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Effects of the Transformation of Social Forces on Environmental Protection: An Example of Marine Conservation in Green Island, Taiwan

Ren-Fang CHAO¹

Abstract

Social forces are the constantly changing process with social changes. Due to the special social development history in Taiwan, the social forces induced by past social movements present the transformation tendency towards communities so that the social forces in the reconstruction of communities present the characteristics of social movements. Based on the marine conservation process in Green Island, social forces are divided into the stage of pain and threat (2004-2007), the stage of transformation (2008-2011), and the stage of participation (after 2012). Each stage stands for the effects of the transformation of social forces on the marine conservation in Green Island and presents professionalization and systemization. Under the demands for professionalization and systemization, the intervention of nonprofit organizations is essential for the reconstruction of communities. The idea of local intermediary organization is therefore introduced in this study to explain the feasibilities of the system in permanently counseling a community developing the social forces.

Keywords: social movement, community participation, sustainable development, non-profit organization, civil society.

Introduction

In face of continuously increasing pressure from the short of marine resources, marine conservation has become a primary challenge in environmental protection (Hawkes *et al.*, 2009). In the last decade, the governments in the world have continuously concern about the issue of marine conservation so as to maintain the sustainability of marine resources (Druel & Gjerde, 2014). A lot of research indicated that the marine conservation should be made a joint effort between the

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governments and local societies; especially, a community-based marine conservation mechanism was the path to achieve the marine conservation effectiveness (Syakur *et al.*, 2012; Mills *et al.*, 2011; Ban *et al.*, 2009). In such a trend, it is obviously that two forces from the government and the society are simultaneously injected into the marine conservation mechanism. How the two forces effectively develop the function of environmental protection and the development when such two forces conflict with each other are the key factors in the effectiveness of a community-based marine conservation mechanism.

An interesting case of Green Island in the west edge of Pacific Ocean is studied. The island, with the square measurement merely 17 square kilometers, is surrounded by coral reefs. Since tourism was developed in 1990s, the increasing tourism pressure caused the little island with the number of citizens less than 3000 people bearing more than 0.3 million tourists every year and the marine resources being constantly damaged. Such problems have induced the concerns of the government and the community citizens (Chao, 2014a). To cope with the trend of global marine conservation, Marine National Park was established in 2007 and Green Island was covered in the administration in order to promote the protective measures like the delimitation of marine conservation zones. Nevertheless, it was strongly opposed by local citizens in the beginning of promotion. According to the investigation of the township representative council in Green Island, up to 83% adult citizens (above 20 years old) strongly oppose the establishment of national park in Green Island at the time (Ker & Chang, 2007). At the end, the delimitation of national park in Green Island was postponed. However, with the promotion of local citizens in 2007-2014, the local government of Green Island announced to increase the delimitation of fisheries resources conversation zones and the prohibitive exploitation of marine species. In the 7 years, local citizens changed from the strong opposition to the national park in the beginning to the local government formulating the protective measures according to the intention. Apparently, it was the results of transformation and intervention of social forces. Nonetheless, what are the process and mechanism of the transformation of social forces to advance the marine conservation mechanism in Green Island in the period?

The idea of social forces covers the research on social movement, civil society, and social history, generally referring to the physical change of society formed by the autonomous concentration of the mass society responding to social issues or changing trend (Lin, 2011). Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) explored the presentation of social forces with tourism to respond to the challenge of tourism capacity. In other words, Higgins-Desbiolles (2006) explored how tourism became the social forces to promote the sustainable development of communities from the aspect of sustainable tourism. However, “movement” was the focus of social forces, from the case of Green Island. Although the case was not a typical social movement, the “movement” intension could be found in the opposition to the governmental

intervention. It was the cause of special historical contexts in Taiwan that Lin (2011) regarded social forces as the special prospective of sociologists in Taiwan. Following the social forces discussions from the aspect of social movement, it was found that social forces could transform with changing space-time environments to change the interaction between social forces and the environment. Regarding the case in Green Island, the changes of social forces in 2007-2014 resulted in distinct responses to the environmental change. This study therefore aims to explain the cause of the transformation of social forces in the process of marine conservation in Green Island, Taiwan.

The transformation of social forces in Taiwan: background and concept

The statement of social forces in Taiwan started in the social movement in 1970s and boomed after the lifting of martial law in 1987. There were 1,727 environmental protesting cases occurring in Taiwan during 1980-1998 (Ho, 2003) that Hsiao (1989) called such autonomous forces from the civil in 1980s as “social forces”, which were then broadly discussed in Taiwan. Lii & Lin (2000) explained such a phenomenon as the change in physical perceived meaning of environment in Taiwan under the bad environment of mass society in 1970s-1980s causing the changes of social movement and protest model. Such model changes used to be sustained or privately petitioned, but changed to positively open and concerted movements. The idea of Lii & Lin (2000) was stated apparently from the power and physical aspects of Foucault (1979) to highlight personal subjectivity. Under the context, the early social movement in Taiwan gradually transformed from physically autonomous suffering to specific social movements.

