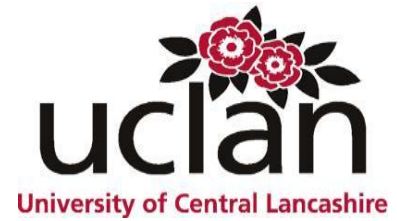# Residents' Perceptions of Dark Tourism Development: The Case of L'Aquila, Italy

Daniel W. M. Wright

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire

October 2014

Student Declaration

Concurrent registration for two or more academic awards

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the research degree, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional institution.

Material submitted for another award

I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award and is solely my own work.

Signature of Candidate: D. W. M. Wright

Type of Award: PhD

School: School of Sport Tourism and the Outdoors

Acknowledgements

Residents' Perceptions of Dark Tourism Development: The Case of L'Aquila, Italy

Abstract

Over the last two decades, the concept of dark tourism has attracted ever-increasing attention in both academic and media circles. At the same time, not only has there been an apparent growth in the supply of 'dark' tourism sites and attractions, but also such demand for dark tourism experiences is also evidently on the increase. Hence, academic research has and continues to be concerned with both the consumption (demand) and development (supply) of dark tourism sites and experiences, reflected in a now extensive and diverse dark tourism literature. Nevertheless, significant issues with respect to dark tourism remain unresolved, not least the validity of the term itself. That is, dark tourism is considered by some to be a pejorative term, particularly in the context of the tourist experience. However, of greater concern is the lack of attention paid to the role of local communities in dark tourism destinations. In other words, there is limited understanding of how local communities respond to becoming the object of the dark tourist 'gaze', and the subsequent implications for the development and management of tourism in 'dark' destinations.

The purpose of thesis, therefore, is to address the gap in the literature. Based on a case study of L'Aquila, a city in Italy that in 2009 was struck by a powerful and deadly earthquake and that subsequently became (and continues to be) a new dark tourism destination, it sets out to explore how 'dark' tourism has evolved and, in particular, the local community's understanding of and responses to their city becoming a dark tourism destination as a result of the disaster it suffered. More specifically, in order to address these issues, the thesis focuses initially on relevant background theory, including a critical review of both the emergence of the concept of dark tourism and its wider application within the field of tourism studies and contemporary theory of host-tourist perceptions. Subsequently, the formal literature review explores critically contemporary approaches to theorising disasters, the disaster recovery process and disaster tourism, as well as broader theoretical constructs relating to the social construction of reality. Collectively, these inform the construction of two conceptual frameworks which are subsequently applied to guide two stages of empirical enquiry.

The research in L'Aquila reveals that, overall there has been a lack of any significant guidance or leadership in tourism development within the city. As a consequence, the city has in effect become an unplanned open museum for tourists, whilst the residents themselves feel betrayed by the authorities for the lack of progress in the redevelopment of their city and feel exploited and or treated with a lack of understanding and respect by tourists who come to gaze on their misfortune. Thus, it is argued that a more recognised and established tourism presence on behalf of the local community might have ensured that the conduct of tourists was effectively controlled and managed, thereby reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the local community. That is, it is suggested that, had the local community been better placed to manage the influx of 'dark' tourists into their city, they would have been more accepting of tourism and tourists in the initial stages of tourism development following the disaster. Consequently, through a combination of stakeholder development theory and the empirical data generated by this research, the thesis proposes a '*Post-disaster tourism development stakeholder model*'. Of most significance, however, is the manner in which the city's social and cultural environment has limited the individual and the collective attitude amongst the local community in L'Aquila towards tourism and tourists; that is, it is identified that L'Aquila's collective social mentality has been a major barrier to the potential development of tourism since the disaster.

With respect to the concept of dark tourism in particular, the research reveals that for, the local community in L'Aquila, tourism since the earthquake is best defined or thought of not as 'dark tourism' but as disaster tourism. Indeed, it became evident through the research that the labelling of L'Aquila as 'dark' not only stigmatised the location and the victims of the earthquake but, importantly, also influenced the residents' perceptions of tourists. That is, tourists are seen as 'dark' by the local residents, heightening negative feelings towards them and consequently, reinforcing the unwillingness of many members of the community to support or engage in promoting dark tourism.

Additionally, the research found that local residents experienced higher levels of negative emotions towards tourists in the initial stages following the disaster. Of significance, is that, over time, the local residents have become more willing to accept tourism and tourists who are engaging with 'dark' tourism practices relating to the earthquake that destroyed their city. This temporal element is recognised and proposed in a *'Host-Reactions to Post-Disaster Tourists / Tourism Model'*. This thesis also proposes a more rounded perspective of host-tourist attitudes to dark tourism, focusing on the individual attitude of a local, rather than that of a collective societal position.

Overall, then, this research reveals that there are significant and varied implications in the development of dark tourism from the perspective of the local community, not least with respect to the term 'dark tourism' itself. That is, dark tourism is shown to be an inappropriate label to attach to either the destination of tourists who visit, enhancing as it does the negative perceptions towards tourists whilst stigmatising the local community as victims. Thus, use of the term 'dark tourism' may be best restricted to academic contexts. Nevertheless, the attitude or perceptions of the local community to becoming the object of the 'dark' tourist gaze can only be fully comprehended within a wider analysis of the local socio-cultural environment and, in particular, the disaster recovery process. In this case study, the local community's perceptions of tourism are influenced by failures in the disaster recovery process and, hence, the proposed frameworks offer a valid basis for future research in alternative dark or disaster tourism contexts.

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Volume One – A Theoretical Analysis

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Setting the scene

L'Aquila, the capital of the Abruzzo region located at a height of 720 meters in the Apennine Mountains in central Italy, has a long history. Originally constructed during the thirteenth century, it enjoyed periods of political power and economic prosperity punctuated by natural disasters, including two plague epidemics during the 1300s and, at regular intervals throughout its history, a number of earthquakes. The most destructive of these was in July 1786 when more than 6000 people lost their lives. Nevertheless, much of the city's architectural heritage survived these disasters and, in modern times, L'Aquila became a thriving cultural centre as well as a popular destination catering for domestic tourists, as a centre for hiking or skiing in the surrounding mountains.

On April 6th 2009, L'Aquila was once again struck by an earthquake. Measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale, it destroyed or damaged much of the city's historical centre; 309 people died in the disaster, a further 1500 were injured and the great majority of the city's population of some 70,000 was made homeless. Thus, having developed its way of life and its culture over the centuries and, in more recent times, a modest domestic tourism sector, as a result of the earthquake lasting just thirty seconds, the city descended into social and cultural disorientation and faced an uncertain future. It can be assumed that in the aftermath of such a devastating event, when an entire city is in mourning, there follow weeks, months and years of challenges and difficulties for the local population, both individually and collectively, in returning to some form of recognisable normality, to the life that was lived before. Individuals, families and groups within L'Aquila have inevitably had to confront numerous problems with wide-ranging personal levels of significance, reflecting the fact that, when such disasters strike, they frequently bring widespread devastation to a location with subsequent infrastructural, social and, perhaps, psychological challenges for the local community.

Equally, a natural disaster such as the earthquake that struck L'Aquila in 2009 has an impact on the external image or, in a sense, attraction of the city which, in turn, has

an impact on the tourism industry. That is, the earthquake or, more precisely, the city as the victim of an earthquake, has become an attraction as a disaster site. In other words, the nature of L'Aquila as a tourist destination has been transformed from a centre for mountain-based activities to a potential 'dark tourism' attraction.

Significantly, this new form of tourism, based as it is upon a natural disaster that brought destruction, death and suffering to the city of L'Aquila and its population, is unlikely to be one that is welcomed or indeed promoted by the destination. Rather, it is the forces of tourism demand, the desire of tourists to witness the aftermath of the earthquake, which accounts for the new status of L'Aquila as a dark tourism destination. Indeed, dark tourism, as a relatively recent concept within tourism studies, refers broadly to both the supply (production) of and demand for consumption of tourism in places of or associated with death, disaster or suffering. In some cases, a dark tourism destination or attraction may be purposefully created, developed and promoted, such as, for example, museums or other sites commemorating tragic events. In other cases, however, sites may become either temporary or permanent dark tourism attractions as a result of demand; that is, as a result of the fascination of tourists in disaster sites (see Sharpley, 2005).

In the latter case, there are significant implications, as yet unexplored in the dark tourism literature. Regarding the destination, the local communities in particular have experienced the disaster and subsequently find that their suffering has, in effect, become a tourist attraction. L'Aquila, a city still experiencing the effects of the earthquake more than four years on, has become a new type of destination, as a result attracting a completely new type of tourist – the dark tourist. Consequently, questions surround the impact and implications, the function and role, and the development of and responsibility for managing this possibly unwelcome and unwanted form of tourism, particularly at a time when the local population is still coming to terms with and recovering from the disaster. Therefore, based on the case of L'Aquila, the overall purpose of this thesis is to enhance academic and social understanding of post-disaster tourism from a dark tourism perspective. The specific aims and objectives of the research are considered shortly but first it is important to introduce briefly the framing concept of this thesis: dark tourism.

1.1 Dark tourism in contemporary society

Since it first emerged in the mid-1990s, the dark tourism concept has attracted increasing attention in academic and media circles, as well as being appropriated by

particular destinations, sites and attractions around the world in order to attract and fascinate national and international audiences. According to Stone (2006a: 146), dark tourism can be defined as 'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre' and, as a specific form of tourism, is arguably becoming an increasingly pervasive aspect within the contemporary visitor economy (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). For the individual or groups of people who wish to visit and gaze upon real or recreated death, places of death and atrocity and other sites of or associated with human suffering; a range of destinations, attractions, events, sites and or exhibitions are continuously emerging and developing across the globe to satisfy people (tourists) with a growing interest, fascination or curiosity in what can be referred to as the 'darker side of travel'.

Prior to the emergence of the dark tourism concept, the study of travel associated to death, atrocity and or disaster had limited, if any, feature in the academic literature as a specific form of tourism consumption (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). However, this does not meat that the practice of dark tourism is a recent or modern phenomenon. As Sharpley (2009: 4) observes, 'for as long as people have been able to travel, they have been drawn – purposefully or otherwise – towards sites, attractions or events that are linked in some way with death, suffering… and violence'. Nevertheless, dark tourism as a sub-field of research in tourism is relatively young (Preece and Price, 2005). Indeed, the dark tourism term was first established in 1996 (Foley and Lennon, 1996) although, since the subsequent publication of Lennon and Foley's (2000) seminal work, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*, the body of knowledge related to dark tourism has grown significantly, reflecting, the proposed stance by Ryan (2005), that a substantial amount of research interest in the subject continues to emerge. In addition to the rapid increase in the volume of academic papers and other works published, the past decade has also witnessed a number of international conferences and symposia related directly or indirectly to dark tourism, reflecting the relevance of the topic to various disciplines beyond the confines of tourism studies. Moreover, research in dark tourism is also underpinned by a site called the Dark Tourism Forum (see www.dark-tourism.org.uk), which is an online platform facility that supports scholarly research as well as providing a resource for those with a wider interest in the topic.

As noted above, in addition to academic attention, dark tourism has also attracted widespread media interest, perhaps reflecting the increasing number of dark tourism attractions / experiences around the world (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Nor has it escaped the attention of populist writers. For example, in 2010 actor / comedian Dom

Joly published *The Dark Tourist: Sightseeing in the world's most unlikely holiday destinations.* Though not the first book to follow this theme (for example, P.J. O'Rourke's *Holidays in Hell* was published in 1988), it brought the concept of dark tourism to a wider, non-academic audience and, perhaps, stimulated greater interest in visiting destinations previously seen as possibly forbidding, menacing or simply dangerous. Similarly, a movie previously titled *The Grief Tourist* was re-released in 2012 as *The Dark Tourist*; it tells the story of an American whose annual vacations are spent visiting 'dark' sites.

Thus, over the last two decades, the concept of dark tourism has gained ever increasing currency as both a field of academic research and as the focus of popular media attention. Indeed, it could be argued that the term has become both over-used and, perhaps, mis-appropriated. However, despite the extent of academic attention paid to it, questions remain about the validity of the terminology and, in particular, about the implications and consequences for local communities of developing a dark tourism destination.

1.2 The suitability of 'Dark'

Sharpley and Stone (2009) recognise that the term 'dark' stimulates curiosity and can make interesting newspaper headlines, particularly when applied to the tourism context. In other words, they suggest that the attraction of or fascination in the term 'dark tourism' lies in the unlikely and intriguing juxtaposition of the words 'dark' and 'tourism' and all that each implies. They also suggest that it offers not only an extensive framework for categorising and investigating types of tourism that are in some form related to matters of death, horror, tragedy, atrocity or disaster, but also and, perhaps, more significantly, a context for exploring how people / societies confront death, suffering of others as well as their own mortality. In that respect, they argue that there are positive outcomes from the study of (and engagement in) dark tourism.

However, negative connotations also surround the term 'dark', hinting at a ghoulish interest in the macabre, or possibly an element of *schadenfreude* (the German word meaning the pleasure derived from the misfortunes of others) on the part of the tourist. Moreover, the adjective 'dark' can also attach implicit labels to the supply and or production of events, attractions, and experiences (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Thus, the authors recognise the multifaceted and complex nature of dark tourism. Consequently, suggesting that research exploring the phenomenon within a broader

socio-cultural and political framework continues to remain limited and, as a result of this, the dark tourism literature remains eclectic, theoretically delicate and inconclusive. They also note that the topic is emotive, multidimensional, politically vulnerable, and an ethically and morally challenging phenomenon and extremely complex for people (victims or the perpetrators) associated with the dark places and researchers (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Ryan (2005) agrees, observing that although there is much research interest in dark tourism, our understanding of the phenomenon remains incomplete. Therefore, given the emotive nature of the term 'dark', particularly when applied to the context of tourism, the first objective in this research is to investigate the implications of the use of the term, particularly for those who become the object of the dark tourist 'gaze':

Objective 1: Given the potential negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark', to explore critically how the local community of L'Aquila feels about and responds to the concept of dark tourism.

1.3 Limitations in dark tourism research – The supply perspective

As noted, despite the mounting academic attention given to the dark tourism concept, a number of areas require further investigation and research. Although much of the earlier work on the topic focused on the production / supply of dark sites, emphasis was on identifying, defining and categorising such sites and attractions with limited attention focusing on issues surrounding their development and management. Stone (2011) for example, observes that the nature of dark tourism sites, and the conflicts, tragedies or disasters they epitomise, continue to point to a variety of interconnected concerns that require exploration and further understanding. In particular, suggesting, research is required into the ethical and moral issues of dark tourism development and promotion for tourism consumption. More generally, Sharpley and Stone (2009) identify that, in some respects, the term 'dark tourism' can be unhelpful, particularly as an emotive and widely applied term used to describe the diverse range in sites, attractions and events that comprise the supply of dark tourism, and the implications of this on the broader dark tourism market (Stone, 2005b).

Furthermore, practitioners supplying dark tourism may disapprove of or feel uncomfortable labeling themselves with a term synonymous with morbidity and mortality. Others have in fact challenged the term; Bowman and Pezzullo (2009: 199) have gone so far to propose that it may be 'time to even abandon the term "dark tourism" insofar as it may present an impediment to detailed and circumstantial

analyses of tourist sites and performances in all their mundane or spectacular particularity and ambiguity'. This is further recognised by Seaton (2009: 562), who recognises dark tourisms pejorative connotations.

Stone (2006a) further notes that the consequences of using emotive terminology and language, such as 'dark', should be further explored, especially if considering the repercussions of using certain terms to describe tourism industries; more generally associated with fun, escapism and, perhaps, hedonism. In addition, some sectors of the tourism industry may not fully appreciate the meanings and connotations of the term 'dark' when applied to their business, a notion echoed by Freeman (2005: 2) who suggests that dark tourism is not a term that can necessarily or appropriately be applied to all sites or attractions related directly or indirectly to death, atrocity and suffering. Consequently, at a recent Dark Tourism Symposium, Sharpley (2012) suggested that it is time to move away from exploring the consumption of dark tourism and to focus on supply issues, specifically managerial developments and limitations and the moral challenges for local communities. This was echoed by Seaton (2012) at the same symposium, who also noted the importance of moving away from the study of dark tourist motivations and focussing on the locations and communities in which dark tourism sites are established and being developed.

In short, it is recognised that limitations in dark tourism research relate primarily to problems or challenges surrounding the development of dark sites and the complexities involved with the supply of such forms of tourism. In particular, the local people / communities who are associated with dark destinations / attractions have remained a 'silent voice' in the research; that is, there remains a lack of academic understanding with respect to the attitudes, perceptions and responses of local communities who unwillingly become the focus of dark tourists' attention. The city of L'Aquila is a current example of a 'dark' destination where the issues surrounding the implications of the development (supply) of dark tourism for the local community can be investigated. Thus, the second objective of this research is as follows:

Objective 2: To explore the responses of the local community of L'Aquila as it has become the focus of the post-disaster tourist gaze.

1.4 Proposed conceptual frameworks

Having identified the emergence of dark tourism as a subject of academic endeavour and, within it, specific areas of limited understanding and knowledge, it is now

relevant to mention the intended structure of this thesis. The principle purpose of the literature review and, specifically, the focus on certain key theories in Chapters 3 and 4 is to underpin the construction of two conceptual frameworks, which will be formally proposed in Chapter Five. The two frameworks (DLCF and DTDF) will guide the subsequent two stages of research (Chapters 7 and 8).

The Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) will be used in the first stage of primary research to guide a critical appraisal of the general social responses to the earthquake in L'Aquila. It will aim to identify post-disaster recovery processes and will be used to facilitate an assessment of the current state of the city as a 'dark' tourist destination.

Subsequently, the second framework, The Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF), will guide the second stage, which will focus on the five research objectives, thus, aiming to enhance our understanding of the development of a dark tourism destination as perceived and experienced through the local community. The third objective of this research is:

Objective 3: To review critically the applicability of the proposed Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF).

1.5 Tourism supply – stakeholders and development

Given that the focus of this research is on tourism development (supply perspective), it is also necessary to recognise the variety of stakeholders involved in destinations. Disasters are not a new phenomenon and, thus, much research has been conducted into the role of stakeholders in post-disaster scenarios (Asgary, Badri, Rafieian and Hajinejad, 2006), where stakeholder analysis acts as a device, or set of tools, with differing drives in its purposes in the fields of policy, management and development planning (Varvazovszky and Brugha, 2000; Brugha and Varvazovszky, 2000). From a different angle, Seaton's (2001) Heritage Force Field recognises the potential diversity of stakeholders and their interests in dark heritage sites – the focus for Seaton is more from a tourism perspective. By applying the two differing perspectives on stakeholders, this research will aim to assess the role of stakeholders in L'Aquila since the earthquake. Thus, the forth objective of this research is as follows:

Objective 4: To identify the role of different stakeholders in L'Aquila's 'dark' post-disaster tourism development.

1.6 Philosophical approach to the research

This thesis will adopt a social constructionist position. According to Berger (1967), the social construction of reality concept focuses on the influences of the external environment and social institutions on social reality or on people's everyday lives and, consequently, on influences within society that may control and manipulate our ways of thinking and living. In the context of this thesis, when discussing the fundamental limitations of dark tourism development, it is important to recognise how we are shaped by society; even if we feel we are free, independent thinkers, we are arguably not. Society is essentially constructed by humans to control humans, to ensure we act as social beings; thus, social institutions, such as politics, religion, occupation or family, facilitate an environment in which we can live collectively with our fellow members (Berger, 1967). Therefore, it is important to ask questions such as: how are we shaped by the society in which we live, and how social institutions control or influence our behaviour? Consequently, if society has the ability to control humans, can it influence the possible development of 'dark' tourism after a natural disaster? Thus, the fifth objective of this research is as follows:

Objective 5: To consider how L'Aquila's social environment impacts on or influences an individuals' attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism development.

An important aspect of this will be to consider the question: can individual attitudes then be feedback into a collective environmental consciousness? As such, does the social environment impact individuals and can this be recognised as a collective attitude with regards to the development of dark tourism? To fully understand this, the literature review will also consider alternative philosophies of existentialism and humanism and their importance in understanding the construction of meaning. Additionally, place theory, the empathic consciousness, Durkheim's collective effervescence and memorialisation will be discussed in order to understand how meaning is constructed in different social realities and social entities.

1.7 Summary of research objectives

The five research objectives introduced in the preceding sections are as follows:

> *Objective 1:* Given the potential negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark', to explore critically how the local community of L'Aquila feels about and responds to the concept of dark tourism.

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Objective 2: To explore the responses of the local community of L'Aquila as it has become the focus of the post-disaster tourist gaze.

Objective 3: To review critically the applicability of the proposed Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF).

Objective 4: To identify the role of different stakeholders in L'Aquila's 'dark' post-disaster tourism development.

Objective 5: To consider how L'Aquila's social environment impacts on or influences an individuals attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism development.

1.8 Case study location

As already observed, on Monday April 6th 2009 at precisely 3.32am, an earthquake struck L'Aquila in central Italy (Figure 1.1). Measuring 5.8 on the Richter Scale and 6.3 on the Moment Magnitude Scale, it left 309 people dead, with over 1,500 people injured and around 70,000 left homeless. It destroyed and or damaged around 10,000 buildings (Eggleton, 2010; McLaughlin, 2010). Previously a centre for activity tourism in the region, the city has become a post-disaster dark attraction in its own right and, hence, an appropriate case study for research into dark tourism development from the perspective of a local community. Disasters, whilst by definition devastating, can be seen as an opportunity to re-develop, and the tourism industry should also aim to recognise this. This research will investigate what types of dark tourism attractions exist within the city since the earthquake. Furthermore, how have they emerged, who is responsible (stakeholders) and what are the impacts of such attractions (either positive or negative) for the local community and tourists?

