

Climate Justice at the Ballot Box: Unpacking the Political Dynamics of Environmental Governance in Thailand's 2023 General Election Campaigns

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Abstract

The 2023 Thai General Election marked a turning point in national political discourse, with climate justice emerging as a central theme across party platforms. This study examines how three major political parties—the Move Forward Party (MFP), Chart Thai Pattana Party (CTPP), and Pheu Thai Party (PTP)—framed climate governance through the lenses of distributive, procedural, and intergenerational justice.

Drawing on qualitative content analysis of campaign materials and public debates, the study identifies ideological divergences in addressing climate challenges. The MFP emphasized grassroots participation and renewable energy; the CTPP focused on rural resilience and adaptation through carbon markets, and the PTP embedded climate goals within a broader socio-economic justice agenda. While all parties expressed commitments to equity, inclusion, and sustainability, challenges remain in implementation, enforcement, and participatory governance. This study contributes to understanding how electoral politics can foster more just and inclusive climate governance in emerging democracies such as Thailand.

Keywords: Climate Justice, Climate Change Policy, Election Campaigns, Thailand Environmental Policy

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Introduction

Thailand is facing profound climate change challenges, including rising temperatures, sea-level rise, and increasingly frequent extreme weather events (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2022; Supratid & Aribarg, 2022). These dynamics pose significant threats to agriculture, biodiversity, and the livelihoods of millions. For instance, sea-level increases lead to the loss of approximately 30 square kilometers of coastal land annually, directly impacting over 11 million people residing in vulnerable coastal regions (IMF, 2022). Coastal communities face compounded risks such as recurrent flooding, displacement and significant economic losses. Extreme heat has further reduced agricultural productivity, particularly in the growing of staple crops like rice and sugarcane, consequently exacerbating food insecurity and rural poverty (Prommawin et al., 2024). Farmers increasingly struggle to adapt to these erratic weather patterns, as directly affects their incomes and livelihoods. Marine ecosystems are also under threat, with coral bleaching causing significant biodiversity loss and undermining the livelihoods of coastal communities reliant on fisheries for sustenance and income (Supratid & Aribarg, 2022).

In response to these escalating challenges, Thailand's political parties have begun to incorporate climate-related policies within their platforms, marking a significant shift in stated political priorities. This growing focus reflects heightened public awareness being given to environmental issues and the urgent need for comprehensive climate action. As a result, political leaders now face mounting pressure to develop integrated strategies that balance mitigation and adaptation provisions while protecting vulnerable populations throughout this critical transition.

The 2023 Thai General Election, held on May 14 of that year, marked a pivotal turning point in Thailand's political discourse in which climate justice emerged as a central theme. This shift was driven by widespread public dissatisfaction toward the military-backed administration led by General Prayut Chan-o-cha. The Palang Pracharath Party, which dominated the political landscape, faced criticism for its inadequate environmental policies. Despite establishing the Thai Department of Global Climate Change, the Prayut Administration had failed to address the escalating environmental crises effectively. Notable examples of this inefficient governance included the worsening of PM2.5 air pollution between 2021 and 2023 and the Thai Government's rejection of the Thai Clean Air Act – the latter being a proposal championed by civil society and a range of political parties. Environmental governance failures were further evidenced by incidents such as the Ming Dhi Chemical Factory Fire in the Samut Prakan Province and the On Nut Waste-To-Energy Power Plant Controversy. These events highlighted Prayuth Administration's lack of regulatory oversight, which fueled public demand for

increased transparency and accountability. Efforts to introduce the Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Bill were similarly thwarted, underscoring the systemic governance shortcomings experienced (Springnews, 2022).

The Prayuth Administration's environmental missteps extended to policies that disproportionately marginalized vulnerable groups. For example, the enforcement of National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) Order 64/2557, as ostensibly aimed at curbing forest encroachment, disproportionately affected ethnic minorities, hill tribes and impoverished communities who rely on forests for their livelihoods. These policies prioritized conservation objectives at the expense of cultural and economic rights, which had the consequence of exacerbating social inequalities (iLaw, 2022).

Amid escalating public demands for political and environmental reform, the 2023 Thai General Election saw unprecedented emphasis being given to policies which advocated constitutional reform, Environmental Justice and socio-environmental equity. Liberal democratic parties and their allied coalitions – including the Move Forward Party (MFP) and the Pheu Thai Party (PTP) – here emerged as leading proponents of transformative change in environmental and social spheres. This focus signaled a broader and more diverse commitment being raised as to addressing climate governance challenges and advancing Environmental Rights.