Social movements in Taiwan also changed with social changes. Since 1990s, the social movement for environmental protection gradually transformed from physical protests to demonstrations and to professional lobbies so that violence and conflict in social movements for environmental protection in Taiwan were decreasing and the high organization was being generated. Lii & Lin (2003) called such a phenomenon as “domestication of social forces”, which was the transformation process of social forces, and proposed the following dimensions covered in “social forces”: (1) social forces implied at least a mover who could positively mobilize and adopt movements to affect social changes; (2) such movements received most members’ perceived and emotional support and consonance; (3) such movements advanced social communication and introspection and were an innovative power to reconstruct social morality and emotion (Lii & Lin, 2003: 108-109).

Following the localization development and the organization of social forces in Taiwan, a lot of groups and associations in Taiwan started to study local history and culture in 1990s. Such nonprofit organizations were the collective action originated by local citizens, aiming to protect the community environments. Chen (2014) regarded such movements led by local nonprofit organizations as a “new social movement”, marking the emergence of “civil society”.

Comprehensively surveying the development of social forces in Taiwan, it was found that the interactive changes between the government and societies changed the performance of social forces. Although there were still some typical social movements in the 21st century, more social forces in Taiwan were presented on local environmental and cultural preservation. Chen (2014) considered that such transformation of social forces embedded in community construction could assist in reconstructing “ideals of society” in local communities.

Nonetheless, in spite that Chen (2014) regarded community movements led by a local nonprofit organization as a new social movement, it was wondered whether such community movements were transformed from social forces of public social movements or another emerging social force. The problems were not clearly explained by Chen (2014). Reviewing the interpretation of Lii & Lin (2000) about the social forces in Taiwan, they were considered as the third department concept that it was important to develop the third department and have it navigate the entire society. Following such a context, Lii & Lin (2003) divided social movements after 1980s into physical protests (1980-1986), demonstrations (1986-1993), and professional lobbies (after 1993). At the stage of professional lobbies, the intension of social movements was changed, more social movements were presented on political figures or intellectuals leading community citizens to demonstrations, and the mobilized crowd was directly affected. Lii & Lin (2003) indicated that the core of social movements at this stage lied in professional lobbies, while crowd mobilization merely played the secondary role, and the forces to induce social movements were deepened in communities. Integrated Reconstruction of Communities (Lai, 1999) promoted in 1994 timely accepted social forces from social movements and turned into the assistance in the community sustainable development. The bonding between the two was discovered, allowing the social forces of social movements in Taiwan transforming into the social forces of community participation in the social change process.

Community participation as an alternative social movement performance

The transformation of social forces in Taiwan was initially formed by public social movements and now changes to the social forces based on community participation. However, public social movements were greatly different from community participation after all. Nevertheless, McGehee *et al.* (2014) revealed to regard community participation as a social movement to expand the vision of social movement by finding out the social movement composition in community participation. They proved such an opinion after studying the development of handmade industry in 7 communities in North Carolina, the US. Accordingly, when the transformation of social forces in Taiwan was the form of community participation, it might still remain the characteristics of social movements. Intense opposition movements could possibly exist because of the “movement property” of social forces in community participation.

In the analysis, McGehee *et al.* (2014) discussed the social movement in community participation from the dimensions of consciousness-raising, networks/resource mobilization, and self-efficacy. Nonetheless, the roles of nonprofit organizations at various levels were ignored in the research. From the past transformation process of social forces in Taiwan, nonprofit organizations aiming at professional lobbies were gradually combined with the community development after 1993 and communities also autonomously established community development organizations to promote the community development. The problems were the changes of communities after such national professional organizations entering the communities and the relationship with local nonprofit organizations. McGehee *et al.* (2014) also discovered in the case study that a lot of regional and national nonprofit organizations started to participate in the promotion of handmade industry since 1990; however, the relationship between regional and national nonprofit organizations was not mentioned in the research.

Concerning such a problem, Chao (2014b) proposed the idea of local intermediary organization as the fuse to trigger community movements. He considered local intermediary organizations as the services among organizations, the role of knowledge integration and innovative activities, and the communication and negotiation platform among internal organizations, external organizations, and environmental management authority. Nevertheless, the role of local organizations as the mediator in the transformation of community social forces was not discussed in the research. Consequently, this study extends the thinking context of Chao (2014b) to explore the transformation of social forces in Green Island, Taiwan.