Figure 1.1: Location of L'Aquila

L'Aquila, Italy. Situated in the region of Abruzzo.

Source: Bar-Tzur (ND)

A local photographer born in the city of L'Aquila wrote the following poem (below). Written post-disaster, it provides a brief introduction to what follows later in this thesis, particularly when embarking on the study of the devastating event that destroyed the city.

To My Family **–** Roberto Grillo

Only a minute is gone and trough the window of my sore home
I see a huge cloud above the town
I pretend with myself it would only be a fog, ten minutes later I will understand
It is the dust of our houses and our deaths
Dust that gets into the body and the soul
Which obscures the vision.
Then tears are running down from the pain and the dignity.
Those tears that make for a moment the pictures shining clear.
Afterwards I understand that dust and tears make a paste
A cement we will use to rebuild our town
And from the day "L'AQUILA IMMOTA MANET"
Will never more be FIXED and STATIC, but STRONG and FIRM.
Today the dust is gone, these tears stay.

Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 31)

1.9 Thesis structure

The structure of this thesis is similar to that of a story unfolding in a book, inasmuch as there is an introduction followed by a main body in which the reader is taken through the key themes and topics, gradually leading to a conclusion. The overall structure of the thesis is summarized in Figure 1.2 below. It is presented in two volumes; Volume One presents the theoretical analysis and Volume Two the empirical analysis. This introductory chapter has presented briefly the conceptual framework (dark tourism) and the aims and objectives of the research, as well as introducing the case study location, L'Aquila. The second chapter presents the conceptual background to the specific research topics whilst Chapters 3 and 4 critically review the relevant literatures. The discussion in these two chapters subsequently informs the construction of two conceptual frameworks that are presented in Chapter 5. Concluding the first volume of the thesis, Chapter 6 outlines the philosophical, ontological and methodological approach to empirical research. It should be noted that owing to the nature of the topics discussed in the literature review the objectives will not be presented throughout the following chapters (Chapters 2-5) in the same chronological order as presented above. Rather, they will emerge and be considered in accordance with the focus of academic themes and debates presented in the literature review. However, the concluding chapter of the thesis will provide a summary discussion on the research objectives in the above order.

Volume Two (the empirical section) presents the outcomes and analysis of primary and secondary research data. As noted above, two conceptual frameworks are proposed in Chapter 5 which guide the two stages of research (Chapters 7 and 8). Chapter 7 is a scoping stage of the research, based primarily on field visits and secondary data. Chapter 8 then presents and analyses the primary data generated through the empirical research in L'Aquila. It should be noted that throughout Chapter 8, short *Intermezzo* sections are also included; these do not contribute directly to the research findings and analysis, but serve to strengthen and add a human element to the story being told. Chapter 9 then draws out the conclusions of this thesis. This is followed by a post-script section, which provides an update on the most recent situation at the time of writing in the case study location. All sources referred to during the thesis are listed in the reference list at the end of Volume Two which is followed by relevant appendices.

Figure 1.2: Thesis Structure
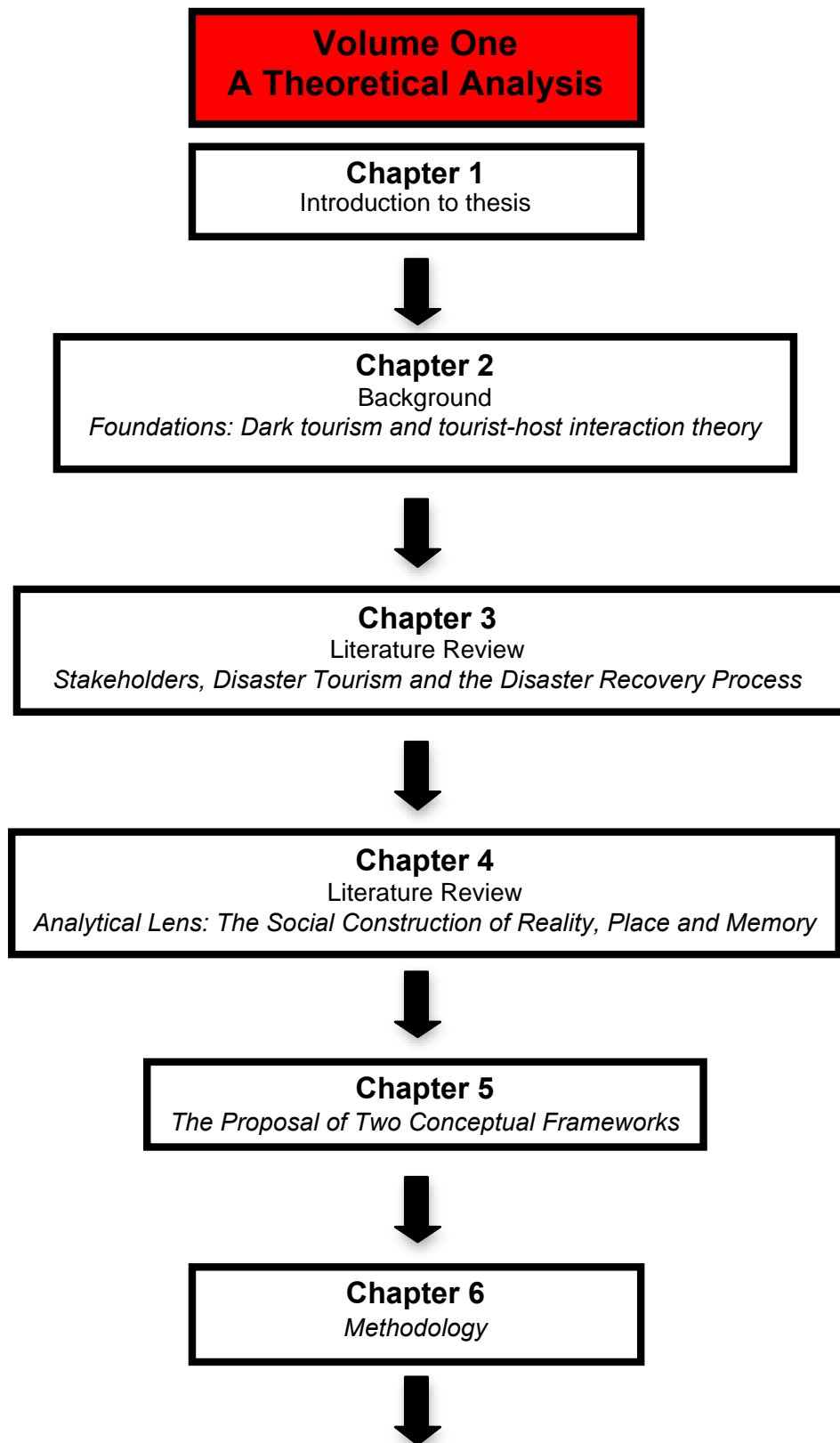
Volume One
Volume One **A Theoretical Analysis**

Chapter 1
Introduction to thesis

↓

Chapter 2
Background
Foundations: Dark tourism and tourist-host interaction theory

↓

Chapter 3
Literature Review
Stakeholders, Disaster Tourism and the Disaster Recovery Process

↓

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↓

Chapter 5
The Proposal of Two Conceptual Frameworks

↓

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Stage One Research: DLCF

Chapter 8
Stage Two Research: DTDF

Disasters as Opportunities

Intermezzo 1*: The Initial Impact: Participants Relive their Experiences*

The Social Construction of Character: An Aquilano Perspective

Intermezzo 2*: The Story of the Vittorini Familgia*

Residents Reactions to Dark Tourists and Tourism Post-Disaster: An Aquilano Perspective

The Role of Stakeholders: A Local Aquilano Perspective

Future of L'Aquila: A Participant Perspective

Chapter 9
Conclusion

Post-Script

1.10 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the thesis and, in particular, to highlight and justify the research aims and objectives. Framing this research is the concept of dark tourism, an area of academic study within the broader field of tourism studies that, as discussed continues to display a number of gaps and limitations. In particular, limited attention has been paid to the development of dark tourism (supply) from the perspective of a local community, hence the focus of this thesis is on the local community in L'Aquila, the site of a devastating earthquake, to becoming the object of the dark tourist 'gaze'. It has been established in this chapter that the philosophical approach adopted by this research is associated with the theories of social constructionism. Furthermore, the chapter has explained that the literature review will critically consider relevant theory to inform the construction of two conceptual frameworks. More specifically, Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss relevant theory that is amalgamated within the construction of the two frameworks to be applied to guide two stages of research. The Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) will be used as a critical appraisal of the general social responses and processes to post-earthquake L'Aquila. The second framework proposed in this thesis, the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF), will guide the second stage of empirical enquiry. This stage will focus on the five research objectives, enhancing our understanding of the development of a dark tourism destination from the perspective of the local community.

Prior to reviewing the specific literatures relevant to the construction of the proposed frameworks, it is first necessary to locate the research within a more systematic understanding of the development of the dark tourism concept itself and its development as an increasingly popular focus of academic study over the course of the past two decades. Moreover, given the central theme of the research – that is, local community responses to dark tourism – it is also necessary to introduce the key literature that explores host (supply) perceptions of tourism and the role of stakeholders in tourism development. It is with these topics that the next chapter is concerned.

Chapter 2

Foundations: Dark Tourism and Tourist-Host Interaction Theory

2.0 Introduction

As discussed in the preceding introductory chapter, the overall purpose of this thesis is to explore critically the consequences and implications of tourism development for a local community (in a post-disaster tourism scenario). In other words, its purpose is to enhance knowledge and understanding of the complex issues surrounding the supply of dark tourism from the perspective of local residents who, having suffered a disaster, have become the object of the 'dark' tourist gaze. In so doing, it will develop and propose two conceptual frameworks, a Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and a Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF) that will inform the empirical research in L'Aquila, Italy, a city that suffered a devastating earthquake in 2009 and has subsequently become a dark tourism destination. These frameworks are developed from a review of the relevant literatures in Chapter 3 and 4. First, it is necessary to establish the background of the thesis through a brief review of relevant foundational concepts. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide background discussions, considering briefly the contemporary understandings of dark tourism and current theory on tourist-host perceptions.

2.1 Introduction to tourism

Throughout the last half century, tourism has emerged as a significant global social and economic phenomenon. In 1950, just 25.3 million international arrivals were recorded in 2012, an important milestone was reached when, for the first time, international tourist movements surpassed the one billion mark (UNWTO, 2013). At the same time, international tourism generated US$1.3 trillion in exports whilst the overall global tourism economy (both domestic and international tourism) was worth some US$7 trillion. This remarkable and rapid growth has been driven by a number of recognised factors: greater mobility resulting from growth in air transport and car ownership, increases in personal wealth, more leisure time and the development of a sophisticated travel industry (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill, 2013).

Nevertheless, tourism remains difficult to define, arguably reflecting the multifaceted and 'abstract nature of the concept' (Burns and Holden, 1995: 5). As a socio-economic phenomenon, it can be conceptualised from two perspectives: firstly, as a platform for economic growth and, secondly, as the movement of people (Sharpley, 2011). Technical definitions of tourism typically embrace both of these, establishing parameters for the statistical measurement of tourism in terms of numbers of tourists, purpose of travel and tourism receipts. For example, the United Nations (1963) defined an international tourist as 'any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited', whilst the World Tourism Organisation defines tourism as 'The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes' (WTO/UNSTAT, 1994). Both of these serve to gauge statistical and quantitative information regarding the movement of tourists.

In contrast to such technical definitions, more holistic and nuanced definitions attempt to conceptualise tourism in terms of its wider social function and anthropological meaning (Gilbert, 1990). In so doing, alternative conceptual definitions consider tourists to be at the heart of the definition of tourism, as 'a person at leisure who also travels' (Nash, 1981). At a fundamental level, tourism can be simply understood as the movement of people (Sharpley, 2011) and can be conceptually defined as a 'highly significant dimension of temporary mobility' (Hall, 2005: 21) which, often referred to and promoted as 'travel', encompasses a journey and a temporary stay at a destination. Nonetheless, it is apparent that this accounts for a single aspect of the broad spectrum of the phenomenon of tourism. That is, it is also important to consider the contemporary meaning and significance of tourism as an escape from everyday life through holidays and annual breaks in its various forms, such as 'ritualised pleasure' (Shields, 1991) or as a desire to experience the 'other' (Scheyvens, 2002).

Moreover, tourism comprises not only the movement of people, but also of goods, resources, wealth and information across the globe. The multi-faced nature of tourism is modeled by Leiper (1990) as a system (see Figure 2.1 below), which involves tourists and economic activities in both the tourist generating region and destination region interacting with each other, linked by the outward and return journeys in the transit region.

Figure 2.1: The tourism system
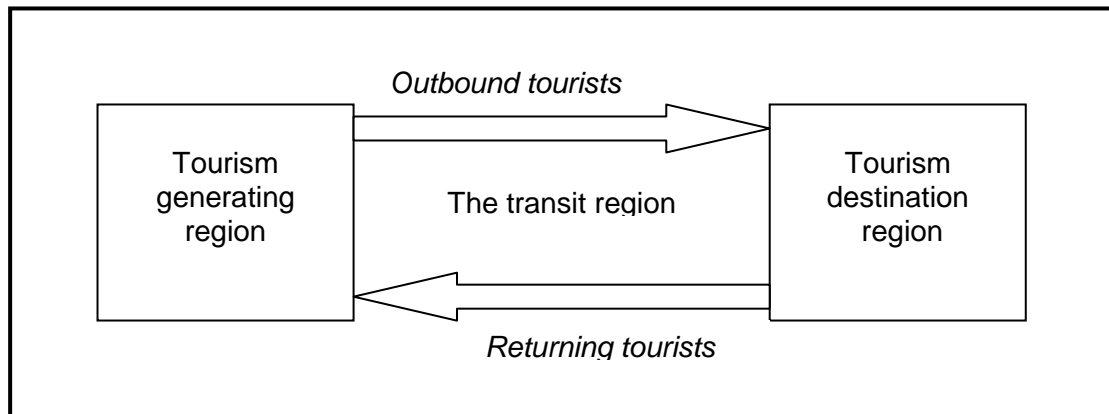
Source: Adapted from Leiper (1990)

The tourism system highlights the functions of supply and demand as fundamental to the existence of tourism as both a 'social victory' and as an economic phenomenon (Krippendorf, 1986). Within this system, the tourist's principal role is as a consumer of the tourism product (the tourist experience) at the destination (McKercher, 1993) conversely, the main objective or purpose of the tourism industry is its supply function, that is, to meet the demands of tourists or to facilitate tourists in satisfying their demands. Evidently, then, the level of tourist satisfaction (that is, a satisfying tourist experience) is determined in part by the effective delivery of services and facilities which meet the needs and demands of the tourist. Thus, attention needs to be focused on the development of tourism services from a supply perspective in general, and from the destinational perspective in particular (Budowski, 1976). Specifically, for a harmonious relationship to exist between local people and tourists at the place where the tourism experience is consumed – seen by many as fundamental to the successful development of tourism (Zhang, Inbakaran & Jackson, 2006) – then the support for tourism amongst local people (who are, in effect one element of the tourism 'product') is fundamental to satisfying tourist experiences. The question then is: is such a balance achievable or realistic in post-disaster scenarios, particularly when a new 'dark' tourism product or experience emerges as a direct result of the disaster?

This is, of course, a question that will be explored in more detail in the empirical research and will be discussed later in this thesis. For the purposes of this chapter, it is now necessary to briefly review the foundations of the concept of dark tourism and, in particular, to identify the gaps and limitations in our knowledge and understanding of which, despite the increasing academic attention paid to the subject, still remain.

2.2 Dark tourism – The story so far

As observed in Chapter 1, despite the extended history and growing contemporary confirmation of travel to sites / attractions associated with death, disaster or suffering, it is only somewhat recently that attention from an academic perspective has focused on 'dark tourism' as a concept and term that collectively embraces such sites, attractions and experiences. Although the term was first coined by Malcom Foley and John Lennon in the 1990s in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (Foley and Lennon, 1996), it was the succeeding publication of their book *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster,* by Lennon and Foley (2000) that not only introduced the concept to a wider audience but also stimulated interest in the concept amongst academics and the media. Since then, increasing academic attention has been paid to the topic, evidenced by the growing body of literature across a variety of disciplines which considers the concept from various specific sub-themes. As noted, the table highlights the range of extant research in dark tourism. In so doing, it categorises articles under a variety of subheadings. These are not, however, definitive. That is, many of the cited works could be located within many of the subsections. Nevertheless, the main purpose of categorising the material is to emphasise the range of academic, management, cultural and philosophical perspectives from which research has approached the emerging issues in the sphere of dark tourism.

A full review of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, although Table 2.1 below summarises the evolution of dark tourism research since 1996. Inevitably, given the increasing variety of disciplines drawing on the concept, Table 2.1 does not present an exhaustive list of extant research into dark tourism. Nevertheless, it serves to highlight the increasing scope and depth of the research, illustrating the variety of tourism attractions, experiences and contexts that have become the focus of academic attention within the theme of the dark tourism. More in-depth reviews can also be found in Sharpley and Stone (2009) and, more recently, Biran and Hyde (2013) and Stone (2013).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, despite the ever-increasing volume of research into dark tourism, not only does the literature remain eclectic, lacking a sound (or, at least, generally accepted) theoretical basis, but also a number of themes and issues relevant to dark tourism have yet to receive rigorous academic attention. One such issue is, of course, the role and perceptions of the local community as stakeholders (and victims) in post-disaster dark tourism destinations, hence the focus of this thesis. Indeed, as the following chronological review of the development of

dark tourism research reveals, this is one of a number of issues relevant to dark tourism that continues to demand academic scrutiny.

Table 2.1: Dark tourism research the story so far

Battlefield Tourism		
Author / Date	**Topic**	**Article Focus**
Seaton (2000)	"Another weekend away looking for dead bodies...": battlefield tourism on the Somme and in Flanders.	This article reports a phenomenological investigation into the perspectives and experiences of battlefield tourists visiting the landscapes of the Western Front, the setting of trench warfare in the Great War of 1914-1918.
Gatewood and Cameron (2004)	Battlefield pilgrims at Gettysburg National Military Park.	This article reports on the motives people provide for visiting Gettysburg National Military Park and the perceptions and images they have of the park.
Holguin (2005)	"National Spain Invites You": Battlefield Tourism during the Spanish Civil War.	The author explores an episode in Spanish Civil War history - in National Spain Invites You': Battlefield Tourism during the Spanish Civil War.
Cooper (2006)	The Pacific War battlefields: tourist attractions or war memorials?	This paper considers on the continuing debate on Japan's involvement in the Pacific War 1941–45, and the development of Pacific battlefields as tourist destinations.
Iles (2006)	Recalling the Ghosts of War: Performing Tourism on the Battlefields of the Western Front.	This article explores the ways in which tourists embarking on commercial coach tours engage with the battlefield landscape by examining contemporary tourist performance.
Ryan (2007)	Battlefield Tourism: history, place and interpretation.	Through a series of case studies that involve past conflict in China, the United States, The South Pacific and Europe, the nature of battlefield sites as tourist locations are explored.
Iles (2008)	Encounters in the Fields – Tourism to the Battlefields of the Western Front.	This paper explores the ways in which tourists embarking on commercial coach tours engage with the battlefield landscape by examining contemporary tourist performance. It also considers the role of the tour guide in setting and directing the tourist encounter.
Winter (2009)	Tourism, Social Memory and the Great War.	This paper uses social memory theory to describe the processes through which tourism can engage in creating and perpetuating the memory of the Great War.
Winter (2010)	Battlefield visitor motivations: explorations in the Great War town of Ieper, Belgium.	This study measured the motivations for education, holiday and remembrance for an international sample of visitors to the Great War town of Ieper in Belgium.
Zhang (2010)	Of Kaoliang, Bullets and Knives: Local Entrepreneurs and the Battlefield Tourism Enterprise in Kinmen (Quemoy), Taiwan.	This paper explores the role of local entrepreneurs in the branding of Kinmen (Quemoy) Island, Taiwan as a battlefield tourism destination.
Dunkley, Morgan and Westwood (2011)	Visiting the trenches: Exploring meanings and motivations in battlefield tourism.	This paper provides insights into the motivations and experiences of tourists who visit sites associated with war and conflict specifically 25 individuals who participated in a tour of the World War One battlefields of the Somme and Ypres.
Cheal and Griffin (2013)	Pilgrims and patriots: Australian tourist experiences at Gallipoli.	This paper explores the Australian tourist experience at Gallipoli in order to better understand how tourists approach and engage with battlefield sites and how the experience may transform them.

