

Thailand’s Ministry of Interior’s local administration department also has decision-making power over almost all aspects of sub-national government operations, including personnel management, budgetary processes, and planning (Sudhipongpracha and Wongpredee, 2016). Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior’s regional representatives, including provincial governors and chief district officers, must approve sub-national budgets, development plans, and procurement contracts (Sudhipongpracha and Wongpredee, 2016).

Unfortunately, as previously discussed, Thailand’s political system is plagued by elitism and nepotism. Thus, decision-making power in provincial governance
systems also remains in control of a small circle of influential people, including those with ties to the military, wealthy businesses, and the monarchy (Ayal, 1992; Unger and Mahakanjana, 2016).

4.4.2 Phuket’s bureaucratic separatism and competition

In general, local governments in Thailand, including Phuket’s government offices, have limited capacity or legitimacy to plan and manage their local environments and communities due to the nature of decentralization in Thailand (e.g. the delegation of responsibilities from central to local government with limited fiscal and legislative capacity). Phuket’s governance system also experiences fragmentation and a lack of cooperation between different levels of government and agencies (Webster and Maneepong, 2009).

As discussed, the central government, through the Ministry of the Interior, maintains control over local levels of government (Yeung and Lo, 1996). All local governments in Thailand also have executive officers that are directly elected by local constituents. However, the elected representatives, including those in Phuket for example, must still function under strict regulations from the Ministry of Interior. At the same time, the Ministry often has delegates from opposing political parties who do not agree with the locally elected officials, and thus only support local officials’ agendas if they align with delegates’ interests (Yeung and Lo, 1996).

Decentralization reforms in Thailand have formally made it difficult for sub-national governments to receive subsidies for projects and plans from the national government. For example, local government bodies must explain and justify nationwide benefits for any subsidy application and proposals (Webster and Maneepong, 2009).

In general, each province of Thailand receives its budget from the National Government according to reported population size. However in the case of many
provinces, including Phuket, the official population size of the island does not match the actual amount of people living there (Webster and Maneepong, 2009).

For example, during an interview, Professional D stated their frustrations with receiving limited funding from that national government to enact environmental policies and plans in the province. Professional D explained that funds were insufficient given the reduced interest from the national government to adequately budget for environmental initiatives, as well as the inaccuracies between reported population sizes and allocated budgets.

It was stated that between 1997 and 2001, Thailand’s national government significantly reduced environmental expenditures, which includes pollution control (e.g. wastewater treatment, waste disposal facilities), from 12.3 million baht to 7.9 million baht (approximately 4.8 million to 3.1 million CAD) (Tabucanon, 2006). Professional D said (Interview, 15 January 2016):

The pollution and waste are not created by Phuket people only. Tourists and other people create the pollution. The problem is that the island has excessive pollution, but the money to solve this problem is only a small quantity.

Therefore, without fiscal and administrative autonomy, public servants in Phuket cannot efficiently perform their duties. The misalignment between political actors’ interests, within and between the different levels of government, as well as the embedded elitism and nepotism within Thailand’s governance systems, both create challenges for policymakers and planners in Thailand and Phuket in enacting long-term plans and policies, particularly with regards to addressing vulnerabilities of inhabitants and related environmental challenges.
4.5 The limitations of climate change and migration responses in Thailand and Phuket

Today, Thailand and Phuket have several policies and plans around existing environmental concerns, including climate change. Both government levels also engage in policies and practices for addressing labour migration in Thailand. Despite specific policies and practices, however, I demonstrate in the following subsections how institutionalized elitism, nepotism, and fragmentation strengthen certain governance institutions’ ability to continue with technical, profit-driven, and top-down approaches to addressing climate change and migration. In another manner, such structures limit the country and province’s overall ability to adequately respond to pressing climate change and migration issues, particularly with regards to marginalized populations.

4.5.1 Climate change challenges in Thailand and Phuket

The IPCC (2013) reports that extreme precipitation events, especially for wet, tropical regions, such as Thailand, will intensify before the end of this century. Areas covered by monsoon systems are also expected to increase in the same period. Meanwhile, monsoon seasons are predicted to lengthen. They will likely start earlier or not change much. However, monsoon season retreat dates will likely be delayed (IPCC, 2014).

An increase of mean annual temperature by approximately 1 to 2°C is also predicted to occur in Thailand over the next 50 to 80 years (The Southeast Asia START Regional Center, 2006). The summer season (days with mean temperatures above 33°C) in Thailand is concomitantly predicted to lengthen by two to three weeks, while the colder season (days with mean temperatures below 15°C) will shorten (The Southeast Asia START Regional Center, 2006). Climate models also indicate an increase in temperature over time for the whole country of Thailand.
Projections for an increase in mean annual temperatures range from 0.4°C to 4.0°C in the next 100 years (Naruchaikusol, 2016).

The Southern part of Thailand, including Phuket, is forecasted to experience an annual extension of the warm period by two to three months. Meanwhile, annual precipitation in Southern Thailand is also expected to increase from the middle of the century, and the mean sea level in the Andaman coast is expected to rise by about one centimetre per year over the next 25 years (Naruchaikusol, 2016). A one-meter increase of the Andaman sea level would impact approximately 1.4 million people living in the low-lying coastal areas of Phuket (Naruchaikusol, 2016).

These changing climate conditions will also influence other Southeast Asian nations, including Myanmar (Tyler and Moench, 2012). For example, all of the previously described changes in climate will negatively affect agricultural outputs, biodiversity, food prices, cost of living, and the availability of clean water and energy in various countries (IPCC, 2014). Higher incidences of disease, such as malaria, for instance, are also predicted to take place in the Mekong Region (ADB, 2010).

In 2011, Thailand experienced widespread flooding due to more substantial than average rainfall, which, in turn, disrupted and destroyed significant infrastructure, housing, transportation, and communications (Davivongs et al., 2012; Marks, 2015). Approximately 680 people died, while the flood caused $US 47 billion (approximately 58 billion CAD) in damages. The catastrophic event is an example of how climate change effects are exacerbated by weak governance systems (Naruchaikusol, 2016). The major disaster caused intense controversy and scrutiny from the public.

For example, different government authorities had contrasting opinions about the progress and extremity of the floods (Cohen, 2012). Predictions varied from no
flooding whatsoever would occur to warnings that entire cities, including Bangkok, would be flooded.

Due to competing predictions and the fragmentation between Thai governance actors, uncertainty and confusion ensued amongst all people in Thailand, which, thus, affected the public’s disposition and actions towards the floods (Cohen, 2012). Evacuation plans were slow, and rescue teams were delayed; consequently, contributing to the devastation (Davivongs et al., 2012; Marks, 2015).

In Phuket, uncontrolled urbanization (e.g. ongoing tourism infrastructure development, expansion of roadways, and increased amounts of high-rise residential buildings), as well as shifting population sizes, and a changing climate are also creating unprecedented challenges for Phuket’s governance systems (M-BRACE], n.d.). Floods are now regularly occurring throughout the island (Figure 16). For example, in 2003, it was reported that flooding on the island was quite rare (Raksakulthai, 2003). However, local news outlets now frequently inform the public of re-occurring floods in Phuket (Muenhawahong, 2017).

Yearly water supply shortages are also a pressing issue for island residents and visitors (M-BRACE, n.d.; Raksakulthai, 2003). For example, climate change affects the level and availability of surface runoff and groundwater on the island. Faster evaporation rates coupled with competing interests for water (e.g. industries, farmers, tourists, and residents) leads to more severe water shortages (Raksakulthai, 2003).

Sea level rise is also already accelerating saline intrusion into deep wells in Phuket (Raksakulthai, 2003). Increasing temperatures and sea level rise is devastating the coral reefs surrounding the island, and, therefore, harms the natural ecosystem as well as Phuket’s tourism industry. Approximately more than 50% of the world's recreational diving takes place in Southeast Asia, including in the Andaman Sea surrounding Phuket (Raksakulthai, 2003).
4.5.2 Policy responses to climate change in Thailand and Phuket

With regards to addressing such climate change-related concerns in the country, Thailand has enacted several policy documents and programs. First, the guiding policy framework for the entire country, the NESDP (2017-2021), has acknowledged the importance of building the resilience of Thai institutions and people (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017). In addition to resilience, the Thai government has also outlined risk mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as climate change-related priorities (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017).

In recognizing the urgency of addressing climate change, the Thai government has appointed a National Committee on Climate Change, which consists primarily of
national-level government bodies, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture. The committee is the central government institution responsible for reviewing and approving climate change policies in Thailand (Sakhakara and Rossetti, n.d.).

Additionally, the NCCMP (2015-2050) is the second most important policy document for supporting resilience and reducing climate change risks for Thai institutions and people. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is responsible for enacting this plan. A principal goal of the plan is for Thailand to achieve “sustainable low carbon growth and climate change resilience by 2050” (Sakhakara, 2016).

In addition to the two policy frameworks, Thailand also developed the Program of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions [NAMA], which was created in compliance with Thailand’s 2009 agreement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC] to reduce global emissions (UNFCCC, 2014). A subcommittee that is part of Thailand’s National Committee on Climate Change Policy oversees NAMA.

Thailand’s additional program focusing on climate change is called the Program of National Climate Change Adaptation [PNCCA], which is led by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, in partnership with the UNDP (UNDP, 2017). The primary goal of the program is to build institutional capacity at the national and local levels in Thailand to design and implement climate programs (UNDP, 2017).

The PNCCA also released the National Adaptation Plan, which focuses primarily on building the climate resilience of industries, such as agriculture (Songkhao, 2017). The plan highlights technical solutions for climate change effects, such as building floodwalls along coastlines (Songkhao, 2017). Policies targeting communities are limited only to establishing flood and landslide early warning systems, as well as
building “other infrastructures necessary” for coping with emergencies and disasters (UNDP, 2017).

Even though it is evident that the Thai government is taking measures to deal with and prepare for climate change, a previous report by the UNDP (2015) indicates that the national government is only spending a small amount (0.53%) of the total GDP towards climate expenditure. It remains unclear in the policies and plans how governance actors must coordinate themselves to implement the above-mentioned strategies and improve overall executions of the goals.

Thus, the limited financial commitment to environmental expenditures and the bureaucratic fragmentation will likely maintain minimal sectoral coordination and weak commitments to climate action within Thai governance systems. In fact, the NESDP already acknowledges that institutional, structural reforms are needed in the country.

For example, the document highlights that bureaucratic fragmentation is one of Thailand’s weaknesses, and that “genuine coordination between monetary and fiscal policies, as well as real sector development policies” are all required. Despite admitting this, however, the NESDP does not outline clear strategies or measures for improving sector and government coordination.

It is also recognized that Thai ministries do not have authority or influence to command other agencies to coordinate with policymaking practices (Marks, 2011). Each ministry has their plans and budgets and often resist in sharing information with other ministries (Marks, 2011).

Also, as previously considered, the Thai government is known to practice top-down approaches to planning and development. It is, therefore, likely that planning for climate change and resilience within the country will pursue similar paths, where national government bodies create plans and programs and expect local level
governments to comply; leaving minimal room for bottom-up discussions and public negotiations (Lebel et al., 2011; Marks, 2011).

Another significant critique of Thailand’s climate change policies and programs relates to the country’s focus on technical indicators as a means of addressing climate change-related challenges. For example, the NCCMP outlines the following as long-term targets for sustainable, low-carbon growth and climate change resilience by 2050 (Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment, 2014):

- By 2030, reduce energy intensity by at least 25 per cent compared to a business as usual scenario;
- Increase proportion of trips made by public transportation;
- Reduce proportion of greenhouse gas emissions from land transport;
- Increase proportion of investment in low carbon and environmental friendly industries;
- Reduce open waste dumping area;
- Reduce proportion of open burning in agriculture areas; and
- Reduce carbon intensity of the economy.

However, limited discussions are given to social programming and planning, for instance with regards to building public awareness and altering behaviour around climate change23 and resilience. Even with technical indicators, such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the NESDP still states: “the implementation of NAMA is based on the voluntary actions of the energy and transport sectors.” Therefore, because emission reduction has yet to be fully enforced in Thailand across all sectors, energy reduction targets for 2030 will likely be unmet.

This particular declaration in the NESDP also indicates that the Thai government is putting a preferred focus on growing industries over addressing climate change

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23 During interviews, it was revealed that the English term “climate change” is not easily translated into Thai or Burmese.
concerns. Overall, Thailand’s tendency to prioritize technical solutions and economic growth will make minimal impacts on the social inequalities and related climate change issues within Thai society.

Professional D also recognized this problem. He said (Interview, 18 January 2016):

> The Thai government wants to make Thailand into a developed country. There are many industries in Thailand, and here in Phuket also. I think we do not have sufficient methods to solve climate change problems and make Thailand into a developed country because the government also wants more industries, but then we will have more pollution.

At the provincial level in Phuket, certain policy documents on environmental issues exist, including the Natural Resources and Management Plan (2016-2021) (Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, 2015) and the Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Plan (2016-2021) (Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in Phuket, 2015). However, a specific climate change action plan is not yet available for the island (Professional D, Interview, 18 January 2016), even though local governments, research institutions, and international aid agencies, which include Phuket government actors, ISET-International, and USAID, have all acknowledged the challenges that climate change brings to the island of Phuket.

For example, and as previously mentioned, M-BRACE (n.d.), reports that water systems in Phuket are vulnerable to climate change disturbance due to increasing population demands and limited governments (M-BRACE, n.d.). Phuket is also susceptible to coastal erosion and sea level rise, which has implications for housing development, and significant local industries such as construction, tourism, and fishing (Raksakulthai, 2003).

After interviewing Professional D (environmental protection) and Professional C (disaster prevention), it was apparent that both of them focus primarily on the prevention of environmental issues (e.g. excess pollution or overuse of natural
resources) and mitigating impacts of disasters (e.g. such as floods, landslides, and earthquakes). However, limited attention is placed on climate change adaption or resilience within their respective fields of work, which, thus, demonstrates a misalignment with the existing national-level strategies and priorities for climate change adaptation and resilience.

Both professionals are aware of the term “climate change”, its impacts in Phuket, and how climate change is a cross-sectoral issue that affects different government actors in different offices, including planners, environmentalists, and disaster and risk mitigation experts. For example, Professional C said (Interview, 18 January 2016):

I think there will be many more floods and then landslides in Phuket because of climate change. With urban planning, climate change has a direct effect. [...] In Phuket, a real problem is about the management of land. For example, when it rains, the land floods because the drainage system is not good. Some resorts and houses are built in flood areas, and they end up obstructing the drainage system.

Most of the people do not have a lot of consciousness about cleaning the environment or about garbage disposal. I think we all need to give a lot of attention to the environment. This will help us reduce risks and damages that come from climate change in Phuket.

However, neither Professional D nor Professional C knew of Phuket-level plans or policies that specifically focused on climate change. Also, similar to the national-level issue of fragmentation between government bodies, and according to interviews with the above-mentioned professionals, I observed that local-level government actors did not link their policies and plans with institutions or actors outside of their respective offices.

For example, even though Professional C accepts that different government offices in Phuket focus on environmental issues and even share related concerns, including tourism and housing developments encroaching on conservation lands or hazardous
lands, Professional C declared that government offices in Phuket are “different from [other offices]” and that “maybe, one day, [different government officers] will work together [with government officers in other departments]”. However, Professional C thinks that it will unlikely be anytime soon (Interview, 18 January 2016).

4.5.3 Migration challenges in Thailand and Phuket

Similar to addressing climate change in Thailand and Phuket, the country’s labour migration sector is challenged by social and political fragmentation. To this day, Thailand remains as a regional economic and migration hub in Southeast Asia (Huguet et al., 2012). Thailand attracts both “high-skilled” migrant workers (e.g. people from Japan, Korea, or Taiwan working in Thailand’s telecommunications industry), as well as “low-skilled” migrant workers who work in Thailand’s “dirty, dangerous, and demeaning” industries (Huguet et al., 2012; Walsh and Ty, 2011).24

As described in Chapter 1, migrant workers from Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam generally take on work that Thai locals look down upon, including jobs in seafood processing, factory work, construction work, and domestic work (Arnold and Hewison, 2005; Fujita et al., 2010; Huguet et al., 2012; Thet and Pholphirul, 2015; Walsh and Ty, 2011). The IOM and ARCM (2013) estimate that of the 3.5 million registered migrant workers in Thailand, 2.3 million people are from Myanmar.

Migrant workers are reported to contribute significantly to Thailand’s economy. For example, in 2010, it was found that one in every eight workers in manufacturing was a migrant worker, while foreign labour was also heavily represented in construction as well as service sectors, including private household services (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] and International Labour Organization [ILO], 2017).

24 In this chapter and thesis, I speak specifically to “low-skilled” migrants.
In 2010, the economic contribution of migrant workers was estimated to have ranged from 4.3% to 6.6% of Thailand’s total GDP (OECD and ILO, 2017). The country’s economic growth depends on the migrant labour force since the gap between labour demand and labour supply in Thailand will increase. For example, the IOM and ARC (2013) calculate that the number of labour migrants in Thailand will grow to 5.36 million workers by 2025.

### 4.5.3.1 Migration push factors from Myanmar

In addition to the demand for labour in Thailand and increased work opportunities there, people leave Myanmar for reasons linked to social, political, economic, and environmental conditions in their homeland. Political chaos, social oppression, and limited economic opportunities have all contributed to the out-migration of Myanmar people (Arnold and Hewison, 2005; Eberle and Holliday, 2011; Fujita et al., 2010).

Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) is one of the poorest countries in the world. As previously described in this chapter, Myanmar has the lowest GDP nominal per capita relative to other ASEAN countries (IOM and ARCM, 2013; IMF, 2017). In 2016, Myanmar was reported to have culminated a national GDP of $US 66.32 billion (approximately 82.87 billion CAD) (IMF, 2017). According to the World Bank (2016), Myanmar’s population is approximately 53 million people.

The past several decades in Myanmar have been dominated by strife, hostility, and oppression (Eberle and Holliday, 2011). Myanmar people have been subject to suppressing living conditions due to armed conflict, decades of military dictatorship, ethnic uprising, and economic mismanagement (Eberle and Holliday, 2011). Persecution of minorities, political repression, poverty, unemployment, and the most protracted civil war the world has seen in the last 60 years have caused thousands of Myanmar people to flee their country (Eberle and Holliday, 2011; Thet and Pholphirul, 2015; IOM and ARCM, 2013).
Many have left Myanmar as refugees or migrants in search of better lives elsewhere (Fujita et al., 2010; Punpuing et al. 2004). The exact number of Myanmar people living in Thailand is difficult to gauge since, as previously mentioned, a significant portion of migrants in Thailand are undocumented (Eberle and Holliday, 2011).

Myanmar is located northwest of Thailand (Figure 13) and is divided into seven states and seven divisions (also known as regions) (Figure 17). The Government of Myanmar officially recognizes 135 ethnic groups (Al Jazeera, 2017). The predominant ethnic group, the Bamar people, mainly inhabits the divisions. Other ethnic groups include Shan, Karen, Rakhine, Rohingya, Kachin, Dawei, and Mon (Al Jazeera, 2017; McGann, 2013). States are home to ethnic minorities. The country has a complicated past of political and social fragmentation between and amongst political institutions and ethnic groups (McGann, 2013).

For example, between 1962 and 2010, Myanmar was ruled by two military regimes, which were both internationally accused of enacting human-rights abuses on local people (McGann, 2013). The United States, the European Union, Canada, and Asian-Pacific countries all have imposed significant sanctions against Myanmar throughout the 1900s to 2000s (McGann, 2013).

The military junta came to power in Myanmar in 1948 when the civil war broke out. Similar to Thailand, the army has remained a dominant institution for running the country (Walton, 2008). For decades, the military junta rejected any abdication of power and continued a stronghold over Myanmar despite international criticism (David and Holliday, 2006; Walton, 2008). Up until the 2015 election, military dominance shaped much of modern life in Myanmar (Walton, 2008).
And, parallel to the political, economic, and social issues in Myanmar, the country has also experienced devastating climate events (Swe et al., 2015). For example, in the recent past, on 2 May 2008, tropical cyclone Nargis made landfall in Myanmar and prompted one of the country’s worst disasters. More than 138,000 people were killed, and structural damages cost nearly $US 10 billion (approximately 13.10 billion CAD) (Fritz et al., 2009).
Today, the stability of the country and a majority of people’s livelihoods in Myanmar are at risk due to climate change (Swe et al., 2015). For example, nearly 70% of Myanmar’s population work in the agricultural sector (IOM and ARCM, 2013; Swe et al., 2015). Moderate global warming could significantly reduce agricultural yields.

If temperatures increase on average above 3°C by the end of this century, Myanmar is projected to lose approximately 15% to 50% of its total agricultural yield (Cline, 2007; Swe et al., 2015). Rising temperatures could also increase infestation and the spread of communicable diseases, which has implications on food security, livelihoods, and poverty in Myanmar and the surrounding region (IPCC, 2014).

Additionally, Myanmar is undergoing historic political, economic, and social transformation (IOM and ARCM, 2013; Singh, 2016). A landslide majority of voters in Myanmar’s openly contested elections, which were held in November 2015, elected Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy [NLD]. The success of Aung San Suu Kyi’s party in securing office meant that the party was allowed to elect a president and form a government.

Despite the NLD being officially elected, Myanmar’s military still remains a strong force in the country (Singh, 2016). Speculation exists about whether the new government can reduce Myanmar migration into Thailand by improving conditions in the homeland (McGann, 2013). For example, the Migration Policy Institute reports that labour migration patterns from Myanmar to Thailand will likely remain the same, at least in the short term, since significant political and economic reforms in Myanmar will take time to alter the daily lives of the Myanmar people (McGann, 2013).

Another big question lingering in political circles is whether the election and the landslide win of the NLD will move the country towards a stable democracy for all Myanmar people, who are also fragmented by religious, ethnic, cultural, and
political beliefs (McGann, 2013). For example, approximately 65% of Myanmar’s population are ethnic Burmans (also known as Bamars) and are practising Theravada Buddhists. The remaining third of the population is divided into different ethnic groups, many of who have made substantial claims to independence (Kipgen, 2016). Nearly 2.5 million people (4.5% of total population) are ethnic Rakhines (or Arakanese). They are also Buddhists but consider themselves independent from Burmans. Rakhines are the majority in Rakhine State (formerly Arakan State).

Approximately one million Rohingya people also live in Rakhine State (Kipgen, 2016). As recent news reports attest, in Myanmar, the Rohingya are an oppressed Muslim minority. They are currently experiencing brutal violence at the hands of the Myanmar military (Kipgen, 2016; The Guardian, 2017). Aung San Suu Kyi and her government are facing international criticism for the mishandling of the plight of the Rohingyas. Soldiers are reported to be blocking access for aid workers to Rohingya communities and are allegedly terrorizing and murdering civilians. Aung San Suu Kyi has denied that ethnic cleansing is taking place (The Guardian, 2017).

4.5.3.2 Myanmar migrants in Thailand and Phuket

Once in Thailand, many migrants face multiple injustices and endure inequities when it comes to accessing decent living and working opportunities, adequate services, such as clean water and adequate health care, as well as equal civil rights (Huguet et al., 2012). Despite the net positive impact that international migrants bring to Thailand, not all migrants, including those from Myanmar, are treated humanely (Huguet et al., 2012). For example, it was estimated that as many as 10,000 to 15,000 Myanmar migrants died during the 2004 tsunami (Rice and Haynes, 2005). When aid-relief workers helped Thailand in the search for tsunami victims in tourist enclaves, Myanmar victims were all but forgotten (Rice and Haynes, 2005).
Some Myanmar tsunami-survivors living in Thailand at the time said that they watched from their small houses as food and supplies were given to their Thai neighbours (Tang, 2005). This happened despite the Thai government promising relief to all survivors. Myanmar workers, who contributed significantly to the Thai economy, received nothing. Myanmar people also feared to ask for help during this time because they preferred to avoid the risk of being arrested or harassed by Thai authorities (Tang, 2005). It has been reported that Thai police officers accused and arrested many Myanmar migrants for allegedly looting tsunami-affected areas (Relief Web, 2005).

Myanmar migrants in Thailand continue to experience cruel exploitation, strict restrictions on civil rights, and often at times, are forced into human trafficking (Huguet et al., 2012). For example, most low-income migrant workers are not covered by accident compensation plans even though many physically demanding jobs, such as construction work and work on fishing boats, are high-risk and accident-prone working environments (Huguet and Chamratrithirong, 2011). Migrant workers are also prohibited from forming official labour unions (Huguet and Chamratrithirong, 2011).

On top of all these problems, many employers seize identification documents from migrants as a means of restricting migrants’ mobility. All the while, migrants have insufficient opportunities and resources to overcome these challenges (Huguet et al., 2012).

Myanmar migrants who move to Phuket, unfortunately, are forced to surmount the challenges that come with being a migrant in Thailand, as well as navigating the complex social, political, economic, and environmental issues that already exist on the island. For example, in contrast to the luxurious resorts and hotels on the island, the housing areas occupied by Myanmar migrants are of low quality and are often surrounded by waste (Figure 18). Myanmar people in Phuket tend to live in poorly serviced areas, and often on hazardous land, which is susceptible to flooding
or landslides (Ms. Patereeya; Interview, 18 January 2016). I discuss in further detail the personal experiences of Myanmar migrants in Phuket in Chapter 5.

Figure 18: Myanmar housing unit in Ong Karn, situated in a mangrove. When water levels rise due to heavy rainfall or increasing tide levels, the piled-up garbage floats around and washes onto the walkways and into people’s homes (Photographer: de Jesus-Bretsneider, A., 2015).

4.5.4 Policy responses to migration\(^{25}\) in Thailand and Phuket

Thailand’s Ministry of Interior is responsible for creating and implementing policies that control migrants’ entry, mobility, status, and benefits in Thailand. The

\(^{25}\) I refer to “low-income” labour migration.
Ministry also has authority over law enforcement agencies including border and immigration patrols (Doneys, 2011).

The NESDP highlights Thailand’s ongoing intention of attracting foreign labour to help stimulate Thailand’s economy (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017). At the same time, however, Thailand’s government has long been concerned with irregular border crossings, including human trafficking. Thailand’s NESDP has, therefore, prioritized taking action on undocumented migration.

Recently, for example, on 23 June 2017, the Thai government swiftly implemented a new Royal Decree on Managing the Work of Aliens B.E. 2560 (2017) [Royal Decree]. It was argued of by the national government as a means to regulate human trafficking and abuse of labour migrants (Baker McKenzie, 2017) (Table 8). However, this new Royal decree is another example of the national government’s strong ability to create and implement policies without adequate consideration of a broad range of stakeholders, including migrant workers and business owners who rely on migrant labour (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017).

Thailand’s new labour laws are, unfortunately, causing thousands of migrants to flee Thailand for fear of being arrested or being forced to pay high fines (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017). The Thai Immigration Bureau reports that approximately 60,000 workers from all nationalities left between 23 to 28 June 2017 (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017). Thai government trucks are transporting Myanmar workers to Myawaddy, which is 246 kilometres east of Yangon. It is, however, unreported whether migrants are being deported or are leaving Thailand voluntarily (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017).
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<td></td>
<td>“Engaging in a work by exerting one's physical energy or employing one’s knowledge, whether or not for wages or other benefits.”</td>
<td>“Exerting one's physical energy or employing one's knowledge to perform a profession or perform works, whether or not for wages or other benefits.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employing a foreigner without a work permit</td>
<td>A fine from 10,000 baht to 100,000 baht per foreigner (approximately 420 to 4,200 CAD).</td>
<td>A fine from 400,000 baht to 800,000 baht per foreigner (approximately 16,780 to 33,560 CAD).</td>
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<td>Employing a foreigner to work differently than the conditions specified in a work permit</td>
<td>A maximum fine of 10,000 baht.</td>
<td>A maximum fine of 400,000 baht per foreigner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working differently than the conditions specified in a work permit</td>
<td>A maximum fine of 20,000 baht (approximately 840 CAD).</td>
<td>A maximum fine of 100,000 baht.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working on an urgent and necessary basis without notifying officials</td>
<td>A maximum fine of 20,000 baht.</td>
<td>A fine from 20,000 baht to 100,000 baht.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confiscating a work permit or identification document of a foreigner</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>A maximum of 6-months in prison and/or a maximum fine of 100,000 baht.</td>
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Table 8: Recent changes to Thai labour laws under the new Royal Decree on Managing the Work of Aliens B.E. 2560 (2017) (Baker McKenzie, 2017).

Experts describe how the mass exodus of migrants impacts sectors that depend on migrant workers, such as construction and the multi-billion dollar seafood industry (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017). For example, Thai fishing boat owners are concerned about losing the foreign workers needed for nearly 30,000 Thai fishing boats (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017). Mongkol Sukjareonkhana, Chairman of the Thailand Fishery Cooperative, said: “If foreign labour disappears, these boats will remain docked” (as cited in Sawitta Lefevre, 2017).

Despite the national government prioritizing the issue of irregular border crossings into Thailand, the language in the NESDP elicits elitism and discrimination over non-Thais, and further social fragmentation between Thais and people from neighbouring countries, including Myanmar. For example, policies in the document
frame uncontrolled migration as a threat to national security, as well as a hazard to the health and safety of Thai people.

The NESDP, unfortunately, encourages strengthened protectionism from so-called “illegal” migrants. It cites that uncontrolled international labour migration increases crime rates in Thailand, and also heightens concerns for “hygiene and public health, as well as the rights and obligations of legal persons” (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017).

Such wording implies that only the rights and obligations of “legal persons” are worth protecting. For instance, it has been argued that official documents are frequently used as classifiers between those who can be harassed and those who can be left alone (Abu-Zahra, 2008); or in the case of Thailand, those whose rights are worth protecting and those whose rights are not.

As further described in Chapter 5, such policy designs inevitably result in or reinforce vulnerabilities (as embodied structural violence) towards migrants, especially undocumented ones. Regrettably, limited attention is given in the NESDP towards protecting the rights of migrant workers, in general, despite their documentation status. Additionally, the NESDP does not speak to the issue of Thai people taking part in the shadow economy of human trafficking, or at least being complicit in it.

Six years ago, as an attempt to manage overall labour migration into Thailand, the Thai government regularized the labour recruitment process. In 2002, Thailand signed a MoU with Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Cooperation in the Employment of Workers. This document was a means to formalize the recruitment procedures of migrant workers. In the following year, Thailand signed a similar MoU with Cambodia and Myanmar.
Despite having the formal recruitment processes in place, the IOM reports that fewer than 80,000 migrant workers entered Thailand through the MoU in 2003 (Huguet and Chamratrithirong, 2011). Professional A (migration) explains that today, most Myanmar people still do not go through the formal migration process. Myanmar migrants are hindered by long application times, the costs of the application, and the costs of having to travel to the only immigration office in Yangon (Interview, 15 January 2016).

In addition to the MoU, Thailand’s other dominant policy framework for governing labour migration in Thailand is the Alien Employment Act (2008). This document emphasizes the importance of the government’s role in regulating the employment of low-skilled labour migrants. It was designed according to the principles of national security and protecting the work opportunities of Thai people. The Act states that each migrant must have their nationality verified by the migrant’s country of origin before being allowed to obtain a work permit in Thailand (Huguet and Chamratrithirong, 2011).

Unfortunately, because nationality verification must be completed in the migrant’s home country, significant bottlenecks and challenges for migrants typically occur. For example, if migrants are already in Thailand, they are required to return to their country at their own expense. After returning home, migrants are then only supposed to return to Thailand after completing the national verification process (Huguet and Chamratrithirong, 2011).

Most migrants have found the nationality verification process challenging to accomplish due to operational problems, lengthy delays, and costs (e.g. application costs and travel costs to return home) (Scharf, 2013). If, however, migrants successfully verify their nationality in their home country, they can then apply for a work permit (Professional A, 15 January 2016).
The application fee for a work permit is approximately 14,300 baht (approximately 537.97 CAD), which is a price that many migrants, who earn very little, cannot easily afford (Professional A, 15 January 2016). To qualify for a work permit, migrants must provide health-check documents, an identification number, and proof of agreement from an employer stating that the employer will pay the migrant (at least) the minimum wage of 300 baht (approximately 11.30 CAD) per day (Huguet and Chamratrithirong, 2011). Some employers, however, do not honour this wage. Research participants report to earning less than 300 baht per day. On many occasions, participants have not been paid at all by their employer.

Additionally, Professional B (migration) confirmed that Thai low-income workers receive a basic salary per day. However, he also said (Interview, 3 March 2016):

> Migrant workers in some sectors get paid much lower than Thai workers, like in agriculture and fishery. It is difficult to monitor the information of migrant construction workers because they move around with the construction sites. It is difficult to compare if they earn less than the law allows.

Thus, bureaucratic fragmentation throughout the documentation process for the migrant and the social fragmentation between Thai and Myanmar people have both resulted in structural violence towards migrants, including those from Myanmar. Profit-driven and discriminatory, top-down, government-enforced policies and practices continue to marginalize migrants and make them vulnerable in Thai society.

The expensive, complicated, and lengthy steps required to become a ‘documented migrant’ in Thailand leaves ample room for employers and migration brokers to take advantage of the convoluted processes. Many employers and brokers engage in human trafficking or forced labour, while others charge exorbitant fees to migrants for ‘quicker processes’ (Professional B; Interview, 3 March 2016).
Between 2008 and 2011, only 550,000 migrant workers completed the nationality verification process (Huguet and Chamratrithirong, 2011). Despite the attempted improvements by the Thai government, the regularization process of labour migrants continues to be costly and difficult—warranting opinions that the current Thai registration process for labour migrants discourages formal registration and bolsters undocumented entries into Thailand (Huguet, 2008; Doneys, 2011).

In Phuket, thousands of labour migrants are unrecorded. For example, the Phuket Sustainability Indicator Report 2013 states that approximately 64,000 migrants workers from Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia live and work in Phuket (SEEK-Phuket, 2013). On the other hand, Professional A calculates that approximately 250,000 Myanmar workers live in Phuket, including documented and undocumented migrants. During an interview, Professional A said, “I estimate that approximately 70% of workers in Phuket are migrant workers from Myanmar” (Interview, 15 January 2016).

On the other hand, another non-governmental organization, the Good Shepherd International Foundation, reports that anywhere from 60,000 to 70,000 Myanmar migrants live and work in Phuket (Good Shepherd International Foundation, n.d.). Another source, Professional B, considers a report from Thailand’s Ministry of Labour, which estimates that Phuket is home to approximately 21,000 Myanmar migrants (Interview, 3 March 2016). Conversely, Professional B guesses that the statistics form the Ministry of Labour does not include migrants in fishing and agriculture. Professional B said, (Interview, 3 March 2016):

I think this number does not include migrants that are in the fishing industry because they are under another system of monitoring. Only migrants in ‘normal sectors’ are in these numbers. Fishing and agriculture are not covered under standard Thai labour laws.