The paper examines the strategies employed by the MFP, Chart Thai Pattana Party (CTPP) and PTP to address climate change and advance climate justice. Specifically, it investigates how these parties integrated climate issues into their political agendas, namely by focusing on mitigation, adaptation and socio-economic initiatives aimed at fostering justice and equity. Importantly, the utilization of a climate justice framework encompasses the foregrounding of distributive justice, procedural justice and intergenerational justice. As such, the present study evaluates the inclusivity and effectiveness of these approaches, from which critical insight is provided as to the evolving dynamics of climate governance within Thailand's political landscape.

Literature Review

Climate Justice as an Analytical Lens in Public Administration

This study is conceptually grounded in the climate justice framework, which has increasingly been adopted in environmental governance and public administration scholarship to interrogate how climate change policies distribute benefits and burdens, structure decision-making processes, and

account for long-term societal impacts (Schlosberg, 2001; Bulkeley et al. 2014; Boran, 2019; Mohtat & Khirfan, 2021). Rather than treating climate policy as a purely technical or environmental matter, the climate justice perspective foregrounds questions of power, inclusion, and governance capacity, making it particularly suited to analyzing climate policy within electoral and administrative contexts.

In public administration, climate justice thus is not only an ethical ideal but also a governance problem: it concerns how states allocate public resources, design participatory mechanisms, enforce regulatory responsibilities, and balance short-term political incentives with long-term sustainability. This study therefore mobilizes climate justice as a bridge concept connecting political discourse, administrative design, and distributive outcomes.

Three Dimensions of Climate Justice

Following established literature, the analysis operationalizes climate justice through three interrelated dimensions: Distributive justice, procedural justice, and intergenerational justice.

Distributive justice refers to the equitable allocation of climate-related benefits and burdens across social groups, regions, and economic sectors. In public administration terms, this dimension relates to budgetary priorities, welfare distribution, compensation mechanisms, and access to adaptive infrastructure. Climate policies framed around distributive justice raise questions about who receives state support, who bears regulatory costs, and how inequalities between urban and rural populations are addressed (Bulkeley et al. 2014; Chu & Michael, 2019; Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017).

Procedural justice focuses on the fairness and inclusiveness of decision-making processes. From an administrative perspective, procedural justice concerns the design of participatory institutions, transparency in policymaking, decentralization of authority (Fraser, 2009; Schlosberg, 2001; Young, 2011), and responding to marginalized communities (Adger, 2006; Romero-Lankao & Gnatz, 2019). Electoral discourse that emphasizes participation and decentralization can thus be understood as signaling particular administrative models of governance.

Intergenerational justice addresses the ethical responsibility to safeguard environmental resources and governance capacity for future generations. In public administration, this dimension intersects with policy sustainability, long-term planning, and institutional resilience, particularly in contexts where short electoral cycles often conflict with long-term climate objectives (Tremmel & Jörg, 2019; Tamoudi & Reder, 2019; Saraswat & Kumar, 2016).

These dimensions provide an analytically coherent structure for evaluating how political parties conceptualize climate governance and justice during election campaigns (see Table 1, below).

Table 1. Synthesized Components of Climate Justice: Definitions and Key Concepts

Climate Justice Component	Definition	Key Indicator	Concrete Idea	Key Research
Distributive Justice	Equitable allocation of benefits and burdens arising from climate adaptation measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair spatial and temporal allocation of resources. - Equal access to adaptive infrastructure. - Reduced socio-economic disparities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritize resource distribution to vulnerable groups/regions. - Address urban-rural disparities in climate adaptation. 	Bulkeley et al. (2014); Chu & Michael (2019); Eizenberg & Jabareen (2017).
Procedural Justice	Fair and inclusive decision-making processes for climate adaptation planning and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive participation of marginalized communities. 	Fair and inclusive decision-making processes for climate adaptation planning and implementation.	Fraser (2009); Schlosberg (2001); Young (2011).
Intergenerational Justice	Ethical responsibility to preserve resources and ecosystems for future generations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long-term policy sustainability. - Future-proofing adaptive measures. - Ethical consideration of future impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote carbon-neutral strategies. - Ensure infrastructure projects minimize long-term ecological damage. 	Tamoudi & Reder (2019); Tremmel (2019)