Holocaust Tourism		
Author / Date	**Topic**	**Article Focus**
Young (1993)	The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning.	In this study of Holocaust memorials, Young explores both the idea of the monument and its role in public memory, discussing how every nation remembers the Holocaust according to its own traditions, ideals, and experiences, and how these memorials reflect the ever-evolving meanings of the Holocaust in Europe, Israel and America.
Dann (1998)	The Dark Side of Tourism	The article address the issues concerned with the commodification of the Holocaust and as a means of selling death as a visitor attraction.
Cole (1999)	Selling the Holocaust. From Auschwitz to Schindler: How History is Bought, Packaged and Sold.	Cole shows us an "Auschwitz-land" where tourists have become the "ultimate ruberneckers" passing by and gazing at someone else's tragedy. He shows a US Holocaust Museum that provides visitors with a "virtual Holocaust" experience.
Beech (2000)	The Enigma of Holocaust Sites as Tourism Attractions - The Case of Buchenwald'.	This article considers the case of Buchenwald Concentration Camp, which has a memorial site, some extant buildings and an interpretation centre.
Zelizer (2001)	Visual culture and the Holocaust.	Whilst not specifically focused on dark tourism, Zelizer's book looks at both the traditional and the unconventional ways in which the holocaust has been visually represented.
Miles (2002)	Auschwitz: Museum interpretation and darker tourism.	Attention is drawn on underscoring the significance between the distinction of 'dark' and 'darker' tourism. Particularly, focusing on the authenticity in terms of site interpretation in regards to the differing motivations for Holocaust memorial construction and visitation.
Hoskins (2003)	'Signs of the Holocaust: Exhibiting Memory in a Mediated Age'.	This article examines one site of contemporary Holocaust representation: the Holocaust Exhibition housed at the Imperial War Museum, London.
Tumarkin (2005)	Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy.	"Traumascapes" is a deeply-felt and wonderfully intelligent exploration of international sites where traumas of great magnitude have occurred – Moscow theater; Pennsylvania, USA plane hijacking during 9/11; 2002 Bali bombings; Bosnia and Port Arthur colonial penal settlement in Tasmania.
Thurnell-Read (2009)	Engaging Auschwitz: an analysis of young travellers' experiences of Holocaust Tourism.	This article considers the experiences of young travellers visiting the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland.
Biran, Poria and Oren (2011)	Sought Experiences at (Dark) Heritage Sites.	The authors focus on Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp (here after Auschwitz), the epitome of dark tourism
Cohen (2011)	Educational dark tourism at an in populo site: The Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem.	This article is based on a study at Yad Vashem, the Shoah (Holocaust) memorial museum in Jerusalem.
Podoshen and Hunt (2011)	Equity restoration, the Holocaust and tourism of sacred sites.	This paper, utilising netnographic data, examines the reactions of some global Jewish citizens in relation to tourism activity surrounding historic Holocaust sites located in Eastern Europe.
Kidron (2013)	Being there together: dark family tourism and the emotive experience of co-presence in the holocaust past.	This study examines the motivations and lived experiences of Israeli descendants of Holocaust survivors who set out on family roots trips to heritage sites and sites of atrocity accompanied by their survivor parents.

Ghost Tourism		
Author / Date	**Topic**	**Article Focus**
Inglis and Holmes (2003)	Highland and other haunts: Ghosts in Scottish Tourism.	This paper traces the history of the parts played by spooks in constructing Scotland as a prime tourism location
Holmes and Inglis (2004)	Selling the Spectre: Ghost Stories and Tourism in Modern Scotland.	The paper considers the historical development of these literary forms, the reasons for their genesis, and the often-strange mutations they are undergoing in the present day.
Gentry (2007)	Walking with the Dead: The Place of Ghost Walk Tourism in Savannah, Georgia.	This paper introduces ghost walk tourism as a mobile form of dark tourism; discusses the role of walking in the formation of sense of place and relates the negotiation of the tour experience between guide and participants in terms of performance.
DeLyser (2010)	Authenticity on the Ground: Engaging the Past in a California Ghost Town.	Study explores how the concept of authenticity is constructed, experienced and employed by visitors and staff in the provocative landscape of the ghost town of Bodie, California.
Holloway (2010)	Legend-tripping in spooky spaces: ghost tourism and infrastructures of enchantment.	This paper investigates the increasingly popular practice of ghost tourism comprising urban ghost tours and organised paranormal investigations. Examples from participant observation on ten ghost tours across the UK, an overnight vigil in a Tudor mansion are used.
Valdez (2010)	Ghost legends from the historical district of Puebla, Mexico. A complementary tourist attraction?	This study supports the creation and promotion of three tourist routes containing the most famous historical buildings linked to legends of ghosts and supernatural phenomena in order to increase their interest for tourists in the historical district of the city of Puebla, Mexico.
Rittichainuwat (2011)	Ghosts: A travel barriers to tourism recovery.	This study aims to assess whether or not beliefs in ghosts really deter tourists from traveling to disaster-hit destinations. Study examines tourist barriers associated with tsunami-hit destinations.
Garcia (2012)	Management issues in dark tourism attractions: the case of ghost tours in Edinburgh and Toledo.	This article explores the interpretative, managerial, and ethical issues present in dark tourism, namely ghost tours.
Thompson (2012)	Entertaining Ghosts: Gettysburg Ghost Tours and the Performance of Belief.	The author's aim is to define the ghost tour as a distinct genre and examine each of the elements that comprise a ghost tour performance in Gettysburg - the site of the largest battle and death toll during the entire American Civil War.
Dracula Tourism		
Author / Date	**Topic**	**Article Focus**
Muresan and Smith (1998)	Dracula's castle in Transylvania: Conflicting heritage marketing strategies.	This paper explores issues of marketing, policies for interpretation and the understanding of heritage sites within a formerly socialist society in transition to a market economy, and offers solutions to produce a better understanding of the role of heritage tourism in a transitional economy.
Bristow and Newman (2004)	Myth vs. Fact: An exploration of Fright Tourism.	This paper investigates the new phenomena called "Fright Tourism." This research explores this topic by comparing and contrasting two sites in the world that have a reputation of sinister activity. Salem, Massachusetts and Transylvania, Romania are excellent examples of sites that promote fright tourism.
Tanasescu (2006)	Tourism, Nationalism and Post-Communist Romania: The Life and Death of Dracula Park.	The following analysis examines how Romania is responding to Dracula as a tourist attraction and focuses on the debate surrounding the proposed development of Dracula Park.
Cosma, Cornelia	Should Dracula Myth	This paper tries to find an answer to the controversial question -

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
and Negrusa (2007)	be a Brand to Promote Romania as a Tourist Destination?	should the Dracula myth be used as a brand promoting Romania as a tourist destination?
Iordanova (2007)	Cashing in on Dracula: Eastern Europe's Hard Sells.	This article aims to show that attempts intended to capitalise directly on Dracula's trademark image.
Light (2007)	Dracula tourism in Romania Cultural identity and the state.	This paper examines the way the Romanian state has managed and negotiated such tourism, in both socialist and post-socialist contexts.
Jamal and Tanase (2009)	Impacts and Conflicts Surrounding Dracula Park, Romania: The Role of Sustainable Tourism Principles.	Sustainable tourism principles are applied to a historical case study of tourism-related impacts and conflicts over Dracula Park and its proposed location in Sighisoara (Romania). Analysis of this large theme park project reveals a highly political landscape, with complex interdependencies attributable to a diversity of stakeholders and issues ranging in scale and scope from the local to the global.
Banyai (2010)	Dracula's image in tourism: western bloggers versus tour guides.	This study attempts to describe the different Western images related to Dracula tourism, and the role Bran Castle tour guides have in the image formation process.
Reijnders (2011)	Stalking the count: Dracula, Fandom and Tourism.	This article investigates why people feel the need to connect fictional stories, such as *Dracula*, with identifiable physical locations, and why they subsequently want to visit these locations.
Larson, Lundberg and Lexhagen (2013)	Thirsting for vampire tourism: Developing pop culture destinations.	The pop culture phenomenon the Twilight Saga (book and film series) is in this paper used as an example to explore how a pop culture phenomenon can affect destinations, and how destinations manage this type of tourism. Case studies in Forks, WA, in the USA, Volterra, Montepulciano in Italy and British Columbia in Canada illustrate different tourism destination strategies.

Ground Zero

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Blair (2002)	Tragedy turns to tourism at Ground Zero.	The article addresses the rise of tourism around the vicinity of Ground Zero – frequently seen as a one of the more recognisable dark tourism attractions.
Lisle (2004)	Gazing at Ground Zero: tourism, voyeurism and spectacle.	This essay uses the temporary viewing platform at the site of the former World Trade Center to explore human fascination with violence, conflict and disaster. It illustrates how discourses of voyeurism and authenticity promote a desire for sites of horror, and examines how that desire both disrupts and reinforces our prevailing interpretations of global politics.
Hajer (2005)	Rebuilding Ground Zero. The Politics of Performance.	This paper analyses the planning process of rebuilding Ground Zero as a case in which politics was unhinged and new procedures were invented on the spot. It describes the rebuilding of Ground Zero as a case of an 'unhappy performance' in which, as the process continued, the wider publicly-shared determination to create a bold symbolic response to terrorism lost out to uninspired political-economic reasoning.
Marcoux and Legoux (2005)	Ground Zero: A Contested Market.	This article provides a theoretical reflection on the documentary Selling Tragedy, which relates to the commodification of Ground Zero.
Sturken (2007)	Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero.	Sturken investigates the consumerism that followed from the September 11th attacks; the contentious, ongoing debates about memorials and celebrity-architect designed buildings at Ground Zero.
Potts (2012)	'Dark tourism' and the kitschification' of 9/11.	The article interrogates the framing of New York's Ground Zero as a 'dark tourist' destination, with particular reference to the entanglement of notions of kitsch in academic discussions of the events of 11 September 2001.

Terrorism and Tourism

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Richter and Waugh Jr. (1986)	Terrorism and tourism as logical companions.	This article looks at the relationship between tourism and terrorism from several perspectives and the sensitivity of the tourism industry to general political strife and the vulnerability of travellers and tourist facilities to terroristic activity.
Ryan (1993)	Crime, violence, terrorism and tourism: An accidental or intrinsic relationship?	The relationship between crime and tourism is discussed.
Pizman (1999)	A Comprehensive Approach to Classifying Acts of Crime and Violence at Tourism Destinations.	Based on a review of 300 cases of acts of crimes and violence that occurred at tourist destinations around the world in the last decade, a comprehensive typology is created.
Pratt (2002)	Terrorism and tourism: Bahamas and Jamaica fight back.	This study highlights the fragility of the tourism industry in developing countries.
Beirman (2003)	Restoring tourism destinations in crisis: a strategic marketing approach.	This book deals with destinations marketing in specific crises events: war, terrorism, natural disasters, crime waves, and epidemics.
Tynon and Chavez (2006)	Adapting a Tourism Crime Typology: Classifying Outdoor Recreation Crime.	The authors tested a crime typology developed for tourism destinations in a U.S. National Forest recreation setting. Specific objectives were to classify the attributes of crime and violence, examine the effects of crime and violence on visitor demand.

Genocide Tourism

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Grosspietsch (2006)	Perceived and projected images of Rwanda: visitor and international tour operator perspectives.	The present study was conducted with the purpose of determining and comparing the images of Rwanda as a tourist destination as perceived by visitors and as projected by international tour operators.
Mazimhaka (2007)	Diversifying Rwanda's tourism industry: a role for domestic tourism.	This paper examines the role of domestic tourism in Rwanda's developing tourism economy and argues that positive benefits can be obtained through the greater promotion of domestic tourism in the country.
Hughes (2008)	Dutiful tourism: Encountering the Cambodian genocide.	This paper considers contemporary international tourism to a genocide museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The paper is concerned with the ways in which visiting practices encouraged at the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide Crimes in the immediate post-genocide period (the 1980s) continue to affect visiting practices in the present.
Hitchcott (2009)	Travels in Inhumanity: Véronique Tadjo's Tourism in Rwanda.	This article focuses on *L'Ombre d'Imana: voyages jusqu'au bout du Rwanda* (2000), the travel narrative she published as a result of this trip.
Robb (2009)	Violence and Recreation: Vacationing in the Realm of Dark Tourism.	In this article the author takes a cross-regional approach to a diverse group of dark tourism sites, from Rwanda and Argentina to the United States and Brazil, considering their aesthetics and the experiences of visitors to contribute to the theoretical exploration of the relationship between tourism and violence.
Simic (2009)	Remembering, Visiting and Placing the Dead: Law, Authority and Genocide in Srebrenica.	The article address the recent development of 'dark tourism' in Srebrenica and the blurring between voyeurism and educational enlightenment that such tourism provokes. The article examines the legal and ethical disputes surrounding the authority over the dead who rest in the Srebrenica Cemetery complex.

Kistner (2010)	Commemoration and Counter-Memory: 'The Genocide Series'.	At the end of his monumental work *Lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora finds himself baffled by the paradox that the critical work of counter-memory has been overtaken by the obsession with commemoration. This paper explores this paradox.
Tadjo (2010)	Genocide: the changing landscape of memory in Kigali.	This paper reflects on the memory of the genocide in Rwanda.
Bolin (2012)	On the Side of Light: Performing Morality at Rwanda's Genocide Memorials.	In Rwanda, numerous memorials have arisen to remember the 1994 genocide and its victims. This paper considers the effect of the national genocide memorials on Western tourist visitors, in the context of research on 'dark tourism' and Western attitudes toward death and the dead.
Bonnekessen (2013)	Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846–1873.	The book consists of three parts, Imagining, Perpetrating, and Supporting Genocide.

Slavery Tourism

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Dann and Seaton (2001)	Slavery, Contested Heritage and Thanatourism.	This article introduces a collection of eight revised papers that focus on the connection between slavery and tourism.
Richards (2005)	What Is to Be Remembered? Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons.	This paper explores performances of identity enacted by black tourists and hosts in the "contact zone" of Ghana's castle-dungeons, now designated World Heritage sites because of the transatlantic slave trade that occurred there.
Buzinde and Santos (2009)	Interpreting slavery Tourism.	This inquiry explores the manner in which tourists endow a former slave plantation with meaning by promoting or demoting its cultural authority.
Mowatt and Chancellor (2011)	Visiting death and life: Dark Tourism and Slave Castles.	This study is informed by combining data from interviews that were conducted with 14 individuals pre- and post-travel to Cape Coast Castle, Ghana, alongside elicited photographs from the site, and a narrative analysis on other visitations and reflections of coastal castles and bringing the discussion of these sites into an overall conceptual discussion of dark tourism.

Prison Tourism

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Shackley (2001)	Potential Futures for Robben Island: shrine, museum or theme park?	This article focuses on the debates surrounding the future of Robben Island which include its position within the multicultural heritage of the Western Cape, whether or not it should be developed as a conference centre including residential accommodation, and to what extent its message should be politicised.
Strange and Kempa (2003)	Shades of dark tourism: Alcatraz and Robben Island.	The paper argues for an analysis that accounts for the multiple shades of penal history marketing and interpretation - focusing on sites such as Alcatraz in the United States, and Robben Island in South Africa.
Schrift (2004)	The Angola Prison Rodeo: Inmate Cowboys and Institutional Tourism.	This article examines the Angola prison rodeo as a form of tourist performance and ritual. It argues that the rodeo capitalises on the public's fascination with criminality through the spectacle of animalistic inmate others subdued by a progressive penal system.
Wilson (2004)	Dark tourism and the celebrity prisoner: Front and back regions in representations of an Australian historical prison.	This article discusses two very different entities utilising Goffman's vocabulary of dramaturgy, and examines the links between the two. One entity is an institution: Pentridge Prison, the former maximum-security jail in Melbourne's northern suburbs. The other is a 'celebrity' whom, a considerable portion of the general public has come to associate with Pentridge's evolving post- operational front region, and who is arguably its most famous living ex-inmate: the criminal-turned-writer Mark Brandon Read, universally known as 'Chopper'.

Wilson (2008)	Prison: culture memory and dark tourism	This book addresses a fundamental question: Do the interpretations and presentations of the sites include and fairly represent the personal stories and experiences associated with those prisons? This book examines avenues via which neglected narratives may be glimpsed or inferred, presenting a number of examples. The book also focuses on the influence of 'celebrity prisoners', whose links to the penal system are exploited as promotional features by the sites and in some cases by the individuals themselves.
Walby and Piche (2011)	The polysemy of punishment memorialisation: Dark tourism and Ontario's penal history museums.	Contributing to debates about cultural representations of prisons and prisoners, as well as exploring the crossover between the dark tourism literature and cultural criminology, this article reflects on how penal museums in the province of Ontario, Canada, create and communicate meaning as it regards imprisonment and punishment.
Welch and Macuare (2011)	Penal tourism in Argentina: Bridging Foucauldian and neo-Durkheimian perspectives.	This project explores penal tourism in Argentina in ways that reveal key forms of state power alongside important cultural signs, symbols, and messages.
Wilson (2011)	Australian Prison Tourism: A Question of Narrative Integrity.	The article discusses the special nature of prison tourism in Australia, given the nation's origins, just over two centuries ago, as a penal colony, and the significant role thus played by convicts in the development of Australian society.
Ross (2012)	Touring imprisonment: A descriptive statistical analysis of prison museums.	Most of the prison museums in the United States are in California, Colorado, and Texas. This paper briefly reviews the scholarly literature about jail and prison museums.

Dark Tourism / Thanatourism Concepts

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Seaton (1996)	Guided by the dark: from thanatopsis to thanatourism.	The paper looks at the historical development of Thanatoptic elements in travel and shows how the Dark Tourism can be located within a historical tradition which sheds light on how it should be defined, typified and viewed in contemporary society. Thanatopis, death are captured in the concept of tourism bring forth the modern origins of dark tourism.
Foley and Lennon (1997)	Dark Tourism – An Ethical Dilemma.	The authors place emphasis and critical attention to the ethical dilemmas engulfed within the act of travel associated with death and disaster.
Lennon and Foley (2000)	Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster.	The book focuses on the conceptual attraction of visiting sites associated with death and disaster.
Seaton (2002)	Thanatourism's final frontiers? Visits to cemeteries, churchyards and funerary sites as sacred and secular pilgrimage.	The paper examines the historical and contemporary status of cemeteries, churchyards and other funerary sites, and their textual characteristics, as pilgrimage goals.
Stone (2005a)	Consuming Dark Tourism - a call for research.	The article calls for the development of consumer behaviour models, which incorporate contemporary socio-cultural aspects of death and dying.
Stone (2006a)	A dark tourism spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related sites, attractions and exhibitions.	In this article the author argues that certain suppliers (of dark tourism) may indeed, conceptually at least, share particular product features, perceptions and characteristics, which can then be loosely translated into various 'shades of darkness'.
Wight (2006)	Philosophical and methodological praxes in dark tourism: Controversy,	The article comments on a cross section of publications written on this subject in the context of philosophical issues, research methodologies, emerging paradigms in the topic, contemporary debate and controversies.

Stone (2007)	Dark Tourism: the ethics of exploiting tragedy.	Stone suggests sound management and governance is fundamental to ensuring dark tourism sites are not reduced to simply a voyeuristic tourist gaze, where people come to gawp upon others' grief and misfortune.
Stone and Sharpley (2008)	Consuming dark tourism: A thanatological perspective.	Despite increasing academic attention paid to dark tourism, understanding of the concept remains limited, particularly from a consumption perspective. That is, the literature focuses primarily on the supply of dark tourism; less attention, however, has been paid to the demand for 'dark' touristic experiences. This theoretical paper seeks to address this gap in the literature.
Bowman and Pezzullo (2009)	What's so 'Dark' about 'Dark Tourism'? Death, Tours, and Performance.	The essay identifies and interrogates the scholarly and political assumptions behind labeling tourist destinations at sites of death as 'dark'.
Sharpley and Stone (2009)	The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism.	This book explores conceptual themes and debates surrounding dark tourism. It explores the wider disciplinary context to establish informed relationships between the theory and practice of dark tourism.
Walter (2009)	Dark tourism: Mediating Between the Dead and the Living.	First the author identifies a range of mediators, and then enquires what kind of relationships dark tourists and others have with the dead. This is followed by an enquiry into what kinds of encounters with death are involved, and, finally, the author questions the current trend to analyse dark tourism in terms of motives and demand.
Stone (2010)	Death, Dying and Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis.	Drawing upon thanatological discourse – that is, the analysis of society's perceptions of and reactions to death and dying – the research objective is to explore the potential of dark tourism as a means of contemplating mortality in (Western) societies.
Stone (2012)	Dark Tourism. Heterotopias and Post-Apocalyptic Places: The Case of Chernobyl.	The purpose of this chapter is to critically explore the touristification of Chernobyl and, in particular, examine how a place of industrial death and disaster convey broader political narratives and identity.
Podoshen (2013)	Dark tourism motivations: Simulation, emotional contagion and topographic comparison.	This paper examines dark tourism consumption motivations. This study traces the dark tourism motivations related to "blackpackers" and fans of the musical performance art known as black metal.
Raine (2013)	A dark tourist spectrum.	The purpose of this paper is to develop a typology of dark tourists through an investigation of people's motivations to visit burial grounds. This research extends Stone's Dark Tourism Spectrum and Seven Dark Suppliers framework by identifying nine types of dark tourists.
Stone (2013)	Dark tourism scholarship: a critical review.	This review paper scrutinises dark tourism scholarship and, subsequently, offers original insights into the potential role dark tourism may play in the public representation of death, as well as highlighting broader interrelationships dark tourism has with research into the social reality of death and the significant Other dead.

Conceptualising Dark Tourism

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Buzinde and Santos (2008)	Representations of Slavery.	Adopting collective memory as the conceptual framework, this study sought to explore dominant narratives of a publicly owned former slave plantation opened to tourists.
Bigley, Lee, Chon and Yoon (2010)	Motivations for War-related Tourism: A Case of DMZ Visitors in Korea.	Study analyses the motivations of visitors to the Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) and examine those findings relative to a review of conceptual research related to identifying the motivations for travel to war-related tourism destinations.

Stone (2011a)	Dark Tourism: towards a new post-disciplinary research agenda.	The author suggests that some dark tourism research has been characterised by a banality that either illustrates deficient conceptual underpinning or provides for limited disciplinary synthesis.
Farmaki (2013)	Dark tourism revisited: a supply/demand conceptualisation.	The purpose of this paper is to advance the conceptualisation of dark tourism by evaluating both the supply-side drivers for dark tourism development and the demand-side motivations for visiting two dark heritage sites in Cyprus.