The transformation process of social forces in Green Island

When Green Island transformed to the economic pattern based on tourism development in 1990, the development on the island was obvious different from the past agricultural and fishery society. Especially, Green Island tended to mass tourism after 1998, when the port extension reduced the factor of transportation in limiting the number of visitors. The tourism development obviously clamped down the industrial economy in Green Island that the social development was gradually connected with tourism economy. The continuously growing tourism development in Green Island exploded the number of visitors after 2004 that the citizens started to perceive the environmental damage. It was considered as the time point when social forces were generated in Green Island. To analyze the changes of social forces in Green Island during 2004-2014, the development of social forces was divided into the stage of pain and threat, the stage of transformation, and the stage of participation (Figure 1).

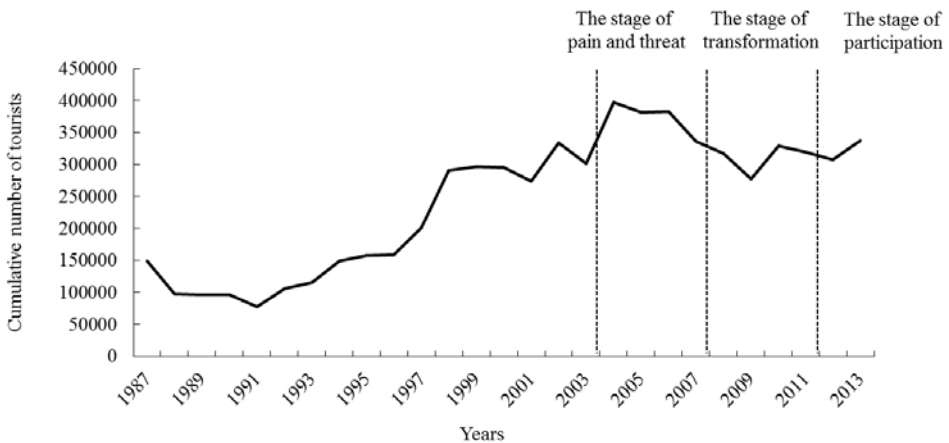


Figure 1. Changes of the number of visitors to Green Island. The transformation of social forces started in 2004. Based on the transformation process of social forces, the stage of pain and threat (2004-2007), the stage of transformation (2008-2011), and the stage of participation (after 2012) were classified.

The stage of pain and threat (2004-2007)

Lii & Lin (2000) considered environmental perception as the cause of social forces being presented in Taiwan and pointed out the stages of physical suffering, physical damage, and physical violation in 1970s-1980s. In the three stages, the changes of physically perceived meaning of environment caused the changes of

social movements and protest models in the mass society in Taiwan. The similar idea also appeared on Green Island in 2004-2007. The rapid increase of visitors in 2004 resulted in the exhaustion of fisheries resources because of tourism demands. For the citizens on the island, the rich marine resources became the memory.

The short of marine resources had the citizens in Green Island perceive the pain and threat of the environment. In comparison with past social movements in Taiwan, which were also the sense of oppression resulted from environmental changes, the past environmental movements were caused by the dissatisfaction with the government and the industrial policies that it showed a definite revolted subject on social movements. The environmental sense of oppression in Green Island indeed was resulted from the improper use of environmental resources in the internal community on the island. Since there was not a definite revolted subject, the pain and threat caused by environmental sense of oppression could merely be solved by the community introspection to make changes from the internal community. The appearance of environmental perception revealed the emergence of social forces. Ecological Conservation Association (ECA) was established in January 2005, and marine patrols were consisted for the marine conservation. Such a phenomenon triggered the social forces because the citizens perceived the environmental sense of oppression.

At this stage, the planning of establishing national park was another key factor in the social forces in Green Island. Since 2006, it was the demand of local marine conservation and, on the other hand, the government expected to connect with international marine conservation by the establishment of national park. Although the national forces presented the importance on the community development, Monteiro (2014) stated that a community would not completely, but selectively, accept the national cooperation project. For this reason, he considered that a nation mainly played the role of programmatic guidance in community development in order to develop the mediating effects. Comparing to Green Island, Ker & Chang (2007) organized the reasons of the citizens in Green Island opposing the establishment of national park at the time, including limitations to terrestrial and marine activities, use of land and buildings, total amount control of visitors, non-confidence in the government, and maze of future policies. From such reasons, the citizens in Green Island did not oppose the idea of marine conservation about the establishment of national park, but opposed the effects on the life after the establishment of national park. Since the performance of social forces appeared distinct dimensions from the establishment of national park, the development of social forces in Green Island was basically not hindered. However, the performance of social forces and the establishment of national park showed two different properties. When the delimitation of national park in Green Island was postponed in 2007, the marine patrol members indeed encountered the pressure from communities agreeing with national park.