Climate Justice, Ideology, and Electoral Competition

While climate justice provides the normative and analytical foundation of this study, climate policies articulated during election campaigns are also shaped by ideological orientation and electoral competition. Political parties do not apply climate justice principles uniformly; rather, they selectively emphasize particular dimensions in ways that align with their constituencies, political identities, and governing traditions. Progressive parties tend to foreground participation and systemic reform; conservative parties prioritize economic resilience and market-based adaptation; and populist parties embed climate action within redistributive welfare narratives. These ideological differences shape how climate justice is framed, which governance mechanisms are highlighted, and which policy trade-offs are rendered politically acceptable (Bantel, 2023; Carter et al., 2018; Drecker, 2025; Renström et al., 2021; Vegetti & Širinić, 2019). Accordingly, climate justice is treated not as a fixed policy outcome but as a contested political construct negotiated through democratic competition and political-economic constraints.

To contextualize these dynamics, the analysis incorporates insights from political marketing and governmental power marketing as interpretive extensions rather than standalone (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2011; Needham, 2006; O’Shaughnessy, 2004; Savigny, 2008). From this perspective, political actors are strategic agents who design and communicate policy offerings in response to voter preferences, electoral rivalry, and legitimacy concerns. Climate policies—such as renewable energy transitions, carbon credit schemes, or compensation mechanisms—thus function not only as instruments of governance but also as political value propositions aimed at signaling competence, aligning voter expectations, and consolidating governing authority. This lens does not reduce climate justice commitments to symbolism; instead, it helps explain why certain justice dimensions are amplified while others are muted during campaigns, and why ambitious climate rhetoric may coexist with administratively cautious or ambiguous policy designs (Hase, Mahl, Schäfer, & Keller, 2021; Carter et al., 2018).

Conceptually, the framework contributes to policy analysis and environmental governance scholarship in three ways. First, it conceptualizes electoral discourse as a pre-administrative arena where future governance priorities and distributive logics are symbolically constructed. Second, it demonstrates that climate justice is filtered through ideology and electoral strategy rather than uniformly translated into policy commitments. Third, it underscores the need to analyze climate governance as both an administrative challenge and a political process, particularly in emerging democracies.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on document-oriented qualitative content and discourse analysis to examine how climate change and climate justice were framed in political party campaigns during Thailand’s 2023 General Election. It is situated within interpretive traditions in public administration and political analysis, which conceptualize policy discourse as a central arena through which political actors construct meaning, legitimacy, and governance priorities. Rather than assessing policy implementation or outcomes, the study focuses on electoral discourse, treating campaign narratives as strategic and ideologically informed representations of climate governance during moments of democratic contestation.

Three political parties were purposively selected: the MFP, CTPP, PTP. Selection was based on three criteria: explicit engagement with climate or environmental issues in the 2023 campaign; ideological differentiation—progressive (MFP), semi-conservative/conservative (CTPP), and populist

(PTP); and political relevance as major contenders or coalition actors. Other parties, such as Bhumjaithai, were excluded to maintain analytical coherence and depth, as the study prioritizes ideological contrast over comprehensive coverage. The analysis is therefore comparative but deliberately bounded.

Data were drawn from materials produced during the official campaign period (March–14 May 2023). Primary sources include party manifestos and policy documents, campaign speeches and statements by party leaders, social media communications from official party platforms, and transcripts or recordings of nationally televised debates and policy forums broadcast by Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS), Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT), PPTV Thailand and Thairath. Secondary sources—academic literature, policy analyzes, investigative journalism, and expert commentaries—were used to contextualize Thailand’s environmental governance landscape.

Analytical robustness was enhanced through triangulation across policy texts, public debates, and media communications. The analysis is guided by a climate justice framework—distributive, procedural, and intergenerational justice—used as sensitizing concepts rather than rigid coding categories. Data were thematically coded to identify recurring narratives, policy priorities, and justificatory logics, followed by cross-party comparison to assess ideological divergence and shared constraints.

As a document-based study, the analysis captures strategic communication rather than post-election outcomes and does not include interviews. These limitations reflect deliberate scope choices; future research could extend the analysis through elite interviews, community perspectives, or longitudinal policy assessment.