Death of 'Famous' Individuals

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Foley and Lennon (1996)	JFK and dark tourism: A fascination with assassination.	This paper sets out to explore the phenomenon that the authors have entitled Dark Tourism and to analyse evidence of its existence in the context of sites associated with the life and death of the former US President, John F. Kennedy (JFK).
Merrin (1999)	Crash, bang, wallop! What a picture! The death of Diana and the media.	This paper draws upon contemporary media theory to argue that the death of Diana represents one of the most important recent examples of a media event in which event, broadcast and audience interpenetrate to render questions of truth and falsity, original and image undecidable.
Blom (2000)	Morbid tourism: a postmodern market niche with an example from Althorp.	The paper examines locations such as Elvis Presley's grave in Graceland, Jim Morrison's in Paris and Princess Diana's at Althorp in England (all of which attract large numbers of tourists). Additionally, battlefields, places where accidents have occurred and ghost walks in old castles are other examples of a kind of attraction which draws tourists and which can be included under the heading of morbid tourism. Blom also address the emergence of increasingly sophisticated commercial activity.

Natural Disasters

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Faulkner and Vikulov (2001)	Katherine, washed out one day, back on track the next: a post-mortem of a tourism disaster.	This paper aims to refine a previously developed model for tourism disaster management plans (companion paper) by examining the case of the 1998 Australia Day flood at Katherine. In the process, the potential contribution of such a plan to destination preparedness is illustrated, and valuable insights into the details of such a plan and the more enduring tourism impacts of disasters are provided.
Ryan and Kohli (2006)	The Buried village, New Zealand – An example of dark tourism?	In 1886, the explosion of Mount Tarawera resulted in the loss of 150 lives and the burial of the village of Te Wairoa, the base from which tourists had visited the Pink and White Terraces, a silicone-stained natural formation then advertised as one of the natural wonders of the world. Since 1931, the buried site has itself been a tourist attraction and Smith and Croy have argued that it serves as an example of "dark tourism".
Coats and Ferguson (2013)	Rubbernecking or Rejuvenation: Post Earthquake Perceptions and the Implications for Business Practice in a Dark Tourism Context.	In this research the authors explore how residents of Christchurch, New Zealand negotiate the balance between being the subject of unwelcome tourist gazing and commencing the path towards economic and social recovery from the devastating earthquake.

Supply and Demand of Dark Tourism

Author / Date	Topic	Article Focus
Hanink and Stutts (2002)	Spatial demand for national battlefield parks.	A spatial demand model is developed in this research to examine some of the factors contributing to the popularity of battlefields as tourism destinations. The model is applied to a pooled data set of annual visits to 19 national battlefield parks in the years 1990, 1993, and 1996.
Marcel (2004)	Death Makes a Holiday.	In this article the author discuss the role of death in contemporary society and how death is increasingly seen as a

Author / Date		
		motivator for tourists and as a means for selecting travel destinations.
Ashworth and Hartmann (2005)	Horror and human tragedy revisited: the management of sites of atrocities for tourism.	This book deals with the management of atrocity sites, relics and memorials for tourism.
Kim and Wong (2006)	Effects of News Shock on Inbound Tourist Demand Volatility in Korea.	This study introduces the concepts and theories relating to conditional heteroscedastic volatility models and the news impact curve, and applies them in the analysis of the tourist market in Korea.
Miller and Gonzalez (2007)	When death is the destination: the business of death tourism – despite legal and social implications.	This paper views the growing popularity of death tourism which directs the confrontation with grief and mortality with the expressed purpose of orchestrating travel that culminates in assistance to end one's life.
Goatcher and Brunsden (2011)	Chernobyl and the Sublime Tourist.	This paper looks at a number of photographs from the Pripyat.com website that appear to share a visual grammar with 'tourist snap-shots'.
Kang, Scott, Lee and Ballantyne (2012)	Benefits of visiting a 'dark tourism' site: The case of the Jeju April 3rd Peace Park, Korea.	This research examines visitor experiences at a contemporary dark tourism site: the April 3rd Peace Park on Jeju Island, South Korea, a site commemorating and memorialising one of the most destructive episodes in modern Korean history.
Biran and Hyde (2013)	New perspectives on dark tourism.	The purpose of this paper is to introduce the papers in this Special Issue of IJCTHR on dark tourism. These papers take either a demand-side, supply-side, or integrated demand-and-supply side perspective to understanding dark tourism. Collectively, the papers explore tourist experiences at dark sites, the management of dark sites, ethical issues in profit making, and the involvement of indigenous peoples in site management.
Brown (2013)	Dark tourism shops: selling "dark" and "difficult" products.	The purpose of this paper is to analyse the position of the museum shop within dark tourism sites.
Buda and McIntosh (2013)	Dark tourism and voyeurism: tourists arrested for "spying" in Iran.	The purpose of this paper is to propose voyeurism as one possible lens to analyse the experiential nature of dark tourism in places of socio-political danger, thus expanding psychoanalytic understandings of those who travel to a "dark" place.
Johnston (2013)	Mark Twain and The Innocents Abroad: illuminating the tourist gaze on death.	This article offers a rereading of Twain's encounters, proposing examination of Twain's encounters as timely and useful in addressing what Seaton identifies as a gap in data on thanatourism consumption.

Heritage and Dark Tourism

Author / Date	Author / Date	Author / Date
Essah (2001)	Slavery, Heritage and Tourism in Ghana.	This paper examines the past and present of the approximately 80 slave trade-related structures erected by Europeans on the shores of the Gold Coast (now Ghana). The meaning of these monuments remains powerful, bringing to Ghana and the slave forts a stream of tourists, primarily from Europe and the Americas, on a pilgrimage to view the virtual history of buyers, sellers and victims of the Atlantic Slave Trade.
Domenico and Domenico (2009)	Tourism in Rwanda: the challenges of managing and presenting a sensitive heritage.	This chapter explores the contrasting Rwandan tourism types of 'gorilla' and 'genocide' tourism. It is also a reflexive exploration of the ways in which tourism has developed in Rwanda, especially a consideration of the challenges of managing and presenting a sensitive heritage.
Biran, Poria and Oren(Banyai 2010) (2011)	Biran, Poria and Oren(Banyai 2010) (2011)	Biran, Poria and Oren(Banyai 2010) (2011)
Hanks (2011)	Re-imagining the	Examines significant contestation of British cultural heritage in

	National Past: Negotiating the Roles of Science, Religion, and History in Contemporary British Ghost Tourism.	terms of attitudes toward science and religion, complicated by the tumultuous times or events that produce these ghosts constituting a feature of British cultural heritage.
Lemelin, Whyte, Johansen, Desbiolles, Wilson and Hemming (2013)	Conflicts, battlefields, indigenous peoples and tourism: addressing dissonant heritage in warfare tourism in Australia and North America in the twenty-first century.	The purpose of this paper is to examine the omission of Indigenous narratives in battlefields and sites of conflicts while also highlighting how certain battlefields and sites of conflicts have attempted to address dissonant heritage by diversifying interpretation strategies and implementing elements of collaborative management approaches, thereby addressing Indigenous erasure.

Dark Tourism Symposiums and Conferences		
Location / Date	**Title**	**Discussions**
The Dark Tourism Symposium Westlea Conference Center, UCLAN, Preston. (2012)	Shining the Light on Dark Tourism: an introduction to themes, issues and consequences.	The Dark Tourism Symposium Westlea Conference Center, UCLAN, Preston. (2012)
The Peace Conference The Netherlands 9-12 October (2013)	Post-Conflict, Cultural Heritage and Regional Development Wageningen University, Deviant Leisure, Dark Tourism and the (Re)configuration of Morality in Contemporary Society.	The Peace Conference The Netherlands 9-12 October (2013)
The Dark Tourism Symposium Preston. 23 September 2014	Assessing Dark Tourism Scholarship and Practice. Themes, Issues and Consequences.	The purpose of the symposium is to review the state of the dark tourism scholarship as well as highlight key themes and issues.

Dark tourism has existed in practice, if not in name, throughout history. As Sharpley (2009: 4) observes, early manifestations of dark tourism attractions or events can be traced back as far as the Roman gladiatorial games, religious pilgrimages or travel to witness medieval public executions. Indeed, according to Boorstin (1964) the first guided tour in England was an organised train trip taking tourists to observe the hanging of two murderers, whilst tours of the city morgues were a common and popular feature of nineteenth century tours of Paris (MacCannell, 1989). Equally, Seaton (1999) suggests that warfare and battlefields have for centuries represented an attraction for tourists, the Battle of Waterloo (both the event itself and subsequently the site of the battle) being a notable example. However, the number and diversity of places (sites, attractions, experiences events) that can be referred to as dark tourism has in modern times increased dramatically as numerous forms of tourism, from

visiting memorials or the sites of famous murders to more 'playful' experiences such as ghost tours or visiting 'houses of horror' have been embraced by the concept. Of these, locations related to war are considered by many to constitute the largest single category of dark tourism attractions globally (Henderson, 2000; Ryan and Kohli, 2007; Smith, 1998), although even these vary enormously, from ancient battlefields to sites such as Hiroshima in Japan.

Thus, it is not surprising, perhaps, that much of the earlier research focused on identifying and categorising different dark tourism sites and experiences, such as Dann's 'post-modernistically playful inventory' (Seaton and Lennon, 2004) – see Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: A categorisation of dark tourism

Divisions of the dark	
Perilous places: dangerous destinations from the past and present	• towns of horror • dangerous destinations
Houses of horror: buildings associated with death and horror, either actual or represented	• dungeons of death • heinous hotels
Fields of fatality: areas / land commemorating death, fear, fame or infamy	• bloody battlegrounds • the hell of the Holocaust • cemeteries for celebrities
Tours of torment: tours / visits to attractions associated with death, murder and mayhem	• mayhem and murder • the now notorious
Themes thanatos: collections /museums themes around death and suffering	• morbid museums • monuments to morality

Source: adapted from Dann (1998), cited in Sharpley (2009: 11)

Given this range and diversity of dark sites and experiences, fully categorising dark tourism on sound theoretical principles is a complex task. Not only do locations vary enormously, from the commonly cited examples of the Sixth Floor in Dallas, Texas (Foley and Lennon, 1996) or graveyards (Seaton, 2002), to Holocaust (Biran et al., 2011; Cole, 1999; Dann, 1998; Miles, 2002; Podoshen and Hunt, 2011; Strange and Kempa, 2003; Zelizer, 2001) or slavery-heritage tourism (Dann and Seaton, 2001), but the nature of the 'dark' event or significance of the site also varies. For example, there are few if any similarities between major disaster sites such as Ground Zero in New York or, indeed L'Aquila as the focus of this study, and manufactured, playful attractions such as the 'Dracula Experience' in Whitby, UK. These are very different

types of locations offering very contrasting visitor experiences, yet they can be categorised as dark tourism destinations according to definitions of the concept.

Nevertheless, frequent attempts have been made to define and label 'dark tourism'. One of the first was offered by Rojek (1993) who, pre-empting the coining of the term dark tourism some three years later, proposed the concept of 'black-spots' concept or 'the commercial development of grave sites and sites in which celebrities or large numbers of people have met with 'sudden' and 'violent death' (ibid., 1993: 136). Similarly, Lennon and Foley (2000) adopt a supply-side focus in offering a number of case studies of dark sites, whereas Seaton (1996) proposes an alternative term, namely thanatourism, thereby referring to dark tourism as a behavioural phenomenon. That is, he defines thanatourism as '…. travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death, which may, to a varying degree be activated by the person-specific features of those whose deaths are its focal objects. (ibid.,1996: 240). In so doing, he emphasises the role or motivation of the tourist, a theme followed by others such as Blom (2000) who refers to 'morbid tourism' as the focus of sudden death that quickly attracts large numbers of people or an attraction-focused artificial morbidity-related tourism. Simply stated, thanatourism may be defined as the visitation to sites or the desire to indulge in experiences that allow an individual to engage, with varying degrees of intensity, with representations of death, including memorials, music, art, poetry and so on (Seaton, 1996).

Further examples of demand-inspired dark tourism categorisations are grief-tourism (see www.grief-tourism.com) and Bristow and Newman's (2004) concept of 'fright tourism', in which individuals may be motivated by the promise of a thrill or shock from particular experiences. Here, the 'fright' aspect may not be closely related to death – though the concept of genocide tourism might also be considered to be a form of fright tourism (Beech 2009; Schaller 2007; Sharpley, 2012) – but as Dann (1998) argues, 'dicing with death' engages a tourist with his or her own senses of mortality and, as an extreme form of fright tourism, may be measured as a motive of dark tourism.

The media may also create alternative (headline grabbing) terms to describe dark tourism. For example, an article published in the Italian newspaper *La Republica* (2010) was titled 'Turisti dell'orrore', translated: 'horror tourists'. The article described tourists passing by the house of a recent murder victim, her body having been found in a nearby well. Of course, the intention of such headlines is to catch the attention of

readers and to sell newspapers, not a deliberate attempt to create a new categorisation of tourism, although they undoubtedly highlight the potential attraction of dark tourism sites and experiences to the wider public.

Irrespective of the terminology used, the fundamental significance of dark tourism places and experiences lies in the relationship between the sites / attractions and death or suffering. Indeed, some commentators, such as Tarlow (2005), identify dark tourism sites specifically as places that have witnessed death or suffering which is not only of historical significance, but which continues to impact in some way or another on our lives. The most frequently cited definition of dark tourism is that offered by Stone (2006a), who defines it as 'the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre'. In so doing, he offers a broad definition which, on the one hand, succinctly explains what dark tourism 'is' but, on the other hand, inevitably embraces a potentially limitless array of sites, destinations, attractions and experiences. Consequently, attempts have been made (and continue to be made), to categorise dark tourism according to a variety of determining factors, to create a 'spectrum' of dark tourism or, most recently, a dark tourist spectrum (Raine, 2013).

2.3 Dark tourism – A spectrum of sites

As is evident from the discussion above, numerous sites, attractions and experiences can be referred to or labeled as dark tourism, whilst there also remains disagreement over what dark tourism fundamentally is. That is, much attention has been paid to identifying and categorising particular sites or attractions, implicitly establishing dark tourism as a supply-led phenomenon. Conversely, as discussed above, Seaton (1996) notes that fundamentally dark tourism is a behavioural phenomenon defined by the motivations of the tourist's rather than the particular site / attraction characteristics. Whilst understanding the motives, behaviours and experiences of dark tourists is of course essential and, as noted below, an increasingly popular focus of dark tourism research, Stone (2005a) argues that Seaton's perspective is restricting as it focuses on dark tourism as a demand-oriented phenomenon, thus, ignoring significant issues from the supply and development perspective which is, of course, fundamental to this research.

Sharpley (2005) remains more ambivalent, arguing that it remains uncertain whether the phenomenon of dark tourism is consumer-demand driven or attraction-supply driven. Consequently, suggesting the importance of considering both the demand and supply elements when attempting to construct any kind of framework to guide

research into the phenomenon. Nevertheless, this position again emphasises the need for further research to understand the development of dark tourism from the supply side or destination / attraction perspective, an opinion supported by Stone (2006a) who acknowledges that there is a continuing need to explore in more detail issues surrounding dark tourism supply. This is not to say, of course, that the demand for dark tourism is uniform; inevitably, and as with all forms of tourism, there exist infinitely diverse motivations and behaviours amongst tourists who consume dark tourism services, products and experiences (Stone, 2006a). Moreover, understanding these motivations, behaviours and experiences is, as examined in more detail later in this thesis, of fundamental importance to the effective planning, management and interpretation of dark tourism sites (Sharpley and Stone, 2009).

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this thesis, it is important to consider the varied, complex and multifaceted nature of dark tourism sites. In other words, the term 'dark' when applied to tourism destinations can be too broad, and is unable to expose the multilayers of dark tourism supply. For example, Strange and Kempa (2003) compare the Alcatraz prison in the USA, once the home of infamous criminals but now a popular tourist attraction known as 'The Rock', with South Africa's Robben Island, the former penal complex where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated. Both sites are 'prison tourism' attractions offering political and historical narratives. However, the Alcatraz experience has been commercialised and, arguably, trivialised in the pursuit of entertainment, whereas Robben Island has yet to exploit the theme park marketing potential (Shackley, 2001). Rather, it displays a powerful political message in its design and interpretation, thus promoting remembrance, commemoration and education. Therefore, it can be suggested that these two prison destinations convey different shades of 'darkness'; Robben Island can be perceived as darker or more 'serious' in its contemporary representation of penal (in)justice than the 'lighter' experience offered by Alcatraz (Stone, 2005).

Figure 2.3: A Dark Tourism Spectrum by Stone (2006a: 151)
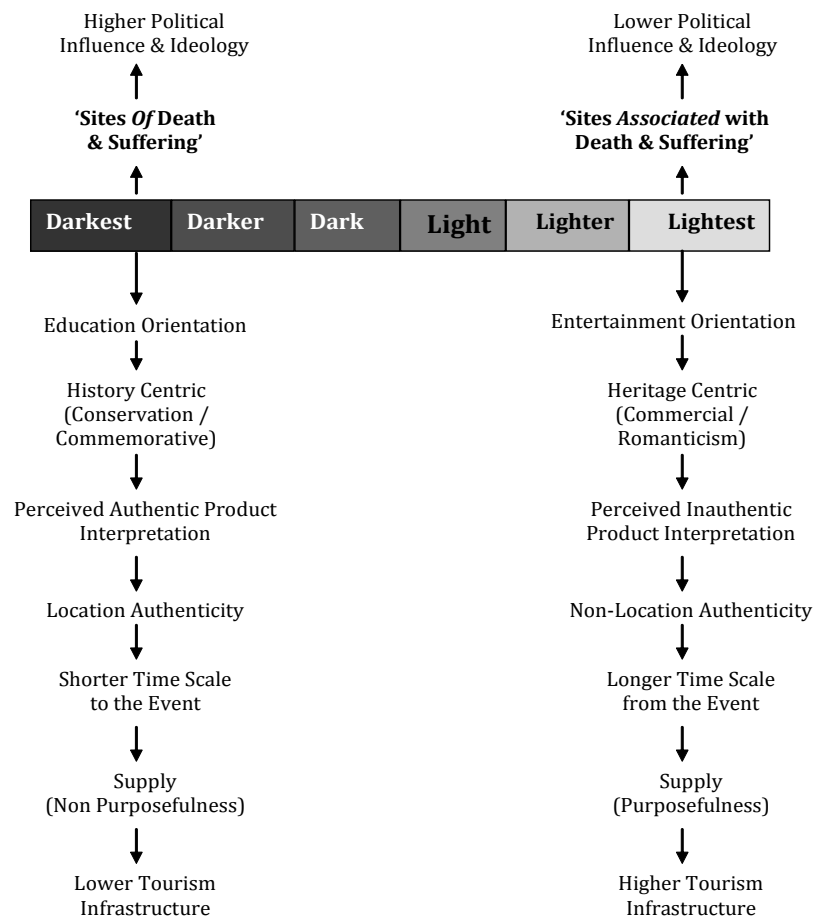
Source: adapted from Stone (2006a)

In recognition of these distinctions, Stone (2006a) proposes a dark tourism spectrum, the fundamental basis of which are the different shades of darkness in relation to sites associated *with* death and sites *of* death (Figure 2.3 above.) The spectrum identifies the perceived product features of dark tourism within a 'darkest-lightest' framework of supply (Stone, 2006a).

Related to the themes underpinning Stone's widely-cited spectrum model, Seaton (1999) observes that the (re)production and interpretation of a dark and disturbing past is not only propelled by consumer tastes, which can be influenced by the media and or marketing messages on the part of the supplier, but is also subject to transformations in the wider political and cultural climate. As a consequence, the 'shade of darkness' inherent in a dark tourism product may also change, the significance of an attraction or site adapting to external events, such as wars, political turmoil, terrorism, or natural disasters, and to the passage of time since the event, it could be argued, for example, that the darkness of a site reduces as the event it

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represents or commemorates passes from immediate memory into history. At the same time, the cultural environment can also impact on representational characteristics of a destination as, for example, movies, novels or memoirs alter the moral meanings of sites of death and the macabre (Rojek and Urry, 1997). In other words, the political and cultural environment in which the site or attraction is located influences its representation, pointing to the necessity of understanding the characteristics of that wider political and socio-cultural environment. Thus, in the context of this thesis, an exploration of the development of dark tourism in L'Aquila should, according to Rojek and Urry's (1997) argument, commence with identifying and understanding the characteristics of the cultural environment that might impact on the supply of dark tourism in the city. In other words, in the case of L'Aquila, do cultural characteristics / the cultural environment impact on or influence local residents' attitudes and feelings towards dark tourism / tourists and, if so, in what fashion?

In a similar vein to Seaton (1999), Miles (2002) also proposes the idea that a perceived shift of 'darkness' between attractions, suggesting that a 'darker-lighter' tourism paradigm exists. According to Miles there is a difference between 'dark' and 'darker' tourism, suggesting that not only is there a broader variation between the macabre and the morose in terms of how sites may be experienced, but also that a distinction exists between sites that are *of* actual death and suffering (darker) and those that are only associated *with* death and suffering (dark). Drawing on Holocaust sites to exemplify his point, Miles (2002) argues that the product on offer and experienced at the death campsite at Auschwitz-Birkenau is plausibly darker than the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. In other words, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum is a site *associated* with death, whereas Auschwitz-Birkenau is a site *of* death and, hence, possesses a significant degree of locational authenticity within its product design (Stone, 2006a). Miles (2002) further suggests that dark touristic sites should stimulate or give rise to a measure of empathy between the visitor and the victim(s) of the event being commemorated, and that this empathy may be amplified by the spatial and, indeed, temporal proximity of the site to the event. That is, visitors are likely to have a more powerful or meaningful experience the closer the site or attraction is in time and space to the event it represents or commemorates.