The stage of transformation (2008-2011)

The social forces in Green Island could be fluently developed after the removal the negative effects of the establishment of national park. However, it was found in Figure 1 that the number of visitors to Green Island obviously decreased after 2007, possibly because of the following factors. 1. The government reduced the establishment and marketing investment in the tourism in Green Island when the visitors to Green Island exploded in 2004-2006. 2. The competition of similar tourist spots (such as Penghu and Liuqiu Shiang in west coast of Taiwan) attracted the original visitors to Green Island. 3. Travel agencies arranged group visitors to other tourist spots because of the decreasing profits caused by the joint operation of steam boats and the rise of ticket price in Green Island. The decreasing number of visitors and the pressure from environmental changes had the citizens in Green Island consider adopting more sustainable tourism models. The promotion of crab ecological corridor in Green Island in 2007 allowed volunteer tourism being an option of the tourism development in Green Island (Chao, 2014a).

In the statement of the transformation of social forces in Taiwan, Lii & Lin (2003) pointed out the professional role as the key factor in the social movements changing from the stage of demonstrations to the stage of professional lobbies. They organized the job of director general in the environmental protection organization in Taiwan in 1993 and discovered that the total weight of professional levels (lawyers, professors, and doctors) and entrepreneurs appeared about 80%, revealing the critical role of professionals in the continuous development of social movements after the organization and systematization.

In consideration of the social forces in social movements in 1990s, Integrated Reconstruction of Communities tended to continue the importance of professionals in social forces. The stage development in Green Island presented such characteristics. In regard to volunteer tourism in Green Island, the idea was to transform the professional environmental survey to tourism development and to enhance the tourism intension and quality through theme-based tourism models. The process involved in issue seeking, survey training, and tourism product marketing (Chao, 2014a). Each stage required the intervention of professionals, who mainly input knowledge and provided opinions about the development agenda. Such development allowed the social forces in Green Island, which was transformed from pain and threat, continuously developing with the assistance of professionals.

Another key factor in social forces at this stage was the relationship between the government and communities. A lot of protective measures needed to be promoted through the administrative forces of the government. Although the relationship between the communities in Green Island and the central government was worsened because of establishment of national park being interrupted at the

previous stage, Lii & Lin (2003) indicated that making good use of media was an advantage of professionals as well as the cultural asset. Chao (2006) pointed out the obviously increasing reports of environmental conservation in Green Island after 2004, when a lot of such reports were announced by the professionals engaging in the community development in Green Island. With the joint forces among communities, professionals, and media, the catch of Orbicular batfish in 2008 promoted the local government delimiting a new fisheries conservation zone. The event of Orbicular batfish enhanced the self-efficacy of social forces in Green Island as well as improved the tension between the community and the government.

The stage of participation (after 2012)

An unsolved problem was left at the stage of transformation, as it was wondered who could integrate various environmental protection issues, which required the assistance of researchers and experts. The establishment of Society for Nature and Humanity (SNH) in 2011 solved such a problem. Both professionalization and systematization were generated when a social movement moved to the stage of professional lobbies (Lii & Lin, 2003). Systematization allowed a social movement moving towards professional services; especially, after social forces getting in a community, the services from professional team would assist in the continuous development of social forces under the permanent demands for community development.

Chao (2014b) proposed that the idea of local intermediary organization was from the analysis of such development stage in Green Island; SNH, as the communication platform between internal and external organization as well as the innovative medium of social forces, was a local intermediary organization. At this stage, the development of social forces advanced to the sustainable development of communities. The platform of local intermediary organizations integrating the experts and researchers and the media resources not only could indirectly promote the local government expanding the fisheries conservation zone and announcing the prohibitive exploitation of marine species, but could also guide the community citizens playing the role of operators in the sustainable tourism operation process and sustaining the task of environmental protection.

Function of local intermediary organization in the transformation of social forces

Who should sustain the permanent community counseling work?