Results

Contrasting Visions: Three Parties with Disparate Ideologies and Approaches to Climate Change Policy

Move Forward Party: A Progressive and Transformative Approach

Founded in 2020, the MFP advocates for progressivism and liberalism. Under the leadership of Pita Limjaroenrat, the MFP emerged as a prominent progressive political force in Thailand. Building on the legacy of the dissolved Future Forward Party (McCargo & Chattharakul, 2020), the MFP advocates for democratic reform, Human Rights and environmental sustainability. The MFP has demonstrated a proactive approach toward meeting environmental challenges, addressing critical

issues (such as the Northern Haze Crisis) and introducing key legislative proposals on waste management, pollutant tracking, haze control and cross-border pollution (Prachathai, 2023).

In the 2023 Thai General Election, the MFP's climate policies, as anchored in the Thai Environment Progress Platform, invoked bold mitigation and adaptation strategies. The party's mitigation agenda, driven by a "Just Energy Transition" theme, aimed to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions by 19.5% by 2030 through initiatives such as solar panel installations, net metering, the phasing out of coal-fired power plants by 2035 and the transitioning to electric public transport (Move Forward Party [MFP], 2023d). Additional measures included the imposition of emissions caps for key industries, a cap-and-trade system, alternatives to crop burning and afforestation projects like the Pension Tree Initiative (MFP, 2023a). To address Thailand's vulnerability, reflecting the nation being one of the most climate-risk-prone countries globally, the MFP emphasized adaptation strategies such as the providing disaster-flood adaptation funding, enacting decentralized disaster management, instituting community-based warning systems and establishing of comprehensive water management (MFP, 2023a, 2023e). The proposed provision of equitable compensation frameworks and crop insurance for farmers further demonstrated the party's alignment with international resilience goals (MFP, 2023c). By integrating systemic reforms with innovative policies, the MFP positioned itself as a transformative force in climate governance practice.

Chart Thai Pattana Party: A Balanced Focus on Rural Resilience and a Green Economy Approach

The CTPP was established in 2008 (Nishizaki, 2018) to embody semi-conservative or conservative ideologies. The CTPP has maintained a strong influence in Thailand's rural and agricultural sectors. Under the leadership of Warawut Silapa-Archa, the Thai Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (2019–2023), the CTPP advanced its environmental agenda through its participation in COP26 and COP27, support for the Paris Agreement and establishment of the Thai Department of Climate Change and Environment (Manageronline, 2023). The party's 2022 "WOW" campaign emphasized waste management, alternative energy and sustainable development, thus demonstrating its adaptability to global challenges (Chartthaipattana Party [CTPP], 2023b; Springnews, 2023a).

In the 2023 Thai General Election, the CTPP emphasized the need for a balanced approach being taken as to climate policies, thereby integrating both mitigation and adaptation strategies. Its campaign slogan, "Green and Sustainable Practices: Driving Thailand's Next Generation Forward", highlighted this dual focus (PPTV, 2023). On the mitigation side, the CTPP prioritized ecosystem conservation, renewable energy advancement and legislative measures to address haze pollution – as

included the Clean Air Act and Transboundary Pollution Act (ThaiPBS, 2023). The CTPP's adaptation efforts centered on initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific Regional Carbon Credit Center (CCC), which aims to empower farmers in carbon credit markets and to promote sustainable agricultural practice (Springnews, 2023b). These initiatives sought to position Thailand as leading the formation of a green economy and to reduce the impacts of international environmental tariffs (Bangkokbiznews, 2023).

Notably, the CTPP's policies leaned more heavily toward adaptation than mitigation, with limited emphasis being provided on addressing global climate justice concepts like "loss and damage." The CTPP did not advocate the providing of financial assistance to vulnerable countries experiencing irreversible climate impacts, as reflecting its prioritization of rural resilience and farmer empowerment. By focusing primarily on creating a carbon-based economy, the CTPP's climate strategy underscored its commitment to local economic resilience over broader international climate obligations.

Pheu Thai Party: Integrating Climate Action into a Populist Framework Approach

The PTP was founded in 2008 with strong roots in both libertarianism and populism. Following the dissolution of the Thai Rak Thai Party and People Power Party (Peck, 2024), the PTP emerged as a consistently-dominant political force in Thailand. Rooted in the legacy of former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the PTP has focused on addressing income inequality and promoting social welfare, particularly in rural areas (Bowornwathana, 2004; McCargo & Pathmanand, 2005). The PTP has emphasized the need to strengthen healthcare, expand educational access and support economically-marginalized groups as part of its commitment to inclusive development.

