Earthquake to ecotourism in Taiwan:

Sustainable livelihoods challenges following a crisis event

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Abstract

After a major earthquake in Taiwan in 1999, the Taomi community, a rural location in the mountainous part of the country, faced a number of livelihood impacts. But the earthquake disaster was not only a crisis; it presented residents an opportunity to transform their situation and solve their livelihood problems through developing ecotourism. The development of ecotourism required experts and scholars being invited to conduct an education and training programme to provide residents with ecotourism industry skills and knowledge, and establish their ability to alleviate poverty in Taomi community. This study examines the changes brought by ecotourism to this community over the past decade using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. The aim of this study is to explore and examine the relationships between the various elements of community capital when ecotourism is used to provide sustainable development as a solution to a crisis event.

The study adopted a theoretical framework of social constructionism, using a range of data-collection methods to create a holistic picture of the ecotourism development in the Taomi community. In all, 26 residents and 10 experts were interviewed, with semi-structured and in-depth interviews, in face-to-face settings, and 3 focus group interviews conducted (involving another 15 residents). Interviewees were interviewed extensively; follow-up interviews were found necessary to clarify and further explore their perceptions and attitudes. Other data was collected data through participant observation, and examining documentary evidence, to be combined with the interviews findings, to crystallise emergent research. The aim of this triangulation was to better understand the whole picture of the ecotourism development in the Taomi community after the 921 earthquake crisis.
This study uses the Sustainable Livelihood Approach and analyses the positive and negative changes to its six forms of capital—natural, human, physical, financial, social and cultural assets as perceived by all the interviewees from Taomi. These are documented through the social representations of respondents. A significant finding of this study is that a new ‘political capital’ asset should be adopted to examine ecotourism development applying the Sustainable Livelihood Approach lens. Political capital—essentially power and access to benefits—affected all interactions of the six forms of capital between the NGO groups, organizations, groups, and individuals in Taomi ecotourism development. Investigation of this element and discourses of power are a major contribution of this thesis.

The entire Taomi ecotourism development was based on the NGO groups contributing their human capital, conducting ecotourism education and training programmes. An even more significant, essential factor was for the residents to identify a vision of a better, more attractive life associated with the whole eco-village paradigm - to give direction to and guide the various ecotourism stakeholders’ participation in and sharing of the benefits and power brought by developing sustainable ecotourism. This study proposes introducing a community-based ecotourism model to explain the dynamic relationships at play between political, natural, human, physical, financial, social and cultural capital in this ecotourism development case, and further suggests that community trust and core values were, and remain, essential in Taomi’s adoption of a socialist approach to developing sustainable ecotourism. It is also vitally important that all stakeholders commit for the long-term; NGO groups should play a continuing consultant role, particularly regarding interdisciplinary ecotourism courses and ecotourism planning, to assist maintain a healthy ecotourism community. These suggestions are designed to help reduce and resolve negative expressions of political
capital and move toward a fairer sharing of benefits and power among all Taomi stakeholders.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previous been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.

To be best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signature:  

Date:
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Chapter 1
Introduction

“...After the earthquake everyone was thinking over and talking about how Taomi should go about transforming and reinventing itself. At the time that all this wondering and talking was going on, everyone had enough to eat, but they were expecting another quake any time, and if there might be another quake, they didn’t dare be out working or go inside a building. So the majority of people had gathered along the bank of the stream outside the Taoyuan Primary School classrooms, and they thought over and talked about what Taomi might do in future, how they would develop in a new way ...” (F1, P.1)

“...after the major earthquake everyone had been badly injured or otherwise seriously affected. Everyone in Taomi was fortunate and settled; safety had not been badly affected as a result of the earthquake, but people’s whole view on life, their sense of things, was quite shaken, people are really ... so very very tiny in the scheme of things. That time was quite significant in people’s contemplating what life is all about...” (R3, P.1)
1.1 Context

Ecotourism has stolen the limelight of tourism development over the past few decades, a result of its green-friendly image which continues to correlate with consumption fashion. Indeed, while neither tourism nor ecotourism has a blemish-free development record, many institutions have held this sector up as a ‘holy grail’ solution to development challenges in both the West and emerging economies. Ecotourism may have experienced rapid growth – with a suggested annual rate of between 15% and 20% in the 1990s (Weaver, 2001) – and receiving the United Nations seal of approval during the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE) in 2002, but it is still a minor part of the tourism industry, and is unlikely to ever exceed a market share of perhaps 5%. Nevertheless this ‘magic’ solution to the sustainability challenges of globalisation, particularly in rural and marginal areas, has gained a high profile and acceptance. Indeed, there has been growing interest in how tourism as a whole can be used as a development tool for places facing all sorts of natural and societal challenges. In 2007, for example, the tourism branch of APEC carried out a workshop examining ‘Tourism Responses to Crisis’. This took the specific standpoint that the industry needs to plan for swift action in response to crisis events; but it also presented tourism development as a potential route out of trouble for destinations that have suffered some crisis. This thesis examines these trends in a rural community setting in Taiwan.

In line with many other emerging economies, Taiwan has pursued the development of ecotourism as a means of capitalising on its natural and cultural resources. In 2001, the Taiwanese Government implemented a “two-day weekend” policy (Council of Taiwan Labour Affairs, 2006). In addition, Taiwanese incomes have increased significantly over recent years. These are the main factors that have contributed to Taiwanese people altering their lifestyles and allow them more leisure time to arrange and engage in a variety of recreational and leisure activities. According to Taiwan Tourism Bureau (2005) statistics, the average rate of domestic travel for Taiwanese citizens was more than 90% between 2003 and 2005. This has lead to a diversification of tourism offerings, including nature-based, and multicultural tourism, the latter involving indigenous communities. Ecotourism in particular is becoming recognized as a popular tourist activity in Taiwan.
Taiwan’s entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2002 exerted enormous pressure on the agricultural industry, particularly in rural and indigenous areas. To help the rural community overcome the hardships this caused, the Taiwanese Government introduced a series of measures to enhance the agriculture industry’s productivity and competitiveness (Taiwan National Park, 2007). One was to change existing production and operation methods to encompass greater diversification and product quality. At the same time, the development of ecotourism was considered an effective way to help diversify and improve traditional production methods in rural areas. To improve the declining economic significance of rural communities, especially those recovering after the 921 earthquake disaster, the government is encouraging the development of ecotourism in local communities through policies providing general guidelines and designating ecotourism areas (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2002a; Taiwan National Park, 2007).

As a consequence, in recent years the ecotourism phenomenon has become increasingly prevalent, and many peripheral communities in Taiwan have begun to capitalise on the economic opportunities that it has presented (Taiwan National Park, 2007). Nevertheless, based on my observations, ecotourism development in rural areas is often hampered by massive simplistic replication without differentiating local characteristics. Society is increasingly becoming aware that many operators and communities have indiscriminately imported operational models that exhibit very different attributes, and are grossly incompatible with the scale or the unique characteristics of the local culture/s (Taiwan National Park, 2007). This encroachment of non-authentic culture and landscapes is a negative consequence resulting from rapidly changing market tastes, and increasingly sophisticated consumer behaviour. From my observations, many ecotourism communities swiftly adapt to market trends that accommodate the conventional expectations of tourists but give scant consideration to maintaining the integrity of the local social, cultural, and natural resources.

In particular, there is a lack of public understanding about what ecotourism actually means, and the ecological concepts which should underlie and embody ecotourism operations (Weaver, 2001). It is seldom the case that operators exercise the principles and concepts of ecotourism adequately. Ecological concepts are often adapted to
‘dress’ tourism products simply as a means to access targeted market segments and
enhance products’ marketability. It has become apparent that in many cases
“ecotourism” is merely popular terminology, and ecotourists are often misled by the
operators’ misinterpretations of ecotourism operation, which in turn distorts virtually
all ecotourism concepts (Wight, 1993). Significantly, most current approaches in
ecotourism focus on enhancing the environmental education aspect and minimising
ecotourism impacts on the area toured. There has been less emphasis, however, on
presentation of local NGOs’ role in guiding ecotourism education and training, and
their long-term accompaniment and consultation role, and how it influences
community-based ecotourism development after crisis events.

1.2 Background to Research Problem

The 921 earthquake on September 21, 1999, measuring 7.3 on the Richter Scale,
devastated central Taiwan (Huang & Min, 2002). Damage caused by the earthquake
included 2,416 deaths, 11,443 people severely injured, 44,338 houses completely
destroyed, 41,336 houses severely damaged, and an estimated cost of NT$300 billion
from these shocking statistics, there was great psychological trauma suffered by the
people in the regions affected. As shown in the opening quotes, many local residents
were left feeling shocked, stressed, and helpless in the face of this unexpected natural
event, on both an individual and collective level (Arnold, 1980).

It is important to understand what constitutes a crisis and disaster. A crisis is an
undesired, extraordinary, often unexpected, and time-limited process with ambivalent
development possibilities (Glaesser, 2006). Many researchers note the brief
characteristics of a disaster or crisis emerge as incorporating a triggering event;
intense threat; urgency; a short time for decision-making; and an inability to deal with
the situation among those directly affected (Faulkner, 2001; Weiner & Kahn, 1972;
Keown-McMullan, 1997; Fink, 1986); a turning point involving both positive and
negative change (Keown-McMullan, 1997); and an unstable and dynamic situation
(Fink, 1986).
In the initial crisis event, the most important issue is how to design planning strategies for handling and control of different crisis situations with varying time pressures and threat level stages (Burnett, 1998; Page et al., 2006). Specifically, when a crisis or disaster threatens a tourism destination, all of these changes have to be responded to by relevant public and private organisations who will deal with them (Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2004). Both the public and private sectors should set up a leadership organisation that embraces and considers tourism management in crises and disasters. This leadership organization plays a significant role in developing a set of techniques and tools for crisis management that seek to lower potential negative changes when a crisis event cannot be avoided (Page et al., 2006). The emergency services are also a crucial crisis management issue within the leadership organization’s activity sphere, incorporating the police, and a decision-making structure which requires effective and appropriate responses in a timely manner during a disaster situation (Huque, 1998).

Different organizations may, however, end up in competition, potentially creating impediments to effective coordination for the sharing of scarce public resources (Comfort, 1990). Differences between internal and external cultures and methods of operating impede communication and co-operation between organizations (Faulkner, 2001). Thus understanding and collaborating with different internal (e.g. business unit, staff, and managers) and external (e.g. other agencies and organisations, the public, the media, and tourists) stakeholders is a highly important issue in implementing emergency services for disaster strategies (Hill, 1994; Ritchie, 2004). Further, integrating different cultural organizations with key internal and external stakeholders is important for achieving the organizational objective of disaster crisis planning and management (Smallman & Weir, 1999; Ritchie, 2004).

Nevertheless, as Faulkner (2001) and Law et al. (2007) point out, crises and disasters can sometimes have potential positive changes, quite apart from the negative impacts – transformations evolving from events can create innovations or new markets. Thus for example, developing ecotourism can bring economic benefits to improve community livelihood problems after a crisis event. If a community attempts to develop an ecotourism industry, however, it is important that they must understand ecotourism’s definitions and key characteristics to avoid developing mass tourism. Hetzer (1965) was the first to identify defining principles of ecotourism: “minimizing
environmental impacts; respecting host cultures; maximizing the benefits to local people; and maximizing tourist satisfaction” (cited in Page & Dowling, 2002, p.56). Nevertheless, as is demonstrated in the next chapter, ecotourism definitions have diverged widely from these original four principles, and over 80 have now been examined in the tourism literature (Fennell, 2001). But the main definitive principles and characteristics of ecotourism remain much the same, with building environmental awareness, providing financial support for conservation and socio-economic benefits, providing empowerment for local people, and environmental education; and respecting local culture being key (Wallace & Pierce, 1996; Dowling, 1996; Honey, 1999; Pedersen, 1991; Ross & Wall, 1999; Fennell, 1999). These are used as central guidelines to lead ecotourism development toward a sustainable future and avert negative changes.

How sustainability is manifested in the development process has also been the subject of critical enquiry, particularly as it requires a holistic perspective. The UK Department for International Development (DfID) proposed the Sustainable Livelihoods framework as a means to “analyse the complex livelihoods of rural people” with the aim of reducing poverty in developing countries (Lee, 2005, p.216). This model has recently been used in tourism settings to understand the positive and negative changes brought by this activity to people’s asset base (Ashley, 2000). Cater and Cater (2007a) amended the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) in a coastal community setting to examine different forms of community capital – natural, physical, financial, human, social, and cultural assets. This model forms the basis of the analysis in this thesis, and is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

In ecotourism development, when visitors arrive in ecotourism communities, they can bring not only economic benefits but also costs to the community in the form of socio-cultural and environmental damage (Weaver, 2001). These changes, both positive and negative, influence the perceptions of residents towards ecotourism development. These changes are often complex and mutually-interrelated; there are many examples in the natural, physical, financial, human, social, and cultural spheres.
Most of the research literature on financial change is in strong agreement that ecotourism can bring a number of direct economic benefits by creating employment opportunities for individuals and increasing community revenue (Zeppel, 1998). Other indirect benefits are: that funding to support and protect cultural heritage and natural areas can be gleaned from ecotourism budgets (Weaver, 2001); resident participation in conservation work (Belsky, 1999); and residents’ attitude to ecotourism (Pretty & Smith, 2004). In contrast, Weaver (2001) points out negative changes accompanying such phenomena as the purchase of land, and establishment of infrastructure and services. And arguably ecotourism income can reduce agricultural activities such as commercial agriculture (Langholz, 1999; Lindberg et. al., 1996). Furthermore, West & Garrier (2004) stress local residents almost always pay more of the costs entailed by the environmental conservation form of tourism; they seldom share fairly in economic benefits gained. Developing the physical infrastructure or ecotourism facilities brings financial opportunities and benefits into community, a positive aspect of physical change. But ecotourism development entails financial costs such as maintenance of land, labour costs, and marketing (Weaver, 2001).

The human capital requires that residents must be appropriately educated and trained to acquire the knowledge and skills to engage in the ecotourism industry servicing tourists. Beaumont (1998) points out that environmental education or eco-guide services are a critical factor in sustainable natural-setting areas. Thus good human capital skills and knowledge can bring further financial capital into the community.

Ecotourism is intended to be able to improve the local quality of life, enhance community network relationships, and encourage friendly interactions with tourists, thereby enhancing mutual understanding of different life styles and cultures, all developing social capital. Further, Stronza & Gordillo (2008) note communities with strong social capital can solve the political challenges posed by development. Nevertheless tourism developments can often cause a negative change to local lifestyles and the quality of livelihoods (Wearing & Neil 1999).

Ecotourism development helps local people understand how to improve and maintain traditional culture and heritage values, their cultural capital (Scheyvens, 1999; Ross & Wall, 1999) and increases interaction and exchange opportunities regarding
socio-cultural differences with a broader population (Weaver, 2001). Additionally, ethnicity, culture, and history aspects also affect and link to community conservation work (Wunder, 1999). In contrast, Weaver (2001, p.120) claims that socio-cultural costs are often experienced through “cultural and social intrusion, imposition of an elite alien value system, and erosion of local control”.

It is vitally important for ecotourism to protect, maintain, and enhance the natural environment (Weaver, 2001); promote conservation of the local environmental resource (Buckley, 1994; Sirakaya & McLellan, 1998); and provide environmental education or guide services in sustainable or natural-setting areas (Beaumont, 1998). If this is not achieved, negative changes to the natural capital will result in disturbing wildlife and habitats; crushing or clearance of vegetation; stresses; erosion (Simons, 1988; Tallantire, 1993; Tyler, 1989; Buckley, 2004); soil compaction (Boo, 1990; Buckley, 2004), and vegetation damage (Liddle, 1997; Buckley, 2004); introduction and subsequent penetration of exotic species (Dickson, et al., 1987; Buckley, 2004); increasing noise; pollution, and traffic congestion (Buckley, 2004). Maintenance of natural capital is fundamentally dependent on the integrity of the other capital assets, and this is developed in the relationship of the building blocks of the sustainable livelihoods approach (Cater & Cater, 2007b).

Based on the above categorisation, social capital has weakness and is insufficient to fully explain power and inequality issues (Jones, 2005). Cater & Cater (2007a) note that the power relationship of different stakeholders generated some significant effects in community–based tourism, which is not a homogeneous construct (Burkey, 1993). A successful ecotourism development therefore also has to depend on good political capital to lead economic, socio-cultural, and environmental issues. Observing the machinations of community development for this thesis lead to examination of the political aspect of the process, an aspect bound up with community empowerment. Onyx & Benton (1995, p.50) define such empowerment as “located within the discourse of community development (it is) connected to concepts of self-help, participation, networking, and equity”. Sofield (2003) notes that empowerment in tourism and sustainable development requires consideration of the political and socioeconomic environment. He also argues that sustainable tourism which does not include empowerment of the community rarely results in good development (Sofield,
Many researchers additionally propose four forms of empowerment necessary to determine successful tourism development in a community: political, social, economic and psychological empowerment (Brown, 2002; Friedman, 1996; O’Neal & O’Neal, 2003; Scheyvens, 1999, 2003; Timothy, 2007). Indeed, empowerment is the process of transferring relevant powers (or control) to the community and relevant community stakeholders (individuals, groups, and associations) (Brown, 2002; Chambers, 1993; Laverack & Wallerstein 2001; Lyons et al., 2001). Significantly, the key meaning of empowerment will often be to disturb different powers in a dynamic process, reflecting mutual interaction between economic, social, and environmental issues (Pearce, et al., 1996; Murphy, 1985).

Timothy (2007) notes that developing real empowerment hardly exists anywhere in the world. This study also argues that political empowerment alone is not sufficient to resolve all political change issues. Political capital has to embrace resident participation and local organization leadership, addressing disparate power and benefit conflicts in rural communities. It is resident participation in the decision-making processes of ecotourism development that is particularly important. The decision-making demands equitable consideration of their opinions, concerns, and questions regarding the ecotourism venture, and any good feasibility guidelines for designing ecotourism projects, or policies for implementation, which must take into account community organizations and societal groups as well as individuals (Scheyvens, 1999; Sofield, 2003; Fennell & Dowling, 2003; Hall et al., 1997). Resident participation in the tourism planning process demonstrates the critical need for the incorporation of their views and benefit (D’Amore, 1983; McIntosh & Goelder, 1986; Sofield, 2003; Madrigal, 1993); Lankford & Howard, 1994). Stronza & Gordillo (2008) suggest that residents can assist in building social capital to support the sustainable conservation goal, and catalyse local organizational leadership’s ability and skills, when residents intend to translate economic benefits into wider aims. Organizational leadership and leader attributes play critical roles in employing democratic ways to encourage more resident participation in decision-making.

With strong organizations, communities can do more to effectively implement long-term management, and share benefits and resources (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). A good leader’s ability will be reflected in their handling of public affairs surrounding
Ecotourism, particularly solving different conflict issues between various stakeholders, such as conflict over social power and benefits (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995; Close & Scherle, 2007). By contrast, if community organizations are weak, barriers to environmental conservation may arise (Barrett et al., 2001; Becker, 2003; Weinberg, Bellows & Ekster, 2002). The leadership or leader can play a connective role to link promotion of government ecotourism policy and planning, and local residents’ understanding of that government policy and planning. Tourism leaders need to support government ecotourism planning to protect a region’s ecological environment (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Owen, Witt & Gammon, 1993). Local political capital issues thus concern and underpin the sustainability of a community’s other assets, its financial, physical, human, social, cultural, and natural capital.

As well as these various changes brought by ecotourism, it is important to consider external influences with regard to the social understanding of power being linked with the “external relationship of a community to the world market, to Western aid agencies, and to NGOs themselves” (Butcher, 2007, p.88). Indeed, NGOs play a critical role, being involved in many different functions to catalyse successful ecotourism development, but they themselves are highly political. NGOs, for example, perpetrate their own organisations’ ideological characteristics; bring to bear their expertise, and provide advice to the various stakeholders; and catalyse community democracy (Butcher, 2007). Nevertheless, NGOs are often key planners and educators assisting and guiding community–based ecotourism development. NGOs provide initial funding for policy and planning; and policy and planning strategies for ecotourism developments to assist local people establish their own policies and planning, particularly regarding biodiversity resources in the rural community (Holtz & Edwards, 2003; Sofield, 2003). NGOs can act to practically implement relevant governmental ecotourism policy and planning to realize their policy objectives in communities. Significantly, local residents themselves have to study and acquire appropriate knowledge and information from the professional ecotourism field, particularly those in rural communities. So the NGOs’ here, can indeed play a highly significant role providing ecotourism education and training programmes to local residents; agencies have to conduct such programmes from the beginning, for a successful ecotourism development in a rural community.
Stronza & Gordillo (2008) noted that education training opportunities programmes catalyse personal growth, provide greater confidence, and create more new skills and thinking, leading to community residents putting forward novel ideas for ecotourism management projects. Few of the current education and training programmes are truly interdisciplinary; integrating coverage of ecological environment, and the operation and management of small tourism in community-based ecotourism development settings is a challenge. Cole (2005) noted that community education in tourism has two main aspects to address: service provision and sustainability. This study points out that the literature on ecotourism education in rural communities usually comes from either an environmental and/or a tourism perspective. Sustainability education has to not only provide training on protecting and conserving the environment, but also educate residents to participate in public affairs. Thus environmental education should adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to also develop the knowledge, awareness, participation, attitudes and values, and skills of individuals and community (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999). This guideline with its five objectives is offered to teachers to articulate the essential aspects and ensure broad coverage in the environmental education they provide.

For resident participation it is important to consider community identity, and this may require an understanding of relevant knowledge and concepts of community environment to further identify place as ‘sense of place’ concept (Relph, 1976; Tuna, 1980; Buttimer & Seamon, 1980; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001); or place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992; Tuan, 1980); self-identity (Proshansky et al., 1983); self-esteem enhancement (Korpela, 1995); and community value enhancement (Scheyvens, 1999, Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). When local residents understand these concepts, community participation helps to further establish the goal and vision of achieving sustainability in the community, involving residents in environmental activities (Vincent & Thompson, 2002). Thus, successful education requires going through an education and training programme to give rise to awareness to alter residents’ behaviour and attitudes (Sweeney & Wanhill, 1996). In general, many communities lack a real understanding of decision-making (Sofield, 2003). Many researchers stress the meaning of value and the need for public education on community participation and empowerment (Simmons, 1994; Connell, 1997; Pearce,
Similarly, many researchers note that community participation in educational opportunities and training encourages significant enhancement of conservation (Scheyvens, 1999; Ross & Wall, 1999; Vincent & Thompson, 2002). Indeed Cole (2005) suggests that in tourism education and training programmes in community-based tourism have to develop capacities and requirements such as building confidence with knowledge and ideas, cross-cultural understanding, tourist needs, tourism and product development, marketing, finance, and food services. Particularly important service quality issues are how to interact with residents to reduce tension and misunderstanding (Robinson & Yee, 1996; Pearce, Kim & Lussa, 1998; Coles, 2005).

Niesenbaum & Gorka (2001, p.13) offer five features of the education programme they studied: “international experience; interdisciplinary collaboration; community interaction; experiential, and service learning; and campus component; and consistency with our institution’s objectives”. They also comment that tourism education should be not overdeveloped to avoid driving negative changes in community-based ecotourism (Niesenbaum & Gorka, 2001). Tourism training was therefore insufficient in their study. But the tourism education sector is still a controversial issue in ecotourism development. This study argues that if there is insufficient tourism training, it is hard to enhance service quality and satisfy tourists expectations. Further, this study suggests that avoiding overdevelopment requires the implementation of ecotourism rules and policy to set limits. Currently, the holistic ecotourism industry is encountering the critical question of how to establish reliable criteria for community-based ecotourism education.

Based on these concepts and theories, this thesis examines some significant issues regarding different social representations from different stakeholder groups. Using the SLA it presents and examines the views of different residents, groups, organizations, and NGO groups within ecotourism communities. These are examined through individual social representations. Social representations play an important role in the area between individual social identity and groups (Moscovici, 1981; Dougherty et al., 1992). Pearce et al. (1996, p.2) demonstrate that “social representations are concerned with understanding everyday knowledge and how people use this knowledge and common sense to understand the world in which they live and to guide their actions.
and decisions” (Billing, 1993; Halfacre, 1993; Moscovici, 1981). Social representations can link the wider community ecotourism issues included in financial, physical, human, social, cultural, natural, and political capital. Social representations theory is a very broad theory that cannot be narrowed down to any single method or model covering all social representations. It does, however, reflect the complexity of rural social relations surrounding ecotourism development. Using social representations theory provides greater understanding of the connection between the detail of the content and structure of social representations (Breakwell & Canter, 1993; Breakwell, 1993; Good, 1993). Thus, this study attempts to provide a better understanding of social representations of the relationship of ecotourism education and training issues, and the negative and positive changes in community assets associated with community-based ecotourism development.

1.3 The Problem Statement

This study focuses on the Taomi community in Taiwan, based on its position as a community pioneering ecotourism development. It is considered a paradigm of successful ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake disaster and has received many subsidies and rewards from the Taiwanese government. Additionally, mass media interest has further promoted the growth of ecotourism in Taomi. Nevertheless, the extraction of local natural, and cultural resources, and conflict over economic benefits has also brought pressures onto the host community, economically, socio-culturally, environmentally, and politically, and challenges to Taomi’s original values, beliefs, and cultural systems (Scheyvens, 1999; Belsky, 1999; Vincent & Thompson, 2002; Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Tsaur et al., 2006; Sofield, 2003). This thesis seeks to examine the function of the ecotourism education programme led by the NGOs and the empowerment of the Taomi community after the 921 earthquake crisis event. This study asks “what perceptions and knowledge do residents of the Taomi community have regarding the changes and conflicts brought by ecotourism after the 921 earthquake disaster?” Furthermore, it also seeks to ask “should ecotourism be used as a development tool, in the manner of Taomi village, following crisis events?” The specific research questions posed by this study are presented in Chapter 4.
1.4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the relationship of ecotourism development and its influence on community capital in a community-based ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake crisis, paying particular attention to the role NGOs played in this process. The following objectives were set to guide the research:

1. to examine ecotourism’s use as a development tool to improve community livelihood and alleviate poverty;
2. to investigate the nature of the ecotourism education and training programme in relation to a specific ecotourism development;
3. to identify to what extent political capital is central to ecotourism development;
4. to examine the relationship of positive and negative changes to all community assets; and
5. to establish an empirical study to develop a useful framework for community-based ecotourism development which can be applied after crisis events worldwide.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study makes an important contribution to the state of knowledge regarding ecotourism development in emerging economies, and is part of a newly developing body of work from the Sinic world. Further, using the Sustainable Livelihood Approach helps us understand the relationship between the financial, physical, human, social, cultural, and environmental forms of capital in ecotourism development. Further interrogation of the importance of political capital takes this model forward in a theoretical way. Ecotourism education and training programmes, a central aspect of community-based ecotourism development, also require further investigation. This study aims to establish a benchmark to judge their effectiveness. These all represent significant contributions to current knowledge of ecotourism development.
Social representation theory has been utilized in previous research of changes brought by tourism. However, social representation theory has been less often adopted to present different representations to understand the relationship of ecotourism changes between NGOs and residents in a community-based ecotourism development following a crisis event. This study presents a dynamic model of community-based ecotourism to explain the relationship of all positive and negative changes in community-based ecotourism (see Chapter 8). Furthermore, it seeks to provide useful research that interrogates everyday public understanding of ecotourism development and its potential for sustainable outcomes when used as a response to a crisis event.

1.6 Study Scope and Methodology

This study provides an exploration of a holistic picture of community ecotourism development in a single case. The basic design of this study was ethnographic, using triangulation of data methodology, comprising in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, and documentary analysis for the data collection process. The aim of triangulation in this study is to mutually reinforce and offset any insufficient data or weaknesses of each technique. In the individual interviews, respondents were residents, and expert interviews involved some members of the NGO groups. Different open ended, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used with these two groups to probe for deeper evidence or data in relation to significant events from my informants. Another interview format adopted focus group techniques: residents provided and shared their similarities and differences of opinions, and memories of experiences during the ecotourism development process. I used participant observation to research the interactions of Taomi residents in some key activities and meetings concerning ecotourism issues. To add to observation evidence, I took field notes, photos and digital video footage to record evidence in the research field. Documentation was used to confirm and interrogate evidence from sources other than the three different interview formats, and participant observation. This also verified the reality of ecotourism education and training, and ecotourism activities and events in Taomi’s ecotourism development. These techniques were used to interrogate the conceptual framework as illustrated in figure 1.1. The aim was to explore and
measure the research posed by 5 objectives (see p.14) and the research questions as below.

RQ1: What changes have occurred in community capital as a result of ecotourism development? (objective 2, 3, 4)

RQ2: How have community social representations influenced outcomes? (objective 2, 3, 4)

RQ3: How does education of residents help them understand the concepts of ecotourism and responsibility for environmental protection? (objective 1, 2)

RQ4: What are the difficult issues in ecotourism educational and training programmes? (objective 3)

RQ5: What was the vision and what are the challenges of ecotourism for the Taomi community? (objective 3, 5)

RQ6: What were the positive roles played by each of the NGOs through provision of ecotourism education and training in Taomi’s ecotourism development following the earthquake? (objective 1, 2, 4)

RQ7: What conflicts regarding power and benefits occurred between the NGOs and the various ecotourism operators? (objective 3)

RQ8: Should ecotourism be used as a development tool following a crisis event, as occurred in Taomi village? (objective 1)

All the findings of the triangulation techniques were synthesised to understand the changes to sustainable livelihoods in the holistic ecotourism development process after a crisis event.
This study, of a single case, has some validity and reliability limitations in expanding the research. It adopted snowball sampling, relying on key persons to provide other direct or indirect relevant respondents to provide more information pertaining to events in the development process in Taomi. However, these individuals were those best placed to observe the changes brought by ecotourism, so they also embodied the social representations most sought after by the study. In addition the community had the special experience of being among the first ecotourism developments in Taiwan, and having had almost 10 years of experiences of ecotourism, following the 921 earthquake disaster. For this reason the study chose Taomi village as its research site, it being a paradigm of a community in a rebuilding process after the 921 earthquake disaster, and giving a longitudinal perspective rare in academic tourism research. This study interrogates the transformation brought by ecotourism development from the ecotourism education and training programmes of the NGOs, and building the vision of a sustainable eco-village.
1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters as outlined below:

Chapter 1 has provided an overview of the background to this study and the arguments arising from the relevant literature that it aims to address. The research scope, and purpose, and significance of the study are also outlined along with the methods employed for data collection.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature relating to the definitions of ecotourism; its key characteristics and concepts; the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental changes accompanying ecotourism, using the sustainable livelihood approach; and relevant empirical studies. This chapter outlines the nature of ecotourism development and identifies indicators of ecotourism related change. This chapter also identifies and discusses the gap concerning political capital in the sustainable livelihood approach.

Chapter 3 continues the literature review with a focus on political change aspects, including empowerment in tourism; resident participation and organizational leadership; the role of NGOs; policy and planning; and community ecotourism education and training programmes. This chapter describes political capital and its influence on other assets, and the significance of NGOs’ role in catalysing ecotourism education, and policy and planning. It also compares theories that have adopted social representations theory, the approach applied to examine the Taomi ecotourism development.

Chapter 4 explains the development of the research questions and methodology including the process of establishing the research framework, study approach, research method, research design, selected research site, data collection, and ethical research issues. Some limitations this research confronted in the Taomi community are also discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the contextual background of Taiwanese ecotourism development, governmental ecotourism policy, and the ecotourism definition, principles, spirit, and goals. It also identifies the background process of Taomi’s ecotourism development, cataloguing key events, primarily from documentary evidence; and the Taiwanese
government’s ecotourism policy as one following world ecotourism standards and criteria to promote a healthy ecotourism development; as well as the Taomi ecotourism development.

Chapter 6 provides a qualitative analysis of the ecotourism development in Taomi village and its relationship to the sustainable livelihoods model by presenting the collected perspectives and experiences of positive and negative changes of the various community stakeholders and NGO groups. This chapter also analyses the findings using the financial, physical, human, social, cultural, and natural assets framework. It also pays close attention to the role of the education and training programme in ecotourism development.

Chapter 7 advances this research by highlighting the lack of political capital in the Taomi community and the conflict that became apparent in the research process. This chapter reports the perspectives and experiences of positive and negative political changes of all community stakeholders and NGO groups. It calls for attention to the political aspects of the development process and their inclusion in the sustainable livelihoods model. Finally, Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the findings and responds to the research questions, makes comparisons with previous work, and demonstrates the implications of ecotourism education and training programmes and community-based ecotourism development following a crisis event. It also discusses limitations of this study and poses recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2
Ecotourism and Sustainable Livelihoods

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature on how ecotourism may contribute towards sustainable community development. This study examines community-based ecotourism after the 921 earthquake crisis in Taiwan, paying particular attention to the impacts on residents’ livelihoods. A wide range of different stakeholders are involved, including different NGO groups, local organizations, and local residents. This exploratory study thus reviews items from a selection of relevant topics. The literature review first targets discussion of what is understood by ‘ecotourism’, including debate surrounding its definitions and characteristics. The discussion then moves on to consider how ecotourism has contributed to change in host communities, particularly examined through the lens of a sustainable livelihood approach. This involves examination of the positive and negative issues arising through the various relationships of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental changes. In the following chapter, the discussion moves on to address the literature regarding issues of empowerment and politics in community development, which frame the theoretical approach taken by this thesis.

2.2 Ecotourism Defined

Given that the Taomi community selected ecotourism as its development strategy, it is important to review the considerable literature surrounding its definition (see for example Cater, 2004). Ecotourism is gaining popularity around the world as a form of tourism, especially in developing countries that rely on local economic development strategies in order to increase their growth rate and improve people’s livelihoods. Ecotourism in its simplest form is taken to be observation of the flora and fauna of an area, and includes giving tourist visitors an introduction to ecological concepts while promoting ecological conservation within the recreational process. However, the
translation from theory to practice is rarely a smooth transition, as deeper levels of ecotourism comprise some broad and fuzzy concepts that can often be misleading. It is also important to note that, until relatively recently, ecotourism was incorporated as part of the global tourism industry as one of many individual recreational activities; it was not until the mid-1980s that the word ‘ecotourism’ really emerged in the English language (Romeril, 1985).

The concept of ecotourism evolved primarily from human environmental ethics. In the 1960s and ’70s, tourism activities underwent great growth, in some cases causing a severe, detrimental impact on the ecological systems of natural areas. This led to consideration of how best to protect ecosystems while enjoying outdoor recreation (Nelson, 1994). Researchers were also concerned with how to devise an effective management strategy to address the problem of tourists overusing sensitive natural areas (Korten, 1986; Berkes, 1989; Ziffer, 1989; Lynch & Talbott, 1995; Western & Wright, 1994; Valentine, 1993). An alternative type of tourism involving sustainable development was developed, in accordance with changing trends in tourism motivations, travel demands, and developments (CDOT, 1994; Weaver, 2001). Ecotourism focuses on minimising negative changes caused to the socio-cultural, political, and physical environments of host communities.

Hetzer (1965) was the first to identify four principal concepts relevant to ecotourism: “minimizing environmental impacts, respecting host cultures, maximizing the benefits to local people, and maximizing tourist satisfaction” (cited in Page & Dowling, 2002, p.56). The Mexican ecologist Hector Ceballos-Lascurain (1987) used the Spanish word ‘ecoturismo’ to identify elements of ecotourism. The term has proliferated since the 1980s in conjunction with a series of related sectors — including ‘nature-based tourism’, ‘sustainable tourism’, ‘adventure tourism’, and ‘alternative tourism’ — being identified (Weaver, 2001, p.16-20). Most importantly, definitions of ecotourism maintain that this form of tourism must embody the concept of being “sustainable based on the best available knowledge and experience, or best practice” (Weaver, 2001, p.15). Other terms that have been associated with ecotourism are Green Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Environmental Tourism; Natural Areas Travel; Ethical Travel; Nature Tourism; Wildlife Tourism; Responsible Tourism; Nature-Oriented Tourism; Nature-Based Tourism; Alternative Tourism; Cultural Tourism; and so forth.
In fact, over 80 different definitions of ecotourism have been identified in the tourism literature (Fennell, 2001). Looked at in combination, the various published research offers a good summary of the many principles embodied in a comprehensive definition of ecotourism, as outlined below in table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: Principles of Ecotourism Identified in the Literature**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ecotourism Principle</th>
<th>Relevant Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low impact/ Non-consumptive</td>
<td>Ziffer, 1989; Valentine, 1992; Brandon, 1996; Goodwin, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Valentine, 1993; Wallace &amp; Pierce, 1996; Fennell, 1999; EAA, 2000; Weaver, 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small scale</td>
<td>Brandon, 1996.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite minor differences in definitions of ecotourism, the key elements include ecotourism being nature-based, sustainable, having educational interpretation, and community participation, with an emphasis on local benefits (Beaumont, 1998).
Notably, these definitions have been influenced by the values and theoretical assumptions of the respective researchers above.

Given that ecotourism often developed first in protected natural areas or remote areas, many early definitions identify the natural and cultural environment as being of the greatest concern. For example, according to Wallace and Pierce (1996, p.848-850), ecotourism has “six principles”, to:

1. “minimise negative impacts on the environment and local people;
2. increase visitor awareness and understanding of an area’s natural and cultural system;
3. provide legal conservation and management of a natural area;
4. (have) local participation in the decision-making process and determination of the kind and amount of tourism;
5. direct economic and other benefits to local people rather than overwhelm or replace traditional practices (farming, fishing, and social systems); (and)
6. provide special opportunities for local people and nature tourism employees to utilize and visit natural areas and learn more about the wonders that other visitors come to see”.

It is of course important to note that tourists require enjoyable diversions, so tourist satisfaction should not be neglected in this discussion. Dowling (1996), for example, addresses five core principles which are considered fundamental to ecotourism: being nature-based; ecologically sustainable; environmentally educative; locally beneficial; and generating tourist satisfaction. Indeed, as Cater and Cater (2007a, p.144) point out “ecotourists are also tourists … to deny holidaymakers the opportunity for enjoyment … is dangerous for any tourist product that wishes to maintain long-term viability”.

Ownership and empowerment are also key characteristics of ecotourism if it is to contribute towards community sustainability. Pedersen (1991, cited in Ross & Wall, 1999, p.125) identifies the following fundamental functions: the protection of natural areas; production of revenue; education; quality tourism; and local participation and capacity. Pedersen (1991) sees the objectives of ecotourism as: “provision of local
socio-economic benefits; provision of environmental education services; conservation of the natural area; provision of a high-quality experience; increased foreign exchange; and promotion of environment/stewardship advocacy”. These principles, however, require the balancing of the needs of a multitude of stakeholders. “If all of the functions and objectives can be met, then ecotourism will have contributed to the resolution of many of the conflicts associated with tensions between resource exploitation and resource conservation” (Ross & Wall, 1999, p.125). Consequently, the above functions and objectives, as they occur in real ecotourism, are almost impossible to attain, given the multitude of interrelated variables. Indeed, Honey (1999, p.22-24) recognises the highly political nature of ecotourism development when she puts forward her “seven characteristics” that include “travel to natural destinations, minimising impact, building environmental awareness, providing direct financial benefit for conservation, providing financial benefits and empowerment for local people, respecting local culture, and supporting human rights and democratic movements”. These last characteristics recognise the importance of power relationships, and that ecotourism must be developed carefully if development is to be harmonious and bring democratic benefits. More recently authors such as Hall & Brown (2006) and Fennell (2006) have examined the ethical dimensions to tourism, building on earlier suggestions by Honey that establishing important variables to examine ecotourism involves “environmental awareness; employment skills, or actions in the pursuit of the primary activity; the degree to which one subscribes to the conservation ethic (the emotional ties that one has with plants, animals or nature as a whole); and finally the degree of impact (consumptive to non-consumptive) caused by the type of tourism” (1999, p.44).

Ross & Wall (1999, p.124) take a more structural approach, recognising that in general ecotourism development allows “protection of the natural environment through generation of revenue, environmental education, and local people’s involvement for the purpose of sustainability” (see Figure2.1). During the process of ecotourism development local people participate while gaining benefits from three areas:

1. “Economic benefits include increased employment opportunities, e.g. as guides, in transportation, construction; protected area employees; in
restaurants, motels, shops, retail, entrepreneurship, and through distribution of tourist revenue.

2. Infrastructure benefits include access to goods and services, and access to and quality in health care, education, communication infrastructure, and transportation infrastructure.

3. Social welfare benefits include the indirect benefits of improved infrastructure and socio-economic status, status of environmental conditions, intercultural appreciation, and strengthening of cultural pride heritage” (Ross & Wall, 1999, p.128).

These ecotourism characteristics indicate that ecotourism should encompass sustainable conservation of nature, eco-education, benefits to local residents, satisfaction to tourists, and empowerments for residents.

Figure 2.1: The Ecotourism Framework (Source: Ross & Wall, 1999 PAGE)
Based on this discussion of the existing literature, this study suggests that successful ecotourism development within the Taomi village community needs to embody the following concepts:

1. satisfaction of tourist demands and the enjoyment of nature-based tourism;
2. an emphasis on the conservation of natural environmental resources and on minimising the environmental impacts of tourism;
3. respect and promotion of local cultural heritage development and sustainability, and reducing socio-cultural impact costs;
4. provision of a rich environmental and cultural education experience for tourists;
5. contribution to the local economy;
6. retaining sustainable management and operation;
7. protection of small-scale development;
8. encouraging public participation in decision-making in the ecotourism development process; and
9. allowing and empowering local autonomous institutions to operate ecotourism development.

2.3 Understanding of Ecotourism

Achievement of these goals is based on a sound understanding of ecotourism, which in turn requires an awareness of the characteristics and definitions of ecotourism presented above; yet it is unlikely that local communities will have the depth of knowledge assumed in some of these definitions. Many case studies in the literature suggest that ecotourism rarely results in absolute sustainability (Foucat, 2002; Stew et al., 2003), but sustainability must be an essential criterion in ecotourism development to distinguish it from mass tourism (although there are now moves to encourage tourism of all scales to incorporate more sustainable practices). Early on it was well recognised that ecotourism concepts often failed to achieve highly as far as (what were then) valid and reliable ecotourism criteria and evaluation were concerned (Wight, 1993). Many businesses, for example, have operated within the profitable marketing strategy that ‘green sells’, and used the label ‘ecotourism’ to advertise a misleading image of ‘environmental responsibility’ (Wight, 1993; Beaumont, 1998). Further, some businesses operate in ways which deliberately misrepresent
ecotourism—practices resulting directly from the lack of effective accreditation schemes, management guidelines, and laws and public policies. Burns (1997) suggests that as a result in Australia many genuine ecotourism operators may be avoiding the term ‘ecotourism’ because of this prior abuse by uninformed operators and its subsequent reduction to a ‘buzzword’, merely attracting curious visitors. Clearly, because of these factors one of the greatest challenges faced by the industry is establishing its legitimacy (Lawrence et al., 1997).

This study therefore argues that having local residents’ understanding and support is a critical factor in developing an ecotourism project. If local residents do not understand the importance of sustainability, they could undermine the process and ecotourism would not be able to establish sustainable development. The definitions currently available, however, are at a rather abstract level. This study takes the position that if the concepts embodied were presented at a more simplified, general level then more people would be able to readily gain an understanding of ecotourism. In the chaos following crisis events, simple solutions and messages are essential. It is for example extremely important that residents understand and participate in the initial planning of ecotourism development projects, including consideration of the potential economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts, to seek to maximize the benefits (or positive impacts) and to minimize the costs (or negative impacts) to the community (Pederson, 1991; Woodley, 1993; Walker, 1996). Understanding is therefore a significant dimension, not only for examining a successful ecotourism development, but also seeking to identify the relationships between the economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and political spheres. Understanding of ecotourism is itself also driven by the changes that ecotourism might bring to a community’s everyday livelihoods, thus if we examine residents’ understanding of ecotourism and the parallel changes that this has brought to their community assets, it brings us closer to identifying the contribution that ecotourism might make.

2.3.1 Ecotourism and Change

Despite its conservationist roots, ecotourism, just like mass tourism, will always bring change. Of course, change is not limited to forms of tourism, and places are always
dynamically influenced by a wide variety of other human and natural causes, like mass residential development, natural disasters and mining natural resources and so on. Indeed, as Thrift (1999, p.317) maintains, “like societies, places can be made durable, but they cannot last”. When numerous visitors arrive in ecotourism communities, they inevitably bring not only economic benefits but also costs to the community in the form of socio-cultural and environmental damage (Weaver, 2001). Such changes, both positive and negative, influence the perceptions of residents towards ecotourism development. But despite this, ecotourism stakeholders are considered to be in a strong position to successfully implement strategies that maximise the positive and minimise the negative outcomes (Weaver, 2001). Genuine ecotourism development seeks to minimize its environmental impact and to maximize the socio-cultural and economic benefits in community-based destinations (Neto, 2003). Scheyvens (1999) also suggests that authentic ecotourism recognises the need to promote both the quality of life of people and the conservation of natural resources. Some researchers have therefore suggested that the term ‘community-based ecotourism ventures’ should be used to distinguish those initiatives which are environmentally sensitive but which also aim to ensure that members of local communities have a high degree of control over the activities taking place, and that a significant proportion of the benefits accrue to them (Liu, 1994; Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). Nevertheless, changes accompanying ecotourism development are often complex and mutually-interrelated, such as the many examples of political, environmental, social, cultural, and economic issues. These changes may occur inadvertently given that there is still much uncertainty about sustainability (Weaver, 2001).

2.4 Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA)

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) model is a useful framework to test the changes wrought by ecotourism on people’s asset base (Ashley, 2000, cited in Cater & Cater, 2007a). The approach, which aims to reduce poverty in developing countries, makes a systematic evaluation of the variety of assets in a community that might be used and augmented by tourism development (Cater & Cater, 2007a), thus the sustainable livelihood approach examines a variety of livelihood strategies.
Ashley’s study (2000), for example, offers two perspectives on rural communities using tourism for their livelihood. Previous tourism developments have often only focused on the contribution to enhancing local employment and income benefits, often to the exclusion of the major social and environmental changes in livelihoods. Under the SLA, the focus is on how to enhance development and the contribution tourism can make, and to reflect on the broad changes to people’s livelihoods consequent to the decision. The approach is a multi-level one and regarded as dynamic for households, community, region, or nation (Cater & Cater, 2007a).

According to the SLA there are five types of asset central to people’s livelihoods (Sustaining Livelihood in Southern Africa, 2002, cited in Cater & Cater, 2007a). These are identified as:

“(i) natural capital (the natural resources stocks upon which people draw for livelihoods);
(ii) human capital (the skills, knowledge, ability to labour, and good health important to be able to pursue different livelihood strategies);
(iii) physical capital (the basic enabling infrastructure, such as transport, shelter, water, energy, and communications);
(iv) financial capital (the financial resources available to people such as savings, credit, and remittances; and
(v) social capital (the social resources such as networks, membership of groups, and relationships of trust upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihoods).”

Based on above five capitals, a study by Lee (2005) adopts the Sustainable Livelihood framework in his examination of PYO (Pick Your-Own) farms in Taiwan to improve farmers livelihoods strategies and to assess policies and institutional processes. However, in a global tourism context, where local traditions form both the uniqueness and identity of communities, Cater & Cater (2007a) identify a further asset. This is cultural capital, consisting of the heritage, customs, and traditions, which should be considered in any analysis of the characteristics of local livelihoods. It is important to note that this definition of cultural capital differs somewhat from that presented elsewhere in the social sciences, for example that in Bourdieu’s Capital Theory (2001), which is more concerned with exchange and value.
Significantly, these six forms of capital are highly interdependent, as depicted in figure 2.2. This shows the building blocks of the sustainable livelihoods approach, where the ground layer, the financial, social, and cultural capital, constitutes the community foundation. The second layer, comprising physical infrastructure and human skills, requires the underpinning of the financial, social, and cultural capital. The top of the pyramid, the natural capital so central to ecotourism, relies on sustained and sustainable support from all of these forms of capital. If the natural capital itself is eroded, perhaps by external influences, then the viability of other forms of capital in the community is also in doubt.

Figure 2.2: The Building Blocks of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Cater and Cater, 2007b)

![Diagram of the Building Blocks of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach](image)

This study applies this model of the six forms of capital assets pertinent to livelihood analysis to assess the diverse positive and negative changes brought to people’s assets in ecotourism settings.
2.4.1 Financial Change

Although ecotourism development is dependent upon high labour resources to operate and support the industry, this does not necessarily imply greater capital requirements. The direct economic benefits of ecotourism result from the creation of employment opportunities for local people. The employment opportunities thus derived in turn help to increase the economic resources of individuals and community revenue (Zeppel, 1998). Moreover, there is strong agreement in the research literature that the direct economic benefits of ecotourism development accrue from creating employment opportunities in areas such as guide services introducing the natural and cultural history, accommodation, and local food. A further example can be seen when local people involved in the ecotourism sector sell handicrafts, local foods or drinks, or provide accommodation and transportation services, with particular emphasis on informative and educational services (Wearing & Neil, 1999; Hong et al., 2003). Nevertheless, these financial benefits require a contribution from the human capital factor: local residents engaging in the ecotourism industry almost always require tourism-specific skills training and ecology-specific education.

Lindberg et al. (1996) uses an economic perspective examining an ecotourism development case in Belize to establish whether residents there improved their financial assets. The intention was to test three ecotourism objectives: “generation of financial support for protected area management; generation of local economic benefits; and generation of local support for conservation” (Lindberg et al., 1996, p.543). Selected criteria were used to validate the test results. Although ecotourism brings financial support for protected areas, it can produce financial costs as well. Unfortunately, most of the negative ecological or socio-cultural impacts in Belize were not reflected in the evaluation of the financial costs, therefore the analysis of the changes which ecotourism brought to the local area could not contribute to a reliable understanding of whether or not positive impacts were generated.

Ecotourism at a particular destination can attract tourist numbers due to the diversity offered by its wildlife-based viewing (Weaver, 2001). In such cases ecotourism is based on natural capital in order to generate financial capital. Belsky (1999) also notes that economic benefit affects resident participation in conservation work. Moreover
Petty & Smith (2003) claim that economic benefit can alter residents’ attitudes towards ecotourism. Thus financial capital can influence the natural and social capital aspects of ecotourism development.

Arguably, these developments offer benefits by providing alternatives to traditional agriculture or hunting practices (Lindberg et al., 1996). Langholz (1999) similarly argues that ecotourism income can reduce agricultural activities in a commercial setting. Nevertheless in many cases agriculture remains an important part of the local economic activity, and will continue to do so. In these cases, such as in the Taomi community investigated in this thesis, it is important to develop ecotourism alongside existing agriculture, especially since the latter is often an integral part of the ecotourism attraction. Thus financial capital does have an influence on the use of natural capital in community-based ecotourism.