In Phuket, few institutions and actors focus on labour migration issues. For example, Phuket’s two Immigration Offices (one in Phuket Town and the second in
Patong) are only responsible for dealing with tourist visas, re-entry permits, and processing 90-day tourist visa reports (Phuket Immigration Office, n.d.). In 2014, a One-Stop Service Center for labour migrants opened up in Phuket Town. The agency is part of a nation-wide service to help labour migrants process all documents necessary for living and working in Thailand (Ministry of Interior, n.d.).

Before the existence of One-Stop Service Centers, labour migrants were required to submit documents separately to the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of Public Health to acquire a migrant identification card and number, as well as a work permit (Ministry of Interior, n.d.). According to Professional A, even though work permit and identification application processes have been streamlined into one institution, it is still the migrant’s responsibility to acquire and complete all the necessary documents before visiting the One-Stop Service Center. It costs 3,000 baht (approximately 118 CAD) to process documents at the One-Stop Service Center.

Professional A states that due to the difficulties migrants experience in acquiring and completing the necessary documents before visiting the One-Stop Service Center, migrants rely heavily on brokers, who charge 5,000 to 6,000 baht (approximately 196 to 236 CAD) to facilitate the application processes. She said (Interview, 15 January 2016):

Migrants do not go directly to the One-Stop Service Center because it is too confusing and migrants need to show all the right documents to get through everything. The broker sometimes goes with the worker to the One-Stop Service Center to process all the documents. The broker has to know the entire process.

For example, if a worker needs an identification number, the broker will know the documents a worker needs to get one; or if a worker needs a health check-up, they will prepare the worker and all the documents needed. For a health-check, the broker will tell the migrant where to go and will sometimes go with the migrant worker. So, the brokers are kind
Outside of the Immigration Offices and the One-Stop Service Center, no other government institution exists for helping migrants settle into Phuket; for instance, a government office that would, for example, provide information and referrals on finding housing, work, and health care. DISAC Phuket was one of the few, if not only, Thai-based institution addressing migrant issues in Phuket, specifically with regards to trafficking of Myanmar migrants into Thailand.

DISAC was once a missionary organization, working with tribes throughout Thailand in the 1930s (Japan Lay Missionary Movement, 2015). Today, DISAC’s primary goal today is to improve social education, wellbeing, and health and hygiene amongst women, children, refugees, and migrant workers in 15 southern provinces of Thailand, which include: Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumporn, Ranong, Suratthani, Krabi, Phang-nga, Phuket, Satun, Pattalung, Nakorn Sri Thammarat, Trang, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat (DISAC, 2013).

DISAC Phuket’s principal activities focus on providing translation services, Thai and English language lessons, and information on health insurance, work permits, passports, residency permits, and birth certificates for Myanmar people in Thailand (DISAC, 2013). DISAC works on the problem on human trafficking in Phuket, while other organizations, such as World Vision International, address additional social issues amongst Myanmar migrants, including health and education services.

4.5 Conclusion

As described in Chapter 1, many climate resilience critics call for resilience practitioners to accommodate political approaches and broader concerns of social justice (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Béné et al. 2012; Friend and Moench, 2015; Kaika, 2017). Therefore, I recommend transforming current frameworks of climate
resilience by using structural violence theory to analyze systems during the vulnerability assessment stage critically.

Practitioners must assess the potential or existing harms created by systems and work to remove or mitigate such harms next to supporting resilience-building strategies (Bahadur and Tanner, 2014; Friend and Moench, 2015). Without doing so, climate resilience strategies, which typically promote welfarist plans (as discussed in Chapter 1), risk to propagate structural violence in society, which, I argue, underpin the vulnerabilities of many marginalized people.

In discussing Thailand and Phuket’s political economies through a structural violence lens, I have shown that the theory allows resilience practitioners to directly acknowledge the social construction of vulnerabilities as well as the dualistic nature of an institution, system, or actor. For example, Thailand’s and Phuket’s governance systems face extraordinary challenges linked to climate change and migration. All of Thailand is susceptible to the compounding problems linked to climate change, including rising sea levels and changing migration patterns. At the same time, Thailand and Phuket’s governance systems are also weakened by structures, such as elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination, which also create or reinforce vulnerabilities for other institutions, systems, and actors.

In the following chapter, I describe how structural violence impacts the individual scale; meaning a Myanmar migrant’s embodiment of structural violence as climate change vulnerabilities. I also show that despite being victims of oppressive structural violence in Thailand, migrants are also dualistic. They, too, are victims and catalysts of structural violence. Consequently, they also contribute to the vulnerabilities of others within and between geographical scales.
Chapter 5
The Structural Violence Experienced by Myanmar Migrants in Phuket, Thailand

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the governance challenges and vulnerabilities that Thai governance systems experience in the face of climate change and migration. I explained that governments and research institutions, and international aid agencies, including the Phuket government, ISET-International, and USAID, respectively, acknowledge the biophysical vulnerability of the island of Phuket to climate change.

Thus, it is evident that Phuket, as a complex system, must be made resilient to climate change. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, contemporary climate resilience strategies often only bring together technocrats and bureaucrats to create planning solutions for climate change, for example through resettlement or flood protection (Friend and Moench, 2015).

Through this chapter, I argue that the voices and experiences of marginalized populations, such as Myanmar migrants, must also be considered in planning for resilience to acquire a holistic picture of the risks involved in supporting the resilience of a system. Because of structural violence, as enabled through elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination in Thai society, Myanmar people are unfortunately marginalized, exploited, and made vulnerable.

In this chapter, I provide examples of vulnerabilities as embodied forms of structural violence experienced by Myanmar migrants in Phuket. I divide the sections according to primary examples of components of systems, such as institutions, systems, and actors. To reiterate, my exploration of the lives of 80 Myanmar people shows that even though complex systems in Thailand are
vulnerable to climate change and are weak in responding to climate change-related issues adequately, the components of systems also possess inherent structurally violent characteristics. These norms reinforce or create vulnerabilities for Myanmar migrants.

Because contemporary structural violence scholarship acknowledges the inherent capability of a person to impact broader scales beyond the individual scale, I demonstrate in this chapter that practitioners must also acknowledge that amongst Myanmar people are fragmented groups who experience (or contribute to) nuanced forms of structural violence. Resilience practitioners must, therefore, apply concerted efforts to understand the dynamics and power imbalances between Myanmar people to give voice to the variations in vulnerabilities experienced by Myanmar migrants and help promote inclusive planning processes.

5.2 Institutions

As described in Chapter 1, institutions are rules and conventions. They are also laws, customs, and structures that guide, enable, and constrain people's behaviour (Friend and MacClune, 2012; MacClune and Reed, 2012). Institutions also define the range of responses or actions in a given situation (MacClune and Reed, 2012). In this section, I discuss migration institutions in Thailand to demonstrate the dualistic nature of its vulnerabilities (e.g. being both vulnerable and a perpetrator of vulnerabilities due to structures that reinforce structural violence).

Because climate change contributes to increasing migration flows in the Mekong Region, migration institutions in Thailand must be able to meet the needs of current and future migrants adequately (Kim and Mihn, 2016; Marks, 2011). Thus, migration institutions and actors in Thailand could potentially argue for their need to be resilient to climate change through enhancement of their abilities to organize and control migration flows into Thailand.
As described in Chapter 4, Thailand’s NESDP prioritizes improving the resilience of Thai institutions, while at the same time also supporting action against undocumented, “illegal,” migration (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017). Thus, resilience practitioners must take a critical look at such existing institutions in Thailand.

On the one hand, institutions are constrained by structural failings, such as elitism, nepotism, and fragmentation, as demonstrated in Chapter 4. However, Myanmar migrants also, unfortunately, embody the uneven impacts of such structural failings in Thai society. The current design of migration institutions in Thailand puts Myanmar migrants in harm’s way and makes them vulnerable to climate change disturbances.

A critical review of the current MoU process between Thailand and Myanmar, from the perspective of the migrant, provides an example of an institution that has inherent structurally violent characteristics. As described in Chapter 4, the MoU aims to formalize migration into Thailand and mitigate irregular border crossings. The agreement aims to ensure the following (Hall, 2002):

- Proper procedures for the employment of workers;
- Effective repatriation of workers;
- Due protection of labourers;
- Prevention of and effective action against illegal border crossings, human trafficking, and illegal employment of workers; and
- The integration of illegal workers who are already in Thailand as undocumented people.

However, limited details of how such actions should occur coupled with weak regulation and enforcement of the MoU on the part of both Myanmar and Thai governments create ample room for rampant exploitation of Myanmar migrants. Grey areas in the MoU and minimal enforcement of the agreement continuously produce substantial problems and vulnerabilities for Myanmar people (Hall, 2002).
For example, due to the complexity and vagueness of the MoU, Thai and Myanmar brokers facilitate the migration process for Myanmar workers. Myanmar brokers are legally allowed to be involved in the MoU process as long as they are registered with the Ministry of Labour in Myanmar. However, it remains unclear the conditions under which brokers are regulated in Thailand and Myanmar (Hall, 2012).

Coincidently, Myanmar migrant research participants report to being ill-informed of the migration process into Thailand. Research participants were either purposely given incorrect information so that brokers could extort migrants for exorbitant fees, or migrants were unknowingly given incorrect information because brokers were unaware of the MoU process for moving to and working in Thailand.

When participants were asked how they moved to Thailand and how much they paid financially to do so, their responses indicate that none of the 80 participants entered Thailand through the MoU process, while many paid high brokerage fees to relocate. Consider the following:

I travelled from Dawei to Thailand by myself. When I arrived in Thailand, a broker was waiting for me. The broker brought me to Phuket. I paid 6,500 baht (approximately 260 CAD) for the broker. (Participant no. 49)

I came to Phuket through a broker. I did not know where I was going. I only realized I was in Phuket after arriving here. After arriving [in Phuket], I met people from Rakhine. We talked to each other and they told me that I was in Phuket. (Participant no. 35)

It was easy to come and move [to Thailand]. I paid money to the broker to come here. I had no passports or documents. I came alone. I think it was easy to travel here in comparison to other Myanmar people. I know that some people who come to Thailand sometimes have to sleep in the forest or in the mountains but I never had to experience that. I paid the broker 8,000 baht (approximately 320 CAD). (Participant no. 26)
When I came [to Thailand], I migrated with many people in a small truck. They covered us. We were under the cover. I was lucky because my small brother and I were hiding right next to the driver but some people were not so lucky because they were noisy and they got found [by the officers at the border]. (Participant no. 32)

I did not go directly to Phuket with a truck. I stayed one night in the forest. At first [brokers] came with a truck, and then they told us the police was checking at the border. So, we had to stay one night in the forest. I paid 4,500 baht (approximately 180 CAD). (Participant no. 29)

Professional A states that the migration process to Thailand is messy for most Myanmar people. She discussed in an interview the unnecessary yet widely practised procedure of ‘double brokers,’ which typically results in a scenario of broken telephone. Myanmar people are not given proper information because secondary brokers, which Professional A refers to as ‘double brokers,’ do not know how to properly explain the information given to them by official MoU brokers.

In Myanmar, however, it is difficult to distinguish an official broker from a ‘double broker.’ Professional A stated (Interview, 15 January 2016):

In Myanmar, there are maybe 240 brokers. Most Myanmar brokers do not know everything about migration laws, so they are not very good brokers. They actually double the work because there are real brokers that know the law in Myanmar.

The brokers that don’t know the law contact the real ones. So they are like ‘double brokers’. For example, I can be a broker in Myanmar but I do not know how to process the documents under the MoU, so I end up asking a real broker who knows how to process the documents with Thailand. That’s why I call it a ‘double broker.’

Professional A also expressed (Interview, 15 January 2016):

The local broker in Myanmar has to call the real broker who knows the MoU between the two countries. If things were simple, it really should just be one broker from Myanmar calling one broker from Thailand but in reality there are local broker agencies that contact the real broker agencies.
For example, if I am a Myanmar worker, I cannot contact the real broker. I have to contact the local broker first. I need a broker to contact the real broker.

So, for example, a migrant says, ‘I want to go work in Thailand.’ The migrant will have to find a local broker. That broker will have to contact the real government broker who knows the process.

After the local broker in Myanmar contacts the broker for the Government of Myanmar, that MoU broker will also have to contact the broker with the Government of Thailand.

So before arriving to Thailand, the migrant worker has to pass through many broker agencies. The MoU seems like a strict law and a good law. But in another way, there is space for brokers to earn money.

Because of the grey areas within the MoU and the overly complicated processes of ‘double brokers,’ migrants are under constant risk of being exploited, trafficked, or arrested. As outlined in Chapter 4, the Thai government is attempting to regulate human trafficking and abuse of labour migrants through the new Royal Decree (Baker McKenzie, 2017). At the same time, however, the Thai government is also being criticized for their limited exploration and evaluation of broader actions necessary for improving the migration process, work experiences, as well as the vulnerabilities experienced by Myanmar migrants in Thailand (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017). Thus, the new Royal Decree is limited in scope.

The Thai government has failed to see the vulnerabilities that the Royal Decree creates or reinforces. For example, one significant change in the Royal Decree is the penalties for conducting a work-related offence. Anyone, including Thai employers or officers, can now be imprisoned or fined for confiscating a worker’s permit and identification (Baker McKenzie, 2017).

Research participants described instances where previous employers have taken their identification documents to prevent them from running away. Migrants,
unfortunately, bear the cost of renewing the documents and the risks that come with being unable to provide identification during police checks.

Still, the new Royal Decree mostly implements an increase in fines both to the employee and employer who fail to meet permit requirements. The new Royal Decree does not, however, include specifics about penalties for worker abuse (e.g. physical or sexual) at the hands of the employer.

The Royal Decree also prescribes that employers must send migrant workers back to their country upon termination of employment with the employer's own money. Nonetheless, enforcement tactics, such as fines or other punishment for failing to do so are not explained, which creates room for doubt that employers will abide by this new regulation.

Because news outlets report that the mass exodus of cheap labour is affecting Thai businesses (Sawitta Lefevre, 2017), the economic impact on local Thai businesses also has implications for people in Myanmar and Myanmar workers in Thailand. Thus, given my interviews with migrants and assessment of the current labour migrant landscape in Thailand, I predict at least six additional and reasonably unforeseen macro-level consequences.

First, Myanmar people who rely on remittances from friends or family working in Thailand, and have sometimes failed to receive money for several months, will now have a significant source of their income cut off indefinitely. As migrant workers lose their jobs or leave Thailand due to the new Royal Decree, family members and friends in Myanmar will also likely be affected.

While in Thailand and budget permitting, research participants send money to their family in Myanmar. However, there are multiple instances where participants do not earn enough and are, therefore, unable to share their earnings. Participants no. 15, 35, and 37 said, respectively:
I cannot send money every month. I send 3000 baht (approximately CAD 120) every two or three months.

Living here is okay for earning money. I send 3000 baht (approximately 120 CAD) per month to my parents.

In the past, we used to send money to our daughter but now we don't. We have not been able to send money since six or seven months ago. Our daughter calls and asks why we do not send money, and we say that it is because we do not have enough work and money [in Phuket].

Second, Myanmar’s economy will likely fail to absorb returning migrants since thousands of Myanmar people initially left Myanmar due to limited work opportunities in their homeland. Consider the following responses:

I think it is difficult to work in Myanmar. There is no work and no money. [In Phuket] we can work and earn money. (Participant no. 13)

[In Phuket] it is easy to find a job and earn money. If you want to live in Myanmar, you need money. If you live in Myanmar and are lucky enough to have a good education, you will have a good job. But if you cannot read or write, no one will give you a job so you will have no money. If someone does give you a job, you can only work for a short time. You won’t have work every day. When you get money, the money runs out. It is better to live [in Phuket] because you can work all the time. (Participant no. 70)

In Myanmar, I had to work with a rubber company, tapping rubber trees during the night. If I work here in Phuket, I can work during the day, and if I work at night, it counts as overtime and I earn more money. (Participant no. 16)

I am happy to live in Thailand but of course I would be happier to live in Myanmar because it is my country. But the reason why I moved to Thailand is to earn money. If, one day, I have enough money then surely I will go back to my country. (Participant no. 42)

I think it is better [in Phuket] because when I lived in Dawei only my husband worked. Ladies did not have work. Here, it is better because everyone can have work. Right now, my life is better when compared to before. Before, work and the place where I lived were not good. [...] Myanmar is different from Thailand. In Thailand, there are many...
companies and factories. Many industries are in Thailand. In Myanmar, there are no industries. No factories. No companies. That’s why ladies did not have work in Myanmar. (Participant no. 50)

Third, the problem of ‘double brokers’ will persist. MoU broker agencies will likely continue to provide inaccurate information to Myanmar people who seek to migrate to Thailand through the MoU. The new Royal Decree does not address the need for regulating and properly educating brokers that attempt to help migrants move to Thailand for work. This can result in continued undocumented entries and high fees, most likely at the expense of the migrant. For example, participant no. 17 shared her migration experience using a broker:

The brokers that helped us cross the border did not say anything about processing documents. They know that crossing the border without documents is illegal. What the brokers did was they provided transportation and they helped us escape from the police at the border.

A report from the Mahidol Migration Centre by Andy Hall (2012) also states that migrant workers lack formal public awareness services in Myanmar, specifically about the MoU process. The information workers receive about how to migrate to Thailand comes from brokers, employers, friends, or relatives. Migrants also have limited information on the broker responsible for importing them into Thailand apart from the broker’s telephone number (Hall, 2012). Most brokers also use their homes to meet with migrants and mostly never use an official office (Hall, 2012).