This temporal dimension of dark tourism is also referred to by Lennon and Foley (2000) who identify the importance of 'chronological distance' (referring to the time of tragedy and the consumption of it) and, somewhat controversially, claim that dark

tourism is a chronologically modern phenomenon. They consider that sites or attractions that commemorate events which did not take place 'within the memories of those still alive to validate them' (Lennon and Foley, 2000: 12) cannot be considered as dark sites, contradicting the claim of others such as Seaton (1996; 1999) that dark tourism has been an observable form of touristic behaviour throughout history. Nevertheless, Miles (2002) suggests that sites of more recent death and tragic events that can be transported in living memory through individuals who have survived and or witnessed those events are credibly 'darker' than those in which the events and all of the individuals involved have passed into more distant history, as in the case of, for example, Pompeii. Therefore, sites or attractions associated with more recent dark events and that, as a consequence, can be authenticated by the living, arguably encourage greater empathy on the part of the tourist and should be identified as a 'darker' destination in the dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006a). This is certainly the case with L'Aquila, where the survivors of the earthquake maintain the traumatic events of April 2009 in their living memory. This not only points to the 'darkness' of L'Aquila as, arguably, a 'darker' site, but also underlines the need to identify the emotional responses of the local community to the disaster and to take these into account in managing the city as a dark tourism destination.

From a temporal and spatial perspective, then, it is certainly evident that there exists a spectrum of 'lighter-darker' forms of dark tourism supply. Building on this concept, Stone's (2006a) dark tourism spectrum, referred to above (Figure 2.3), identifies a variety of other factors relevant to the supply of dark tourism attractions that may determine their position on the 'lightest-darkest' spectrum. These include temporal and spatial implications, but also the extent to which a site has a 'serious' (for example, education, commemoration, reconciliation) as opposed to frivolous (for example, entertainment, fun) purpose, is commercially driven, is based upon authentic history as opposed to inauthentic heritage, and so on.

The spectrum model inevitably over-simplifies the often complex and multi-layered character of dark tourism destinations and, indeed, Stone (2006a) himself acknowledges its limitations. He recognises that not only would it be unwise to argue that all dark tourism sites or attractions possess all the defining traits that allow them to be plotted precisely on the 'spectrum of supply', but also, given the potential diversity of stakeholders, that the degree of darkness of a site is likely to be perceived differently by different stakeholders. Nevertheless, as Stone (2006a) suggests, the dark tourism spectrum does provide a set of parameters within which the almost infinite diversity of dark tourism sites can be defined and categorised whilst, for the

purpose of this thesis, it emphasises the 'darkness' of L'Aquila as a disaster site, the potential role of tourism in education and commemoration, but also the need to understand the living memories of the city's population as a basis for its appropriate management as a dark tourism destination.

2.4 Summary

Up to this point, this thesis has revealed and considered the ever-growing interest in dark tourism both in academic circles and more generally. Indeed, in recent years research has increasingly been undertaken into dark tourism although to date it has primarily adopted a supply-side focus, exploring and categorising the multiplicity of dark tourism attractions and experiences (Seaton and Lennon, 2004). This is not to say that research into the demand for or consumption of dark tourism has been lacking (see Preece and Price, 2005; Sharpley, 2011; Yuill, 2003), and there is evidence of a shift in focus towards a demand perspective (Raine, 2013). Certainly, such a thanatological approach is likely to contribute to a deeper, more theoretically informed understanding of dark tourist experiences, although it must be remembered that the demand for tourism more generally is highly complex and specific to the individual; it is 'discretionary, episodic, future oriented, dynamic, socially influenced and evolving' (Pearce, 1992: 114). Consequently, tourists are individually and uniquely motivated to travel to sites associated with death and suffering, and will respond to or make sense of their experience in individual ways (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Nevertheless, the supply of dark tourism is equally complex and, as suggested earlier in this chapter, this thesis addresses a notable gap in the relevant literature.

Specifically, despite the ever-increasing academic attention paid to dark tourism, the perceptions of the local community in dark tourism destinations have been largely overlooked, particularly where they have suffered some form of disaster and, hence, have become the object of the dark tourist gaze. In other words, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of how local people at disaster sites perceive the concept of dark tourism in general, and their role as victims to be gazed upon in particular. Such knowledge and understanding is, however, crucial in order to develop and manage dark tourism in a manner which not meets the needs and expectations of the tourist but which is also beneficial to the local community and other stakeholders. Indeed, it is arguably even more crucial in the context of a 'darker' site, such as L'Aquila, where the local community live in temporal as well as spatial proximity to the event and where the development of dark tourism may not only enhance visitors

understanding of the scale and impact of the disaster but also may contribute to the recovery and redevelopment process.

In short, when planning and managing a 'dark' tourism destination, the needs of both tourists and the local community must be taken into account. Therefore, it is essential to enhance not only theoretical but also practical understanding and knowledge of the local community's perceptions of and attitudes towards 'dark' tourism, in a disaster site. L'Aquila is, of course, an example of such a site, providing the opportunity to explore, through empirical research the issues surrounding the supply of dark tourism and in particular, the complexity of host perceptions of tourists in such a destination. Thus, it is important to address briefly the literature on host perceptions of tourism.

2.5 Tourism development: Host perceptions of tourism

2.5.1 Introduction

Having identified the limitations in dark tourism research in general, and the lack of knowledge of host perceptions of 'dark' tourism in particular, the purpose of this section is to review briefly contemporary understandings of host perceptions of tourism as a background to the development of the two conceptual frameworks in the following chapters.

As noted above, it is widely recognised that successful tourism development is dependent upon on the achievement of a harmonious affiliation between tourists, the people and places they encounter, and the businesses that supply tourism services (Zhang, Inbakaran and Jackson, 2006). Tourism represents one of the world's major discretionary transfers of wealth, offering income, government revenues, foreign exchange, employment opportunities, and business and infrastructural development, thereby stimulating extensive economic growth and development in any given location. It is not surprising, therefore, that the role of tourism, has been identified, widely adopted and sanctioned as an agent of economic growth and development (Jenkins, 1991; WTO, 1980).

Inevitably, however, such benefits brought about by tourism development are not achieved without costs. The development of tourism incurs various different impacts on the destinations environment, and the local people (hosts) who interact with tourists (Wall and Mathieson, 2006). Consequently, destination communities are faced with what has been referred to as a 'development dilemma' (Telfer and Sharpley, 2008). That is, host communities are required to engage in difficult

decisions when developing tourism; it is necessary to deliberate over the possible benefits they perceive that they will receive from tourism and the potential negative social and environmental consequences brought about by tourism development. Andriotis and Vaughan (2003: 172) suggest that the 'balance of residents' perceptions of the costs and benefits of tourism is a major factor in tourist satisfaction and therefore, vital for the success of the tourism industry'. This point is also recognised by Snaith and Haley (1999: 597) who argue for the need for a 'happy host'; that is, the destination community's support for tourism is deemed essential as the success and continued sustainability of the tourism sector is dependent on the goodwill of local residents (Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Perez and Nadal, 2005). From this, it can be implied that, should a local community perceive the costs of tourism to outweigh the benefits, the possibility of support (of tourism) being withdrawn is increased, consequently threatening the future success and development of the sector (Lawson, Williams, Young and Cossens, 1998).

As Sharpley (2014) observes, the withdrawal of support for tourism by host communities may in reality be limited. That is, the argument that negative perceptions on behalf of the local community will or may be translated into negative or antagonistic (Doxey, 1975) behaviour towards tourists or the tourism sector is not widely supported in the literature. Nevertheless, the ability of tourism to penetrate the inner workings of a destination (Harrill, 2004) serves to magnify the responsibility of those charged with the planning and development of tourism for meeting the needs of local people. They need to ensure that tourism planning / development seeks to optimise the well-being of the destination community at the same time aiming to minimise the potential negative costs of tourism. Therefore, the importance of tourism planning being driven by attitudes and perceptions of local residents, or what has been termed 'resident responsive' tourism planning (Vargas-Sanchez, Plaza-Mejia and Porras-Bueno, 2009), has long been emphasised in the literature (Ap, 1992), Thus, within the broader concerns for the social, economic and environmental consequences of tourism, significant attention has been paid to the understanding of host communities' perceptions of tourism and its impacts in particular (Sharpley, 2014).

2.5.2 Tourist-host interaction theory

To understand host perceptions of tourism and tourists, it is first necessary to consider what tourist-host interaction is and where it takes place. Tourism is a social phenomenon and can be defined by the consequences of the movement of people to, and their transitory stopover in locations away from what may be termed their 'regular'

environment and their frequent interactions with 'others' (Hunziker and Krapf, 1942; Sharpley, 2014). In other words, tourism is the social interaction between tourists and other people and other places outside the daily and routine environments in which they live their lives. This involves experiencing the 'Other' and, as a consequence, may influence the tourist's or the host community's attitudes, expectations, opinions and eventually, lifestyles (Sharpley, 2008). Thus, as observed above, fundamental to tourism are so-called 'host-guest' relations (Smith, 1977), the nature of which may, on the one hand, determine the extent to which tourists have a successful or fulfilling experience (Reisinger and Turner, 2002) and, on the other hand, the degree of impact, positive or otherwise, experienced by host communities or residents in the destination area and, hence, their perceptions of tourism and tourists.

Inevitably, the contexts or environments in which 'host-guest' interactions occur vary according to the stage, scale or type of tourism development or, indeed, to the expectations of tourists with respect to the structure and characteristics of the destination society (Pearce, 1994). Nevertheless, commentators have long attempted to conceptualise tourist-host interaction, one of the first being Sutton (1967), who identified five characteristics seen as common to most encounters. He claimed that contact is: (i) transitory; (ii) that both parties seek instant satisfaction; (iii) that, for the tourist, encounters tend to be new or unusual experiences whilst for locals it is very much business as usual; (iv) that cultural distinctions usually exist between tourists and local people; and (v) that generally, tourist-host encounters tend to be unbalanced. This was supported by research carried out by UNESCO (1976: 82) which found that 'the encounter between tourist and host is characterised by its transitory nature, constraints in terms of time and space, and relationships that are both unequal and lacking in spontaneity'.

Significantly, both of the studies referred to above implicitly focus on the interactions or encounters between locals and tourists in what can be understood as 'organised tourist spaces' (Sharpley, 2014: 38). Moreover, they are concerned principally with encounters which take place in the first of three settings suggested by de Kadt (1979: 50); that is, 'where the tourist is purchasing some good or service from the host'. Additionally, according to de Kadt (1979: 50), such encounters also occur where 'the tourist and host find themselves side by side' and where 'the two parties come face to face with the object of exchanging information and ideas'. Thus, the form and nature of relations between local people and tourists without doubt varies significantly from structured, commercial exchange-based encounters to spontaneous, unexpected meetings, and may even involve no contact or communication in regards to the

sharing of 'space' in particular places (Sharpley, 2014). However, a specific influence on tourist-host relations is the 'role' of the host; indeed, Krippendorf (1987), observing that the host community is not of course an homogenous group of people, identified four types of resident within a primarily business context:

- those in direct businesses with continuous contact with tourists;
- those in irregular contact in unrelated business;
- those in regular contact but only partially deriving their income from tourism; and,
- those with no contact with tourists.

Thus, as Sharpley (2014: 38) proposes, it is possible to conceptualise the diversity of tourist-host encounters as comprising a continuum, though based more generally on the nature of contact rather than the business-specific context suggested by Krippendorf (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: A continuum of tourist-host encounters

Intentional encounters based on commercial exchange	Intentional encounters for personal exchange	Unintentional /spontaneous encounters	Sharing space: no physical / verbal contact / communication
Contact: *Frequent Structured / planned Mutually beneficial* *High degree of influence on tourist experience and host perceptions*	**Contact:** *Occasional Planned Mutually beneficial* *Some degree of influence on tourist experience and host perceptions*	**Contact:** *Infrequent Unplanned Uncertain benefit* *Some degree of influence on tourist experience and host perceptions*	**Contact:** *None* *No influence on tourist experience; possible influence on host perceptions*

Source: Sharpley (2014: 39)

Inevitably, such a continuum over-simplifies the complex and variable nature of possible encounters between members of a host community and tourists (Sharpley, 2014). Nevertheless, it is suggested that, at one end of the spectrum, where locals are engaged frequently in commercial-based exchanges with tourists, there is a higher degree of direct impact on the tourists' level of satisfaction; with the locals

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themselves being affected by tourists' attitudes and behaviour (Sharpley, 2014). Furthermore, as a consequence of this, it is this group (of locals) that is most significant in terms of understanding perceptions of and responses to tourism and tourists. However, at the opposite end of the spectrum, residents who share space with tourists but who do not come into direct contact are less likely to influence the tourists' experience, irrespective of their perceptions to tourism (Sharpley, 2014). Thus, for the tourism sector to be a success or to ensure a positive experience (by the tourists), understanding the perceptions of the latter group is arguably less significant.

It is also necessary to understand that encounters at a commercial exchange, as suggested by Krippendorf (1987), often occur in what can be defined as liminal 'tourism culture' (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). This means that, whilst both parties have and bring their own culturally-defined expectations, behaviours and prejudices to the encounter, these can be temporarily suspended in mutual recognition of the nature of that encounter (business as usual for the local and a 'new' / alternative encounters for the tourist). This suggests that, within the sphere of any encounter, a local resident, despite the possibility of holding negative attitudes towards (certain) tourists, may suppress such attitudes in the interest of having a successful (that is, profitable) encounter. Thus, generally the varying nature or structure of the encounters between tourists and different members of a host community has implications for the theoretical frameworks within which host community perceptions are analysed.

The conceptual frameworks that are applied to research into resident perceptions of tourism are discussed in more detail in the following section. For now however, it is important to recognise that tourist-host interaction is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon and that encounters which occur between the local and tourists vary according to context, roles, expectations and so forth (Sharpley, 2014). The different nature and form of such encounters between tourists and the local community have been conceptualised as a spectrum of possible contexts in which they occur but, as Sharpley (2014) argues, research should recognise that all forms of encounters are significant and demand attention. Furthermore, in his review of the research on tourist-host relations, he also argues that, to date, research on host perceptions of tourism is more limited in its development than previously thought.

2.5.3 Resident perceptions – theory and limitations

The origins of what is now a considerable body of knowledge with respect to residents' perceptions of tourism lie in the early recognition of tourism's negative

consequences (Sharpley, 2014). From the 1960s onwards, tourism was seen to be in conflict with the environment in which it occurred (Dowling, 1992), the initial enthusiasm for its potential economic developmental benefits being dampened by the increasing awareness of the potential costs of tourism development. As a consequence, commentators began to turn their attention to the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism in general (for example, de Kadt, 1979; Turner and Ash, 1975; Young, 1973), and to host perceptions of and responses to tourism development in particular. One of the first, and still widely-cited, theories was Doxey's (1975) 'irridex model', which established the foundation for much of the succeeding research into resident perceptions. Since then, research on residents' attitudes towards tourism has become one of the most systematic and intensely studied fields within tourism (McGehee and Anderek, 2004), underpinned by the notion that understanding residents perceptions and responses is fundamental to the success and sustainability of tourism. Given the volume of research into host perceptions of / attitudes towards tourism (Sharpley, 2014), for example, identified over 1000 articles on the topic published in just the three leading tourism journals), a complete review of the literature is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, a variety of themes that emerge from the extensive literature demand attention.

Initially, a number of now well-known though arguably simplistic models were developed to theorise the relationship between tourism development and residents' perceptions of its possible potential. In particular, Doxey's (1975) 'irridex model', Butler's (1980) seminal resort life-cycle model and Smith's (1977) tourist typology all proposed that residents adopt increasingly negative attitudes towards tourism as it develops and grows. However, these theories have been criticised for their inherent linearity and assumptions of local community homogeneity (Sharpley, 2014). As noted by Travis (1980) in the 1980s, a broadening vision of tourism as an industry began considering the actual resources that support its sustainability. Among these resources, the residents of destinations areas are seen as the 'core' of the tourism product. It is extensively acknowledged that tourism development is a double-edged sword for host communities (Travis, 1980). It is recognised that tourism's impacts are both positive and negative and are most evident at a community destination level (Travis, 1980; Simmons, 1994; Jafari, 2001). In response to this, tourism planners underline the need to decentralise tourism planning and to incorporate it into inclusive community objectives (Spanoudis, 1982; Getz, 1987; Haywood, 1988). Central to these ideas is the argument that vaster public participation is essential in defining and establishing a community tourism product, or the combination of potential resources that a community (the locals) wishes to present to the wider tourism market

(Simmons, 1994). Thus, within the 'host perception' research, attention is focused primarily on identifying and measuring the reactions of residents as tourism growth commences (Reid, Mair and George, 2004) and there have been numerous attempts to both measure and characterise host attitudes towards tourism (for example, Akis, Peristianis and Warner, 1996; Pearce, Moscardo and Ross, 1996; Fredline and Faulkner, 2000; Williams and Lawson, 2001; Ko and Stewart, 2002; Tosun, 2002). Furthermore, there have been many investigations into the factors that influence residents' responses to tourism development, such as economic reliance (Lankford and Howard, 1994), length of residency in communities affected (Madrigal, 1993), and issues surrounding the quality life (Perdue, Long and Kang, 1999). These amongst others have amplified research that aims to identify the social, political, economic and environmental implications of tourism for local destination communities (Frederick, 1993; Oppermann, 1996; Lewis, 1998; Potts and Harrill, 1998; Fleisher and Felsenstein, 2000; Reid et al., 2004). Furthermore, investigating how such responses can be greater-understood and countered and thus, attain broader backing for more sustainable tourism development plans (Reid et al., 2004).

In an attempt to offset the tensions that result from negative impacts from uneven and unplanned development, researchers suggest that tourism-dominated / interested communities can and should aim to plan their evolution more thoroughly, and in so doing, taking into account (local) residents' attitudes and perceptions of tourism products from outset (Reid et al., 2004). According to Murphy (1985: 15):

> *The product and image that intermediaries package and sell is a destination experience, and as such creates an industry that is highly dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of host communities. . . . It is the citizen who must live with the cumulative outcome of such developments and needs to have greater input into how his community is packaged and sold as a tourist product.*

Many studies have focused on residents' attitudes towards tourism (for example, Perdue, Long and Allen, 1990; Ap, 1992; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Yoon, Gurosy and Chen, 2001; Gursoy, Jurowski, Uysal, 2002), each framing the research within theory, for example growth machine theory, equity theory, power theory, lifecycle theory, and social exchange theory (S.E.T). The latter (S.E.T) has, in particular, proved to be a popular conceptual foundation for exploring host perceptions of tourism. Ap (1992), who first utilised it, suggested that 'residents evaluate tourism in terms of social exchange, that is, evaluate it in terms of expected benefits or costs

obtained in return for the services they supply' (Ap, 1992: 670). He concludes that when a positive outcome for the host actor results from the exchange of resources in either the balanced or unbalanced exchange relations, then tourism impacts are seen positively. Conversely, the impacts of tourism are negatively seen if exchange of resources brings limited or negative outcomes for the host (Ap, 1992). In other words, the theory of social exchange proposes that residents will support tourism as long as the perceived benefits surpass the perceived costs. This point is founded on the belief that human beings are reward-seeking and try to avoid punishment, and arguably if people see profits and gains they will be motivated to act, as it is in their own interest to do so (Skidmore, 1975). Social exchange theory also assumes that social relations involve the interchange of resources among people (or groups) pursuing reciprocal benefits from exchanges. In the context of tourism, Ap (1992) suggests that the primary motive of exchange is, commonly, the improvement of the community's economic benefits. As already noted, studies (Perdue et al., 1990; Ap, 1992; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Yoonet al., 2001 and Gursoy et al., 2002) have been conducted on the basis of the social exchange theory framework. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, these identified that local residents offer their support to tourism when the benefits are greater than loses from tourism activities.

Importantly, a number of factors that may influence residents' attitudes towards tourism development (with respect to its social, cultural, and environmental implications) have not been fully explored and examined when applying the social exchange theory (Yutyunyong and Scott, 2009). Specifically, the concept of social exchange theory excludes influential factors such as the values, norms, beliefs and attitudes within a given society, factors which, as this thesis has stressed, are fundamental to understanding the destination's socio-cultural environment and the influence this may exert on the local community's feelings or attitudes towards tourism development. Moreover, social exchange theory is, by definition, concerned with the exchange of material or symbolic resources between people or groups of people. As such, it is appropriate when analysing the voluntary exchange process between two parties (the tourist and the local – in this context).

However, where no such exchange is initiated, for example, where residents share space but do not make contact or communicate with tourists, or where research focuses on one party in particular – the resident (Woosnam, 2012) – then the contribution of social exchange theory to an understanding of residents' perceptions is questionable (Sharpley, 2014). More specifically, social exchange theory views interaction between people or groups of people. In such, it views the interaction

between people as a form of transaction which, in a tourism context, implies that tourists and hosts undergo a process of negotiation or exchange, the ultimate aim of which for each party is to optimise the benefit arising from the encounter (Sharpley, 2008: 9-6). Thus, social exchange is considered a sequential process (Ap, 1992). The first stage requires both parties (host and tourist) to be motivated to engage in the process. Subsequently, in the present context for tourism encounters to be successful, the exchange should be characterised by rationality, fairness, reciprocity and satisfactory outcomes for the people who are engaged in the process. This suggests that both parties choose to engage in social exchange in the expectation of balanced 'negotiations' resulting in satisfactory outcomes. However, if the process is at any stage unbalanced or if the expected benefits do not materialise (from what was previously expected), then the process will be evaluated negatively and arguably no exchange will occur (Sharpley, 2014).