2.4.2 Physical Change

Developing their physical infrastructure allows local communities to develop economic opportunities. In general, ecotourism is located mostly in remote destinations that need to invest in and work on improving infrastructure facilities such as electricity, sanitation, and roads, all forms of local physical capital. So an indirect benefit of community-based ecotourism development is that the funding to provide some of this infrastructure can be gleaned from ecotourism budgets (Weaver, 2001). This relates to the physical capital of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach. However negative physical impacts can also follow community-based ecotourism development. Weaver (2001) points out negative impacts related to large financial capital outlays such as for the purchase of land, establishment of infrastructure, and services such as guided trails, visitor centres, and parking facilities in the early development stages. Subsequent ongoing expenses are mainly for maintenance of land and facilities, labour costs, and marketing (Weaver, 2001). Providing the means for this physical capital is no easy task; the cost factors depend on the size and distribution of developments.
2.4.3 Human Change

Engaging employees to deliver ecotourism industry services requires effective and relevant training programs. According to Sirakaya & McLellan (1998) ecotourism, or tourism to natural areas, continues to be of interest to tourism professionals because it is considered a sustainable alternative to mass tourism, or other forms of economic development (Also Buckley, 1994; Jacobson & Robles, 1992; Lee et al., 1998; Prosser, 1992). Additionally, Vincent & Thompson (2002 p.154) measured community concern about the support, need, and interests of local residents concerning an ecotourism project. More importantly, they established four significant factors, namely “environmental consciousness; encourage[ment] and support of development educational goals; support for economic development; and ethical/moral conservation regulations and enforcement codes”. Beaumont (1998) concurs that environmental education or eco-guide services are a significant success factor in ecologically sustainable or natural-setting areas. Weiler & Ham (2002) offer a model for sustainable tour guide training to examine a series of guide-training programmes for enhancing professional growth and employment opportunity in host rural villages. These studies clearly indicate that development of human capital is essential in order to successfully engage local residents in the ecotourism industry. This in turn requires people with a diverse set of abilities and skills to deliver ecotourism education and training, directly pertinent to home-stay, local catering, and eco-guiding services, in order to equip a community to enjoy the financial benefits described above.

A cautionary note is called for by the research of Walpole & Goodwin (2000) who focused on understanding the magnitude and distribution of ecotourism employment and revenue generation in the communities of Komodo National Park in Indonesia. Their findings established that external investors and operators controlled the largest proportion of business and exploited opportunities in ecotourism development because the local people lacked investment capital. Additionally, the local people did not have the advantage of appropriate skills nor the opportunity to undertake training, and traditional production sectors could not match the tourism industry. The result was that economic benefits could not accrue to the local community. It is therefore very important to develop human capital to cope with ecotourism development.
2.4.4 Social Change

Examining social impacts, the direct benefits of developing ecotourism are enhanced employment opportunities, and financial capital in the form of income from local economic products. Indirect benefits include improving the local quality of life and increasing lifestyle options, and reducing the local population drain towards a positive social capital relationship. Moreover, developing ecotourism can produce a stable social environment in a community and friendly interactions between tourists and local people that increase positive awareness of different cultures, contributing to a network of social capital. Weaver (2001) addressed the potential socio-cultural benefits and costs of ecotourism, and provided a number of suggestions that not only satisfy local community support for ecotourism and environmental benefits, but also bring pleasurable experiences, ultimately providing visitor satisfaction. Anthropologists such as Brosius et al., (1998) and Russell & Harshbarger (2003), “have long pointed to the need to pay greater attention to values, social relationship, and institutions, as opposed to just economic changes, in conservation projects (cited in Stronza & Gordillos, 2008). Further, Stronza & Gordillo’s (2008) study indicates when communities have stronger social capital, they are more able to solve political challenges. This suggests links to network and trust relationships because social capital affects the financial, physical, cultural, and natural capital assets.

Nevertheless, like mass tourism, ecotourism developments can equally induce negative socio-cultural changes, including disruption to established activity patterns, increased anti-social behaviour and crime, and over-crowding. No tourism development is immune from having some negative impact on local lifestyle and quality of life (Wearing & Neil 1999). Negative social impacts also affect some cultural and natural capital issues.

2.4.5 Cultural Change

Ecotourism development aims to reduce its negative cultural effects on local people and to retain and recuperate traditional cultural spiritual attachments, such as to land and traditional solemnity (Hinch, 2001). Similarly, ecotourism development helps local people understand how to improve and maintain traditional culture and heritage
values, and establish cultural appreciation of the heritage and customs constituting cultural capital, while highlighting local pride (Scheyvens, 1999; Ross & Wall, 1999). Khan (1997, p. 990) argues that socio-cultural benefits can include “emphasizing local lifestyles, values and economic well-being, promoting local identity pride and self-accomplishment.” Wunder (1999) suggests that cultural and historical benefits can influence and affect the link between economic benefits and environmental conservation. Moreover, the host community has opportunities for interaction and exchange of experiences of socio-cultural differences with a broad spectrum of the population (Weaver, 2001). From these perspectives, positive cultural impacts can positively enhance local social, natural, and financial capital.

On the other hand, particularly when visitors arrive in the community, negative cultural impacts can emerge as points of conflict centred on mutual lack of understanding of different cultural values and beliefs, between tourists with their characteristics and the host community (Nash, 1996; Gessner & Schade, 1990). MacCannell (1976) also points out that some eco-specialists bring visitors who intrude into long-established and sensitive communities, thereby creating the potential for social and cultural tensions: some sacred places or solemn rites in local indigenous communities do not permit visitor participation or access (Hinch, 2001). Again, the intrusion that visitors impose on remote, unspoiled destinations inhabited by indigenous communities can cause discord in primitive cultures and lifestyles (Munt, 1994; Wheeller, 1994).

Weaver (2001, p.120) asserts that socio-cultural impacts are represented “by direct costs, such as cultural and social intrusion, imposition of an elite alien value system, erosion of local control (e.g. take over by foreign experts; in-migration of job seekers), and local inequalities and internecine disputes; and indirect costs, such as the potential for local resentment or antagonism, and potential tourist opposition to aspects of local culture and lifestyle (e.g. hunting, slash and burn agriculture)” To give an example, despite some economic benefits accruing from their investment in ecotourism development, the presence of external investors and operators in the host community, and their activities, can also have negative socio-cultural impacts. External investment increasingly expands accommodation capacity, destroying the harmonious link between local operation and tourism management. The local operators then develop
resentments of exotic cultural intrusion into local cultural values and ethics. External operators can for example cause severe negative impacts through lack of professionalism and lack of familiarity with traditional cultural concepts, and provide visitors with an inferior experience of the demonstration and explanation of local cultural aspects. The above research does report that socio-cultural impacts involve both benefits and costs—depending on how the host community and local people deal with the factors at play to produce a mutually advantageous ecotourism development. In the case examined by Lindberg (1996) described above, ecotourism activities were found to have had significant impact on existing community activities. A finding of this research was that local people had had to make a contract with a travel agency regarding cultural performance issues. A result was that households often had insufficient time to carry out agricultural land preparation, hunting, or traditional fishing activities. In addition, fish, livestock, or crops in the protected wildlife area can suffer indirect damage. Nevertheless the overall effect of such impacts was still less than the direct economic benefits of ecotourism. Significantly, a number of researchers have attempted to understand the effects of ecotourism development on cultural values and the related social, natural, financial, human, physical, and even political landscape. Scheyvens (1999, p.249), for example, proposed that successful ecotourism development in a local community involves “a framework of four empowerment and disempowerment factors: namely social, economic, psychological, and political”. Indeed, it is clear that cultural impacts are not only relevant in the socio-cultural realm, but also contribute to further understanding the interactive relationships of financial, physical, and natural capital.

2.4.6 Natural Change

Ecotourism was being heavily promoted by government and industry in Taiwan by the early years of this century (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2002). An implication this has for the natural environment is greater provision of incentives for protecting natural habitats and conservation work to stop and prevent environmental degradation from tourism (Sirakaya & McLellan, 1998). From the early 1990s, ecological protection increased, with people more widely valuing natural resources and participating more readily in ecotourism activities, such as bird watching and exploring natural hiking trails (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2002).
Positive natural impacts establish the purposes and values of developing ecotourism, and also reinforce sustainable development. Weaver (2001, p.99) states that the direct and indirect benefits which ecotourism has for natural issues include an “incentive to protect natural environments; an incentive to rehabilitate modified environments; [that] ecotourists assist with habitat maintenance and enhancement; [that] exposure to ecotourism fosters environmentalism; and [that] areas protected for ecotourism provide environmental benefits”. These concepts, all significant contributions to natural capital, can facilitate local people’s ensuring the protection of sensitive environmental places and promote more understanding about the conservation of local environmental resources (Buckley, 1994, 2003). This can often be directed through existing local environmental knowledge; rural people generally have a greater regard for ecological conservation than visitors do. It is suggested that this is the case (or perhaps ‘was’, given increasing contemporary and global public concern about environmental sustainability) because traditional cultures follow values and beliefs which prevent hunting without rules and which effectively prohibit the over-use of flora and fauna. Thus natural capital is closely tied to cultural capital.

Keeping a balance between maintaining natural capital and development is a far from easy task. Gössling (1999) for example used cost-benefit analysis to observe the economic effects of conserving biodiversity and ecosystem functions in ecotourism in developing countries. One finding was that a traditional development such as clear-cutting produces a negative cost value—one exceeding the non-use value—and has severe negative impacts in tropical rainforests. The economic benefits of ecotourism development are therefore very important in conserving natural resources, but in some instances hardly achieve the ecotourism goal of community development. He suggested that the rate of visitors be limited; that education, management, and ecotourism development be integrated; and that the proportion of money from tourists going into the community be increased.

Advocates of ecotourism therefore claim that developing ecotourism has more natural benefits or positive changes than potential negative changes (Department of Environment (DoT), 1994; Hvenegarrd, 1994; Queensland Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry (QDTSBI, 1997). Even allowing for such practices as high-usage, ecotourism can still play an important role in and provide incentives for
further protection of the natural environment. Moreover, natural benefits accrue as host communities are persuaded to protect natural environments in order to sustain economically viable tourism (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1990). Bookbinder et al., (1998) argue, however, that if economic benefits are unable to be satisfactorily shared among local communities, then there is a lack of incentive for residents to participate in conservation work. Bovarnick & Gupta (2003) argue that environmental conservation is dependant on whether or not residents obtain economic benefits. Based on their findings, natural capital has the potential to bring benefits to human and economic assets.

Nevertheless, negative natural impacts threaten ecotourism development and can bring about a situation of un-sustainability. Weaver (2001) asserts that recreational activities and behaviours of tourists entail negative natural impacts such as: disturbing wildlife and habitat; crushing or clearance of vegetation; stresses; erosion (Simons, 1988; Tallantire, 1993, Tyler, 1989, Buckley, 2004); soil compaction (Boo, 1990, Buckley, 2004) and vegetation damage (Liddle, 1997, Buckley, 2004); and the introduction and subsequent penetration of exotic species (Dickson, Rodriguez, & Machada, 1987, Buckley, 2004). Other problematic human activities include high impact adventure activities; increasing noise from machinery, vehicles and voices; pollution from human wastewater; and traffic congestion (Buckley, 2004). Modern facilities which may be essential for business development, such as expanding accommodation cabins and car parks, may disturb visual enjoyment of the facility.

Cataloguing the changes to natural assets through accurate baseline monitoring is extremely important, but again is dependent on the skills present or accessible to the community (the human capital). Ouba (1997) for example evaluated campsite developments, such as one in a potential ecotourism development in Kibale National Park, Uganda. Research established that the campsite development involved removing much vegetation, thereby reducing vegetation diversity. Thus the proposed amount of vegetation removal should be calculated and reduced with a view to ecological preservation. Ultimately, the influence of external impacts on species in the recreation area must be monitored, as tourist activities can destroy the local ecosystem structure and function. The importance of baseline monitoring as part of this has been noted in the literature (see for example Cater and Cater, 2007b, p.208).
Orams (2002) recognizes this in a study designed to allow tourism operators to devise activities for tourists to closely observe and make contact with wildlife. Tourist activities have a broad impact on wildlife. Behaviours such as close observation of whales and dolphins, or the supplementary feeding of birds and monkeys, affect the habituation, population and breeding season of wild animals. The animals often lose their ability to search for food and suffer damage to their health as a result of inappropriate food some humans provide. While there are psychological, social, and economic benefits for individuals and communities as many people enjoy close contact with wild animals, wild animals should be adequately protected to ensure conservation.

Bunce et al. (1999) address aspects of this particular management issue in the Caribbean. This study does not directly discuss the impact of recreational activities on a coral reef, but focuses on understanding the management strategies concerning the different characteristics of the multiple activities using the resource. Exploring the backgrounds of the users has provided perceptions of the different impacts of reef management. According to both this study and the previously mentioned study by Ouba in Uganda, ecotourism development should encompass recreational demands and economic benefits, as well as assist in maintaining an awareness of environmental issues. Quite conclusively, from the research literature and more specifically, from these two studies, it is difficult, if not impossible to avoid having negative impacts on natural areas. The negative impacts are a reflection of how natural capital is influenced by negative social, cultural, and physical change. Natural capital is, however, the most important and fundamental issue in community based ecotourism development, balancing and affecting the other assets, as shown in figure 2.2. It is essential that the ecotourism community be established with environmental policy guidelines for ecotourism operators to operate under, to control visitor access while maintaining the quality of the travel experience.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has examined the relevance of a holistic approach to community assets in an investigation of ecotourism’s contribution to sustainable livelihoods. The above
research recognises that the benefits for local residents are the most important issue in developing sustainable ecotourism operations. Impacts from ecotourism development are clearly unavoidable, but the aim is to direct these in as positive a framework as possible. It is also important to acknowledge that all community livelihood systems are dynamic, so change is inevitable, whether ecotourism is part of that development or not. Nevertheless, this approach attempts to identify the highly interrelated factors which are the nature of development, and how ecotourism can bring change to a wide variety of community assets. The forms of community capital identified involve aspects of financial, human, social, physical, cultural, and natural assets. Some of the foundations of these areas have been previously identified in the literature concerning economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues. Various earlier definitions of capital or theories which also embrace social, cultural, and economic capital have been proposed by a number of people, for example Marx, or Bourdieu’s Capital Theory (2001), but these are only loosely relevant to this examination.

Whilst the initial Sustainable Livelihood approach described here presents just natural, financial, physical, human, social, and cultural capital (Cater & Cater, 2007a); it is apparent in the literature that this approach lacks a clear identification of the political nature of tourism development, although the political realm has a dynamic relationship with these factors (for example Hall, 2000, Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). This is clearly identified by Hall who maintains that tourism development is always “highly political …. the goal of sustainability is not a given, it is a contested concept that we need to be arguing for” (Hall, 2000, p. 205). Therefore another form of community capital, namely political capital, should perhaps also be considered one which must be included in the Sustainable Livelihood Approach. Political changes are a key issue in successful ecotourism development and are intimately related to economic, socio-cultural, and environmental issues. Some might contend that politics is part of the network aspect of social capital, but this study argues that social capital only focuses on horizontal linkages which constitute positive networks. This study is also concerned with examining vertical linkages, the unequal power distribution among the different levels or members of the community (Grootaert, 1998; Anderson et al., 2002; Glavovic et al., 2002). Social capital has a weakness and is insufficient to explain power and inequality issues, particularly in its over-emphasizing positive social capital, and not emphasizing negative social capital (Jones, 2005). Indeed, Mykletun’s study of festival tourism in Norway (2009, p.25) offered a new
administrative capital to explain “the regulation of public goods and welfare, the organization of civil servants and officers employed to enforce these rules, and the political bodies elected to be in charge of major decisions and developments”. Governance of administrative capital probably introduces some conflict between investments and organizers into social and cultural capital relationships (Mykletun, 2009). Administrative capital is however, essentially a temporary organizational structure, such as one set up to operate a sport event (Mykletun, 2009), and lacks the constituent depth to be a factor discussed in the context of the more complicated relationships of power and benefit conflicts in the host community. This study therefore explores political capital as a more permanent expression of a community’s power structure.

Cater & Cater (2007a) contend that power relationships between different stakeholders generate some significant effects in community–based tourism due to the nature of life in the local community, which is rarely a homogenous construct or harmonious model (Burkey, 1993). This study therefore proposes that the SLA has to identify the political capital assets to assess the positive and negative political changes and manifestly illustrate and identify the differences with other forms of capital used for the livelihood analysis of the Taomi community after the disastrous 921 earthquake. This has major implications when considering the involvement of local communities in the ecotourism planning process. The next chapter presents a discussion of empowerment issues to contribute to a better understanding of the political nature of community-based tourism development. It asks who could guide appropriate ecotourism empowerment, and provide education and training programmes, and how. Understanding community interpretations of sustainability and successful ecotourism development is central to this thesis. Since this is played out within the political sphere, this will also be discussed in the next section.
Chapter 3

Power, Politics and Perceptions in Community Ecotourism Development

3.1 Introduction

The aims and objectives of academic studies looking at tourism impacts have changed over time. In the 1960s for example, tourism development research focused largely on the economic and positive aspects; it was then criticized by sociologists and anthropologists throughout the 1970s for not raising the negative consequences. More balance in estimating the positive and negative changes caused by tourism was achieved from the 1980s to the early 1990s (Ap & Crompton, 1993; Lankford, 1994). During the past decades research on such changes has focused on issues broadly centred on the economic, social, and environmental effects. In general, understanding residents’ perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development often assists in the implementation of tourism planning (Ap, 1992) and in assessing local residents’ support for tourism (Loukissas, 1983; Marsh & Henshall, 1987; Murphy, 1985; Pearce, 1981). Prior research foci in impact studies include the following:

1. Examining tourism change modelling approaches. By definition, in tourism development it is necessary to understand the variation between positive and negative changes and the ways these affect residents’ attitudes towards development, and then to examine the relationship between both;
2. Examining the relationship between tourism development phases and residents’ attitudes. Social capacity assumptions are used to examine the different phases of tourism development with emphasis on the relationship between residents and tourists;
3. Comparative research of different resident types to understand the changes in perceptions of and attitudes towards tourism, and discussion of the effects these have on whether residents support tourism.
More recently greater attention has been paid to how tourism might contribute to the broader goals of sustainable development in communities. In particular, there has been attention paid to how tourism might alleviate poverty (so called ‘pro-poor tourism’) (see Ashley et al., 2001, Hall, 2007), and how tourism might give communities a chance to dictate their own development. Empowerment is a complex issue as it relies on a number of changes to the different aspects of community capital described in the previous chapter. This chapter examines some of these aspects, including issues of participation, leadership, education, planning, and the role of non-governmental organisations. In this case study it is also important to examine how perceptions of ecotourism development might be formed. For this I turn to social representations theory to explain how meanings are derived in a community setting.

3.2 Defining community

This discussion highlights the dynamic aspects of community, which are often far from the traditional stable structures often assumed. Community is a term derived from the Latin *communitas*, inferring that a group of people can share a sense of shared spirit and structure (Beeton, 2006). However, community is used in many different ways by many different groups, for example, by politicians, social commentators, religious leaders, academics and media reports (Beeton, 2006). In basic terms use of community is often defined in geographic terms as the location of village, town or city (Frank & Smith, 2006; Beeton, 2006). However, it is widely recognized that interpretations of community in cultural anthropology and the social sciences are far more fluid than this, and has highly political dimensions (Beeton, 2006). This study focuses on the Taomi community which is a small village with a sense of local community, as described in chapter 5. Thus, it is simultaneously both geographically and politically defined (Beeton, 2006), but also possesses a range of other contextual dimensions related to the local cultural and natural environment. More importantly, community residents have some common issues related to community identity, trust networks, moral judgements and interaction norms that define this sense of community and facilitate group actions to achieve community goals (Zhan, 2004). However, as this village is not especially isolated, this sense of community must also be taken as fluid, and should be seen in relation to multiple
other entities. Farmers and tourist operators alike are aware of how their notion of community only makes sense when understood in relation to other types of interaction. Thus, as this thesis will uncover, the notion of community is politically negotiated and a dynamic entity in itself.

3.3 Community Tourism Development and Empowerment

As identified in the previous chapter, one of the central principles of ecotourism is the involvement of the local community in the decision making and development process. This is a far from easy task and often involves the augmentation of the various community assets identified in the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. It may also require changes to the traditional power structures of the community and empowerment of previously marginalised groups. This section therefore discusses how community-based ecotourism development must provide self-determination to the local organization or association in regard to controlling the operation, marketing, and managing the resources and facilities in the local community (World Wildlife Fund (WWF), 2001). This involves a greater autonomic political mechanism, allowing decision-making on sustainable tourism development, particularly in indigenous and minority communities (Swain, 1989; Altman, 1989; Hall, 1996), leading to community empowerment.

Onyx and Benton (1995, p.50) define empowerment as “located within the discourse of community development (it is) connected to concepts of self-help, participation, networking and equity”. Timothy (2007) describes four degrees of empowerment in the process of tourism development, with different levels of community involvement: imposed development; tokenistic involvement; meaningful participation; and lastly empowerment. With true empowerment, the community members are able to establish their own goal and programmes (Timothy, 2007). They may accept assistance and encouragement from government leaders or NGOs, but any external involvement has to be limited to roles alongside relevant decision makers (Logan & Morseley, 2002). Thus community-level empowerment is focused on collecting the well-being of local community through tourism (Campbell & Marshall, 2000). Indeed, Sofield (2001) argues that sustainable tourism lacking empowerment for the community presents
difficulties for development. This implies that it is essential that ecotourism development empowers a local autonomous organization or association to operate and handle all the issues of ecotourism development in their local community. In later work Sofield (2003) presents the view that in integrating the concept of empowerment into tourism and sustainable development there has to be consideration of the political and socioeconomic environment, particularly in indigenous communities. He suggests that “without the element of empowerment, tourism development at the level of community will have difficulty with sustainability” and that “such traditional empowerment must be transformed into legal empowerment if sustainable tourism development is to be achieved” (Sofield, 2003, p.9). Thus traditional structures should form the basis of more legislated power hierarchies that may be formally enshrined later on. Nevertheless, as Timothy (2007) notes, there is opportunity for these power structures to be abused, as empowerment is a dynamic process which if misdirected can “lead to higher levels or losses of agency (disempowerment)” (Timothy, 2007, p.200).

Other researchers have proposed four forms of empowerment which may determine successful tourism development in the community: namely political, social, economic, and psychological empowerment (Brown, 2002; Friedman, 1996; O’Neal & O’Neal 2003; Scheyvens, 1999, 2003; cited in Timothy, 2007). These four are described as follows:

- **Political empowerment:** “The community’s political structure, which fairly represents the needs and interests of all community groups, and provides a forum through which people can raise questions relating to the ecotourism venture and have their concerns dealt with. Agencies initiating or implementing the ecotourism venture seek out the opinions of community groups (including special interest groups of women, youths, and other socially disadvantaged groups) and provide opportunities for them to be represented on decision-making bodies” (Butcher 2007, p.87).

- **Social empowerment:** this emphasizes enhancing or maintaining the community’s equilibrium and has been achieved when community cohesiveness and community service are improved through the tourism project (Scheyvens, 1999; Butcher, 2007; Timothy, 2007).
- Economic empowerment: tourism can produce a long-term economic or fiscal benefit and shares this benefit by networks within the community (Scheyvens, 1999, 2002; Timothy, 2007). Likewise, economic empowerment in rural or poor communities can develop capacities to reduce or alleviate poverty (Longan & Mosely 2002).

- Psychological empowerment: this is concerned with the self-esteem of community members when outsiders recognise the value of special community culture and traditional knowledge (Timothy, 2007; Scheyvens, 1999). In addition to building self-esteem through individual initiatives, outside recognition also facilitates psychological empowerment through collective social identity (Laverack & Wallerstein, 2001). Moreover, psychological empowerment encourages the community to seek further education and training opportunities (Scheyvens, 1999), for example, enhancing the knowledge and skills necessary for managing ecotourism, as well as the usefulness of traditional craft skills.

Thus empowerment through tourism development encompasses political, social, economic, and psychological aspects that are mutually interactive. Empowerment is based on the ability to share power and develop democratic processes in the local community. There are, however, often special barriers created by socio-cultural and political issues in tourism development (Timothy, 2007). Empowerment is the process of transferring relevant powers (or control) to the community and relevant community stakeholders (individual, groups, and associations) (Brown 2002; Chambers 1993; Laverack & Wallerstein 2001; Lyons et al., 2001). Butcher (2007) points out that the four forms of empowerment are often played out on a micro-political stage within the community and that it is difficult to implement projects and benefit sharing within communities. The empowerment process may often disturb vested powers in its dynamic evolution and mutual interaction with other economic, social, and environmental issues. Empowerment is therefore not something that happens overnight; it requires an evolutionary approach, often taking many years. Consequently, local politics and power hierarchies constitute a highly significant factor that can seriously affect the success of ecotourism development in a community. The critical issue of political empowerment requires democratic mechanisms to promote resident participation in the decision-making process, but rural communities
often have limited local leadership or organizational ability with which to facilitate this. Indeed, while the ecotourism industry creates economic benefits, it often needs to attract more key members to participate in organizations and associations, something which is often difficult. Thus, according to Timothy (2007), real empowerment through this industry hardly exists anywhere in the world, because of the outside knowledge and capital required for tourism development. Indeed, this study argues that political empowerment is not sufficient to resolve all of the political challenges brought by tourism development. Empowerment is a broad-based process that requires attention to different aspects of community life, including education, leadership, participation, and planning, and careful attention to the role of non-governmental organizations.

### 3.3.1 Resident Participation and Empowerment

To make a seemingly obvious statement, community tourism development cannot take place without community participation. The World Tourism Organization (1994, p.10) stipulates the following requirement regarding resident participation in tourism development: “The bottom-up approach involves holding meetings with local districts or communities to determine what type of development they would like to have.” In order to achieve political empowerment, residents and stakeholders need to participate in the ecotourism development decision-making process. The development of democratic processes may also assist a sense of community to further cohere. Resident participation in the ecotourism development decision-making process demands equitable consideration of their opinions, concerns, and questions regarding the ecotourism venture, and it should further seek out any good feasibility guidelines in designing ecotourism projects, or policies for implementation (Scheyvens, 1999). The organizational structure in community-based ecotourism constitutes an autonomous union that must include community organizations and societal groups such as conservation groups, community groups, and local key persons (Scheyvens, 1999; Sofield, 2003; Fennell & Dowling, 2003; Hall et al., 1997) and individuals. In particular, representation in special interest groups should involve the input of women, adolescents, and other less powerful stakeholders to facilitate joint decision-making in ecotourism policy and planning (Scheyvens, 1999), although this does need to be sensitive to traditional local power hierarchies.
Smith (1984) specifies that public participation implies four legal rights and opportunities, including the approach to information, involvement of sufficient resources for individuals or groups, and frank public input. Moreover, he indicates that public participation should not be limited to operational issues, but should also involve strategic and normative planning. In contrast, Scheyvens (1999) identifies some negative aspects stemming from resident participation that can include: autocratic organization and/or self-interested leadership; the ecotourism association and venture recognizing the passive beneficiaries of community, but not involving them in the decision-making process; partial exclusion of local residents’ opinions in decision-making, and situations where most community members harbour suspicions of the ecotourism operation.

The concept of resident participation in the decision-making process implies that the empowerment of community organizations through tourism development is also a key factor in relation to economic, socio-cultural, and environmental issues (Pearce, et al., 1996, Murphy, 1985). The decision-making process can build and lead a cohesive sense of community, promoting greater cooperation and concern for local affairs (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). The promotion of community activities can often be used as a springboard for encouraging community involvement. For example, the “Protecting Fish” activities in Shanmei village in Taiwan evoked in Shanmei residents a better understanding of environmental conservation concepts, whereby local organizations such as the Shanmei Community Development Association further encourage all residents to participate in decision-making processes (Tsaur et al., 2006). Indeed, Stronza & Gordillo (2008) claim resident participation in the ownership and management of conservation is more effective than participation motivated purely by economic benefits; local residents will voluntarily protect community resources because of community trust relationships and community rules. Some researchers have argued that successful environmental conservation is heavily reliant on local participation and other non-economic factors. Thus Stronza & Gordillo (2008) suggest that resident participation could assist in the building of relationships of social capital contributing toward achieving the goal of sustainable conservation in ecotourism development. These different views identify political mechanisms as influential in the development of natural, financial, physical, human, social, and cultural capital.
Resident participation in the tourism planning process demonstrates the critical need for the incorporation of residents’ views (D’Amore, 1983; McIntosh & Goelder, 1986). Some researchers also note that community participation is often more concerned with benefits rather than the process of incorporating them in development (Becker, 1997; Bond et al., 2001). Residents’ participation in tourism development is often motivated more by concerns for their own benefits rather than with the autonomous making of decisions (Sofield, 2003). Moreover, Madrigal (1993), and Lankford & Howard (1994) indicate that residents who enjoy more personal benefits and beliefs in a positive relationship are more likely to participate in tourism decision-making; local residents actively involved in ecotourism ventures are those most actively concerned with ecotourism development in the local community.

Residents participating have varying value orientations; participation should involve the views of local residents who can be steered to a greater concern with process rather than outcome. In general, local residents who support tourism development expect real participation rather than control by community developers (Sofield, 2003). Participation can also catalyse and help develop residents’ organizational leadership ability and skills when they intend to translate economic benefits into wider aims (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008).

Belsky (1999) researched the changes brought by ecotourism development and resident participation to an indigenous community based in Gales Point Manatee, Belize. He monitored the local community from 1992 to 1998, utilizing participant observation and conducting interviews with local people. His results indicate that developing ecotourism not only enhanced income for a number of households, but also led to a reduction of animal hunting activities. The early project planning for this ecotourism development lacked local people’s participation and brought about inequities, with only a few households and individuals enjoying distribution of benefits. Local people participating in ecotourism investment often enter a situation of debt, which acts as a barrier and disincentive to further participation, and drives local people to alter their conservation-related attitudes and behaviours. A few local people either supported or obstructed conservation planning, with some even breaking down related informative signage, in order to protect their perceived interests. Nevertheless, Belsky recognized that successful ecotourism development requires the input of
different local people. It is very important that diverse perspectives are understood and that those who participate are accredited for their contribution to the conservation processes. As Timothy (2007, p.212) points out, it is rare “that a community and all its stakeholders must be of the same mind or homogenous in their views of tourism, (the important thing is that) everyone enjoys an equal opportunity to participate”. Thus, organization leaders must play a critical role in identifying more empowerment opportunities and adopt a more democratic approach to encourage residents’ participation in decision-making. Attention to community leadership theory is therefore another important aspect to consider when examining community empowerment.

### 3.3.2 Leadership and Empowerment

A leader in local development must be a key person who has significant influence in local affairs and deeply understands the culture and history of local development and the natural environment. They should have lived in the local community for a long time. Moreover, a local leader should have a good service enthusiasm, have participated in the local organization long term, and possess good leadership abilities to help mobilize local residents to act towards achieving the goal of sustainable development in their community (Zhan, 2001). An organization leader should also possess a significant position of power within the organization’s authority and decision-making structure, in terms of such activities as organizational operation, management, policy-making and planning, promotion, and coordinating tourism affairs among government and different stakeholders within a local community (Reed, 1997). If these attributes are not present, a lack of strong leadership results in a lack of enthusiasm, skills, abilities, support, definite visions and goals for community development planning, and/or weak continuity in policy and planning (Frank & Smith, 2006).

Frank & Smith (2006, p. 48) stress that a good community leader needs to have a positive attitude which “effectively communicates the vision of community, focuses energy on results and inclusion, motivates individuals and organizations to act together for a common purpose, and develops effective processes to work through issues of concern and conflict.” With strong organizations, communities can
effectively implement long-term management and share benefit resources (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Thus a sustainable ecotourism development is linked closely to a community leader’s capability.

Community conflicts are often a negative consequence of tourism development, which the leader must work to resolve. Conflicts are generated from interactions between stakeholders individuals or groups if they do not achieve their goals or if they have incompatible aims (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995). These conflicts are often “constructed and resolved in more emotive, subjective and ambiguous ways” and concerned with the value positions of the individuals and groups (Close & Scherle, 2007, p.227). Thus, an organization leader has to be able to propose effective tactics to resolve conflicts of individual and collectivist organizations. Yukl & Falbe (1990) suggest that power influences in organisations involve seven tactics, as set out and described in table 3.1:

**Table 3.1: Power Influence Tactics Used in Organisations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of influence tactics</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pressure tactics</td>
<td>Use of demands, threats or intimidation to source compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upward appeals</td>
<td>Use of persuasion to persuade another that the request for compliance is approved by higher management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange tactics</td>
<td>Use of explicit or implicit promise that rewards or tangible benefits will result from compliance with request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition tactics</td>
<td>Aid of others is used to persuade an individual to comply with a request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiating tactics</td>
<td>By means of getting an individual in a good mood, requests for compliance will be met more positively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational persuasion</td>
<td>Use of logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade an individual to comply with a request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational appeals</td>
<td>Emotional request of an individual to secure compliance by appealing to the values and ideals of an individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation tactics</td>
<td>Use of consultation or the opportunity to input to decision-making or planning in order to secure compliance to a request.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These power influence tactics can be employed in studies of inter-and intra-organisational power relations, which display different behaviours depending on the organizational culture (Knights & Willmott 1999). Close & Scherle (2007) also demonstrate how power is influenced by cultural background, especially in commercial transactions between businesses. They suggest, however, that tactics such as inspirational appeals, coalition tactics, and consultation tactics are often adopted to solve different conflicts in collective organizations that may appear to have a complicated and messy relationship between culture and business. Thus local organization leaders or leadership could also employ these tactics to resolve different conflicts arising from ecotourism development. Additionally, local organization leaders must assume leadership in setting up self-initiated policy and planning, and they need to create mechanisms that can operate incorporating members of different groups and individuals in the ecotourism development; for example, establishing their own regulations and environmental protection rules to deal with negative aspects, such as the problem of environmental destruction in the local community (Vincent & Thompson, 2002). Notably, other researchers contend that weakness of community organization contributes to creating barriers to environmental conservation in biodiversity issues (Barrett et al., 2001; Becker, 2003; Weinberg et al., 2002). It is clear that political leadership structures influence not only the natural but also the cultural, social, and financial community assets.

Moreover, community tourism leaders need to support government ecotourism planning in order to help create a balance between local economic benefits and protecting the region’s ecological environment (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Owen et al., 1993). One purpose of ecotourism policy and planning is to achieve sustainable development. Tourism management policy, for example, must provide funds to sustain the ecotourism policy aims and objectives (Mak & Moncur, 1995). The leadership of community associations in ecotourism development settings must “ensure that those in leadership roles have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what can be delegated to others; support leaders with good processes, appropriate organizational structures, and skills development; ensure the vision, goals, and objectives of the community development plan are clear and well-understood; and develop ongoing leadership capacity in the local community” (Frank & Smith, 2006, p.48). Moreover, leadership plays a connecting role between promoting government
policy and planning and local residents’ understanding of the government’s ecotourism development policy and planning. Local organization leadership also contributes to good ecotourism planning and policy by using the local organization and local residents to make further positive changes which benefit the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects of the local community. It is also important to recognise the role of external organisations in providing leadership, especially in the early stages of development. In particular, there is considerable literature on the role that non-government organizations (NGOs) can play in the process.

3.4 The Role of Non-government Organisations (NGOs)

It is clear from the empirical research outlined above that issues of empowerment are very relevant in ecotourism development. In addition a social understanding of power is important, but this social understanding has to link with the “external relationship of the community to the world market, to Western aid agencies, and to NGOs themselves” (Butcher, 2007, p.88). In many cases, especially in developing economies, NGOs play a significant role assisting rural communities develop ecotourism, particularly in the provision of education and training programmes. The term “NGOs refers simply to formal organisations that are neither part of the state nor profit-maximising commercial companies” (Butcher, 2007, p.7). NGOs should (in theory) take a neutral role in empowerment issues to assist the local community. NGOs are actually very diverse, with countless organizations, from self-help groups to political parties, and so on included under this umbrella term (Butcher, 2007). NGOs exist outside the direct involvement of government and probably attempt to affect political issues from the view of civil society (Hilhorst, 2003; Wallace & Lewis 2000; Princen & Finger 1994).

In general NGOs are not only concerned with the environment but also with people’s well-being and development (Butcher, 2007), depending on their specific aim. In the area of environmental issues, for example, the WWF is the largest NGO concerned with conservation and integrating this with community benefits in the world; SNV (Stichting Nederlandse Verijwilligers), a Dutch-based independent development
agency concerned with well-being and development, has been active in developing sustainable ecotourism in less developed countries (Butcher, 2007).

Doyle & McEachern (1998) identify NGOs’ “size, their principle aim, their character (e.g. campaigning, industry body, membership); and their relationship to the private and government sectors” as categories to be considered in working with NGOs in case studies (Butcher, 2007, p.14). The different characteristics of NGOs are reflections of very different relational contexts, including “a diversity of funding resources, (and) work with commercial, governmental and other NGOs on relevant issues of development and conservation” (Butcher, 2007, p.15), and notably, NGOs often have quite strong individual ideological attributes which underlie the organisation, and they conduct their activities with these attributes in mind (Butcher, 2007). Nevertheless, the role of NGOs is that of facilitators in the community – “they bring to bear expertise and advice, and bring together the relevant stakeholders - but essentially are facilitating a process in which the community is central, rather than being the driving force in this process” (Butcher, 2007, p.85). NGOs act in the role of consultants, facilitators, and educators offering their professional knowledge, concepts, and skills for use in community-based ecotourism development.

Nevertheless, problems often arise when it comes to the issue of empowering community residents to exercise control over development of their ecotourism. Empowerment implies that the community acquires a sustainable ability to exercise power or control, and the NGOs’ role is to assist the community engage with the empowerment issues, acting as “catalysts for community democracy, rather than exerting a powerful external influence on the direction of development” (Butcher, 2007, p.84). A successful empowerment depends on how well-founded the trust relationship, communication, and cooperating mechanisms between the NGOs and community all are.

Being people-centred, NGOs probably exert their greatest influence in the sphere of human capital of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach, through providing the ecotourism development with skills, knowledge, and strategies and thereby helping to reduce poverty in rural or remote communities. The NGOs’ influence naturally extends beyond this and also influences all the other forms of capital because human
capital inevitably interacts with and affects financial, physical, social, cultural, natural, and political aspects in ecotourism development. It is, however, in the educational realm that NGOs are often tasked with providing the most immediate influence on empowerment of communities, often an area that can bring about lasting changes. Indeed the importance of education to community development is one that receives significant attention in the literature.

3.4.1 Community Education and Empowerment

Education is critical for empowerment and for community residents to determine whether they are able or willing to join in the decision-making process (Timothy, 2007); “education theory argues that knowledge is power, and advocates of community empowerment contend that increased levels of community and individual awareness about tourism lead to levels of all types of empowerment” (Friedman, 1996, cited in Timothy, 2007, p.209). Empowerment of communities therefore requires effective education and training programs, often with the involvement of scholars and other experts (Scheyvens, 2002; Sofield, 2003; Telfer, 2003; Tosun & Timothy, 2003; cited in Timothy, 2007, p.200), such as those associated with NGOs. Local residents must acquire a mastery of professional level concepts and knowledge of the surrounding ecology, and the skills to convey this understanding for the environmental education of tourists (Niesenbaum & Gorka; 2001). Business skills are also vital in ecotourism, for use in areas such as home-stays and catering, operation, and management (Cole, 2005). Above all, education and training programs are critical in the success of community-based ecotourism development. Stronza & Gordillo (2008) noted that more opportunities for educational training programs could catalyze personal growth, give people working as guides greater interaction skills, confidence to deal with ecotourism problems and in turn create more new skills and ways of thinking, leading to producing novel ideas about ecotourism management projects, for community residents.

Community-based ecotourism appears to be lacking attention within the ecotourism education framework. Currently few education and training programs for community-based ecotourism development are interdisciplinary, integrating such areas as the ecological, environmental, operational, and management aspects of
small-scale tourism. Most ecotourism education and training programs focus only on the environmental education and training sector, not on community-based programs for small tourism. Moreover, there are limited opportunities in host communities for formal ecotourism education to guide the residents. Cole (2005) notes that community education in tourism has two main motivations: service provision and sustainability.

The first aim of empowerment through education and training programs in a community has to be to understand ecotourism and tourists’ needs, in order to provide suitable information and facilitate ecotourism development. The literature concerned with ecotourism education in rural communities suggests that it should embrace both sustainability and different areas of tourism education, discussed further below.

1. Sustainability Education

Sustainability education concerns the protection and conservation of the ecological environment in rural communities, but as described above it is critical for local residents or villagers to participate actively in order to educate them. Therefore identifying how to effectively educate residents to participate in public affairs and in the activities of ecotourism development, and then delivering such an education, are very important elements in the process of community education. Sustainability education should take into account the literature of environmental education and community participation, discussed below.

Environmental Education

Ecotourism education programs have to include environmental education as a fundamental element alongside other principles. Conferences held in Belgrade in 1975, and Tbilisi in 1977 (UNESCO-UNEP, 1978) identified the central issues of these programs to provide some consensus on environmental education and also the effect of such education on many countries (Hart, 2003). Integrating some of the principles of environmental education arrived at in the sessions in Belgrade and Tbilisi, Palmer (1998, p.10-11) described the following main characteristics of environmental education as follows.
Environmental education:

- is a lifelong process;
- is an approach to education as a whole, rather than a subject;
- is interdisciplinary and holistic in nature and application;
- concerns the interrelationship and interconnectedness between human and natural systems
- views the environment in its entirety encompassing the social, political, economic, technological, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects;
- encourages participation in the learning experience;
- emphasizes active responsibility;
- uses a broad range of teaching and learning techniques, with stress on practical activities and firsthand experience;
- is concerned with local to global dimensions, and past/present/future dimensions;
- should be enhanced and supported by the organization and structure of the learning situation and institution as a whole;
- encourages the development of sensitivity, awareness, understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills;
- encourages the clarification of values and the development of values sensitive to the environment; and
- is concerned with building an environmental ethic.

Overall, the above characteristics are all expressed in the goals of the various disciplines of environmental education. New Zealand, in common with many other countries, has identified the importance of environmental education in schools. The New Zealand government’s guidelines, in line with the Tbilisi goals, state:

…environmental education is a multi-disciplinary approach to learning that develops the knowledge, awareness, participation, attitudes and values, and skills that will enable individuals and the community to contribute towards maintaining and improving the quality of the environment (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999, p.9).
They further identify five main environmental education objectives for developing knowledge and promoting public awareness of social environmental issues, set out in table 3.2 below:

**Table 3.2 Environmental Education Objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>To help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness of and sensitivity to the total environmental and its allied problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>To help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience in, and acquire a basic understanding of, the environment and its associated problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>To help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feeling of concern for the environment and motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>To help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>To help provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working toward the resolution of environmental problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These five objectives can guide the purpose of environmental education, and this guideline can assist teachers to use and articulate the aspects and coverage of the environmental education they provide. Ross & Wall (1999) note that environmental education must understand the value of the natural environment and provide ecological guide services, and programs in participatory conservation. Environmental education programs can also provide guidance towards improving natural environmental resources (Vincent & Thompson, 2002).

Residents’ participation in environmental education in the community requires their understanding of relevant local knowledge and the ecological concepts embodied in the local environment to further identify a ‘sense of place’ as part of the process (Relph, 1976; Tuna, 1980; Buttmer & Seamon, 1980 cited in Vaske & Kobrin, 2001). This augments the degree of place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992) present in a community, as well as providing a unique aspect which can attract tourists. Place attachment can also yield emotional attachments if there is an identification between a special place and a person (Giulian & Feldman, 1993; Williams & Patterson, 1999).
Identifying place with a component of self-identity (Proshansky et al., 1983 cited in Vaske & Kobrin, 2001) may also enhance self-esteem (Korpela, 1995) as outsiders recognise the value of that community culture (Scheyvens, 1999, Stronza & Gordillo, 2008) and locals gain a feeling of belonging to their own community (Tuan, 1980). Vaske & Kobrin’s study (2001) in turn found the relationship between environmentally responsible behaviours and place dependent on attachment to place. If people care about their local environment through attachment, they are more likely to care for it. This is significant; the most important issue in ecotourism is to generate environmentally responsible behaviours to conserve the natural environment (Ross & Wall, 1999) and to potentially improve the natural resource (Vincent & Thompson, 2002).

**Community Participation Education**

As established, community participation can promote the environment and residents’ support of conservation (Ross & Wall, 1999). Community participation in ecotourism development helps to establish the goal and vision of achieving sustainability in the community and involving residents in environmental activities (Vincent & Thompson, 2002). Thus the plans and funding are a critical issue for community participation in tourism (Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Kadir, 1997). There are important sustainable plans for protecting and conserving environments and providing tourism resources with community participation (Tourism Concern, 1992). Scheyvens (2003), however, notes that community residents often lacked the ability to control ownership, capital, skill, knowledge and resources, for community participation. Moreover, as described above, many communities lack a real understanding of and are suspicious about what decision-making is about (Sofield, 2003). Thus, many researchers have emphasized the value of and need for public education about the meaning of community participation and empowerment (Simmons, 1994; Connell, 1997; Pearce, 1994).

The purpose of public education about community participation in tourism is to drive residents to understand tourism development and what it can offer them. A successful education program yields awareness which can alter residents’ behaviour and attitudes (Sweeney & Wanhill, 1996). In particular building environmental consciousness will encourage community residents to support sustainable activities and developments.
which protect their community environment (Vincent & Thompson, 2002). This may often be founded in a strong identity awareness; for example, one of the key objectives of the Tourism Awareness Program of the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism was “to form a strong, sturdy identity and maintain national discipline” (Departemen Parawisata, Pos, & Telekomunikasi, 1990, p.36). Thus public education is regarded as important for strengthening community identity. But community participation rarely includes initial training of political skills of residents involved in the tourism development decision-making (Goodwin, 1995). Nevertheless, many researchers also note increasing educational opportunities and conservation program training as being critical for community participation (Scheyvens, 1999; Ross & Wall, 1999; Vincent & Thompson, 2002).

Tourism Education

Community residents involved in developing tourism service provision are often more concerned about education of the front-line workers, and they ignore the interaction with tourists and formal tourism education (Robinson & Yee, 1996). Conflicts often arise from misunderstanding and tension in the interactions between residents and tourists, due to cultural differences (Pearce et al., 1998; Cole, 2005), particularly in interactions with tourists from foreign cultures. Thus, provision of essential information about tourists is a key issue for host communities (Ross, 2004). Nevertheless, ecotourism education and training in the host community often has a limited discussion of the service aspect of tourism. In general, the literature suggests a failure to provide adequate, if any, such content as part of ecotourism or tourism community education and training programs. Cole (2005) suggests that training programs in community-based tourism have to develop greater capacity and appreciation of the following areas:

- esteem - building confidence based on knowledge and ideas;
- cross-cultural understanding to reduce misunderstanding;
- what tourists want;
- tourism development - understanding the advantages and disadvantages;
- product development - such as agriculture, food, crafts, and souvenirs;
- marketing - linking tour operators and intermediaries;
• finance - long-term financial and sustainable planning; and
• food service and hygiene, and menu variety.

It is important to note that tourism training programs in remote marginal communities are not suitable if it means applying techniques such as email and internet to send and link information (Cole, 2005). Cole (2005) further noted that residents in remote communities could leave their homes to train with longer tourism courses but still not have gained academic quality training. Indeed, she proposes that adopting a tourism training program mixing employment and learning would have greater success (Cole, 2005).

The tourism education sector is a controversial issue in ecotourism development at the community level. The pressure there is to reduce the threat of overdevelopment and negative changes in community-based ecotourism, particularly in remote or rural communities (Niesenbaum & Gorka; 2001). In addition, ecotourism education often lacks relevant literature and material on operational and organizational management. Thus those wanting to set up a holistic ecotourism industry are often faced with the critical question of how to establish genuine criteria for ecotourism operation and management in a community-based situation. In contrast, the tourism service portion in community education for ecotourism industry is a very important issue that is often overlooked.

One example where an adequate balance was reached between tourism skills and environmental knowledge is detailed by Niesenbaum & Gorka (2001), who conducted eco-education in partnership with a local community in Costa Rica. The education program had six features, namely “international experience; interdisciplinary collaboration; community interaction; experiential and service learning; campus components; and consistency with our institution’s objectives” (Niesenbaum & Gorka’s, 2001, p.13) some details of which follow.
International Environmental Experience

First, a conservation project goal of being *bio-cultural*, incorporates and links both natural and human elements. The program conducted courses incorporating experiences of bio-cultural conservation in the students’ own country, to both impart information and also allow the students to discover their own environmental degradation. Using international experience demonstrated to them how to protect their biological community. This bio-cultural concept was one applied by Taomi residents to aim for a community that has harmony between biological and cultural processes. This is an important ecological consideration. These courses also stressed the necessity of taking into consideration local language, culture, history, and the relationship with the government, as well as the relevance of environmental understanding to social rights organization.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The purpose of interdisciplinary collaboration was to train people to solve environmental problems, and to share or acquire skills. Different participating faculties with departmental education needs can easily lead to various conflicts. Thus the sustaining administration must have the ability to deal with basic and practical collaboration. Here the students need to learn appropriate political science, biology, foreign language, history, or education, and offer their experiences to create a better and mutual understanding of complex conflict problems.

Community Interaction

The educational institution provided an academic program each year at its own expense to contribute towards economic well-being in the local community. More importantly the NGO did not urge or support overdevelopment, instead encouraging modest accommodation. In communications with the community, relationships were seen as mutual: in assisting the community education program, and creating partnerships to understand the local culture and solve their environmental problems. To this end, this institution, a faculty of the Muhlenber College Centre, held meetings
with local conservationists and politicians to cooperate on protecting the local culture and environment.

**Experiential and Service Learning**

The institution guided students developing their independent research and participatory service-oriented projects or activities, for example, to interact with local residents and their land issues, such as in local forest recovery or river clean-ups. These experiential and service learning methods were very useful for these students, given their background.

**Campus Component**

The institution had a time limitation on the tourism sector teaching which was offered for less than two weeks. Nevertheless students were encouraged to learn and connect with their experiences back at home. All of the important learning experiences were included in presentations to the college community, and helped with fundraising to assist or offer welfare in their community.

**Relation to Institutional Objective**

The eco-education program was consistent with the institutional aim. Moreover, one of the courses was on establishing an administration, to help promote the community’s own institutional capacity. Thus, the institution was confident that their courses, centred on sustainability, were a good contribution to community-based conservation. In this case study, eco-education courses were offered for many years funded from a Creative Teaching Grant of the Muhlenberg College Faculty Centre. The aims of the eco-education courses were to promote the institution, and to strengthen an environmental and conservation ethic in their students and contribute to an effective community-based conservation in their local community. Some of these features and ideas can be observed in the Taomi ecotourism education and training discussed in this thesis.
3.4.2 Policy and Planning

NGOs not only play the significant role in education and training, but also often provide consultants to assist developing an ecotourism plan and other aids. Planning is often lacking in the early stages following a crisis, and in rural communities like Taomi, local capacity for planning may be limited. Nevertheless, strategic planning is vitally important, and often a highly political process itself. Hall (1994, p.34) indicates that “planning for tourism occurs in a number of forms (development, infrastructure, promotion, and marketing); structures (different government organizations); and scales (international, national, regional, local, and sectional)”. As a result, tourism policy often has a large number of stakeholders, reflected in the participation at different levels of interested parties such as international agencies, government agencies, NGO groups, tourism industry associations, community leaders, significant individuals, bureaucrats, politicians, and indigenous groups, all influencing tourism policy (Hall 1994, Fennell & Dowling, 2003; Edwards et al., 2000; Hall, 2003, Fennell, 2003). Moreover Heeley (1981, p.61) points out that “planning for tourism tends to be an amalgam of economic, social, and environmental considerations which reflects the diversity of factors which influence tourism development”. In addition Fennell (2003, p.103) indicates that “tourism and ecotourism policy encompasses a broad spectrum of concerns related to the implementation of tourism programmes around the world, including social, ecological, and economic relationships”. Thus, tourism planning and policy is not only highly political, but reflects financial, physical, social, cultural, natural, and human assets at a variety of scales.