Many ‘double brokers’ exist in Myanmar due to limited availability of official brokers. Professional A said (Interview, 15 January 2016):

There is only one office in Yangon that officially deals with the MoU. There are no offices in other parts of Myanmar. People will have to pay for transportation to go to Yangon, and then also take the time to go to Yangon. So, for many, it is actually easier for them to go directly to Thailand with another broker than to first go to Yangon.
During the interview with Professional B, they also expressed (Interview, 3 March 2016):

It is much easier and cheaper to cross the border to Thailand outside of the MoU. You can work and pay later. If you come through the MoU, you have to pay first. Maybe migrants have an agreement with a company in Thailand to come and pay later but it is much more expensive to come with the MoU […]. Also, a lot of Myanmar minorities do not have any documents from the Myanmar government so they cannot go through the MoU process because they do not have any documents.

Professional A echoed a similar observation in a separate discussion (Interview, 15 January 2016). They explained that since the border between Myanmar and Thailand has many entrances, Myanmar people pay a ‘double broker’ to help them get into Thailand. Once migrants are in Thailand, they attempt to process their documentation papers.

According to Professional A (Interview, 15 January 2016), an official broker that works with the MoU charges approximately 15,000 baht (approximately 600 CAD). This broker will provide all the official papers necessary. On the other hand, those who go with a ‘double broker’ typically pay approximately 8,000 to 10,000 baht (approximately 320 to 400 CAD) in Myanmar plus another 5,000 to 6,000 baht (approximately 200 to 240 CAD) to hire a Thai broker. On top of these fees, migrants who do not enter through the MoU pay an additional 3,000 baht (approximately 120 CAD) for document application processes with the Thai government.

While I estimate the financial costs to be roughly equal between entering the country through the MoU and entering the country with the help of a ‘double broker,’ many Myanmar people, according to Professional A (Interview, 15 January 2016), find it burdensome and costly to go to Yangon. Therefore, many choose to go to Thailand directly, outside of the formal MoU process.
After arriving in Thailand without documents, Myanmar migrants are tasked with overcoming an overly complicated and indefinite documentation process. According to Professional A (Interview, 15 January), brokers habitually tell migrants that processing times for documents in Thailand are reportedly only two weeks. However, as reported by many research participants, wait times are much longer. For example, Participant no. 64[^26] shared with me his horrible experiences in applying for documents after arriving in Thailand. He said:

I came to Phuket through an agency. I paid 12,000 baht (approximately 480 CAD) for a broker. [The broker] said they processed the documents for me. I paid [the broker] but I was not given a receipt. After that, [the broker] disappeared and I did not get any documents.

After that, I processed the documents another two times but it was not successful. First, I processed the documents with the company secretary and the Thai chief worker of the construction business. I paid the money to the secretary and after that she said she would ask the Thai chief to process the documents. After that, both the secretary and the Thai chief disappeared from the company.

I paid around 20,000 baht (approximately 800 CAD) [to the secretary and Thai chief]. The secretary also said that the receipt disappeared. I do not have the receipt myself. [The secretary] also cut 3,000 baht (approximately 120 CAD) from my salary for a few months to pay for processing the documents, but I did not get my documents. Maybe that is why [the secretary and Thai chief worker] did not give me a receipt.

He continued:

I did not get any documents [through the company secretary or the Thai chief worker], so after that, I went to register for the pink card[^27] on my own. I am now waiting for it. After I get the pink card, I can apply for the passport at the Myanmar Embassy.

[^26]: Because Participant no. 64 is registered through the health card waiting list, Miss Phakbulawat explained that it is technically ‘legal’ for Participant no.64 to be in Thailand.

[^27]: The ‘pink card’ refers to the identification – health insurance (co-pay) card for migrant workers.
And, after I get the passport I will go back to Myanmar. Right now, I cannot go back [to Myanmar] because I do not have a passport. I want to go back home because I think three years in Thailand is enough experience.

In addition to issues with processing the documents with Thai actors, Participant no. 64 also faced problems with Myanmar migration actors. He described:

I was at the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok in August. They said that they are busy preparing for the elections in Myanmar so they did not say how many months it will take for me to get my pink card and my passport. [The embassy staff] needed to make a list of Myanmar people living in Thailand for the elections. They said it will take time for [Myanmar people] to get documents and passports but they did not say how long.

The fourth consequence that I anticipate to result from the new Royal Decree is that many undocumented migrants in Thailand will continue to be exploited in Thai society. Migration experts in Thailand have stated, “mass movement leaves undocumented workers vulnerable” (Hall as cited in Sawitta Lefevre, 2017). Therefore, corrupt officials in Thailand who regularly extort money from migrants, or at times employers, will likely attempt to benefit from the mass movement of migrants.

For example, some Thai officials already threaten to punish or imprison migrants for not having proper documents in Thailand. Participants have described how government or police officers in Phuket commonly expect money from migrants in exchange for not being arrested. Regrettably, the Royal Decree does not address or implement consequences for people who impose or accept bribes from migrants. Thus, police officers or government workers in Phuket will also likely continue to earn more money from the commotion and panic created by the Royal Decree.

Because most undocumented migrants live in the shadows, they are at high risk of being smuggled around Thailand or to other parts of the Mekong region at the hands of both Myanmar and Thai traffickers. If Myanmar and Thai officials do not
have records of who is leaving Myanmar for Thailand, how can those moving underground be protected and kept safe?

Fifth, the mistreatment of migrant workers in the workplace will likely continue (Hall as cited in Sawitta Lefevre, 2017). The Royal Decree is intended to also improve how businesses operate, especially with regards to employing migrant workers. However, the new law does not address the problem of employers failing to pay their migrant employees on time and at the minimum wage.

Migrant workers are customarily restricted from movement while in Thailand. Migrant workers are only allowed to change employers and move to another province if the business owner dies, if the business shuts down, or if the business owner does not comply with laws about bringing in and employing migrant workers (Rak Thai Foundation, 2014).

At the same time, migrant workers have reported that brokers also restrict migrants’ movement, given that the broker agency usually has an agreement with a business owner to provide substitute workers for free should any of the new workers leave the company within a certain amount of time of starting the work agreement (Hall, 2012). Therefore, even if both the employer and the employee have proper documents, there is no guarantee that workplace practices will improve to protect migrants from abuse or missed salaries.

Sixth, the law also states that only a Thai employer or a licensed operator can bring migrant workers into Thailand. However, in practice, people have found ways to manipulate the system and subvert the regulation of being a ‘Thai employer’ or a ‘licensed operator.’ For example, research participants described how brokers normally sign documents as the ‘employer’ or ‘licensed operator’ to process migrants’ documents and permits.
Professional A further explained that for a particular fee, brokers pretend to be a business owner on paper to help migrants acquire permits and documents that are not tied to any real employer. She said (Interview, 15 January 2016):

Sometimes migrants want to change their work easily, so they go to a broker to get papers that say the broker is the owner of the business but this is not the truth. And, for the broker who says that they are the business owner, they do not really care when migrants want to change their work because they are getting money from the migrants.

Additionally, two participants shared the following statements regarding their experiences in attaining documents to work for Thai employers. They said, respectively:

It was difficult to change business owners and documents. I had to pay a lot of money to change business owners. I don’t have money right now. Only to change the business owner, it costs 1,200 baht (approximately 48 CAD). (Participant no. 4)

There is something strange with the company controller. When the [government labour] officer comes, the controller tells every worker, “You have to say that you cannot speak Thai”, even though I know some people can speak Thai. [...] 

There are company controllers in Phuket who can help you get a job but they charge fees. Many people want to work at my workplace, but the company controller charges a lot of money.

For the work permit at the government office, we usually pay 2,500 baht (approximately 100 CAD) but the company controller would ask for 4,000 baht (approximately 160 CAD).

I think the money goes directly to the pocket of the controller. When the [government labour] officer comes and checks for migrant documents, it is all proper. But the labour officer does not talk to the Myanmar workers so [the labour officer] does not know how much the workers paid to get the work permit through the company controller. (Participant no. 5)
Even though Thailand has increased the minimum wage to 305 baht (approximately 12.20 CAD) per day in 2017 from 300 baht (approximately 12 CAD) per day in 2016, most migrant workers continue to receive less than half of the minimum wage per day (Trading Economics, 2017; Radheya, 2014). Also, research participants report that they earn more in Thailand than they could possibly make in Myanmar. The cost of living in Thailand is expensive for most migrants. Migrants do not earn enough to save or send remittances. They make just enough to survive.

Most participants dream of saving money to one day build a house for their family in Myanmar and, perhaps, start their own business back home. Thoughts of building a better life in Myanmar propel many migrants to endure hardships in Thailand. For example, research participants shared the following:

I feel that I have no choice in life. If I live in Myanmar, I have no work and no money. But when I work here...the people here do not treat us in a nice way. They talk badly to us and we must work many hours each day. (Participant no. 27)

I still want to live here because my life is not better yet. If I have enough money, then I will move back home but right now, I do not have enough money. (Participant no. 8)

I want to go back when I have saved money. I also want to have good clothes to wear so that when we go back to the village they will say, ‘Wow! They have very nice clothes and gold necklaces.’ (Participant no. 16)

I have to continue to work in Thailand. I don’t know when I will go back to Myanmar. When I have my own money, I can open a shop in Myanmar. I don’t know how long that will take. (Participant no. 19)

I pay 3000 baht (approximately 120 CAD) for rent and 1400 baht (approximately 56 CAD) for my two children to go to school in Myanmar. [...] My salary of 6000 baht (approximately 240 CAD) is not enough for some months. When I cannot pay the rent, I have to tell the owner of the house that I will pay the money next month. And then I borrow money from my friend. It has been about eight times now this year where this
has happened. [...] But my children go to school so that is good.
(Participant no. 65)

5.3 Systems

Towns, cities, provinces, and nations are linked across multiple scales through various systems, such as regional food systems, trade systems, infrastructure systems, and ecosystems (Moench et al., 2011). Managing, developing, and maintaining such (sub-)systems are integral to ensuring the well being of places and the people who inhabit such places (da Silva et al., 2010; Moench et al., 2011). Thus, resilience practitioners typically recommend supporting the resilience of systems to maintain their functions and linkages in the face of climate change shocks and stresses (OECD, 2014; Moench et al., 2011). Similar to my discussion on Thailand’s migration institutions, essential systems in Phuket, such as water systems and food systems, which are vulnerable to climate change (M-BRACE, n.d.), also discriminate against Myanmar migrants, and, therefore, increase or reinforce their vulnerabilities.

For example, as described in Chapter 4, Phuket’s water systems are vulnerable to climate change, due to saline intrusion, drought, and flooding (M-BRACE, n.d.). As in many parts of Southeast Asia, Phuket also faces severe water shortages (Professional D, Interview, 15 January 2016). This happens partly because the number of tourists and residents is increasing, while changing climate conditions, such as prolonged dry periods, further aggravate water shortages (M-BRACE, n.d.).

Heavy rainfall also creates flooding risks and affects physical infrastructures, such as pumps and pipes (M-BRACE, n.d.). Despite the fact that Thai people who live on the island also suffer from water shortages, research participants face tougher circumstances when it comes to accessing water in Phuket.

Current practices within the water system in Phuket are inequitable and discriminatory towards Myanmar migrants. Participants living in Pesang and Peh
Poh recounted how their water supply gets shut off by their landlords three to four days of the week. Migrants believe it is because the landlords want to save money on water bills. This happens regularly despite Myanmar renters paying a water fee as part of their rental costs.

Migrants spend nearly half of their monthly income, which is, approximately, 300 to 400 CAD, on rent and utilities, and the supply of water is still only available for less than half of the week. This scenario illustrates inequitable access to water in Phuket, as experienced by research participants.

When no water flows through their taps, Myanmar migrants are left with no choice but to call a private water service delivery truck to buy jugs of water. Eight litres of water costs approximately 300 baht (approximately 12 CAD). What seems like a straightforward solution comes with many problems for migrants.

First, migrants earn very little and are already paying for water services as part of their rent. They are then burdened to pay a second time for water from private companies when they cannot access water from the property on which they live.

Also, because everyone on the island faces water shortages, all Phuket residents require services from private water trucks. Informal discussions with Thai locals indicate that their experience of waiting for a water truck is a regular activity. However, they claim that they usually only wait for one to two hours for delivery.

After talking to participants about the amount of time that they wait for water deliveries, responses indicate that waiting periods for water appears to be longer for Myanmar migrant participants than for Thai locals. Some participants wait for at least five hours, while others wait for much longer. Participant no. 20 said:

Last April, we tried ordering water in the morning but the trucks only came in the evening. This happened for several days in a row. When we would come home from work, we would be very, very hot. At that time, we
had to buy bottled water from the store so that we could bathe. Normally, we only use bottled water for drinking.

In addition to the marginalization of migrants in Phuket’s water system, Myanmar migrants are also abused and exploited through their work in the food system. The fishing industry in Phuket, which is a part of both the local and global food system, is under threat from climate change. For example, increasing water temperatures and rising sea levels disturb the natural ecosystem of the fish.

Unfortunately, however, this very same food system also creates and reinforces vulnerabilities. For example, Thailand’s multi-billion dollar industry is renowned for its human trafficking practices, and other harmful practices that create vulnerabilities for migrants and the environment, for instance through over-fishing (Hodal, 2016).

As previously described, migrants who come to Phuket, typically find jobs in tourism, construction, hospitality services, and fishing industries (Walsh and Ty, 2011). Many of these jobs are also dangerous in practice. For example, fishery jobs are managed in ways that do not prioritize the health and safety of workers. Most workplaces in Phuket do not promote the use of safety equipment or protective clothing such as safety gloves, life jackets, construction hats, harnesses, or other safety equipment. The culture of disregard for migrant workers’ safety is considered as a form of structural violence because it results in needless deaths, injuries, and illnesses for migrant workers (Brady and Burton, 2016).

For example, during an interview with Participant no. 31, he presented his severely swollen hands and feet. His skin had completely peeled off and it had not yet grown back. Participant no. 31 was injured while packaging seafood at a fish factory. His job required him to work with ice and chemicals. Regrettably, one day, he spilled chemicals on his hands and feet. He clarified that he was only wearing cloth gloves at the time, which of course did nothing to protect him from the severe chemical
burns. He technically did not lose his job, but he was unsure of when his burns would heal enough for him to return to work.

Research participants who work on fishing boats report to also being vulnerable to workplace injuries or deaths. Participant no. 23 explained how the fishing boat that he works on has a limited amount of life jackets. The number of life jackets does not match the number of persons on the boat. Additionally, Participant no. 23 described stories of men who have fallen overboard and have drowned at sea; for instance, during severe rainstorms.

When Participant no. 23 was asked if he worked during stormy weather, he replied:

Yes, even if there is a storm we have to work. If workers know that a heavy storm is coming before we leave the shore, we bargain with the boat owner to not go out for work. But if we go out already and then it starts to storm, we have to work. [...] Also, the weather affects how much fish we catch. When there is a heavy storm, we can catch fish but not so many.

Another participant who works on a fishing boat described how his coworker slipped on the boat and injured himself. The boat owner did nothing to help. Sadly, the onus of caring for the injured person fell on the shoulders of the fishing boat crew. Participant no. 21 explained:

If someone on the boat gets injured and needs money—maybe 10,000 baht (approximately 400 CAD), the crew donates money to this person based on salary. The people who earn more will donate more.

For example, someone who earns 10,000 baht (approximately 400 CAD) will give maybe 800 baht (approximately 32 CAD) and someone who earns 8,000 baht (approximately 320 CAD) will give 500 baht (approximately 20 CAD). We mostly help migrants who have the pink card pay for transportation to go to the hospital. But for other migrants, we have to help cover all the costs like medicine and hospital fees.
5.4 Actors

The term actor refers to an individual (e.g. farmer or consumer); a household (e.g. as a unit for consumption, social reproduction, education, and capital accumulation); as well as a representative of private and public sector organizations (e.g. government departments or bureaus, private firms, civil society organizations) (Moench et al., 2011). Resilience supporters argue for increasing the capacity of actors to anticipate and take action on external changes and stresses (O’Brien et al., 2009). This implies strengthening the ability of actors to resist change and maintain the status quo (O’Brien et al., 2009). However, upon applying a structural violence lens to existing functions and characteristics of different actors in Thailand, it is evident that Thai actors reinforce vulnerabilities for Myanmar migrants.

For example, it is the cultural norm of Thai people in Phuket to consider migrants as low-class people; which is exhibited in the workplace, in migrants’ access to services, and in how Myanmar people are treated throughout the province. For instance, I observed that it is not customary or expected for Thai people to engage with migrants in social activism or local knowledge building practices for significant matters, such as disaster risk management, environmental management, and public health.

During an interview with Professional C, they explained that the province has plans for mitigating the impacts of tsunamis, earthquakes, mudslides, landslides, fires, and car crashes. A significant aspect of Phuket’s disaster prevention plans includes educating the public on what to do in case of a disaster. Professional C said (Interview, 18 January 2016):

Each year, [the Government Office of Phuket] has a project for Community Based Disaster Risk Management. Every year, [government officers] go to risk areas of tsunamis, floods, landslides, and earthquakes. [Government officers] give knowledge to communities, and then they practise activities like ‘disaster calendars’ or ‘evacuation maps.’
However, when asked if government officers talk to Myanmar people about such issues, Professional C replied (Interview, 18 January 2016): “No, [government officers] don’t do anything with migrants. Only Thais…and tourists.”