In other words, within the resident perception research, social exchange theory is applied simplistically, if not erroneously. That is, it is used to support the argument that should residents perceive that the costs of tourism (economic, social and or environmental) outweigh its benefits, then the local community will have negative perceptions and could withdraw their support for tourism. However, such a position is not only instinctive, but it overlooks the implicit processes suggested by social exchange theory that underpin why the exchange process might be considered unsuccessful (Sharpley, 2014). Pearce et al. (1996) also note that the contribution of social exchange theory to the explanation of resident perceptions of tourism is limited by three factors, namely (a) people are not rational, systematic informational processors; (b) an individual's knowledge is often socially derived rather than based on personal experience; and (c), perceptions are formed within a wider socio-cultural and historical framework. Simply stated, 'the linear rational process proposed by social exchange theory is in actuality infrequently followed, whilst to ignore the socio-cultural context within which social exchanges occur is to ignore the extrinsic influences on that process' (Sharpley, 2014: 45). In addition, the idea that both parties engage voluntary and proactively in the process (a fundamental tenet of social exchange theory), is contestable. For many residents in tourism destinations, any form of interaction with tourists can often be unintentional and involuntary, and in some cases no interaction occurs. Thus, whilst the social exchange theory aims to understand why local residents may adopt positive or negative attitudes towards tourism and tourists, as Sharpley (2014) suggests, it is insufficient as a conceptual framework for the research.

In addition to this, Sharpley (2014) also observes that the vast majority of research to date into host perceptions of tourism has employed quantitative methods, an issue which is also discussed in greater depth by Deery, Jago, and Fredline (2012) who argue for the need to rethink the approach to researching the social impacts of tourism. Similarly, Nunkoo, Smith, and Ramkissoon (2013), in a review of 140 papers on resident attitudes to tourism published between 1984 and 2010, also identify the dominant use of quantitative methods. Of course, the use of quantitative methods (frequently through the distribution of large scale questionnaires) is justifiable where, for example, the purpose of the research is to identify and test relationships between variables that influence resident perceptions of tourism and in certain circumstances, to segment residents through cluster analysis. However, it can also be argued that the application of quantitative analysis serves only to heighten what various commentators consider to be the simplistic and theoretically weak nature of the abundant research on resident perceptions of tourism (Woosnam, 2012; Zhang et al., 2006). That is, studies tend to focus on a description of *what* residents perceive, but lack detailed understanding of *why* residents are inclined to perceive tourism / tourists in particular ways (Sharpley, 2014). Consequently, Deery et al. (2012) call for a qualitative approach to the research which, on the one hand, might enhance knowledge and understanding of residents' perceptions on a case / situational basis but, on the other hand 'would not mitigate the lack of generalisability of the extant research' (Sharpley, 2014: 42).

Further to this, it is suggested that research is often carried out in a predominantly short period of time and few studies adopt a longitudinal approach (Hsu, 2000; Lee and Back, 2006). Tourism development is a dynamic process, yet majority of studies collect data during a single stage, thus limiting the validity of the conclusions with respect to host perceptions (Huh and Vogt, 2008: 446). Sharpley (2014) therefore suggests that a variety of weaknesses exist in the collective body of research into residents' perceptions of tourism, which could arguably limit its contribution to knowledge and also to the effective planning and management of tourism. Thus, in this research, and as considered in more detail in subsequent chapters, not only will a qualitative approach be adopted in order to explore the '*why'* with respect to residents' attitudes to tourism. It will also, in a sense, adopt a more longitudinal approach to analysing residents' perceptions to tourism inasmuch as it will aim to understand the host community's attitudes towards dark tourism, firstly, in the stages immediately post-earthquake (2009) and secondly, how these attitudes have changed over the course of the three year period between the date of the earthquake and the implementation of the empirical research phase of this thesis.

Although some studies explore residents' perceptions of proposed, rather than existing tourism developments (Keogh, 1990; Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Nepal, 2008), it is fair to suggest that, in order to identify and explain local communities' perception of and responses to tourism and tourists, research should be located within a conceptual framework of host-guest relations. However, Sharpley (2014) reveals that this is generally not the case. Woosnam (2012: 315) observes, 'the present residents' attitudes literature does not consider how residents' feelings towards tourists (on an individual level) may potentially influence their attitudes about tourism'. As such, the majority of research within the literature is often associated with 'residents' attitudes towards what may be referred to as tourism development, and the benefits / disbenefits that arise from it' (Sharpley, 2014: 38). Furthermore, a great deal of research has been and continues to focus on identifying, measuring and comparing the variables that may influence the way in which tourism and its impacts are perceived, with the principal purpose of both explaining and possibly predicting residents' responses to tourism (Sharpley, 2014). It is often the case that researchers draw attention to the surfeit of studies addressing the subject and the range of variables identified and explored, often aiming to categorise variables under specific headings (Sharpley, 2014), such as Harrill (2004) who refers to socioeconomic and spatial factors and economic dependency. Alternatively, others have distinguished between macro, community-wide factors and those related to the individual, 'values variables' (Sharpley, 2014). However, as is often the case the dichotomy between broader declinational factors and those related to the individual are defined as 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' factors (Faulkner and Tideswell, 1997).

A more detailed and critical review of the research into tourist-host perceptions is provided by Sharpley (2014). For the purposes of this chapter however, it suffices to recognise the limitations of the host perceptions research as identified by Sharpley (2014), Deery et al. (2012) and others and, consequently, to consider the most appropriate approach to undertaking research into the local community's perceptions of 'dark' tourism in L'Aquila.

2.5.4 Residents perception theory – application to L'Aquila

Much of the research on host perceptions has been limited to case studies in the developed world, whilst less attention / research has been focused on developing nations and even mainstream tourism regions such as the Caribbean and the Mediterranean (see Sharpley, 2014). Moreover, whilst acknowledging that Italy (the country in which L'Aquila is located) has also been a focus of past research (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2012) on host perceptions, no research to date has been

concerned specifically with host perceptions of dark tourism development. Thus, the focus of L'Aquila represents a new, unique yet highly significant area of research within the broader context of host perceptions of tourism.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the city L'Aquila, once a centre for activity tourism in the surrounding mountains, was destroyed by an earthquake in 2009. As a consequence, a new form of tourism has emerged in the city, though arguably one that is neither welcomed nor wanted by the local people. More specifically, the development of L'Aquila as a dark tourism destination will have inevitably evoked a variety of attitudes and responses amongst local people, opinions that may impact not only on the nature of the tourist experience in L'Aquila, but also on the development of tourism facilities and infrastructure. Thus, research into the local community's perceptions of dark tourism will not only contribute to knowledge and understanding of the supply of dark tourism more generally, but will also inform the (re)development of the city as a (dark) tourism destination in particular.

As discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter, not only has limited, if any, academic attention been paid to local communities (host) understanding of and responses to tourism development in dark tourism destinations, but also host perception research, as the principal focus of this thesis, itself suffers a number of significant limitations. Specifically, simplistic linear models of tourism development linked to resident attitudes, such as Doxey's (1975) 'irridex model' and Butler's (1980) life-cycle model, are considered to represent outdated and inappropriate frameworks for exploring resident attitudes to dark tourism in L'Aquila, whilst the predominant quantitative approach to the research has resulted in a lack of explanatory depth to research outcomes. Thus, as Sharpley (2014: 48) concludes, 'the need remains to consider perceptions of and, in particular, responses to tourism within the totality of residents' social lives'.

In this respect, the utilisation of social exchange theory, popularly applied to host perception research, has also been shown to be of limited value. That is, although social exchange theory 'can accommodate explanation of both positive and negative perceptions… at the individual level or collective level' (Perdue et al., 1999: 667), there remains a lack of consensus over its usefulness in explaining residents' perceptions of tourism. Consequently, social representation theory has been proposed as an alternative conceptual framework for exploring host or resident attitudes towards tourism (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Fredline and Faulkner, 2000). Social representation refers to the mechanisms by which people try to

understand or make sense of their world (see Moscovici, 1981). Simply put, they are the influences within a particular society (and shared by members of that society) that determine how and what people think in their day-to-day lives, and contain a set of ideas, values, knowledge and explanations that comprise a social reality (Pearce, Moscardo and Ross, 1996). As such, social representation theory is similar to Berger and Luckmann's (1991) concept of the social construction of reality, which suggests an individual's everyday reality is structured and maintained through social interaction with family, friends and strangers. Thus, the concept of the social construction of reality offers potential as an analytical lens through which the social environment or 'totality of residents' social lives' may be explored and, in particular, how it impacts on local people's attitudes to tourism (in the case of this thesis, dark tourism development in L'Aquila). The concept of the social construction of reality is therefore discussed further in Chapter 4.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has established that the attitudes and perceptions of the host community should be taken into account in any tourism development context (Murphy, 1985), but particularly so in 'darker' dark tourism destinations where not only has death and destruction occurred but is still present in the living memory of residents (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Thus, not only is further research required into the social understanding of tourist-host perceptions of tourism's impacts in general (Sharpley, 2014) but also in dark tourism destinations in particular. Moreover, given the limitations of the extant research into host perceptions of tourism, it has been suggested that more longitudinal studies and qualitative methods are required in order to further understand the questions surrounding *why* local residents may embrace various attitudes towards tourism / tourists, both generally and in dark tourism destinations.

L'Aquila is, of course, one such destination and, thus, represents an opportunity to investigate tourist-host perceptions in the specific context of dark tourism. The next step, then, is to identify the relevant stakeholders in the destination and the roles they play within the disaster recovery process. This is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Stakeholders, Disaster Tourism and the Disaster Recovery Process

3.0 Introduction

As discussed, the overall purpose of the current thesis is to consider the development of a disaster site as a tourism destination from the perspective of the local community and in so doing addressing a notable gap in the dark tourism literature. The preceding chapter introduced the relevant foundational concepts by first briefly reviewing the development of dark tourism, its breadth and due to the increasing attention paid to it, the limitations and gaps within the theory and research. Second, given the principal focus of the thesis on the host community in disaster tourism destinations, Chapter 2 reviewed approaches in research on tourist-host relations and in particular, host perceptions of tourism.

It is evident from Chapter 2 that 'dark tourism' is a term widely employed to refer to visits to places or events associated with death, disaster and suffering, embracing both the demand for (or consumption of) and supply (or production) of dark tourism. Thus, dark tourism may be considered both a behavioural phenomenon that is, perhaps, best addressed within a thanatological tradition and also as a specific context for the production of tourism. As noted in Chapter 2, academic attention has to date focused primarily on the latter, revealing that, as previously acknowledged by Stone (2006a), dark tourism products are complex in their design and overall purpose, and diverse in nature and historical significance. Consequently, the term 'dark' when applied to tourism destinations may be overly broad, failing to expose the multilayers of dark tourism supply and, in particular, the complexity and challenges of developing a dark (or disaster) tourism destination taking into account the needs and perceptions of the local community. Specifically, it was suggested that the term 'dark tourism' may be pejorative and, hence, perceived negatively by the (post-disaster / tragedy) host community. Thus, the first objective of this thesis (see Chapter 1, section 1.2) is to explore the negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark' from the perspective of the local community in the city of L'Aquila.

The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to first identify the different groups of stakeholders who play a role in the redevelopment of disaster destinations and in dark tourism development in particular. It then goes on to review the literature on disasters,

disaster recovery processes and so-called disaster tourism as a structure for the later proposal and development of two conceptual frameworks, the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF), which will guide research in L'Aquila.

3.1 Stakeholders: Post-disaster theory and tourism development theory

In considering the roles of stakeholders in post-disaster 'dark' tourism destinations, two key areas demand attention. First, the role of stakeholders in post-disaster scenarios in general, therefore inclusive of L'Aquila, will be addressed followed, secondly, by a critical discussion of Seaton's (2001) Heritage Force Field, which begins to recognise the potential diversity of stakeholders and their interests in dark tourism / heritage sites.

3.1.1 Stakeholders: Post-disaster development

Generally, stakeholder analysis acts as a device, or set of tools, with distinctive purposes when applied to various fields (such as management, policy and development planning) (Brugha and Varvazovszky, 2000; Varvazovszky and Brugha, 2000). More specifically, authors identify that stakeholder analysis represents (a range of tools or) a methods for understanding a system by recognising the key (actors or) stakeholders (Ramirez, 1999; Brocklesby, Ambrose and Fon, 2002) on the foundation of their attributes, interrelationships and measuring their respective interests related to the system, issues or resource (Smith, 1993; Ramirez, 1999; Swiderska, 2002). In post-disaster reconstruction in particular, stakeholder analysis can be used to measure potential support or opposition to the reconstruction process amongst the interested parties, such as those impacted on directly by the disaster, administrators, the private sector, NGOs and so on.

A stakeholder can be defined as a person, group, organisation or system that has a 'stake' in the reconstruction, who to be potentially affected by any form of reconstruction, and whose support is required or who may oppose the reconstruction plans, policies, or projects (Asgary, Badri, Rafieian and Hajinejad, 2006). According to Asgary et al. (2006), stakeholders who are involved in the reconstruction process (in post-disaster scenarios) usually include representatives from the following sections of society:

1. Community members and citizens' groups.
2. Governments (national and local), encompassing public and semipublic entities in a wide range of sectors and roles.

3. Civil society organisations including NGOs, civic groups, and voluntary associations.
4. The private sector (that is, business and industrial groups).
5. Professional groups, including academic, research, and training organisations, consulting firms, and so on.
6. The media, including newspapers, radio, and television networks (Asgary et al., 2006)

Asgary et al. (2006) also note that, for a reconstruction process to be effective and successful, it is necessary for all the stakeholders indicated to demonstrate commitment to the cause and with close collaboration and partnership and transparency, bottom-up planning, democratisation, accountability and cost effective measures, in order to ensure the proper utilisation of resources. However, as previously noted, Asgary et al. (2006) focus on the role of stakeholders in post-disasters situations in general, not specifically on stakeholders in tourism development in post-disaster 'dark' contexts. Therefore, the following section introduces Seaton's (2001) Heritage Force Field, a model that identifies neatly the potential different stakeholders who have an interest and influence in tourism / heritage attraction developments.

3.1.2 Stakeholder: Tourism development

As suggested earlier in this thesis, dark tourism sites are complex; that is, multidimensional realities may co-exist in any given dark tourism site / location (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). In order to identify these differing and sometimes competing realities, Seaton (2001) has proposed a model, the 'heritage force field', which identifies four distinctive groups between which differences including emotionally-charged disagreements may arise with respect to conflicting interests in the development of a 'dark' heritage site. The four sectors comprise the 'owners / controllers' of the development; the 'subject groups' (the focus or subject of the heritage narrative); 'host communities' and or the residents located in the vicinity of the developed location; and, finally, the 'visitor groups' or tourists (See Figure 3.1 below).

The potential contribution of this model lies in its ability to identify four significant sectors of society that are involved in the development of dark tourism heritage. Indeed, at first glance the model also identifies the key areas of research in dark tourism to date. As considered in Chapter 2, increasing attention has more recently been paid to the demand for or consumption of dark tourism, collectively categorised

by Seaton in his model as the 'Visitor Groups', whilst the majority of research has tended to focus on issues surrounding the supply of dark tourism, in which the other three sections are involved. Significantly, however, the boundaries or distinctions between these three may in reality be less apparent than suggested by the model.

Figure 3.1: Seaton's (2001) Heritage Force Field
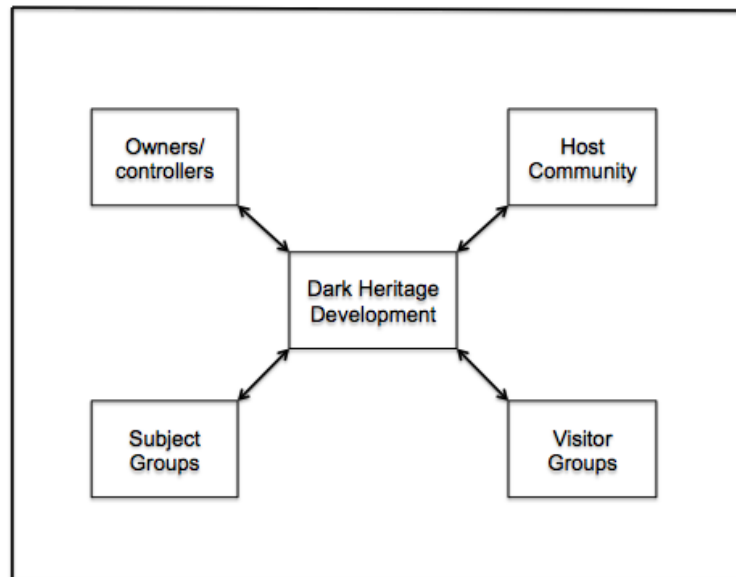
Source: adapted from Seaton (2001)

For example, the 'owners / controllers' evidently comprise that sector of society which, through private ownership or some form of delegated authority, has an influence in the development of sites. Conversely, the 'subject groups' are those who are the focus of the dark tourism 'product' or those upon whom the narrative of the dark tourism product is based whilst the 'host communities' or those who can also be referred to as the 'residents' are people living within the vicinity of the development. However, in the case of a disaster site such as L'Aquila, the boundaries between these three groups of stakeholders are rather fuzzy. In other words, L'Aquila presents a valid example of how the boundaries implicit in Seaton's model may in some ways be distorted when applied. Following the earthquake which destroyed approximately 1,600 buildings, including the historical city centre, displacing 70,000 people, rendering almost the entire area uninhabitable, it becomes immediately evident that many, if not all, members of the local community could be categorised under all three headings. This then leads to the question, how can (or should) one begin to sub-divide local people into the three remaining categories provided by Seaton?

Moreover, when comparing Seaton's (2001) 'four groups' and Asgary et al's. (2006) 'stakeholders', evident distinctions emerge with respect to the types of stakeholder

who have an interest. Certainly, it should be remembered that Seaton's focus is on tourism development in heritage sites in particular (which can also be applied to dark tourism) whilst Asgary et al. (2006) provide a more rounded categorisation of stakeholders in the development of a destination post-disaster, their emphasis not being specifically on tourism development. Consequently, for example, Asgary et al. (2006) identify the media as a potential stakeholder group, whilst the media are not mentioned in Seaton's model.

What this exposes is potential limitations in Seaton's model in terms of its applicability to a post-disaster destination such as L'Aquila and, in contrast, the relevance of Asgary et al.'s (2006) list of stakeholders to the development of heritage attractions or, indeed, any form of tourism development. Again, Seaton's focus is on heritage / tourism attractions and, in particular, their management over a period of time. Thus, certain stakeholder groups 'external' to the site / attraction, such as the media or NGOs, are perhaps logically or inevitably excluded from Seaton's model. However, given the characteristics of a post-disaster site such as L'Aquila (which has suffered a disaster and by default emerged as a potential attraction to 'dark' tourists rather than being purposefully developed as a 'dark' tourism attraction), some if not all of the stakeholders listed by Asgary et al. (2006) may influence and or impact the development of tourism in a post-disaster situation, as is potentially the case presented by L'Aquila.

Therefore, the development of the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF) will take into account Asgary et al's (2006) and Seaton's (2001) research into the potential role of stakeholders in 'dark' tourism development. Next, the thesis considers concepts and theories relevant to disasters and the disaster recovery processes in general, and post-disaster tourism development in particular. Within this context, the first question to be addressed is: what is a disaster?

3.2 What is a disaster?

Definitions of disasters and related work focusing on disaster tourism are primarily located within the broader study of what is often referred to as crisis and disaster management in tourism (Faulkner, 2001; Evans and Elphick, 2005; Glaesser, 2006; Proff and Hosie, 2007; Ritchie, 2009). Indeed, much of the literature is concerned primarily with the anticipation, prevention and / or management of disaster / crisis

situations in tourism. Thus, a logical place to begin is the contemporary literature on crisis and disaster management in tourism.

When considering tourism crisis and disaster management, it is important to recognise the breadth of the subject; that is, there are numerous ways in which crises and disasters are manifested (Ritchie, 2009). Thus, challenges facing tourism organisations or destinations may vary from negative rumours circulating among staff or higher than normal levels of staff illness to wider, technical, political and economic crises or natural disasters that impact directly on the tourism sector. Each will have different outcomes for the organisation or destination and will require different management responses (Santana, 2003; Ritchie, 2009). Nevertheless, as Faulkner (2001) observes in his seminal work on crisis management in tourism, not only has a growing number of disasters and crises affected the tourism industry (from natural to human influenced incidents) but it is also becoming increasingly more likely that most tourism destinations will at some time experience a crisis or disaster. Indeed, the global tourism industry has long experienced numerous crisis and disasters, from natural events such as earthquakes, floods and volcanoes, to terrorist attacks, political instability, economic recession and bio-security threats (Speakman and Sharpley, 2012). Actions of man and nature have the ability to transform the reputation, desirability and marketability of any destination overnight (Prideaux, Laws and Faulkner, 2003), as undoubtedly occurred in L'Aquila in April 2009.

Keown-McMullan (1997) notes that there is still no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a crisis. Herman (1972) characterised a crisis into three dimensions: high threat, short decision time, and an element of surprise. According to Fink (1986) a crisis can be considered as an unstable time or state of affairs in which decisive change is impending, outcomes of which can be wither extremely undesirable and at times highly desirable and enormously positive. Whilst Reilly (1987) states more broadly that a crisis suggests elements of magnitude, the need for taking some form of action and the requirement of a timely response. Whilst Pauchant and Mitroff (1992: 15) suggest that a crisis is a 'disruption that physically affects a system as a whole and threatens its basic assumptions, its subjective sense of self, its existential core'.

Evidently, depending on the context of any particular crisis, some definitions are more applicable than others. Much in line with, Santana (2003) who recognsies that the definition of a crisis is problematic due to its application in diverse fields and its joint use in literature with similar terms, including, catastrophe, jolt, problem, turning point

and significantly to this research, disaster. However, Laws and Prideaux (2005) suggest that consensus on a reliable typology of terms describing tourism crisis can facilitate dialogue with other researchers in the field of crisis management, a process critical to advancing knowledge and understanding in the subject. As discussed in more detail shortly, this position is also strongly supported by Quarantelli (1989).

