

Scott, Paul Monae. Differentiating between Tsunami as hazard and tsunami as risk: A case study of the 26 December Tsunami in Phuket, Thailand. (BSc Honours thesis in Disaster Risk Science, 2004)

The tourism-dependent community of Phuket, Thailand was devastated by a tsunami that struck its Andaman coast on 26 December 2004. Major physical damage occurred to most of Phuket's popular beachfront resorts and both tourists and locals were killed by the wave impact. Phuket's response to the initial tsunami event was a rapid rebuilding of tourism facilities and rehabilitation of the tourism industry. The vulnerability of the local economy due to its reliance on tourism became apparent as Phuket experienced a critical decline in tourists for several months after the tsunami. This study argues that Phuket's experience of the tsunami hazard – the immediate shock – was less significant than the longer term economic impacts. Differentiating between tsunami as hazard and tsunami as risk allows for exploration of distinctions and contrasts via a conceptual lens of disaster risk and an examination of risk reduction via characterising hazard and risk components. The research illustrates why it is necessary to view hazards such as tsunamis through a risk lens in order to explore the sometimes more devastating medium- to long-term impacts caused by incidents, differentiating between the immediate impacts of a disaster and the longer-term consequences that more often follow.