The public sector, comprising national, regional, and local government, has two primary responsibilities: first, to set up protection and regulation of natural resources; and secondly, to include the promotion of economic development in local communities —including transport, infrastructure, investment, and employment— in tourism policies (Holtz & Edwards, 2003). Government functions can provide assistance, such as ecotourism policy and planning, technical assistance, and funding subsidization of ecotourism development (WTO, 1994). Specific assistance can, for example, be given to rural communities to alleviate poverty and establish their own economic viability.
Holtz & Edwards (2003, p.50) point out that the ecotourism policy and planning for national parks and other reserve areas would involve “creating national strategies for ecotourism; developing effective environmental impact assessment and regulatory frameworks; creating and managing protected areas; and promoting investment in tourism facilities that are consistent with sustainable development objectives, and transport infrastructure and systems that support sustainable development objectives.” Moreover, tourism policies are affected by the social, economic, and cultural characteristics of society (Hall, 1994). In general, government planning and policy without considering costs and benefits may lead to decision-making which uses government power to coerce the local community (Sofield, 2003). Government policy in Taiwan, for example, usually involves a top-down imposition of decisions on local government and local communities, due in part to lack of expertise or research funds to implement good planning and policy. Local government planning and policy in Taiwan is often deferred to national government policy and planning departments to determine, particularly in the case of indigenous and rural communities, an approach which clearly creates problems for locally-based sustainable development.

In contrast, contemporary planning literature suggests that rural development should seek to reduce the domination of outside agencies and institutions in any development project or program, and set up a bottom-up process to establish a planning and development local knowledge base for better understanding (Chambers, 1983; Hildebrand, 1981). Chamber’s (1997) approach suggests that professional planners and consultants are often unable to explore and implement the more in-depth indigenous knowledge. As a result, outside institutions may inadvertently incorporate various negative changes—which might otherwise have been avoided or minimized—into the policy and planning required for ecotourism development in local communities. It is often better for NGOs to seek to establish and work with local agencies and institutions which can help provide good plans and policies and guide the local community over the long-term.

Government policy, planning, and implementation of ecotourism development are designed to improve and assist in remote areas such as indigenous and rural communities. The Taiwanese government’s ecotourism development policy in 2002 was in line with the UN International Year of Ecotourism 2002 design to promote...
ecotourism development in local communities and develop ecotourism activities.
The purpose of the Taiwanese government’s carrying out of ecotourism development in rural and indigenous communities in 2002, for example, was to decrease poverty and improve sustainable use of local economic resources.

The private sector is often of a relatively small economic scale in ecotourism development in local communities; many rural and indigenous communities located in mountain areas will not have a sufficiently developed public infrastructure. So, few outside business enterprises are interested in investing in rural and indigenous communities; only local businesses. Generally speaking, outside businesses are principally concerned with improving their own financial base and so tend to have lower regard for government policies and regulations with regard to natural resources (Holtz & Edwards, 2003). This is one way in which outside business enterprises could create negative consequences in ecotourism development in rural and indigenous communities.

Other important external stakeholders, including donors and NGOs, can also play a significant role in creating biodiversity policy and planning for tourism processes. Their role is often to provide the initial funding, policy, and planning strategies for ecotourism development, which can assist rural and indigenous people establish their own policy and planning, particularly regarding the biodiversity resource (Holtz & Edwards, 2003). Generally speaking, donors and NGOs provide grants, loans, and policy-making for ecotourism projects in local communities, thereby having a more direct influence than government policy (Sofield, 2003; Holtz & Edwards, 2003).

In summary, ecotourism policy and planning on the part of the national government, local government, local associations, and other significant NGOs creates both positive and negative changes in the local community. Policy and planning objectives can be more successfully implemented if based on the knowledge and experience of local residents, and with their support. However, local residents have to have access to relevant knowledge and information of the professional ecotourism field, particularly in rural communities. So, the NGOs play a significant role indeed in providing ecotourism education and training programs to guide local residents, not only in acquiring essential skills and knowledge, but also in local capacity-building initiatives.
3.5 Resident Perceptions and Tourism Change

It is clear from the above discussion that community empowerment is influenced by a range of factors that are more and less specific to each individual case. It is also apparent that the success of any development is also influenced by the perceptions that the local community has of that development. As this study aims to examine the story of Taomi’s tourism development from the perspective of the community, it is important to investigate how these perceptions are derived. Residents’ perceptions are rarely discussed within ecotourism impact studies in relation to development theory and empirical research into tourism impacts. Perception is usually taken to mean the final, organized, and meaningful experience of sensory information (Weber, 1991). Perception involves assigning a meaning to what has been sensed. When one senses a stimulus, one is aware of it; when one perceives that stimulus, one seeks to understand what it is. This term does not infer profound understanding of objects or issues. Naturally, there are a number of different definitions differentiating perceptions and cognition concepts in psychology. Fisher et al. (1984) recognize that perceptions are more or less based on judgments and estimations of the situation, dealing with the reactions of humans to an environmental issue. Thus the process of perception includes the concept of cognition.

Attitudes are also important in understanding community views as these are strongly influenced by perception. In general, ‘attitude’ refers to personal feelings that are either positive or negative with regard to their object. According to an early definition by Allport, ‘attitude’ is “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (cited in Bordens & Horowitz, 2002, p.158). Weber (1991, p.238) refines the definition: “Attitude is an evaluative reaction to persons, things, or events”. Again, “an attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998, p.269). On the other hand, Hewstone & Stroebe (2001) claim that attitude represents an affect and belief arising from learning about the behavioural object, which leads to a specific response with specific behaviour.
Thus, the attitude definitions above are evaluated according to the mental process and attitude towards objects (Hewstone & Stroebe, 2001).

Socio-psychological factors relevant to attitude are generally divided into three components: cognition, affect, and behaviour process (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). Some social psychologists further separate the behaviour component into two sub-components: behaviour/active intention and behaviour (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1992; Weber, 1991; Himmelfarb, 1993; Rajecki, 1990). According to Weber (1991) by attitude we can understand that a personal action tendency was probably adopted in the social environment. The definition of attitude has three components:

1. Cognition component: comprises beliefs, knowledge, and information about attitude object; uses evaluation to arrive at belief, and understanding; and judgments, such as agreement-disagreement, good-bad, benefit-detriment, and so forth.
2. Affect component: consists of emotion and feelings directing an individual’s response towards favour-disfavour, respect-disrespect, acceptance and refusal of attitude objects.
3. Action tendency: an individual adopts preparatory situation toward direct active reflection for attitude object as well as behavioural intention.

Examination of attitudes has been widely used in examinations of tourism impact studies. Choi & Sirakaya (2005) for example developed and validated a scale using subjective indicators to assess the attitude toward sustainable tourism of residents in a small tourism community in Texas. Their study encompassed seven factors, namely social costs, environmental sustainability, long-term planning, economic benefits, ensuring visitor satisfaction, a community-centred economy, and maximizing community participation. This study found that using subjective indicators could provide meaningful insights into residents’ attitudes toward sustainable tourism. They can also be a source of meaningful information for local planners and decision-makers to appraise and strengthen current and future tourism development. Moreover, this study also contends that subjective indicators can be linked with objective measures to provide a wider viewpoint but points out that economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political sustainability is accomplished by maintaining
good perspectives and cooperation between local planners, managers, government, and local residents.

The concept of perception is often used interchangeably with that of attitude in tourism research based on local residents, visitors, and other stakeholders. Certainly, it is difficult using indirect comparison between perception and attitude in empirical research to define the difference as it applies to tourism impacts (Ap, 1992). To strictly distinguish between these two different concepts: ‘perception’ expresses views based on a target, whereas ‘attitude’ expresses a sustained tendency/active intention towards an issue. How these come about and how they are influenced over time is covered by theories of social exchange and representation, discussed below.

3.5.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory is a model developed by Ap (1992) to explain residents’ perceptions in the process of exchange relationships, and concerning personal satisfaction with these exchanges. For example, residents who have engaged in the tourism industry would be inclined to hold a more positive perception of tourism development. Pearce et al. (1996), however, are critical of equity and social exchange theory in that it is too simple; it cannot properly explain the complex relationships involved in supporting tourism as it is approached only from the perspective of individual costs and benefits. Pearce et al. (1996) point out that the Ap (1992) study provides individual opinions that are not balanced against community costs and benefits.

“The underlying assumption of Social Exchange Theory is that actors behave in a way that maximizes the rewards and minimizes the costs they experience” (Madrigal, 1993, p.338). The theory implies that there is a focus on evaluating from the perspective of individual perceptions of benefits and costs, and a lack of discussion of the more group-oriented relationships in tourism (Prentice, 1993; Pearce, et al., 1996). Social Exchange Theory makes no assumptions about what actors value; such things could include, for example, wealth, fame, time with family, or environmental causes. All exchange theories do, however, assume that actors are self-interested, seeking to increase outcomes they positively value and to decrease those they negatively value,
aspects particularly adopted from behavioural psychology (Molm, 2001).
Consequently the concepts of Social Exchange Theory are inconsistent in that certain
researchers draw conclusions based upon a body of empirical research evidence that is
centered on individual units. It is therefore inadequate as an assumption to
purport to further explain how “each individual has an equal influence on policy and
planning” (Pearce et al., 1996, p.38).

Most studies on residents’ perceptions of changes caused by tourism focus on
individual values and beliefs, but these values and beliefs need to be investigated
more deeply. A study is required which further examines how values and beliefs are
distributed and transferred within the local community. This study therefore seeks to
apply social representation theory and investigate other perceptions of ecotourism
changes in the interaction between individual and societal factors (Pearce et al., 1991,
1996).

3.5.2 Social Representations Theory

Social representations have been the most comprehensively defined, adopted and
defined social representations as a “system of preconceptions, images and values
which have their own cultural meaning and persist independently of individual
experience”. In addition, social representations as a meta-system are used around the
world, being inclusive of values, attitudes, beliefs, and common sense explanation
(Doise, 1993; Farr, 1993).

Pearce et al. (1996, p.2) demonstrate that “social representations is concerned with
understanding everyday knowledge and how people use this knowledge and common
sense to understand the world in which they live and to guide their actions and
decisions”(Billing, 1993; Halfacree, 1993; Moscovici, 1981). In addition, people’s
knowledge is concerned with events or objects that involve individual experience and
this knowledge could come from other people, and through the direct experience of
others (Himmelweit, 1990). When people have more knowledge with which to
understand tourism, they develop positive and supportive perceptions of it (Davis,
et al., 1988, Keogh, 1990, Lankford & Howard, 1994). This implies that as people
receive more knowledge of tourism than they presently have, they will have access to more information to draw on deciding more positive impact assessments.

Social representations provide a mechanism for people and communities throughout the process which takes them from the unfamiliar to the familiar. For example, when people are faced with a problem, they first make a decision based on the result of previous experience, or look for relevant information to support the result (Moscovici, 1984; Wason & Johnson-Laird, 1972). In addition, when people encounter a new and unfamiliar object or event, they will compare it with previous or past experience and knowledge that could either become a new element in the existing framework, or could produce new feelings of conflict (Moscovici, 1981). People can and might alter their inconsistencies regarding facts when their representation is different to the actual situation (Echable & Rovira, 1989). Moscovici (1981, p.189) emphasises that this process needs more “socially meaningful fusion, with a shift in value and feeling”.

Social representations also play an important role in the area between individual social identity and groups (Moscovici, 1981, Dougherty et al., 1992). Groups usually influence individual social identity in the social process through communication. Therefore when examining joining a group presenting a group representation, it will be found that different groups display different uniform cohesiveness regarding social representations.

Moscovici (1988) provides three types of social representations, namely hegemonic, emancipated, and polemical. Hegemonic representations are defined as those of “uniform, coercive, stable, and homogenous groups” (Pearce et al., 1996, p.44). Emancipated representations describe subgroups which have acquired somewhat different knowledge and ideas. Polemical representations exist “in the context of group or social conflict” (Pearce et al., 1996). Social representations can also be divided by the different levels of the groups depending on the topic, object, and event, and communication occurs by diffusion, propagation, or propaganda (Moscovici, 1992). When these different types of groups find elements beyond their direct experience, they will glean social representations from elsewhere (Dougherty et al., 1992; Echabe et al., 1992).
Change as a social dynamic can be linked to social power and conflict in social representations. Social power can provide a stable situation in society (Moscovici, 1981; Wells, 1987), influencing individual perceptions and definitions (Echabe & Rovira, 1989) and reinforcing them socially. In contrast, when different groups have different social representations conflict arises (Moscovici, 1972). These different groups will have different opinions and understandings, and this could arouse further polarisation or opposition between views on the same topic or different topics, objects, or events (Pearce et al., 1996). Nevertheless, change is important in relieving group conflict and in promoting understanding in interactions taking account of the power differences between groups in influencing decision making. In other words, an understanding of local residents’ perceptions, beliefs, and decisions is gained by applying the theory of social representations to explain matters of social exchange and conflict regarding everyday knowledge of the world (Pearce et al., 1996; Moscovici, 1981).

Social representations are not only informed by how people see the world, but are also decided by social interactions and communications with their society (Purkhardt, 1993). Fredline & Faulkner (2000) identify three sources of social representations: direct experience, social interaction, and the media.

1. Direct Experience

Most direct experience occurs in an individual’s consciousness, which is then transmitted to the group. Direct experience regarding tourism offers residents more information in building their perceptions, and most information is directly controlled by individuals rather than other tourism reference sources (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). More important stimulation for a situation of change occurs when an individual experience presents an inconsistency between actual observation and the predominating social representation (Pearce et al., 1996). When direct experience with a phenomenon is not sufficient, social representations will find other important sources, such as important individuals or groups, political persons, or the media.
2. Social Interaction

Social interaction specifies that individual development, contribution, and change take place through conversation and participation in social activities (Emler & Ohana, 1993, Moscovici, 1981, 1984, 1988). Social interaction in social representations takes place between individuals and their social or cultural world. Generally, social interaction is also a powerful means of transmission between individuals and social groups, as well as consisting of a very broad interaction between family, friends, workmates, strangers, or connections with a close group (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000).

People prefer to compare their representations with similar social identities in order to validate with other group members (Breakwell & Canter, 1993). Moreover, multiple members could be interacting with different groups in order to present their different representations (Dougherty et al., 1992), and individuals or influential leaders are likely to exert information through networks to influence the opinions of other groups (Pearce et al., 1996). In contrast, residents who have not joined a group or had contact with an object or experienced ecotourism would probably borrow from other sources of social representations, such as the media.

3. Media

The media operate within the concept of social representations and knowledge to provide people with understanding of social information or some issue, to present images, and to raise people’s awareness (Gamson et al., 1992) and to further influence public opinion or views. The media can influence people’s perceptions through real or selected stories, reports, or discussions, or through providing the individual with a wide range of representations through analogies, metaphors, and visual images (Gamson et al., 1992). This is their means of presenting an issue of conflict between different groups and subgroups. The media can also create cohesion in terms of social identification, which can affect the attitudes or opinions of individuals or subgroups (Gamson et al., 1992).

Fredline’s (2000) approach incorporates relationships between individuals and social representations using the model of Dann (1992) and Pearce et al., (1996). This model
assumes relationships between group social representations, individual perceptions or representations, and individual actions and outcomes (see Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1: Relationships between Individual and Social Representations**

In this model it can be seen that individuals entertain perceptions or representations about objects or events which regulate individual actions and outcomes—shown at (A). Conversely, individual actions and outcomes also modify the individual’s perceptions or representations—shown at (B). As a result, groups undergo direct interactions that could generate consistencies or inconsistencies in their representations. Group social representation goes through a socialisation process to influence individual perceptions or representations—as shown at (C). Further, individual representations are strongly affected by group social representations and feelings of belonging as members of the group. Conversely, individual representations depend on personal power to influence group social representations. This, shown at (D), occurs in fewer situations. Groups can exert direct control over individual actions and outcomes through such mechanisms as rules and regulations—shown at (E), but the consequences of individual actions and outcomes may more indirectly impact on the group social representations—as at (F) (Fredline, 2000).
Social representations theory provides an understanding of the social values or belief systems which influence local residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts (Billig, 1993; Moscovici, 1988). It is important that social representations also provide greater power of interaction and influence between individuals and their society, which helps to create and change social representations. Moreover, social representations indicate that an individual’s direct contact or experience with actual situations is a key point in changing representations and a link to real tourism changes. Applying social representations to the changes brought by tourism includes the “perceptions of impacts, but also embraces its future development; who should be responsible for its control and development; why it has the impacts it has; and how it relates to other aspects of social and community life” (Pearce et al., 1996, p.2).

Social representations theory is a very broad theory that cannot be narrowed down to any single method or model covering all social representations. Using social representations theory provides greater understanding of the connection between the detail of the content and the structure of social representations (Breakwell & Canter, 1993; Breakwell, 1993; Good, 1993). Applying social representations theory to residents’ perceptions in ecotourism studies allows exploration of the real social actors in the sample. Most researchers currently doing so have to measure or search for significantly different groups pertaining to the relationship with the variables of tourism-related factors, demographics, personal factors, and social factors (Inbakaran & Jackson, 2006). Most current research in host communities has been conducted as a community segmentation study where resident populations have been segmented into several different groups sharing similar response patterns with similar perceptions of tourism. Relative studies have been used in cluster analysis, as outlined below (see Table 3.3).
Table 3.3: Relative Cluster Analysis of Tourism Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
<th>Study area</th>
<th>Cluster analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madrigal (1995)</td>
<td>Attitudes of residents from two rural cities, one in the USA, and one in the UK</td>
<td>Three groups: lovers, realists, and haters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fredline &amp; Faulkner (2000)</td>
<td>Residents’ perceptions of Gold Coast at Indy in Queensland, Australia</td>
<td>Five groups: lovers, haters, ambivalent, supporters, realists, and concerned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver &amp; Lawton (2001)</td>
<td>Residents’ perceptions of tourism on Tamborine Mountain, Gold Coast, Australia</td>
<td>Three groups: supporters, neutrals, and opponents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams &amp; Lawson (2001)</td>
<td>Local opinions and perceptions of tourism in ten New Zealand towns</td>
<td>Four groups: lovers, cynics, taxpayers, and innocents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inbakaran &amp; Jackson (2006)</td>
<td>Residents’ attitudes to five tourism product regions in Victoria, Australia.</td>
<td>Four groups: tourism industry, low tourism, neutral tourism, and high tourism connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study will apply social representation theory as an important theoretical perspective (methodological lens) to examine perceptions of different groups of residents towards ecotourism and how it has changed different aspects of community capital. Most empirical studies that provide model diagrams of residents’ perception have measured links between tourism changes, benefits, and support (Lee & Back, 2006; Lee et al., 2003, Gursory & Rutherford, 2004). This study, however, will investigate the representations of various Taomi stakeholders to present a dynamic model of change.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has examined issues of empowerment in community tourism development, and how this can contribute to changes to community capital. Social representations theory is introduced as the conceptual framework applied in this study to understand all the different representations of community stakeholders and NGO groups. Much of the existing literature to date seems to have concentrated on reactive approaches to crisis events destinations which have a significant established tourism industry. There has been much less work on how tourism might be used as a
development or recovery tool in locations which have suffered natural disasters. In particular, there has been little examination of how such development changes the stock of community capital that is present in such locations. This study focuses on the development of ecotourism within the Taomi community. The 921 earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter Scale devastated central Taiwan on September 21, 1999 (Huang & Min, 2002) and left the Taomi community, located in Puli Town in Nantou County, in a state of collapse. A significant purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the impact ecotourism has had on the local community and on the conservation of resources in the Taomi community since the introduction of ecotourism development. It is important to note that Taomi adopted a “holy grail” approach to ecotourism as a solution to development issues. This study exploring ecotourism development in Taomi is congruent with the design rationale of a single case study: that is, critical, unique, and revelatory (Yin, 2003). The design of this research is covered in the following chapter.
Chapter 4
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the research questions posed by this study to explore the perceptions of and attitudes of community stakeholders and NGO groups in community–based ecotourism development. A further aim of this study was to examine how some related political conflicts and the ecotourism educational and training programme affected relationships between the NGO groups and resident stakeholders. It was designed to obtain a wide understanding and provide a holistic picture of ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake event. The research framework guiding the research process was linked to my review of pertinent literature to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

This study discusses in turn the theoretical frameworks articulated by social constructionism, social representation, and ethnography. Moreover, I had to be aware of my own position and role undertaking fieldwork for this study. The study uses a qualitative research method, comprising the development of a design, pilot study, the sampling method, methodological procedure, and data analysis. A range of data was collected from Taomi village with a detailed ethnographic method. Extensive semi-structured interviews were conducted with three main stakeholder groups: residents, tourism operators, and NGO experts. By using a combination of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and participant observation it was possible to achieve triangulation of information for verifying research question data and findings. Interviews were the principal method of probing issues, and ideas, and testing variables for gathering information. All interviews conducted involved an initial (first phase) interview and a follow-up (second phase) one. The participant observation and documentation alleviated any weaknesses inherent to the interview method. This chapter discusses in detail the development of these methods, along with the questions of their validity, reliability, and limitations.
In undertaking this study ethical issues were addressed by following the criteria and principles of the National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans and ethical clearance was given by Griffith University. The aim was to respect and protect all participants’ wellbeing, rights and perceptions, and reduce risk issues. I adopted a number of important strategies to protect the confidentiality of all the information and contribute benefits fairly to all who participated in this study.

4.2 The Research Framework

I first reviewed a large amount of the extant literature, as discussed in the Chapters 2 and 3. This provided definitions of ‘ecotourism’, ‘crisis management in tourism’, ‘community capital’, ‘community education’, and ‘ecotourism development’. This led me to focus on understanding the process of ecotourism development in the village of Taomi in Taiwan and how it has contributed to sustainable livelihoods, thereby identifying a specific research problem and associated questions. Next, an appropriate research target and method with which to explore and measure the research questions were selected. I adopted a qualitative approach to data collection, one allowing triangulation of results through interviews, participant observation, and documentary processes. Finally, my research findings are presented. The research framework is detailed in Figure 4.1, and the research questions are set out under the next subheading.

4.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to clarify and focus on the research purpose:

1. What changes have occurred in community capital as a result of ecotourism development?

2. How have community social representations influenced outcomes?

3. How does education of residents help them understand the concepts of ecotourism and responsibility for environmental protection?

4. What are the difficult issues in ecotourism educational and training programmes?
5. What was the vision and what are the challenges of ecotourism for the Taomi community?

6. What were the positive roles played by each of the NGOs through provision of ecotourism education and training in Taomi’s ecotourism development following the earthquake?

7. What conflicts regarding power and benefits occurred between the NGOs and the various ecotourism operators?

8. Should ecotourism be used as a development tool following a crisis event, as occurred in Taomi village?
Figure 4.1 The Research Framework

Ecotourism Development in Taomi Community after the 921 Earthquake

Generated knowledge of
- problem area
- weakness in research
- approach to research

Research Problem

Literature Review

Research Questions

Qualitative Approach (Data-collecting)

Design and Pilot Test
Semi-Structured
In-depth Interviews

Refinement and adjustment

Conduct Individual
Semi-structured
In-depth Interviews

Conduct Focus Group
Interviews

Residents
Experts
Residents

Follow-Ups and Cross-Checking

Integration and Analysis of Data

Report Finding

Participant Observation and Documentation

Triangulation
4.4 Theoretical Framework: Social Constructionism, and Constructivism

As outlined in the previous chapter, wanting an understanding of peoples’ perceptions of ecotourism development in Taomi village led to the identification of social representation as an important pillar of this study. Such an approach recognises the importance of a social constructionist view of the world. Social constructionism adopts a basic belief in a relativist ontology (world-view) which is “what is said to be ‘the way things are’ is really just ‘the sense we make of them’” (Crotty, 1998, p.64). Moreover, “constructionism is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted with an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p.42). Thus, the philosophies of social constructionism tend to exclude “this naïve realist view of representation” (Schwandt, 2000, p.197). Shadish (1995, p.67) offers that social constructionism “refers to constructing knowledge about reality, not constructing reality itself”. Unlike positivist methods which contend a knowable reality, Crotty (1998, p.42) asserts that “constructionism is well removed from the objectivism found in the positivist stance”. As this study is primarily concerned with the interpretations of various stakeholders, constructionist approaches have great relevance.

Different definitions of social constructionism have been proposed by different people. Schwandt (2000, p.197), for example, offers that social constructionism means “that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience”. Crotty (1998, p.43) takes a more dynamic view, believing that understanding is “constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting”. Moreover, “constructionism is viewed as relative to time and place, never absolute across time and place, thus the reluctance to generalize and the suspicion of generalizations asserted by others” (Patton, 2002, p.100).

Constructionism has been widely used in sociological and psychological theories of knowledge, concerned with how social phenomena develop in special social contexts.
Indeed, Burr suggests that constructionism is the foundation of many contemporary social science approaches, for “social constructionism can be thought of as a theoretical orientation which to a greater or lesser degree underpins all of these newer approaches, which are currently offering radical and critical alternatives in psychology and social psychology, as well as in other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities” (2003, p.1).

Guba & Lincoln (1994) similarly claim that constructivism adopts a relativist ontology (relativism), epistemologically subjectivist findings, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology. Thus, when being used the paradigm is adjusted to generate a “reconstructed understanding of the social world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.158). In this particular study we examine one complex setting in depth through the representations of individuals and the understandings they have gained through the attendant social interactions. Moreover, “constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it” (Schwandt, 2000, p.197). Constructivist approaches create concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience and further “test and modify the constructions in the light of new experience” (Schwandt, 2000, p.197). Constructivist approaches also deny an objectivist theory and instead pay attention to philosophical hermeneutics of constructivism in the potential of language (conversation, dialogue) to disclose meaning and truth (Gallagher, 1992; Smith, 1997). Therefore “constructivists study the multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions for their lives and interactions with others” (Patton, 2002, p.96).

There is often confusion of these very similar sounding approaches, which do share a number of attributes. For example, Schwandt (2000, p.197) contends that “social constructionist epistemologies aim to ‘overcome’ representationalist epistemologies in a variety of ways. They typically begin by drawing on an everyday, uncontroversial, garden-variety constructivism.” Moreover, Patton (2002, p.97) emphasises that “social construction, or constructivist philosophy, is built on the thesis of ontological relativity, which holds that all tenable statements about existence depend on a worldview, and that worldview is uniquely determined by empirical or sense data about the world”. Thus, their similar worldviews are based around this ontological relativity and the importance of philosophical hermeneutics to understanding them.
There are, however, a few different epistemologies (researcher-researched relationships) between constructivism and constructionism which illustrate how “the process of social construction unfolds among scholars” (Patton, 2002, p.97). Crotty (1998, p.58) offers “…constructivism consideration focusing exclusively on ‘the meaning-making activity of the individual mind’ whereas in constructionism the focus includes ‘the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning’. Moreover, he claims that “constructivism taken in this sense points up the unique experience of each of us. It suggests that each one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other, thereby tending to scotch any hint of a critical spirit. On the other hand, social constructionism emphasises the hold our culture has on us: its shaping the way in which we see things (even the way in which we feel things!) and giving us a quite definite view of the world” (Crotty, 1998, p.58).

Given the interactive investigation of the community representations under examination in this study and the possibilities outlined above, I have adopted a social constructionism stance.

Crotty further proposes that having identified a suitable paradigmatic approach, the subsequent considerations must then be addressed:

- “Epistemology: the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology.
- Theoretical perspective: the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria.
- Methodology: the strategy, plan, and the action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods, and linking their choice and use to the desired outcomes.
- Methods: the techniques or procedure used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis” (1998 p.3).

Following this framework, Crotty (1998) gives an example of a paradigm comprising constructionism (epistemology), symbolic interactionism (theoretical perspective),
ethnography (methodology) and participant observation (method). This example of a theoretical approach entailing symbolic interactionism, ethnography, and participant observation emphasises the interaction process and the characteristics of individual interpretation. However, as Flick (2002) suggests, a social construction research approach using symbolic interactionism theory, ethnography, and participant observation might let one gain insights into the interaction process, but the researcher may have difficulty capturing the individual’s biographical process and their knowledge and/or understanding. Indeed, although ethnographic approaches embody a flexible approach towards the research topic, they also risk easily falling into arbitrariness (Flick, 2002). In contrast, the social representation theory can deal with the sharing of social and cultural knowledge, and how this influences individual perceptions, experiences, and actions (see Chapter 3) (Flick, 2002). In this research approach, social knowledge is obtained from social rules and such knowledge and rules do not accommodate real categories (Flick, 2002).

This study therefore adopts a mixed paradigm process, based on social constructionism (for its epistemology), social representation (for its theoretical perspective), and ethnography (for its methodology) (see Figure 4.2). This approach generates a wider meaning and knowledge understanding of the interaction processes between different individuals and groups by exploring deeper individual biographical processes with regard to sensitive issues. For example, “a constructionist evaluator would expect that different stakeholders involved in a welfare programme (e.g. staff, clients, families of clients, administrators, funders) would have different experiences and perceptions of the programme. “A constructionist evaluator would attempt to capture these different perspectives through open-ended interviews and observations, and would then examine the implications of the different perceptions (or multiple ‘realities’)” (Patton, 2002, p.98). To this end this study looks at the different representations of experts, residents, and tourism operators. Moreover, Flick (2002) contends that ethnography has to adopt different strategies, such as semi-structured interviews, and different types of participant observation. This study adopts multiple-technique ethnography to collect data and achieve the triangulation discussed in the next section.
4.5 Ethnography

“To know things we use our five senses: sight, hearing, taste, and touch. But these senses do not acquire knowledge separately, each on its own account” (Gobo, 2008, p.4). An ethnographic methodology concerns itself with an interest in daily activities, how these daily activities are implemented, and the context or structure of mutual interaction with different places and people (Flick, 2002). Angrosino (2007, p.14) offers some features of various approaches to the basic principles of ethnography, as below:

- “A search for patterns proceeds from the careful observations of lived behaviours and from detailed interviews with people in the community under study. When ethnographers speak about ‘culture’ or ‘society’ or ‘community’, it is important to keep in mind that they are speaking in terms that make sense to the ethnographer who has a global overview of the social or cultural whole that people living in it may lack.

- Ethnographers must pay careful attention to the process of field research. Attention must always be paid to the ways in which one gains entry to the field site, establishes rapport with the people living there, and comes to be a participating member of that group.”
Therefore an ethnographic strategy comprises observation as a primary resource, and individual and focus group interviews, and documentary materials add to this (Gobo, 2008). Although ethnography primarily adopts the observation technique, community studies should incorporate interviews and documents to collect data and data analysis on the spot as the researcher stays in the local community for a long period of time (Gobo, 2008). Careful attention needs to be paid to the research problems of site, person, and methods in ethnography identified by Angrosino (2007). A holistic methodology for ethnography should incorporate many different techniques to gather data, such as various interviews and documentation, and not be confined to observation as the main strategy, as was the case in earlier anthropological work.

In community studies of ecotourism, some researchers noted they utilized ethnographic research: for example Stronza & Gordillo’s study (2008) involved ethnographic research and data from three community-based projects, and used semi-structured household interviews, focus groups, and participatory approaches. Other studies have applied ethnographic research in community development studies, in areas such as social impacts assessment (Becker, 1997; Becker, Harris, McLaughlin, & Nielsen, 2003); action research (McNiff, 2001); and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) (Chambers, 1983). Essentially, the ethnographic method should be flexible, adopting various suitable techniques to collect data “about the material products, social relationship, beliefs, and values of a community” (Flick, 2007a, p.xv).

4.6 The Researcher’s Position

In qualitative research, the researcher takes on the role of a research instrument in the position of collecting and organizing all the data from all interviewees. As Cloke points out “interviewers are themselves implicated in the construction of meanings with their interviewees… such intertextuality is crucial and unavoidable, and the data which results is essentially collaborative” (Cloke, 2002, p.20). It is therefore always important to identify the background of the researcher.

This study focuses on residents’ and NGO groups’ perceptions of and attitudes to the community-based ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake, and as the
researcher I have to identify my own experiences in relevant research to avoid extraneous or subjective factors inadvertently intervening, and thereby seek to optimize research reliability in this study.

I am a lecturer in the Department of Leisure Studies in the Faculty of Tourism at Aletheia University in Taiwan. I have also worked in a number of tourism fields, leading two projects designing comprehensive tourism plans for Taoyuan County and for the city of Keelung, both in Taiwan. These experiences communicating with various key persons involved in the two tourism planning projects enhanced my interviewing skills.

Additionally, before undertaking this study, I undertook a research higher degree with a research topic concerning residents’ perceptions of ecotourism impacts in the Tsou Community, an indigenous community, in Taiwan. That research also required my having good communication skills and building trust relationships with local residents. From this research I identified a number of different political challenges and issues surrounding establishing sustainable livelihoods in community-based ecotourism development settings. This present study was undertaken in order to further understand these issues, by further investigating and exploring them in the context of the community-based ecotourism development in Taomi. Study of these issues, however, was conducted with a social constructionism approach.

### 4.7 Research Design

Possible selections for the rationale for a single case design fall into: critical (to confirm, challenge, or extend the theory), unique, extreme, or revelatory cases (Yin, 1994). My purpose was to investigate how ecotourism development was used to rebuild the Taomi community, a topic congruent with the purpose and criteria of a single-case study—that is “to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation)” (Yin, 2003, p.10). Taomi is where the first ecotourism community developed after Taiwan’s disastrous 921 earthquake; it is a specific case in ecotourism development in Taiwan and fits the appropriate definitions of a case study. Data collection in case studies involves broadly “six sources: documents, archival records,
interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artefacts” (Yin, 2003, p.83). Denzin (1978) proposed that using a variety of data sources in a study aids triangulation, and Flick (2007b) notes that many case studies employ a systematic way of implicit triangulation, through using multiple sources such as interviewing, observation and documentary analysis to collect data.

Triangulation will “reduce the risk of chance associations and systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops (Maxwell, 2005, p.112).” Stake (1998, p.97) notes that triangulation is adopted as a process to achieve “multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, [and] verify the repeatability of an observation and interpretation.” Triangulation will reduce distortion introduced by ill-structured research and contributes to building knowledge as discussed within the constructivist approach outlined above (Stake, 1998). Fielding & Fielding (1986) suggest that triangulation in qualitative research can be extended to use as a validity-test strategy, but they point out that the triangulation could still be liable to error as validity may be threatened from any particular method or data. Validity threats are based on evidence, not methods (Maxwell, 2005). Nevertheless, the result of triangulation in ethnography is generally agreed to be sound and achieved by using multiple data-collection techniques (Angrosino, 2007).

This case study employs triangulation in its ethnographic research, collecting data by means of in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, and documentation in a holistic process, and adopted convergence of multiple sources of evidence (see Figure 4:3). There has been recent discussion of the relationship between triangulation and crystallisation, the latter focusing on more emergent research. As Tobin & Begley (2004, p.388) point out, “triangulation is a tried and tested means of offering completeness, particularly in mixed-method research. When multiple types of triangulation are used appropriately as the 'triangulation state of mind', they approach the concept of crystallization, which allows for infinite variety of angles of approach”. The interview techniques were employed with myself, the researcher, in the role of protagonist, and participant observation and documentations took an ancillary role. The aim was to thereby amass a range of mutually supportive
data and offset any data insufficiency or any methodological weakness of each individual technique.

4.8 Research in Taomi

4.8.1 Justification of Case Study

The research site selected was the Taomi Village community (hereafter simply referred to as ‘Taomi’), in Puli Township in Nantou County in Taiwan. The community has had the special experience of being the site of the first ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake disaster. Ecotourism has now seen 10 years of development, since 1999. This research site is one that can offer its own many experiences of ecotourism development to other rural and remote communities, particularly after crisis events. The choice of Taomi for this study is justified in more detail below.
1. Taomi Represents a Paradigm Community Regarding its Rebuilding Process after the 921 Earthquake Disaster

The Taomi community has developed ecotourism since the 921 earthquake, seeking change and renewal in its traditional rural community setting. In the initial rebuilding process the local residents particularly sought ways to assist their livelihoods and obtain economic resources. Moreover, many of the community associations were aggressively promoting and implementing strategies for building Taomi residents’ confidence, and for future community construction. The aim was to achieve broad benefits for the community. For these reasons Taomi came to be cited as a paradigm of an ecotourism community in Taiwan, and representative of how rural Taiwanese communities are changing.

2. A Case of Ecotourism Development Following from NGO Education and Training Programmes

During the post-earthquake rebuilding, residents sought new economic resources to sustain their livelihoods. Setting up a new economic situation required them to completely alter the type of work they engaged in and the nature of their working lives. The public and private sectors offered assistance, NGO groups playing a significant role in guiding the development of both relevant education and training programmes, and ecotourism activities. These programmes and activities initially brought with them some significant impacts: increasing incomes from new sources, employment opportunities, altering concepts of environmental conservation and protection, enhancing community quality, and strengthening community relationships. These initiatives facilitated a successful transformation towards ecotourism development.

3. Building the Vision of a Sustainable Eco-village

The ultimate aim of ecotourism development is sustainable development. Ecotourism in Taomi was established with the aim of both sustainable community development, and providing a common goal for all the residents to build and identify with. The NGO groups assisted the community to identify a set of eco-village visions and values
for a sustainable community development. The visions and values of sustainable development had to facilitate achieving community goals and benefits for several associations and groups in the Taomi community.

4.9 Research Methods

4.9.1 Interviews

An interview has the potential to provide a more expansive description of a respondent’s experiences/behaviours, opinions/values, perceptions, knowledge and background (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Moreover, the interview is one of the most important sources of information in the case study, being evidence which is concerned with human affairs (Yin, 2003). Interviewees can offer significant insights into situations, understand the background or prior history of a situation, and assist the interviewer identify relevant evidence (Yin, 2003).

Interviews fall into three types: standardised, un-standardised, and semi-standardised (semi-structured) interviews (Berg, 2007). This study adopted semi-structured in-depth interview techniques to collect data. The interviews were conducted using different scripts for the residents and the experts, given the different knowledge base of the individuals in these two groups. In addition, a guide was developed to further explore the development of ecotourism in Taomi through focus groups with residents. All interviews took at least one hour, and are described below. Interviewee details are given further below at 4.11 under the Sampling Method heading.

1. Individual Interviews – with Residents, and with Experts

Different interview designs were used to conduct one-on-one interviews of residents and expert members of the NGO groups. Open ended, semi-structured in-depth interviews probe for deeper evidence or data from informants in significant events, as this study required. Informants were required to recall their own opinions, attitudes, and feelings to reflect on the history and significant effects of the education and
training programme, and relevant events in the development of ecotourism after the 921 earthquake. Details of the two individual interview types are given below.

**Resident Interviews**

An open-ended, semi-structured in-depth interview was used with the residents to allow key interviewees to offer more of their own opinions (as subjective data) about relevant events (Yin, 2003). A semi-structured in-depth interview also assists in rebuilding subjective theories (Flick, 2002). A subjective theory approach is reflected in that the interviewee has a complex stock of knowledge regarding the research questions (Flick, 2002). An open-ended question has to be unbiased but still follow the interviewer’s own line of inquiry (Yin, 2003). The strength of this type of interview is that one obtains a large amount of rich information from each interviewee, and deeper than other techniques may elicit. On the negative side, some interviewees may be unwilling to share more detailed information in response to an interviewer’s inquiry.

**Expert Interviews**

An elite interview enables people to offer their professional insight from their different areas of expertise (Flick, 2002). Experts, for example, could provide opinions about the relationship between particular organizations and their activities and events supporting Taomi’s ecotourism development. A shortcoming is that although experts can offer the interviewer deeper information, the interviewer may often have to adjust their original interview structure to fit in with the experts’ needs (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). An interview guide has to be designed to avoid expert interviewees falling into discussion of unconcerned subjects arising from their own opinions and issues (Flick, 2002). Nevertheless, a successful elite interview allows the interviewer to clarify and canvass all the interview themes or questions (Flick, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).
4.9.2 Focus Groups

The main characteristic of a focus groups interview is using a group’s interactions to obtain data and more deeply understand what could not be understood from non-group interaction (Morgan, 1988). Although often dynamic, selected focus groups must have some relatively common features with regard to the research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The interviewer also has to create a supportive and encouraging discussion in a natural environment and encourage all group members to provide their different opinions or perspectives. The purpose is to reveal impressions, emotions, and opinions about common trends or models from every group (Krueger, 1988). In addition, people often like to hear and compare others’ opinions to create their own views, which is a strength of the focus group method. In this study, all participants provided and shared the similarities and differences in their opinions and experiences in the entire interviewing process. The focus group thus overcomes some of the limitations of one-on-one interviews: insufficient reflection or not knowing how to respond to questions or themes (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In addition, focus groups can save time and generate a large amount of data compared to interviews with individuals alone. Focus groups also allow probing discussion of other additional issues. The results of focus groups also have a quite high “face validity” and the findings of focus group interviews appear believable (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.114). The weakness of focus group interviews in this study was felt to surround some sensitive questions on the conflict issues of power and sharing of benefits, due to the close relationships existing between all the interviewees. Flick (2002) suggests that one method of operating focus groups is to initially invite people in such a way as to form heterogeneous groups, but this is not always possible. This study adopted both focus groups and talking directly face-to-face to gain a further understanding of the local characteristics of ecotourism development. All interview targets were ecotourism operators or other residents, and they were divided into three different groups; every focus session lasted at least 2 hours.

The whole picture of ecotourism development in Taomi was explored using the three different interview techniques above.
4.10 Data–Collection

The entire process of data-collection involved my spending eight months (from June, 2007 to February, 2008) in Taomi to gather relevant data. Additionally, I had to make field notes from my participation in and observation of peoples’ daily activities. My role as a researcher was fully disclosed to all residents and NGO groups when I contacted them or participated in any activity, meeting, or interview. A researcher also talks to participants about their own role and goals – describing activities they have participated in, their learning experiences, and using information about what issues they are interested in (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). More importantly, as the researcher I had to build up a trusting relationship with all participants, especially considering “sensitively ethical issues and respectable norms of reciprocity” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.78).

4.10.1 Pilot Study

It is important to trial any research method through a pilot study prior to its full implementation. A semi-structured in-depth interview must follow the design of an initial interview guide, for example regarding the inclusion of some predetermined questions or special topic (Berg, 2007). A series of questions relating to the topic/s needs to be asked of each interviewee in a specified systematic order (Berg, 2007). The ‘pilot case is more formative, assisting you to develop relevant lines of questions - possibly even providing some conceptual clarification for the research design as well” (Yin, 2003, p.79). This study conducted a pilot study in the form of questions developed from the literature review. The pilot study was carried out over two weeks in June 2007; two interview targets were interviewed for each of the three interview settings: namely one-on-one resident; one-on-one expert interviews; and focus groups. My aims were to:

1. enhance my interview skills through gaining feedback from interviewees;
2. make sure that my questions were clear and could be understood;
3. check that the interviews could collect critical information and achieve the research purpose;
4. confirm that interviewees found the interview acceptable and felt personally comfortable with it;
5. test and identify the most effective of different interviewing techniques and strategies;
6. identify any potential bias in the interview guides; and
7. revise any inappropriate questions before conducting the main phase of the study.

English languages versions of the original guides used in the pilot study are shown at appendices 1–3. These were subsequently refined to produce the final interview guides (see appendices 4–6). Both the English and Chinese language versions of the three different final interview guides were checked by an academic colleague, and the English version was checked by my supervisors.

4.11 Sampling Method

A sampling strategy should be determined based on the purpose and rationale of the study (Patton, 2002). In general, sampling size is a debatable question in qualitative approaches. As Patton (2002, p.224) suggests, “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry”. He further offers: “the size of sampling depends on what you want to find out, why you want to find it out, how the findings will be used, and what resources (including time) you have for the study” (Patton, 2002, p.224). Naturally, the in-depth interview, adopted with a small number of people (seeking depth) could yield rich information (Patton, 2002). Nevertheless, it is important that sampling size takes into consideration all the information regarding the study’s purpose. When new sampled units cannot further provide new information (saturation), the sampling is terminated in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Glaser & Straus (1965) contend that theoretical sampling in data-collection can generate theory. Theoretical sampling is judged on its offering new variations to facilitate more new theory development (Flick, 2002). The criterion of terminative sampling is also dependent on achieving theoretical saturation (Glaser & Straus, 1967). Theoretical saturation occurs when there is no emergent new variation or theory.
This study adopted snowball sampling as this “identifies interest from sampling people who know people who know people who know what cases are information rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview participants” (Patton, 2002, p.243). My snowball sampling relied on key persons identifying other direct or indirect relevant respondents who might help me obtain more information on relevant events in the development of ecotourism in Taomi. Such key individuals are often termed ‘gatekeepers’, as they have “control over key sources and avenues of opportunity” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.34); they are both important sources of information, and also facilitate further research.

The first important interview target identified was the former mayor who had held office during the period of the rebuilding of Taomi after the 921 earthquake. It was crucial to establish contact with him in order to fully understand the ecotourism development process, particularly given the conservative hierarchy and traditions of rural communities, and to collect further information from the NGO groups and Taomi residents through his support. The New Homeland Foundation, which took a key role in development, could also assist me to identify persons or residents key to understanding the ecotourism development process. They assisted by recommending other people I could interview who could provide significant and rich information.

Details of the three different data-collection interviews follow:

1. **Resident interviews:** These were undertaken with 26 key residents, broad details of whom are listed in Appendix 7, who were members of the Taomi Ecotourism Association, and relevant ecotourism enterprises. They included the village mayor, the head and members of the ecotourism association, the owner of an ecotourism business, and other local residents. All interviews involved talking directly face-to-face, to help gain a deep understanding of the local characteristics of ecotourism development.

2. **Expert interviews:** These were conducted with 10 recommended key personnel from the NGO groups, an example of snowball sampling. Their broad details are listed in Appendix 8. They were members of NGO groups, such as the New Homeland Foundation, the Endemic Species Research
Institute, and Hsin-Shih University, and other key experts or scholars. As for
the resident interviews, all involved talking directly face-to-face, to help gain a
better understanding of the local circumstances.

3. **Focus group interviews:** This again used snowball sampling to identify and
select three different groups of five, making a total of 15 residents interviewed
in group settings. These included relevant ecotourism operators, eco-guides,
residents, and new residents. Their broad details are listed in Appendix 9.
Finding all the different people suitable to interview was far from easy,
particularly arranging a mutually convenient time and place for everyone for
each group interview.

Residents interviewed in both individual and focus group settings had to have been
long-term residents of Taomi and over 20 years old; the ‘new residents’ had already
lived there many years. Those residents would have sufficient ability to understand
the relevant issues in the ecotourism development. The persons selected from the
NGO groups for the elite interviews must have had a long stay in Taomi, or taken
some key role contributing towards the ecotourism education, training and
development process.

4.11.1 Interview Process

The interview process involved many different stakeholders: local residents,
ecotourism operators and key persons, and some members of the NGOs. It was
important to establish that these interviews would be agreeable to each interviewee as
a voluntary participant before the interview process took place (Neuman, 2006). After
receiving approval for the information sheet about my study (English Appendix 10
and Chinese Appendix 11) and the consent form (English Appendix 12 and Chinese
Appendix 13), I first phoned each interviewee to establish contact and arrange a
meeting. I then posted each interviewee a copy of the information sheet and a consent
form regarding their participation in this research. The interview process involved
organising a convenient meeting place—most commonly their home, if not then some
other comfortable venue—and a suitable time with each interviewee. In the interview
process, I interacted with interviewees in an informal way allowing them to follow their own memories and line of thought. I sometimes had to adopt appropriately colloquial language with some residents in order to facilitate the data-collection aim.

As the researcher I talked to each interviewee about the purpose of this study, the content of the interview guide, and assured them of the use of a pseudonym to protect confidentiality during the publishing of any contents of the transcripts (Neuman, 2006). Examples of the Chinese language information and consent forms that had been mailed beforehand are attached as appendices 11 and 13. Each interviewee would be entered separately into the data using a non-identifying reference. Any report or publication resulting from this study would do likewise and would not reveal the names of the interviewees. Moreover, I had to obtain permission from every interviewee to use audio-taping to record the entire interview, for future review of the information collected and transcription. A researcher must clearly understand their ethical responsibility to avoid or to anticipate the potential benefits and harms regarding each interviewee (Orb et al., 2000). Interviewees were assured that if any interviewee did not feel comfortable with any questions during the interview process, they could refuse to comment on any issue, or halt the interview at any time. Additionally, in all cases I would give a gift to the interviewee before I started an interview as an expression of my sincerity, this being an important cultural exchange in Taiwan; the interviewees were told that this gift was not conditional on their participation.

As the interviews progressed and after translating the initial transcriptions, I often became aware of gaps, or new and deeper questions emerged. This particularly occurred when cross-checking the transcriptions of all interviewees, and necessitated second or even third interviews with some interviewees to pose further follow-up questions. This iterative approach enabled me to probe new and deeper questions and obtain further more useful information from these interviewees, thereby moving towards information saturation. In this regard it was very advantageous to be located in the case study locality for the extended period already described. After finishing all the various interviews, I compiled individual transcriptions, and sent the relevant one to each interviewee to confirm the content of the transcription of their particular interview, and to verify that the transcriptions accurately reflected the thinking and
ideas of all the interviewees. This highly iterative method was felt to be a strength of this study and one which allowed it to achieve a rigorous canvassing of qualitative data.

Nevertheless, these three different verbal report methods, while rigorous, were still not comprehensive, in that other sources of evidence should also be considered. Interviewees often respond with “some problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation” (Yin, 2003, p.92). Therefore, the interviewer should be cautious in relying solely on key informants due to their interpersonal influences (Yin, 2003). An interviewer must therefore carefully search other sources of evidence to verify informants’ evidence (Yin, 2003). This study also used two other methods – participant observation (field notes and visual materials), and documentary evidence – to gather data to offset these minor weaknesses of the interview data and verify findings. These two other methods are discussed below.

4.11.2 Participant Observation

Denzin (1989, p.157-158) contends that “participant observation (is) defined as a field strategy that simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and information, direct participation and observation, and introspection”. Indeed Yin (2003, p, 94) notes that the participant-observation technique “can be used in everyday settings, such as a large organization”. In this study participant observation is a complementary method of gathering more fruitful information than that available in interviews when people do not like to expand on sensitive and safety questions (Veal, 2005). Taomi interviewees could not easily discuss situations or issues concerning individual benefits, cultural and political taboos, or social norms.

The key elements of participant observation are: participants, setting, purpose, social behaviour, frequency, and duration (Zikmund, 1991). This study focused on observing and recording Taomi residents’ reactions and interactions during ecotourism-related activities and meetings, and related events, for example, an advanced eco-guide training workshop held by the Endemic Species Research Institute, a New Homeland Foundation building set-up activity, and the ‘Paper Dome’ meeting. The participant
observation of ecotourism issues in this study will concentrate on the nine dimensions, which Spradley (1980, p.78) described, below:

1. space: the physical place or places
2. actor/s: the people involved
3. activity: a set of related acts people do
4. object: the physical things that are present
5. act: single actions that people do
6. events: a set of related activities that people carry out
7. time: the sequencing that takes place over time
8. goal: the things people are trying to accomplish
9. feeling: the emotions felt and expressed

For more observational evidence, I also took field notes, digital photos, and video footage to record some evidence in the research field. This constitutes more evidence to convey the important characteristics and phenomena relating to Taomi (Yin, 2003). When I intended to undertake participant observation in any activity, I first obtained permission from the appropriate head of the activity or meeting and only then would I enter a site to take notes, photos, and videos to record relevant activities and events. If any person in charge did not agree that I could join their activities or attend their meeting, I had to refrain from doing so and withdraw from their activity or meeting. It was far more important to develop a good trusting relationship with the relevant ecotourism associations and NGO groups.