Of particular relevance to this thesis, however, confusion commonly exists with respect to the difference between a crisis and a disaster. Faulkner (2001) suggests that the distinction between the two lies in the extent to which the (in)actions of the organisation or an external influence is responsible. Thus, a crisis can be seen as self-inflicted as a result of, for example, inept management structures and is, therefore, in some way preventable. In contrast, a disaster is an external event that cannot be prevented and which leaves organisations, towns or countries in an unpredictable catastrophic state. Prideaux et al. (2003) add that, in the case of a disaster, the victims are usually capable of only responding to the damage after the disaster, as disasters are unpredictable and irregular. In addition, Hills (1998) notes that disasters are sudden and overwhelming events that may happen in any given place for any amount of time and, thus, the recovery time is dependable on many varying factors.

Smith (1995) points out that even if disasters are stimulated by natural conditions or ecosystems which are outside human control, our vulnerability is a direct consequence of human development, activity and our living conditions and, therefore, disasters can be seen as a realisation of a hazard. Similarly, Twigg (2004) states that there is no such thing as a natural disaster, only natural hazards. Consequently, a community's vulnerability to a hazard will eventually determine the effects and impacts that a disaster will have; that is, the impact of a disaster will be determined by the community's capacity to deal with it. In other words, a natural disaster may be seen as nature's sentence on humans and what they have created; although events such as the earthquake that devastated L'Aquila are natural, the extent of damage and problems caused by the disaster may be mitigated by, for example, early warning systems or the structural capacity of buildings to withstand the natural phenomenon. Indeed, some locations around the world are known to be prone to natural disasters owing to their geographical positions, including the region of Italy in which L'Aquila is located. Many have employed modern building technologies and early warning systems to enable them to withstand natural disasters but, as Bierman (2003) observes, for many places, in the event of some sudden disasters there is no escape. According to Parsons (1996), there are three main types of crisis: (i) *an immediate*

crisis, where little or no warning exists. Therefore, organisations are unable to research the problem or to prepare a plan before the crisis hits. In this case, the crisis may be considered similar to a natural disaster, when there is typically limited or no warning or possible response; (ii) *an emerging crisis*: this is slower to develop and may be stopped or limited by organisational action; and (iii) *a sustained crisis*, that may last for weeks, months or even years. Strategies to deal with these crises will, of course, vary depending on time pressures, the extent of control and the magnitude of the incident.

Overall, then, it is apparent that clearly defining the terms crisis and disaster, and distinguishing between them, is a difficult task. In the tourism context in particular the terms are frequently used either collectively or interchangeably, whilst implicitly one may follow the other. That is, a disaster (an event) may subsequently result in a crisis (a problem to be managed) for tourism organisations or destinations. However, in the context of this thesis, the term 'disaster' is evidently the most appropriate. That is, a disaster is generally considered to be an event (natural or otherwise) that is sudden, unpredictable and results in a catastrophic state for those affected. Moreover, it is the disaster or, more precisely, its impacts – the visible evidence of destruction and implicitly human suffering – that becomes the attraction that draws tourists to the location. This is undoubtedly the case with L'Aquila. Given the city's history, the 2009 earthquake was not necessarily unpredictable. Nevertheless, it struck without warning and its impacts were catastrophic for the city and its population who are now becoming the object of the dark tourist 'gaze' as tourists increasingly visit the city to witness the aftermath of the disaster. The implications of this are complex and substantial for the local community, particularly with respect to their attitudes and perceptions of the new status of their city as a dark or disaster tourism destination. Evidently, and as considered in the preceding chapter, for any form of tourism development to be successful it must be accepted or viewed positively by local residents (Snaith and Haley, 1999); where destruction, death and suffering are involved, such support or engagement with tourism development is essential, hence the focus of this research. That is, the aim of this thesis is to investigate the characteristics of the social environment in L'Aquila and how it can influence the development of tourism post-disaster. At this stage, it is useful to consider briefly what is referred to as 'disaster tourism'.

3.2.1 Disasters and tourism

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNISDR (2008) definition of a disaster is 'a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a service causing widespread human, material, economical or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources'. This definition includes situations in which a warning is issued and people alter their behaviour to respond to that warning, such as evacuation. Based on this definition, 'disaster tourism', as suggested by Kelman and Dodds (2009), can therefore be seen as the act of travel for predominantly recreational or leisure purposes to see areas affected by a disaster (as defined by UNISDR, 2008). Similarly, the online Travel Industry Dictionary defines disaster tourism as follows:

> ***Disaster Tourism -*** *Travel undertaken for the purpose of visiting the scene of a natural disaster, usually with a connotation of voyeurism* (Travel-Industry-Dictionary 1999-2007).

There is also the disaster tourism website which considers the meaning of disaster tourism, as follows:

> *Disaster Tourism takes you to the heart of the disaster – to see beyond the writings and pictures in the history books, beyond the coverage in the media, to the actuality of the circumstances, be it past, present or future.*
>
> *Planet Earth has been plagued by disasters throughout its history, from the death of the dinosaurs to the lost Kingdom of Atlantis, the destruction and burial of Pompeii by Mount Vesuvius, to the modern day catastrophes that blight our world.*
>
> *Disaster Tourism offers a unique experience for those who have exhausted the normal mundane package holiday. We guarantee your holiday will be a complete disaster and leave you wanting more…* (DisasterTourism, 2009).

An alternative definition is offered by the online website Vagabondish, which suggests that:

People usually hope an earthquake or tornado doesn't get in the way of their vacation. But a 'disaster tourist' would be more likely to put themselves in the way of such a natural disaster. It's really true that there are people who hear of a huge landslide or tsunami and immediately start looking for the cheapest ticket into the disaster zone. Less extreme are the travelers keen to see the effects of natural disasters in places they visit. What's the motivation behind disaster tourism, and are you helping or hindering?

…lets' get some definitions straight. Some people would say disaster tourism is a form of grief tourism, or vice versa, but let's simplify it by leaving grief tourists at sites where tragic, man-made events have occurred, and let disaster tourists be the ones headed for zones left floundering by natural disaster. Sometimes, of course, the motivations here overlap, but the destinations are usually different (Kendle, 2008).

It is important to note here that the above quotation is from an Australian travel blogger's feature on disaster tourism which forms part of a multi-part series on dark tourism published on the Vagabondish website, hence the references made to grief tourism. It is also important to note that both this and the preceding definition emphasise the experiential or demand perspective of disaster tourism. That is, disaster tourism is considered to be a particular type of dark tourism experience determined by the destination and the event it has suffered – its status as a disaster tourism destination is determined by the event and the desire on the part of people to travel there to witness the effects of the disaster. This suggests that the destination and, significantly, the local community suffering the impacts of the disaster become the focus of tourists' attention, both involuntarily and, perhaps, unwillingly, with all that that implies. Hence, again, the current thesis aims to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the complex issues surrounding the supply of dark tourism from the perspective of local residents who, having suffered a disaster, have become the object of the dark (or disaster) tourist gaze. To guide the research, two frameworks will be developed. The first of these, the DLCF, will be used to appraise critically the social responses to L'Aquila's earthquake and the post-disaster recovery phases in particular. As a foundation for that framework, the following section considers in more detail social understandings and responses to disasters, drawing particularly on the work of American sociologist Enrico Quarantelli.

3.3 What is a disaster? Towards a universal definition

Barkun (1974: 51) notes that many scholars have accepted the idea that '… a disaster is perhaps easier to recognise than it is to define'. Enrico Quarantelli, a pioneer in the sociology of disasters whose work on the subject dates back to 1949, suggests that although there has been moderately limited scholarly attention paid to the question of what a disaster is, anyone who conducts studies of or undertakes planning for disasters must have at least an implicit image or conception of the phenomenon (Quarantelli, 1985). Referring to the wider work on disasters (Carr, 1932; Barton, 1963; Barton, 1970; Kinston and Rosser, 1974; Berren, Beigel and Ghertner, 1980; Kreps, 1984), Quarantelli suggests there are numerous implicit assumptions about the phenomenon, but that it is possible to collate what social and behavioural scientists assume when they use the term 'disaster' into a meaningful order. Consequently, drawing on the relevant literature, Quarantelli provides seven idea-type conceptual definitions of what constitutes a disaster, as follows:

1. *Physical agents*;
2. *Disaster as physical impact*;
3. *Disaster as assessment of physical impacts*;
4. *Disasters as social disruptions from events with physical impact*;
5. *Disaster as social constructions of reality in perceived crisis situations that may or may not involve physical impacts*;
6. *Disasters as political definitions of certain crisis situations*; and
7. *Disasters as an imbalance in the demand capability ration in a crisis occasion*
   Source: Quarantelli (1985: 43 - 44)

Attention will now turn to each of the above in order to provide some clarity as to what each concept signifies, specifically in the context of defining the earthquake in L'Aquila as a disaster. The definitions are taken from the work of Quarantelli (1985).

1. *Disasters as physical agents*. The word disaster can be associated to certain types of physical agents (fires, floods, explosions and importantly earthquakes). The fundamental concept here is 'something' that can produce an effect on the environment (Dynes, 1976; Faulkner, 2001). Quarantelli (1985) suggests that, these 'something's' may be labelled as disaster agents, although a recurrent difference is made between what are 'natural' agents or 'acts of God' (nature) and 'human' or 'man-made' agents. Therefore, a natural land movement of a certain kind is called an earthquake (nature); whist the accidental transformation (following human error) of an inert liquid into an expansive gas is called a chemical explosion (Quarantelli, 1985).

From this perspective on disasters, there is a search primarily for the physical cause (or agent) of whatever has occurred. Thus, the cause of an earthquake is different from that of a fire or a tornado. This concept provides the broadest of the seven on which to define an event as a disaster.

2. *Disaster as physical impact.* Some usages of the term 'disaster' are associated with its physical impact. Disasters may have some form of noticeable impact on certain parts of the environment; a hurricane will move air and water, whilst an earthquake will move water and land. Quarantelli (1985) suggests that the importance is the physical impact can be distinguishable. Here attention is paid to how characteristics of the disaster agent may affect and impact upon the sphere in which it occurs. Referring to the latter (the sphere), the impact can be seen as happening in the geographical sphere or the environment (Dynes, 1976). Furthermore, certain characteristics of disaster agents are seen to produce particular types of impact. Consequently, disaster agents are different in their regularity, because they are not randomly distributed over space (globe). Generally, localities are likely to be near geological faults, if a place is to be impacted by distinguishable earthquakes, whilst a tsunami for example, will not impact areas that are not located next to coastal areas. Disaster agents can also fluctuate as to their duration. A volcanic eruption may have a prolonged duration, and earthquakes may have post tremors. Distinguishable physical characteristics may and may not be socially significant. However, there is little doubt that the features of many physical impacts can be established, and frequently in quantitative terms (Quarantelli, 1985).

3. *Disaster as assessment of physical impacts.* In the third concept, distinguishable physical impacts of disaster agents may happen but, it depends on the assessment made, as only some would be categorised as 'disasters'. Quarantelli (1985) suggests that in some way or another, the event must be categorised as 'disastrous'. This approach implies the establishment of a benchmark or threshold of impact beyond which the event may be justifiably defined as a disaster. Such benchmarks or thresholds are frequently based on an assessment criterion. Earthquakes, for example, are measured on the Mercalli and the Richter scales; the former indicating the intensity and the latter the magnitude, which involve the combination of distinguishable physical impacts and an assessment of those effects. Analogous assessment measures of impact have also been developed for hurricanes and tornadoes (Quarantelli, 1985). Quarantelli suggests that, from this approach, most commentators concur with Barkun (1974: 72) that, 'disaster means damage – physical, social, and psychological'. The three concepts considered thus far have

focused on: first, the antecedent conditions responsible for the physical agent; second, the distinctive features of disaster as distinguishable physical impact; and third, the categorisation of an event as a disaster when its effects are assessed / measured as notable. Therefore, the first three concepts of a disaster highlight causes, characteristics and consequences of physical agents and or their impacts (Quarantelli, 1985).

4. *Disasters as social disruptions from events with physical impact.* Compared with conceptualisation of disasters defined by physical cause, features and impacts, the fourth concept, defines a 'disaster' if its magnitude (as indicated by property damage and casualties) is believed to be sufficient to result in disruption of social life. In other words, a disaster is seen to of occurred if there is substantial destruction of material and tangible goods and or there is relatively high numbers of deaths or injuries; that is, the event is defined as a disaster not owing to its physical impact, but because of the assumed social consequences of the physical impacts. Thus, this concept differs from the third (*Disaster as assessment of physical impacts)* as the emphasis is on the social rather that the physical; the physical indications are used primarily as a sign of probable social disruption (Quarantelli, 1985). This fourth conceptual approach is illustrated in the following definition of disaster used frequently by social scientists:

> *… an event, concentrated in time and space, in which a society, or a relatively self-sufficient subdivision of a society, undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented.*
> (Fritz, 1961: 655, as adapted from Endleman, 1952).

Quarantelli (1985) recognises that, as a member of the group of social scientists' to which this definition is attributed, the original declaration assumed a very close relationship between extensive physical impact and social disruption. Furthermore, for the purposes of this study, disasters are defined by identifying indications of death and damage. Thus, it was assumed that social disruption was a necessary consequence if an event involving major impact was to be defined as a disaster (Quarantelli, 1985).

5. *Disaster as social constructions of reality in perceived crisis situations that may or may not involve physical impacts.* Social scientists have at times been concerned by the easily made observation that there is no necessary relationship between physical

impact and social activity. Quarantelli (1985) provides the example of the New Madrid earthquake (1811-1812) that had substantial physical effects on the topography of the region and changed the course and channel of the Mississippi River (Penick, 1976). However, Quarantelli (1985) suggests that some observers do not consider this as a disaster because the area was lightly populated and there was limited damage to property and life. However, from the viewpoint of social reality it was perceived as dangerous by the involved populations; whether a situation is defined as real is fundamentally a social-psychological matter. With regards to defining a disaster, the issue to some is not the presence or absence of physical impact, but whether it is believed that the event poses a threat or danger to the values of life, well-being, property and social order (Quarantelli, 1985). In other words, there must also exist a socially constructed perception of a crisis situation, as such, a situation that necessitates unexpected collective action because it involves high-priority values. From this perspective, actual impact is not the crucial element. What is important is the perceived need for collective action, a consensus type of crisis in contrast to a dis-census crisis (Quarantelli, 1970). What this suggests is that the concept of disaster becomes a relative rather than an absolute term since it claims differential perceptual possibilities as a result of different social constructions of reality. Thus, adopting a social constructionist approach can eventually lead to the position that no one event can be conclusively called a disaster. Quarantelli does not suggest a basis for this argument but notes that:

> *… a disaster is not a unitary whole. For different areas or communities, for different organizations and families, the 'same' disaster may start and may stop at different chronological points. For example, a weather service may start getting involved in a disaster with the first sighting of danger cues picked up by its monitoring system, and its involvement may end after a warning message has been issued. In the same situation, the disaster for some governmental agricultural agency may start six months after actual impact because certain crops might not be planted until that time due to salt water contamination, and the organizational involvement may end two years after that.* (Quarantelli, 1985: 48 - 49).

Quarantelli (1985) also suggests that the importance of noting this is that what is contemplated a disaster and its length can vary, and often does, even between organisations that may become involved at different times. Thus, the perceived urgency of the situation may also vary amongst different people, groups and

organisations, as will differential times of involvement and withdrawals from a disaster. A disaster is not a fixed entity with a fixed duration in time. A disaster, to such an extent that its existence is concerned, is always a relative matter, varying according to whose perspective is being applied (Quarantelli, 1970). This definition, therefore, provides varying degrees of interpretation depending on the involvement of innumerable organisations, groups and individuals.

6. *Disasters as political definitions of certain crisis situations.* Some authors (Brown and Goldin, 1973; Westgate and O'Keefe, 1976; Dombrowsky, 1981) argue that disasters should not only bee seen as social constructions but also from the perspective of that which can be attributed as a political phenomena. From such an angle, crisis (or disaster) scenarios can be defined as disasters depending on the political perspective, often taken post-disaster. Quarantelli (1985) notes that political decisions often reflect the interest of the elite or power holders in the society in question. From such a perspective, disasters may be viewed as commensurate with certain kinds of political definitions (Brown and Goldin, 1973; Westgate and O'Keefe, 1976; Dombrowsky, 1981). There are, for example, instances where nations' official declarations have indicated that a disaster has not transpired whereas, by other definitions noted above, it actually has. Such formal denial of a disaster is worrying, in the case of an earthquake, cyclone, or famine, not only does this deflect international disaster relief, but it can also be used to justify limited or no internal domestic response to the situation (Freudenheim, 1979). Additionally, on various occasions there have been times when a disaster has been officially declared but objective outside parties (often other nations) could not identify that the designated event was materially different from a 'normal,' everyday occurrence to that locality (Quarantelli, 1985).

Quarantelli (1985) points out that those who define disasters as political are not impressed when others dispute that something has actually occurred, considering what is involved is simply a reluctance (for political motivated reasons) to formally define or 'label' a situation. They observe that the formal label can make a difference in everything from issues concerning mitigation and prevention to the response and recovery activities that follow disasters. Evidently for a variety of reasons which can be complicated, disaster researchers and theorists commonly shielded away from contemplating the political features of disaster phenomena (Quarantelli and Dynes, 1977). This could be an issue in this research, when consider Mafia involvement in Italy. Political processes are involved in all aspects of disaster phenomena. Political processes can determine whether an event will be considered or labelled a disaster

and, hence, influence subsequent (in)actions. It is for this reason that some disaster theorists justify the argument that disasters should be conceptualised as a political statement about certain crisis situations (Quarantelli, 1985).

7. Disasters as an imbalance in the demand capability ration in a crisis occasion. The final conceptual approach argues that 'disasters' are better understood of when observed as a certain type of crisis; as such, it is a social 'occasion'. Proponents of this position recognise that a disaster has occurred when the demands for certain action in a crisis situation exceed the capabilities for a response to that of a crisis. As high priority values are threatened, there is a perceived urgent need to act, but the available capabilities – intangible or otherwise, are insufficient to meet the demands of the occasion (Quarantelli, 1985). The 'occasion' is a term taken from Goffman (1963), but applied to the disaster phenomena by Brown and Goldin (1973), and it typically requires non-routine and emergent collective behaviour. The definition of disasters as crisis occasions in which demands exceed capabilities for Quarantelli (1985) seems the most useful conceptualisation presently available as its emphasis is on behavioural responses rather than whatever may generate that response. It therefore turns consideration away from physical features of disaster agents that can be differentially perceived (or in some cases not actually exist) (Quarantelli, 1985).

The seven definitions reviewed above will form part of the conceptual framework (the DLCF) which is developed and proposed in Chapter Five and will go onto inform stage one of the research. It is important to recognise, of course, that the diversity of actual or potential disasters means that they may correspond with some, if not all of these ideal-type terms. In other words, it is not necessary for an event to be representative of all these in order to be classified as a disaster. Nevertheless, it is necessary to embrace all seven definitions or concepts of a disaster within the framework in order to enhance its applicability to contexts beyond the particular case study of the current thesis.

Moreover, in addition to defining a disaster, another significant element of the study of disasters is the understanding of the post-disaster recovery process; that is, a reasoned evaluation of the current condition of a post-disaster location must be based upon knowledge of the management and collective experience that has emerged and been endured during recovery process. Indeed, dependent on the focus of enquiry (in the case of this thesis, the development of dark tourism), the research will be aligned with understanding of the post-disaster recovery process.

3.4 The disaster recovery process

Drawing on the literature that explores the disaster recovery process, Quarantelli (1989) makes two general observations prior to addressing specific key concepts and themes in disaster recovery. First, he suggests it is important to locate the study of disaster recovery in a wider context, that is, recovering from disasters did not start with the study of disasters. For Quarantell (1985), that wider context is the history of the human race. Disasters are not, of course, new or recent phenomena; they have occurred in different forms and on different scales throughout history. Implicitly, therefore, recovery from disaster is also not a new or recent phenomenon. With some notable exceptions, as Pompeii, which is an example of a community that was completely destroyed by a catastrophic natural event, societies typically recover from disasters. Ground-breaking studies are not required to establish that the overwhelming majority of social units do survive disasters; history has proved this to be the case. Therefore, there is nothing unusual about recovering from a disaster – it is what usually happens (Quarantelli, 1989). Though self-evident, this is an important observation because, in recovering from a disaster, the recovery units must have done something 'right' insofar as they managed to recover from whatever disaster struck them. However, does this suggest that planning for disaster recovery is unnecessary since recovery appears to occur naturally or organically? The answer is, according to Quarantelli (1989), no. Lessons can always be learned from previous experience.

Secondly, Quarantell (1989) asks what is meant by 'recovery from disaster', suggesting that the process has not been well conceptualised and that there is limited agreement on the terms or labels used. Specifically, he argues that 'recovery' is too broad a term (Quarantelli, 1989) pointing out that frequently used terms, such as recovery, reconstruction or restoration, do not always point to the same thing or the same issues. Dynes (1970) remarked that disasters should be thought of as social phenomena of some kind and not as physical happenings, further noting that different types of disasters lead to different problems that, in turn, should elicit different responses. He uses the example that, in the case of a cyclone, some forewarning and preparation is possible whereas, with an earthquake, no forewarning period exists.