In the 2023 Thai General Election, the PTP presented a comprehensive climate policy platform underpinned by principles such as "environmental uncertainty", Planetary Limits and the Triple Planetary Crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution). These policies aimed to safeguard Thailand while fostering sustainable development and aligning with global objectives such as those established at the COP28 (PTP, 2023; Voice TV, 2023). Mitigation efforts proposed here included advancing the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) economic model, reducing PM2.5 emissions, combating forest burning and addressing marine pollution. The adaptation strategies set out encompassed water management reorganization, erosion control, agricultural adaptation and environmental stewardship incentivization to enhance ecosystem resilience (Isaranews, 2023). Addressing the "loss and damage" challenge, the PTP proposed a "Clean Air for Human Rights Act" to enforce corporate accountability for pollution and to ensure compensation for affected communities through the Polluter Pays Principle (The Citizenplus, 2023). These policies reflected the PTP's desire to integrate global climate goals with solutions tailored to Thailand's unique socio-political challenges.

The climate policy platforms of the MFP, CTPP and PTP demonstrated distinct approaches, as shaped by their respective ideological orientations and governance priorities. The MFP advocated for progressive systemic reforms through renewable energy adoption, emissions reduction and decentralized disaster management – all of which resonated strongly with younger voters. The CTPP emphasized a balanced mitigation-adaptation approach, the leveraging of carbon credit markets and the enacting of anti-haze legislation to empower rural communities and to enhance economic resilience. In contrast, the PTP integrated the need for climate action within its populist framework, therein addressing "environmental uncertainty" and the Triple Planetary Crisis through regulatory reform, the BCG Model and the Polluter Pays Principle to ensure corporate accountability and equitable compensation for affected communities. The diversity of these climate platform policies is illustrated in Table 2, below.

Table 2. Summary of Collective Climate Change Policies Across Key Thai Political Parties During the 2023 Thai General Election Campaign

Aspect	Move Forward Party	Chart Thai Pattana Party	Pheu Thai Party
Mitigation Strategies	Expanding renewable energy, phasing out of coal and promoting electric vehicles.	Conservation and restoration of natural resources, enactment of a Clean Air Act to address urban and international pollution.	Emissions reduction through the BCG Model and stricter regulation over pollution sources.
Adaptation Strategies	Agricultural adaptation, disaster adaptation funds and decentralization of disaster management.	Establishment of a regional carbon credit hub, renewable energy research and development empowering farmers through education and participation in carbon markets.	Water management reorganization, agricultural adaptation and incentives for environmental stewardship.
Addressing Loss and Damage	Equitable compensation framework for communities affected by extreme weather and agricultural losses.	No explicit focus on "loss and damage", emphasis on adaptation and farmer empowerment through carbon credits.	Emphasizing Polluter Pays Principle but neglecting comprehensive mechanisms for irreversible climate impacts.

Climate Justice in the Policy Platforms and Divergent Approaches to Justice of the Parties

Climate justice does not manifest automatically in political platforms. Instead, achieving climate justice requires governments to deliberately address the distributive, procedural, and intergenerational dimensions of climate change. The respective climate justice agendas and policies of the MFP, CTPP and PTP reveal distinct approaches being taken toward addressing the ethical, social

and political aspects of climate governance, yet each party was witnessed to incorporate distributive justice, procedural justice and intergenerational justice into their platforms – consequently targeting vulnerable groups and employing inclusive mechanisms to mitigate climate vulnerabilities.

Distributive justice is central to the policy frameworks of all three parties, albeit with varied emphases being given. The MFP, recognized for its progressive stance, sought to promote distributive justice by enabling households to sell surplus renewable energy back to the grid at market rates, thus ensuring equitable participation in the green energy transition (MFP, 2023d). Furthermore, the MFP supported small-scale agricultural initiatives by seeking to provide subsidies for biogas systems and disaster compensation funds for farmers affected by extreme weather events. The PTP proposed to advance distributive justice by enforcing the Polluter Pays Principle, resultantly holding industries accountable for PM2.5 pollution and ensuring compensation for affected communities – particularly in heavily-polluted provinces like Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai (PTP, 2023). Additionally, the BCG Model was foregrounded, as promotes economic opportunities in low-income areas by fostering recycling and resource recovery industries. The CTPP, on the other hand, emphasized adaptation through the opportunities provided by carbon credit markets – as exemplified by successful initiatives in Suphan Buri where farmers had gained financial benefits while contributing to sustainable practice (Springnews, 2023a).