Professional D was also posed a similar question about engaging with Myanmar migrants to create local plans and strategies for the environment. Professional C explained that local government offices in Phuket once ran a campaign to raise awareness about taking care of the environment, for instance by reducing garbage and air pollution. However, Professional C confirmed that the campaign’s target audience includes only local Thai people and tourists. When asked of any knowledge regarding local government plans to reach out to Myanmar migrants or involve them in future campaigns, Professional C stated (Interview, 15 January 2016): “[Government offices] will try to make that as part of the plan. That is the ideal thing [to do].”

With regards to public health services run by Thai organizations in Phuket, Myanmar migrants are also not typically included in plans or outreach by local service providers. For example, Professional E (public health), explained that they only knew of one campaign that reached out to migrants, but it was organized by a non-Thai organization, World Vision International. Professional E said (Interview, 20 January 2016):

Along with World Vision, [Thai public health workers] visited camps\(^{28}\) [in Phuket villages] and checked for family planning and vaccines. [They] wanted migrants to go to the hospitals to get their vaccinations. Other than that, I do not know of anything else [about outreach work with migrants and public health].

Another group of important actors, such as the local police force, also do little to support migrants. In fact, several participants explained that local police officers

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\(^{28}\) Thai locals refer to informal settlements as ‘camps’.
mistreat them and manipulate them for money. Participant no. 72, for example, said:

I paid the police 500 baht (approximately 20 CAD) each month for two years. Before, when I heard someone speak about the police, I was very scared. I was always thinking about places where I could hide myself from the police.

Also, multiple participants have described situations where health care providers have also taken advantage of them. Participants attest that even though though many migrants have a co-pay health card, many fear using it due to mistrust towards Thai hospital staff. For example, Participant no. 24 explained her unfortunate experience at a government hospital in Phuket:

My husband was in the hospital because he had a stroke on the fishing boat. He went to the hospital, and the doctor said that his care would be covered by the pink card. But the hospital staff was asking me for 30,000 baht (approximately 1260 CAD) in cash without the bill.

I do not understand Thai, so I did not know what was happening. The hospital staff kept asking me to pay, so I did [after borrowing money from a friend]. I did not receive a bill. I paid in the laundry room somewhere inside the hospital. I first met with the man [hospital staff] behind the hospital.

At that time, I did not care about the money. I cared about my husband getting good medicine and care. I did not want to tell the hospital staff, 'No, I do not want to pay you' because I was scared that my husband would not be taken care of.

5.5 Nuanced experiences of Myanmar migrants in Phuket

In general, the social relations and arrangements between Thai and Myanmar people create vulnerabilities for how Myanmar migrants live and work in Phuket. When participants were asked about how they felt as a Myanmar person living in Phuket, some said:
Some Thai people don’t like us. After work, I have some free time and I try to sell some dried fish. Some Thai people tell me, “Don’t do that! There’s a bad smell!” I think Thai people are jealous that we work and earn money. (Participant no. 14)

Sometimes, I’m happy to live in Phuket. Sometimes, I’m not happy because this is not my country. There are some Thai people who put pressure on us. They talk a lot and say, “Why don’t you go back to your country?” (Participant no. 23)

I think Thai people do not like us living here. They tell me things that are not so nice. When I told a Thai person that I was worried about a stranger coming into my home and stealing my things, the Thai person laughed at me. They said, “Why are you worried? You have nothing!” (Participant no. 36)

Thus, the entrenched attitude of many Thai people looking down upon Myanmar people leads to vulnerabilities as embodied forms of structural violence for Myanmar migrants in Thailand; for example, as I have described, through discriminatory policies and planning practices, as well as the inequitable access to water, and the exploitation of migrants in workplaces and villages.

However, in addition to recognizing the structural violence experienced by Myanmar migrants, it is also imperative to acknowledge that vulnerabilities experienced by Myanmar migrants, on an individual basis, are nuanced. Issues and experiences differ between villages, and even from person to person. Thus, resilience practitioners must recognize that variations in vulnerabilities also occur even within marginalized factions of society. Research or strategies that advocate for marginalized people as one collective risk propagating the assumption that marginalized people are a homogenous group (Spivak, 1988). Resilience practitioners must, therefore, practice rigour in understanding the diverse experiences of marginalized populations to design strategies and plans that are inclusive of the varying needs of stakeholders.
In the following subsections, I discuss examples of ways in which people within the Myanmar migrant population are disenfranchised differently from other Myanmar migrants. For example, Myanmar women, migrants without documents, and migrants from different ethnic groups experience differentiations in vulnerabilities that should not be overlooked.

5.5.1 Experiences of Myanmar women

Through interviews with 80 Myanmar people, it is evident that Myanmar women experience specific issues. For example, gendered norms in Myanmar associate women with reproduction and domesticity (Wilkins, 2017). Thus, even in Phuket, female Myanmar migrant participants were held to be typically responsible for unpaid labour, such as child rearing, if they did not leave their children in Myanmar with other family members. I observed that mostly women took on the responsibility of unpaid reproductive labour. This gendered-stereotype of women taking on child rearing is deeply entrenched amongst research participants. Female participants also accepted this as the norm, even citing concerns that ‘they did not work’ (at least in the paid salary sense).29

Despite citing interests in finding working in Phuket, some female participants report of the expectation of their husbands for the wife to stay at home and take care of the children. Thus, female participants who have children, and still want to find paid labour, typically lose out on opportunities to diversify household incomes while in Phuket.

Because mothers are expected to stay at home, services for mothers are also not expected and, therefore, are not provided to help Myanmar households in Phuket.

29 For further reading about unpaid reproductive labour and gendered experiences amongst migrant women in Southeast Asia, see: Gaetano, A.M. & Yeoh, S.A., Brenda. (2010). Introduction to the Special Issue on Women and Migration in Globalizing Asia: Gendered Experiences, Agency, and Activism. *International Migration, 48*(6), 1-12.
decide whether or not a parent can pursue paid employment or stay at home. Professional A highlighted this problem (Interview, 15 January 2016):

Many Myanmar women in Phuket have their children here, so they stay at home and do not [have paid work]. Maybe it is better to have a nursery so mothers can [find paid work].

Some participants who are mothers also acknowledge the customary practice of women staying at home to care for the children. Participant no. 12, said: “My new husband wants me to stay home and take care of the house and children.” Also, Participant no. 6 noted:

My eldest son and my husband work together for the same construction company. They leave early in the morning and come back in the evening. All my younger [daughters] stay at home with me.

A male participant (Participant no. 29) also expressed similar ideas about women bearing the responsibility of childcare. When asked if he planned to stay in Phuket much longer, he replied: “I will stay and [earn money] here but my wife will go back to Myanmar and take care of our children.”

Additionally, of the female migrants who do have paid employment in Phuket, some experience discrepancies in pay compared to their male counterparts’ salaries. For example, Participant no. 55, explained:

At the company where I work, the maximum a woman can earn is 6000 baht (approximately 240 CAD) per month. Men earn around 9000 to 10,000 baht (approximately 360 to 400 CAD) per month.

When asked why she thinks the salary is different between men and women, she replied: “Men have to work harder than women, so they get paid higher.” Another female migrant, Participant no. 17, also acknowledged the differences in salary. When asked if she wanted to complain about these differences to the chief of workers, Participant no.17 responded against this idea and stated: “I am only a woman so I am not fighting against anything. I only work and come home.”
Health concerns, particularly for pregnant research participants and their babies, were also raised during interviews. As mentioned, Myanmar migrant participants report of their preference to not go to a Thai hospitals for many reasons, including: language barriers, not having official documents, financial costs, and fear and mistrust of Thai health care providers.

Because of these concerns many pregnant women choose to give birth in their homes with the help of other Myanmar women living in the village. As previously described, however, migrants’ houses are typically in poor and unsanitary conditions, thus, posing health concerns for the mother and child. Participant no. 9, who was pregnant at the time of the interview said:

I will have my baby at home with a midwife. There is a Myanmar midwife living in the village. I will pay her 4,000 baht (approximately 164 CAD) to deliver the baby. [...] I do not get any pre-natal care. The midwife only comes when the baby is born, nothing else.

Professional A also expressed that female Myanmar migrants need better access to Thai hospitals. Delivering a baby in a government hospital costs 5,000 baht (approximately 205 CAD), which is not much more than delivering a baby through a village midwife who charges a similar amount.

Professional A emphasized that giving birth at a hospital will allow women access to medicine and equipment that may be necessary, should an operation be required during delivery. If a Myanmar child is born in a Thai hospital, the child will be given an official birth certificate, which in turn documents their existence in Thailand. A birth certificate will also entitle the child to other services in Phuket, such as schools and health care.

5.5.2 Experiences of undocumented migrants

Another differentiation between experiences and issues of Myanmar migrants in Phuket relates to whether or not a migrant is technically ‘legal’ in the eyes of Thai
law. The situation of Myanmar migrants with proper documents and identification usually is less precarious than that of undocumented migrants. Undocumented migrants live in constant fear of being detained by Thai police; and if caught, fear being put in jail or being forced to pay a bribe to the police. For example, Participant no. 21 said:

At first, I was scared and afraid because I came to Thailand ‘illegally’. I was afraid and scared that the police would catch me. I had to pay money to the police. I had to pay the police monthly through the owner of business that I worked for. I had to do this for two years until I got all my documents. I paid 500 baht (approximately 20 CAD) each month. Now that I have my documents, I am very glad and happy.

Participant no. 60 shared similar experiences:

I waited four years to get my passport. I had to hide when I didn’t have documents. When the police came, I had to pay 3000 baht or 2000 baht (approximately 120 or 80 CAD, respectively), maybe. Sometimes they would arrest me on the road. Sometimes, I would be at home eating and they would catch me.

Each time after I paid, the police would come again. It seemed like they always knew where to find me. One time, they arrested me while I was eating, and they did not even let me wash my hands because I was eating with my hands.

Even though undocumented migrants risk being detained by the police, documented migrants also face the ongoing possibility of becoming technically ‘illegal’ and being treated as such due to the discriminatory Thai culture and the practice of earning money from Myanmar migrants. Participant no. 18, said:

I have been stopped by the police two or three times. One time, they came to my room asking me if I had my documents. I told them that I did. I really did have my documents. I looked everywhere for my documents but I could not find them because I was so panicked. The police told me “Stop looking!” They arrested me and took me to the police station.
Other times, migrants also do not have enough money to renew their documents while others have their documents confiscated by employers or Thai law enforcement officers. Thus, migrants can easily lose their official proof of being a documented migrant in Thailand. Participant no. 22, described:

When I first came to Phuket, it was difficult because I was only earning 80 baht (approximately 3.20 CAD) per day, and I had to pay the police 300 baht (approximately 12 CAD) per month. But right now, it’s okay to live here. It is not scary anymore with the police. But when my passport and the cards expire, I have to pay a lot of money to renew the documents and I do not know if I can.

Participant no. 40 also explained her problems around acquiring new identification documents after her employer destroyed all of her cards. She filed a police report and is waiting to receive a new card. However, no one had told her how long it would take to receive new documents. The police report technically made it okay for Participant no. 40 to continue living in Phuket. However, without proper identification, Participant no. 40 cannot apply for new health insurance or a new work permit.

For the undocumented migrants who are technically unaccounted for, they also face the frightening possibilities of being trafficked. Participant no.10 described how his friend was caught by the Thai police and was possibly sold to brokers who traffic migrants around Thailand. Participant no. 10 explained:

Brokers sell ‘illegal’ migrants for labour. The brokers buy ‘illegal’ migrants from the police who catch them. Some brokers sell migrants to companies and some brokers sell migrants to other brokers.

Without identification documents, some participants also became targets for coercion into jobs about which they were uninformed. For example, participants described situations where they agreed to work in certain jobs to expedite their documentation process. For example, Participant no. 70, said:
I do not know how the health card works but when I went to the
government office to process the health card, the government officer
said that they only insured workers on fishing boats at that moment.
The officer told me, “The health card...this is only for the workers of
the fishery and the fishing boat right now. If you do not work in the
fishing industry or on the fishing boat, you cannot have this card.” So
after that, I said, “Okay, I will work on the boat.” Then, I got the card.

Mr. Sooktawee, Coordinator of the Migrant Working Group, highlights that
addressing the documentation issues of migrants in Thailand links to ongoing
cooperation between Thailand and Myanmar (Interview, 3 March 2016). The two
countries are responsible for ensuring safe, equitable, and transparent migration
processes. He stated that in addition to Thailand having to improve the
immigration process, the Myanmar government should also be held responsible and
accountable for improving citizen documentation systems and the emigration
process. Mr. Sooktawee said (Interview, 3 March 2016):

Many Myanmar ethnicities do not have formal documents from the
Myanmar government about their identity so this creates problems for
them becoming ‘legal’ in Thailand. Also, if someone is ‘illegal’ in
Thailand and they do not have documents to show that they were born
in Myanmar, they might also be ignored by the Myanmar Government.

The status of migrants who do not have proper documents in both
countries is a very difficult problem. ‘Legal’ status is the first entry
point for the overall protection of migrants in Thailand and the origin
country.

5.5.3 Experiences of Myanmar migrants in different ethnic groups

The historical divide between different Myanmar ethnic groups plays a prominent
role in whether a Myanmar person is officially recognized to be a citizen by the
Myanmar government. For example, as described in Chapter 4, in Myanmar, the
Rohingya are an oppressed Muslim minority (The Guardian, 2017). The Myanmar
government does not consider Rohingya people as citizens.

Thus, in addition to the varying experiences between men and women, and
documented and undocumented migrants, Myanmar participants from different
ethnic groups also experience nuanced vulnerabilities in Phuket. For example, the reinforcement of divisions between different Myanmar ethnic groups in Phuket was observed. Mr. Sooktawee also recognized such divisions between Myanmar people in Thailand, in general, through his work. He said (Interview, 3 March 2016):

We use Burmese translators but some migrant people we work with are Mon or Dawei. So, when we go to the village with Burmese translators, they just ignore the translators. They don’t say anything. They just say, “No, we don’t speak with the Burmese.”

In a separate interview, Participant no. 15 said that even though he found there to be no physical fighting between different Myanmar ethnic groups in Phuket, he also noted that Myanmar ethnic groups tend to live separately. He said: “We all live in peace but we also prefer to live with similar people.”

Additionally, two workers on fishing boats admitted that workers from different villages often fought with one another. Participant no. 45, expressed:

I don’t like it when I work and people fight with each other. Some people come from different villages in Myanmar and they fight. This makes the owner of the boat angry. It is not good for the workers.

Another boat worker, Participant no. 23, said:

There are different ethnic groups on the boat. Normally, Rakhine and Dawei people do not get along. Normally, they will say something to each other that is not nice and then they will get angry and fight.

Additionally, it was observed that participants from Dawei typically live in Pesang, while those from Rakhine State live with other people of Arakan background in Ong Karn or Kingkaew. Therefore, there is a possible connection between a Myanmar person’s cultural ethnicity and where they live in Phuket. Professional A is also of the opinion that (Interview, 15 January 2016):

People from Dawei are in better financial situations before leaving Myanmar compared to people from other parts of the country, so Dawei people can afford to live in nicer houses in Phuket.
Some housing areas, which are home to separate ethnicities, are subjected to different vulnerabilities. For example, residents of Ong Karn describe how the Thai police consider Myanmar people in Ong Karn to be ‘illegal occupiers’ of the land, even though Thai landlords were the ones who built the houses in mangroves and now rent the units to Myanmar migrants. Compared to residents in Pesang, Ong Karn residents, unluckily, have to pay government officials to be allowed to continue living in Ong Karn. Participant no. 11, said:

We all pay the government officer each month. Each room has to pay 300 baht (approximately 12 CAD) per month. I do not know why we have to pay this price because many of us have our documents. The owner of these houses told us that we have to pay because these houses ‘do not follow the law’. We have to pay. Otherwise, the police will arrest us.

5.6 Personal agency

Complexity exists in structural violence scholarship, which relates to the meaning of personal agency, which can be looked at from both top-down and bottom-up viewpoints. Structural violence was initially considered as the systematically ingrained economic, political, and cultural structures that enforce human suffering and limit personal agency (Galtung, 1969). Thus, it is typical to look for top-down forces that reduce the agency of a person; for example, the reduced agency of Myanmar migrants to cope with climate change disturbances and reach their dream of a better life.

However, as previously discussed in Chapter 2, contemporary structural violence scholars acknowledge that each person is a bottom-up decision-maker and therefore practices their inherent agency for dealing with shocks and stresses that get in their way of reaching personal goals (Moran et al., 2014; Slack and Whiteford, 2011). Humans are always learning and readjusting their behaviours and actions to survive (Moran et al., 2014). Each one of us is capable of having a unique reaction to
shocks or stresses, which either reduces or reinforces structural violence (Moran et al., 2014).

Thus, resilience practitioners must not take for granted that some people in disenfranchised situations choose to take part in the structural violence as a means to take back power (Moran et al., 2014; Slack and Whiteford, 2011). Not all Myanmar migrants are victims. There are also heroes and villains among them.

For example, Participant no. 3, who lives in Pesang, teaches children during the day because Pesang participants have children who do not have proper identification and, therefore, cannot attend school in Phuket. Participant no. 3 said:

I teach children who are still young and cannot speak Thai yet. Since they cannot speak Thai, they cannot go to Thai school. Thai schools do not teach Burmese, and so some children come to me and learn Burmese. In this village, I don’t teach at a formal school. The parents collect money and they pay me to teach inside my home. I teach English, Burmese, Mathematics, and Science.