I adopted participant observation to take photos or video footage, and notes (see appendix 14) to record details of the daily life of local residents. My purposes for recording such details were to:

- understand the relationships between the various ecotourism operators, and the heads and members of the Community Development Association and the Ecotourism Association;
- understand more about the New Homeland Foundation and how it cooperated with all the ecotourism associations, working towards common goals and on common activities and issues;
• understand the relationship between the New Homeland Foundation, various ecotourism operators, and other residents; and
• understand residents’ life and associated ecotourism facilities.

Participant observation on my part helped provide a more holistic picture of ecotourism development in Taomi.

4.11.3 Documentation

In qualitative research, reviewing documents is a vital means of establishing the historical context of the case (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The researcher can gather a large amount of documentation to assist or support other data derived from participant observation and interviews. Yin (2003, p.85) offers a variety of types of documents in a data-collection plan, as below:

• “Letters, memoranda and other communiqués;
• Agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings, and other written reports of events;
• Administrative documents – proposals, progress reports, and other internal records;
• Formal studies or evaluations of the same “site” under study;
• Newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newsletters”.

Documentation found can confirm or contrast with evidence from the other sources outlined above. Moreover, documentation can pose new questions regarding communication and networks within organizations, but it is important to further check and investigate clues early on, as later inference could lead to false assumptions (Yin, 2003). Thus documentation had to be examined along with other sources to verify the actual extent of ecotourism education and training, and the activities and events present during Taomi’s ecotourism development.
Being based in the community for eight months, I expected that I would also access a significant amount of secondary and informal information, which would form a useful part of the research data, and indeed I did. Most documents or files are from the New Homeland Foundation, the Endemic Species Research Institute, and the Taomi Ecotourism Association, including minutes from community meetings, planning forums, and training workshops; activity handbills; the Taomi ecotourism journal; Taomi maps, books, reports, newspapers, and mass media and internet sites concerned with Taomi ecotourism (see appendix 15). The purpose of gathering all these documents was to better understand the entire context of Taomi ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake, and to assist my better understanding the background history of Taomi.

4.12 Analytic Procedures

Analytic procedures require a number of steps; each phase of data analysis must necessarily reduce a large amount of data to present various interpretations that represent “the words and acts of all participants in the study” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.156). Using data triangulation in this study required the organization and cross-checking of all data derived from the interviews, participant observation, and various documents, to elucidate the story of ecotourism development. The steps the analytic procedure involved are presented below.

4.12.1 Data Organizing

Organizing the data was a time consuming enterprise, requiring filing of all the data and details, often requiring a large amount of revising or cleaning up. I needed to incorporate notes made during the interview processes, for example, records of all types of potentially relevant details such as the “dates, times, places where, when, and with whom they were gathered” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.157). Reducing the amount of raw data to display the research focus while maintaining their connections with daily events or phenomena is a very significant step in the procedure of organizing data. Other data, from participant observation and documentation, had to
be arranged into different files for building the database, to accommodate the many data formats described above.

4.12.2 Coding Data

In this study, my intention was to identify meaningful categories, themes and patterns in seeking all recurring ideas and language expressions thereof, and the links in the different relationships between the local residents and the Taomi setting. Additionally, in considering the questions in the data, the research had to reflect the entire conceptual framework (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Data analysis reduced the volume of data acquired from the in-depth interviews. Coding was used to generate categories and themes from the data. A data coding procedure described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) outlines three steps: open coding (deconstruction), axial coding (construction), and selective coding (confirmation) (Gobo, 2008) (for example as shown in table 4.1). These three steps offer a systematic and efficacious analysis (Gobo, 2008). As one of the core elements of the literature review was the sustainable livelihoods approach, my initial coding focused on the presence of the six themes identified in this framework. This gave an initial structure for analysis that could be developed and critiqued in the discussion in chapters 6 and 7. A link was made between the themes and subthemes in the sustainable livelihood framework and the open, axial and selective codes which emerged in data reduction of the interview transcripts.

Table 4.1: A Data Coding Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• local natural resources</td>
<td>Natural Capital Assessment</td>
<td>Natural Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the resources found on the mountains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the rich biodiversity in the mountains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the area’s mountains and water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• local life and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clearly defined path</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• social and community life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The coding was supported by my writing analytic memos to find the significant subthemes and themes. Then, interpretations were postulated to develop a link between the main meaning of the subthemes, themes, categories, and patterns in order to make sense of them (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Following some early trials with software I made the decision to not use software to code data from the interviews. I felt that the currently available software did not fit the case study approach and the different language and cultural orientation of this study. Instead I used different colour highlighting pens to mark the significant quotes from interview transcripts and field notes. My intention was, through comparison with and thematic analysis of the literature, to identify any new themes and categories which this study might present. As one of the core elements of the literature review was the sustainable livelihoods approach, my initial coding focused on the presence of the six themes identified in this framework. This gave an initial structure for analysis that could be developed and critiqued in the discussion.

4.12.3 Analytical Strategy

The analytical strategy relies on the theoretical proposition, “which in turn reflect(s) a set of research questions, reviews of the literature, and new hypotheses or propositions” (Yin, 2003, p.112). Yin further (2003) offers four analytic techniques: pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, and logic models. The logic model in particular is assumed to be of relevance in case study evaluation as the “logic model deliberately stipulates a complex chain of events over time. The events are staged in repeated cause-effect-cause-effect patterns” (Yin, 2003, p.127). In other words, logical models in sequential stages have “to be distinguished as a separate analytic technique from pattern matching” (Yin, 2003, p.127). Pattern matching searches the empirical material for a predicated pattern, which can strengthen internal validity in a case study (Yin, 2003), but the adopted logic model is more useful in strategies of explanation and exploration of the case study (Yin, 1994). This study thus follows this analytical strategy.
4.13 Validity and Reliability

Case study data-collection should be based on three principles as suggested by Yin (2003) and discussed below. If these three principles are used properly, they can assist in alleviating problems of construct validity and reliability:

4.13.1 Use Multiple Sources of Evidence

Triangulation is based on a relational use of multiple evidence (Yin, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion. Triangulation therefore assists in producing more convincing findings and greater accuracy in conclusions (Yin, 2003). Again, data triangulation is aimed at verifying the same fact or phenomenon, or clarifying meaning by collecting information from multiple sources (Silverman, 1993; Flick, 1998; Yin, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Thus, data triangulation can deal with potential problems in building construct validity (Yin, 2003). This study incorporates triangulation, combining and cross-checking all data–collected from three different interview groupings, participant observation, and documentation, as discussed above. Additionally, communicative validity was enhanced and further authentication was obtained by having all interviewees confirm the corresponding transcription after their interview (Flick, 2002; Dann, 1990).

4.13.2 Create a Case Study Database

Data-collection requires paying attention to organizing and documenting techniques. Documentation refers to all the data, evidence, articles, reports, and books (Yin, 2003). The principle in case studies is to establish a database of notes, documents, tabular materials, and narratives. It is important to establish a database and use adequate citation to connect with specific evidence and the relevant issues of the case study (Yin, 2003). In this way reliability is increased. I collected data from the interviews; from videos & photography from participant observations; newspapers; and from documents relating to community meetings, planning forums, and training workshops; and books. This study thereby built up a detailed database of material, as
listed in the relevant appendices.

4.13.3 Maintain a Chain of Evidence

This third principle also increases the reliability of information in a case study. The database evidence has to have sufficient specific documents, interview records, or observations to indicate how it was collected, and that it was collected following set procedures, questions, and protocols (Yin, 2003). This principle allows an external observer to start to research questions and follow the relevant evidence to the ultimate conclusion of the case study (Yin, 2003). Further, the external observer should be able to continually trace various steps from the conclusion back to the research questions, or from the research questions to the conclusion (Yin, 2003). The purpose of these objectives is to determine construct validity in methodological aspects, further enhancing the entire quality of the case study (Yin, 2003). If the researcher adopts these principles of clear cross-referencing to methodological procedures in the results and evidence, the opportunity for dissemination and sharing is higher (Yin, 2003). Thus, this study is based on a research proposal plan, understanding how to collect data, and establishing a database to compare by cross-referencing the entire procedure. Moreover, my supervisors have played the role of my external observer to trace the process of my whole study. This principle of maintaining a chain of evidence should therefore support establishing the validity and reliability of this study.

4.14. Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study:

1. The snowball sampling method might not adequately canvas the range of opinions and experiences of all the residents and NGO groups in Taomi, i.e. the sampling technique is not necessarily statistically representative. There are approximately 1,000 adult residents in Taomi village, and the study conducted either one-on-one or focus group interviews with 41 of them. In addition there could be considered to be some bias in this study, as most of the interview targets had some stake in the ecotourism industry. Nevertheless, given that this is the group most affected
by tourism development, it was felt that focusing on this population of interested persons was not an issue. Also, a sample size of over 4% is quite reasonable for a qualitative survey and the sample provided a large amount of rich information to explore the research topic. In addition, there was indirect representation of stakeholders not involved in tourism, with 12 of the 26 resident interviewees, and 9 of the 15 individuals involved in the focus groups not having direct involvement in the industry.

2. Due to different ways of linguistic expression between Chinese and English, I had to consider cross-cultural issues. For example, when speaking Chinese people often omit the pronoun “I” in many sentences. “I” often has a rather aggressive tone and meaning in spoken Chinese. Sometimes interviewees did not voice their real thoughts and employed metaphors to express their thoughts and opinions. This meant that some degree of license was needed when I translated the interviews so that the meaning originally conveyed in the Chinese language could be accurately expressed in the English.

3. Sensitive issues led to some interviewees not putting forward their real opinions about some conflict issues in the interviewing process, and parts of some interview could not be used as they might raise ethical problems. To minimize this limitation, the participants were assured that their anonymity would be protected, as discussed above, and elements of trust were built upon in comfortable surroundings.

4. A few interviewees did not understand some of the interview questions or responded with irrelevant answers. However, the iterative research process described helped me to clarify what they were wanting to say and to confirm with them that their intended meaning had been understood.

5. Due to the ecotourism development having begun nearly a decade ago, some interviewees may be limited in their recall abilities and so unable to provide their whole perspective on ecotourism development. The data collected might have some information gaps relating to specific events. To offset this I sought
contextual information from documentary material and other important publications which assisted in getting a clearer picture.

6. The participants were overwhelmingly middle-aged. There has been significant out-migration of young adults, seeking jobs or studying outside the community, so it was difficult to find and recruit them as interviewing targets. I actively tried to recruit people aged between 20 and 30 to interview, but could find only three interviewees in this age group, so they are still underrepresented. As it happens, this is an interesting research finding in itself.

7. Some of the elderly respondents aged between 70 to 80, or those possessing a lower level of education found some of the questioning difficult to comprehend. In these cases I had to expand on the discussion, using lay language to ask questions to allow understanding of the questions in the interview guides.

**4.15 Ethical Issues**

Based on the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2007), the principle of ethical conduct in human research is to respect and protect all participants’ welfare, and rights to reduce risks in research. This study was designed to follow the National Statement of Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans guidelines, and met all ethical conditions, and was approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee.

This study has diligently attempted to present the smallest risk to all interviewees involved in this research and addressed ethical issues in the following ways:

1. **Informed Consent**

I phoned all participants and posted each a copy of the research information sheet and a consent form for this research to confirm that they were willing to be voluntary participants before interviewing them.
2. Risks

Participants might want to not reveal some information on sensitive issues during the interview process. Participants were informed that they may refuse to comment on any issue or may halt the interview at any time.

3. Confidentiality

This study examined some sensitive or controversial questions, particularly conflicts around power and the distribution of benefits. Participant confidentiality for those joining in this study is respected. Firstly, each participant was assigned an anonymous identity for the coding of data gained from the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Any report or publications resulting from this study will maintain the anonymous identity of each participant. All interviewees have been allocated a classification reference: an “R” prefix indicates an individual in the resident interviews group; an “N” prefix indicates an individual in the expert interviews group; and an “F” prefix indicates an participant of the focus groups. Respondents in the 3 groupings are then further allocated a sequential number. This preserves their anonymity, while allowing data labelling and analysis. The tape-recordings of each participant will ultimately be deleted. Additionally, any information provided will remain confidential. All information will contribute to a summary, which will then be documented. All data will be kept in the possession of the investigator and revealed to no-one. During research reports or study discussions, no interviewee’s name will be used under any circumstances. Moreover, this study also will be excluded from use on publicly available information sources, documents, or publications in the open public arena.

4. Data Handling

All data has been stored and managed on my individual computer which requires a password to access, to prevent others from using it. All records, including computer records, will be stored in a locked filing cabinet with restricted access for a minimum of five years in a private office.
5. Reciprocity (Contributing Back)

If any participants want to obtain a copy of this study, I will protect other participants’ rights and welfare by making an appropriate summary of this study available to give back to all interested participants. Further, to avoid these sensitive reports causing harm to other participants, all lists of participants’ information in any report will not reveal their real identities. It is hoped that the findings from this thesis will contribute to a greater understanding of the development process following a crisis event. To this end it will advise towards sustainable futures and equitable benefits for Taomi village as well as other rural locations wishing to develop ecotourism.

4.16 Summary

An ethnographic methodology was employed, collecting data and applying triangulation: this is not a new methodology, having been applied in previous research studies into ecotourism, but some different techniques have been employed. Additionally, this study used a social representation theoretical perspective to explore different representations in ecotourism development, particularly after the earthquake crisis. Little previous research has adopted this approach to examine ecotourism development after a crisis event. Most previous research has merely focused questions on all the positive and negative changes accompanying ecotourism, and there have been less questions focusing on the power relations and conflicts between the NGO groups and community stakeholders; the critical function of ecotourism education and training programmes; and ecotourism as a sustainable livelihood tool to alleviate community poverty. More importantly, this method of study allowed me to explore and present a new and broad picture of community-based ecotourism after a crisis event.
Chapter 5
The Taomi Community Context

5.1 Introduction

Taomi was chosen as the subject of this study because it possesses the critical criteria necessary to research ecotourism development in Taiwan following a crisis event. Taomi was a forerunner in the development of ecotourism which commenced there as a result of the 921 earthquake and is now used by the Taiwanese government as a model to demonstrate the eco-village and ecotourism development concepts to other communities.

A major earthquake in 1999 virtually destroyed the whole community. During the initial rebuilding, a number of NGO groups assisted community rebuilding works in a consultant role and helping source resources and funds. Significantly, NGOs also conducted ecotourism education and training programs to equip residents to develop an ecotourism industry to provide them with a sustainable livelihood. Moreover, Taomi residents made the decision to develop ecotourism as a means of rebuilding and improving local economic resources, and to further develop a cohesive sense of community among local residents. The Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre was set up by the Taomi Community Construction Association in 2002, and the annual numbers of tourist visitors to Taomi increased (see Table 5.1) until 2005, by when some negative impacts of eco-tourism, such as traffic jams and overuse of recreation facilities, were being experienced. At the time of my field research, more than 100 residents were engaged in the ecotourism industry, as home-stay operators, eco-guides and educators, environmental designers and builders, and in restaurants supplying specific local foods, and in other roles.
Table 5.1: The Taomi Eco-Village Development Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Tourists (persons)</th>
<th>Community Fund (US $)</th>
<th>Total Income (US $)</th>
<th>Number of Tour Guides</th>
<th>Home-stays</th>
<th>Restaurants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1,492</td>
<td>29,828</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8 (informal)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>7,891</td>
<td>8,068</td>
<td>161,363</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7 (formal)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>16,523</td>
<td>14,947</td>
<td>298,929</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7 (formal), 1 campsite</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>20,899</td>
<td>15,186</td>
<td>303,718</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11 (formal), 2 campsites</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>19,165</td>
<td>13,384</td>
<td>267,687</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12 (formal), 2 campsites</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>12,813 (From Jan. to Oct.)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>30*</td>
<td>17 (formal &amp; informal), 2 campsites*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>30*</td>
<td>17 (formal &amp; informal), 2 campsites*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Although Taomi had set a carrying capacity limit of 500 visitors per day, based on the total amount of home-stay accommodation available, the perceived economic benefits are inducing more local residents to invest in the ecotourism industry. It is important to observe that ecotourism development is simultaneously bringing not only economic benefits, but also more conflicts arising from increasing economic competition between new and old local enterprises, particularly among home-stay enterprises (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). Moreover, the economic benefits have exacerbated other conflicts as a consequence of the attendant social-cultural, environmental and political changes. As a result, community relationships are also gradually being altered by these economic benefits. Therefore, this study will investigate these changes within ecotourism in Taomi.

To get an accurate picture of the relationship between what was happening in Taomi and government ecotourism and ecotourism promotion policies the Taomi community context must be examined as well as taking into account the wider overall development of ecotourism policy for all Taiwan, as reflected in the 2002 Ecotourism White Paper, and the 2005 Ecotourism White Paper. These two white papers sought to promote the development of ecotourism, which were considered an effective means
by which to help diversify and improve the traditional production methods in rural areas. Moreover, to improve the declining economic significance of rural communities, especially for rural communities recovering after the 921 earthquake disaster, the government has encouraged the development of ecotourism in local communities with the provision of policies concerning general guidelines and designation of ecotourism areas (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2002a; Taiwan National Park, 2007). Thus, this chapter therefore explores two aspects: one being the background of development of ecotourism in Taiwan and the government’s ecotourism policies, popularisation and promotion of ecotourism, the other being the background to ecotourism development in Taomi itself. This chapter is largely descriptive, being derived from the observational and documentary research. However, it is included as an important contextual basis for the theoretical discussion of the following chapters.

5.2 Ecotourism Development in Taiwan

Taiwan is located in the subtropics covering an area of approximately 36,000 square kilometres. It stretches 400 kilometres north-south, and 180 kilometres east-west. The mountainous region accounts for almost 2/3 of the country, and includes the highest peaks, in places reaching almost 4,000 metres in altitude (Hsu, 2002). Other areas encompass ocean, island, swamp, lake, river, forest and desert environments, within which there exists a rich and wide range of some 4,000 plant species and 150,000 species of fauna (Hsu, 2002).

Taiwan has a population of over 23 million people, made up of indigenous people (1.5%), Minnan and Hakka (91%) (the so-called 'Taiwanese' who immigrated to Taiwan from southeast coast of China since the 17th century) and mainland Chinese (7.5%) who arrived from China after World War II (Lin et al., 2000). Thus there is a wide variety of cultures including Taiwan’s indigenous peoples, southern Fujianese from early Chinese rule, Hakka immigrants, the Dutch, Spanish, and Japanese from earlier colonial periods, and recent immigrants from mainland China. Indigenous cultures comprise the Bunun, Saisiat, Thao, Tsou, Rukai, Puyuma, Paiwan, Taya, and
Amis (Council of Indigenous Peoples, Executive Yuan, 2006). As a result of such cultural variety, Taiwan enjoys a series of festivals and traditional religious ceremonies throughout the year, constituting a significant cultural tourism resource. According to a Taiwan Tourism Bureau report (2003), the reasons Taiwanese citizens engage in domestic travel include: pleasure; physical exercise vacations; ecological tours, conferences or study tours; religious tours; business; and visiting friends and relatives. Taiwanese participation in ecotourism accounted for approximately 6.0% of domestic tourism in 2001 and 2002 (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2003). Growth in this activity was negatively affected by the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreaks of 2003, but recent years have seen a recovery in numbers.

Taiwan’s tourism industry is dominated by domestic tourism, with over 90% of Taiwanese citizens participating in domestic travel for leisure purposes (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2003). In 2002 international tourism was from Japan (657,053 visitors), America (314,721), Europe (118,843), Australia (26,612) and New Zealand (5,418), although many of these visitors would have been visiting friends and family (Taiwan Tourism Bureau report, 2003). Where these foreign tourists engaged in ecotourism activity, these would be focused on Taiwanese National Parks such as the Taroko and Kenting National Parks (Taiwan Tourism Bureau report, 2003). There is currently little evidence of foreign tourists participating in community-based ecotourism in Taiwan. However, given the interest in this in international markets, it is likely that community-based ecotourism can be developed by tour operators and travel agencies to attract foreign tourists’ participation in the future.

5.2.1 Taiwan Government Ecotourism Policy

In line with experience elsewhere, the rapid growth in interest in ecotourism activity in Taiwan has caused some mismatch with accepted definitions of the practice (Taiwan National Park, 2007). This led to a Taiwanese government “Ecotourism White Paper” promoting the concepts, spirit and principles of ecotourism throughout all Taiwan’s ecotourism areas. This “Ecotourism White Paper” was developed by two government agencies, as described below.
5.2.2 Taiwan Tourism Bureau Ecotourism Policy

Building on Taiwan’s ecological and cultural diversity, the Executive Yuan drew up a “Taiwan Ecotourism Year 2002” policy, specifically to promote ecotourism development and institute strategies (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2002). The Taiwan Tourism Bureau (abbreviated below to Tourism Bureau), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, formulated six major strategies, listed below (Hsu, 2002):

1. Draw up policies and management systems, such as an ecotourism white paper, and ecotourism guidelines.
2. Set up an ecotourism infrastructure, including such aspects as ecotourism service facilities, selection of ecotourism spots, and evaluation or accreditation of ecotour programs.
3. Strengthen ecotourism training, and education courses in elementary and middle school programs. Ecotourism training will include training foreign language-speaking eco-guides, and ecotourism symposiums.
5. Hold a series of ecotourism activities such as ecotourism exhibitions, village tours, youth ecotourism camps, tours of ancient/historical monuments, and indigenous cultural tours.
6. Promote ecotourism on a regular basis.

The popular ecotourism tours available in Taiwan include a variety of activities such as bird watching; whale and dolphin watching; butterfly watching; ecotourism education about the wetlands; geological viewing; natural hiking trails; and visits to indigenous destinations (Hsu, 2002). Further, the Tourism Bureau states that ecotourism is an important form of tourism developed from the “21st Century Taiwan Tourism Development Plan” (Tsaur et al., 2006).

5.2.3 The National Council for Sustainable Development Ecotourism Policy

The Tourism Bureau drew up the first strategic “Ecotourism White Paper” in 2002, but it had some inadequate policies requiring further research and revision. Due to the
rapid growth of ecotourism, most participating enterprises have not yet fully realized the true significance of ecotourism (Taiwan National Park, 2007) although negative impacts of the ecotourism development process have become apparent. Most tourists, for example, now recognise that ecotourism involves outdoor destinations but most operators have insufficient perception of the limits to development in sensitive natural environments and the impacts of increasing excessive exploitation in protected areas with the subsequent increase in destruction of natural resources and the environment (Taiwan National Park, 2007).

Nevertheless ecotourism development in Taiwan is held up by the government as a significant milestone in holistic development. The National Council for Sustainable Development (a government organisation) expresses the conservation approach to territorial resources. It recognises that the Tourism Bureau “Ecotourism White Paper” must be used to revise some of the management practices and institute precautions, to avoid the excessive exploitation and destruction of many of the excellent natural resources and environments that go to form tourism destinations (Taiwan National Park, 2007). In 2004 the Ministry of the Interior drew up a new “Ecotourism White Paper”, designed to establish ecotourism laws and regulations, as the main strategy of an ecotourism framework for relevant national government organisations, in order to implement ecotourism management through the responsible national and local government bodies (Taiwan National Park, 2007). This “Ecotourism White Paper” clearly sets out the definition, spirit and goals of ecotourism discussed below (Taiwan National Park, 2007).

5.2.4 Ecotourism Definition

As discussed in chapter 2, defining ecotourism presents a challenge. Taiwanese scholars have put forward various definitions generally with an ecocentric perspective, and limited focus on tourist behaviour, activity destinations, or recreational content, and whether or not these embody a concern about nature and the environment. The government definition is based on whether or not the tour activity fits with the principle of biological conservation. Its 2005 Ecotourism White Paper is a synthesis of the views of both Taiwanese and international scholars which defines ecotourism as “tourism undertaken in a natural area which emphasises ecological conservation
concepts and has as its ultimate goal sustainable development” (Taiwan National Park, 2007, p.4).

5.2.5 Ecotourism Principles

Selection of places as designated ecotourism sites must be based on ecotourism principles criteria (Taiwan National Park, 2007, p.4) outlined below. They must:

1. Adopt low environmental impact accommodation and leisure activities;
2. Place a limit on visitor numbers (including both the number of groups, and visitors);
3. Support local natural environment and conservation work;
4. Utilise local relevant services and facilities;
5. Provide an experience of the natural environment to visitors during the eco-tour process;
6. Employ local eco-guides who have a rich understanding of the local natural and cultural environment;
7. Avoid disturbing the wildlife and habitats, or destroying the environment; and
8. Respect local traditional culture, and local residents’ living spaces and privacy.

5.2.6 Ecotourism Spirit

Taiwanese government policy also recognises the ethical dimensions of ecotourism discussed in chapter 2. Promotion of ecotourism needs to integrate the following five components (Taiwan National Park, 2007, p.5):

1. Nature-based

Natural environments and resources are the main constituent feature of ecotourism, which focuses principally on local species and on natural and cultural features which possess significant ecological value. Good service during the tour process provides tourists with a deeper, more satisfying experience. The specific resources of a natural area are therefore the most essential element in the planning and operation of ecotourism.
2. Environmental Education and Eco-guide Services

This key point addresses the need for a visitor to experience, understand, admire and enjoy nature. The tour process creates opportunities for tourists to interact with the environment, and have a professional introduction to Taiwan’s natural and cultural heritage, and allows accurate information to be given before and during tours. The eco-guides are responsible for environmental education through ecotourism activities which provide knowledge, appreciation and experiences of nature for tourists of all different backgrounds.

3. Sustainable Development

The development and operation of an ecotourism area should incorporate practices which sustain natural resources, and protect the local biodiversity resources and habitats. It is important that ecotourism minimises the impact of human behaviour, increases the incomes from tour activities, and reinforces conservation of the natural and cultural heritage. The ultimate goal of ecotourism is therefore sustainable development.

4. Environmental Consciousness

Ecotourism combines a sense of mission to protect the natural environment with a sense of responsibility for being socially ethical, and that taking on these ideas should be vigorously put to tourists. It is expected that the ecoguide services and environmental education will inspire tourists to respect the environmentally integrated local traditional culture and lifestyle, and encourage both tourists and local residents to take on environmentally ethical behaviour, and strengthen their awareness of and commitment to environmental protection.

5. Feedback Benefits

An important ecotourism strategy is to transfer some income made by the tours into the local community’s conservation fund. Operating strategies include encouraging local residents’ participation, and using different mechanisms to assist local residents
raise funds for environmental protection, research, and education. More generally, the local community would obtain various ongoing benefits from both ecological conservation and ecotourism development.

5.2.7 Ecotourism Goals and Demonstration Sites

The ecotourism goals identified in the Ecotourism White Paper are (Taiwan National Park, 2007, p.6):

1. Sustainable territorial conservation and enhancement of social welfare;
2. Encouraging a natural experience and providing a healthy tourism environment;
3. Improving the local culture and economy, and promoting the ecotourism industry; and
4. Implementing policy goals, and healthy responsible citizens.

The Taiwanese government has been promoting ecotourism development based on the 2004 Ecotourism White Paper, and set up an ecotourism consultant group comprising a wide range of experts and scholars to assess the selected ecotourism sites, encompassing the natural environment, outdoor recreation areas, and rural areas. The group provided reports and suggestions regarding planning and management aspects of ecotourism and assessed eleven ecotourism sites nominated by different counties in 2006 (Construction and Planning Agency, Ministry of the Interior, 2006). However, according to the Ecotourism Evaluation Group’s 2006 report on and recommendations regarding ecotourism in protected areas (Construction and Planning Agency, Ministry of the Interior, 2006), these eleven sites did not meet the definition, principles, or spirit of Taiwan’s 2004 Ecotourism White Paper and were merely seeking to market themselves using ecotourism catchphrases, in the hope of attracting more tourists (Construction and Planning Agency, Ministry of the Interior, 2006). The goal of developing ecotourism in the eleven sites was to either transform a former conventional tourism site into an ecotourism site, or to receive national Government funding and/or subsidies. In other words, the eleven ecotourism sites do not completely coincide with ecotourism criteria and have to further improve their relevant educational and practical training, set limits on local tourism capacity, reinforce environmental monitoring, and establish the management criteria for their
By contrast, Taomi’s ecotourism development and operation predated both the government’s 2002 Ecotourism White Paper, and its 2004 Ecotourism White Paper. Taomi had established a number of strategies and criteria for ecotourism management and operation by cooperating with relevant ecotourism professionals (some government organisations and some NGOs) and local residents. As a result Taomi not only became a forerunner in this field, in the aftermath of the 921 earthquake, but is a well-respected community model, having received many rewards for promotion of their experience of ecotourism development to other communities. This is despite some of the conflicts detailed in the following chapters. The specific context of Taomi community is thus discussed in the next section.

5.3 Taomi Location

Taomi is located on the Taomikeng Stream terrace, with an elevation ranging from 430 to 800 metres, between Taomi Mountain and Chu-Jan Mountain. The region has six streams: the Taomikeng, Zhonglukeng, Zhiliaokeng, Maopukeng, Zhonguakeng and Lintoukeng streams, all of which run through villages. Taomi is located 5km south-west of Puli in Nantou County (see figure 5.1) and has a total area of about 18 square kms (Taomi Eco-village, 2007). Taomi is currently one of 33 villages in Puli Township (Puli Household Registration Office, 2008). The land is mostly used for farming activities.

Taomi is located as an intermediate stage along a transport route; over a hundred years ago people in that vicinity had to cross mountains to get to Taomi to buy and carry goods and purchases and would usually remain in Taomi to recover from the journey before returning home. It was called “Taomi-keng-zai”, meaning something like ‘peach-rice-hollow’ which became “Taomi-keng-zhuang”, ‘peach-rice-hollow-village compound’, under Japanese rule (1895-1945), and then “Taomi” after 1945 (Taomi Eco-village, 2007).
5.4 Natural Ecological Environment

Taomi is set among hills in a rural area in a region bestowed with an abundant biodiversity of species. It boasts diverse landscapes, such as ponds, streams, wetlands...
(see figure 5.2), waterfalls, forests, and has a rich array of flora and fauna (New Homeland Foundation, 2007e). According to investigations carried out by ESRI, a government academic research institution, Taomi is home to 21 of Taiwan’s 29 frog species, 45 of its 145 dragonfly species, and 72 of the 450 bird species in the whole of Taiwan (Peng, 2001). As a result, there were a number of natural resources that were able to contribute significantly towards developing ecotourism there.

![Figure 5.2: Taomikeng Stream (left) and Cao-Nan Wetlands (right)](image)

**5.5 Taomi’s History**

An inflow of a few new settlers (e.g. the indigenous Hoanya tribe) who established plantations on both sides of the Taomikeng Stream began around 1824, in the reign of the Manchu-Qing dynasty emperor Daoguang. A number of Han groups (e.g. Fukienese and Cantonese) also began to settle and open ground in Taomi following the Manchu-Qing dynasty Xianfeng reign (1850-1861) (Taomi Eco-village, 2007). Between the Tongzhi and Guangxu reign periods of the same dynasty (1856-1908), a large number of Hakka tribes engaged in large scale settlement, reclaiming and creating a place to live on the banks of the Taomikeng Stream. The new settlers cultivated a huge stand of bamboo around the village for protection of the villagers (Taomi Eco-village, 2007) and this very earliest settlement area was therefore called “Chengzai”, meaning “walled village” or “Dingcheng”, similarly indicating a walled settlement (Taomi Eco-village, 2007).
5.6 Taomi Population

According to Puli Household Registration Office statistics, in 2008 there were a total of 1,221 Taomi residents, 618 males and 603 females (see table 5.2), living in 444 households in 11 neighbourhoods. The majority are aged 40-49 with the smallest group aged 90-99. A large number of teenagers and young adults have left their community to study or look for good jobs in urban areas. Approximately 100 local residents are still employed in the agriculture industry (He, 2007). There is also a deficit of females of working age that can be observed in table 5.2, this is because many young females have left their homes to study, get married or look for good jobs in urban areas. However, the development of ecotourism has given opportunities for empowerment to this group, as of the approximately 120 residents employed in ecotourism, approximately 72 females participate in relevant ecotourism organizations (He, 2007).

Most of the female workers are more than 27 years old and have been trained in the knowledge and practice of catering, ecotourism education, and home-stay management (He, 2007). Thus, they have participated as eco-guides, home-stay operators and in restaurants as well (see p.297, 299). Further, 24 females are core members of the three different Taomi community organizations (see p.127-128) as the Community Development Associations, the Taomi Ecotourism Association and the Leisure-Agriculture Park Association (He, 2007).

Table 5.2 Taomi Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>1~10</th>
<th>11~20</th>
<th>21~29</th>
<th>30~39</th>
<th>40~49</th>
<th>50~59</th>
<th>60~69</th>
<th>70~79</th>
<th>80~89</th>
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<td>67</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>111</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7 Significant Spiritual Centre

Taomi has eleven temples, the majority of which were built by followers of Taoism. The Fu-Ta Temple in particular (see figure 5.3), established in 1872, represents the most significant centre of worship for local residents (participant observation, photo, no.2). It is centrally located, providing access for the whole village (Taomi Eco-village, 2007). The meaning of “Fu-Ta” is “to share bliss and misfortune together”. A traditional temple festival celebration is held every three years to ensure protection and drive out epidemics and disease from the local community (Taomi Eco-village, 2007).

![Figure 5.3: The Fu-Ta Temple](image)

5.8 Traditional Economic Activity

Local industry currently depends on agricultural products such as the shoots of a variety of bamboo, mushrooms, teas and flowers. The bamboo shoots in particular (see figure 5.4) are a significant economic resource in Taomi (New Homeland Foundation, 2007d). Local agricultural products are, however, declining due to being unable to compete with the price of imported agricultural goods. Agricultural products in Taiwan were severely affected by the opening up to agriculture imports when the country joined the WTO (World Trade Organisation). The local economic situation was critically affected in many rural areas, entering a severe slump for rural economies like Taomi.
5.9 Mainstream Ecotourism Activity

Since the 921 earthquake, Taomi has transformed itself from being based on traditional agriculture to having an ecotourism development and organic agriculture base, with a diversity of economic resources. The ecotourism industry currently comprises 17 home-stays, 2 campsites, 10 small restaurants, and 30 eco-guides (see Table 5.1).

Most home-stays have five rooms to accommodate tourists’ arrival, but a few home-stays have more than five rooms to accommodate tourists. In the initial ecotourism development, most home-stays only had five rooms, in line with a national government tax-free policy (He & Chen, 2007). More recently, the Community Development Association has lost its ability to use community rules to limit the scale of home-stays. External investors did not understand the ecotourism rules or limitations and they invested more capital in home-stay facilities and their size. In general, home-stays must be registered with the local government, but the current 17 home-stays comprise both informal home-stays, which are illegal, and the formal home-stays which are legal (see figure 5.5).
Four key restaurants are directly engaged in ecotourism, others such as snack bars, cater to local consumers. There are 30 eco-guides who have passed rigorous testing by Endemic Species Research Institute (ESRI), and over 100 residents are engaged or employed in various ecotourism enterprises. A breakdown of where people were employed year by year is given in Table 5.2, along with annual data on the community fund and total income. Some statistical data from 2006 onwards was not recorded or unavailable due to changes and conflicts in the community associations. Nevertheless, it is clear that Taomi’s ecotourism development has driven the creation of many opportunities for income and employment, attracting more residents’ engagement.

### 5.10 Community Organization

The main community organization in Taomi is the Community Development Association which has undergone organizational changes during the many different phases of development, adjusting to community needs. The major phases and accompanying organizational changes are set out below:

- The main community organization was the Community Development Association, established in 1996 with the aim of working to access government funds and provide support to build community facilities and protect community safety.
• After the 921 earthquake, the New Homeland Foundation (NHF) and OURs (the Organizational of Urban Re’s) decided to cooperate to assist local residents to rebuild their community, and the Community Development Association set up the Community Rebuilding Committee to implement the rebuilding work. In 2001, the Community Development Association designated four areas of responsibility: community space, industry, innovation, and protecting the waterways from the rebuilding and transformation work. The NHF assisted by offering ecotourism education and training to equip the local people with the knowledge and skills to professionally operate an ecotourism development.

• In 2002, when the Community Rebuilding Committee completed the rebuilding and the ecotourism industry work for which it had been formed, the Community Development Association had to extend its jurisdiction to include the operating management aspects of ecotourism businesses. This saw the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre (hereafter abbreviated to “Tourist Information Centre”) established under the Community Development Association.

• In 2004, the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre altered its name to become the ‘Tourist Service Centre’, and restructured its organization to comprise four main groups: eco-guides, catering, home-stays, and administration, all remaining under the Community Development Association (see Figure 5.6) (documentary evidence, internal record, no.3).

• In 2006, the “Taomi Ecotourism Association” was set up to take responsibility for the Taomi Community Development Association and oversee the operation and management of ecotourism development in Taomi (Taomi Eco-village, 2007).

• In 2007, the Leisure-Agriculture Park Association was established in Taomi. Its aim is to enhance and ensure the quality of local organic agricultural products, to further integrate them into the ecotourism industry and increase the incomes of local farmers.
Figure 5.6: The Framework of the Community Development Association


5.11 Ecotourism Development History of Taomi

Prior to the 921 earthquake, the industries in Taomi had been declining, due to economic dependency on agriculture, reticence in social relations, lack of public
facilities, and diminishing hope for its future as a Taiwanese agricultural community (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b).

Important issues and features involved in the process of Taomi’s rebuilding and development into an eco-village, and then into a model of ecotourism development during the recovery stage following an earthquake disaster, and the accompanying organizational changes are discussed below.

5.11.1 The 921 Earthquake Catastrophe and Taomi (September 21, 1999-December, 1999)

On September 21, 1999 an earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale devastated central Taiwan (Huang & Min, 2002). Taomi suffered severe devastation, being close to the epicentre. Of the 369 households in Taomi, 168 were completely destroyed and 60 were damaged (Taomi Eco-village, 2007). Most residents lost their livelihood, and the vision for the future became one of hopelessness. Fortunately, in the initial post-earthquake period, a variety of public and private sector bodies offered relief funds or daily commodities, and built 30 prefabricated houses to assist and settle the daily life of local residents. Community associations, such as the neighbourhood watch group, played an aggressive role in taking care of injured residents, protecting safety, and dealing with daily commodities (Chiang, 2006)

A crisis can also present opportunity. In October, 1999 the then village mayor, Huang Jin-Jun, seeking a framework for rebuilding in Taomi, invited the New Homeland Foundation (NHF) to participate in the reconstruction process (New Homeland Foundation, 2007c). The NHF, established on 4th February, 1999, attracted and gathered senior and junior cultural workers, who operated as a non-government organization (NGO), and after the earthquake developed four main frameworks: cultural industry; community infrastructure establishment; community learning; and post-earthquake community restructuring community (New Homeland Foundation, 2007). During the post-921 rebuilding stage, Taomi was one of several communities in Taiwan assisted in reconstruction by the NHF following the earthquake.
5.11.2 Transformation into an Eco-village in the Recovery Stage
(2000-February, 2002)

During the initial reconstruction, the NHF accredited two members, who had a
background in spatial design and community empowerment, to investigate a
preliminary profile identifying potential resources in Taomi for rebuilding the local
area and future development (Chiang, 2006). At the beginning of the rebuilding
project, most residents addressed concerns to the NHF about two key issues: “What
should we rebuild?” and “How should we rebuild?” (New Homeland Foundation,
2007b).

In January 2000, specialists from the NHF and OURs (the Organisation of Urban
Re-s) were assigned to assist the local community set up the Taomi Community
Construction Association to operate and work in the areas of environmental life,
education, industry, spatial planning, and the formation of stream working groups
(Zhan, 2004; New Homeland Foundation, 2007c). The emphasis in the community
rebuilding and development revolved around a number of key axes, all designed to
expand the Taomi community and requiring the making of connections between
community life style patterns and the rebuilding issues. Economic issues in particular
revolved around the issue of residents’ livelihood in the period immediately after the
earthquake crisis (Wang, 2001). Everyone in the community had faced a violent
upheaval of their lives, loss of their incomes and economic resources, and lack of safe
living conditions.

The NHF played a significant and integral role in coordinating the handling and
distribution of all the resources available during the recovery stage from
governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, enterprises, and other
units, and created a series of learning and growing activities in Taomi. The following
are some important issues regarding the provision of professional planning and
assistance for the reconstruction and development of Taomi as an ecotourism
community, during the recovery stage.
1. Building Community Cohesion through Public Affairs

The first NHF activity, held in January, 2000, was one to encourage residents’ participation in community public affairs: “Cleaning-up the Stream” involved clearing away rubbish and planting numerous ginger lilies (Wang, 2004). Taomikeng Stream is the main waterway in Taomi, and focusing on it was seen as a way to tap and revitalize community emotion and shared memories. In this sense, these public affairs and activities were not simply important as activities in themselves. However, the activity did not attract everyone’s notice and participation (documentary evidence, workshop, no.1), and most residents remained hesitant about the purpose of this activity (New Homeland Foundation, 2002) as discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

In February 2000 the NHF cooperated with the Taomi Community Construction Association and ran a “Start with our Homeland Mountains and Waterways”. Its aim was to combine local resources in new ways to create new features and thereby assist development. At that time, however, most residents were just concerned about their livelihoods, economic resources, and what would benefit them and meet their own needs; additionally, Taomi was a deeply conservative traditional agricultural community which had held community public affairs in long-term indifference (Lee, 2006). So the challenge facing the NHF was to give local residents a sense of coherence and cooperation around common views, link social networks, and cultivate active concern about protecting the local environment (documentary evidence, film, no.1).

To do this the NHF wanted to improve the number of residents participating in public affairs. In March, 2000 the NHF invited relevant key community members and the village head to visit other community developments to emulate and learn from other’s experiences, and then discuss with local residents how to better bring about community empowerment (Lee, 2006). The places they visited included the Baimi and the Erjie communities in Yilan County (Lee, 2006). These activities led to many discussions in which the community residents received acknowledgement and commendation from others in the community (Wang, 2001). In September, 2000 the NHF ran an activity called “That special feeling reserved for your Taomi homeland is
calling you” to promote a sense of internal cohesion amongst all the residents (documentary evidence, activity handbills, no.9).

The activities briefly outlined above were attempted to encourage Taomi residents to appreciate public affairs and further bring together a common view of their community. How to consistently guide local residents towards participating in public affairs and the future developments was an important issue for the NHF to constantly consider (documentary evidence, film, no.1).

2. Introducing Suitable Ecotourism Education and Training Programs

During the rebuilding, the Taomi Community Construction Association submitted many plans and applications for rebuilding funds, but could not gain further support from the Puli Township government. The NHF continued to seek fund assistance from a variety of sources to undertake major construction. With funds obtained in 2000 they carried out work such as bridge repairing, stream-bank recovery, and rebuilding the community centre. At the same time, the NHF accessed two educational funds: one for “wages for resident workers” with money from the Council of Labour Affairs; the other to fund “employment training for disaster residents” with money provided by Nantou Country (Chiang, 2006). These two projects allowed the NHF to introduce many experts and scholars into the rebuilding and expert-guidance work in Taomi. Both projects offered casual employment to people participating in the nursery garden project; but they had to be studying the basic tourism and ecological education courses to earn money.

As well as getting residents to participate in public affairs and some of the construction and reconstruction work, the NHF constantly cooperated, negotiated, and consulted with local residents about further community development. Moreover, the NHF invited a number of other NGO groups to guide, educate, and train local residents. In the initial rebuilding period, the main NGO groups were from Shih-Hsin University, and the Endemic Species Research Institute (ESRI); and other groups such as Tamkang University, National Taiwan University, and Taiwan Forestry Research Institute also played an ancillary role (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). Moreover, some faculty members and students from different departments of National Chi-Nan
University participated and cooperated in guidance with the community (Wang, 2001). However, the main external groups were the NHF, Shih-Hsin University, and the ESRI. Significant education and training was conducted by Shih-Hsin University and the ESRI.

In April 2000, Chen Chr-Ji, a leading professor at Shih-Hsin University, was in charge of designing a leisure-tourism plan for Taomi and the tourism educational and training programme in the rebuilding period. This leisure-tourism plan also launched a new holistic Taomi community development comprising three development phases: an initial survey to identify local natural and cultural resources; spending a lot of time discussing the proposed leisure-tourism development with local residents; and designing a whole range of short-term tourism courses to be run at the same time as the reconstruction process (documentary evidence, plan, no.1). Specialists from the Department of Tourism at Shih-Hsin University arranged and then instructed a series of courses teaching essential skills to ecotourism operators, such as eco-guides, home-stay providers and local food provision managers (He & Yan, 2002). These included basic courses on ‘ecological guiding and survey” and an “eco-guide, local cooking, home-stay, tourism employment, and leader training program” However, the group from Shih-Hsin University was relatively limited in experience in the professional field of ecological environment.

To address this, in May 2000 the NHF invited and appointed people from ESRI (a government institution) to investigate appropriate environmental ethics and eco-technology, the popularising of native species conservation, and maintenance of the streams and wetlands; with a view to identifying the vital features of Taomi (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). Notably, all the NGO groups initially had different perspectives on Taomi’s potential development. Conflicts arose in all the NGO groups, regarding matters such as community development and theoretical ideas. The initial framework for community development put forward by the NHF and Shih-Hsin University was to develop leisure agriculture and ecological conservation (Zhan, 2004; Chiang, 2006). The Community Development Association also intended to develop agriculture and agricultural processing, but most of the population were relatively old people, who would find any development which involved a lot of physical labour-intensive work in the leisure-agriculture field hard. Discussion with all the residents
ensued: they considered many key factors - agricultural resources, transport, economic weakness, and the relatively aged population, and finally determined to alter the initially proposed leisure-tourism development into ecotourism development (Zhan, 2004).

This was the process that launched the vision of ecotourism development and the eco-village in Taomi. But how to establish a successful ecotourism education and training programme was an extremely important issue. In order to achieve all the associated goals, the Endemic Species Research Institute (ESRI) worked with the Taomi Community Construction Association to access allocated finance available from different levels of government. From May 2000, they designed training courses for residents addressing the crucial issues of environmental protection and the need to induce a sense of responsibility towards the conservation of natural resources (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). ESRI started to introduce local people to ecological education, eco-technology construction, ecological greening, protection of the local streams and wetlands, and so on.

3. Accessing Construction Funds from the Public Sector

The NHF had to put a great deal of effort into baseline evaluations and then applying for reconstruction funding for many projects from different levels of government. For example, there were significant funds for Environmental Recovery and Conservation Education, and Natural Landscape available from the Nantou County government; funds for the 921 Earthquake memorial Building from the Council for Cultural Affairs; funding for the great army of workers employed in the rebuilding from the Council of Labour Affairs; and four years' funding of a “Taomi as an ecotourism promotion model” project, the nursery garden project, and the stream recovery project from the Council of Agriculture (He & Yan, 2002). These construction activities were undertaken to set up a shared community consciousness and sense of life (Zhan, 2004; Chiang, 2006). The ultimate strategic goal was to restore a community environment, a process which would transform Taomi from a traditional rural village into a community with environmental education and ecological conservation within a recreational area (documentary evidence, reports, no.2).
4. Building the Goal and Vision of an Eco-Village

Furthermore, the NHF and ESRI cooperated to set up various productive community actions, such as surveys of the local ecological resources and ecosystems; community greening and planting trees native to the area; forming the Taomi Eco-Technology Construction Team; certification of home-stays; recording community history and culture; surveying public opinion; and holding community meetings (Chang, 2006). The NHF was able to take into account the views of local residents regarding very important issues and local public affairs through meetings and discussions, encouraging them to participate, while noting their concerns to be used in the evaluation process (Yen, 2002). It was hoped that Taomi arrived at the goal and vision of developing an eco-village incorporating the integral concepts of ecology, production, livelihood, and lifestyle (New Homeland Foundation, 2004).

In addition, in 2001 the Taomi Eco-Technology Construction Team carried out planning for building an ecological ecotourism environment in the local community under the Eco-Village framework (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). They invited local ecological engineering and landscape specialists to adapt and reconstruct the local ecological environment, creating recreation facilities, greening the area using plants originally native to Taomi; and implementing protection of the stream in order to recover water to supply this environment (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). In September, 2001 ESRI held many activity days where residents were invited to help NHF people cut away and clear trees of ‘green cancer’ (Mikania micrantha) (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). The aim was to promote deeper understanding of ecological concepts and further evoke residents’ concerns and sensibilities about their own local ecosystems and environment.

However, education about the ecological environment was a more important issue to address. In September 2001, Taomi initiated a test for those in the eco-tourist operating services (Chiu, 2003); nine residents passed the strict test to obtain certificates for their knowledge of bird, dragonfly, and frog species (Lee, 2006); and six home-stay operators prepared to begin operating their home-stays as their source of income. In brief, the NHF hoped that the initial ecotourism training and education could be completed and residents be given confidence in the results of community
empowerment within two years, before the trial operation of the ecotourism industry took place (Chiang, 2006).

During the initial training and education, the role played by the NHF had been to assist the community with rebuilding planning and attract and make available all the resources and self-governance skills training needed (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). A lot of reports on the concepts of an eco-village appeared in the mass media, and the Taomi community received a great deal of positive appraisal. As a result, many private companies and organizations also provided funds to support the concept and vision of the Taomi eco-village (Zhan, 2004).

For example, in September 2001, Taiwan’s Philips company provided funding support for construction of ecotourism and ecotourism facilities (New Homeland Foundation, 2007a), and later from October, 2001 to November, 2002, provided educational funds which were used to initiate a whole series of green workshops, primarily teaching about ecological species and ecological construction techniques (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). All the lecturers were from ESRI, and the main foundation courses covered such topics as fireflies and eco-system conservation; training eco-guides how to better impart information about their local ecology; Taomi’s history and culture; local plants; long-term monitoring of the water quality of ecological ponds; second stage training of eco-guides’ professional information skills; and featured food cooking training (Zhan, 2004; Wang, 2004).

5. The Trial Ecotourism Industry Operation

Taomi began a trial operation of its infant ecotourism industry in August 2001. At the time of the trial operation, the community had not yet established some functions of an operating centre ready for the arrival of tourists. The NHF therefore provided accommodation, temporarily took care of all tourist reservations, and handled a number of other operational matters, such as eco-tour plans; arranging eco-guides and home-stays; and set the prices of all the ecotourism services (Zhan, 2004). The trial operation uncovered some negative aspects which drew external and internal criticism: tourists complaining; environmental mess; lack of professionalism in home-stay operations; low quality construction; and only core members receiving income
benefits (Chiang, 2006). Other unanticipated but significant factors were the workloads; and some problems arising from the pressures of the trial operation and other NGO groups. For example, the NGO groups had ineffective communications with each other, for example with the Shih-Hsin University group, and the trial operation mechanisms were unable to bring about a common view shared by the various parties (Chiang, 2006).

As a result, the Shih-Hsin University group announced its withdrawal from the NGO groups, and this event led to some organizational conflicts between different core members of Community Development Association and the NHF (Chiang, 2006). Consequently the NHF attempted to resolve its conflicts with the residents through effective communication and giving the matter careful consideration. One result was that the NHF withdrew from holding any enterprise operating right in Taomi’s ecotourism industry (Chang, 2006).