Procedural justice featured prominently in the policy platforms of all three parties, although their approaches to this aim differed in execution. The MFP prioritized the requirement for community engagement, decentralization and inclusive decision-making. This approach was designed to empower local authorities to autonomously declare disaster zones, consequently enabling swift responses to crises such as seasonal flooding in the Chao Phraya Basin. Additionally, the MFP stated its desire to involve communities in disaster preparedness by training volunteer groups and implementing localized early-warning systems in flood-prone areas. The CTPP emphasized the role of public consultation in environmental legislation (including the Clean Air Act) and transboundary pollution control (CTPP, 2023a). Similarly, the PTP underscored the need for participatory pollution management systems, thereby allowing local governments and communities to collaboratively tackle sources of pollution (such as PM2.5 and forest burning).

Intergenerational justice was a cornerstone of the respective parties' visions, reflecting a commitment of these political entities to manifesting sustainability and resource conservation for future generations. The MFP promoted intergenerational justice through investments in renewable energy – such as via the proposal to subsidize solar panel installations for urban and rural households and to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The MFP's afforestation initiative, as targeted over 200,000 acres of green spaces in deforested regions, was positioned to complement its plan for Thailand to transition to electric public transportation within seven years as a means of collectively enhancing ecological resilience. The CTPP encapsulated its commitment to this aim through its slogan of “A Sustainable Country for All Generations”.

This was stated to be operationalizable through mechanisms like carbon credit markets and drought-resistant crop varieties designed to combat climate impacts in arid regions (CTPP, 2023b). Similarly, the PTP integrated this concept into its broader environmental framework and key initiatives – such as by setting out plans for a nationwide transition program toward electric vehicles alongside targeted support for taxi drivers in Bangkok and the issuance of 19 million acres of land title deeds dedicated to tree planting as part of its carbon neutrality goals. Additionally, the BCG Model illustrated was designed to promote sustainable industries like urban mining, to transform electronic waste into valuable resources and to foster efficient resource utilization (Isaranews, 2023).

All three parties focused on addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, albeit with different priorities being established in this endeavor. The MFP targeted farmers, urban residents and industrial workers, setting out a vision where local people would be enabled to transition to green jobs. In addition, the MFP's crop insurance scheme was proposed to ensure financial protection for farmers in flood-prone areas. The CTPP focused on rural communities and farmers impacted by pollution, whereby the tangible successes of Suphan Buri's carbon credit markets were pointed to as illustration of the financial gains available and the increased awareness that could be developed as to sustainable practice. The PTP extended its reach to low-income urban populations and upland environmental stewards (via support being given as to progressing garbage mining practice). Furthermore, it was stated that reforestation programs associated with financial incentives would be continued in reflection of how previous efforts had conserved water sources while generating income streams for affected vulnerable groups (Isaranews, 2023).

Each party arguably underscored its commitment to equity and fairness through their stances of instituting inclusive mechanisms. The MFP set out the provision of green finance initiatives, renewable energy incentives and participatory governance structures able to empower marginalized communities and local governments. Here, it was argued that the subsidizing solar panel installations for low-income households would not only reduce energy costs but also enable participation in renewable energy production. The CTPP asserted its intention to leverage carbon credit markets and legislative frameworks (such as offered through the Thai Clean Air Act) to support rural and local communities in participating in the reaching of haze management solutions. The PTP argued it would enforce the Polluter Pays Principle by holding polluting factories in industrial zones accountable for environmental damage while further advancing the BCG Model to transform urban waste into economic opportunities and to promote sustainable development (Voice TV, 2023).

In conclusion, the climate justice policies of the MFP, CTPP and PTP all reflected a shared commitment to integrating distributive justice, procedural justice and intergenerational justice into their platforms. In their 2023 Thai General Election campaigns, the MFP emphasized decentralization and grassroots engagement, the CTPP prioritized economic empowerment through adaptation strategies and the PTP focused on comprehensive socio-economic reforms (see Table 3, below).