In my opinion, this particular Myanmar migrant is enacting her personal agency to address vulnerabilities in her village. Also, several Myanmar people in the village are doing the same by pooling together money as a means to pay for Participant no. 3’s teaching efforts.

In addition to collecting money for village-based education services, Myanmar people in Pesang also raise emergency funds for anyone in need. Participant no. 30 said:

People in my village do not have enough money to go to the hospital if they are very sick. Sometimes they are very sick and want to return to Myanmar but they do not have the money. In my village, my role is to collect money from people to help pay for the hospital and sometimes transportation to Myanmar. [...] Right now, my community has about 15,000 baht (approximately 630 CAD) saved.
Social networks are, therefore, valuable to participants, as they often rely on one another for moral and financial support during difficult situations. Even if a migrant falls victim to structural violence, other Myanmar migrants attempt to right wrongs through their own personal agency despite structural violence also reducing their personal agency in other ways.

However, not all Myanmar people act justly towards other Myanmar migrants, which can be argued of as a means to cope with personal experiences of structural violence while in Thailand. For example, Participant no. 9 declared that some Myanmar people in her village profit off others who are vulnerable and need help. She said:

I borrowed from another Myanmar person in this village. People who have the ability to lend money charge very high interest rates. Interest is sometimes ten or 15 percent...or sometimes 20 percent per month. If you want the money quickly, then it is 20 percent per month. Many Myanmar people face the problem of borrowing money with high interest. People borrow money, then they cannot pay it back, and then they borrow more money to pay off the first loan, and so on.

Participant no. 24 also stated:

I asked friends from this village for money but it came with high interest...about ten percent per month. I am still paying for the money I borrowed from my friend. In total, I borrowed 50,000 baht (approximately 2100 CAD).

Another Myanmar migrant, Participant no. 12, claimed:

I'm not happy here because my friend borrowed money from another person and I am the warrantor for my friend's loan. But my friend ran away, so now I have to pay the loan. I do not know how to find my friend. I cannot contact my friend at all.

Several migrant participants demonstrate signs of passivity towards the structural violence and vulnerabilities that they experience. Structural violence scholars acknowledge that the internalization of social suffering reproduces vulnerability
production in which those marginalized can become complicit, including unconsciously, in their ongoing subordination (Bordieu, 2000; Kleinman et al., 1997). For instance, the passivity of vulnerable people can contribute to the continuation of obvious injustices (Auyero and Swistun, 2009).

For example, when participants were asked if there was anything that they did not like about living in Phuket (e.g. their jobs or the migration process), many provided passive responses. Consider the following:

I cannot say if I am happy or not with how the process works for Myanmar people to move to Thailand. I have nothing to say about it. (Participant no. 17)

I am happy in Phuket. I know I live in a tiny room and there is garbage outside my room, but in my life, I can have only this choice. (Participant no. 9)

I cannot say if I am happy with my job or not. I go to work and I earn money. Even if I like my job, I have to work. But if I do not like my job, I have to work anyway. I have no choice. (Participant no. 18)

I go to work and I earn money [in Phuket] but I cannot say if I am happy or not. It is not as happy or the same as living in Myanmar, but it was not a good life in Myanmar because there was no work and money. So, we have to accept the situation here in Phuket. We must come here and work to earn money. (Participant no. 23)

5.7 Conclusion

Overall, any examination of structural violence requires an understanding of how one highly vulnerable population group, such as Myanmar migrants in Thailand, may not necessarily be one cohesive group. Individual characteristics such as gender, documented status, and ethnicity play a role in the types of vulnerabilities that a Myanmar migrant experiences. As demonstrated in this chapter, each person acts from their own sets of interests, motivations, and personal agency as a response to structural violence. Some migrants are passive. Others choose to help, while some choose to take advantage of others.
Whichever the practice or chosen pathway, an analysis of structural violence at the individual level indicates Myanmar migrant participants’ inherent agency in dealing with structural violence. Thus, as expressed in Chapter 4, all systems, institutions, and actors across different scales have a dualistic nature of being both vulnerable (e.g. as a victim to structural violence), while also having an ability to react to or reinforce vulnerabilities as an embodiment of structural violence.

In the following and final chapter, I present recommendations for addressing structural violence at the national, provincial, and individual scales. I also unpack how resilience practitioners can take political, inclusive, and non-neutral pathways towards building climate resilience in Phuket, Thailand.
Chapter 6
Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

Southeast Asia is one of the world’s most vulnerable regions to climate change (Naruchaikusol, 2016). According to the ADB (2012), Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar are the top three East-Asian countries whose populations will be affected by a sea level rise of one to five metres. As discussed, livelihoods and population movements in this region will also likely be affected (ADB, 2012; Marks, 2011).

The growing concerns around climate change-induced migration as well as the various impacts of climate change on people and the environment justify the argument from practitioners that the resilience of complex systems must be strengthened to help societies cope with the challenges that climate change imposes (e.g. Tyler and Moench, 2012). However, as described throughout this thesis, resilience theory and key resilience frameworks do not adequately address social justice issues. Given the reality that climate change is forecasted to worsen issues connected to equity, rights, and entitlements in the Global South, such as the unequal access to resources and benefits, and the unequal distribution of climate vulnerabilities, balancing social justice concerns with climate action is, therefore, imperative (Friend and Moench, 2013).

Following critics of resilience theory, such as Bahadur and Tanner (2014) and Friend and Moench (2013), I argue that resilience's neutral and post-political approach to planning for climate change must move towards critically questioning resilience for whom and by whom? Current approaches to resilience typically miss the mark about the social construction of climate vulnerabilities and, therefore, risk reproducing the inequities and injustices in society that put many marginalized people in vulnerable situations (Kaika, 2017).
Still, a need exists for understanding the trade-offs that occur when strengthening or building resilience into complex systems. Thus, my thesis addresses this particular need by exploring how structural violence theory helps practitioners assess the potential trade-offs of resilience building, especially during the vulnerability assessment stage.

My thesis, therefore, responds to the question: *What in (Thai) society must be transformed to address the social construction of vulnerability; and thereby ensure equal access, rights, or entitlements to resilience?* I argue that structures, such as elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination must be confronted to address the social construction of vulnerability, especially for Myanmar migrants.

In this sixth and final chapter, I discuss my theoretical contributions to resilience theory and planning for climate resilience. I also present recommendations for addressing structures, such as elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination, which shape structural violence in Thai society; and in turn, create or deepen vulnerabilities within a complex system. Finally, I summarize the realities of political decision-making in Phuket to reiterate further that current circumstances in Thailand create obstacles for a more equitable, inclusive, and transformative approach to planning for climate resilience in Phuket.

### 6.2 Thesis outline

In this thesis, I have summarized the reality of climate change and migration in Phuket, Thailand, giving focus to the day-to-day experiences of Myanmar migrants. Following the introductory chapter, I have explained in Chapter 2 why structural violence theory is relevant for helping climate resilience practitioners acknowledge the potential winners and losers when supporting the resilience of a complex system. I have also engaged with political ecology and critical disaster studies scholarship to demonstrate how climate resilience theory currently overlooks the
broader social, political, and economic factors that shape vulnerabilities and resilience.

However, where political ecology and critical disaster scholars primarily focus on place-based frameworks targeting the local scale, I have argued that structural violence theory is a valuable additional lens for climate resilience, particularly during vulnerability assessments. Political ecology, critical disaster studies, and structural violence all challenge the status quo at various scales, from the individual to the macro-level. The ability of a person to practice choice over their own lives and, thereby, influence their vulnerability or resilience, or that of others, are not thoroughly explored when applying local-level frameworks. Structural violence highlights the individual scale while also accepting the fluidity of scale. Both of which are essential for working in climate change and migration contexts given that impacts are exhibited across multiple geographical and temporal scales.

In Chapter 3, I have described my research design for exploring the structural violence at various geographical scales (e.g. Thailand, Phuket, and the Myanmar individual) to showcase the social construction of vulnerabilities in a complex system. By applying ethnographic methods, such as semi-structured interviews and photovoice, I gained deep insight into the daily lives of Myanmar migrants in Phuket. Also, given structural violence theory's focus on the social and institutional constructs that marginalize or create vulnerabilities for specific groups of people, the best way to explore the individual experiences of migrants was through an ethnographic approach.

Chapter 4 has provided a description of the political economy of Thailand and Phuket, and how structures, such as elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination all contribute to structural violence in Thai society. In Chapter 4, I have also discussed how the structures, which are deeply ingrained in Thailand and Phuket's governance systems, inhibit Thailand and Phuket's capacities to respond to climate change and migration challenges in ways that address social justice.
concerns, while also protecting and promoting the voices and rights of marginalized people.

To further showcase examples of structures, especially discrimination, which shape the structural violence experienced by Myanmar migrants in Phuket, I have dedicated Chapter 5 to describe the nuanced vulnerabilities of Myanmar research participants. I have demonstrated how institutions, systems, and actors in Thailand and Phuket oppress and marginalize Myanmar people. By using a structural violence lens, I have also explored how Myanmar people contribute to structural violence in broader society.

Pinpointing the varied experiences between research participants is essential to understanding the power imbalances and overlooked voices within marginalized groups. Understanding the complexities of the Myanmar population in Phuket will help create sensitive policies and practices that consider the needs and vulnerabilities of various sub-groups; for instance, women, undocumented migrants, and those belonging to different Myanmar ethnic groups. Considering and honouring the diversity of experiences in Thai society will also help resilience practitioners advocate for the inclusion and representation of people typically left out of decision-making and planning processes in Thailand.

6.3 Contributions to resilience theory and planning

Resilience is framed as innately natural and universal (Tyler et al., 2016). It also implies neutrality and post-political problem solving through technical solutions (Friend and Moench, 2015). Thus, resilience has a powerful resonance in public policy circles. For instance, the IPCC and the Government of Thailand accept resilience as a concept. Multilateral organizations, aid agencies, and governments tend to favour technical solutions over strengthening grassroots advocacy and democracy, given that technical solutions are tangible, quantifiable, and easy to administer (Abu-Zahra, 2005; Maiese, 2013).
However, as described in Chapter 4, post-political approaches to climate resilience risk overlooking and, thereby, reinforcing the social structures that create vulnerabilities. Applying resilience to any complex system, therefore, requires an explicit acknowledgement of the political nature of vulnerability (Adger, 2006; Dercon, 2006; Friend and Moench, 2015). Meaning, social institutions and norms that generate inequities and vulnerabilities in society also need political solutions; for example, solutions that encourage grassroots political activities that challenge dominant discourses (Escobar, 1995; Hart, 2001).

In this thesis, I have demonstrated how components of complex systems are vulnerable to compounding challenges of climate change and migration. However, such components also create vulnerabilities for others through structures that enforce vulnerabilities as embodiments of structural violence. By combining structural violence theory with resilience, I have accommodated critical concerns about post-political and neutral approaches to existing resilience theory and frameworks.

Through this thesis, however, I do not aim to provide evidence that climate change will increase human mobility from Myanmar to Thailand. Instead, I use the current experiences of Myanmar migrants in Phuket, as well as the political economy of Phuket and Thailand as examples for illustrating the complexities and challenges involved in resilience building, particularly at a time and in a region of increasing climate change and migration concerns. My research, therefore, serves as a precursor to the problems that future (climate) migrants may face in Thailand. It also highlights the structural violence in Thai society that must be considered and addressed when supporting resilience.

As discussed in Chapter 2, structural violence theory is primarily linked to research on health inequalities (Lane et al., 2004). Structural violence in environmental issues has not been extensively explored in academia (Morales et al., 2012). I recognize the potential in using structural violence theory to highlight the social
construction of vulnerability at multiple scales, including the individual, local, and national. By acknowledging structural violence, resilience practitioners can identify and plan for the broader social transformations needed to push resilience towards explicitly political goals.

As discussed in Chapter 1, a practical sequence to planning for resilience in Southeast Asia typically includes climate projections, impact assessments, vulnerability assessments, detailed planning and sectoral studies, and pilot projects (Tyler et al., 2010). Thus, it is reasonable to hypothesize that if resilience supporters sought to enhance the resilience of a complex system, such as Phuket, practitioners would primarily aim to identify how its institutions, systems, and actors are vulnerable to climate change using a technical lens.

Local government bodies in Da Nang, Vietnam, for example, are planning for resilience within the municipality through several action plans. Local government actors are taking the lead in training people on storm-resistant house construction, improving government staff facilities and training for early warning, and modelling potential future drought and saline intrusion impacts on water supply (Tyler et al., 2010). However, it is also clear that grassroots advocacy and protection of human rights is missing from the list of action plans.

As discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, components of complex systems are dualistic. They are both vulnerable and contributors to the vulnerability of others via institutionalized structures, such as elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination. Thus, resilience practitioners must make explicit in their vulnerability assessments that they will approach this step with the acknowledgment of the dualistic nature of complex systems. A vulnerability assessment coupled with a structural violence lens affords resilience practitioners the critical eye needed for a non-neutral and political approach to resilience.
6.4 Recommendations

After the focus of resilience practitioners transforms to an overtly political one by incorporating a structural violence lens, climate resilience strategies can then be framed in a manner that targets structural violence in Thai society while also planning for climate change. Doing so can produce long-term resilience that is inclusive and equitable.

As described in Chapter 4, resilience strategies have yet to be created for the island of Phuket. Now is an opportune time for resilience supporters to lobby for political approaches to planning for resilience; for example, an approach that acknowledges the rights of all inhabitants on the island, including migrants, to participate in decision-making and planning processes.

International migration has a net-positive impact on the Thai economy (Huguet et al., 2012). Thus, if appropriately facilitated, migration can be an impetus for Thailand's economic growth and resilience, since migrants are vital contributors to the functionality of many of Thailand's economic systems (e.g. Thailand's fishing industry). The Government of Thailand and Thai society at large have a responsibility to acknowledge and promote the civil rights of migrants (Huguet et al., 2012). Sound governance in Thailand is, therefore, needed to balance Thai interests while protecting migrants' rights and providing them with appropriate access to work, housing, and other services (Hugo, 2009).

However, as demonstrated throughout this thesis and in Section 6.5 of this chapter, leveraging a participatory and inclusive approach to policymaking and planning in Thailand is not easy given the widespread existence of elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination in Thai society. Economic interests of the Thai elite (e.g. wealthy business families, military government, high-level bureaucrats) frequently circumvent Thai laws, environmental concerns, and issues of social inequities and injustices (Lebel et al., 2011).
Therefore, ideally, sweeping reforms that tackle the structures that promote structural violence in Thailand are necessary to move the country and all its inhabitants towards a more democratic society. Doing so can improve the capacity of all stakeholders to respond to climate change and migration challenges in Thailand adequately.

As climate change is a relatively new issue for many decision-making and management actors in Thailand, there is a need to emphasize and combine social issues with technical expertise at the early stages of policy development. I propose resilience practitioners to consider the following strategies for taking a political approach to climate resilience in Phuket, Thailand, which can also address social structures (norms) that shape structural violence in Thai society (Table 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Structures (e.g. social norms) that shape structural violence in Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elitism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand public participation in resilience building</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for improved policies and practices for migrants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote collaborative relationships between governance actors at multiple scales and sectors</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Strategies for addressing structures that shape structural violence in Thailand.
6.4.1 Expand public participation in resilience building

Increasing public participation in resilience building can help reduce elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination in Thai society (Lebel et al., 2011; Marks, 2011). Resilience practitioners must promote fair and inclusive public engagement processes for all stakeholders and inhabitants in Phuket, especially labour migrants. Representation by and on behalf of marginalized and oppressed populations is an essential pathway for bringing issues of equity and justice to the forefront when setting priorities and strategies for climate action (Lebel et al., 2011).

The UNFCC highlights the importance of engaging residents in participatory urban planning processes (Broto et al., 2015). However, participation, as a concept, is often critiqued for maintaining existing power relationships (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Questions have been raised regarding the extent to which participatory processes enrol token representation of marginalized people and whether marginalized participants are given equal opportunities to interrogate the motivations of experts and other stakeholders (Broto et al., 2015). Participation is still regarded of as a tool for empowerment, citizenship, and promotion of the civil right to shape planning decisions (Gaventa, 2004).

Ultimately, participation is a messy and open-ended process that requires negotiation between stakeholders (Barton et al., 2015; Broto et al., 2015). Participatory planning processes should be used to decentralize decision-making power from elite groups in Thailand, to promote the co-construction of knowledge, and to push planning for resilience beyond technical solutions to a more fundamental discussion on alternative and political courses of climate action (Swart et al., 2003).

A bottom-up housing program in Thailand and Somoa’s community-based approach to planning for climate change are two positive examples of planners putting
marginalized people at the centre of decision-making and planning. For example, the Community Organizations Development Institute [CODI], a Thai public organization, implemented the Baan Mankong Collective Housing Program in 2003 to 2011. The program improved the lives and housing conditions of 90,000 households across Thailand (Norford and Virsilas, 2016).

Traditionally, upgrading informal settlements in Thailand is administered and funded solely by the national government or a third party. Residents, especially those living in poverty, are excluded from planning and implementation processes in the housing sector (Norford and Virsilas, 2016). However, the Baan Mankong Program facilitated a community-driven housing upgrade for informal settlements (CODI, n.d.).