5.11.3 Operating Ecotourism Development Stage (February, 2002-2006)

As will be seen in the following chapter, before actually undertaking it, most residents were doubtful that the reconstruction project of the NHF could transform their community into an Eco-Village (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). Following the trial operation, many residents hoped to find new employment opportunities or to develop new economic skills so that they could participate in this learning project, using the relevant concepts of ecology, the imparting of ecological ethics, the promotion of eco-technology, and the practice of ecological philosophy (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). Taomi was developing its ecotourism industry with a view to creating a new economically viable industry. As the number of ecotourism enterprises increased, it would create employment opportunities, helping to alleviate poverty for local residents.

The Tourist Information Centre, set up by the Taomi Community Construction Association, began to formally operate in February 2002 and organise services, such as eco-tour design, ecological education guides, selling local handicrafts, home-stays, and catering (Chiu, 2003). The tourist information centre also incorporated a display cataloguing the history of the 921 earthquake in Taomi village and the subsequent
recovery. All the local enterprises had to make their arrangements for the allocation of tourists visiting and wishing to join ecotourism activities through this centre. The Tourist Information Centre formed fifteen working groups. These were: administration, accounting, research, local products, ecological conservation, environmental design, eco-guides & ecological education, home-stay, transportation, activities, culture, local food, waterways maintenance, technology, and environmental protection. The working groups were designed to handle the huge operations necessary to further provide better and more efficient service for tourist arrivals to Taomi (He & Yan, 2002).

During the early stages of ecotourism operation, some problems arose concerning how the benefits should be shared with the community. The NHF and the community reached a consensus: it was decided to establish a “community fund” into which 5%-10% of the ecotourism income derived from guided tours, home-stays, and restaurants must be donated to offset the public expenses which effectively subsidized them, and to take care of the old and the weak (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b). The growth of this fund is shown in table 5.1. The sustainability aspect of the community fund is to emphasise that eco-businesses are based on the overall development of the community and not just on individual enterprises. The spirit of Taomi ecotourism equally involves establishing healthy competitive relationships (New Homeland Foundation, 2007b).

1. Activities to Strengthen Resident’s Conceptual Understanding of and Identification with Ecotourism

Apart from various activities for those directly involved in the ecotourism industry, or preparing to be, the NHF held a number of activities to promote and strengthen residents’ understanding of the concepts underpinning ecotourism. The eco-village was operated and carried out by various ecotourism operators and the Community Development Association, while the NHF played an assistant role helping the Community Development Association to apply for funds to carry out a series of planned community activities. A key goal of these planned activities was to give all residents a better understanding, awareness of, and identification with the key ideas and concepts of ecotourism development and their eco-village. A number of
significant activities (documentary evidence, activity handbill, no. 1-8) are set out below in table 5.3:

**Table 5.3: List of Planned Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Main aim/Brief details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shuidangdang Activity</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The aim was to alter aspects of community life with negative environmental consequences by creating and promoting ecological ponds with the New Homeland Foundation. A main practical purpose was to educate residents to not use pesticides in agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s Get Taomi Moving</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The aim was to improve and/or rebuild public spaces in Taomi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Big Cake</td>
<td>28 September, 2002</td>
<td>An activity held by the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre. The aim was to explain to the community that benefits belonged to everyone, just as the Big Cake was shared with all the residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Love Taomi!</td>
<td>2002, 2003</td>
<td>The purpose was to get residents to learn about more of the operations of their eco-village and thereby engender a strongly shared sense of community. The most important issue was to discuss how to link and integrate local agriculture with ecotourism industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise Lanterns to Celebrate</td>
<td>January, 2003</td>
<td>This was to express the heartfelt gratitude for all the concern and assistance Taomi received from all quarters after the earthquake enabling it to gradually bring the dream of creating an eco-village to fruition. Old photos of Taomi and items such as toys old residents had played with as children and local children’s toys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deeply Ploughing Taomi</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The aim of these activities was to build a place to study and find cultural resources to strengthen people’s sense of community and heighten their sense of environmental aesthetics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrations of Feature Food</td>
<td>2003, 2005</td>
<td>The key aim was to attract local women’s participation, conduct cooking skill demonstrations presented by external chefs, and encourage innovation in cooking styles and enhance service quality for working in the ecotourism industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning-Up the Stream</td>
<td>22 May, 2004</td>
<td>The aim was to protect and look after Taomi’s waterways and fish populations, give the residents an understanding &amp; awareness of the importance of learning how to do this properly, and publish a notice from Nantou county government prohibiting fishing in the waterways for two years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taomi’s ecotourism development resulted in its receiving some excellence awards and invitations to key events:

- In 2002, the Eco-Village reconstruction project was listed as a “Community Infrastructure Establishment” by the Council for Cultural Affairs (Wu, 2002).

- In 2003, Taomi received an excellence award from the Executive Yuan for being “an exemplary case promoting Taiwan ecotourism for the year 2002” (Taomi Eco-village, 2007).

- In 2004, Taomi was invited to participate in the “Dubai international contest for the promotion of the best model of a living environment in 2004”. This contest was organised by the Council for Economic Planning and Development, and the Earthquake Post-Disaster Recovery Commission, Executive Yuan (New Homeland Foundation, 2004).

Moreover, in line with the central government cultural innovation industry policy, Taomi linked cultural innovations into its growing ecotourism industry. This involved two categories: ecological sculpture and quilting, and products were designed incorporating frog and dragonfly imagery. These products with their value-adding highlighting emblematic local features could be incorporated into the ecotourism experience. These activities were seen to extend the understanding of other residents, not engaged in ecotourism enterprises, that ecotourism and becoming an eco-village were increasing employment and income resources. To successfully establish an eco-village, the NHF and ESRI continually sought out and talked with residents and accessed resources and funds for education and training from both the public and private sector, to accelerate and enhance the community’s ability to take charge of its own affairs (Chang, 2006). As a result, ecotourism training workshops continued to be held to enhance residents’ ecotourism industry skills and abilities (documentary evidence, training workshop, no. 1-5).

Taomi seems to have done well in the initial ecotourism development, but some problems then arose followed by conflicts around organizational structure;
distribution of economic benefits; and participation and non-participation in
ecotourism enterprises. More significant issues were differences between the
Community Development Association and core senior members regarding
organizational operation concepts – both in terms of core values and operational
approaches. This led to core senior members withdrawing from the Community
Development Association. The eco-village vision had only focused on increasing
people’s knowledge of ecotourism; it did not include enhancing community welfare
and upgrading community enterprises. The negative impacts which became apparent
obstructed the perceptions of what an ‘eco-village’ is. How to solve these different
opinions between stakeholders to further develop ecotourism and fully realize the goal
of setting up an eco-village was a critical issue for the NGO groups and the
Community Development Association.

5.11.4 New Organizations Established for the Eco-Village Vision (2006 – present)

By April, 2006 organizational operation problems led to all the ecotourism operators
intending to set up a new association – the Taomi Ecotourism development - to share
different responsibilities for community affairs with the Community Development
Association. Further, this association proposed the idea of “adopting an environmental
area” to allocate responsibility for each area among all the ecotourism operators, and
began publishing the “Taomi Ecological Journey” (documentary evidence, journal,
no.1). An important issue for this association was to effectively combine the design,
planning, educational training, and investigation aspects of ecotourism (Chang, 2006).
Moreover, the association wanted to enhance the eco-friendly quality of home-stays,
restaurants, and eco-guides, and having specific standards agreed on by all the
ecotourism operators and enterprises. The aim of this association was directed toward
achieving core values and a sustainable eco-village.

In November, 2006 the Leisure-Agriculture Park Association was established and
approved by the Council of Agriculture. The principle behind it was to unite the
strengths of all the farmers and come up with ingenious imaginative ways to integrate
enterprise across the community: such as linking up special local products and
features of local cultural life, and mobilizing the human resources of this farming
village to facilitate the more rapid creation of employment opportunities, break their
local economy from being locked into old patterns, and promote further revitalization and a complete new lease of life for this agricultural society (Lin, 2005). A further aim was to enhance the value of such agricultural products as organic fruits and vegetables to address concerns about the income of local farmers. These organic products could also be integrated with other ecotourism experiences, thereby creating more benefits sharing with more residents. This was complemented by the ESRI and the NHF holding an advanced eco-guide training course to upgrade the ecotourism skills and knowledge of all the eco-guides (documentary evidence, training workshop, no.7 and participant observation, field notes, no, 1).

In January, 2008, the NHF held an opening ceremony for the Paper Dome building (see figure 5.7) built to commemorate the 921 earthquake. The Paper Dome in Taomi was built with donations from the Takatori Catholic Church community in Japan who had suffered during the Kobe earthquake in January, 1995. The activity was designed to exchange experiences of earthquakes both had suffered, and to increase interactions between the people of Taiwan and Japan. The Paper Dome offers visitors to Taomi a new place to experience.

Figure 5.7: Paper Dome
5.12 Summary

Taomi was the first place to develop ecotourism, begun as a positive response to the 921 earthquake disaster. The experience gained by Taomi offered an example and an important model for the promotion of ecotourism development to other areas in the recovery stage after Taiwan’s 921 earthquake disaster. Taomi’s experiences with ecotourism development may also provide useful information for the successful transformation of traditional industries (New Homeland Foundation, 2004). The purpose of ecotourism development is to improve the local community’s culture and economy, and to create economic policies in Taiwan (The Water & Land Resource Working Group of the National Council for Sustainable Development, Executive Yuan, 2009).

On the negative side, though ecotourism development brought new economic benefits to the community, some conflicts arose between different community associations and other stakeholders. These problems could potentially lead to a renewed healthy ecotourism, or to a collapse of the ecotourism development, depending on what intelligence the stakeholders bring to resolve them. The concern of this thesis is to investigate how the development of ecotourism detailed in this chapter has influenced the livelihoods of the Taomi community. Thus the following chapter examines changes to the various forms of community capital suggested by the sustainable livelihoods approach discussed in chapter 2.
Chapter 6

Ecotourism Development in Taomi Village and Sustainable Livelihoods

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative research findings following the previous chapters which presented the literature reviews, methodology, and the context of the Taomi community. This study uses the Sustainable Livelihood Approach model’s six types of assets—natural, human, physical, financial, social, and cultural capital assets—(Ashley, 2000; Sustaining Livelihood in Southern Africa, 2002; Cater & Cater, 2007a) to analyse the positive and negative impacts on all the interviewees in Taomi. See Chapter 4 for an explanation of the outcomes of the coding process to the themes (six types of assets) in the sustainable Livelihood Approach model. The link applies to the discussion of the themes in Chapters 6 and 7. The aim is to understand how developing ecotourism is reflected in broad changes to people’s livelihood in the community. As described in Chapter 3, the research adopted a social representations framework to analyse community change. It is felt that this offers a viewpoint that has been underrepresented in tourism research. Although there have been many studies that have examined the quantitative impacts of tourism, the perceptions and insights of community members, however socially derived these might be. By combining the social representations from the fieldwork with the SLA framework, this chapter presents a detailed insight into community perceptions of the changes resulting from ecotourism development. Changes to Taomi were of course inevitable, and we should be careful of ascribing all of these to ecotourism. Nevertheless, many community assets were affected by ecotourism.

6.2 Natural Capital

As outlined in Chapter 2, natural capital refers to the environmental resources on which communities depend for their livelihoods. From an ecotourism development
perspective, it may be argued that natural capital is the core building block of the, Sustainable Livelihoods Approach although as has been shown, all of the facets are fundamentally interdependent.

6.2.1 Natural Capital Assessment

It has been acknowledged that the catastrophic 921 earthquake was the crisis which triggered ecotourism development; what followed was a complex and lengthy development process. Assessing the natural assets as part of a baseline evaluation is essential in ecotourism development, particularly as it is based on those natural assets. Immediately following the earthquake a representative of the New Homeland Foundation began the process of investigating and assessing these assets over a year spent living in the Taomi community.

“I had come to know quite a lot about what the local natural resources were, the resources found on the mountains, because I had investigated the environment for a year, and had discovered the rich biodiversity in the mountains. The residents came up with the idea of positioning the community by emphasizing the area’s mountains and water. It took some time for them decide how to rebuild and construct their community. This approach had a good fit with their local life and culture and offered a relatively clearly defined path to take. I think that these factors connect into their social & community life.” (N4, follow-up interview, P.1- P.3)

This original assessment seems quite organic, being based on identifying the natural assets that were deemed to be important. Local residents acknowledged the time that this individual had put into finding out what the livelihood assets were, and mapping their connections to the community:

“... N4 visited the Taomi community after the 921 earthquake, riding his scooter ... then he stayed with us, and we saw him every day, so I think his thinking is locally based ...” (R9, P.2)

But the New Homeland Foundation recognised that they did not perhaps have the specialist ecological knowledge required to undertake a detailed assessment of Taomi’s natural capital, so they engaged a government research institute, ESRI (the Endemic Species Research Institute), to perform this function:
“ESRI was invited by the New Homeland Foundation in May 2000. The New Homeland Foundation had previously offered the Taomi community counselling about reconstruction. The result of their discussions was that the residents wanted to develop ecotourism, but they had no idea what it was about. They did not know whether to focus on ecotourism or leisure tourism, and neither did the New Homeland Foundation. So some people with expertise in ecology were needed, and residents of Taomi and New Homeland Foundation members came to our deputy leader. ... this is how we got to know about Taomi.” (N9, P.1)

The respondent from the ESRI institute recognised how ecotourism had become a global ‘bandwagon’, and perhaps been developed in some areas without any significant natural attributes. He notes that having high quality natural resources is fundamental to the success of any ecotourism products:

“... We investigated the natural resources in Taomi. I think that if a community wants to develop ecotourism, the quality of the local natural resources and the richness of ecological resources do matter. It is very difficult to develop ecotourism without rich ecological resources ...” (N9, P.5)

Fortunately Taomi village was identified as having very high biodiversity compared to other Taiwanese regions:

“... of the resources in Taomi include a very great number of wild plants ... so plants play a large part in ecotourism in Taomi ... Taomi boasts 22 of the 29 species of Taiwan’s frogs; about 60 of the 152 species of dragonflies; and between 70 and 100 of the approximately 500 species of birds.” (N8, P.7)

ESRI was keen to understand and discuss residents’ views on Taomi’s natural capital. In particular, as discussed below, they were acutely aware that the residents’ primary objective immediately following the earthquake was economic survival. For this reason ESRI wanted to demonstrate how the natural assets of the community could be used for ecotourism:

“At first our team did not know what we could do to help Taomi ... we started off communicating with the local residents ... we had to think about what actual contribution ESRI could make to this community ... I thought the most important thing for the residents was to make a living ... for their part, the residents were wondering what we could do for them, given that we were there. They wondered whether we could help them make some money; whether we could help them make a living ... for our part, we (ESRI) could accompany them going out and identifying the community’s natural resources and features.” (N10, P.1)
6.2.2 Environmental Education

Improving the natural capital to create a marketable ecotourism product involved addressing the lack of ecological awareness of Taomi residents. This was the subject of much discussion between ESRI, the New Homeland Foundation and core members of the Community Development Association, on how to guide residents and change their understanding of ecological resources and the natural environment. An environmental education and training programme was adopted to educate and train community members to address this identified need. A key ESRI member observed:

“... ESRI is an organization for the protection of ecological systems. We went into Taomi with methods and ideas pertaining to ecological education. At that time ESRI had consistently been promoting and holding ecological education as part of their speaker education, so I thought this was a perfect opportunity to make contact with a community at grass roots level, something that really excited us. This was how we came to be in Taomi ... Taomi was the first community undertaking post-earthquake reconstruction in which we provided ecological education ... ” (N9, P.1-2)

However, ESRI was concerned to ensure that the ecoguides working in an ecotourism context met rigorous standards:

“... I communicated with the local people about several matters. What we mean by ‘ecotourism’ and by ‘ecological education’ is not what people generally understand these terms to mean. Our terms encompass valuing and respecting the environment. For example, ‘ecotourism’ must meet the quite strict definition given by the International Ecotourism Association ... it sets a high standard. I think the most important thing is that people have really be serious about it ...” (N8, P.1)

As a professional ecological association, ESRI perhaps adopted quite eco-centric criteria in the development of ecological species and environmental education. This is evident in the training programme developed for ecotourism development in the Taomi community. The NGOs were, however, aware that the environmental education should only involve content of direct use to the community:

“The Endemic Institute arranged sessions for the residents in October, 2000. ... we couldn’t simply arrange whatever sessions we felt like. I believed only helpful sessions should be arranged and course participants would be able to really absorb the information.” (N9, P.5)
Following these principles and in response to some of the earlier baseline studies, it was decided to focus on a number of strategic species that could become a core part of the ecotourism product for Taomi village. Early investigations developed, particularly regarding the frogs and dragonflies found in the local ecosystem.

“... the principle to follow when arranging these sessions is to start with simple things and ideas which are non-controversial. Things like snakes and wild animals should not be included, and there are too many insects to deal with, so leave out insects too. Strategically, frogs, dragonflies, and birds are all non-controversial so begin with these three categories.” (N8, P.7)

The advantage of these species in these categories is that they are relatively charismatic, simple and easy to identify (see Cater & Cater, 2007a), and they could capture the interest of both residents and tourists.

“The course on ecotourism activities involves how to give people (tourists) a way of looking at frogs and dragonflies ... how to give them ways to look at various plants, observing their flowers and the down on leaves ... I believe that for the tourists experiencing these local ecological species is like being allowed to discover a new wonderland, a wonderland which they learn things about from both the eco-guide’s explanations and the whole process.” (N8, P.7)

A range of environmental protection principles that contribute to the maintenance and improvement of natural capital can be mapped onto these individual species. The NGOs felt that this was successfully accomplished, even with the older members of the community:

“ ... the grandpas and grandmas there know that frogs are representative of Taomi, and have to be protected. I think the concept of protection has the greatest influence ... these particular people may not be so clear about the more general concept of protecting and preserving the environment.” (N3, P.10)

“ ... there has in fact been a rise in both the amount of knowledge of the ecology everybody has absorbed, and in their acknowledgment of its value. If you were to ask the grandma who owns the grocery store, she would tell you that the environment needs protection, and frogs ... I think that what is of greatest benefit is to get residents to really take protecting and preserving the environment very seriously ... they have already internalized the concept; and it already informs a lot of their thinking and behaviour.” (N1, P.8)
It was also deemed vital to ensure that the education was at a level appropriate to the average educational level of the community, using an easy and simple way to educate them. Lay explanations of the natural environment were important, as these were easiest for both residents and tourists to relate to:

“I think there is a lot that simply cannot be translated into everyday Chinese; many technical terms have no everyday language equivalent. There’s a lot of things you cannot give an everyday Chinese term for, particularly when it comes to theoretical aspects. And the plants, animals, and various dragonflies have their myriad names – you can’t just use the general Taiwanese dialect names. There is a general term for dragonflies but it is difficult to talk about 15 different dragonfly species, each with their own name ...” (N10, P.13)

6.2.3 Green Workshops

The first environmental education effort was to hold a “Green Workshop”, supported by fund from the private sector. These workshops continued from October 2000 to July 2001 (New Homeland Foundation, 2002), educating the community about species composition and ecological construction methods. This contributed to envisaging the physical goal of the eco-village discussed further below (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). These workshops attempted to change some of the community values towards their natural capital through education:

“... we think education has a lot to do with changing people’s ideas, so we had discussions with the New Homeland. During the process of operating in Taomi, we thought that education was very important; this was what we were setting about to do, and how we did things. I think attending class sessions was the most important thing.” (N9, P.3)

In addition, more information about local ecological species and planting and nursery skills were included in follow-ups to the green workshops held from 2001-2003 (Chang, 2006), particularly meant to enable the residents attending to gain more hands-on species and environmental knowledge and skills. These workshops were designed encompassing “foundation courses in ecological ethics, natural values, eco-technology construction, ecological greening and ecological guide skills ...” (N9, P.4).
6.2.4 Ecological Ethics

Altering ecological ethics was a fundamental element of the environmental education program to change and foster the ecological concepts of the attending residents (documentary evidence, training workshop, no. 4). Many of the NGOs recognized that at the outset there had been an erosion of the general public’s environmental awareness as serious as the earthquake itself:

“... in the process of environmental education and training, I think the most important thing is to change the residents' ideas ...” (N9, P.3)

Many residents recognised that attending the program was involving quite a dramatic change in their attitudes, as reflected in the opinions many residents offered about the changes to their ecological awareness:

“I think this represents a major change. After the farmers are educated about ecology and better understand their local ecology, they identify with their local environment and become aware of the sounds around them at night. Afterwards, they will love and protect the land beneath them instead of ruining it.” (F1, P.17)

“I think, when your behaviour is changed, you will protect the environment in your daily life. If residents are successfully educated, they will be able to decide whether to keep or destroy an area. Therefore, the premise is to change residents’ ideas through education ...” (R8, P.29)

“I think this is an important core value in development of the whole environment! This is the essential core value ... ” (R9, P. 8)

Although this took some time, imparting such values was an important first step. In addition, the knowledge imparted had to be carefully scaffolded, built on the development of sequential concepts:

“... I feel that in the ecological education sessions, the residents’ meet new concepts or change old ones, and accumulate knowledge.” (N2, P.13)

“I insist on beginning with environmental ethics, and people’s attitudes to the natural environment ... standard sessions like that need very lengthy educational training ... if the residents are willing to take it on, then we will go ahead.” (N8, P.1)
“What I mean by environmental ethics is to respect the natural environment. For example, the residents think concrete is better material for the construction of banks, but they don’t realize that concrete is a barrier to the natural survival of various species because tiny species hide in the cracks of rocks along the natural banks. Basically, I tell them “choose one: concrete or the natural ecology”, to make them aware of what environmental ethics involves ... I believe they will slowly grasp the concepts behind environmental ethics and then show respect toward the natural environment, instead of destroying the original ecology.” (N10, P.5)

Many residents understood the fundamental principles on which environmental ethics are based, and how they contribute to an integrated understanding of nature:

“Let the residents get an understanding of ecological ethics, and the ideas will be implanted in their minds, and those of the whole community. Set up businesses which are integrated with the community ethos. I think doing things this way, accommodating the residents, will improve the quality of their lives.” (R5, P.3)

“I think you can use the idea of protecting the environment at the same time as exploiting the natural resources to educate people about environmental protection. It doesn’t require a lot of money – and people can earn money with ecotourism.” (R9, P.23)

“Changing the concept of ecological and environmental ethics is all about land and environment use. I feel this should be a key responsibility of the eco-village. Actually, our lecturers told us that we have to take on this responsibility ...” (R10, P.25)

It was hoped that these principles would reach beyond those attending the courses, as action based on these ethical principles would affect others in the community. Indeed, it is clear that the ecological education and training does not just offer professional knowledge to those residents directly involved in the training courses, but also changes the environmental concepts and behaviour of other residents. Creating environmental awareness also stimulated debate about the community environment which had not occurred previously. It also appears to have created a community environmental identity and a commitment to conserve their environment. The respondents above recognised that these concepts had become planted in residents’ minds, and how this might contribute towards realizing the eco-village vision and goals in the Taomi community.
6.2.5 Ecological Aesthetics

A second core teaching focus was ecological aesthetics, building on the beauty of Taomi’s natural capital, and instilling a sense of wonder that would inform residents contributing to having a good environment and thereby enhancing their quality of life (documentary evidence, training workshop, no. 4), and which would lead to exhibiting that pride when speaking to tourists as ecoguides:

“... aesthetics are covered in the later part of the basic ecological education and training: the main sessions teach the participants the beauty, mystery, and science of all the species to nurture their love for them. I believe that tourists will only feel touched when the ecoguides have such a perspective ... so training sessions should not simply teach about the various species; their value and beauty, and the relationship to the community should also be taught; I think these are the main points which the training should cover.” (N8, P.7)

In addition, residents attending these sessions covering expressed their individual perspectives, and the strong sense of place that this evoked:

“... looking on the bright side, at least lots of community residents have begun to do something from where they are. Their awareness of the environment has been strengthened and their sense of aesthetics further developed. The community I see is one making progress. From my observations, Taomi has improved over these years.” (R8, P.6-7)

“I think the quality of our environment has improved, making it very beautiful now. The environment and people feel different.” (R4, P.7)

From these comments, it would appear that a greater awareness of ecological aesthetics on the part of the residents has enhanced the quality of their environment and is attracting more tourists.

6.2.6 Ecological Greening - Improving Natural Capital

The curricula targeting ‘ecological greening’ were more practical in orientation, designed to equip residents with planting and management skills for greening the ecotourism environment. Physically improving the natural capital of the community was a cornerstone of the development approach adopted in Taomi village. For
example, one of the first environmental activities in early 2000 was cleaning-up the Taomikeng stream, the main waterway in the community, in particular collecting rubbish and planting numerous ginger lilies (Wang, 2004). Using the Taomikeng stream as a focus evoked community emotion and common feelings from all residents, who were encouraged to participate in the clean-up. As one of the NGO interviewees observed:

“We conducted an activity called “cleaning-up the stream.” My chief purpose was to arouse the local residents’ attention. At the time the residents found it very special … asking “what is this cleaning-up the stream all about?” I wanted to tell the residents about ecological engineering methods, and the ecological environment would gradually improve step by step.” (N4, P.1)

This relatively simple environmental improvement task was seen as offering a clear community focus, although in the initial stages it suffered from a lack of participation, as discussed below. A second ‘cleaning-up the stream’ was instigated some six months later, and was more successful as a result of some of the community capacity building exercises described in this chapter. These actions contributing to the natural capital definitely improved community spirit and cohesion:

“… I think, once construction is underway in the community, the residents have common public issues and topics to deal with. These issues and topics generate interaction in the community, interaction which becomes a mechanism for mutual assistance in a socialist society. This arises naturally from a sense of revolution; mutual affection arises naturally when people are involved together in lots of public activities and issues; this is what I perceive.” (R8, P.3)

Another initiative to improve the natural capital stock was the nursery program which was designed to grow native species, and to ‘green’ the community using native protophytes. These plants could also provide material for various community, school and educational uses, and the nursery program could also provide a further focus for activities.

“… in conjunction with the community greening activity, I think we should arrange sessions to teach the course participants about ecological greening, starting with common species of plants used for greening, and teaching them things like how to collect seeds, propagate them, nurture seedlings … ” (N8, P.7)
“... the community grows its own plants, and then the plants are distributed to its residents. If residents register then they can take some plants home ... it's very obvious that some of the residents who are home-stay operators register so that they can get the pot-plants and do some greening of their immediate surroundings. As a result, about 5,000 trees are distributed every year.” (N2, P.13)

In combination with the more theoretical approaches to capacity building outlined above, these practical approaches had a very direct impact on increasing the natural capital. The nursery plan contributed to the greening of public space to the benefit of all residents, and also to attitudinal change. This helped create a deeper awareness of the ecological environment on the part of all residents, and saw the recovery of more of the species native to the Taomi ecology.

“... in the nursery garden plan we were going to specify a piece of land especially for indigenous species. We had some goals in mind. In the daytime we worked in the garden and picked indigenous plant species in the mountains. In the evening we went to the ecological sessions ... these were taught by professionals who specialized in endemic species research and they talked about the species native to our local area. I think the participants unintentionally gain a deeper understanding of their local area, and a deeper and stronger affection for it.” (N3, P.7)

In September 2001 ESRI also encouraged action to clear the so-called ‘green cancer’, a weed (Mikania micrantha an exotic plant) that chokes tree growth (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). Not only local residents, but also concerned outsiders who had joined the environmental education workshops, participated in these activities. As well as removing this weed, the activity also encouraged residents to further understand environmental concepts and evoked their sense of community. As a key ESRI member commented:

“... actually we have held ecotourism activities many times, like participants cutting away the (Mikania micrantha) weed, a kind of tree cancer, which clings to lots of local trees and kills them. I can feel that the participants really hate the weed ... they all the local residents got involved and we invited some tourists to join in and work together with the local residents. We organized all these weed removals activities ...” (N9, P.6)

These comments indicate that this activity also increased Taomi residents’ understanding of how this exotic plant destroys indigenous flora, reducing ecological diversity and hence the natural stock.
6.2.7 Outdoor Education

Further community connections to the natural capital were developed through outdoor education classes. The most influential part of this initiative was getting residents out of their existing routines and familiar places within the village. As one of the lecturers noted:

“... there are still even many places in Taomi that the course participants have never been to, can you believe it? Then we hold outdoor courses and they visit local places they have never been to before. I can sense deeply that they only work on their farm and visit places which are easily accessible, but not places outside their normal routine.” (N9, P.5)

A real benefit of outdoor education lies in the visual and tactile interaction that occurs with the species themselves in their habitats, which residents soon responded to positively:

“In reality, by participating in activities with local ecological species, learning about various plants and their particular environmental requirements ... in the outdoor teaching, where the course participants go and collect things outdoors ... and they learn all about these plants ... what they look like at different stages of growth; their characteristic features; their shape and form; where you can find them; and what you (course participants) have to do to propagate them. I believe that in the process of doing these things you (course participants) have to know what changes these plants will undergo in the future and have to understand the various cycles the different plants go through ...” (N10, P.4)

6.3 Human Capital

The second area of community assets which underwent significant change was that of human capital, which relates to the skills and knowledge central to people’s livelihoods. The development of ecotourism involved a significant change to the entire local economy of an agriculture-centred rural community. It required many changes to the skill sets and knowledge present in the community, while at the same time attempting to maintain those human capital attributes that make Taomi village distinctive.
6.3.1 Tourism Planning

There was clearly very limited local expertise on tourism planning so one of the early initiatives undertaken by the New Homeland Foundation was to invite Shih-Hsin University to contribute expert knowledge relevant to the tourism industry and to link this to existing community resources. The university organised a workshop, questionnaire survey, interviews with residents, and a field survey to further identify basic resources and development data for the village. The community initially had a preference for leisure-based tourism (documentary evidence, plan, no.1) as opposed to ecotourism, but this may be partially explained by a local lack of knowledge of the potential of their existing tourism resource:

“At the beginning, N7 from Shih-Hsin University took his team to Taomi ... I think our community intended to develop [conventional] leisure tourism rather than ecotourism back then.” (F11, P.1)

The university then developed a five-dimensional leisure-tourism plan that firmly linked into the local situation:

“There are five ideas; the supply side uses local resources and special features of the environment; what is required is to be positioned in the industry market, by targeting leisure tourism; moreover, arrangements have to accord with the local space and local time schedule environment. ... the fifth idea is that things must take into account and be guided the local people’s lifestyle and their common understandings ... in my opinion common understandings must work coordinate well with the local space and time constraints ... ” (N7, P.3-4)

6.3.2 Study Visits

Another method of human capacity building, one that also strengthened networks with neighbouring communities, was to organise visits to other counties developing ecotourism. This involved visiting, emulating and learning from other community developments in order to understand and discuss ways to develop community empowerment with local residents (Lee, 2006). These visits included places such as the Baimi and the Erjie communities in Yilan County and Fu-Ben, and the Yong-Ping and Young-Le communities in Changhua county (Lee, 2006). These visits helped residents understand the potential for homestay tourism, for example:
"N7 is a professor at Shih-Hsin University ... he took us to Yilan county to get an understanding of how to operate a home-stay." (F10, P.1).

" ... at the very beginning, when we were planning to run home-stays. Almost every year we went and visited other communities to see how they did it. This was also part of our training process ... I think this laid an important foundation for residents to use to transform their industries in the future." (N2, P.12)

Furthermore, this learning process was mutual:

" ... Actually, Taomi community and the other communities observe and learn from each other, each checking out what other communities have accomplished." (N2, P.8).

6.3.3 Training Skills

Probably the most fundamental change needed in the human capital of Taomi village was to convert the residents’ skill set from one used by farmers to a skill set appropriate to tourism professionals. The development of an ecotourism industry required a huge and complicated ‘work in tourism’ programme. A particular challenge was how to develop professional and organizational skills. As N7 commented:

“I think the most difficult question is how to help farmers to turn farming into a leisure tourism profession ... after all, it probably takes many years to go from basic level agriculture to working in what is a level three service industry capacity. I know that doing something like this in such a short period of time will present many obstacles ...” (N7, P.10)

Furthermore, the challenges which human resource development presented in a small-scale ecotourism development such as that in Taomi village were particularly acute:

“I think creating human resources depends on people and organization. If the development is of a small scale, it comes down to a people problem ... I think it isn’t difficult creating industry and promoting it, but creating human resources is really difficult. So, our education aims to change and create human resources ...” (N7, P.11)

These insights indicate that the organizational operation and management content of a tourism educational and training programme are not tourism-specific; the main problems arise in relation to organization and the residents. Therefore, the training must spend more time assisting local community organizations and create both organizational ability and improve human resource skills. A more important challenge
is how to deal with the conflicts which arise in all community organizations. As will be seen in the following chapter, this was acutely so in Taomi village.

Changing residents’ concepts required the use of a learning and training process. The stakeholders had to design tourism courses to provide residents with the knowledge and skill set to equip them to establish a local tourism industry. This training also had the potential to help the community adapt to contemporary challenges. For example, N7 stated: “The general idea in my mind was that one of the very important principles was that education is a mechanism which assists a community in transformation.” (N7, P.3). Thus, relevant tourism education and training courses were designed by the group from Shih-Hsin University. Additionally, N7 also brought many professionals into the Taomi community to guide and educate local residents. As discussed in the environmental section under the “Natural Capital” heading above, this education had to be scaffolded, and build on existing and recently acquired knowledge:

“... of course, education and investigation of the environment are the main focus in these short courses, because the intermediate goal is to get some businesses started up. Some sessions related to business operation and management will be offered later on.” (N7, follow-up interview, P.3)

Thus the group from Shih-Hsin University designed a set of tourism courses to assist participating residents acquire professional knowledge and skills to enhance their income and, more generally, residents’ career skills to meet the future challenges of a transforming industry. The core focus of these courses was to identify how the local people could use their existing resources and knowledge to create an effective tourism product. There is an implicit sustainability principle here; the community assets are developed in a way that makes the most of what they already have:

“Afterwards, I set forth some ideas about community tourism. I mean some ideas and principles. I think my ideas are neither in conflict with their ways of producing things nor greatly change them. There won’t be any great changes to their ecological environment, and their historical and cultural heritage is not being offended ... because managing the community industry is in a sense making use of the ancestors’ property, property which will later be given to offspring, so the principles should be considered as being maintained.” (N7, P.3-4)

One participant acknowledged that the cooking classes for example, were taking existing culinary knowledge and redefining it for the tourist market:
“The featured food cooking session showed us how to present the simplest foods as your own feature food. I feel that this is more useful for me.” (F2, P.7)

Similarly, locals were assisted to theme their tourism offerings, for, as Newsome et al. identify (2002, p.240), themes assist visitors in organizing a significant amount of new information in a logical format and also help with destination marketing. These themes are linked closely to existing agricultural practices and products within the community:

“I once held an activity on picking bamboo shoots... how to cook some dishes using bamboo shoots. After enjoying a bamboo shoots banquet, the participants would take their own DIY stuff home ... so I think something as simple as bamboo shoots can be a theme; design a trip on the theme and include aspects of the ecology that an ecotourism guide would speak about at the same time. Another species of white bamboo shoots will be a different theme for another day ... ” (N7, follow-up interview, P.13)

Some in the community, however, were impatient to get an income from their newfound skills. As already discussed, economic survival was their key priority, and this may have led to a somewhat limited take-up of the more advanced levels of the skills training:

“Some residents attending the courses at that time wanted to follow the New Homeland Foundation ideas; it was their second year of attending classes with no incomes, so they were anxious to urgently start operating ecotourism businesses. But I told them to be patient for one more year, and that way the whole educational and training I was giving them would qualify as an intermediate level. I think that it is equivalent to working having just finished the first stage of a short educational course.” (N7, follow-up interview, P.5)

6.3.4 Mutual Interaction Classes

In contrast to formal education, which generally uses many academic terms, Taomi residents required the use of easy and informal instruction methods to maintain their interest. The tuition had to also take into account the lower education levels of the residents. So the educational curricula were designed to maintain easy accessibility, delivered with guidance and patience in a lively manner to all the participating resident students, to encourage and enhance their learning process. As an educator and a resident separately observed:
“... in fact, ecological education and training sessions give community residents opportunities to learn. These course participants do not have any background knowledge of ecology, and they only have a junior or senior high school graduation certificate. So N8’s passion touches people who are learning here, and the course participants are willing to learn from him. Besides that, his classes are very interesting. They often feel very moved after learning something. And they come back again to learn more, having been inspired by new knowledge. Anyway, I believe that the course participants’ motivation is driven by the teachers’ passion and encouragement.” (N1, P.7)

“This is an important reason why N8 could inspire great trust from community residents. I think he is good at delivering skills training as he does not tell you how to do something, rather he brings you to knowing how to do it.” (R10, P.2)

Having good experiences while learning from good teachers encouraged greater resident participation in these education and training courses. These skills also developed the residents’ understanding of ecotourism concepts and knowledge, and increased their positive interactions with tourists. Further, the use of an interactive style was important for more effective learning. Two lecturers described their experiences thus:

“Providing communities with environmental education is not just like teaching at school. First, it involves some interaction, and we have to create an atmosphere which encourages this ... second, we have to be enthusiastic so that course participants can feel the same way. What I am talking about are teaching techniques. You have to go from the easiest aspects to the most difficult. And you also have to pay attention to the way you explain the content of the materials, and apart from imparting new information you have to create a harmonious atmosphere.” (N8, P.2)

“... the education and training class sessions gradually offer the community course participants many opportunities for interaction ... this interaction provides opportunities to communicate with each other face to face, so I think the most productive activity is to attend classes and participate.” (N9, P.18)

There was also an attempt to make sure that the residents used a variety of senses in their learning, an approach which concurs with educational and interpretation models. Newsome et al. (2002, P.240) identify how maximum use of the senses in learning encourages the uptake of new knowledge, particularly when the process involves are self-discovery.

“Actually, let them (the students) participate in some sessions where they use their different senses. For example, I get them to smell or bite flowers which I pick and
These comments indicate that interactive education was an extremely successful element of the learning process for the rural residents. Further, some of the educational and training programs gave the residents opportunities to enjoy social interaction, which further built on the social capital discussed below. As mentioned, the greatest challenge that residents encountered in their learning related to their ability to speak publicly in an eco-guide role. Being able to address groups and convey relevant information are very important professional skills essential in ecotourism, but most of the residents had little such skill; they were mostly farmers, lacking the confidence to speak in public, and without any previous such experience. The result was that training of this skill-set was a very significant test for residents wanting to transfer industries and thereby enhance their income. This part of the course encompassed both the relevant knowledge base, and the social skills involved in public speaking, to which we return below.

“… So, I think that I got a lot of educational courses through all the NGO groups, I told many people that I previously did farm work. But since the earthquake, I have worked using a microphone. This was a turning point in my life: I have changed from being a farmer to being an eco-guide, at the same time as our agricultural economy has transformed to being a knowledge economy …” (R9, P.3)

**6.3.5 Certification**

The certification of guides who had been through the training program as Ecotourism Guides was crucial in the development of an ecotourism sector. By gaining certification, residents obtained access to an income and to employment opportunities in the Taomi community, as well as professional recognition. While all the environmental education and training was open to all residents, they could not receive certification unless they passed the test of their practical eco-guide information skills. This increased the motivation of those individuals who saw the opportunities this role could offer:
“... I think that course participants are attentive in every session in order to be able to get the certificate. The first part of the examination process is a written test and then there’s an oral test ...” (N8, P.1-.2)

“... When the residents finish taking all the sessions, there will be an examination for an Eco-guide Certificate. This was agreed between the NGOs and the residents. Only residents who have obtained the certificates will be qualified to guide the tourists. So the residents are motivated to study as hard as they can. On the whole, I think the need to obtain this certificate is an important key and it strengthens the residents’ motivation.” (N1, P.7)

The residents, however, found the procedure far from easy:

“... We could get a certificate by participating in the sessions. I think it really has given us more confidence... I think the certificate requirements are very strict.” (R4, P.2)

“As a matter of fact, even if residents go through the complete training, not everyone obtains the certificate ... I think probably only 10 to 20 percent of them pass the exam. ...” (R10, P.10)

Although difficult to attain, having certification of the trained ecological guides was a successful method of validating the learning outcomes of the training program, and ensuring the quality of this aspect of the ecotourism development. At the first stage nine residents passed the testing to obtain a certificate. These nine were then able to make the most of the opportunities to provide eco-guide and ecological information services (documentary evidence, internal record, no. 6). Further, as described above, having certified eco-guides was not only for the tourists; these individuals also conveyed environmental concepts throughout the community and attracted more resident participation in the ecotourism development.

This role was augmented by having the newly qualified people taking on particular responsibilities for their environment. Those who had received certification were expected to survey the community’s environmental resources, try and record the relevant local species, and also to disseminate their environmental knowledge into the Taomi community. Cooperating with all the residents, they then directed the community towards the eco-village vision and goal. More importantly, the issue of how to promote environmental education reaching all residents, especially to plant the environmental concepts in the consciousness of the children of the village, was
discussed. In this way they all had a responsibility to contribute towards ecotourism development and the eco-village vision.

6.3.6 Environmental and Local Ecological Species Surveys

Apart from earning an ecotourism fee, all the trained eco-guides assisted in investigating the local ecological species in the village, doing environmental and local ecological species surveys. They supplied survey data, as well as contributing to conservation issues for ecotourism development:

“... I think they are more than eco-tour guides. They are also investigators, investigating natural resources. In addition to this, they have to organize all the data and put it on the community website.” (N9, P.4, 11, 12)

Further, they had a responsibility to protect and conserve the Taomi environment; the interpersonal skills developed in the education program contributed towards using professional knowledge and skills, and taking personal responsibility for conservation of the ecological environment. Having this responsibility augmented the pride felt by individuals and their sense of stewardship over the natural assets.

6.3.7 Training How to Compile and Write Brochures on Local Ecology and Species

In order to further build their sense of stewardship over the natural assets of the community, the eco-guides and speakers were encouraged to write and compile brochures about the species in Taomi, with the assistance of ESRI. This involved their doing a baseline ecological survey and transferring this data to make tables and maps, detailing the habitats of different frogs, dragonflies, birds and aquatic plants. Further, they published two books on the community and local ecological species, ‘one is about plants and the other is about the process of constructing eco-ponds”. (F12, P.6)

As both experts observed, and residents agreed:

“They can train themselves to write books. At the beginning, they write books and brochures slowly ... in the end they can do this by themselves without our help. I think they have gained confidence in themselves.” (N9, P.9)
“... I feel that this is something that belongs to Taomi. We have to do our own species surveys and compile books by ourselves.” (F12, P.6)

These books (documentary evidence, book, no.1 and no.3) enhanced the compilation and writing abilities of those involved but more significantly, validated and deepened community attachment to the natural resources and species in the Taomi area, and assisted all residents to better understand their assets. For, in addition to writing these brochures (documentary evidence, brochure, no. 1 and no. 2), all the newly trained people also took on a voluntary responsibility to promote ecological education in Taomi as well.

6.3.8 Voluntary Promotion of Environmental Education

In order to disseminate these principles and information and to achieve the eco-village vision, it was important to promote the environmental and ecological concepts amongst students attending the local primary school. This was undertaken with the voluntary help of these eco-tourism guides. The purpose of doing this was to firmly plant the eco-village vision in children’s minds.

“We ecological training teachers have received part of our education in Tao-Yuan Primary School ... I think we have to take painstaking care with our local children.” (R10, P.13)

“Our environmental speakers have to cooperate with the local primary school to set up a natural ecology course. I think that the idea is to teach our children to understand the relationship between ecological conservation and our own quality of life ... ” (R7, P.8)

“... Taomi has a primary school, so the eco-guides went there regularly, doing things like playing games with the children about the planet. The games were actually all related to learning about ecology and protecting the environment. These courses are free. I feel this is a duty we should do.” (R11, P.4)

A consequence of promoting environmental education in the primary school was that these students also brought their parents to participate in ecological activities such as bird-watching and learning about different plants, and this further changed their parent’s original ideas and awareness of their ecological environment. Thus, these eco-guides and ecological speakers were very important core elements in the
promotion of ecotourism development and the eco-village vision. As a key figure in an NGO group commented:

“... So far, Taomi community is still based on ecotourism, and the 30 or 40 professional eco-guides and speakers still play an important role. I think they form the core group in Taomi ecotourism. This group of people did their training by attending all kinds of ecotourism related classes. The residents became familiar with what an eco-village is through this group and their interpersonal networks and the large-scale activities.” (N6, P.10)

Thus these eco-guides and speakers played a very important role in promoting environmental concepts and thereby expanding ecotourism development. They were also important in creating the vision of an eco-village in the Taomi community in the future. For this reason the NGOs were keen to ensure that the transfer of human capital was a process that would continue over time, rather than leaving matters to fate:

“... I think the ecoguide training has not stopped ... N8 runs the training with his own resources, and is using his own ESRI plan to run further education and this training for ecoguides to upgrade to intermediate level.” (N1, P.10)

“... if the sessions continue, the most important mission is to maintain the quality of the human resources. Everyone attending the training sessions will change their way of thinking or get to know a lot about their community through education. They will end up gaining lots of professional knowledge and this improves the quality of human resources, so training is very effective.” (N6, P.10)

“... What did the sessions mean to the community at the early stage? I think, it was more difficult to find human resources then. At the intermediate stage, it was more difficult for people to arrange the necessary time. For example, operators could not make it to the sessions when had too many customers or when they were working.” (N6, P.11)
6.4 Physical Capital

6.4.1 The Eco-Village Vision

Developments to the physical capital of the Taomi community centred around the promotion of the local area as an eco-village. It was felt that this would be a suitable platform on which to build an ecotourism industry that would have broader benefits for the assets of the community itself. As discussed above, a strong sense of place and attachment represented by a number of emblematic species was the foundation for this development, providing a holistic perspective. Initially the design of a community logo (figure 6.1) was important (participation observation photos no.2):

“... I think we should come up with a logo for the eco-village. One representing the eco-village that is a symbol of life. That is, one that expresses that we residents are going to live life in our own way. Our philosophy encompasses local industries, local life and even education ... to make it clear, I think the logo will reflect values (an identity) shared by everyone. This philosophy will be passed down to our future generations.” (N4, P.5)

This view is echoed in some of the documentary material describing the vision of the eco-village, whereby “the basic long-term goal of a sustainable community must be to be in a sustainable ecological environment, with sustainable social relationships and a sustainable economy, and sustainable spirits and culture” (Homeland and Dream, 2002). This eco-village vision was based on the fundamental principles of a strong vision and embedded ecotourism development.

Figure 6.1: Frog Pavilion
Although the initial investigations outlined above found good conditions for the development of ecotourism, the NGOs recognised that development needed to fulfil broader objectives than just tourism. In addition the eco-village concept needed to be dynamic and to develop as a result of iterative discussions with the residents. As a key resident stated:

“... Actually, the whole process of rebuilding Taomi to become an eco-village was the result of discussions between experts and scholars and residents.” (R9, P.1)

The eco-village concept developed gradually, initially being quite controversial:

“... I think it is reasonable that the idea of having an ecological village was unacceptable at first. It took time because people had no idea what it might involve. When the idea had been proposed, the community needed time to figure it out and decide the way to go ... ” (N3, P.8)

“After that, we wondered whether it was possible for Taomi to develop its ecology, and about the possibility of development. The idea of an ecological village came up when we were pondering and evaluating. I thought ecotourism might be able to be constructed on the basis of an ecological village. The idea of an ecological village could be a major direction for reconstruction in our community, after the big earthquake.” (N1, P.2)

The identification of core values shared by all was central to these discussions:

“... Our ecological education gave expression to our residents’ affection. We are going to become Taomi the eco-village. I think it should be possible to do this in the future ...” (R4, P.2)

“... I think this is a core value. If you are format odds with the shared values of the ecological community, the residents will be divided. Values wield invisible power and represent goal shared by everyone. So the community will not be torn apart if people are working together for a common goal, and work at the same pace ...” (F1, P.13)

The two pillars of sustainable ecotourism and the ecological village were seen as heavily reliant on one another:

“In reality, an ecological village cannot be developed without tourism there supporting it. Many residents believe that the problem of local industries cannot be overlooked when developing an ecological village, and this motivates them to get engaged in long-term development. Likewise, if tourism is not supported by an ecological component, then tourism will simply not be competitive in the market ... ” (N6, P.3)
“I think the original proposal was for the eco-village and ecotourism development was to come later. But an eco-village has to first survey and monitor how many species are there. So, it looks to identify how it can competitively market itself first, and then formulates plans and education and training.” (F1, P.2)

These comments indicate that under the eco-village vision umbrella, ecotourism development could support the eco-village goal, with a strong reciprocal influence. However, in the early stages many residents, particularly the community elders, were suspicious of the vision because of the levels of poverty in the Taomi community. Nevertheless, as someone from an NGO group indicated:

“... once they receive their first pay for working as an eco-guide, and home-stays earn their first money from tourists, they will realize the feasibility of developing an eco-village.” (N3, P.8)

Residents who were not directly participating in the ecotourism industry also understood that the ecotourism development could offer new economic opportunities through linking it with agricultural produce such as organic fruits and vegetables. Thus the ecotourism industry helped drive forward the eco-village vision, one that could offer benefits to most residents (documentary evidence, reports, no.1). However, this eco-village vision required a good ecotourism industry behind it to bring it to fruition. This in turn required the development of a significant physical tourism infrastructure (documentary evidence, news, no.4).

In order to undertake this, ESRI induced various areas of the public sector to provide some funds (documentary evidence, internal record, no.2), using these funds for building ecotourism facilities which promoted environmental conservation and ecological activities. These activities increased residents' participation and further promoted their knowledge and awareness of the local environment. Thus the various concepts pertaining to ecological environment encountered in different activities could gradually be planted in residents’ minds and expand their participation in environmental activities. Therefore, when a community's living space experiences structural change, this will generally bring about some extent of social change (Tseng, 1999) such as enhancement of community networks. ESRI developed a number of physical capital improvement activities with residents involvement, some of which are outlined below.
6.4.2 Eco-Technology Construction

Prior to the earthquake, public construction in Taomi village had been dominated by the use of cement, for example along riverbanks and in other water facilities. In combination with the environmental education initiatives discussed above, training was provided in eco-technology construction designed to assist the recovery of various local species. To help establish ecotourism, residents were encouraged to reduce their use of cement for drains, and for bank revetment along the riverbanks, and to increase construction of wetlands in the natural environment.

“... According to ESRI’s research, there are many dragonflies and frogs in this locality. The residents come to realize the importance of using eco-technology construction methods through learning about these species. I believe that after that, the residents understand why concrete cannot be used around or on their farms.” (N8, P.8-9)

“... I think that when you visit Taomi, you will now see lots of wetlands. The wetlands, such as the Tsao-nan wetlands, and other similar ones, are all maintained using eco-technology construction methods.” (N10, P.3)

There were some initial concerns that alternative methods would not be as strong or reliable as concrete structures, but these fears proved unfounded:

“... so far, the eco-technology construction methods have been getting more and more accepted. In the very early stages, the residents thought that public facilities which are not made from concrete are very dangerous, but later on people became more used to the alternative methods. Some of them are now prepared to adopt eco-technology construction methods when they are reconstructing on their own land. Given this, I think the ecological training is effective ... and the educational approach does work.” (N3, P.5)

It was hoped that by spearheading the use of ecological construction methods in public facilities, the community as a whole would change their attitudes:

“... Taomi is moving toward being an eco-village, so we have adopted eco-technology construction methods to build some of our public facilities ... we are using more natural rock and wood materials. So, I feel the community should be behind this positive change.” (R6, P.12-13)
These changes to the physical infrastructure recovered waterways and species habitats and offered new recreational and educational space, all contributing to the goal of establishing an eco-village. Many of the eco-technology constructions, such as the new wetland areas, simple outdoor classrooms (figure 6.2), eco-guide and information facilities, and bamboo bridges (figure 6.3), created the best venues where tourists could observe and learn about birds and frogs (documentary evidence, activity handbill, no. 1 and news, no.1; and participant observation, photos, no.1, field notes, no.2).