Table 3. Summary of Climate Justice Characteristics Across Key Thai Political Parties During the 2023 Thai General Election Campaign

Climate Justice Component	Move Forward Party	Chart Thai Pattana Party	Pheu Thai Party
Distributive Justice	Gained economic benefits from renewable energy and sustainable agriculture reaching vulnerable communities.	Prioritized carbon credit markets to empower farmers and compensated pollution-affected communities.	Implemented Polluter Pays Principle and economic opportunities provided through the BCG Model for low-income and rural communities.
Procedural Justice	Community involvement in emissions monitoring, disaster preparedness and sustainable transportation.	Public consultation on drafting key legislation like the Clean Air Act; community engagement in pollution-related issues.	Local authority empowerment through participatory pollution management, community-involvement in shaping policy.
Intergenerational Justice	Investment in renewable energy, electric public transportation and green spaces & resilience to ensure long-term sustainability for future generations.	Sustainability emphasized through carbon credit markets and agricultural practice alongside a slogan of "A Sustainable Country for All Generations."	Support for BCG Model, electric public transportation and effective water management to ensure long-term resource conservation and carbon neutrality measures
Targeted Vulnerable Groups	Farmers, urban populations, local residents, industrial stakeholders and local governance structures.	Farmers, agricultural communities and pollution-affected rural populations.	Vulnerable, rural and low-income urban populations, including upland environmental stewards and farmers.
Inclusive Mechanisms	Green finance, renewable energy incentives and tree planting for the economic empowerment of vulnerable groups.	Carbon credit markets for farmer empowerment and participation in climate action.	BCG Model for economic opportunities in recycling and resource recovery alongside community-led pollution monitoring and response.

Discussion

Viewed through a political marketing lens, these divergent climate justice framings can also be understood as strategic value propositions tailored to distinct electoral constituencies, rather than purely technocratic policy designs.

The MFP, as rooted in an ideology aligned with progressivism, advocated for systemic reforms centered on renewable energy adoption, emissions reduction and decentralized disaster management. These policies resonated strongly with younger voters, which positioned the party as a champion of transformative climate action. In contrast, the CTPP, whose discourse reflected a conservative ideology, emphasized a balanced mitigation-adaptation strategy via the leveraging of carbon credit markets and anti-haze legislation to empower rural communities and enhance economic resilience. Finally, the PTP, in adhering to a populist framework, integrated climate action by addressing "environmental uncertainty" and the Triple Planetary Crisis through regulatory reforms, the BCG Model, targeted support being provided for urban and rural vulnerabilities and the Polluter Pays Principle to ensure corporate accountability and equitable compensation for affected communities.

While political parties with divergent ideological foundations adopted varied climate change and climate justice policies (Böhmelt et al., 2015; Midlarsky, 1998; Ward, 2008), the increasing global and public priority of climate change came to be reflected in the dominant discourses of Thai political parties in the 2023 General Election. In this context, climate policies were positioned as a key mechanism through which to capture voter demand – a trend aligned with global political dynamics where environmental issues are utilized as a strategic platform in electoral competition (Liao & Ruiz, 2022).

The diverse interpretations and applications of climate justice by different Thai political parties highlighted how their strategies had come to be linked to established theoretical frameworks. Scholars – such as Schlosberg (2001), Boran (2019), Bulkeley et al. (2014) and Mohtat and Khirfan (2021) – have emphasized that climate justice encompasses three interconnected pillars: equitable resource distribution, inclusive decision-making processes and intergenerational responsibility. The approaches adopted by the MFP, CTPP and PTP reflect varying degrees of alignment with these principles, as shaped by their ideological orientations and targeted constituencies.

The MFP demonstrated a strong alignment with the principles of distributive justice and intergenerational justice. Its proposed renewable energy initiatives – such as subsidies for low-income households – were stated to allow significantly-reduce energy costs while empowering communities to

generate and sell solar power, thereby fostering economic resilience (MFP, 2023b, 2023c). The MFP's commitment to procedural justice was evident in its plans for community-led emissions monitoring programs to engage local groups and to emphasize inclusivity and democratic decision-making (Fraser, 2009; Schlosberg, 2001; Young, 2011).

However, the implementation of the MFP's ambitious proposals was liable to encounter significant challenges, both financial and infrastructural, in Thailand – as illustrated by Newell and Mulvaney (2013) and Bainton et al. (2021). For instance, delays in integrating renewable energy projects into the limited capacity of the Thai national grid has historically hindered the realization of such aims (MFP, 2023d). These systemic barriers thus manifested barriers for the MFP in translating its vision into effective and scalable climate justice policies.

Similarly, the CTPP emphasized distributive justice by prioritizing rural economic empowerment. The CTPP's proposed initiatives – such as carbon credit programs – were stated as being able to allow Thai farmers to access supplementary income while promoting sustainable agricultural practice (CTPP, 2023b). The CTPP also asserted it would support farmers in adopting eco-friendly methods and engaging in carbon exchange markets, exemplifying its distinctive approach toward addressing historical and geographic inequities (Walker & Bulkeley, 2006).