As part of this unique program, people living in informal settlements worked closely with local government officials, specialists, universities, and non-governmental organizations to strategize community-housing upgrades. Once plans were finalized, CODI channelled infrastructure subsidies and housing loans from the Thai government directly to households in informal settlements (Boonyabancha, 2009). Baan Mankong allowed communities to upgrade their infrastructure and living environment according to priorities that they set. Communities also managed their upgrading budgets and chose technical assistance that they deemed appropriate (Boonyabancha, 2009).

The success of Baan Mankong is linked to the decentralized decision-making process that was supported throughout this program (CODI, n.d.). Baan Mankong also demonstrates that significant planning issues, such as housing for the poor, should not be dealt with solely through top-down, welfarist solutions. Instead, local partnerships and the integration of knowledge and experiences from civil society can resolve broader structural issues of exclusion and fragmentation (Boonyabancha, 2009). Similar principles should, therefore, be applied to planning for climate resilience throughout Thailand.
In highly vulnerable and small island geographies (e.g. Phuket), where government capacities and commitment to climate change and migration action is limited, a point of entry should also focus on bottom-up approaches. The Samoa Coastal Infrastructure Management Plans [CIM Plans] are examples of successful participatory and bottom-up initiatives regarding planning for climate change with coastal communities (Butcher-Gollach, 2015).

In 2000 to 2007, the World Bank funded a collaborative and locally-led planning process for reducing the climate vulnerabilities of coastal communities in Samoa. The outcomes of the project included the development of a national-level policy for the management of coastal infrastructure, as well as local implementation plans (e.g. CIM Plans) for Samoa’s coastline communities (Glovovic and Smith, 2014; Nelson et al., 2008). The CIM Plans were developed through facilitated government-community partnerships, as well as the inclusion of villagers' knowledge and experiences about vulnerabilities, which were also supplemented by technical studies (Butcher-Gollach, 2015).

Good planning practices in this project include an up-front recognition of the importance of partnership and meaningful consultation (Nelson et al., 2008). The style of consultation was also tailored to the local context and culture. The scale of consultation was substantial, involving nearly 300 meetings with villagers, each lasting nearly a day, as well as more than 120 district meetings, of approximately a half-day duration each (Nelson et al., 2008).

Until recently, consultation by the government with local villages was uncommon in Samoa. In the past, infrastructure (e.g. roads and seawalls) had been established without direct consultation or direct comment from villagers—a similar trend in Phuket's planning practices. Only in 2004 did Samoa’s National Planning and Urban Management Act explicitly implement a policy on stakeholder consultations. The Act holds the National Planning and Urban Management Agency responsible for consulting with stakeholders and providing them with all relevant information.
on the environment and planning area (Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2004).

The CIM Plan process involved a systematic and coordinated approach using the village chief to coordinate meetings. This approach valued the traditional model of local village decision-making processes through consensus under leadership of the village chief (Nelson et al., 2008). The CIM Plan process departed from traditional meeting practices by inviting women and youth to participate. Similar to Thai culture, the Samoan culture is hierarchical where everyone has a defined position and role in society. It is highly unusual to include women and youth in decision-making practices in Samoa because women and youths typically are not allowed to speak in public forums unless they have a ‘chief’ title (Nelson et al., 2008).

The CIM Plans appear to have worked well for Samoa and have been recognized for their excellence in planning practice due to the culturally appropriate process, the combined (top-down and bottom-up) partnership process, and the integration of CIM Plans to other disaster management frameworks and plans in the country (Butcher-Gollach, 2005; Glavovic and Smith, 2014). Still, it is important to note that the creation and implementation of CIM Plans required substantial financial backing from an international donor agency, as well as long-term commitment from the Samoan Government to the ongoing implementation of the plans.

Thus, for a similar participatory planning approach to be undertaken in Phuket, resilience practitioners must also lobby for support (e.g. advocacy and financial support) from international agencies such as the World Bank. Thai and Phuket's governing bodies must be pressured from international organizations to take on policies or frameworks that hold government agencies accountable for stakeholder engagement processes.

Consultations with inhabitants of Phuket will also then need to be adapted to Phuket's local culture and traditions. Resilience practitioners must, therefore,
advocate for the participation of people whose voices are typically not heard in Phuket’s planning processes, including migrants, while also taking into account representation from women and diverse ethnic groups, for example.

6.4.2 Advocacy for improved policies and practices for migrants

Resilience practitioners must also promote the rights and humane treatment of migrants in Thailand. Promoting social inclusion of migrants can tackle existing fragmentation and discrimination in society (Faetanini and Tankha, 2013). Through my research, I recognize three potential avenues for advocating for low-income labour migrants in Thailand:

1. Simplification of migration processes from Myanmar to Thailand;
2. Enhancing public awareness on rights and positive contributions of migrants in Thailand; and
3. Empowering migrants.

6.4.2.1 Simplification of migration processes from Myanmar to Thailand

Regularized migration through the MoU is one of the critical barriers to migrants safely moving across Myanmar and Thailand’s borders. The World Bank (2017) recognizes that migrant documentation procedures across ASEAN are restrictive. Barriers, such as costly and lengthy recruitment processes and rigid policies that constrain worker employment options and mobility, impact the wellbeing of the migrant and their ability to acquire official migration documents, including identification cards and work permits (World Bank, 2017).

The widespread perception that an influx of irregular migrants will have a negative impact on Thai society (as discussed in Chapter 4) strongly influences the creation and implementation of restrictive policies and exploitative practices in Thailand. However, a recent analysis by the World Bank (2017) states that without migrants in the labour force, Thailand's GDP would fall by 0.75 percent.
Easing restrictive policies on the regularization of labour migrants in Thailand, and simplifying the migration process from Myanmar to Thailand can improve the lives of migrants and strengthen regional economic integration (Faetanini and Tankha, 2013; World Bank, 2017). Thailand can benefit from making entry procedures for migrants less costly and less complicated (Huguet et al., 2012; World Bank, 2017).

As discussed in Chapter 5, problems for migrants already begin during the initial stages of migration; for instance, when Myanmar people deal with 'double brokers' in their homeland. Too many migrants and migrant households go into debt to pay for brokers and the other costs associated with moving to Thailand.

Resilience practitioners must, therefore, keep in mind that with the likelihood of immigration patterns increasing in Thailand (e.g. due to climate change and environmental degradation in the Mekong Region), migration policies and practices must be improved upon with full respect for the rights of migrants. Important goals include reducing inefficiencies, restrictive policies, and high fees for migrants (Hall, 2012).

Resilience practitioners in Phuket must also push for Myanmar and Thai governments to ensure that brokers undergo a formal vetting process, so that migrants travel with correct and up-to-date information about the MoU, and only pay standardized fees for moving to Thailand. Resilience practitioners should also continuously advocate for migrant workers' protection to improve the wellbeing of current and future migrants, including climate migrants.

The governments of Myanmar and Thailand should work in partnership with migrants and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. embassies, employers, and civil society) to devise a practical and robust migration protection policy and migration process (Hall, 2012). The policies must protect migrants from the exploitation of unregulated brokers and human traffickers; exploitation and abuse from employers;
and exploitation by officials, such as police officers and government officers (Hall, 2012).

In September 2006, the Global Commission on International Migration and a high-level dialogue at the UN called for a collaborative global response to the challenges of migration (World Health Organization, 2007). In 2007, the Ministers of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council endorsed the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migration Workers (ASEAN, 2017). Both Thailand and Myanmar signed the 2007 ASEAN Declaration (ILO, n.d.).

The general principles of the 2007 ASEAN Declaration read (ILO, n.d.):

1. Both the receiving states and sending states shall strengthen the political, economic and social pillars of the ASEAN community by promoting the full potential and dignity of migration workers in a climate of freedom, equity, and stability in accordance with the laws, regulations, and policies of respective ASEAN Member Countries;

2. The receiving states and the sending states shall, for humanitarian reasons, closely cooperate to resolve the cases of migrant workers who, through no fault of their own, have subsequently become undocumented;

3. The receiving states and the sending states shall take into account the fundamental rights and dignity of migrant workers and family members already residing with them without undermining the application by the receiving states of their laws, regulations and policies; and;

4. Nothing in the present Declaration shall be interpreted as implying the regularisation of the situation of migration workers who are undocumented.

It has been more than ten years since the declaration was signed, and as demonstrated through this thesis, migrants are still experiencing human rights abuses and exploitation during the migration process between Myanmar and Thailand, and also during their time in Thailand. The Government of Thailand also continues to enforce restrictive regularization (documentation) policies for migrant
workers. Thus, resilience practitioners must advocate for holding the ASEAN states accountable for their promises when signing the declaration in 2007.

Currently, it is difficult to identify a country with an ideal regularization program for (undocumented) migrants (Levinson, 2005; Mármore, 1999). Permanent regularization programs may be an option for countries where migration politics are controversial since governments often grant documentation according to the length of time a migrant has lived in the country. However, the length of time required to obtain a permanent residence permit is usually very long (e.g. three years in Thailand). Thus, it does not address the problem of the undocumented population in the short-term (Levinson, 2005). Also, one-off programs are contentious given that they are not long-term solutions to the needs of specific sectors. They also do not address migrant worker exploitation or undocumented migration issues (Levinson, 2005).

Given the shared challenges many countries face in designing and implementing regularization programs for migrants, it is still possible to identify theoretical approaches as outlined by the IOM. The intergovernmental organization identifies several essential guidelines for the implementation of a sound migrant regularization program (Mármore, 1999):

*Consensus-building*: Participatory planning is needed among different stakeholders regarding the scope and terms of the migration program (e.g. advocacy groups, employers, trade unions, political parties, and migrants). A plan for the widespread promotion of the program also needs to be designed and implemented.

*Sector learning*: Officials must learn about the details of the regularisation program with the assistance of immigrant communities. The involvement of non-governmental organizations at this stage is critical since many migrants are cautious of government agencies.
Integration of migrants into host countries: Promoting the social and economic integration of migrants is essential. Migrants must also be given opportunities to learn language and job skills that are vital to the success of current and future generations of migrants.

Flexible work visas: Migrants should have visas that are transferable across sectors to help ensure that migrants will not lose their status if they leave their job. Having easily transferrable visas can also deter workplace exploitation.

Strong migrant worker protection laws: Laws must protect the rights of migrant workers and ensure that employers pay fair wages and obey labour laws.

6.4.2.2 Enhancing public awareness on rights and positive contributions of migrants in Thailand

Although providing migrants with ‘official papers’ for living and working in Thailand (e.g. identification card, work permit, visa, passport) affords migrants basic entitlements such as work, housing, and regular border crossings, documentation is also a dominant threat over the lives of many migrants in Thailand. Migration experts have expressed concerns about the 'legalization' of people through identity documents (Hall, 2012).

For instance, ‘official documents’ are often tied to human rights issues, such as coercion, fear, and everyday concerns of those on the bottom-rung of social hierarchies (Abu-Zahra, 2008). Identification documents are repeatedly used for coercion and control by those in a position to discriminate against those who are targets of coercion in society (Abu-Zahra, 2008).

As demonstrated in Chapter 4 and 5, Myanmar migrants live in fear of Thai authorities, who exercise arbitrary carding or 'stop and search' practices towards migrants. Despite some migrants having official documents, many are still pressured by Thai authorities, who threaten to confiscate migrants’ official
documents. Thus, it is not enough to facilitate processes for migrants to acquire appropriate documents to live and work and Thailand, a profound transformation in public attitudes towards migrants, is also needed.

Misconceptions and negative attitudes towards migrant workers often lead to discrimination in society and the workplace. It also contributes to a society in which social exclusion and human rights abuses are tolerated (ILO, 2018). Resilience practitioners must, therefore, advocate for the rights of migrants and a more positive public perception of migrants in Thai society.

Planners and policymakers in Phuket, for example, can foster greater public dialogue on the rights of migrants and their positive contributions to the province and country. Practitioners can also promote learning opportunities between diverse stakeholders such as migrants, Thais, the media, academics, the private sector, and policymakers (Huguet et al., 2012).

Resilience practitioners in Phuket can learn from two education-based advocacy projects in India and Thailand. First, in 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization conducted lectures at the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi about the challenges, priorities, and success factors for developing a rights-based approach to urbanization in India, which includes the inclusion of migrants in planning practices (Faetanini and Tankha, 2013).

The lectures encouraged Bachelor and Master’s students to promote the 'right to the city' for migrants. Students were also shown that the inclusion of migrants in planning is necessary for creating sustainable urban development that promotes cultural diversity, social cohesion, and human rights (Faetanini and Tankha, 2013).

Second, ILO research states that the general public in Thailand has a limited understanding about the need for migrants in specific sectors, the positive contributions that migrants make to the Thai economy, and migrants’ rights to fair
and equal treatment (ILO, 2011). Thus, in 2013 to 2014, the ILO, IOM, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and World Vision International supported an advocacy and awareness campaign in Thailand to promote a positive image of migrant workers.

The Saphan Siang (Bridge of Voices) advocacy program sought to increase interactions between Thais and migrants. The campaign placed young Thai volunteers with organizations interacting with migrant workers, specifically in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Pattani. The youth ambassadors were encouraged to share their experiences on social media.

In 2014, there were 35 news pieces in traditional and online newspapers, dozens of articles on student websites, and three interviews with local radio stations about Saphan Siang. Youth ambassadors report to having developed a sense of empathy towards migrant workers and a greater awareness of what migrant workers can offer to Thailand (ILO, 2015).

Changing public attitudes is a colossal task, one that requires an extensive amount of time and resources. However, there are many opportunities to implement similar education programs and awareness campaigns in Phuket. The province has two universities, Phuket Rajabhat University and Prince of Songkla University. DISAC Phuket also works directly with Myanmar migrants on the island. Thus, resilience practitioners could replicate such learning models at local universities and non-profit organizations.

6.4.2.3 Empowering migrants

In addition to educating the public about the rights of migrants and their positive contributions to Thai society, migrant workers must also be informed of their rights. For example, the Mahidol Migration Center supports a thorough pre-departure training program to educate migrants on appropriate topics (e.g. fees, forms, and
language) (Hall, 2012). The training program should be an approved syllabus developed by experienced migrants and organizations working with migrants that understand the challenges and constraints involved in the migration process (Hall, 2012).

Migrants must be informed of the obligations of authority figures towards migrants, including employers having to pay migrants on time, and police officers having to protect them. Migrants should have the contact information of any consulates, migration services, and local non-profit organizations that could help them if they face a difficult situation in their village or workplace.

Informing migrants about their rights and how they can respond to exploitation, non-payment of salary, confiscation of documents, and abuse could help empower migrants to voice their concerns and bring their experiences to broader political discussions in Myanmar and Thailand. Encouraging migrants to mobilize can also address the issue of passive complicity towards structural violence, as discussed in Section 5.6.

The ILO promotes the initiation of policies and programs that empower migrant workers in Thailand. For example, the ILO states that migrant workers in Thailand should be allowed to organize and create migrant labour unions (Huguet et al., 2012). In the current absence of such policies in Thailand, resilience practitioners in Phuket can learn from best practices in Mae Sot where a gradual shift of Myanmar migrant empowerment is taking place (Arnold, 2013).

Myanmar migrants in this region are moving from relative passive exploitation at work towards protest and community organization (Arnold, 2013). Although Myanmar migrants in this region have not created a formal union, an association of migrant workers, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, and student activists has formed. In 1999, Myanmar student activists and migrant workers in Mae Sot created the Yaung Chi Oo Workers Association [YCO].
The association endeavours to protect workers’ rights in Mae Sot, while also supporting health care, maintaining safe houses for migrants, and providing other social services (YCO, n.d.). YCO is particularly active in mobilizing female textile and factory workers by encouraging them to collaborate with one another to improve their living and working conditions (Arnold, 2013). The overall strategy of YCO is to recognize the transformative potential of migrant workers and to help migrants exercise their power in ways that challenge and change the social, political, and economic structures that impact their lives in Thailand (Arnold, 2013; YCO, n.d.).

YCO has helped many migrant workers in Mae Sot take action, for instance through worker strikes or the pursuit of court cases for compensation claims against employers (Arnold, 2013; YCO, n.d.). After several years of pressure and dialogue, the Mae Sot Labour Protection Department has become more open to negotiating with migrants in this part of Thailand, which signals the growing empowerment of Myanmar migrants, at least in Mae Sot, to assert their desires in Thai society (Arnold and Pickels, 2011). Thus, practitioners in Phuket should partner with YCO to replicate a similar association for migrant workers on the island.

6.4.3 Promote collaborative relationships between actors at multiple scales and sectors

Fostering relationships to plan for climate resilience requires engaging stakeholders in different political and social hierarchies as well as across multiple scales (Cloutier et al., 2015; Sherman and Ford, 2014; Lebel et al., 2011). Partnerships between different sectors at multiple scales can reduce inefficiencies and increase effectiveness by supporting policy coherence between different sectors impacted by climate change, including the environment, migration, transportation, and housing (England et al., 2017).

An inclusive planning process that values collaboration and shared-learning helps address equity and social justice concerns, particularly for poor and marginalized
communities (Chu et al., 2015). Also, building relationships between different governance actors will help tackle competition issues within Thailand and Phuket’s governance systems (Lebel et al., 2011).

Collaboration is significant for addressing elitism and fragmentation in Thai society and politics (Lebel et al., 2011; Marks, 2011). The strengthening of networks between state actors and non-state actors will also help build knowledge on the vulnerabilities of marginalized groups in Thai society (Lebel et al., 2011).

Current resilience scholarship and frameworks promote shared-learning processes (Tyler et al., 2010). Thus, resilience practitioners in Phuket must continue to promote shared-learning and cross-scalar, inter-institutional approaches, while encouraging participation from migrants.