**Figure 6.2 Frog shape of Ecological Classroom**

**Figure 6.3 Bamboo Bridge (left) and Interpretation Facility (right)**
6.4.3 Ecological Ponds Construction

The Shuidangdang (small ecological pond) activity was one spearheaded by ESRI, to improve the community environment by creating and promoting ecological ponds in Taomi. One of the main aims of this was to educate residents about the consequences of overuse of pesticides in agriculture. Having wetland environments would assist with attracting back flora and fauna such as frogs, dragonflies and aquatic plants. Two participants’ comments follow:

“You can construct some ecological ponds and preserve wetlands. What good will this bring? I think construction of ponds and wetlands will attract water plants, frogs, and dragonflies, and then more species will gradually come. Then I can tell the course participants that this is what the original environment of Taomi was like, but the overuse of pesticides has damaged the environment …” (N9, P.3)

“Basically, if you use pesticides, you will kill all the dragonflies and frogs. Then you have no chance to fully restore the ecological environment …” (R16, P.2)

In recent years the construction of ecological ponds has been promoted by the New Homeland Foundation: “... the promotion of ecological ponds was part of the Council of Agriculture’s 2001 plan ... we improved and built the ecological ponds quite systematically.” (N2, P.13-14). Public funds were sought for implementation of the “Shuidangdang activity”, which led to the creation of the Taomi Eco-technology Construction Group. This group collected community experts together to construct these ponds, and this created further employment opportunities for residents.

“... the Shuidangdang activity was undertaken during 2004 and 2005 ... every resident of Taomi was welcome to make proposals regarding the construction of the ecological ponds ... so I think the ponds have a function and little by little have become part of their life.” (N2, P.14)

In the same manner as some of the other initiatives, the aim here was to disseminate ecological principles and hope that some of the large physical infrastructure projects would trickle-down into residents’ practices on their own landholdings. A fund was made available to encourage such follow-up initiatives:
“... We are holding a series of activities to commemorate the Shuidangdang project, and everyone is welcome to apply for funds to improve your own place. The premise is that you will use ecological engineering methods...” (N3, P.10)

These quotes demonstrate how the eco-pond activity slowly reinforced residents environmental concepts and integrated ecological principles into local construction methods. Interestingly, as N2 (P.15) notes: “I think that ecology became a fashion in Taomi”, further building the vision of an eco-village in Taomi community.

6.4.4 Empowering Environmental Greening Activities

In addition to building wetlands, there was also a move to green the local area, particularly public areas. The NGOs thus encouraged the construction and maintenance of various facilities in the community environment, such as: along wetland banks; walking paths and green environments; bamboo bridges; pavilions and frog logos. Apart from improving the physical environment for the residents, these could also be an additional attraction and provide venues for educational talks for arriving eco-tourists. ‘Ecological greening’ was seen as a very significant activity for encouraging residents’ participation and expression of their concern for their community environment and public affairs.

“I think this is helpful for the natural landscape; people are making their surroundings very beautiful.” (R4, P.15)

“I think having this greening of our environment has made the roads more beautiful and every resident is making their surroundings pretty and neat.” (R5, P.9)

Additionally, these initiatives were seen as links in the strategic chain of environmental initiatives, one spearheaded by the home-stay operators.

“Almost all our home-stay operators already take care of the environment ... I feel we are linking the entire community, like points joining to form a line.” (R10, P.16)

“... I think the greening and beautifying of the environment are strategic. I think the strategy begins with the home-stays. The home-stays are operated in an ecological way. The buildings and facilities mostly use green construction and ecological engineering methods to increase the ties with the natural environment and friendliness to the environment ... another aspect of our strategy is that we link the
home-stay visitors with local residents and they maintain and beautify the environment together …” (N1, P.7)

These examples indicate how using green activities improved various aspects of the landscape for the whole community, and developed recreational places and spaces for all residents and eco-tourists use. These places become demonstration sites for both ecological education and the exhibition of eco-technology construction (see figure 6.4) (participant observation, photos, no.2 and documentary evidence, film, no.1).

Figure 6.4: Eco-Technology Construction (Around of Home-Stays)

6.4.5 Tourism Infrastructure

Home-Stays

As well as creating income-generating opportunities, the home-stays also effectively extended the ecotourism product into different times of the day, especially night-times as this is when many of the target species are most active, for example the frogs.

“... if the course participants run home-stays, they can invite tourists to experience local life at night. Some of the educational-tour activities are especially designed for daytime. That is what the course participants were told when guiding eco-tourism groups was first introduced to them—they should arrange tours to many different scenic spots and give a professional introduction ... (but) real ecotourism allows tourists to listen to a presentation and interact with the local environment (at any and all times). The most important thing of all, I think, is for the tourists to experience the local life of a rural village, or free their souls.” (N10, P.5-7)
These comments indicate that both the ecotourism and affective experiences are very significant activities for tourists. This informed the design of different experiential ecotourism activities to fulfil tourists’ needs. Informative tours at night are just one example of this product extension, based on successful environmental education and further developing the economic resource potential.

6.4.6 Establishing the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre

By early 2002, when the successful trial operation was developed in the community, most residents understood that ecotourism could create a new local economy. And most residents understood the place of the eco-village vision in future development. It became apparent that tourism and community development needed a physical focus point. The Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre (see figure 6.5) had a coordination function: to run and arrange the home-stays, speakers and guides, restaurants and cultural handicrafts, and to function as an intermediary between all those involved in the ecotourism industry and outsiders (participant observation, photos, no.3 and film, no.1). As one senior ecotourism operators said: “the tourist information centre controls the internal organization of the community, such as the allocation of speakers and guides, food, and space …” (R8, P.18)

Figure 6.5: the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre
Once the operating centre had been established, the New Homeland Foundation intended to transfer the authority and administration of the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre to the Community Development Association to run it themselves (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). The community could begin to operate the entire ecotourism industry and their development autonomously. But to make sure ecotourism development would function effectively, a number of significant policies and rules were laid down to manage the relevant ecotourism operators, create further employment opportunities, and develop the community fund discussed above. Many of these aspects related to the development of a sound financial base for the community. As has been noted in much work on the relationships between sustainability and creating profitable and environmentally sound businesses: ‘the bottom line of green is black’ (Saunders et al., 1993).

### 6.5 Financial Capital

Financial problems for the community were particularly acute in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, and this impacted to some degree on buy-in to some of the initial ecotourism development initiatives. To different degrees all residents had to face life-shifting events, loss of income, and a lack of safe living conditions. Thus early concerns centred purely on economic and physical survival and the initial rebuilding effort. A senior NGO group member observed of this period:

“... initially the residents were more worried about how to make a living or how they could develop the local economy. So I think that this is the main issue that people living here think about a lot.” (N1, P.1)

It should, however, be recognised that the financial problems faced by the Taomi community were not solely related to natural disasters; the Taomi community was one already in decline prior to the 921 earthquake. A traditional agricultural society, “Taomi was one of the poorest communities in all of Puli County” (N1, P.1). As discussed below, this community had a traditional lifestyle that had suffered with rural decline, struggling with diminishing social networks, holding conservative attitudes, and lacking past connections to the environment. According to another NGO key member: “the problem was one of transforming the links to declining
agriculture as the economic networks had broken down” (N4, follow-up interview P.4). One major result was that many young people had left the community to look for good jobs and education elsewhere. In addition, when outside affairs or activities entered the community, most residents adopted a standoff “wait and see” attitude (Lee, 2006), leading to a lack of innovation. The 921 earthquake was somewhat of a trigger to rebuild with a new industry focus and a new sense of community. As a key participant commented:

“The initial purpose was to establish a common goal for the community. Back then, the local residents did not have a specific goal or shared life experiences. I mean they did not have any long-term plan for their community. So engaging ourselves in leisure tourism and promoting tourism was just part a means to our purpose. It was like a shared value gradually which guided the residents ... ” (N4, follow-up interview, P.1)

The university-guided tourism training courses described above had some initial problems as the funds were insufficient to invite professional experts to be involved in the tourism education and training program. “At that time, I had no resources and no-one, wherever I went, was willing to fund our community. I think we were so pitiful when we had our first session.” (N7, follow-up interview, P.5)

In the early stages the educational programs therefore relied to a large degree on voluntary contributions from lecturers:

“The Council of Labour Affairs Bureau of Employment and Vocational Training subsidized us with a little money, so those instructors were giving lectures voluntarily. N7, for example, used up the small amount of subsidy money on the round trip. The instructors received 4 or 5 hundred dollars (about USD$17) for each session, and that was not even enough to pay for the tickets ... so I think they were teaching partly voluntarily and partly paid by the subsidy.” (N4, P.3)

“... the teachers I invited only received lecturing fees, no travelling expenses, or anything to cover food or accommodation. Many of them were from Taipei, and I think they were doing this to save my face ... ” (N7, follow-up interview, P.4- P.6)

Nevertheless, there was still strong scepticism from the local community regarding the potential for developing a viable income from tourism. In addition, given the precarious financial position of local residents there was a challenge presented by those who were very keen to develop, wanting to get into running an ecotourism
business as soon as possible. This created some conflict between the educators and residents: the former wanting the education and training to be as complete as possible; the latter urgently wanting to put their embryonic skills to the test and generate an income.

“We understood N7 was well-intentioned and wanted the best for us. He thought that everything has to be properly finished before we could start operating businesses. But we had no jobs or work to do any more; we had to make money ... So, I thought we had no time to attend his course.” (R10, P.1-2)

6.5.1 Educational Funding

One of the early initiatives targeting the lack of incomes was to provide people participating in the nursery project with casual remuneration from a central government fund (Chiang, 2006). The nursery garden project was administered by the NGO partners:

“we began with the reconstruction of the economic industry. I think the circumstances of the local economic industry were easily recognized at that time, ... and we made our points clear to the residents. We told them how we could restart our lives and recover our industry. Beginning with industry also included farming, with our plan for nursery gardens. The plan was the beginning of the government’s reconstruction plan.” (N4, P1-6)

“If you participated in the plan, you earnt 15,000 (USD$484) per month. I think the foundation executed the plan well; it encouraged the participants to go to night sessions.” (R8, P.1)

As well as providing learning and other activities for residents’ participation, the project settled the short-term casual employment shortfall, giving residents a basic livelihood income. In addition, the social networking and interaction opportunities contributed to by this project, built up a sense of community and the community identifying with public affairs. As a key participant commented:

“I think the primary goal of training sessions is to encourage interaction between residents. The residents are encouraged to operate the organization, participate in activities, and recognize the value of their community. There is for example funding from the labour association, and through the project, the residents work for money and participate in local public affairs. At the initial stage N4, in particular, taught
residents how to establish relationship between people, how to conduct community activities, and how to operate an organization.” (R8, follow-up interview, P.6-7)

6.5.2 The Community Fund

A community fund policy was implemented to ensure there was some sharing of financial benefits once ecotourism had been established and guides and speakers were getting an income:

“Eco-guides have an income and then have to pay into the community fund … the head of the council in charge and the cadres have drawn up some policies” (R7, P.11).”

Prior to the establishment of the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre, the NGO groups formulated the policy of a “community fund” into which ecotourism operators would donate from 5% to 10% of their income. The resulting money was to be directed towards disadvantaged groups in the community and to cover public expenses such as personnel and administration fees, and costs of community activities and environmental conservation. As one resident observed:

“if the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre gets tourist groups, you service these groups. You must then contribute 5% to 10% of your income from that to the community development association the community fund, … ” (R8, P.11)

And from a senior member of the ecotourism association:

“even though tourists sometimes go directly to home-stays, the operators had to contribute to the community fund, no matter whether they got bookings through the community or privately. It is believed that operating home-stays also involves making use of the community resources.” (R9, P.15)

This “community fund” policy shared out the economic benefits with local residents, combining the spirit of environmental conservation with local community welfare (Weaver, 2001). But if it was to be effective, this policy required support and understanding from residents, and some additional rules and norms were put in place for those engaged in ecotourism operations.
With community agreement, the NGO groups established some standards for ecotourism operators, eco-guides and speakers, home-stay operators, and restaurants, in order to create fair competition in the local ecotourism market. A key home-stay operator stated: “we had a convention of using arranged lists of home-stays and ecoguides. We put them into our operating processes.” (R9, P.20). These rules were drawn up by all the NGO groups through discussions with relevant ecotourism operators. N7, in particular, recommended a policy of every primary home-stay operator having no more than five rooms, being concerned about residents’ economic ability, and wanting to avoid too much competition between home-stays. This rule also complied with the government policy on how large a homestay can be in order to stay tax-free (He & Chen, 2007). It was hoped that all the home-stay operators would cooperate to share their tourists with other home-stays. In the early stages this policy seemed to be effective, although more recently it seems to have been neglected and this underpins some of the problems discussed in the next chapter:

“… in the early days the core operators made their own houses into home-stays. There was a limit placed on the number of rooms, no more than 5, but later on they still built more home-stays. I think they just ignored the regulations …” (N7, follow-up interview, P.4)

Nevertheless the initial rules and conventions did encourage good organizational operation while the ecotourism industry was developing. Ecotourism operations run using the organizational mechanism drawn up created harmonious attitudes and shared the community fund out for use in community public affairs. These policies and rules appear to have contributed to the community’s public welfare and financial capital.

6.5.3 Trial Operation

Before operations commenced, a trial was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the procedures. The importance of the trial operation was not only to equip the residents with skills for working with tourists, or refine those they had, but also to demonstrate that ecotourism could be an effective source of income. Prior to doing the training programs, residents did not recognize that they could make money by using a microphone to provide information about local assets. Following the trial operation,
they could appreciate that the ecotourism training had given them a career in the knowledge economy.

“During our trial operation, we got the first group of eco-guides to guide some ecological environment protection teams. The ecoguides put great effort into guiding a group of people. At that time, visitors were charged, and a group of tourists had to pay 1200 NT dollars. I think the eco-guides were very surprised to realize that it was worthwhile to attend sessions; it had brought them some income. So it is important for eco-guides and speakers to dine or stay in home-stays with some operators beforehand because that gives them a chance to prepare before the real operation.” (N9, P.17)

“R8 for example ... only truly believed that the knowledge economy is possible once he had his first contact with tourists, and received money for the first time. I think that before that he really did not believe N8 at all no matter what N8 said ... ” (N3, P.8)

6.5.4 The Community Development Association’s “Making a Big Cake” Activity

The Community Development Association organized an activity called “Making a Big Cake” to further promote and encourage wider sharing of the economic benefits of ecotourism development. This was a metaphorical exercise to display the ability of the community to operate the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre, and to develop toward the eco-village goal (Lee, 2006):

“ ... Making the big cake was followed up by sharing the big cake, it was for everyone to eat. I think it has the symbolic meaning of residents’ feelings cohering and creating new community spirit... ” (N5, P.6)

“ ... if everyone does ecotourism together as the community industry, it could be more successful, like sharing the big cake. I think it is something different to the traditional tourism industry ... ” (N7, P.7)

“The main idea behind this activity is everyone has to remember this day. We had the 921 earthquake, which led to everyone starting to develop our own community from that time. I think we have made a starting point.” (F12, P.5)

“I think we have benefited from making the big cake. It was able to bring community strengths together in an interactive way which is very good.” (F14, P.6)
Residents recognised the importance of independently operating ecotourism to benefit the community. This activity helped achieve a coherent community view and created more opportunities for all residents to interact and participate.

“... N4 came here, immersing himself right into our community, placing great importance on getting an understanding of our culture. Perhaps he might be able to identify some path forward that would give us ways to make a livelihood ... N7 maintained a more purist approach: he said it was essential for us to be properly-trained to be fully equipped and have the ways to take charge of looking after and working with the environment, and that that was the only way we could operate ecotourism related businesses. ... another teacher, N8, used a more compromising approach (hit and run) ... this let us make some money, and making some money meant we could put food on the table. People were less likely to not attend sessions with a supportive approach like this.” (R10, P.1-2)

6.6 Social Capital

The social capital of the Taomi community had been severely depleted, partly as a result of the economic decline outlined above. Before the 921 earthquake, residents’ network interactions had been relatively low in number: “... I believe, the social network was not well-connected; there was no consensus which linked everyone... ” (N4, follow up interview, P.3). At that time there were few community activities - those centred on the temple, resident meetings, and the local primary school sport meetings.

There was a deep social scepticism regarding some of the early environmental activities, particularly the first clean-up of the stream:

“... Many residents complained about the activity. We were reprimanded wherever we went. Some residents had doubts, asking what kids’ game we were playing. Even the elders said so. Some people really hated us.” (N4, P.9)

At that time the purpose of these activities was clearly not understood by the residents; they had conservative attitudes and a generally passive orientation towards participating in public community affairs. As mentioned in a number of contexts above, during the rebuilding period most residents were just concerned about their livelihood, income and their own benefits and needs. Furthermore, Taomi was a
conservative, traditional agricultural community with a certain degree of indifference to community public affairs (Lee, 2006). These public affairs and activities were not very important issues for them. When it came to some of the development activities, most residents maintained a degree of distance and preferred to simply observe, based on these attitudes (New Homeland Foundation, 2002). Thus the vision of an eco-village took some time to take root;

“I think, actually, it was very hard at the beginning. The people attending the sessions were quite upset. Then gradually something would spark their interest … they saw the so-called vision.” (N2, P.15)

Nevertheless, in order to rebuild the community, the New Homeland Foundation worked with OURS (the Organizational of Urban Re’s) to establish the Community Rebuilding Association. Furthermore, they held meetings with all members of the Taomi community to discuss the perspectives of the village regarding rebuilding. The rebuilding association included the former head of community and core members. As one key participant (N4, P.1) said: “at that time, the local residents were assembling prefabricated temporary housing … most of them had spare time available, so I was always asking them to come to meetings … ” These meetings identified some common views relating to the environment, life, education, industry, and spatial aspects of the community. These are typical of comments on developing the community put forward by some residents:

“... at first N4 came to the community and identified the vision of the community; I think people in the community could not see a community vision, so he led us to reach that point.” (R9, P.2)

“I think at the beginning N4 paid a lot of attention to the living environment and had a great vision.” (R7, P.2)

As mentioned in earlier discussion of other forms of capital development, N4 was a very significant person who helped rebuild community social networks using the visioning process. These visions which took as their first priority the natural environment and essential safety first, and protecting the waterways activities, started the community process of deliberation and action (Zhan, 2004). These initiatives were able to change the social values of the community:
“Of course, the educational training sessions not only teach specialized knowledge but also change course participants’ thinking and behaviour, particularly their value system and behaviour ... I think the various related activities and sessions were the most effective ways ...” (N7, P.8-10)

6.6.1 Education and Training in Organizational Operation

In the early stages of rebuilding, it became clear that the Taomi community had a limited capacity with regard to meeting skills. When the rebuilding association held meetings to discuss community affairs there were very few organisational guidelines in place, such as having rules, procedures, or even agendas:

“The members of the reconstruction committee did not know how to participate in a meeting. When there was a meeting, they talked amongst themselves or whenever they felt like. As they were quite acquainted with each other, they directly criticized each other. As a result, there was not enough time for discussion, and proper meetings were not successfully held ... this included minutes of their meetings: probably done after meetings, they did not reach consensus, so no minutes of the meeting would be recorded. Then when it came to the next meeting, they started over again.” (N6, P.5-6)

This indicates that residents did not understand the operation of an organization and this contributed to negative political conflicts in the meeting process. As a result the New Homeland Foundation organised some effective meeting skills and conflict resolution training with the members of the Rebuilding Association.

“Of course in the sessions, there are actually a lot of chances to talk to the students about how to resolve conflicts in the organization and what to pay attention to in the so-called organization development: like how to transform conflicts into mutual learning; to try not to make conflicts interrupt and affect other events; and how to encourage students to maintain long-term interactive learning ... these are the suggestions I often give them.” (N6, P.5)

“He, like N7, taught me about how to resolve some community problems. I think his professional field is one involving policies ... ” (R4, P.3)

These courses assisted in organizational operations and skills, such as communication, negotiation, and problem solving in the meeting process. Furthermore, some experts helped with the organisational structure of the village. N6, for example, established a good organizational mechanism to operate Taomi’s ecotourism development and eco-
village vision. These community activities must involve using the strengths and powers of community organization to guide residents’ participation.

6.6.2 Public Speaking

A further enhancement of the social capacity of the Taomi residents was the development of their ability to work with tourist groups. Having completed the skills training to use in eco-guiding and catering, described above, a useful initiative was to dry-run the tourism operations on several occasions. This tested the effectiveness of the training and further built up the confidence of the residents in the ecotourism industry before ecotourism operations began in earnest, as well as demonstrating the financial viability described previously. To this end a university group visited in the role of ‘trial tourists’ to evaluate the tourism procedures.

“Actually, N7 came here for the home-stay course sessions, teaching about ecotour guiding and speaking, and would bring some students with him, to give us some practical experience and to test us. At that time he brought over 80 such ‘tourists’ with him and over 40 of us (Taomi residents learning to be ecoguides) looked after them …” (N24, P.2)

“… We bring our ecological protection course participants to Taomi for outdoor sessions, and then give them opportunities to try speaking as ecoguides. This included residents of Taomi who all did this speaking as an ecoguide as part of our team. They stayed in the home-stays, ate, and made rice cakes together, this kind of flow of things. I think you need things like this to be real ecotourism …” (N9, P.17)

However, while the skills and knowledge developed through human capital training were effective, one notable shortfall at this stage was the lack of public speaking skills demonstrated by the community residents:

“We had visitors from … Taiching Community University, there were 60 people in their group … but when our course participants were tour-guiding, they didn’t have the courage to pick up the microphone. Wanting to not to influence them … I could only stand far behind the group within their sight, but I could not hear what they said.” (N7, P.6-7)

In their previous employment, residents had had few opportunities to speak publicly to and guide other people in the rural community; they had little or no such and
experience. Public speaking presented a very great challenge for residents. As a key member of ESRI observed:

“... residents shook before using the microphone ... ” (N8, P.9)

Training in public speaking skills strengthened residents’ confidence to test their eco-guide professional speaking skills and content, for formal use in the near future.

“ ... residents are trained to feel brave enough to express themselves in front of a crowd. Generally speaking, many of the older generation shudder when they give speeches. But after the training sessions they are able to talk freely in front of the public. I think the training sessions help the course participants to gain confidence.” (N10, P.2)

6.6.3 Media

In addition, the NGOs contributed valuable expertise about marketing the community, expertise which was lacking prior to their involvement. In particular, their experience in working with the media contributed to increasing the network capacity of the Taomi community. This led to the ecotourism development in the Taomi community being promoted; for example one website has reported on Taomi’s ecotourism empowerment and development to attract eco-tourist arrivals since 2001 (Eye-Catching New Homeland, 2008). As a key female member of the New Homeland Foundation stated:

“Basically, we think the mass media is able to handle things like advertising the community and recording community events. And I think what we can do is help the community by doing this well, or making it worthwhile ... ” (N3, P.3)

However, it is recognised that these efforts must be in tune with the small-scale of ecotourism development in Taomi, and in particular must make use of word of mouth marketing channels;

“At that time, I tended to promote ecotourism by using word of mouth among a small target population, because I believe that when it comes to promoting tourism, word of mouth is the most effective advertisement, rather than going through the mass media. So this is what I promoted for a small population ... ” (N7, P.7-8)
“... I think ecotourism does not need mass advertising, and that word of mouth is good enough. If you use mass advertising and something causes a negative reaction, it gives you a negative reputation which spreads very quickly. The community would be ruined if something like that happened.” (R8, P.24-25)

These two comments demonstrate that ecotourism development in Taomi was small scale and adopted fairly socialist principles in its sustainable development. This corresponds to the relatively small numbers identified in Chapter 2.

### 6.6.4 “We Love Taomi!” Activity

The “We Love Taomi!” activity was organised by the New Homeland Foundation, ESRI and the Community Development Association to reinforce the community social networks and to explain ecological concepts to all the residents (documentary evidence, activity handbill, no.4). Although the ecotourism operators understood ecotourism development and the eco-village vision and goal, most residents did not understand what ecotourism development or the eco-village vision meant. This activity attempted to bridge this gap through participatory activities for all, accompanied by environmental education.

“... I think the “We love Taomi!” activity will explain to the residents what ecology means, as only a small portion of residents are involved in ecotourism. On the other hand, many residents still have no idea what ecotourism is all about or why tourists come, so we are holding this activity to let them find about what is going on ... we have a series of 5 different activities ... the activities last all day long. In the daytime, the eco-guides and speakers will take the residents to see some spots, such as Tsao-nan wetlands, and tell them about what is special there.” (N9, P.6)

These activities promote an awareness of the basic concepts and knowledge of ecological environment for all the residents. It was also important to showcase something to address and allay residents’ suspicions that resources from the many rebuilding projects and funds were being limited to just a few residents.
6.7 Cultural Capital

Although the Taomi area had been settled for a significant period of time (see Chapter 5), the cultural capital of the community had also been in decline. There were limited records related to the culture and history of the village but community values and identity were an important part of the rebuilding process. The first NGO representative invited a number of youth groups to assist him undertake a survey into Taomi’s culture and history, collecting information from the local temple and elder members of the community:

“I became an instructor and taught history to the local residents. I believe the culture and history data will be a very important part of their cultural heritage in the end.” (N4, P.2) “... if the local residents experience the depth of their antecedents’ life, it will make them feel connected to the land, history, culture, and local life ... I think it is like teaching them the old history of the community and putting that history to good use.” (N4, follow-up, P.12)

This documentation of the community’s cultural capital was felt to be an important part of holistic development:

“Internally, I think that local history and culture are of great importance. At the very least, the residents have to know why it is named ‘Taomi’. Previously, people might not have even thought about it. However, we made an effort to find out the background story, and the residents now tell the story to tourists. At least the residents know more about their local area and its history. I think it is one way to gain knowledge about their local area and build connections with the ecology.” (N3, P.5)

It was also very important to establish the details and then educate the community about local culture and history to further build on residents’ emotional attachment and sense of place. This in turn would then be integrated into the tourism offering, delivered through the ecotourism guides’ information base and skillset. There was a clear focus in their training, not only on local ecological species and environmental resources, but also on an understanding of community culture and life (documentary evidence, website, no. 1-4). The main purpose of this was to enable them to provide eco-tourists with a high quality experience on the eco-tours, one allowing them to understand and appreciate the inseparable links between the natural environment and local history and culture. It is interesting to note that to some extent the rigid
definitions of ecotourism discussed in the literature review become less important here, for it is the manifest connections between communities and their environment that are the foundation of this relationship:

“Usually, we won’t directly tell the residents exactly what ecotourism is, but the actual nature of the sessions concerns ecotourism and (how to) integrate ecotourism into local life ... I think the eco-guides point out to tourists the local culture and features of the tourist attraction ... they tell stories giving the background to different things ... basically, the ecoguides are trained to be able to communicate with tourists spiritually ...” (N10, P.6- 8)

6.8 A Holistic Picture

What has been presented in this chapter is an insight into how the myriad initiatives put in place by the NGOs, universities and community organizations have contributed towards an augmentation of various forms of community capital. Probably the most significant point is that these small parts all contribute towards the bigger picture of sustainable ecotourism development. Furthermore this development is itself part of a broader development perspective, for it is ‘inappropriate to discuss sustainable tourism any more than one might discuss any other single activity … we cannot hope to achieve sustainability in one sector alone, when each is linked to and dependent upon the others’ (Butler, 1998, p. 28). This was understood by NGOs and residents, for example;

“Take the leisure industry as the major function ... if the community develops agriculture related to the leisure industry, the organizational and productive departments associated with agriculture should cooperate with the leisure tourism operation. So I think leisure tourism operation itself acts as a mechanism. The various organizations in the community have to cooperate to work it out and make it all viable. If the leisure tourism industry acts in an isolated insular fashion, it will have fractured relations with other organizations ...” (N7, P.5-6)

“The New Homeland Foundation focuses on community empowerment, as its operational approach is linking and building affection and empathy between the residents; the Endemic Species Research Institution focus on species survey and education and Shih-Hsin University focus is all about the management and operation aspects of tourism. I think all three groups of NGOs must cooperate together. So, after the senior operators have passed through the training process ... then they slowly change to doing things their own way and do not follow all the NGO ways of doing things.” (R8, P.4-5)
These comments indicate that the NGO groups have all made a huge contribution to the Taomi ecotourism development and the eco-village. Much of this was based on a long-running education program underpinning the ecotourism development. The program attempted to present and instill an integrated interdisciplinary approach to environmental education and eco-guiding and speaking skills, small-scale tourism management skills, organizational management, and many other facets, as outlined above. Certainly one could conclude from this that a successful ecotourism development has to have an integrated ecotourism curricula and training to be effective in a rural community, particularly for community residents. However, this study has also found that the ecotourism educational and training program has not continued to have the support that existed in the early stages of development. In particular the influence of a seventh form of capital seems to have arisen, one which is related to that identified in the work of Mykletun (2009). This is that of administrative or governance capital, which he defines as representing “the regulation of public goods and welfare, the organization of civil servants and officers employed to enforce these rules, and the political bodies elected to be in charge of major decisions and developments” (Mykeltun, 2009:in press). Although it has clear links with social capital, this is a broader concept that recognises the highly political nature of the tourism development process. Indeed as Hall identifies, ‘(tourism) planning is not rational. It is highly political’ (2000, p.205). In this study, the more discussions the author conducted with residents and people involved in ecotourism development in Taomi, the more there currently seemed to be a significant level of conflict arising from a breakdown of effective political capital, or the abuse of that capital to meet particular individuals ends:

“This ... The problems organizations face in operating relate to how the benefits are shared amongst the community, the feelings arising between the residents, the web of favours and resentments elicited by different factions and elections - these are all problems. I think these are not problems that we can parcel out responsibility for, or can help them (the community) resolve. ... It takes time; they need time to wake up and figure things out for themselves." (N8, P.10-11)

“The greatest hardship now is being able to operate in this organization. I think the ability to operate is not getting anywhere. The reasons for this are that the members are unable to attract tourists from outside the community or design better trips for example by developing new spots, or new trip arrangements, or training internal staff.” (N1, P.2-3)
The following chapter explores the roots of this conflict, and the abuse of power and political capital in Taomi village.
Chapter 7
Power, Conflict and Political Capital

7.1 The Community Power Conflict

As my fieldwork uncovered the dimensions of the changes to livelihood assets in Taomi, it became apparent that their interaction was not as straightforward as might have been hoped. The more that I interrogated individual social representations, the more obvious significant elements of conflict and struggles for power amongst various stakeholders became. In the coding process, it became apparent that another strong theme not covered by the SLA framework was that of conflict and power struggles within the community. As discussed in Chapter 3, and by Mykeletun (2009) in his identification of the omission of administrative capital in the initial model, inadequate attention has been paid to the importance of governance and political assets. It is the responsibility of all community organizations to set up effective mechanisms to resolve community conflicts involving power and benefits, to create harmonious relationships, and further lead the ecotourism development. When exercising power, the leadership of all community organizations must be careful in their dealings with community public affairs, particularly with regard to the sharing of benefits. Close & Scherle (2007) note that such conflicts are often built and resolved around emotive and subjective issues with individuals and between groups. When the leadership of organizations abuse their power and right to control the distribution of benefits and resources to individuals and other groups, trust relationships break down, along with the social networks and norms comprising the social capital of the residents. Moreover, it creates more conflicts throughout the entire community development: political capital affects the economic, social-cultural, and environmental impacts of an ecotourism development.

This chapter examines the failures of political capital arising from the lack of a number of significant administrative elements, including a lack of goal setting and a lack of empowerment; and the presence of dysfunctional elements such as conflicts in leadership, organisational fragmentation, and problems in benefit sharing. These are
derived from the selective coding process applied to all the interview transcripts described in chapter 4. As in the previous chapter, these are discussed using the social representations from the various stakeholders, with less of an emphasis on documentary evidence, as these themes only emerged in the interview material. Perhaps for obvious reasons, there was no documentation of aspects of conflict in the promotional publications.

7.2 Lack of Goal Setting

7.2.1 Differing Development Goals

Having a strong goal and vision that community members are prepared to be involved in and then act on is a foundation for sustainable development. In the rebuilding process after the 921 earthquake, the development goal was discussed among all NGO groups and the core members of local associations. During the initial arguments and discussion, two strategies for developing local industry were suggested: to pursue leisure-tourism, or to first survey the local ecological resources for ecotourism development. However, it appears that consensus on these strategies were not achieved in the outset. As a key NGO member stated:

“About one or two years after the earthquake, during Taomi’s reconstruction, a decision was reached, after discussions on the development of the community involving much debate. The debate was basically over whether local industry or tourism should be developed first, or whether a proper ecological survey should be done first, or whether tourism should be developed before anything to do with ecology ... We talked and debated and argued about whether an ecotourism development was only part of the tourism industry. If we wanted to develop ecotourism, then of course a proper investigation needed to be done in advance. And tourism was just one dimension attached to ecotourism. These two directions are interpreted differently by different communities. Business operators in the community, of course, hoped that a tourism industry could be rapidly developed. Residents were more concerned about the community itself, or some who weren’t involved in tourism businesses may have thought the ecological part would be more interesting. After the two debates, people had different ideas at different phases. Different communities have different organizational structures and may have different views.” (N6, P.1-2)

Different approaches involved developing different aspects of the Taomi community; the difficulties of resolving this issue were further exacerbated by the different
backgrounds of the NGO groups. The different NGO groups had contrasting values and conceptual approaches stemming from their different disciplinary orientations. Initially, the Shih-Hsin University group held discussions with some key residents to draw up a plan for a leisure-tourism industry in Taomi which would include a traditional agricultural section, and the ecotourism development was to be one part of the leisure-tourism industry:

“...ecology is just a vehicle, a vehicle for our natural resources. The development of one industry is just one of the links. I am talking about supply and demand; ecology is just one link on the supply side, and there are many modes of supply. ...So if the Taomi community gets into developing ecotourism, it’s not just a matter of capitalising on the species ... ” (N7, P.3)

In contrast, the professional field of the Endemic Species Research Institute (ESRI) is surveying ecological resources and the environment. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the ESRI team completed all the surveying of Taomi’s ecological resources in the initial rebuilding period. When the results of the ecological survey were finalized by the ESRI, they suggested that because of the rich ecological species in the local area, the Taomi community had to develop its understanding of it to communicate that to tourists:

“... N8, a key person from the Chichi Endemic Species Research Institute centre gave advice on taking the direction of ecotourism or ecological education. He said that one aspect of ecotourism is an emphasis on education and experiential learning, and that these required a survey to identify the ecological resources native to the community to be done first. So, the ecological resources did not fully include food services; he didn’t include food services and tourism in his advice, just the ecological resources involving education and learning, so I think these are two different directions.” (N6, P.1)

These different views reflect local residents’ concerns to create a more multi-focused approach to generate more employment opportunities. If the local industry just focused on an ecotourism industry, it would create more conflicts and problems between ecotourism and the traditional agriculture industry regarding involving all the residents. The ecotourism industry initially offered some employment opportunities and income avenues for some enterprises and educated individuals, but the majority of residents engaged in the traditional agriculture sector did not obtain any economic benefits.
Moreover it was apparent that it was not just the values of the different organisations, but also their distinct ideologies that caused some conflict. The two NGO groups had some significantly different views on the different goals of developing the local industry, views reflecting particular political standpoints:

“... N8 believes in capitalism; but he also believes capitalism is very awful. I think the range is the real problem, not capitalism itself. Free competition is only suitable within a very small range ... you cannot operate ecotourism that way in a conservative community. Ecotourism is socially-oriented, not capital-oriented.” (N4, follow-up interview, P.10)

Similarly, a key member of the Taomi Ecotourism Association offered:

“... I think N4’s approach was developing ecotourism based on socialism; the ESRI and the NHF were primarily following a capitalist approach ... ” (R9, follow-up interview, P.8)

The two groups offering their professional knowledge and expertise from different fields had different ideologies informing their individual professional approaches. A healthy interactive relationship between both sides appears to have been lacking. These political agendas seem to have been neglected in the early stages of development and as a result have underpinned a range of other governance conflicts discussed in this chapter.

7.3 Lack of Empowerment

As outlined in Chapter 3, empowerment is a complex and highly contextualized combination of factors. For example, as well as the question of empowerment, however, there is the consideration of actual representation, for “participatory democracy is both a matter of right and capacity to participate” (Jamal & Getz, 2000, p. 176). Indeed, it is apparent that empowerment in the Taomi community was not as broad-based as was first expected. Respondents comments indicated that participation and communication aspects were particularly lacking.
7.3.1 Participation

Public participation reflects legal rights and opportunities (Smith, 1984), and as discussed in Chapter 3, is an essential part of community empowerment. Many researchers note that residents’ participation in the ecotourism development decision-making process requires taking into consideration their opinions and concerns (Scheyvens, 1999; Sofield, 2003; Fennell & Dowling, 2003; Hall et al., 1997). The local associations, often held meetings concerned with the ecotourism development. These were open to all the residents and the other groups. As two residents stated:

“... if people wanted to go and join in, or go and listen to what was said at the meetings, there were no restrictions put on residents.” (R7, P.24)

“Everyone could participate about any issue in meetings. All you needed was to have a topic for discussion and the meeting details, and be willing to attend; our door was always open; we would never reject anyone.” (R6, P.16)

Nevertheless, not all residents were willing or able to participate in these meetings; participation was often linked to levels of interest, to people's identification with various organisations, or with the goals described above:

“We always welcomed residents’ participation at any time. But the thing is that most residents simply wouldn’t attend the ecotourism development meetings. The main thing was that they lacked the background knowledge so they felt no interest in getting involved. Residents who came to meetings to become members hoped to change these associations or get them to do something in particular or whatever ... ” (R8, P.30-31)

“I think everyone had an opportunity to join in. But even if you contacted them and informed them, they wouldn’t necessarily go along. Anyway, I feel that only those who felt a sense of identity with what was happening would actually go and get involved. If they didn’t feel that way, they really shouldn’t.” (R24, P.15)

“The participation problem is that some people were unwilling to join in. I believe some people felt these issues simply had nothing to do with them, so, they did not go and take part in these meetings ... ” (R21, P.17-18)

The issue of everyday understandings also emerged as a barrier to participation:
“I could go and take part in these meetings, but there was hardly anybody who wanted to do that. I think they felt that ecotourism was something very boring; and even if they listened they wouldn’t be able to understand what was going on anyway.” (R10, P.35)

Another significant barrier was time:

“The two associations might allow us residents to join in, but I myself really never had any free time available when their meetings were on.” (R23, P.10)

Some residents were also concerned that meetings were becoming too disparate, although this sits uncomfortably with the notion of a ‘greater good’ implicit in the empowerment aims:

“... I think the more residents there are joining in, the more difficult it is to control things. As soon as lots of residents participate they all put forward a whole range of diverse opinions, and things just get nowhere with all the talking ...” (R22, P.10)

These residents’ comments clearly indicate that ecotourism meetings were open and that all the residents were welcome to participate. In particular, it was individuals or groups whose own benefits and rational ideas might be affected who went and got involved in the decision-making processes (Madrigal, 1993; Lankford & Howard, 1994; Sofield, 2003). Some residents not engaged in the ecotourism industry were probably unable, or felt they would be unable, to understand the ecotourism issues being discussed, and as a result they tended to not participate in the ecotourism development meetings.

7.3.2 Communication

A further element contributing to the shortfalls in political capital was a lack of effective communication. The interviews uncovered a number of instances of inadequate communication undermining community empowerment, particularly through the NGOs, for example when the NHF and ESRI started to conduct a trial operation of the Taomi ecotourism industry in September, 2001. The trial operation had not received the endorsement or supportive cooperation of the Shih-Hsin University group:
“... I phoned N1 from the NHF at the first opportunity and argued, pointing out that we had an agreement they were not honouring. No tourists should be allowed in and businesses could not be open to the public before the community was completely ready. But he responded that the local residents could not wait. Well, the residents had not communicated anything of that sort to me ... they were just talking amongst themselves. And at the time we were doing things together and I think N1 should have told me about the information in advance, and he should have told me, not just gone and revealed the news on his own. What he did amounted to a violation of our initial ideals and agreement.” (N7, follow-up interview, P.7)

During the initial rebuilding stage, the NHF had to seek more funding from the public or private sector, in order to continue undertaking the rebuilding work in Taomi. Planned projects responses – for example education and training programmes, and construction of basic local public facilities – at times required immediate decisions and putting in bids for part of allocated funding, and implementation. This points to the importance of having a lead agency responsible for immediate day-to-day requirements:

“Cases from the central government have to be dealt with immediately; they cannot wait for one or two months. Plus, sometimes emergency situations in the community need immediate reports. I think this has resulted in disagreement between the NHF and Instructor N7, as N7 only comes to Taomi once every two weeks. Most of the time, some decisions have to be made right away. So communications and long distance have both been instrumental in causing misunderstandings between the NHF and N7.” (R26, follow-up interview, P.14)

It was clearly an important issue that the NGO cooperation lacked well-integrated transmission of information, good communications, and long-distance created a problem as emergency issues all needed to be dealt with immediately. As a key representative pointed out:

“... it seems to me, actually a lot occurred in the community in the process of reconstruction that was all caused by many break-downs in transmission of information, ... and some of these communication break-downs generated doubts. This lead to distrust, and that created far too many negative consequences.” (N2, P.7)

These conflicts further damaged the originally established communication mechanisms. At the same time, these conflict events also brought to the surface the different viewpoints held by the ecotourism operators and caused tension in the organizational interactions between the NHF and different residents’ groups. The
NHF needed more effective communication with the public and better information flow to negotiate effectively and engage in team-work as part of the whole NGO organization and with local residents. Integral to good communication is good leadership.

7.4 Lack of Leadership

Effective leadership is fundamental to community development, and both supports and is supported by empowerment processes. Indeed, residents often pointed to the significance of individuals in what they saw as the processes of development:

“I think N4 was the most important person during the reconstruction process.” (R1, P.2-3)

The above comment reflects how most residents trusted particular people who were continually involved in and guided the development. This suggests that residents identified those people’s professional ability; this is an example of human capital knowledge affecting social capital respect and networks. However, there were also notable shortcomings in leadership aspects, both in an internal and external context.

7.4.1 Internal Leadership Conflict

Most of the power conflicts in the local community were concerned with election issues, particularly in the Community Development Association that controlled funds from a number of sources in the public and private sectors. The president and leadership of the Community Development Association therefore held significant power to control local resources and benefits. However, there was a perceived lack of democratic process, as one key member of the Community Development Associations criticized:

“For formerly when he was the head of the community, he regarded the heads of the neighbourhoods as the council of the Community Development Association. He also clearly stated that people from other groups would not have any chance to be nominated...” (R4, follow-up interview, P.7)
It appears that the former head of the community controlled all power and exercised it through close trusted people who were members of the Community Development Association. A change in leadership following an election in 2003 only exacerbated the community divisions:

“... In 2003, R1 lost to R2 in the election of the head of the community, and I think that was when the community began to split ...” (R4, follow-up interview, P.6)

Moreover, the former president of the Taomi Community Development impeded the operations of the Community Development Association:

“All new proposals needed his approval stamp ... the Community Development Association had done nothing, so things were at a standstill and there was no progress. Then these operators and the NGO groups had to yield to his power. This is why, I think, people detested him and consistently wanted an election to get someone new as head.” (R4, follow-up interview, P.5-6)

“... When the Community Development Association began to stop operating, residents noticed that the association had control over access to potential eco-tourism tourists. I think that in order to have this control, they (the Community Development Association) sought out a large number of residents, to join the association - more than twice the original number of members. After all those non-professional people became members, the effect was to hinder the association from operating.” (R10, follow-up interview, P.2-3)

“... then a name-list with the names of around one or two hundred people wanting to join the Community Development Association on it was presented ... I think their (the new members’) purpose in joining was to seize power.” (N4, follow-up interview, P.15)

As the above comments indicate, this event caused conflict, and as a result, the former leadership of the community development association obstructed these new people from joining the association. A main participant commented:

“... In brief, the former head of the community and the head of the association fought against R2. The newspapers reported the event and the county government decided to dissolve the association” (R4, follow-up interview, P.7).

The leader and members of the newly created community association were from the group aligned with the head of the community, and this event precipitated organizational fragmentation as discussed below, all as a consequence of the new
leader and leadership. This reflects how the social network and particular trust relationships acted to destroy collaborative relationships. It is also an instance of negative exercise of political capital affecting organizational power. Thus it appears that leadership tactics were not consultative and tended towards the pressure end of the continuum identified by Yukl and Falbe (1990), discussed in Chapter 3.

As a result most of the residents were unhappy with the leadership ability offered by members of the community. Reed (1997) points out that an organization leader should be highly capable and hold a significant position of power regarding decision-making about such activities as organization operations, management, policy-making and planning, promotion, and coordinating tourism affairs among different stakeholders within a local community. Two residents provided their views on the ability of the leadership of the two then-new associations:

“... I think the one from the previous association (former leader of the Community Development Association) was more capable; the two new associations both seem to be less capable ... at present neither of them is any good ...” (R18, P.11-12)

“Actually neither of them the leaders of the two local associations have great ability. They and their associations are unable to negotiate and get things happening. I feel it’s essential for a successful leader to be able to get other cadres under their authority to accept their leadership.” (R7, P.23)

These views demonstrate that the ability of the two leaderships affected all the ecotourism operators being guided toward a successful ecotourism development. In particular residents felt that this lack of leadership acted as a barrier towards effective planning. Frank & Smith (2006) indicate that a strong capable leader or leadership needs to establish a good development plan and policies, with vision and goals. Residents offered their comments on the lack of planning and consideration of the tourist product:

“I brought up the matter of protection of the natural environment in our association; had it and the Ecotourism Association developed new access to the tourism market to increase our share, implemented their policies and performed various designated functions? These are all very important! I think the association is not meant to simply function as some bureaucracy ...” (R9, P.11)
“In my opinion, a president must always have goals and long-term plans, but I didn’t see any concrete action taken by him ... both associations merely provide accommodation, tour guide services, and food. They are unable to touch tourists’ hearts, or provide tourists with cultural or other experiences which fully engage them, body and mind. Hopefully, if we constantly extend ourselves, tourists will not only feel touched but richly experience the local culture ... ” (R8, P.31)

These comments imply that there were insufficient planning and policy and this caused or exacerbated some conflict centred around some of the core values and ideologies embodied by the ecotourism development and eco-village vision.

7.4.2 External Leadership Conflict

There was also conflict in the leadership role taken by the NGOs. Moscovici (1972) refers to conflicts which arise from different groups having different social representations. However, Close & Scherle (2007) demonstrate that power relationships between organizations such as NGOs rely on different cultures from those found in commercial transactions between businesses. During the rebuilding, the Shih-Hsin University group respected the fact that the NHF was better placed locally to organize the handling of unexpected local events. Significantly, when the Shih-Hsin University attempted to apply for funding they were required to use the name of the NHF to do so. This caused significant resentment and conflict as the funding use required NHF approval. Two key participants provided their views:

“ ... actually as soon as Taomi became well-known, the NHF came and used Taomi to get lots of plans ... they (the NHF) had previously had lots of plans which were written by me. The proposals were mine but they applied for funds using their name, and as a result, the funds went into their account. If I needed money, I had to ask their permission. I think we have our own team here, so why did I have to use the name of the NHF to put forward my plans? What I hoped to have ... I didn’t mind being a driving force behind the front lines, you can be there at the front ...” (N7, follow-up interview, P.8)

“ I think the cause of the conflict between Instructor N7 and the Foundation was that they had quite different ideas and rationales. Both of them wanted the authority to control the direction taken by the community. The Foundation thought Instructor N7 was invited to provide assistance, but Instructor N7 thought the Foundation should only control the applications for funds rather than be involved in community operations and management. However, the NHF did not agree with N7 controlling the community operations and management because then the Foundation would probably lose control of the community. Separately, N7 thought the NHF had stolen data from
his articles. Plus, communications between the two parties were not congenial, so conflicts ensued ... the Foundation’s prime focus was ecology, with production as an auxiliary. This made N7 think he did not hold the reins of power or control. This was another factor causing conflict between them.” (R8, follow-up interview, P.16)

Unfortunately, these conflicts also generated differences of opinion among key members of the community regarding perceptions of the NHF and the group from Shih-Hsin University.

“During the initial period of construction for the community, Instructor N7 was only available to teach in Taomi on holidays and weekends. A lot of government subsidy plans needed to be applied for or responded to immediately and the Endemic Centre was located much closer to Taomi. A lot of misunderstandings occurred because notifying Instructor N7 and asking his counsel and advice was therefore often overlooked in communications. In addition, the main direction of the development was towards an ecological village and ecotourism; leisure agriculture - which Instructor N7 is specialized in - was more or less ignored. Subsequently Instructor N7 was unhappy and withdrew from involvement with the community. This led to the community residents being unable to forgive the NHF; they thought that the Foundation had driven Instructor N7 away. They said the Foundation’s counselling teams were telling the residents to unify but divisions were in fact splitting the Foundation itself.” (R26, follow-up interview, P.12)

“N7 was expelled by the NHF and was really embarrassed. He was ousted from the Foundation, and the atmosphere and the situation were extremely awful. Consequently, the villagers had mistaken perceptions of the roles each played, or should play. N7 was our teacher; the NHF’s role was essentially that of a counsellor. It all depended on who you thought was right and who you thought was wrong.” (N4, follow-up interview, P.5)

“I think, when the NGOs initially had different ideas and approaches, our residents did not know what to do. So we invited the NGOs to get together in one place and we asked them to tell us how each of them saw things.” (R.9, follow-up interview, P.8)

These views of the conflicts reflect that local residents were unhappy with the lack of leadership cooperation and misunderstanding between the NHF and the Shih-Hsin University. The local residents did not know whose suggestions they should follow, and they criticized the NGOs saying that they had not been given adequate information to allow them to fully understand what the conflict was about. This led to local residents coming to distrust the NHF; these conflicts even made local residents doubt the professional ability, fairness, and reliability of the NHF.
7.4.3 Leadership Conflict between External and Internal Stakeholders

There was also leadership conflict between the NGOs and the community itself. The function of an NGO in community empowerment is to help the local community to drive a multi-faceted development from a starting point to whole of community empowerment diffusion. This should encourage community participation through having local people nominate new and old experiences to incorporate into the community environment and shared public memory (Southern, 1995), and connect with and engage other NGO out-sectors to cooperate and assist in community affairs. When, however, the role taken by the NHF was one at variance from these goals, its function as an NGO caused a number of conflicts with local residents. Some research studies have criticized NGO groups participating in community empowerment for their insufficient professionalism; cleavage and monopolization; conceptual bias; competition for resources between the guidance groups; lack of international skill; uncertainty about their actual professional role; and causing conflict and opposition (Lin, 2003). The NHF caused some conflicts surrounding its professional ability in the guidance of local residents.