Nonetheless, the CTPP's procedural justice proposals remained underdeveloped. While the party emphasized the need to enhance stakeholder engagement in legislative processes, its discourse lacked a concrete and actionable framework to ensure meaningful participation. Strengthening procedural justice through mechanisms such as town hall meetings and digital platforms is essential in broadening stakeholder involvement and in fostering more inclusive decision-making processes (Grasso & Sacchi, 2015; de Ridder et al., 2023). The lack of concrete steps proposed here limited the ability to successfully reach the aims held.

The PTP presented an accountability-centered framework, within which the Polluter Pays Principle was positioned as a flagship initiative for achieving climate justice. This approach was presented as allowing the allocation of justice by mandating the assumption of corporate responsibility for environmental remediation and by compensating affected communities – as a means of achieving effective distributive justice. In Thailand, households impacted by pollution have reportedly already received direct compensation under this framework through fines being imposed upon polluters (Voice TV, 2023). Additionally, participatory pollution monitoring programs, as involve local groups

collaborating with governments, have been highlighted as a mechanism able to enforce environmental regulations (The Citizenplus, 2023).

However, the PTP's proposals were liable to encounter significant challenges, namely as the implementation of such initiatives would have been constrained by the inefficiencies of Thailand's enforcement mechanisms (Bhudasri, 2017; Sitthisuntikul et al., 2020). These systemic limitations undermined the feasibility of holding polluters accountable and of ensuring the consistent application of fines. Furthermore, the overall policy framework appeared somewhat contradictory and lacked clarity in the plans for its practical execution. This reflected a gap between the PTP's ambitious rhetoric and the actionable steps needed to achieve its stated goals, leaving the effectiveness of its climate justice agenda uncertain.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The 2023 Thai General Election marked a pivotal moment in integrating climate justice into Thai political discourse, with three major political parties – the MFP, CTPP and PTP – presenting distinct frameworks for climate governance within their respective campaigns. This study has examined their respective approaches to climate justice, primarily focusing on how the dimensions of distributive justice, procedural justice and intergenerational justice were foregrounded.

The analysis presented here has revealed that the MFP emphasized transformative and community-driven policies, particularly through renewable energy initiatives and decentralized disaster management. These strategies aligned closely with the principles of distributive justice and intergenerational justice whereupon inclusivity and empowerment were prioritized. However, challenges such as plan scalability and the capacity of the Thai national grid constituted significant barriers to the full implementation of these initiatives. In contrast, the CTPP concentrated on setting out policies designed to build rural resilience through adaptation strategies, including carbon credit markets and sustainable agricultural practice. While these policies were established as being able to effectively empower rural/local communities, the lack of robust procedural justice mechanisms invoked (such as meaningful stakeholder engagement steps) had the potential to limit the broader impact of the proposals. Finally, the PTP adopted a populist framework, thus integrating accountability measures (such as the Polluter Pays Principle) as a means of achieving socio-environmental equity and economic development. Despite these efforts, the enforcement challenges likely to be faced and the limited industrial accountability witnessed in Thailand reflected the need for enhanced regulatory capacity to comprehensively meet those aims.

While the inclusion of climate justice in the political platforms of Thailand can be seen to have represented progress being made, systemic barriers (including infrastructural limitations, regulatory weaknesses and insufficient inclusivity in governance frameworks and political decision-making) remained unaddressed. Closing these gaps is essential in realizing equitable and sustainable climate governance in Thailand's future.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research on climate justice policies in Thailand should prioritize four key areas. First, studies on policy outcomes and scalability should assess the long-term impacts of initiatives like the MFP's renewable energy programs and the CTPP's carbon credit schemes – therein focusing on adaptability and the reducing of regional disparities. Second, enhancing inclusivity in climate governance requires the exploring of participatory tools that empower marginalized groups (e.g., rural and indigenous communities) while integrating indigenous knowledge and comparing participatory approaches across different contexts to identify best practice. Third, the addressing of gaps in the enforcement and regulatory mechanisms available involves investigating a range of barriers – such as industrial non-compliance, weak frameworks unable to improve administrative capacity and the lack of advanced monitoring technologies. Fourth, and finally, comparative and cross-sectoral analysis should be given as to Thailand's policies with those of neighbors like Vietnam or Indonesia. Additional studies on the economic impacts of climate justice policies and the role of youth engagement through grassroots movements and digital advocacy will also provide critical insight as to how best to foster equitable and sustainable climate governance in this context.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

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