The Municipality of Quito, Ecuador is an example of a governmental body that has applied an inter-institutional and shared-learning approach to address the disjointed planning practices of multiple governance actors at multiple scales (Chu et al., 2015). UN-Habitat has identified Quito as an excellent case study for a climate resilience planning process that has prioritized public involvement, especially of marginalized populations, as well as inter-institutional collaboration (UN-Habitat, 2015).

Given that the national government had not yet implemented national laws or policies on inter-institutional climate action, the local government body of Quito positioned itself as a leader in addressing local climate change issues in a participatory manner (Carmin et al., 2012). For example, in 2006, Paco Moncayo, the former Mayor of Quito, championed the vision of forming an Environmental Secretariat in Quito to provide a nation-wide and international example of inclusive and collaborative approaches to planning for climate change in the Global South (Chu et al., 2015). The Secretariat includes multiple government departments such as the Risk Management Unit, the Territorial Planning Office, the Health
Department, the municipal water company, and members of the scientific community (Chu et al., 2015).

The Secretariat implemented successful strategies for increasing local awareness on climate change issues and building different stakeholders' capacities to address climate change-related challenges; including, gaining the support of powerful water companies to invest in water resources due to glacier retreat (Obermaier, 2013). The Secretariat's primary goals consist of holistically assessing the urban challenges linked to climate change, and ensuring that assessments and strategies are useful and meaningful to the most vulnerable people in Quito.

Thus, broad community representation and participation through public engagement in local decision-making are the central pillars of Quito’s approach to planning for climate change. For example, the Secretariat facilitates knowledge alliances between government actors, academics, technical experts, and local citizens, including youth and indigenous people (Obermaier, 2013).

Over the past several years, the Municipality of Quito has progressively refined its set of climate resilience actions, with extensive public input (UN-Habitat, 2015). The municipality's first concerted effort at climate action planning was its Climate Change Strategies Plan, which was approved in 2009. In 2012, Quito released its Climate Action Plan (2012-2016) (UN-Habitat, 2015).

Resilience practitioners in Phuket should, therefore, also focus on identifying local champions for climate change issues in Phuket and building a similar collaborative entity between different governmental units and stakeholders on the island. The newly formed unit can then focus on developing a climate resilience strategy for the province; for example, a strategy that respects the rights of all inhabitants to participate in the planning process.
As discussed in Chapter 4, various government departments in Phuket work on overlapping environmental issues but do not share plans or information with one another. National guidelines and policies on collaborative planning approaches in Thailand are limited. Thus, public officials in Phuket have an opportunity to innovate and be entrepreneurial, similar to the public officials in Quito, by initiating and promoting public agendas in recently popular and significant policy domains, such as climate resilience and climate migration.

The island of Phuket is also an internationally renowned tourist destination. Thus, the provincial government should capitalize on this popularity to bring local climate change and migration issues to broader national and international audiences. For example, the Municipality of Quito hosted international conferences on climate change and participated in joint-initiatives with multilateral organizations. Quito partnered with UN-Habitat to create the Manual for Local Climate Change Management and to share Quito's knowledge and best practices in creating inter-institutional climate change strategies (Carmin et al., 2012).

6.5 The realities of Phuket, Thailand

In the context of Phuket, Thailand, improved democracy and transparent governance are needed throughout the province and country to enable resilience practitioners to create and implement inclusive and collaborative resilience strategies that consider the vulnerabilities of various stakeholders on the island, including migrants. Unfortunately, Thai elites, such as the military junta, continue to hold power over national strategies and priorities, especially ones that emphasize industrial and business investments (as discussed in Chapter 4). Such traditional centres of power also assertively promote their interests by stressing their commitment to traditional Thai values, while also instilling fear in civil society (Gray, 2018; Marks, 2011).
Thus, waning democracy and widespread structural violence through elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination in Thailand mean that the national focus on business and industry growth will likely remain (Pongsudhirak, 2017). Civil society in Thailand, including migrants, must demand and be able to negotiate better treatment and greater inclusion in decision-making and planning processes (Marks, 2011). Only then can other priorities such as human rights, climate change, and inclusive planning practices be brought to the forefront.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, Myanmar migrant populations have diverse interests, needs, and vulnerabilities. Thus, resilience practitioners must also promote dialogue and collaboration between the diverse sub-groups of migrant communities, including women, undocumented and documented migrants, and people from varying ethnic groups.

In general, broader political and social transformations are needed to improve democracy and planning practices and reduce structural violence in Thailand. However, only time will tell if such transformations in Thailand will happen peacefully or violently in the country.

Looking at examples from history around the world, it is possible to identify places where structures were reformed through peaceful or violent political mobilization. For example, in the Philippines (1983-1986), citizens peacefully demonstrated against Ferdinand Marcos’ elitist dictatorship. The civil resistance, known as the People Power Revolution, forced Marcos into exile and facilitated Corazon Aquino’s assumption of the presidency (Hedman, 2006; Shock, 1999).

On the other hand, nearly 50 years ago in China, Mao Zedong unleashed the Cultural Revolution, a social movement also fundamentally about elite politics (Ramzy, 2016). The Cultural Revolution resulted in a decade-long violent conflict between Mao, who was supported by radical youths, against Mao’s perceived enemies, such as intellectuals and those with ties to the West or the former
Nationalist government. The campaign to “cleanse class ranks” claimed many lives (Ramzy, 2016).

Unfortunately, large-scale social transformations, in general, are typically limited, in part, due to widespread support for less costly, more measurable, and time-bound reforms (Maiese, 2013). Those who have authority to set governance priorities often favour preserving the status quo due to their vested interests in sustaining power. Therefore, structures, such as elitism, nepotism, fragmentation, and discrimination, will likely be preserved in Thailand because such structures support the behaviours, interests, and status of those in power in various geographical scales (Maiese, 2013).

At the national level, Thai elites, such as business leaders and military leaders, take liberties to pursue their interests through socially tolerated norms of structural violence. Regrettably, structural violence is systemic in Thailand (e.g. in Phuket’s governance institutions and amongst individuals in the Myanmar community). Thus, it allows actors across different scales to assert power over others and thereby contribute to the vulnerability of others. Consequently, this systemic issue decreases the likelihood of actors across multiple scales to collectively consider and support broader social and political transformations in Phuket and Thailand.
References


193


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Appendices

Appendix 1  Research consent forms and introduction letters

For Myanmar migrants

Consent form to participate in a research study

Study title: Transforming climate resilience: A case study of Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand

Researcher: Angelica de Jesus-Bretschneider

Sponsor: University of Toronto (Canada)

Supervisor: Professor Amrita Daniere

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study on Myanmar migrants and environmental issues in Phuket, Thailand. I would like to go over this consent form with you before you decide whether you wish to participate in my study. You are welcome to talk to family, friends, and colleagues, as well as ask me any questions before you make your decision. Participation in my study is completely voluntary. My intention as the researcher is to include only documented migrants as participants of my research. Even after you give consent to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. You can give consent in one of two ways: either by signing this form or giving verbal permission. There are no consequences for choosing not to participate in my study.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. For your time, your household will be compensated with a practical token of appreciation.

If you feel uncomfortable with answering questions, you are free to skip questions that you do not feel comfortable addressing. Your name will not appear in the study, unless you give me permission to do so. All information collected during my study will be kept confidential and will be stored and encrypted on my laptop. All information will be deleted after completion of my Ph.D. studies.

During our interview, I may ask clarification questions to your responses. Please be aware that I may be in touch after our interview to ask further clarification questions. If you do not wish to participate in any future discussions that may take place after our interview, please feel free to not take my request for a follow-up discussion after our interview. There are no consequences for choosing to do so.
Should you require information about service providers/NGOs that may be of use to you, I will try my best to provide you with information as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in my research study, you may contact the Research Oversight and Compliance Office – Human Research Ethics Program at the University of Toronto at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or +1 (416) 946-3273.

**Purpose of study**

My research seeks to: 1) to identify challenges faced by Myanmar migrants living in informal settlements in Phuket, Thailand; and 2) to create strategies for building resilience among Myanmar migrants to environmental problem in Phuket and strengthening migrants’ capacity to anticipate and respond to such challenges.

**Procedure**

As a documented migrant, you will be interviewed (approximately for one hour) about your living experiences and environmental effects in Phuket. Discussions may be audio recorded with your permission.

**Consent**

This study has been explained to me, the participant. My questions regarding this study have also been addressed. I, the participant, understand that I may choose not to answer some questions, and I know that I may withdraw from participating in the study at any point I wish. I agree to the use of information as described in this consent form.

**Please check all that apply:**

☐ I, the participant, agree to be interviewed as a participant for this study.

I, the participant, agree to be audio recorded during my interview session.

I, the participant, am willing to participate in follow-up/clarification discussions after the interview, if necessary.

*If the consent form was read to the participant, and he/she gave verbal consent to participate, please check here:

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<th>Participant’s name</th>
<th>Participant’s signature</th>
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If participating in the photography activity:

I, the participant, agree to take photographs for this study.

I, the participant, understand that I will be asked to select photographs for the purpose of Angelica’s research reports, dissertation, and presentations.

I, the participant, understand that I am not to take photographs of third parties.

If being loaned a disposal camera: I, the participant, understand that the camera is only on loan from Angelica, and that the camera is to be returned to Angelica in two weeks.

I, the participant, understand that the film from the disposable camera will be developed and digitized by a third party (e.g. photography store); or selected digital photos will be printed by a third party (e.g. photography store).

I, the participant, am willing to participate in follow-up/clarification discussions at a later point in time (after the interview), if necessary.

*If this part of the consent form was read to the participant, and he/she gave verbal consent to participate in photovoice, please check here:

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| Researcher: A.de Jesus-Bretsneider | Signature | Date |
Hello, my name is Angelica de Jesus-Bretsneider. I am doing my Ph.D. studies at the University of Toronto in Canada. I am here in Thailand conducting research on migration and climate change.

People all over the world are impacted by climate change effects, such as rising temperatures, extreme flooding, and drought. Climate change is also happening at a time when millions of people are continuing to migrate to different places in search of new opportunities. Through my research, I aim to bring attention to the connection between migration and climate change, and how the two phenomena affect people's socioeconomic development.

My research objectives are: 1) to identify challenges faced by Myanmar migrants living in informal settlements in Phuket, Thailand; and 2) to create strategies for building resilience among Myanmar migrants to climate change in Phuket and strengthening migrants' capacity to anticipate and respond to climate change.

I need participants to take part in my study. My intention as the researcher is to include only documented migrants as participants of my research.

The study will include a one-hour interview per participant. Some selected migrants will also be asked to take photographs of their daily lives and their living environments.

You are welcome and encouraged to ask me any questions. Please let me know if you would like more information.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Angelica de Jesus-Bretsneider
For professionals

Consent form to participate in a research study

Study title: Transforming climate resilience: A case study of Myanmar migrants in Phuket, Thailand

Researcher: Angelica de Jesus-Bretschneider

Sponsor: University of Toronto (Canada)

Supervisor: Professor Amrita Daniere

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study on Myanmar migrants and environmental issues in Phuket, Thailand. I would like to go over this consent form with you before you decide whether you wish to participate in my study. You are welcome to talk to family, friends, and colleagues, as well as ask me any questions before you make your decision. Participation in my study is completely voluntary. Even after you give consent to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. You can give consent in one of two ways: either by signing this form or giving verbal permission. There are no consequences for choosing not to participate in my study.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. For your time, you will be compensated with a practical token of appreciation.

If you feel uncomfortable with answering questions, you are free to skip questions that you do not feel comfortable addressing. Your name will not appear in the study, unless you give me permission to do so. All information collected during my study will be kept confidential and will be stored and encrypted on my laptop. All information will be deleted after completion of my Ph.D. studies.

During our interview, I may ask clarification questions to your responses. Please be aware that I may be in touch after our interview to ask further clarification questions. If you do not wish to participate in any future discussions that may take place after our interview, please feel free to
not take my request for a follow-up discussion after our interview. There are no consequences for choosing to do so.

Should you require information about service providers/NGOs that may be of use to you, I will try my best to provide you with information as soon as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in my research study, you may contact the Research Oversight and Compliance Office – Human Research Ethics Program at the University of Toronto at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or +1 (416) 946-3273.

**Purpose of study**

My research seeks to: 1) to identify challenges faced by Myanmar migrants living in informal settlements in Phuket, Thailand; and 2) to create strategies for building resilience among Myanmar migrants to environmental problem in Phuket and strengthening migrants’ capacity to anticipate and respond to such challenges.

**Procedure**

As a professional in migration, climate change, and/or urban planning, you will be interviewed (approximately for one hour) about your profession, as well as institutional support systems available for Myanmar migrants in dealing with climate change effects. Discussions may be audio recorded with your permission.

**Consent**

This study has been explained to me, the participant. My questions regarding this study have also been addressed. I, the participant, understand that I may choose not to answer some questions, and I know that I may withdraw from participating in the study at any point I wish. I agree to the use of information as described in this consent form.

**Please check all that apply:**

I, the participant, agree to be interviewed as a participant for this study.

I, the participant, agree to be audio recorded during my interview session.

I, the participant, give permission for my name to be shared with third parties.
I, the participant, give permission for my profession to be shared with third parties.

I, the participant, give permission for my place of work to be shared with third parties.

I, the participant, am willing to participate in follow-up/clarification discussions at a later point in time (after the interview), if necessary.

*If the consent form was read to the participant, and he/she gave verbal consent to participate, please check here:

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<th>Researcher: A.de Jesus-Bretschneider</th>
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Hello, my name is Angelica de Jesus-Bretschneider. I am doing my Ph.D. studies at the University of Toronto in Canada. I am here in Thailand conducting research on migration and climate change.

People all over the world are impacted by climate change effects, such as rising temperatures, extreme flooding, and drought. Climate change is also happening at a time when millions of people are continuing to migrate to different places in search of new opportunities. Through my research, I aim to bring attention to the connection between migration and climate change, and how the two phenomena affect people's socioeconomic development.

My research objectives are: 1) to identify challenges faced by Myanmar migrants living in informal settlements in Phuket, Thailand; and 2) to create strategies for building resilience among Myanmar migrants to climate change in Phuket and strengthening migrants’ capacity to anticipate and respond to climate change.

I need participants to take part in my study. I am looking to talk to professionals in urban planning, migration, and climate change in Thailand.

The study will include a one-hour interview per participant.

You are welcome and encouraged to ask me any questions. Please let me know if you would like more information.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Angelica de Jesus-Bretschneider
Appendix 2  Interview guides

*Semi-structured interview guide for Myanmar migrants*

- Please tell me about yourself.
  - How old are you?
  - Are you married?
  - Do you have any children?
  - Who do you live here with in Phuket?
  - Which ethnic group do you belong to?
- When did you migrate to Phuket?
- Where in Myanmar are you from?
- Why did you come to Phuket?
- Do you like living in Phuket?
  - Are you happy to live here?
  - What do you like about living here? What don’t you like about living here?
  - Do you like living here better than living in Myanmar?
  - How long do you plan to stay in Phuket?
- Do you work?
  - Where do you work?
  - What is work like?
  - How much do you earn per month?
- What are you monthly expenses? How much do you pay each month?
- Tell me what your day is like.
- Does anyone else in your household work? Where do they work?
  - How much do they earn each month?
  - Do they share their income with you?
- Do you keep in touch with family or friends in Myanmar?
  - Do you send money to your family?
    - How much?
- What are some problems you experience while in Phuket? In this village?
- Why did you choose to live in this village?
- Do you rent this house? How much? Do you pay for water and/or electricity?
- Have you ever experienced flooding here in this village?
  - What was that like?
- Are you happy with your water service? Can you please tell me what the service is like?
  - Do you have enough water each day?
  - Was there ever a time when you could not get water? How long did that last? What did you do?
  - Do you plan ahead for water shortages? How?
  - Do you plan ahead for floods? How?
  - If the well ran out of water, what would you do?
o If flooding happened in your house, what would you do?
  o Have you learned anything from past floods or past water shortages?
    Does it help you deal with future floods/water shortages?
• When you have a problem or question about your services or your documents, whom do you ask for help?
  o Do you know of any organizations that you can turn to for help?
• Have you heard of climate change before?
• Can you tell me what you think about the weather in Phuket?
  o How about the weather in Myanmar?
  o Do you notice any differences?
  o Have you noticed a change in weather since you moved to Phuket?
  o What do you think causes the weather to change?
• Do you think the weather affects your life in any way?
  o For example, your health?
• How do you feel about being a Myanmar person living in Thailand?
• Do you want to talk about anything else?
• Do you have questions for me?
Semi-structured interview guide for professionals (varies according person’s job and sector)

• What is your name?
• What is your job title?
• What are your responsibilities at work?
• What is your work department/office responsible for?
• What are the goals of your office/department?
• Can you please share any reports, maps, pictures, or statistics about climate change, migration, or urban planning in Phuket?
• Have you heard about climate change before? Do you see it happening in Phuket?
• Do you think climate change has an affect on people living in Phuket? Can you please explain?
• Do you think people living in Phuket are aware of environmental problems in Phuket?
• Does your office include meetings with migrants to create plans for Phuket? Or to inform them about the environment?
• Where are the environmentally sensitive or flood prone/at risk areas to live in Phuket? Do people live in these areas?
• Is anything being done to control where people build houses?
• What can be done to improve knowledge about environmental issues in Phuket?
• Is there anyone in your network who you think I should speak with in order to discuss similar questions?
• Do you want to talk about anything else?