“... Theoretically, the NHF should have still kept playing a counselling role, but they had not done anything. But the villagers readily complained, and that finally resulted in the situation evolving into a very serious conflict ... the NHF was snatching the resources, what they wanted was the money; the villagers saw right through this, and said that was all the NHF had come for.” (N4, follow-up interview, P.13)

Moreover, the Philips Company was going to assist local rebuilding work and donate some funds and facilities to the Taomi community. But the NHF played an intermediary role to handle all the funds and verification aspects; they demanded that the local residents meet the requirements of the Philips Company. The NHF handling of these demands drew local residents’ complaints and dissatisfaction with the NHF. The Philips Company understood what had happened and was dissatisfied with the NHF management.
“N2 and the XX bank had an argument. Subsequently the XX bank was very unhappy, telling the NHF that they would give the villagers the power to manage things instead of them (the NHF). I think that was the beginning of the serious division in the community. With such serious division, who was willing to attend meetings with the NHF? Key principles were not considered at all. The ultimate goal was never mentioned either … ” (N4, follow-up interview, P.13-14)

Consequently, the conflict affected local residents participation in related community activities. The educational courses on ecotourism issue had been arranged by the NHF, so most residents did not want to participate in them; they suspected the courses lacked a strong purpose or clear goal. Some residents also clearly recognized that the NHF leadership did not have the ability to guide the Taomi development.

7.5 Organizational Fragmentation

The fragmentation of organizations providing an administrative or political role is linked to these failures in leadership. As discussed in chapter five one of the main consequences of power conflict was the setting up of a rival association to manage ecotourism in the Taomi community. This was a response from ecotourism operators who felt that their needs were not being met by the leadership struggles in the Community Development Association:

“… two or three years ago, the old Community Development Association was not working well at all … I think it was never able to operate effectively and it almost stopped operating altogether; and many operators could not have taken that.” (N1, P.4)

“… I think, at that time, the association had done nothing for years, which particularly affected the operators, like R10 and R8 – their group was about to break up, and then it was said that a new association was to be set up to address the problem.” (N9, P.15)

“the county government finally warned me that I had to dissolve the Community Development Association, and that’s why the Taomi Ecotourism Association was established.” (R4, follow-up interview, P.7)

The event also affected applications for funding from the public sector for construction and maintenance of ecotourism facilities and public affairs. Some core ecotourism operators became concerned about this. It was a critical problem that had
to be solved to restore properly functioning community organizational operations, otherwise the ecotourism industry and the vision of the eco-village would suffer. However, this caused further misunderstandings among the community leadership; as a new Community Development Association was also needed. The Taomi Ecotourism Association was set up at that sensitive time, and it may have been perceived that this was done to grab a share of the local resources and benefits of the new Community Development Association. This generated new conflict, between the Taomi Ecotourism Association and the local community government, as well as confusion and frustration from residents:

“… My uncle said that even though you guys were really familiar with the current Community Development Association and knew all about the re-election plan, you still insisted on establishing a new association. As for me, I really do not know why things turned out like this … ” (R4, follow-up interview, P.8)

“… I thought that all the resources in the community should be integrated, but they are not. The Ecotourism Association is one faction, the Community Development Association is another … so as a result, only those core members can share in the pie. Those who are not core members receive nothing at all.” (R19, p.8)

However, the Community Development Association was unwilling to relinquish its previous role of coordinating ecotourism development, due to the perceived control that came with this role. This only exacerbated duplication and conflict;

“… I think the main problem is that the original Community Development Association divided into two. It’s assumed that overall there are no conflicts between the two … I think the Community Development Association does not want the Ecotourism Association to share the big pie, so the Community Development Association is unwilling to release any of its power or advantages to the Ecotourism Association. The Community Development Association thinks that having another new association operating will take away income and their power … ” (N9, P.15-16)

There were attempts from the NGOs to negotiate a solution and clearly define the roles of the new associations but these were not successful:

“… I think there was a violent argument between the Community Development Association and the Ecotourism Association. The Ecotourism Association thought some affairs should be taken care of by the Community Development Association, but the Community Development Association claimed that there was not enough money to
deal with those affairs ... the Ecotourism Association enjoyed all the benefits, but the Community Development received no benefit at all.” (N4, P.19)

The Ecotourism Association felt that the financial expectations of the Community Development Association would be unviable for the new organisation:

“According to R3, the difficulty was a shortage of money; the Community Development Association was doing eco-technology construction, and that meant people had to be paid. The condition imposed was that the Tourist Information Centre had to give 15% of its annual turnover to the Community Development Association ... and pay rent to the Fu-Tong Temple. Under these conditions, I think it would be impossible for our association (Ecotourism Association) to operate, we would be operating at a loss.” (R4, P.19)

A conflict issue thus arose about how the two associations divided responsibilities for public affairs. The leadership of the new Community Development Association gradually displayed an uncooperative attitude to public affairs, because its workload required more funds to be spent on maintaining public facilities. As a result, the relationship between the two associations broke down. This essentially implies that these conflicts also affected social capital in the form of the rupture of trust within the two associations - political capital affected social capital. The above comments demonstrate that groups were considering their benefits, particularly as regards using power to control their access to benefits in the ecotourism industry. New conflicts destroyed opportunities for cooperation and catalysed deeper gaps and distrust between groups. This implies that the negative political capital affected community harmony.

7.5.1 Fragmentation of Marketing and Distribution Channels

One consequence of this major organisational fragmentation was the declining function of the Tourist Information Centre, which was still run by the Community Development Association. The Tourist Information Centre was meant to manage the allotment of all the tourism resources before all tourists arrived in the local community; i.e. the manager of the Tourist Information Centre had the power to decide how to distribute all the tourist resources. This included authority with regard to the benefits from “the community fund” and tourist resources, therefore the two associations now strove for domination of the operating right for the Tourist
Information Centre. Initially, there was a single ecotourism operation portal to handle all tourist inquiries and bookings, resources and benefits. However, it would appear that this role was not always handled in an equitable manner:

“… In the past when the Tourist Information Centre was just set up, it had no resources. A private phone line was installed by the home-stay operators. After a new president took office, there were problems about accepting bookings by telephone. The person who took a telephone booking would have his or her close associates send two or three tour buses to pick the tourists up. In my opinion, no president of any of the associations here in the community has a solution to this problem.” (R2, P.3)

This comment reflects that uneven benefits were criticized, and unfair arrangements of ecotourism business made by exercising the power of the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of the Tourist Information Centre were challenged. While the malfunctioning of the Tourist Information Centre was affecting the benefits of all participating in members, the Community Development Association, entrusted to use impartial methods to ‘ration’ tourist numbers, was suspected of not doing so. It appears that the trust relationships and membership of groups, constituting social capital, were damaged by the leadership of the Tourist Information Centre.

Therefore when good trust relationships between different organizations were lacking, Taomi ecotourism organizations established new distribution portals to promote their own ecotourism business. The two associations (the Community Development Association and the Taomi Ecotourism Association) developed their own websites and telephones to attract and interact with their own tourist clients and where tourists make ecotourism bookings. The purpose of these portals was to individually benefit the two associations, but this fragmentation has induced more conflicts in the community, particularly in communication:

“an Ecotourism Association was established in Taomi. Since then it has had a great impact on the community ... the newly-established association also has its own personnel. In my opinion when communications aren’t good, like when there was a single window (the Tourist Interface Centre), then it’s impossible to solve any problems; now having the two windows will make the situation even worse. This will do our Taomi community harm.” (R1, P.10)
“... In the end, a new association was needed to run the portal, but then a re-election was held in the old Community Development Association. Before the election, a president supported by the members promised to give the new association its own portal. After the election, however, the council was unwilling to do so, so I think that’s why things turned out to be like this — the new Community Development Association has opened its business portal and the Ecotourism Association has opened another.” (N1, P.4)

Having the power and right to control a portal was a vehicle for concerns about people’s own individual benefits. Moreover, it was not clear whether the leadership of the two associations really had the ability to operate their portals and to provide a high quality service to all the tourists who arrived. As a result this fragmentation deepened, and some senior members, a group of individuals who did not participate in having tourists allocated to them by the two associations, set up yet another independent portal to serve their ecotourism businesses. Although the destination appeared to be harmonious on the outside there was now hardly any coordination in the industry:

“At this time, there are no new issues in the community, and everyone appears to get along with each other. But there is no central leadership, so each association works independently, doing whatever it might be doing. I think that is why these associations cannot cooperate and why there’s no solidarity among them. At present there are three factions among these associations.” (R24, P.12-13)

Although many tourists had a high return-visit rate, this was directed back to the individual operator(s) that had previously hosted them. Consequently they did not need to have the two associations make their arrangements. As some participants pointed out:

“... The situation has been like this for a long time. There are more than the two portals in the community now. Why does R9 have his own portal and lots of tourists phone him: he used to be the CEO in the old development association. I am not here to speak ill of anyone I am just telling the truth... ” (N9, P.14)

However, there were some positive voices as some operators felt that having different booking portals allowed greater diversification of marketing:

“So, it is quite difficult. In my opinion, if you wanted to integrate things and have a single portal for everyone to use, that is impossible to achieve, it just can’t be done. They all have their own websites, and their clients can contact each of them directly ... ” (R4, follow-up interview, P.7)
Thus the group of individuals had their own portals to control their own independent access to ecotourism benefits, but their breaking away from the operating limitations associated with the portals of the two associations was an important issue. The currently operating ecotourism industry has three groups competing within the ecotourism market; increasing the number of representations existing “in the context of group or social conflict” (Pearce et al., 1996). There is a lack of trust between these groups and a reluctance to cooperate with each other. This implies that the two associations’ powers and benefits were both diminished by the individual portals.

7.6 Lack of Benefit Sharing

Probably one of the most contentious issues in any community-based economic development is that of benefit sharing. The fragmentation identified above reduced the opportunity for governance that could ensure some broad based benefits to the community.

7.6.1 Collapse of the Community Fund

The community fund, an idea of the NGOs, was designed to contribute to public affairs such as protecting the environment, the well-being of the elderly and disadvantaged groups, and so on. The initial community fund operated by the original Community Development Association was an effective mechanism for running the ecotourism development and industry. Initially contributions were voluntary and significantly, the CEO neither dealt with the non-co-operative operators, nor effected sanctions against any operator for not contributing to the community fund.

“... in the past, there was an effective way to collect the community fund. It’s not that operators contributed money because someone told them to. The effective way was like this—if they didn’t want to contribute money, that was fine. They would not be forced to, but the operators would later contribute some money voluntarily. I think it was effective in the past and it should work as well now.” (R10, P.20)
However, as the fragmentation of associations ensued and the leadership struggles played out, individual needs took over:

“At the very beginning when everyone was talking about things, during the meetings, the consensus was that operators had to make a contribution to the community fund. When tourists first stayed in the home-stays, it was the ecotourism association which assigned the tourists to the operators, they had to contribute to the community fund. But when the tourists came again, we operators would give them our business cards and tell them to contact us operators directly. I think this is why the community fund ran short of money ... it is because everyone did not want to contribute as much as they had, wondering if they could stop making contributions altogether, or take money back. I think that was very selfish. Selfishness played a major part in what they have done.” (R15, P.8)

This issue was the one that drew most ecotourism operators’ complaints following the split. Most operators did not want to comply with the agreed community fund arrangement and donate to the community fund, and thereby to the Community Development Association, as they perceived no direct benefits.

“At present, since the Community Development Association and the Ecotourism Association are fighting over the ecotourism benefits and resources, the two organizations do not get along and have conflicts about benefits, particularly regarding their respective collecting for the community fund. But I think there have been no conspicuous beneficial effects from collecting the community fund, and the situation is that the leaders of the two associations both lack the strength to solve the current problem of poor operation besetting them ...” (R8, follow-up interview, P.1)

The result of the multiple distribution portals was that ecotourism operators largely sought to go it alone and thus avoid any obligation to contribute to the Community Fund. Although some were members of both associations, they considered that neither association promoted their business or provided business resources or links. They did not want to contribute to the community fund of either association:

“... what I mean by the portal is that the Community Development Association portal transfers tourists to me as an operator, and then I have to contribute 5% back ... if the operators are being asked to follow this model now, it will make things hard for them. As I mentioned, operators who accept cases privately do not contribute money to the fund...” (R8, P.11-18)

It appears that the community fund gradually lost its capacity to function positively in public affairs. Having the two portals functioning was essentially a failure, and there
was a further individual group of people who would not join in the arrangements of tourists numbers of either association. They had their own operating concepts and values, different to those of the two associations, and their own websites to interact with tourists and potential tourists. At the time fieldwork was undertaken, the two associations operated the community fund but its ability to contribute towards community development projects was severely limited:

“*The two portals both collect 5%, like the community fund; but I think they can’t support themselves.*” (R8, P18)

“It is still operating, but the fund is very small, you simply couldn’t use it to do anything! ... I think human interference is the major factor! The community fund is still being collected and operated, but its operation is not covering much ... at present, the ecotourism association can only pay the electricity and phone bills ... but there is no maintenance of facilities at all now. In the past, gardeners were hired to cut the grass, but now the fund is empty. The operators have to cut the grass themselves now.” (R9, P.15-16)

Quite apart from the financial and physical capital contribution that the fund had made initially, perhaps more important was the further erosion of community communication that ensued through this issue, as identified by one of the NGOs:

“I think it was arguments over the community fund that caused the severe fight, and no one wanted to contribute to the community fund ... ” (N9, P.15)

“... It is very difficult to communicate with the operators, and at that time none of them contributed to the community fund. I think it is really difficult to talk to them, so the Ecotourism Association and the Community Development Association are short of money, and having difficulty operating ... I think they are selfish people...” (R4, P.13-19)

All the views above indicate that the leaders of the two associations have some inadequacies in their coordinating abilities. For their part the individual group members operate their ecotourism businesses with their own tourists and do not want to be controlled by either association, nor be involved with the deteriorating community fund. The community fund collapse affected community well-being and environmental protection issues; inappropriate exercise of political capital had a direct impact on the natural, physical, and social capital.
7.6.2. Conflicts between Groups of Operators

This increasing individualism penetrated beyond the community fund, and became apparent in the operations of the tourism industry:

“… a phenomenon can be seen, and the fatality is that the operators in Taomi, they only look at how much their group can earn, and how many people will share the big pie. They should seriously value the idea of sustainable development, but I think the idea of sustainable development hasn’t really entered their minds.” (R19, P.2)

This comment implies that there are conflicts surrounding competition for resources between the various ecotourism operators, particularly home-stay operators and eco-guides. Details are presented below.

The Home-Stay Conflict

“… in fact while we were working for the Taomi community in the early days, it was agreed that all operators should share the big pie and that no home-stays should have more than 5 rooms for guests. For example, when a tour bus arrived, everyone–all the operators–actually shared the benefits. I think this sharing the benefits was all about attracting more residents to more actively identify with their environment; encouraging the local residents to value and take the environment seriously because a good environment would bring the community money. The relationship is reciprocal. That is to say, it’s all about people’s environmental ethics; the relationship between the environment and the residents is mutual.” (R9, P.25)

The original rule limiting home-stay guest capacity was good policy regarding distribution of home-stay benefits; it strengthened social networks and trust between all the operators – the political capital affected the community’s social and financial capital. Moreover, the rule acted to consolidate community environmental identification of all the residents. However, As Taomi gained a reputation for its ecotourism development, more tourists were attracted and arrived. More local residents and new outside investors joined in and the ecotourism industry expanded. But when the new or outside investors began home-stay businesses, they had more than five rooms for guests, some even had more than ten rooms, and there was a change in the way that the homestays were part of the community:
“... outside investors, of course, built accommodation offering more rooms for guests. At first, we regarded ecotourism home-stays as a sideline ... If tourists arriving on a tourbus planned to stay in the local home-stays, the local operators would share that group of tourists - each home-stay had 3 to 5 rooms to accommodate them. So all the operators shared the big income pie, but the outside investors have come in and had an immense impact on the local business. There definitely had to be an impact because the investors had lots of money which they used to build very new hotels with more than ten rooms. But there was no law or policy in place to regulate or limit them.” (R9, P.12-14)

“Due to the competition, a lot of home-stays wanted to quickly become five-star hotels ... Basically, I think a home-stay should feel like being in someone’s home. That’s what a real home-stay should be like. But now the home-stays are changing, wanting to become like grand hotels. I can feel the competition between the local home-stays and hotels; the tourists now have more choices open to them.” (R18, P.13)

The outside investors violated the standard originally established for home-stays, creating unfair competition, essentially at odds with the minimising one’s environmental impact aspect of sustainable ecotourism. The fragmented associations had no effective way to limit the competition presented by the outside or new operators. These conflicts fundamentally arose from having organizational leadership that abandoned upholding the originally agreed rule setting a five-guestroom limit for all home-stays, to thereby cooperate and share out benefits among all the operators.

**Conflict between the Eco-Guides**

The initial conflict between the eco-guides arose from ineffective management and unfair allotment of tourists to various operators by the Tourist Information Centre. Some eco-guides complained asking why they were not being assigned tourists even though their names were on the roster. But return-visit tourists often designated the eco-guides they preferred, so some guides were in fact rarely sent tourists when their turn came. Moreover different CEOs were inclined to unfairly allot higher numbers to those close to them. This situation caused a lot of conflict and entrenched ruptures in trust relationships:
“... During the window period, the former Community Development Association was not functioning. The head of the community had conflicts with the eco-guides ... the quality of the services the eco-guides provided talking to tourists about ecological matters was not the same. Some were excellent but some did their job poorly. The eco-guides argued about who was being assigned work by the association when tourists needing local eco-guides arrived ... I think these disputes resulted in jealousy and exclusion, so at that time the most serious fighting occurred among the eco-guides.” (R4, follow-up interview, P.18)

Additionally, the current situation at the time fieldwork was undertaken, where the two associations allocated eco-guides from their own lists, was generating conflict for some eco-guides:

These days, I think they are not operating the associations in the proper way they used to ... there is a set group of people responsible for eco-guiding and home-stays in the Community Development Association, and the situation is the same in the Ecotourism Association. In the end, only their people guide the tourists. The way they operate their associations now is very different from the old way, which was much better. In the past, the Community Development Association would allocate tourists or have eco-guides on a rotation basis, everyone had a turn. And that way, everyone could feel devoted to the community. Now its only the same set group of people participating, and I think the residents looking on feel the current situation is a bit abnormal.” (R1, P.13)

These views indicate that both organizations treated some eco-guides unfairly. The ensuing conflicts can destroy relationships between groups, trust and networks; the political capital of the two associations has impacts on the social and financial capital of all the eco-guides. Nevertheless, no matter what particular ecotourism operators might be like, overall there were insufficient trust and networking relationships, and a lack of good communications between all the operators and organizations; the human capital affected the social capital. The different groups have their own ideas about what would benefit them and different motivations for engaging in their individual ecotourism businesses.

7.6.3. Residents Viewpoints

Although most residents did not participate in the ecotourism education and training programme, there were always some residents who joined in the ecotourism activities
to find out more about the ecotourism development. When it became apparent that the benefits of ecotourism were not being shared some residents began to complain:

“... some residents felt they should complain that ecotourism had not helped them in any way ...” (R20, P.4).

“I don’t think anyone is acting cooperatively running the community organizations ... they pay more attention to personal benefits.” (R17, P.1)

However, some ecotourism operators presented further comments:

“... I observed that many residents said that some of the people engaging in ecotourism were not taking proper care of all the community residents. I believe that the ecotourism operators have to run their businesses properly and pay attention to the economic bottomline, but they also have to take care of the whole community. But I feel that that is impossible. So, that leads to people complaining that ecotourism operators do not take care of them; they just say that we (operators) only care about making money. Gradually, they came to object to us just for the sake of objecting. ...” (R8, P.6-7)

“... looking carefully at some aspects of ecotourism, residents engaged in ecotourism are much more likely to be making an income. The residents who do not have any income will all feel jealous of the ecotourism operators.” (R1, P.11)

“Looking at the whole community there are many people who have not participated in ecotourism. I think they have not attended the education sessions, and simply know how to get involved in an ecotourism industry. So, those are the residents who say we (ecotourism operators) are just making money for ourselves. They are all jealous of the ecotourism operators ....” (R15, P.1)

These benefit-related conflicts reflect that the ecotourism industry had not taken care to provide all residents with some means of livelihood or extend their economic resources. As a result, people not participating in ecotourism were jealous of the ecotourism operators, but they also understood that attending ecotourism education and training programmes was a very important step to enter this industry, a means of economic empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999). The uneven distribution of benefits reveals how social and human capital affects financial capital.
7.9 Summary:

This study used triangulation of data undertaking qualitative research to explore, analyse, and present the different assets of all the forms of capital of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach. This chapter and Chapter 6 have presented the different themes and subthemes as positive and negative impacts (see Chapter 4 example). The holistic approach led to findings which describe the interactions of the natural, human, physical, financial, social, cultural, and political forms of capital in Taomi.

Natural Capital

Taomi’s natural capital stemmed from various ecotourism education activities and topics, such as environmental education, greening workshops, ecological ethics, ecological aesthetics, and outdoor ecological greening education. The key educational design and delivery was undertaken by NGO groups, principally the New Homeland Foundation, and the Endemic Species Research Institute. All the themes showed positive impacts, enhancing residents’ awareness and understanding of ecological concepts and knowledge. This was instrumental in cohering community attitudes to the environment in Taomi’s ecotourism development.

Human Capital

To improve residents’ livelihood, NGO groups had to provide training in tourism skills and knowledge to alter and enhance economic income sources for local residents. The human capital included tourism planning, study visits, skills training, mutually interactive classes, certification, and defining eco-guide responsibilities. All the themes of human capital are reflected in all the positive impacts of enhanced resident skills in Taomi’s ecotourism industry. Human capital has played a very significant role in catalysing a successful ecotourism development in Taomi.
Physical Capital

To successfully establish ecotourism, the residents had to set up effective guidelines regarding the sustainable eco-village vision. Physical capital directly involved the eco-village vision, eco-technology construction, ecological pond construction, empowering environmental greening activities, the tourism infrastructure, and establishing the Taomi Community Tourist Information Centre. All these were designed to improve and create the environment in an appropriate way to attract and educate tourists, and enhance their awareness and understanding of ecotourism, the environment, and environmental protection.

Financial Capital

In the initial rebuilding, the main negative impact was that most residents only considered and sought solutions to their own livelihood problems, wanting income and economic resources. Moreover, the young generation had left their community to look for good jobs and education resources, a particularly common phenomenon in rural and poor communities. It was important to find out how to enhance residents’ economic income. Some key themes were the positive impacts provided, such as the educational fund, the community fund, and the trial operation to assist increasing residents’ financial capital.

Social Capital

Social capital was handicapped by resident attitudes and weak networks hampering willingness to participate in community affairs in the initial rebuilding. To overcome residents’ indifference, the NGO groups cooperated with local organizations to build and evoke residents’ social capital. In particular some important activities created to this end were educational training in organizational operations, public speaking, interacting with the media, and the “We love Taomi” activity. These were all designed to encourage and promote building of social capital in Taomi’s ecotourism development.
Cultural Capital

Before the ecotourism development, the Taomi community lacked significant local historical and cultural records. The NGO groups intention was to seek out and exploit local culture and history to evoke local memory and instill a sense of place into residents’ emotions. Moreover, to be able to incorporate aspects of Taomi history and culture when talking to tourists was an important element of eco-guides’ training; cultural capital has to be connected to natural capital in ecotourism development in the Taomi setting.

Political Capital

Political capital was a critical form of capital found to be affecting all the other forms of community assets using a sustainable livelihood approach to examining Taomi’s ecotourism development. This has been identified as being related to governance and administrative structures that were somewhat insufficient to direct ecotourism development. It therefore generated some negative impacts regarding benefits and powers: in particular a lack of goal setting, empowerment, leadership, and organisational fragmentation between NGO groups, other groups, and organizations in Taomi, resulting in a lack of benefit sharing. It would seem that many of these problems stem from an individualist attitude that became stronger as ecotourism developed, and struggles between groups and key members became more pronounced. As Church and Coles (2007) have identified, concerns with power have been understudied in tourism research to date. Furthermore ‘power is often presented practically as having simplistic directional outcomes either working in favour or against the interests of those to be empowered... (but) this tends to gloss over the complex, situated and contested nature of struggles over power’ (Church & Coles, 2007, p. 273). As this chapter has demonstrated, articulations of power are highly complex, and represent a dynamic terrain of shifting individual priorities and networks.

Indeed, time is a major consideration when examining the role of political capital effects in the sustainable livelihoods model. Initial developments in ecotourism in
Taomi were seen to be quite positive, but this thesis offers a longitudinal account of development over a decade. This chapter documents a breakdown in some of these initial structures and a fragmentation that threatens to derail the ecotourism initiatives. Long term commitment by all stakeholders in ecotourism projects is vital, for example as shown in Hoctor’s (2003) example of ecotourism development in Ireland. In particular NGOs need to move beyond the consultative approach that they may take in the early stages of development towards a self-mobilisation strategy in the community. In the Taomi community some of the NGOs recognized the long-term nature of development and that it would not always be a smooth ride;

“... profit sharing in the community, emotions of local presidents, parties, and elections are all causes of problems ... but we cannot take responsibility or help them solve these problems. We can only identify the problems, but we should not interfere by force. What they need is time. They need time to wake up by themselves.” (N8, P.11)

“Theoretically, I think conflicts are simply unavoidable. Lots of communities go through a stage of having the same problems and they are doing just fine. There is a period of time for arguing and compromise, and communities will slowly find the right way ... It is not necessary to regard conflict as negative. What we care about more is if no progress is made after an argument. If people have disputes over profits, but then they should do something afterwards. The worst thing of all, and it happens in lots of communities, is when no concrete action is taken after a dispute. A dispute or argument is one way to solve conflicts. If it solves things, an argument is not bad.” (N9, P.14-15)

From this perspective, perhaps not all of the conflict detailed in this chapter should be seen as detrimental, as development is always an evolutionary process. However, what is important, is that close attention is paid towards the presence of political capital in the development process, so that this can be augmented where necessary for more inclusive, sustainable outcomes. For, as Brown contends, “assumptions that stakeholders can be empowered through projects and without changing the fundamental political and economic factors are misplaced… the wider social political context has to be clearly evaluated and understood” (2002, p.11).
Chapter 8
Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I summarise the findings from the previous chapters and respond to the research questions posed in Chapter 4. This study also provides some new contributions and findings to compare with other research. It also offers some theoretical perspectives regarding community-based models viewed through social representations. Further, it offers a new contribution in the use of ethnographic methodology exploring Taiwan’s ecotourism development and addresses some practical issues. This chapter also identifies some limitations of the study and provides recommendations for future research. The conclusion identifies some significant issues to address in future sustainable ecotourism development in the Taomi community.

8.2 Research Questions

This section addresses the research questions, incorporating the various findings.

Research Question 1: What changes have occurred in community capital as a result of ecotourism development?

This study examined the six forms of community capital suggested by Cater & Cater (2007a), namely natural, human, physical, financial, social and cultural capital. However, in line with other recent writings it suggests that political capital can be separated from the other forms of capital to examine and explain the economic, social-cultural, environmental, and political changes accompanying Taomi’s ecotourism development. The express purpose of the ecotourism development in Taomi after the 921 earthquake was to reduce poverty in the community, but as has been demonstrated, the changes to community are much broader than this. This study identified both problems and solutions in the various changes involving different
forms of capital discussed below, and highlight how interlinked all of these forms of community capital are.

1. Financial Changes

Financial change was a significant issue. Ecotourism development was meant to enhance residents’ entrepreneurial skills, income, and employment opportunities after the 921 earthquake, in a previously poor rural community. As Wearing & Neil (1999) note, ecotourism often involves selling local food or drink, handicrafts, accommodation, and ecological guiding services (also Hong et al., 2003). There were a variety of business opportunities, such as home-stays, eco-guides, handicrafts, employment in restaurants, and in construction of infrastructure facilities. Other innovations to local products and production also created new employment and income opportunities. The issues surrounding benefit sharing in the community were embraced by the trial operation and the “making a big cake” activity. However, the ecotourism industry has to link in agricultural products such as organic foods to extend financial assets and thereby share more financial benefits with more residents, through greater residents’ involvement.

Funding from the public and private sectors was used to provide ecotourism education and training programmes for all residents as human capital, to facilitate development of more economic benefits. One aim was to attract younger residents to stay or return home to avoid and thereby offset the effects of having an ageing community. Financial change also affected and altered residents’ awareness and understanding of environmental conservation and attitudes to protecting Taomi’s environmental resources. The community fund could fund welfare for disadvantaged groups, and support local conservation and cultural heritage. Thus, financial change affected the community’s human, natural, and social capital.

2. Physical Change

Physical capital was concerned with how to bring to life an ecotourism image in Taomi community. Establishing an eco-village, as the central long-term aim, was a key vision in leading and extending the whole range of physical benefits intrinsic to
Taomi’s ecotourism development: eco-technology, ecological ponds, and empowering environmental-greening activities. Construction led to a number of the ecotourism environments and facilities which attracted the ecological species native to that area, and the recovery of their populations. This in turn reinforced residents’ appreciation of environmental conservation concepts and encouraged further resident participation in related public affairs. Physical improvements clearly attracted more tourists to participate in eco-tours and learn more about environmental concepts—physical capital brings benefits to financial, natural, and social capital in the ecotourism context.

3. Human Capital Changes

Before the 921 earthquake, Taomi was a rural agricultural community. Development of human capital was a critical factor in the development of its ecotourism industry: it was essential to educate and change residents’ skill and knowledge sets. The NGO groups played a significant catalysing role providing tourism planning, study visits, and training of tourism-specific organization operation skills, and environmental education. More importantly, the NGO groups adopted a patient guidance style delivery of courses to participating residents in many mutual interaction classes. To maintain the quality of the education and training, the NGO groups established testing and eco-guide certification of all successfully participating residents. All qualified eco-guides had to take on the responsibility of involvement in local ecosystem species surveys, compiling data and writing about local species, and do voluntary education work in their community promoting the environment.

4. Social Change

The community economy before the 921 earthquake was a declining traditional agricultural society and the community was poor. Most residents lacked strong social networks, had deeply conservative attitudes, seemingly lacked deep feelings about their own life environment, and had long held community public affairs indifferently. The ecotourism development process after the earthquake directly guided the local people as they created financial benefit. Indirectly there were various effective social benefits brought about, such as education and training in organizational training, public speaking, and interacting with the media. These activities were in part intended
to help establish the eco-village vision; enhance interaction opportunities between residents; nurture and re-invigorate community spirit, pride, and values; and increase participating residents’ ecotourism related skills. The “We love Taomi!” activity was a significant attempt to promote environmental education with the goal of having all residents clearly understand and identify with Taomi’s ecotourism development and eco-village vision; to build and link more resident networks; and again extend residents’ participation in public affairs. Thus, the social changes can affect political, human and natural capital.

5. Cultural Change

Cultural capital had been a weak aspect of Taomi community life; there had been a lack of community knowledge of Taomi’s history and few cultural records. However, all the eco-guides not only provided environmental information and education but also involved aspects of local history, culture and life in their eco-tours. Moreover, an aim of building cultural capital was to inform the local residents and strengthen their emotional attachment and sense of place. The eco-guides provided a rich ecotourism experience for tourists, one encompassing both cultural and natural capital.

6. Natural Change

As a traditional agricultural community previously, most residents had always used pesticides to enhance yields of a large range of agricultural products, but these threatened other ecological species and the environment. After the ecotourism development began, the NGO groups conducted a number of environmental education sessions on topics such as ecological ethics, aesthetics, greening workshops, and outdoor education. These were designed to educate and train local residents to understand natural capital concepts particularly regarding local ecological species and ecosystems, and protection of their community environment. Moreover, that natural capital could be altered and bring them financial benefits through ecotourism development. An important environmental activity conducted for resident participation was ecological greening to enhance the environmental and landscape aesthetic, and promote the concept of natural environmental diversity. Environmental
improvements also involved protecting the streams and waterways, wetland conservation, establishing community “duty days”, and designating conservation areas for ecotourism operators to adopt. These successful environmental activities changed residents’ environmental behaviour and mindsets and strengthened their identification with their local environment. These activities also acted to facilitate more resident networking and community identity; the community’s natural capital affected its social, cultural, financial, physical, and human capital.

7. Political Changes

Before the earthquake, Taomi lacked any organization which effectively motivated local residents to participate in public affairs. Subsequently, many were established within the ecotourism development, such as the Taomi Ecotourism and the Leisure-agriculture Park Associations, and many rules and regulations, policies and plans were formulated to handle the ecotourism development. Residents had many opportunities to participate in meetings pertaining to this, meetings concerning plans, policies, and management of various economic, social-cultural, and environmental issues. The main purpose of the ecotourism associations was to establish appropriate key guidelines for development towards the vision of a sustainable eco-village.

However, with development some conflict emerged centred on power and benefit sharing, these negative effects and changes also occurred because of problems in the ecotourism associations: for example, dysfunctional organizational leadership; leaders with insufficient ability; lack of advanced planning strategy; and having no plan or policy to ensure quality service in the future. These power conflicts affected cooperation and maintenance of public environmental facilities, and environmental protection. Clearly, political capital is linked with physical and natural capital.

Additionally, uneven distribution of economic benefits in the ecotourism industry, also produced negative changes affecting social networks, membership relationships and trust, and traditional culture between different individuals, groups, organizations, and the NGO groups. Political issues affected all the other forms of capital – financial, physical, human, social, cultural and natural– in Taomi’s ecotourism development.
Research Question 2: How have community social representations influenced outcomes?

Pearce et al. (1996, p.2) demonstrate that “social representation is concerned with understanding everyday knowledge and how people use this knowledge and common sense to understand the world in which they live and to guide their actions and decisions” (Billing, 1993; Halfacre, 1993; Moscovici, 1981). Furthermore, social representations also play an important role in the area between individual social identity and groups (Moscovici, 1981; Dougherty et al., 1992). Groups usually influence individual social identity in the social process through communication.

From the above, we can understand social representations as concerning individual values, attitudes, beliefs, and common sense explanations (Doise, 1993; Farr, 1993) among individual and group representations (Dann, 1992; Pearce et al., 1996; Fredline, 2000). Fredline & Faulkner (2000) note social representations have three sources: direct experience, social interaction, and the media. The social representations theory can also be found relevant and applied to all the stakeholders to examine their part in Taomi’s ecotourism development, outlined below.

1. Residents

Most residents began to understand ecotourism development in their community through activities such as cleaning up the streams and waterways, cutting back “green cancer” weeds, the “sharing the big cake” promotion of community cohesion and the eco-village vision, and reducing pesticide use. These activities aimed to get residents to participate in public affairs, have a strong sense of and identify with their community and environment, and strengthen social networks and trust. These activities concerned individual and group representations in interaction opportunities to share individual values, attitudes, beliefs, and so on. Significantly, residents also gained pride in themselves through the media’s positive promotion of Taomi’s ecotourism development.

Additionally, the ecotourism development brings a variety of positive and negative changes to community-based ecotourism, but the main issue is how to ensure
sustainable ecotourism development. Thus significant work should be on environmental conservation. In line with Belsky (1999) this study argues that for community participation to link with environmental conservation depends heavily on perceived economic benefit. Taomi residents’ motivation to participate in conservation work was affected by the education and training programme and activities. Some researchers argue that engaged participation in conservation depends on stakeholders receiving economic benefits (Bovarnick & Gupta, 2003; Scheyvens, 1999; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Ross & Wall, 1999; Vincent & Thompson, 2002). Furthermore, not only economic benefits but also good social capital, such as values and strong networks, can help sustainable environmental conservation (Brosius et al. 1998; Russell & Harshbarger, 2003). Langholz (1999) argues ecotourism benefits can reduce exploiting natural resources for commercial agriculture. Ecological education and activities in the Taomi community have eliminated pesticide use and introduced organic agricultural production thereby protecting a great diversity of species.

In the Taomi community, therefore, the significant issue of environmental conservation was based on ecological education and activities to guide residents’ understanding (and social representations) of environmental concepts to change their environmental awareness, attitudes, and behaviour (New Zealand Ministry for the Environment, 1998; Ross & Wall, 1999); further create residents’ sense of community identity (Giulian & Feldman, 1993; Williams & Patterson, 1999; Proshansky et al., 1983; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Vincent & Thompson, 2002); trust and networks relationships; and enhance organizational operation, for human capital affects the natural, social, cultural and political forms of capital.

2. Ecotourism Operators

The ecotourism operators are direct beneficiaries of the economic benefits of the ecotourism development. They had to participate in a variety of ecotourism education and training programmes involving interacting with individuals and groups, to acquire specific ecotourism concepts and skills, change their environmental behaviour, work cooperatively in the ecotourism industry, and promote the eco-village vision. These all embody the concept of social representations in the arena of interactions with individual and group representations.
3. Organizations and Associations

The leaderships of all the ecotourism associations had the important function of formulating rules, policies, and plans to guide the ecotourism development and the eco-village vision. Likewise, they needed ecotourism operators’ and residents’ support of their political forms of capital. Briefly, all the associations, being group representations, interact with and mutually influence different individual representations and inter-group representations. Strong organizational abilities also relate to successful conservation management (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Some barriers to conserving species are found when there are weak local institutions (Barrett et al., 2001; Becker, 2003; Weinberg, Bellows & Ekster, 2002). These findings are similar to those regarding effects of organizations having weaknesses in the Taomi ecotourism setting.

4. The NGO groups

The NGO groups took a leadership role in the ecotourism development, guiding the residents, ecotourism operators, organizations, and associations. They provided expertise in their professional fields for the education, training, and activities; assisted organizational establishment; developed plans and put in bids for funding from the private and public sectors. Their purpose was to build a sustainable ecotourism development and help bring to fruition the eco-village vision. Their roles, being group representations, also involved different individual, group, and organization representations.

Nevertheless, Pearce et al. (1996) note polemical representations exist “in the context of group or social conflict. Conflict arises when different groups have different social representations (Moscovici, 1972), and as Stronza & Gordillo (2008) show, environmental protection only follows when there is trust that other groups will follow the same rule. In Taomi’s ecotourism development, conflicts were generated within different representations: between individuals, groups, associations, and the NGO groups. Thus these changes can be linked to social power and conflict as a social dynamic in social representations. However, they were also important in
relieving group conflict and promoting understanding in interactions, taking into account the power differences between groups affecting decision-making.

**Research Question 3: How does education of residents help them understand the concepts of ecotourism and responsibility for environmental protection?**

This study found that the residents accepted and were guided by the various professional ecotourism concepts and knowledge provided directly and indirectly by the NGO groups. In the interviews, it was consistently found that all the eco-guides who received certification had to take on responsibility of learning how to survey the community’s environmental resources, and then try to record all the local ecological species, and get other residents to understand the ecosystem’s contribution to the Taomi community. Cooperation between all the residents was essential for moving toward the eco-village vision and associated goals. Another important issue was the promotion of environmental education for all the residents, especially embedding environmental concepts within local children’s education, thereby investing in the sustainability of the community’s natural capital.

This study identified the responsibilities of the eco-guides, for example assisting as investigators in surveys of the local ecosystems species and helping with some ecological conservation issues as part of the ecotourism development. This demonstrates that the eco-guides all increased their human capital in the form of professional knowledge, skills, and responsibility for the local ecological environment and conservation. In addition the eco-guides helped compile brochures about the local ecological species presented in the Taomi training – the various frogs, dragonflies, birds, aquatic plants, and so on. They would all do the ecological survey work and transfer the data collected to draw up tables and maps. Two books, and a number of brochures on the community’s ecological species were published, and these books were sent to all the residents to help them better understand and appreciate their community’s natural resources and species. All the eco-guides also had a responsibility to do voluntary work promoting ecological education in Taomi. To help bring the eco-village vision to reality, the eco-guides had to promote the environment and ecological concepts to the local primary students. Through the voluntary environmental education work in the primary school provided by the eco-
guides, the primary students in turn brought their parents to participate in ecological activities, thereby further changing their parents’ original attitudes to their community environment. These responsibilities all illustrate that the eco-guides played a very important role in promoting the environmental concepts to underpin and expand the ecotourism development. It also offers a model of how to build an eco-village vision in future.

Cole (2005) suggests community education should encompass both service provision and sustainability in tourism. Stronza & Gordillo (2008) note ecotourism provides education training opportunities for residents, enhancing their personal growth, creating new skills and ways of thinking, confidence to deal with ecotourism problems, and innovative ideas. Further, Sweeney & Wanhill (1996) stress that a successful education programme creates awareness which is instrumental in changing residents’ behaviour and attitudes. These results are consistent with the effects of the ecotourism education and training programmes in Taomi which enhanced ecotourism operations and skill-sets, and improved residents’ awareness of and attitudes to conservation.

Additionally, Niesenbaum & Gorka’s study (2001) offered a series of eco-education sessions regarding language, culture, history, political science, environmental education, community interaction, independent research, and service learning. The content is similar to that of Taomi’s ecotourism education and training programmes. Nevertheless, this study argues that their eco-education model - deliberately - lacked useful tourism education, to avoid overdevelopment, in what was very modest accommodation and tourism education, taking less than two weeks (Niesenbaum & Gorka, 2001). Taomi’s ecotourism education and training encompassed management and service skill-sets for home-stays and local foods. To avoid over-investment in home-stays, Taomi’s The NGO groups set up a policy of a five-guestroom limitation for every home-stay owner to avoid unfair negative competition and overdevelopment. The purpose was to develop small-scale tourism.
Research Question 4: What are the difficult issues in ecotourism educational and training programmes?

The findings of the interviews with the NGO groups helped identify some difficult issues they confronted in teaching residents and delivering the ecotourism education and training programme. The key difficulties this study identified are presented below.

1. Professional Terminology

Most instructors commented on the need to use colloquial language in the teaching process to closely communicate with and not alienate the residents participating in the learning process, and allow them to understand and master the content of the tourism education sessions.

2. Course Design and Time

It was difficult to coordinate resident participation in any part of the education and training programme, because their understanding of its nature, willingness to participate and actual interest were affected by the nature of the work they did, and whether they had a harmonious relationship with organizations concerned. More difficult issues arose around course design, balancing between the designer’s plan and the residents’ characteristics and needs. Many operators could not make it to the sessions when they had too many customers or when they were working; or some would be unable to attend any sessions, because different ecotourism operators were free at different times. Thus it could not be clearly ascertained how many residents participated in sessions the education and training.

3. Enhancing Professionalism of Operators

It was highlighted that changing from being farmers to professional ecotourism operators was a change from primary-level industry (agricultural industry) to tertiary-level (service industry). It was very difficult to adequately educate and train all the learning residents in a short time. Almost all the ecotourism education and training programme projects tended to be casual projects or plans which could not access
long-term funding from the public or private sectors. This created some gaps, such as in an inter-disciplinary integration to provide a comprehensive ecotourism education and training programme, especially with most tending to stress the environmental elements of the programme. This study suggests that some business management and skills have to be included to upgrade the education and skill of all the ecotourism operators.

However, this study does not agree with Cole that tourism education in remote or marginal communities does not develop appropriately using email, and the internet to send and access information (Cole, 2005). Almost all Taomi ecotourism operators were able to employ these now almost ubiquitous techniques to cooperate and post on the Taomi website to promote their own ecotourism business. This was a relatively cheap promotional expense for most ecotourism operators.

Given the conflicts outlined in this research, this study argues that community participation must require initial training in political skills for residents to participate in decision-making about tourism development (Goodwin, 1995). But in Taomi, all the NGO groups guided organizational operation and held ecotourism activities and meetings to encourage all residents to participate in the initial rebuilding process. Moreover, many researchers emphasize the value of and need for public education about community participation and empowerment (Simmons, 1994; Connell, 1997; Pearce, 1994; Timothy, 2007). These results are consistent with the aim of Taomi ecotourism education.

Another important issue was service provision by the front-line workers. Most community residents were inexperienced at interacting with tourists and engaging in formal tourism education (Robinson & Yee, 1996). This makes tourism service a very significant issue to address through ecotourism education and training programmes for Taomi operators. Moreover, for their sustainable ecotourism development, Taomi ecotourism stakeholders established an eco-village vision and rules for ecotourism operators with NGO groups’ assistance. So these findings could not fit with those of Niesenbaum & Gorka’s study (2001).
Research Question 5: What was the vision and what are the challenges of ecotourism for the Taomi community?

The ecotourism development involved rapid changes affecting Taomi’s financial and social capital, in the form of the livelihood, life, relational networks, and environment of all Taomi residents. The ultimate ecotourism development goal was to bring to life the eco-village vision in the Taomi community. The eco-village vision was represented by a symbol of life designed by all the NGO groups, embracing local production and industries, local life, culture, the environment, and even education: the logo expressed community values and the sense of identity shared by the residents. These aspects required an education and training process to guide local residents. All the residents should learn about and thereby understand and appreciate the eco-village vision and its value. Significantly, a core value of an eco-village intrinsically involves discarding an individualistic approach and holding a community-centred one instead: enhancing people’s sense of community, absorbing ecotourism knowledge and concepts, having them determine their development, and action.

However, integrating all the many interviewees’ perspectives, this study found that the ecotourism organizations appeared to not provide a proper leadership function and ability and thereby created more conflicts over benefits and power due to a lack of effective political capital. As a result, the ecotourism development experienced obstacles affecting the community’s financial, physical, and social capital, such as operators’ livelihoods, and residents’ employment opportunities; the community fund to protect public facilities and conservation plans and implement community well-being promotion. Significantly, it also severely harmed social capital in the form of community trust, networks, and participation of community organizations, operators, and residents. Further, most residents now expressed pessimistic expectations of the ecotourism development and the eco-village vision. As R8 metaphorically stated:

“… the four development phases of ecotourism industry are: 1. pulling off the skin (reforming the community and creating the knowledge economy); 2. eating the meat (sharing economic resources); 3. gnawing the bone (producing conflicts) and 4. sucking the marrow (falling apart)”.

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This demonstrates that the conflicts over community benefits and power are developing major barriers to ecotourism. Many communities with natural resources are attempting to develop an ecotourism industry. Many will present challenges to Taomi’s ecotourism; it will face competition from other ecotourism communities. For these reasons, its human capital– its professional ecotourism knowledge and skills– should be upgraded to strengthen the capacity of organizations, and renew and rebuild networks and trust relationships of operators, its human and social capital.

Research Question 6: What were the positive roles played by each of the NGOs through provision of ecotourism education and training in Taomi’s ecotourism development following the earthquake?

This study found the empowerment role of NGOs should involve economic, social, psychological, and political empowerment (Brown, 2002; Friedman, 1996; O’Neal & O’Neal 2003; Scheyvens, 1999, 2003; cited in Timothy, 2007). The role the NGO groups adopted was that of a long-term companion and guide to Taomi residents on their ecotourism development journey. In general, most community residents lack the skills, knowledge, ability to understand their rights, and capital for community participation (Scheyvens, 2003; Sofield, 2003). This study, however, suggests empowerment should be conducted first through interdisciplinary education and training from the NGO groups, the purpose being to allow residents to understand their rights in the ecotourism development process. The initial educational project was to encourage residents to a better understanding of environmental concepts, the natural capital, and link that to people’s emotional attachment to their land, the cultural capital. An important issue was how to engineer community consciousness and residents’ participation, and identification with community resources. Moreover, community cultural and history education, human capital, could also be regarded in combination with community valuing and identification as social capital for all the residents. Education was very important for evoking shared community life memories for residents during the rebuilding period.

This study found that the NGO groups faced time pressures handling and controlling the design and planning of strategies in different situations (Burnett, 1998; Page et al., 2006). Different cultures and methods of operating impede communication and co-
operation between NGO organizations (Faulkner, 2001; Hills, 1994; Smallman & Weir, 1999; Ritchie, 2004). Moreover, different NGO groups in the case studies have their own ideological characteristics (Butcher, 2007). These studies’ perspectives match the conflicts found between the NGO groups involved in Taomi. This study suggests that leadership personnel need to set up good communications within a more effective organisational culture form the outset, and should provide appropriate planning and guidance, quickly responding at the different stages and implementing strategies in a disaster.

In summary, the empowerment role of all the NGOs and the ecotourism education and training programme were very successful in enhancing understanding and acceptance of ecotourism, and changing residents’ skill sets, human capital; increasing environmental conservation, natural capital; enhancing many residents’ livelihood, financial capital; improving networks and trust, social capital; quality of life, physical capital; and local people’s understanding of their temple culture and history, cultural capital, in the initial phase of ecotourism development. What they failed to do was to adequately put in place effective governance structures and training in effective collaboration. This reduced the levels of political empowerment that could be achieved by the whole community. Partly this failure may have been due to inattention to existing power structures. In line with other studies, broad based local participation was thus lacking as often ‘it has been promoted by the powerful and is largely cosmetic….but most ominously it is used as a “hegemonic” device to secure compliance to, and control by, existing power structures’ (Mowforth & Munt, 2003, p. 214). Thus there needs to be more discussion of micro political empowerment: organizational ability in Taomi affected the whole ecotourism operation and exacerbated conflicts between different groups and organizations over benefits, although residents were offered opportunities to participate as individuals and groups in decision-making. Thus, the findings can be seen to show correspondences with the four categories of empowerment, demonstrating political empowerment within the community, and difficulties implementing projects and sharing benefits (Butcher, 2007; Timothy, 2007).
Research Question 7: What conflicts regarding power and benefits occurred between the NGOs and the various ecotourism operators?

As a result of this lack of political capital, the findings of this study present a number of conflicts over power and benefit between the NGO groups, organizations, groups, and individuals. The central conflicts are outlined below.

1. Conflicts between the NGO groups

The main conflicts involving the NGO groups arose from or over their having different development goals, academically compartmentalized views, different ideologies, inadequate or poor communications and respect, and leadership roles. The development goals initially involved debate: whether to have community tourism or community-based ecotourism. After an ecological survey, the community was found to be rich in the diversity of its ecological environment and species, and eventually, community adopted the ecotourism development as being the best development for Taomi. The conflict arising in deciding between the two different goal directions contemplated was exacerbated by the different compartmentalized views and ideologies, leadership roles, and internal conflicts of the various NGO groups.

The Shih-Hsin University group and N4 tended to adopt a socialist approach to develop ecotourism in Taomi. Their perspective was that the ecotourism development in a rural community needed to develop slowly to share all the resources and benefits with the whole community, and set up various forms of community assistance.

In contrast, the New Homeland Foundation and the Endemic Species Research Institute tended to have a capitalist approach to implementing ecotourism development. Their initial considerations were on how to first establish residents’ livelihoods, particularly during the initial rebuilding. If residents could not rapidly acquire economic resources in the initial stage, they would probably give up their willingness to learn and co-operative attitudes.

All the NGOs did agree that ecotourism development had a finite carrying capacity to protect the environment and resources, but adopting capitalism in a small-scale tourism setting would easily result in free competition destroying the ecotourism spirit and definitive sharing of benefits, and increasing tension in network and trust.
relationships. Thus, using a free market approach was considered inappropriate for this ecotourism development. However, during the initial rebuilding, allocation of many public sector funds had to be rapidly determined and applied for to assist community rebuilding and conduct education and training programmes (Burnett, 1998). This, in combination with factors such a lack of good communications and distance, contributed to breakdowns in the trust relationships within and between the different NGO groups.

2. Conflicts between NGOs and Local Residents

The findings indicate that the New Homeland Foundation interfered in at least one local election and participated in competing for ecotourism benefits. As a result, it was perceived by many residents as being unprofessional in its NGO role. The New Homeland Foundation has now established further community activities to support the ecotourism industry. This attracted more participation in ecotourism empowerment experiences by different groups and individuals, but this still did not conform with residents’ expectations of an NGO’s role. Significantly, one aim of the New Homeland Foundation is to cover its own operating costs. Most residents did not really appreciate that the NHF has to find its own financial resources to underpin its operations, because it lacks funding aid from the public or private sectors.