Regardless of social forces (in spite of the impossibility in practice), the community development required counseling. However, who could sustain such a task? Monteiro (2014) proposed that a nation could play the role when it stood on the position of programmatic guiding. Community forestry has been implemented globally for many years with such a point of view (Kumar & Puri, 2004). Such a point of view presented the theoretical basis and showed successful cases; however, distinct conflict might be induced by including the idea of social movements in the community development. After all, social movements faced the powerful sector/department with informal channels (Halsey, 2001). A government was the largest power owner in a society, and there were secondary objectives beyond the major objectives because of distinct objectives of governmental organizations; some conflict between communities and the government appeared on uncoordinated secondary objectives. The establishment of national park in Green Island being hindered was a typical case (Ker & Chang, 2007). Especially, under the thinking context in this study, a large part of social forces in the community development was from the social forces in the mass social movement that “movement property” became an implicit factor in the community social forces in Taiwan. When a community conflicted with the government, different degree of social movements could reoccur. In this case, it required discussions to have the government play the role of guiding or counseling in the process of the reconstruction of communities.

As previous statement, professionalization and systematization were the essential paths after social forces were introduced in a community. McGehee *et al.* (2014) discovered that the promotion of handmade industry could be the cooperation between local nonprofit organizations and national nonprofit organizations, revealing that professionalization and systematization were the elements of community development. Nonetheless, the reconstruction of communities was a long-term task that it seemed to be difficult for a national nonprofit organization “permanently” concerning about local development in a community.

Apparently, the organizational task of community development would become the responsibility of local nonprofit organizations. It might be the ideal of community development workers. In the discussion of such a problem, it would be impossible to have the community tasks being directly executed by local nonprofit organizations when the subjects were set to the types of isolated communities proposed by Neamtu (2009). The example of isolated communities proposed by Neamtu (2009) might be an extreme sample; however, it was wondered how

many communities could ideally sustain the community development tasks in consideration of the reality. The factors contained simultaneously executing community development tasks and seeking resources and innovative ideas for the organization and the community being able to exhaust the community organization, the changes of inherited power in the community organization, and the effects of information/resource divide.

As a result, Chao (2014b) proposed the idea of “local intermediary organization” form the development case in Green Island to have professional service teams “permanently” serve regional communities. The local intermediary organization integrated the resources of professionals, but did not participate in community tasks, and merely coordinated among organizations in the community and the injection of external resources. By combining local resources and knowledge to enhance the innovation of the community, the social forces could appear continuous forces. Using such a local intermediary organization for bonding a national nonprofit organization with community organizations might be a reference model for future community development tasks.

Conclusion

In the special development background in Taiwan, social movements play an important push force in the social change in Taiwan. The transformation of social forces in Taiwan in 1970s-1980s evolved from the initial physical protest stage to the demonstration stage, and to the final professional lobbies stage (Lii & Lin, 2003). Afterwards, the emergence of Integrated Reconstruction of Communities in Taiwan had the social forces get in communities so that the social forces transferred from initial public social movements to the force to promote community development. In the transformation process of social forces in Taiwan, the community social forces to some extent absorbed the intension of social movements that the community social forces in Taiwan more or less covered the property of “movement”.

McGehee *et al.* (2014) proposed a special point of view to treat the community participation process as a social movement. Such thinking conformed to the social phenomenon in Taiwan. However, McGehee *et al.* (2014) ignored the roles of nonprofit organizations at distinct levels (local and national). Aiming at this point, Chao (2014b) proposed the idea of “local intermediary organization” to supplement the theoretical gap.

Following the thinking contexts of McGehee *et al.* (2014) and Chao (2014b), the transformation of social forces in Green Island is divided into the stage of pain and threat (2004-2007), the stage of transformation (2008-2011), and the stage of participation (after 2012) in this study. The development processes at such three

stages present the transformation of community forces in Green Island. From the three stages, it is found that the taxes in Green Island would change with space-time conditions; more importantly, social forces require the assistance of professionals to inject in new concepts and forces. When the community demands become complicated, the existence of a professional counseling organization is essential. "Local intermediary organization" was proposed by Chao (2014b) in such thinking context. Furthermore, the viewpoints of Chao (2014b) also explained the problem of "who should counsel the community development". When the community development approaches professionalization and systematization, merely professional local intermediary organizations could sustain the "permanent" community counseling task.

According to the current development situation in Green Island, the idea of local intermediary organization seems to be feasible; however, the permanent management of a local intermediary organization is concerned, which is similar to how other nonprofit organizations break through the dilemma when the donation decreases. It is worth consideration whether the transformation to a social enterprise is a proper method for an organization. Social forces would change with social changes, and proper operation of social forces could result in satisfactory development for modern societies. Although there was conflict with the government in the transformation of social forces process in Green Island, a proper assistance in the development could become the force helping the sustainable development of communities. The past development process in Taiwan had social forces become a prospective for sociologists in Taiwan; perhaps, such a prospective might be the reference for analyzing other societies.

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