The differences in perception of its role have generated conflicts between the New Homeland Foundation and residents. Although political capital conflicts have affected the New Homeland Foundation, it has tried to resolve these tensions and spent a lot of time to communicate and arrive at a reconciliation with local residents. It is important for the New Homeland Foundation to elaborate its positive NGO role to cooperate with local residents to provide public services and create more benefits. Local residents must be prepared to learn more about how govern and run their own affairs and growth, and be open minded and engage in more communication and interaction with the NHF.

3. Community Organization

The findings reveal many conflicts over power and benefits over political capital
between associations and groups. The conflicts were related to, or arose in conjunction with, election matters, leadership ability or lack thereof, abuses of power, the different portals, and decline in the community fund. All have limited advancing the ecotourism development, and have also created a pessimistic outlook on the part of residents. These conflicts affected all the operators’ business, local residents’ employment opportunities, and maintenance of the public facilities and funds. It has become an important issue affecting local environmental conservation promotion and work, and seriously harming social welfare. The most critical issues were focused around community organizational harmony, trust among all the operators, and local residents’ participation in the ecotourism development. These conflicts over political capital, are linked with economic, social-culture, and environmental changes - the financial, physical, social, cultural, and natural forms of community capital in Taomi.

4. Ecotourism Operators

The main conflicts over benefit between home-stays and eco-guides identified in the findings are set out below.

The rule of having a five-guestroom limitation on home-stays was instituted to strengthen social networks, trust, strengthen shared community identification with the environment, and share benefits with all the operators. This reflected a socialist approach to implementing the ecotourism development but when all the community organizations were having conflicts, the rule ceased operating: a number of new and outside investors started up home-stay operations which had more than five guestrooms, even more than ten, and newer facilities. These presented unfair competition with the original home-stays. As a result, all the home-stays adopted free competition, which generated benefit conflicts between groups; some home-stays could invest more capital into operating competitively, but most residents lacked the financial capital to compete with external investors. This created new conflicts between different groups of home-stays.

The conflicts involving eco-guides arose from the different levels of human capital of the different cohorts undergoing the eco-guide training. The first group, from the initial rebuilding time, held strong community values, identified with the community
environment, and had a better understanding and more experience of empowerment. By contrast, the second and third groups of eco-guides lacked organization skills, cultural knowledge, eco-guide and home-stay management training, and even identification with the community. This led to some obvious differences in the content and quality of services provided by these different groups.

Nevertheless, these different groups of home-stays and eco-guides all directly gain economic benefits from the ecotourism industry. When large numbers of tourists began arriving in Taomi, the operators and organization were just concerned about their incomes. The result was a decline in service quality. Thus there is a significant need for more advanced sessions on service and management skills for the tourism profession, and advanced ecotourism business courses should be conducted to properly train all operators.

5. Residents

These findings reveal that most residents were not engaged in the ecotourism industry and did not participate in the ecotourism education and training programme. They understood that ecotourism could bring more income resources and opportunities, financial capital, but they were limited by their lack of appropriate knowledge and skills, human capital. They therefore complained that ecotourism operators and organizations did not share financial capital with them, particularly the farmers. Benefit-distribution related conflict was a key issue for non-participants in the ecotourism industry. The development of the Leisure-Agriculture Park Association discussed in chapter 5 aims to create more sustainable economic resources, such as organic products to allow most farmers to be integrated into the ecotourism industry. The purpose of creating such new industries is to share ecotourism benefits more widely with the other residents. Resident participation is one form of political empowerment. Most researchers claim that sustainable tourism has to have resident participation in decision-making in community organizations and societal groups, such as conservation groups, community groups, and local key persons (Scheyvens, 1999; Sofield, 2003; Fennell & Dowling, 2003; Hall et al., 1997). If residents’ participation concerns issues of economic benefit, they can act as catalysts and assist to strengthen the ability of the organizational leadership (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008).
Further, resident participation may facilitate community cohesion (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Ross & Wall, 1999). A more important point regards resident benefit and power issues (Becker 1997; Bond et al., 2001). These studies complement each other and the findings of this study.

Essentially, all the conflicts affecting Taomi’s ecotourism development started with the initial Tourist Information Centre creating many conflicts over power and benefits between different associations, groups, and individuals. Some conflicts involving NGO groups’ exercise of power and different goals affected their ongoing roles guiding local residents and organizations. A more important issue was weakness of community leadership of the various ecotourism organizations. If The NGO groups intend to work together and resolve conflicts over power and benefits, they must consider how best to negotiate with all the stakeholders. Addressing these political capital conflicts not only requires conducting suitably designed courses in organizational operation for stakeholders; it also needs time to allow people to discover for themselves where the critical gaps between all the community stakeholders lie.

Political conflict over powers and benefits concern the different backgrounds and behaviours of groups and individuals within organizations (Knights & Willmott 1999; Close & Scherle, 2007), but it also exhibits the emotive, subjective and ambiguous aspects also documented in this thesis (Close & Scherle, 2007). Frank & Smith (2006) claim that weak leadership can present as insufficient skill or ability, and lack of definite visions, goals and policies for proper community development planning. These study results are consistent with the lack of ability demonstrated by all of Taomi’s various organizational leaderships.

Mykletun (2009) presents administrative capital to explain failures in political governance. Conflicts in social and cultural capital when dealing with public events result from disagreement from powerful stakeholders. In sports events such as those examined by Mykeltun, conflicts are exacerbated because they rarely have permanent administration. In this study political capital concerns complicated conflicts over different powers and benefits, and relationships between different organizations and groups, the NGO groups, and individuals in Taomi. Thus administrative capital
should be included in political capital as different associations have their own
different administrative capital in Taomi. However, as has been outlined, there is both
competition and cooperation in the power and benefit relationships and conflicts
between different associations.

Research Question 8: Should ecotourism be used as a development tool following
a crisis event, as occurred in Taomi village?

By 2007 there were 17 home-stays, 2 campsites, 10 small restaurants, and 30
different associations have their own
different administrative capital in Taomi. However, as has been outlined, there is both
competition and cooperation in the power and benefit relationships and conflicts
between different associations.

eco-guides (He, 2007) and more than 100 residents engaged in Taomi’s ecotourism
industry. Tourist numbers increased between 2002 and 2004, but decreased in 2005
and 2006. This indicates that the conflicts generated by the community associations
affected both the ecotourism development, and cooperation between groups and
organizations. Unfortunately, most data records of Taomi’s ecotourism industry past
this date are unavailable. This is emblematic of the fragmentation that has occurred in
the industry. This is extending through the establishment of the Leisure-Agriculture
park described above. However, it is hoped that this will broaden benefits as the aim
of the Leisure-Agriculture Park Association is to boost the incomes of most farmers
through organic agriculture products, and expand other ecotourism industries. This
may facilitate a more harmonious society and sustainable the ecotourism development
in Taomi. Certainly, despite the conflict and power struggles, ecotourism promoted by
the NGOs has brought improved livelihoods to Taomi community. There has been
augmentation of all forms of community capital as observed in the representations of
residents and experts. Thus, ecotourism has the potential to be a very useful capital
development tool to assist Taomi residents establish sustainable livelihoods in their
community. In this sense, other destinations could use ecotourism as a development
tool following a crisis event. What needs greater attention is the political structures in
the community, and the influence these might have over sustainable outcomes.

8.3 Implications of This Study

Comparisons of the findings in this study with those of other researchers raise many
implications. In particular this study offers new insights into political elements of the
Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. As Church & Coles (2007, p.272) have suggested “tourism analysis requires a more direct consideration of power, and moreover that this should take place within meaningful and theoretically informed frameworks of analysis”, as proposed by this study.

8.3.1 Theoretical Implications

1. Social Constructionism

Social constructionism adopts a world-view to constructing knowledge about reality, inventing concepts, models and plans to explore senses of experience and further examine and modify these constructions in new experience (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2000, Patten 2002). Further, social constructionism presents action and behaviour based on a worldview as represented by empirical or sense data collected in open-ended interviews and observations. It also explores the implications of the different perspectives or multiple realities (Patten, 2002). This study uses ethnography informed theoretically by social constructionism and social representation. This methodology obtains understanding of interaction and cross-interaction processes between 26 resident interviewees and 10 expert interviewees and 3 focus groups to explore the deeper, wider and sensitive issues on individuals’ different experiences and perceptions and constructions of social contexts of the Taomi ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake crisis.

Particularly, this study highlights how political capital is constructed socially using the framework of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach. The new insights on and experiences of political capital and relevant interaction with other capitals are contributed by different perspectives of representations between experts, residents and tour operators. Furthermore, the development of the induced community-based ecotourism model described above is based on the interpretation of the Taomi community from a social constructionism approach.

There are limitations of social constructionism which include its conservatism in describing rather than analysing or having a critical evaluative element, its lack of benchmarks to authority which can be used to test constructions against, its lack of
attention to social inequality and issues around the influence of power differentials on constructions. Some researchers have adopted an epistemology which incorporates critical theory and social constructionism to overcome some of these weaknesses. The present study has addressed this issue using a method of constant comparisons when analysing the data from interviews of individuals at different status levels and power positions in the community.

2. Social Representations

Social representations have been widely used in sociological and psychological theories as complex sets of perspectives and perceptions about how social phenomena develop in a particular social context. Further, social representation is viewed as a dynamic phenomenon, that through different interaction processes offer new information from interpretation and different forms with different representations and from diverse sources such as direct experience and media (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). According to the literature review, some researchers have applied social representations in examinations of tourism impacts (Pearce et al., 1996; Fredline, 2000). There has, however, been limited application of social representations in community-based ecotourism development.

This study examines social representation of stakeholders in the ecotourism development after the earthquake crisis. It presents the different social representations pertaining to the NGO groups, different community organizations, different ecotourism groups and individuals, and local residents. These different representations in Taomi’s ecotourism development played different roles and their relationships link through their different direct experience, social interaction, and the media (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). For example, different NGOs used their ecotourism experiences to transmit their ecotourism educational concepts and change and influence different community organizations, ecotourism groups, and local residents in ecotourism development. Different NGOs adopted different ecotourism activities to create many opportunities for social interactions and create different networks linking different community organizations, ecotourism groups and local residents. Furthermore, various media promotions of public opinion regarding ecotourism development, ecotourism village vision and images affected all
stakeholders’ attitudes and opinions and the extent of cohesion of their community identifications (Gamson et al., 1992). Thus, this study benefitted from taking into consideration the three forms of social representations (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000).

More importantly, this study identifies various positive and negative aspects of political capital associated with the ecotourism events; objectives of and communications between different NGOs groups, different community organizations, and different ecotourism groups regarding different social representations, namely hegemonic, emancipated and polemical representations (Moscovici, 1981). For example, different NGO groups, community organizations, ecotourism groups and local residents have their common and homogenous groups as hegemonic representations of ecotourism development and eco-village vision. NGOs with their different ideologies - emancipated representations - variously adopted more socialist or more capitalist perspectives and influenced different representations of the ecotourism community development identified in the study. Opportunities for access to power and benefit created different conflicts between different NGO groups, community organizations, and ecotourism groups as polemical representations.

Likewise, they created positive and negative changes within different forms of capital, such as knowledge, values, attitudes, belief (Doise, 1993; Farr, 1993), conflicts over benefit and power (Pearce et al., 1996; Moscovici, 1981), communication interaction (Emler & Ohana, 1993, Moscovici, 1981, 1984, 1988), community cohesion issues (Gamson et al., 1992), and other issues in Taomi’s ecotourism development. This study could be an example of a successful ecotourism development by using socialist society mechanism in a remote community. In contrast, tourism development tends towards a capital-oriented and free market in larger communities. The political foundation of these different forms of capital offers new insights that could contribute to extend rich and different categorizations in the social representations context.

3. Inducing Community-Based Ecotourism Model

Based on the above discussions, this study presents a community-based model in a rural location to explain all the relationships, represented in a four-circle structure, of the whole of Taomi’s ecotourism development. This figure 8.1 illustrates their
relationships as follows:

1. Economic change circle: the entire circle exists within the social-cultural circle. It includes financial capital which interacts between the human activity of residents and external factors.

2. Social-cultural change circle: this exists entirely within the environmental change circle. It includes community culture, values, trust, networks, ethics and identity, social norms, and improving facilities - social, cultural, and physical capital.

3. Environmental change circle: this exists entirely within the external change circle. Community environments and resources, natural capital, significantly determine the entire community development. Likewise, it is the largest of the three circles representing an internal factor of the community.

4. External change circle: it exist entirely surrounding the environmental change circle. It includes political capital: governmental plans and policies, organizational powers and benefits; and human capital: the education and training of the NGO groups and tourists’ interaction with information.

These four systems can exist in two states: a balanced situation, and a dynamic situation between different forms of capital. When external changes, political and human capital, present a key trigger, it can effect positive and negative changes to and between the financial, physical, social, cultural, and natural capital. For example, the NGO groups play a catalyst role conducting ecotourism education and training and activities to develop a knowledge economy, enhance community identity, alter environmental attitudes and behaviour, and improve community quality of life. Different organizational conflicts over power and benefits also affected operators’ benefits; social trust relationships; community networks between different groups and individuals; and environmental conservation.

On the other hand, when economic benefits draw into a trigger point, other circles will be affected changing their relationships. Thus, economic benefit is a critical factor for resolving livelihood problems of residents first, but it brings other positive and
negative changes to the social, cultural, natural, and political capital. For example, economic change can influence social networks relationships, community culture and values, environmental conservation and attitudes, and organizational conflict. Social-cultural changes, as a trigger point, also affected financial and physical, natural and political capital in the ecotourism development. In turn, environmental change as a trigger point, also affects all other capital: social, cultural, financial, physical and political capital.

Figure 8.1: Change Relationships in Community-Based Ecotourism Development

8.3.2 Methodological Implications

Ethnography was adopted to examine Taomi’s ecotourism. This is not a new methodology and has a long history in academic enquiry. However, this study provides a methodological contribution to research of Taiwan’s community-based ecotourism. It adopted an ethnographic methodology and triangulation of data, with participant observation (involving photo and film records), interviews with different social representations, and documents in the ecotourism development, to explore the entire picture of the first ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake crisis. Because of the extended nature of the fieldwork and the longitudinal inquiry, this
thesis does offer a rare examination of the development of ecotourism over time, rather than providing a snapshot common in other studies. Furthermore, by concentrating on social representations, it presents a welcome addition to numerous quantitative impact studies, seeking to present the stakeholder views of ecotourism induced change, which are equally powerful.

8.3.3 Practical Implications

Some practical suggestions arising from this study of the ecotourism development in Taomi are set out below.

1. Interdisciplinary Ecotourism Sessions

Holistic ecotourism education and training sessions must be designed, along with interdisciplinary and advanced courses, to guide community-based ecotourism development. Ecotourism education and training programmes, part of the burgeoning knowledge economy, are concerned with human and financial capital. More advanced level education and training must be made available to enhance operators’ professional skills (Cole, 2005). Thus, NGO groups have to take into consideration different stages to guide design and deliver different ecotourism professional education and training in the Taomi community. The general tourism education aspect needs strengthening to increase service quality and ensure tourist satisfaction. This should be done through having some advanced sessions on service management and skills (Cole, 2005) for home-stays, eco-guides and restaurants; and on financial management. Moreover, a weakness of the operators exists in the area of designing new tour packages to attract more tourists to return. A more important issue is the need to provide richer content in the information provided to eco-tours by guides, and to more fully incorporate community culture and history into the tourism offerings – for example the culture and history of different local temples and local agricultural products. Furthermore, education on innovative ecotourism products could be conducted for other residents to stimulate their own innovative skills (Gordillo, 2008) and thereby generate financial capital.
Education of both organizations and operators targeting organizational skills is another important issue, comprising two parts: formal education sessions, and practical experience. Formal organizational education sessions can guide ecotourism organizations and operators to renew and change their assumptions about, concepts of, and approach to organizational operation, and thereby solve their own conflicts. The purpose is to strengthen the organizational abilities and skills of different groups and individuals, involved in different activities and issues, and have them strive for the support of oppositional organizations to achieve community goals and consensus. The NGO groups have to teach organizations skills to guide them to use effective ways to solve their own conflicts. Furthermore, all the organizations should create a new effective mechanism to operate the ecotourism development and maintain the eco-village vision. Additionally, organizational education also has to lead the ecotourism stakeholders, which gain and learn some practical insights from the mistakes of organizations. Significantly, organizational conflicts at different times have allowed stakeholders to reflect and learn. These conflicts can teach people to cooperate, turning a negative situation into learning how to better interact with each other. These conflicts have not drawn intervention and precipitated events with ecotourism stakeholders. Encouraging people to address these issues is conducive to developing good networks through long-term learning interaction and enhancing trust relationships among all the stakeholders (Zhan, 2004). These practical experiences can draw more community cohesion and understanding of the importance of all the stakeholders cooperating regarding common benefits. Thus in the Taomi community, using a half-formal-education and a half-training delivery for organizational skills study is the most effective for ecotourism development.

Lastly, when Taomi ecotourism intends to expand toward the international ecotourism business, all the operators will need to learn languages particularly the Japanese and English languages to attract and then cope with international eco-tourist arrivals. Thus, a sustainable Taomi ecotourism industry must consider international ecotourism marketing and eco-tourists; and enhance local people’s foreign language abilities, especially those working in home-stays, restaurants, other industries, and as eco-guides – people who directly interact with tourists.
2. Ecotourism Plan

From the findings of this study, the ecotourism plan of the current Taomi ecotourism development should be modified. Significantly, the new ecotourism plan has to incorporate the ecotourism principles, criteria, spirit, and goals of the Taiwanese Government’s ecotourism policy as set out in the 2004 Ecotourism White Paper. The new ecotourism plan has to establish the macro position of the Taomi community ecotourism as being in Puli Township, Nantou County, or Taiwan, recognising the competitive national and international market in which it is placed. In addition, under its sustainable ecotourism vision, the plan includes deeply enforcing conservation (Vincent & Thompson, 2002), and enhancing community culture (Scheyvens, 1999, Stronza & Gordillo, 2008) and history to nurture a cohesive community identity (Proshansky et al., 1983 cited in Vaske & Kobrin, 2001). This study suggests that in the ecotourism business human capital has to enhance the service quality of home-stays, restaurants, and eco-guides, and innovative ability, and improve organizational function and policy. This important finding from this study could be applied in general to other ecotourism communities. Notably, the outward construction of the home-stays in Taomi suggests that setting some building standards or limitations would help ensure building are compatible with the agricultural landscape and more in keeping with ecological aesthetics, to build a good ecotourism image.

3. Establishing Community Trust

Conflict between Taomi organizations is based on a number of political capital issues. A key issue is lack of trust between different organizations, groups, and individuals. All the organizations need to cooperate more and share political empowerment to encourage more participation and involvement from ecotourism operators (Brown, 2002; Friedman, 1996; O’Neal & O’Neal 2003; Scheyvens, 1999, 2003; cited in Timothy, 2007; Butcher 2007). There are, for example, important policy and rules, such as those on the community fund, the policy of a five-guestroom limitation for home-stays, and other community conventions, and these have to be continually implemented, to effectively share ecotourism benefits with all the residents and build a fair situation for all the ecotourism operators. To minimize the negative expressions
of social capital, it is necessary to re-establish and maintain a sense of shared community to engender further trust relationships between all the ecotourism stakeholders. Trust is the most significant issue for increasing community and organizational networks (Zhan, 2004), using informal communication and sharing of information - such as organizational plans, finance details, and community journals between all the stakeholders. Attention to this aspect would be beneficial to help optimise results for other communities establishing an ecotourism development.

4. Community Core Values

Community core values are based on trust issue between all the organizations, groups, and individuals. The community core values have to fall within the eco-village vision to guide all the ecotourism development. The eco-village vision has to encompass four principles: ecology, production, livelihood, and life in undertaking the ecotourism development. This not only concerns all the operators and organizations in the ecotourism industry, it also concerns community issues for all the other residents. The eco-village vision should avoid organizational conflicts over power and benefits, or leadership problems: local residents’ organizations can be created and change into a number of new organizations. All the organizations and groups have to act in accord with the eco-village vision leading the whole of the ecotourism development. Importantly, the vision has to allow all the stakeholders enough time to take it in through a series of concepts, thinking, and internalization processes, and exercising their own self-esteem, judgement and behaviour model, towards creating a sustainable ecotourism development. Community core values can thus lead a sustainable ecotourism operation. Other communities could similarly focus on identifying and incorporating their own community core values as a key element of their own sustainable ecotourism development.

5. Introducing New Ecotourism Projects

New ecotourism project ideas are very important for leading the ecotourism development to resolve many organizational conflict issues. The main point is that a community can build many different organizations. In this scenario no one community organization has the power to control the other organizations. All the
organizations can compete in a healthy way to lead new ecotourism development ideas and projects. Further, introducing new ecotourism projects allows all the residents to understand that organizational leadership can be replaced, if it is unable to follow the principles of ecotourism.

The Paper Dome, offering learning experiences, is one example of creating a new ecotourism project to guide all the stakeholders to better access ecotourism benefits. The New Homeland Foundation shares their ecotourism business opportunities with all the stakeholders, and follows the community fund policy and donates money to local organizations to create more well-being for disadvantaged residents. Similarly the Leisure-Agriculture Park Association intends to develop a new ecotourism project expanding production of and integrating organic products grown by local farmers. This project also aims to share ecotourism financial capital with all the residents. Thus, introducing a new ecotourism project is a very useful strategy to resolve problems of malfunction in any of the community organizations, and facilitates all the residents’ trust and support of the ecotourism development.

8.4 Limitation of This Study

Some limitations of this study must be discussed. First, due to time and resource constraints it was not possible to conduct a quantitative research study to further investigate the attitudes and perspectives of the majority of Taomi residents about the ecotourism development and the eco-village vision. Time and resource constraints prevented interviews of key persons from the public and private sectors who donated funds, to explore their perspectives on Taomi’s ecotourism development. In addition, although it is felt that the methodology employed sought to gain longitudinal perspectives from respondents over the whole period of Taomi ecotourism development, this is only based on their recollections over the eight months the researcher spent in the village. This immersion was necessary in order to get a representative sample of respondents. Indeed, truly longitudinal research in tourism is rare, and this study calls for a move beyond the snapshot approach. Nevertheless the in-depth qualitative approach adopted by this study did interview 51 interviewees in the entire interviewing process. The process of having follow-up interviews and
respondent checking of transcripts, whilst time consuming, was felt to add reliability to the findings. Further, this study was exploratory and not involved with hypothesis testing because of the limited literature on ecotourism ventures of this type.

Specific shortcomings of the qualitative research adopted in this study are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Clearly, as described in chapter 3, community is a dynamic and fluid concept and is highly contested by sociologists in particular, and any findings regarding community ecotourism development should be interpreted in this knowledge. The construction of the meanings of community may vary across samples representing various organisations. In some cases the meanings may be limited to particular functional groups around a particular service whereas in other cases the concept of community may be geographic rather than used in the sense of an emotion, sensitivity or feeling. Such diversity of meaning adds to the complexity of this study. Finally, as this study is based on a community in Taiwan, it is important to recognise that generalised conclusions need to be read cautiously

8.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the above limitations, among the many topics to be explored in future research, a few important ones are listed below.

1. Investigating Longitudinal Study

This study has only undertaken a qualitative research to collect all its data. Future work can be done based on these findings and conclusions applying longer term quantitative research such as using questionnaires to investigate residents’ perspectives and attitudes to the ecotourism development and further examine the correlation of all the negative and positive changes in ecotourism industry. The purposes would be to test the validity of these findings. This study will hopefully continue and undertake further quantitative research to clarify and address this important validity concern.
2. Future Research into Ecotourism Education and Training Programmes

Although an ecotourism education and training programme was very successfully used in the Taomi community, and a few researchers have provided useful eco-education sessions in other communities, these do not constitute a comprehensive standard for ecotourism education. To date, there is no series of community-based ecotourism education material to implement were useful to other communities. Most ecotourism education and training tends to focus on environmental and cultural education. There is insufficient addressing of social and political capital or issues, such as organizational operation, community network and trust relationships. Education and training programmes should encompass enhancing local residents’ capacity to cooperate and establish relationships of community trust and to strengthen community core values in an ecotourism-based community. In addition, ecotourism education and training programmes should include appropriate ecotourism activities designed to encourage residents’ participation and promote community cohesion. These general principles are highly applicable to other ecotourism communities. It is anticipated that more extensive research will be necessary to make more definite claims along these lines.

3. Further Research on Organizational Policy

This study suggests the community fund should be revived and operated between all the organizations; it will enhance community well-being and resident support for a successful eco-village vision and the ecotourism development in Taomi community. The recommendation of this study is to continue investigating the relationships among the community fund, ecotourism operators, and the eco-village vision. The original home-stay five-guestroom limitation policy also created conflicts over benefits between external investors’ home-stays and the more authentic home-stays set up and run by local people. Future work is needed on how to limit external investor operations in home-stays, and how to offset or resolve attendant problems, and address native home-stay operators’ complaints and set up viable, fair competition. This is central to a sustainable ecotourism development and to achieving the eco-village vision.
4. Future Research into Organizational Operation

Taomi’s ecotourism development and the eco-village vision may be unable to continue because of organizational conflicts. The NGO groups think there will always be conflicts between all the different groups and organizations, and they provide some assistance to resolve these conflicts; this requires judging if, when, and how to best intervene in a situation. Building trust and cooperation with and between all the operators and organizations helps. Additionally, if the NGO groups promote autonomy and in-house problem-solving and self-governance on the part of community leadership, these leadership abilities should be more able to resolve problems such as organizational conflicts over power and benefits. Whether or not the strategy of the NGO groups is an effective way for all the organizational leadership to confront these problems is worth exploring further, in the context of the relationships between all the ecotourism stakeholders.

5. Comparisons with other Ecotourism Communities

This study focused on the Taomi ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake crisis. The findings, discussions, and recommendations of this study may provide some valuable reference material for other community-based ecotourism ventures in Taiwan. Not all the findings and recommendations will be useful or applicable because different ecotourism developments involve quite different models of resident behaviour and community backgrounds. Future work will need to undertake case comparisons to provide other research perspectives.

6. Applying Experience in South West China and other Disaster Areas

Taomi’s ecotourism development has had almost ten years’ experience since late 1999. This study may therefore have something to provide concerning ecotourism development in post disaster reconstruction settings to apply in other disaster areas – for example the recent earthquake crisis which occurred in Sichuan Province in China in 2008. A key issue is that Taiwan shares the same Chinese language and cultural background, although the different political structures should be noted. Thus, this study may be suitable to be applied and assist remote and rural communities in
Sichuan Province develop ecotourism to address their livelihood issues.

8.6 Conclusion

Taomi’s holistic ecotourism development was the first case in Taiwan after the 921 earthquake crisis. It was selected on the basis of this experience and its relevance to peripheral locations worldwide promoting ecotourism, particularly those who had experienced natural disasters. In line with many other destinations, NGOs were instrumental in this process. Taomi ecotourism development extracts positive and negative changes in economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political challenges to Taomi’s orginal values, beliefs and cultural systems of the community. Furthermore, this study examines the functions of the ecotourism education programme conducted by the NGOs and the empowerment of Taomi community after the 921 earthquake crisis event.

This study focuses on “what perceptions and knowledge residents of the Taomi community have regarding the changes and conflicts brought by ecotourism after the 921 earthquake disaster?” and “should ecotourism be used as a development tool, in the manner of Taomi village, following crisis events?” Thus, this study was an exploratory research. To explore these issues, the study used a triangulation of methodologies, comprising in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, and documentary analysis for the data collection process. The aim of triangulation in this study is to mutually reinforce and offset any insufficient data or weaknesses of each technique. In the individual interviews, respondents were residents, and expert interviews involved some members of the NGO groups.

The results are illustrated and presented on the entire relationship process of Taomi’s ecotourism development from different perspectives of all stakeholders. The use of the sustainable livelihoods approach provided a useful framework to examine the changes that had been brought by this development. Rather than mimic a significant number of impact studies, this study presented the social representations of various stakeholders through interview material. It was apparent that ecotourism had brought a range of changes, particularly through the education and training program.
spearheaded by the NGOs. This final chapter presents a dynamic model of change to communities based on a trigger such as a crisis event. Of particular interest in future studies should be results of evaluation of training programs on changing individuals, groups and community organisations involved not only with ecotourism ventures but also with broader community functions.

While this study demonstrated the difficulties of using contested concepts like community, it has pointed to a number of conclusions emerging from the qualitative analysis which could involve the testing of hypotheses using quantitative analysis in future studies. Moreover, this study has pointed to the issues surrounding the use of triangulation of diverse qualitative methodologies. These issues include the need to be absolutely meticulous and systematic in planning, when deciding on triangulating multiples sources of data from quite different methodologies with their respective ontological assumptions. Careful interpretation is as important here, as systematic data collection.

However, as the study progressed, it became apparent that there was a significant level of conflict in the current state of development. What the NGOs had ignored was the fact that ‘natural disasters not only destroy livelihoods but they also produce a situation in which power relations can be reworked in the turbulent aftermath of the event’ (Church & Coles 2007, p.269). As has been identified by many authors, perfect ecotourism leading to true empowerment for all is rare, and Taomi is no exception. What this case does demonstrate, is that attention to the political capital present in a community must have equal prominence to other elements of the SLA suggested by other authors. This must take place from the outset, when agency support will be one of counselling and guidance, to later stages of self-mobilisation by the community. This long term perspective is essential, and without this, outcomes can never be truly sustainable.
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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Pilot study 1 (Interview Guide for Individuals)

1. Based on your understanding, why did the Taomi community choose and support ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake disaster?

2. What does ecotourism mean to you? (ecotourism activities and ecotourism workshops)

3. Based on your experiences and observations of ecotourism development, what kind of changes (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental) have taken place in your life?
   1) For you, do you think that the economic changes have been positive or negative ones? (jobs, money)
   2) In your opinion, do you think that the socio-cultural changes have been positive or negative? (local values, religion, increasing interaction, media reports)
   3) Regarding the environmental aspects, have these changes been positive or negative? (protection of the environment, river, wetlands, conservation, pollution…)

4. Based on your experience with and observations of ecotourism development, what kinds of changes (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental) have taken place in your community?
   1) In terms of the community, do you think that the economic changes have been positive or negative? (increasing enterprise (home-stay, local food), investment)
   2) In terms of the community, do you think that the socio-cultural changes have been positive or negative changes? (qualify of life, recreational opportunities, social welfare…)
   3) In terms of the community, do you think that the environmental changes have been positive or negative? (environmental education programs, workshops)
5. Are you aware of the government’s promotion of ecotourism development policies and planning? (Ecotourism White Paper in 2002 and 2004)
   1) For you, are these ecotourism development policies and planning of a positive or negative nature? (ecotourism education programs, ecotourism workshops and activities)
   2) Regarding the community, do you believe these ecotourism development policies and planning are positive or negative changes? (planning of ecotourism development or eco-village)

6. What is your understanding about the making of several regulations, rules, policies and planning of ecotourism development by the Local Community Development Association, and the Taomi Ecotourism Association? (eco-guide regulations, home-stay regulations…)

7. Do you have the opportunity to participate in the relevant meetings about ecotourism issues in your community? (the meetings organized by the Local Community Development Association, the Taomi Ecotourism Association, or Taomi Community)

8. In your opinion, what are the visions or challenges of ecotourism development in Taomi village?
   1) What is your vision for the development of ecotourism in Taomi?
   2) What are the challenges that confront ecotourism development in Taomi?
Appendix 2: Pilot study 2 (Interview Guide for NGOs)

1. Could you talk about how you participated in the development process of ecotourism in Taomi after the 921 earthquake crisis?

2. What allowed you entry into Taomi? Have you ever undertaken any ecotourism activities or training programs for the locals? If so, what kinds?

3. What do you feel are the most useful ecotourism activities or training programs for the development of Taomi ecotourism?

4. Which ecotourism activities would residents participate in? What do you think the effects or changes are for the local residents or the community?

5. What are the difficulties faced by you while designing ecotourism activities or training programs?
Appendix 3: Pilot Study 3 (Interview Guide for Focus Group Interviews)

1. What were the effects of the development of ecotourism on Taomi after the 921 earthquake crisis?
2. Based on your understanding, what are the concepts of ecotourism for you? (what is your own set of definitions of ecotourism?)
3. What kind of assistance do you feel is more useful: the planning or training programs provided by the government institutes or by the NGOs? Why is this so? Did you participate in these ecotourism activities and workshop training?
4. Based on your understanding, what were the policies and plans for ecotourism development?
5. Do you think that the economic changes which ecotourism has brought are positive or negative ones?
6. Do you think that the socio-cultural changes have been positive or negative?
7. Do you think that the environmental changes have been positive or negative?
8. What is the key goal of Taomi’s ecotourism development?
Appendix 4: Formal Interview Guide for Residents

Demographics
Age
Gender
Education level
How long has lived in Taomi village?
Occupation
Involvement with ecotourism

1. Based on your understanding, why did Taomi choose and support the ecotourism development after the 921 earthquake disaster?
   1) How did you feel after the earthquake?
   2) How were you affected?

2. Were there any individual people who you felt were important in the development of ecotourism in Taomi village?

3. What does ecotourism mean to you? (activities and workshops)

4. Based on your experiences and observations of ecotourism development, what kinds of changes have taken place in your life?
   1) For you, do you think that the economic changes have been positive or negative ones? (jobs, money, outside investors)
   2) In your opinion, do you think that the socio-cultural changes have been positive or negative? (local values, religion, increasing interactions, media reports)
   3) Regarding the environmental aspects, have these changes been positive or negative? (Protection of the environment, river, wetlands, conservation, pollution...)

5. Based on your experience with and observations of ecotourism development, what kinds of changes have taken place in your community?
   1) In terms of the community, do you think that the economic changes have been positive or negative? (increasing enterprise (home-stay, local food),
2) In terms of the community, do you think that the socio-cultural changes were positive or negative changes? (*qualify of life, recreational opportunities, social welfare...*)

3) In terms of the community, do you think that the environmental changes have been positive or negative? (*environmental education programs, workshops*)

   1) For you, are these ecotourism development policies and planning of a positive or negative nature? (*Ecotourism education programs, ecotourism workshops and activities*)
   2) For the community, have these ecotourism development policies and plans made any positive or negative changes? (*planning of ecotourism development or eco-village*)

7. What is your understanding of the making of several regulations, rules, policies, and the planning of ecotourism development by the Local Community Development Association and Taomi Ecotourism Association? (*eco-guide regulations, home-stay regulations...*)

8. Do you have the opportunity to participate in the relevant meetings about ecotourism issues in your community? (*the meetings organized by the Local Community Development Association, Taomi Ecotourism Association, or Taomi Community*)

9. What are the challenges that confront ecotourism development in Taomi?

10. What is your vision for the development of ecotourism in Taomi?
Appendix 5: Formal Interview Guide for NGOs

Age

Gender

Occupation

1. Could you share with us something of your participation in the development process of ecotourism in Taomi after the 921 earthquake crisis?

2. What kind of agency facilitated your entry into Taomi? Have you ever undertaken any ecotourism activities or training programs for the locals? If so, what kinds?

3. What have been the most useful ecotourism activities or training program for the development of Taomi ecotourism?

4. What are the circumstances under which residents would participate in these ecotourism activities? What have been the effects or changes for the local residents or the community?

5. What are the difficulties that you encountered while designing ecotourism activities or training programs?
Appendix 6: Formal Interview Guide for Focus Group Interviews

Demographics
Age
Gender
Education level
How long has lived in Taomi village?
Occupation
Involvement with ecotourism

1. What have been the effects of the development of ecotourism on Taomi after the 921 earthquake crisis?

2. Based on your understanding, what are the concepts of ecotourism for you? (what is your own set of definitions of ecotourism?)

3. What kind of assistance that you feel as being more useful; the planning or training programs provided by the government agencies or by the NGOs? Why is this so? Did you participate in these ecotourism activities or workshop training?

4. Based on your understanding, what policies and plans were in place for ecotourism development?

5. In your opinion, have the economic changes which ecotourism has brought been positive or negative ones?

6. In your opinion, have the socio-cultural changes which ecotourism has brought been positive or negative ones?

7. In your opinion, have the environmental changes which ecotourism has brought been positive or negative ones?

8. What is the primary goal for the Taomi ecotourism development?
### Appendix 7: Resident Interviewee Profiles

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<tr>
<td>R24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R25</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>New Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 8: Expert Interviewee Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Interviewing Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation staff member</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation staff member</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation staff member</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Puli Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Tainan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>University scholar</td>
<td>Taomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>University scholar</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Council of Agriculture’s Endemic Species Research Institute researcher</td>
<td>Endemic Species Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Council of Agriculture’s Endemic Species Research Institute researcher</td>
<td>Endemic Species Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Council of Agriculture’s Endemic Species Research Institute researcher</td>
<td>Endemic Species Research Institute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 9: Focus Group Interviewee Resident Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Interviewing Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Home-stay operator, and eco-guide</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Home-stay operator, and eco-guide</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>New Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>New Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>New Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Eco-guide</td>
<td>Tianfenzai farm, Taomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F7</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Tianfenzai farm, Taomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F8</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Tianfenzai farm, Taomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Tianfenzai farm, Taomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Tianfenzai farm, Taomi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Home-stay operator, and eco-guide</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Home-stay operator, and eco-guide</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F13</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F14</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F15</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Home-stay operator, and eco-guide</td>
<td>Taomi residence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Earthquake to Ecotourism in Taiwan: Community understanding of ecotourism and its impacts when used as a solution to crisis events

The Researcher: Chin-Chin Wang  
Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management  
Contact phone: 02-89277742  
Contact email: c.wang@griffith.edu.au

Supervisors:  
Dr Carl Cater  
c.cater@griffith.edu.au  
Dr Ray Hibbins  
r.hibbins@griffith.edu.au

Purpose  
This study has been designed to assist in understanding residents’ perceptions regarding environmental, socio-cultural, and environmental changes brought about by and accompanying ecotourism development, from the beginning of development to the present stage. Further, to understand in rebuilding process, NGO groups were how to participate and guide in developing ecotourism and residents were how to understand ecotourism meaning and all changes in ecotourism development. This study aims to create a model of crisis event in community based ecotourism toward a sustainable development. The interview guide was drawn up in both English and Chinese, but for respondents the Chinese interview guide and questionnaire will be used.

Background  
The study focuses on the Taomi of Puli Township in Taiwan. Taomi Village is the first ecotourism development project undertaken by a non-indigenous village, one initiated in response to an earthquake in 1999 which virtually destroyed the whole community. Taomi residents made the decision to develop ecotourism as a means of rebuilding and improving local economic resources, and to further develop a cohesive sense of local community.
The process of ecotourism development has brought both positive and negative changes to the community. Thus, the purpose of this study is to understand residents’ perceptions regarding the ecotourism changes and ecotourism understandings following the 921 earthquake.

**Voluntary Participation**

It is more important to have voluntary participation in the interview process. All interviews will be conducted in one of three different modes: one-on-one interviews with residents, and with experts, and focus group interviews. Each participant in the resident and expert interviews is someone able to provide information regarding ecotourism-brought changes, and their understanding of ecotourism education and training. The participants will be interviewed for at least one hour, and focus groups will be conducted with each group who can offer information regarding ecotourism changes, and their understanding. Participants (residents) will be interviewed for at least two hours. They will have selected a comfortable and convenient location to suit them. The content of each interview will be tape-recorded, and that will be further transcribed and printed in order to check for accuracy.

**Risks**

Some participants will probably want to not reveal information on sensitive issues during the interview process. Participants may refuse to comment on any issue or may halt the interview at any time.

**Benefits**

It is hoped that the results of this study will assist in providing practical suggestions useful to local government and to relevant local management agencies in Taomi Village. The results should facilitate more successful development in the community by enabling these bodies to better understand resident demands, and further improve the situation, thereby reducing the negative impact of ecotourism.

**Confidentiality**

Participant confidentiality of those joining in this study is respected. Firstly, each participant will be assigned an anonymous identity for the coding of data gained from
the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Any report or publications resulting from this study will use the anonymous identity of each participant. Finally, tape-recordings of each participant will ultimately be deleted.

Any information provided will remain confidential. All information will contribute to a summary, which will then be documented. All data will be kept in the possession of the investigator and revealed to no-one. During research reports or study discussions, no interviewee’s name will be used under any circumstances. All records, including computer records, will be stored in a locked filing cabinet with restricted access for a minimum of five years in a private office.

**Question/Further Information:**

Any questions regarding this research project can be directed to the researcher or either of his supervisors. Contact details are:

The researcher: Chin-Chin Wang  
Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management  
Contact phone: 02-89277742  
Contact email: c.wang@griffith.edu.au

Supervisors: Dr Carl Cater  
c.cater@griffith.edu.au  
Dr Ray Hibbins  
r.hibbins@griffith.edu.au  
Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management

**Ethical Conduct:**

Griffith University requires that research is conducted in accordance with the “National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans”. The University requires that all participants be informed that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted so that these may be directed to: The Manager, Research Ethics on 3875 5585  

or: research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.
Feedback
An appropriate summary of study results will be made available back to all interested participants.

Privacy statement
The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purpose. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded.
For further information consult the University’s Privacy Plan at www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp or telephone (07) 3875 5585.
訪談內容資訊簡介

親愛的桃米社區夥伴，您好：

我是王進欽，目前是澳洲國立 Griffith 大學觀光、休閒、旅館及運動管理所博士班的博士候選人。目前正進行的研究是針對 921 地震過後，探討桃米社區發展生態旅遊的歷程，及生態旅遊被應用為一個解決危機事件的方法時，社區居民對於生態旅遊的認知及對生態旅遊所帶來衝擊的瞭解。

訪談目的：主要是針對桃米社區發展生態旅遊從 921 地震災變開始至今，探討桃米居民對生態旅遊的瞭解及生態旅遊帶來經濟、社會文化及環境改變的影響的看法。並且，更進一步分析桃米社區在重建過程中，如何藉由專家學者共同參與培訓發展出生態旅遊方式，及居民如何瞭解生態旅遊意涵及其過程中如何看待生態旅遊發展所引起改變的現象。冀望研究能作為未來生態旅遊在危機事件中孕育而生，社區居民如何發展生態旅遊的模式參考，並期望達到社區永續發展的目標。

訪談對象：根據推薦得知您在 921 地震災變後，曾經對於桃米社區生態旅遊發展積極投入或具有深度瞭解，在此誠心邀請您參與本次訪談，請你不吝分享您豐富的經驗，相關資料及灼見，共同回顧桃米生態旅遊的發展歷史。

訪談時間及地點：每次訪談進行時間約為一小時，訪談依據受訪者需求決定適當的地點及時間。為確實記錄完整的訪談內容，與考量到受訪者寶貴的時間，及未來資料分析的正確性，將在訪談過程中進行全程錄音。您若認為有不適之處，受訪者可以隨時要求終止錄音或是訪談。
訪談資料處理過程：本訪談將您個人資料以匿名方式處理，除非徵得您的同意，否則絕對保密、不予公開。訪談資料僅供學術研究之用，所以不用擔心您個人資料遭到外洩或濫用。訪談後，本人將訪談內容撰寫成逐字稿，並經由您確認文字的內容是否真實表達您的看法與觀點。若是對於這份研究有任何疑慮，歡迎隨時與我聯繫（如下），並感謝您的參與。

研究者: 王進欽
學校系所: 澳洲國立 Griffith 大學觀光，休閒，旅館及運動管理學系
聯絡電話: 0911222255
聯絡 Email: c.wang@griffith.edu.au
指導教授：Dr. Carl Cater
聯絡 Email: c,cater@griffith.edu.au
Dr. Ray Hibbins
聯絡 Email: r.hibbins@griffith.edu.au
Appendix 12: Consent Form

Griffith University
Earthquake to Ecotourism in Taiwan: Community understanding of ecotourism and its impacts when used as a solution to crisis events

I: Chin-Chin Wang
School: Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport management
Contact Phone: 02- 89277742
Contact Email: c.wang@griffith.edu.au

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research includes up to one hour interviews;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the researcher;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3875 5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Name: 

__________________________________________

Signature: 

__________________________________________

Date: _____________ / ___________ / ___________
Appendix 13: Chinese Consent Form

澳洲國立 Griffith 大學
訪談同意書

研究主題: 研究台灣 921 地震災變後，桃米社區居民對於生態旅遊的認知及對生態旅遊所帶來衝擊的瞭解

研究者: 王進欽
學校系所: 觀光，休閒，旅館及運動管理學系
聯絡電話: 0911222255
聯絡 Email: c.wang@griffith.edu.au

我於受訪前，進行相關資訊與其細節的閱讀、瞭解與確認，並同意在最下面簽名:

● 我瞭解我參與這個研究過程，最多需要一個小時的訪談
● 我對於回答任何一個問題，均有達到我的滿意程度
● 我瞭解參與此研究，我沒有任何直接利益
● 我瞭解我是自願參與此研究
● 我瞭解假如我有任何問題，我能與研究者聯繫
● 我瞭解隨時可以抽掉我回答的訪談大綱，且沒有任何理由及罰責
● 假如我有任何有關這個研究的道德行爲問題，我瞭解我可以聯繫 Griffith 大學人類研究行爲準則委員會的管理者，其聯絡電話：07-3875 5585 (或 research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)
● 我同意參與此研究

你的姓名：

簽名：

日期：___________ / ___________ / ___________
### Video footage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location &amp; time</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taoyuan primary school January 15, 2008</td>
<td><strong>The Paper Dome planning meeting</strong>&lt;br&gt;This was attended by 14 key ecotourism operators, the former and current heads of the community, two heads of associations, 8 NHF staff members and the president of Tao-yuan primary school. They discussed issues concerning the Paper Dome activity. As a participant observer, I observed that both association heads, the head of the community government, and other ecotourism operators were able to cooperate with each other on common goals and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Taomi: January, 24, 2008</td>
<td><strong>The Paper Dome workshop</strong>&lt;br&gt;Almost 100 people, Japanese guests and local residents, joined the workshop. Both groups shared their experiences of the rebuilding process, after different earthquake disasters in Japan and Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Paper Dome January 25, 2008</td>
<td><strong>The Paper Dome opening ceremony</strong>&lt;br&gt;Many people from a variety of units from the public and private sectors attended. Almost all key persons from community associations in Taomi, joined in this activity, along with many residents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Photo Sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cao-Nan and Maopukeng Wetlands August, 2007</td>
<td>Many ecotourism facilities such as traditional bridges, rooms for give ecological talks &amp; info, recreational facilities, ecological wetlands, and other natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community centre September, 2007</td>
<td>Home-stay enterprises here were the Green House, Pasture Yen Family, and Frog-Ma; a small restaurant called Xiu-Chin; the local traditional grocery store; Fu-Tong Temple; the Frog Pavilion; and main roads and access points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Taomi Tourist Information Centre September, 2007</td>
<td>The centre is a ecotourism hub and includes the 921 Monument which covers themes such as local history and local products, and an earthquake exhibition. Relevant local signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Taomikeng Stream and nearby areas October, 2007</td>
<td>Photos of Taomi’s stream, forest, local roads, landscapes, temples, and local bamboo farms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 14: List of Videos, Photos and Notes (Participant Observation) (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location &amp; Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Paper Dome:</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Paper Dome opening ceremony:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 25, 2008</td>
<td>These photos include transport signs, the tourist station selling a variety of Taomi products, relevant facilities of Paper Dome. Hundreds of participants joined the established ceremony and relevant activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Field Notes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Location &amp; Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Frog Pavilion,</strong></td>
<td><strong>The advanced eco-guide training courses:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 5, 2007</td>
<td>There are two lecturers and 22 students. The courses dealt mainly with ecological issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Taomi,</strong></td>
<td><strong>The daily activities of residents, such as planting bamboo, clearing and greening some main community streets; local landscapes; wetlands; transport facilities; temple festival; and other activities.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June, 2007 to February, 2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Tao-yuan primary school,</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Paper Dome meeting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 15, 2008</td>
<td>This was attended by 14 key ecotourism operators, the former and current heads of the community, two heads of associations, 8 NHF staff members and the president of Tao-yuan primary school who discussed the Paper Dome activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Taomi:</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Paper Dome workshop</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January, 24, 2008</td>
<td>Almost 100 people, Japanese guests and local residents, joined the workshop. The aim was to share some experiences both groups had had of the rebuilding process, after different earthquake disasters in Japan and Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 15: Documentary Evidence

### List of Documentary Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Book name</th>
<th>Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Frog Awareness in Future in Taomi Eco-village</td>
<td>Taomi Ecotourism Association, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eco-handbook on the Taomi Dragonflys</td>
<td>Endemic Species Research Institute, and New Homeland Foundation, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Plants in Taomi</td>
<td>Endemic Species Research Institute, and New Homeland Foundation, 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dream and Homeland - the Story of the Rebuilding of Taomi as an Eco-village (handbook for students)</td>
<td>Cultural Department, Nantou County government, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flourishing Taomi</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation, 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>At the beginning of community empowerment of an eco-village</td>
<td>He, Zhen-Chin &amp; Yen, Hsin-Chu, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Homeland, dreams, flying high - thoughts and practice: New Homeland Foundation and thereconstriction of Taomi as an eco-village after the ChiChi earthquake</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation, 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Member’s handbook – 2nd meeting</td>
<td>Taomi Ecotourism Association, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Annual Community Empowerment Results for Taomi</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The public fund’s supporting</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The framework of the Community Development Association</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
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</table>
## Appendix 15: Documentary Evidence (Cont.)

### List of Documentary Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tourist number statistics – Visitor Management Centre</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Home-stay, Restaurant, and Eco-guide Agreement</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>List of initial group of certified eco-guides in Taomi</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
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</table>

### Training Workshop (materials)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Provider</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Greening workshop, October, 2001 to December, 2002</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Experience of arranging and promoting Community Ecological Education course</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Community Ecological Education in Taomi, August – November, 2005</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Featured food cooking, 2004</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The advanced eco-guide course training course, December, 2007</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Brochure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Green Taomi 綠色桃米</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Generations Connecting – A Visit to Taomi --一代牽過一代 - 走過桃米</td>
<td>New Homeland Foundation</td>
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### Journal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taomi Ecological Journey (Issues 1-3)</td>
<td>Liao Yong-Kun, September, 2006; January, 2007; July, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Documentary Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Activity Name</th>
<th>Provider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shuidangdang Activity, 2002</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Let’s Get Taomi Moving, 2002</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Raise Lanterns to Celebrate being Safe and Sound! 2003</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Deeply Ploughing Taomi, 2003</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>That special feeling reserved for your Taomi homeland is calling you (桃米故鄉情，望您來牽成), 2000</td>
<td>He Zhen-Chin, 2007, New Homeland Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 15: Documentary Evidence (Cont.)

### List of Documentary Evidence

#### Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Formosa Community</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hometown.org.tw/newsite/community_01.php?cID=14&amp;nowpage=4&amp;tenpage=1">http://www.hometown.org.tw/newsite/community_01.php?cID=14&amp;nowpage=4&amp;tenpage=1</a></td>
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#### Film

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Have a look at this - a place where frogs are called boss!</td>
<td>看這個把青蛙叫做老闆的地方</td>
</tr>
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#### News

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taomi – a Water Delights Paradise</td>
<td>桃米嬉水天堂 探險趣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Creating an Eco-village - Peng Kuo-Dong</td>
<td>彭國棟生態社區推水</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ecotourism: Increasing No.s of Visitors to Taomi Eco-village</td>
<td>埔里桃米村生態觀摩人數倍增</td>
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#### Plan

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Leisure-Tourism Industry plan for Taomi, Puli Township, Nantou County, 1999</td>
<td>Chen Chi-Ji, 2007</td>
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</table>