Whilst acknowledging that his remarks may be seen as selective, Quarantelli nevertheless argues that a partial research agenda can be drawn from what we already know about the disaster recovery process (or, indeed, from what we do not know). Offering a lengthy annotated bibliography of the study of disaster recovery, he identifies the majority of the major and better-known (English language) works in the

field of disaster recovery process. Although most are drawn from studies in developed, urbanised and industrial societies, it should not be automatically assumed that these are not relevant to understanding disaster recovery in developing countries. Indeed, cross-societal studies that have been carried out in disaster areas have consistently found and shown more similarities than differences in recovery processes (Quarantelli, 1989).

Following on from his 1989 paper referred to above, Quarantelli presented a paper for the International Forum on Civil Protection on 20th March 1999 in Foligno, an area of Italy that has frequently been affected by earthquakes. This paper considered the disaster recovery process, exploring what is known and unknown from research, and initiated discussions surrounding the term 'recovery', in particular what the word recovery means. The discussions also focused on what could be considered as success or failure of the recovery process, as well as what characterises those who are assisted and those who provide assistance in the aftermath of disasters.

So, what does the term recovery mean? In research studies and everyday disaster planning, as well as in actual practice, the referent is clearly to a temporal phase. That is, recovery is used generally to refer to what goes on in the post-impact stage at some point after the crisis period of a disaster. However, other words that have been used by researchers and operational personnel are *reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, restitution* and *recovery*. Whilst these words are used frequently, they are also at times interchangeable in their context and meanings and, hence, when used they are not always referring to the same process (Quarantelli, 1999). For this reason, a framework for researchers is necessary in order to address the problems concerned with the disaster recovery process. The following are the general ways in which these different terms are employed in the literature.

Reconstruction – Those who use the term reconstruction almost exclusively stress the (post-impact) rebuilding of physical structures that are destroyed or damaged during a disaster. It is suggested that, for social scientists and most operational personnel, this is not seen as the most significant dimension to consider, although in any post-disaster situation it is arguably (Quarantelli, 1999) the most immediate and pressing need.

Restoration – This is used to refer to the reestablishment of prior or pre-impact physical and social patterns. Whether considered to be a goal, a measure of success, or an indicator of personal and / or social change, the implicit focus is on returning the

disaster site as closely as possible to its original form, to that which preexisted before the disaster.

Rehabilitation – This also suggests restoration. However, here the focus is more on people rather than things or structures, with the inference of fostering the restored level to a one that is arguably better than before the disaster.

Restitution – This advocates some sort of restoration to the rightful owners, and often denotes to legal actions to return to a former (similar as possible) state of affairs.

Recovery – This usually implies the attempt to bring the post-disaster situation back to level of acceptability. However, and depending on the magnitude of damage, this may or may not be the same as the pre-impact level.

Quarantelli acknowledges that in some circumstances researchers have used a number of these terms when constructing theoretical models. He provides the example of Rubin and Popkin (1990) who proposed a model of recovery involving three peaks of post-impact activities. Peak one is a minimalist / restoration effort where the emphasis focuses on the physical recovery. Peak two reveals concern for more than physical restoration, especially for attending to social impacts and human needs after the impact and peak three focus on community betterment. However, Quarantelli (1999) suggests that such systematic multi-term uses are often rare.

It is suggested that there is a great deal in a 'name'. In this context, there is far more involved than semantics as there are many policy and legal implications linked to different labels, and how something is defined is evidently significant. Thus, paying attention to the need for planners, operational personnel or researchers to specify what they mean when attaching particular labels is of much significance. Providing meaning to the words used can diminish miscommunication (Quarantelli, 1999). Consequently, the five R's, namely *reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, restitution* and *recovery*, within their definitions, will be recognised and incorporated into the DLCF. Thus, when, implementing the framework during research in L'Aquila, the aim is to develop a clear understanding of the recovery phases in a systematic manner.

As noted, this literature review is guided by the objective of constructing two models to inform and frame the research. Thus far, the focus has been on defining natural

disasters and the disaster recovery phases, both of which are integrated into the construction of the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) to be employed during stage one of the research. It has become evident that disasters involve and can be defined to some degree, by death and destruction and factors, which also define a tourism destination as 'dark'. Indeed, in the discussion of dark tourism in Chapter 2, it was acknowledged that at its core is the relationship between the tourist site, destination or attraction and the death, suffering or atrocity that it (re)presents. Having considered disasters and disaster recovery in general, this chapter therefore now turns to a brief review of post-disaster tourism recovery models in particular before going on to explore a specific form of natural disaster, namely, earthquakes, which is of particular relevance to the research in this thesis.

3.5 The emotional responses to a natural disaster

As this research is concerned with and will be gathering data from participants who have succumbed to the impacts of a natural disaster, it is therefore necessary to also discuss some of the key theory on surviving natural disasters and the subsequent emotional reactions experienced by victims.

It is common for individuals to have experiences such as, mild stress reactions for several days or weeks after the impact of a natural disaster. Individuals can firstly experience shock and even denial, especially in the first couple of hours or days. The shock can leave people feeling stunned and dazed. Denial can also be present, leaving individual unable to acknowledge that a stressful situation has taken place, or fully appreciate the reality of the experience. Shock and denial are normal protective responses that individuals use to reduce trauma (APA, 2011).

Once the initial reactions begin to moderate, people's responses can differ to a large degree. Often feeling intense and unpredictable emotions, though specific reminders of the natural disaster and this can potentially trigger feelings of anger and fear. Individuals can have immediate reactions following the event, whilst others will have delayed reactions. Some recover quickly whilst other will have adverse effects for a longer period of time (APA, 2011). No regular pattern of reactions to natural disasters is available in the literature. However, varied reactions may include some of the following:

Emotional reaction: Experiencing feelings of fear, grief, anger, guilt, resentment, helplessness, hopelessness, or ongoing emotional numbness (APA, 2011).

Cognitive reactions: Being confused, disoriented, indecisive, worried. Noticing decreased attention span and concentration, memory problems, unwanted memories. Having negative thoughts about oneself, perhaps in a blaming way (APA, 2011).

Physical reactions: Feeling tension, fatigue, restlessness. Having sleep disturbances, bodily aches and pains, changes in appetite. Experiencing racing heartbeat, nausea, and quick startle response (APA, 2011).

Interpersonal reactions: Feeling more distrustful, irritable. Having more conflict in relationships. Withdrawing / isolating from others and putting distance between oneself and others. Feeling rejected and abandoned by others. Being judgmental and over-controlling (APA, 2011).

Whilst for the majority of individuals their reactions will disperse within a few weeks, it is suggested that one in three survivors often experience more severe stress responses (APA, 2011). Such responses can last for several weeks, months, or at times even years. Individuals at greater risk and likely to experience more severe reactions are usually those who have experienced or witnessed (during or after the disaster) the following:

- Loss of loved ones
- Life-threatening danger
- Exposure to others' deaths/injury/maiming
- Extreme environment destruction or human violence
- Loss of home, possessions, neighborhood, community
- Loss of communication with and support from loved ones
- Extreme fatigue, sleep deprivation, hunger, or weather exposure
- Extreme emotional and/or physical strain
- Exposure to toxic contamination, **Source:** APA (2011)

It is, of course probable for individuals who experienced a natural disaster to decrease the risk of these ongoing negative stress reactions and to increase their ability to recover, which can be accomplished through a variety of measures (APA, 2011). These can include seeing to basic needs (shelter, safety, food / water), identifying key resources to recovery (Red Cross, Salvation Army, Local Emergency Assistance groups, Church), establishing priorities for self and family, re-establishing routines, avoiding isolation, medication for sleep deprivation, volunteering, creating meaning of what has been experienced, and knowing to seek professional counseling

if applicable to the individual (APA, 2011). Whilst the experience of surviving a natural disaster is difficult enough, it can be astonishing for victims just how long the emotional toll can remain in them. However, recognsing that all these effects are normal is important, as they are the body, mind and spirit's way of understanding, accepting, and making peace with an unexplainable situation (APA, 2011). Thus, there is no correct method in which victims are likely to react to such a tragic event. By coping head-on with the emotional effects of the disaster, reactions will gradually decrease, allowing the individuals life to begin to re-balance (APA, 2011).

Quarantelli (1989) illustrates what the research literature suggests about disaster recovery, using examples from different levels rather than trying to summarise a substantial body of research, he asks the question: what can we say at the individual level? Disaster survivors will never forget the experience of a major disaster. It will be forever embedded in their memory as it is clearly not something that is easily forgettable. It should be further noted that the literature does not suggest much by the way of general long term health or mental health consequences. On the whole, there is little indication that most disaster victims are weakened or made more vulnerable in the future to physical health problems. Likewise, identifying that this is a more controversial point in the research literature, most disaster researchers have failed to find significant longer-term negative health or bad psychological consequences for individuals who undergo a disaster. Quarantelli states that he has come to conclude that there is as much evidence that some people are actually better off psychologically in the post impact period as a result of the experience of undergoing a disaster, as counter to the notion that some people are worse off. Therefore, disasters should not be automatically thought of as bad in their consequential impacts on individuals; it is an empirical matter regarding the degree to which consequences are positive and negative as well as inconsequential (Quarantelli, 1989).

What Quarantelli has come to deduce is that a certain category of persons *may* exhibit some dysfunctional psychological effects as a result of undergoing the extreme stress of a major community disaster. This is frequently noted to be correct in children and the elderly. It is arguable that long-term negative psychological consequences appear to be a stronger probability in certain circumstances, such as first respondents, the police, fire service and medical personnel, who are first on the scene and required to assist with possibly badly disfigured bodies and the dead (Quarantelli, 1989).

As for families, the research evidence also shows a mixed picture with respect to recovery. Some families are better off after a disaster, whilst some are worst off, while others do not seem to show any significantly apparent affects one way or the other. Some families are drawn closer together, others may show signs of disintegration, or post impact problems, and some research evidence implies that these problems were possibly social entities that were already vulnerable to further stress prior to when the disaster occurred. All of which are said to require individual evidence and inspection as all individuals and families undergo different stressful and disruptive direct and indirect impacts from a disaster (Quarantelli, 1989).

The community level is another significant area to identify with. Research evidence indicates a very mixed picture as to any long-term change that can be attributed to the impact of a disaster. The large majority of communities in recovering from a disaster turn out to be rather similar to what they were before the disastrous event. However, it is also possible to find instances where the community is revitalised and progresses in ways that were not inherent in the pre-disaster existing trends (Quarantelli, 1989). Nonetheless, the research evidence is rather comprehensible on one level of community consequence of recovering from a disaster; a degree of community conflict is almost inevitable. This conflict can be said to stem from a resurgence of existing community disagreements that are usually set-aside during the emergency time period post-disaster. This is in line with the issues and the differences in opinions in terms of allocations of aid resources and temporary housing for example. Other disagreements will reflect the issues of how to rebuild the town, possibly in a physically different way or a mirrored reflection of its past; encouraging the development of new industries or businesses; change land use, or a focus on past traditions (Quarantelli, 1989). However, it is important to note that a major disaster and certainly a catastrophe could have overall positive results depending on what occurs in the recovery process. These could be reflective in regards to conditions that are favourable to change, such as a demonstration that old societal patterns were no longer adequate in an extreme situation, the appearance of emergent groups that work better than established groups prior to the disaster, or the presentation of different role models, better ideals brought in by outside helpers (individuals or organisations), and certain differential effects of the disaster, including polluted land or unsafe building structures (Quarantelli, 1989).

Traumatic experiences can be relatively common after a natural disaster. It is not always easy to classify traumatic events as a disaster, as individual experiences and the kinds of disasters can vary (Galea, Nandi and Vlahov, 2005). According to Norris,

Friedman and Watson (2002) human-made / technological disasters have diverse and more noticeable consequences than natural disasters. Green (1990) notes that certain characteristics can be noticeable in defining how people adjust after traumatic events. Mental health risk factors can be described as subjective or objective in nature. Subjective risk factors comprise of a person's perception of the traumatic event and subjective experiences are commonly linked with greater levels of psychological distress: low control, low predictability, and perceived threat to life (Foa, Steketee and Olasov-Rothbaum, 1989; Jones and Barlow, 1990). Objective risk factors include experiences such as: bereavement, personal injury, unemployment and loss of property and other personal belongings. It is suggested that objective risk factors are also acknowledged to increase an individual's level of psychological distress (Maida, Gordon, Steinberg and Gordon, 1989). However, a dose-response relationship can exist between both the subjective and objective risk factors and subsequent psychological adjustment (Quarantelli, 1989). The perception of life threat due to trauma may carry an elevated mental health liability (Freedy, Saladin, Kilpatrick, Resnick and Saunders, 1994). Objective events that are not reversible (e.g. bereavement) may be particularly important in determining psychological adjustment (Kohn, and Levav, 1990). Many psychological complaints improve across time with considerable resolution of most symptoms within 18 months post-disaster (Krause, 1987; Steinglass and Gerrity, 1990; Rubonis and Bickman, 1991). Predominantly, devastating events may provide expectations to this pattern of recovery (Kohn, and Levav, 1990). In this thesis, primary interviews during Stage 2 research will be conducted 3 years post-disaster; thus, the risk of participants still experiencing post-traumatic stress is relatively low.

Lyons (1991) notes that individuals faced with traumatic experiences have a remarkable resilience. The role of resilience in adjustment following natural disasters is illustrated by several facts. Firstly, the majority of adults often do not necessitate mental health services post-disaster. Secondly, adults do not experience irreparable losses as a result of natural disasters (Summers and Gowan, 1991). However, the average psychological recovery across time possibly transpires in proportion to an individual's capability to reverse losses as a result of a natural disaster. Furthermore, various factions of society are more susceptible to experience psychological distress (Freedy, et al., 1994).

According to Weaver (2002), researchers have identified that people and communities struck by natural disasters often experience four distinct phases of response:

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1. *Heroic Response*, in which people demonstrate outstanding courage, stamina and concern for others in trying to prevent loss of lives and property.

2. *Honeymoon Period*, in which a unified community works together toward recovery.

3. *Disillusionment Phase*, which is likely to endure for months and often even longer, more like years.

Social scientists at times refer to it as the second disaster, because it is a time when the realities of bureaucratic paperwork and recovery delays begin to set in. Outside help begins to diminish and people realise that they must do more themselves.

4. *Reconstruction Phase*, which may take several years as normal functioning is gradually reestablished (Weaver, 2002).

As for Weaver's fourth phase, *reconstruction*, it is not to be mistaken with the previous discussions on the recovery phases offered by Quarantelli. However, what is of note is that both stages of research will be conducted during the reconstruction phase in accordance to Weaver's theory. The importance of identifying post-traumatic responses to a disaster is highly significant to the possible reactions of participants during stage 2 research. Acknowledging such theory aims to assist the researcher when carrying out empirical research.

3.6 Phases of tourism recovery in post-disaster scenarios

The World Tourism Organisation describes a standard process for destination recovery from a crisis that follows a series of remedial steps (WTO, 1998: 156). The WTO phase mode, summarised in Figure 3.2 below, outlines a process of managing media and tourist responses to a specific incident, how to mitigate negative impacts of loss of visitors in the impacted area, and the use of media techniques to restore 'the normal pattern.' However, in its attempt to be accessible, this model glosses over important complexities in crisis management (Scott, Laws and Prideaux, 2008). Coles (2003: 177-178), for example, notes, 'First… crises associated with terrorism are likely to be different to other forms of crisis. Secondly, the model's inherent linearity and the reduction of recovery to a set of practically automatic steps are severe and bare. Finally, and most importantly, it views the events as practically ring-fenced temporally, so there is a 'normal pattern' to which production and consumption can return.

Figure 3.2: Phase Model of a Tourism Crisis
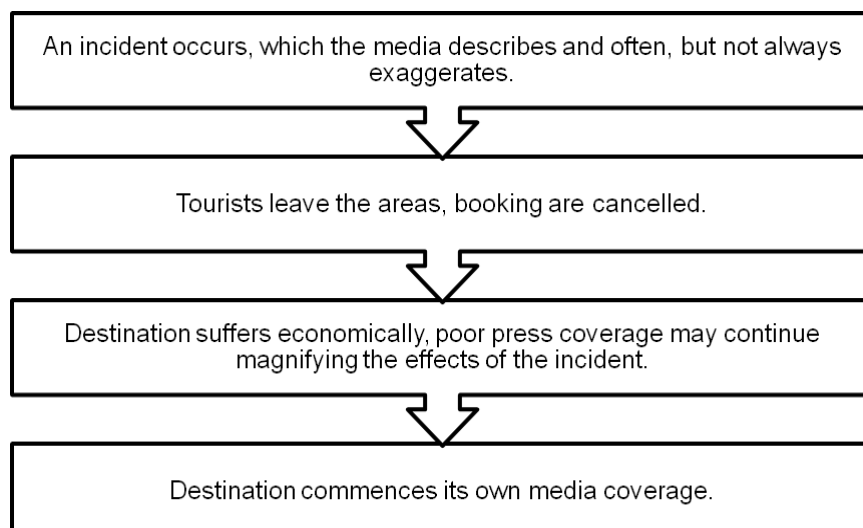
Source: adapted from WTO (1998: 156).

Scott, Laws and Prideaux (2008) note that, in the field of tourism research, relatively few studies have applied established crisis management models, although one of the most comprehensive tourism disaster management frameworks was developed by Faulkner (2001) who synthesised crisis situations based on research by Fink (1986), Keown-McMullan (1997) and Weiner and Kahn (1972). His widely cited – and criticised (see Speakman and Sharpley, 2012) – model identifies a number of phases in crisis situations as illustrated in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Faulkner's Tourism Disaster Management Framework (Simplified)

Stage	Phase
1	**Pre-event phase**: disaster contingency plans, scenarios or probability assessments play a major role in the disaster management strategy.
2	**Prodromal phase**: the disaster is imminent and warning systems and command centers are established. In this second phase, contingency plan actions are initiated.
3	**Emergency phase**: disaster effects are felt and actions are necessary to protect people or property in the tourism destination.
4	**Intermediate phase**: short-term and immediate needs of people have to be addressed by emergency and rescue teams. A clear media communication strategy is crucial in this phase.
5	**Long-term (recovery) phase**: the damaged infrastructure has to be rebuilt and environmentally damaged areas have to be reconstructed • 5A – recovery of damaged infrastructure; Includes roads, water, electricity, hotels, transport and other services • 5B – marketing responses: by individual firms, DMOs, STOs, NTOs • 5C – adaptations to the system itself as rebuilding occurs
6	**Resolution phase**: this phase corresponds to Smith's (1990) feedback loop where existing assessment of methods or contingency plans are improved.

Source: adapted from Scott, Laws and Prideaux (2008: 9).

An alternative systems perspective is centered on the idea of an unremittingly developing system where (gradual) change is endemic but a crisis may suddenly

result in a fundamentally changed state. Taking this perspective it can be suggested that a return to normality is not essentially the required (or even desired) endpoint (Faulkner and Vikulov, 2001). A crisis is seen as the outcome of one form of change and the effects of a crisis are not limited to its immediate temporal or geographical locality. Such changes can be seen both positive or negative but certainly the succeeding reality may be distinctive from proceeding ones, and importantly, the changes that occur were unplanned from the perspective of the organisations strategic management (Scott, Laws and Prideaux, 2008). From this perspective, the effect of a disaster as a catastrophic changing event is much more likely to generate a change of state than what could be seen as other 'lesser' events. This perspective is presented in the case study of a flooding disaster in Katherine (Faulkner and Vikulov, 2001).

Faulkner suggests that a clear distinction between crisis and disaster is revealed within the framework. The origin of a crisis lies in planning and management deficiencies and are often self-inflicted, whereas disasters are generated by natural happenings, in which the victim has little or no control and the impacts are therefore (to some degree) unavoidable, his arguments thus reflecting those presented earlier in this chapter (see section 3.3 above). However, he also suggests that, as some destinations are more prone to natural occurrences than others, the impacts of such predictable disasters can be moderated through planning and management practices. In other words, some tourism destinations are susceptible to certain types of natural disasters (for example, hurricanes are a predictable event in the West Indies) and in such instances, action should be taken to try and avoid or at least reduce the potential damage that could come about from such an event. Apart from evading high-risk locations, an apparent step that could be taken is to evaluate the risks a destination is exposed to and thus, develop and implement management plans that will adequately cope with disaster situations in advance (Faulkner, 2001). Others, however, point out that, generally, disasters and tourism crises are unpredictable in their occurrence, evolution and impact, rendering such pre-emptive measures, time consuming, sometimes ultimately fruitless (de Sausmarez, 2003) and potentially leading to complacency (Evans and Elphick, 2005).

Faulkner (2001) suggests that a rational step in extending the research described in his paper is to use the framework as a basis for examining and analysing actual cases of tourism disasters, thus, enabling a generic model to be applied, tested and refined, and as a result, provide further understandings into the particularities of tourism disasters. For the purpose of this thesis, it has been necessary to establish an

understanding of the key stages of the disaster recovery process, which has been identified in both the general context (Quarantelli, 1989) and from within a tourism context (Faulkner, 2001). In so doing, this will facilitate the construction (in Chapter 5) of the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) to assess L'Aquila's post-earthquake disaster recovery process.

3.7 Earthquakes and society

Natural disasters include earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, storms, bush fires, floods, as well as drought and crop failure. Many of these occur, by definition, beyond human control, yet the choices people make in their lives and in their physical environment can either increase or decrease the probability of death and destruction by natural disasters, or at least reduce the impact in terms of casualties (Kastenbaum, 2008). For example, living closer to the ocean can lead to greater vulnerability to storms and tsunamis, whilst living in woodlands suggests a greater risk of forest fires. Some people may well be aware of the risks of living in hazardous locations. However, they may also appreciate the positive features of the area and make a conscious decision to stay, whilst others may be less aware of the potential for a natural disaster until they experience one.

The term natural disaster customarily refers to an event that occurs within a limited period of time, although this is not always the case. For example, droughts can be significant disasters over months, if not years. Perhaps one of the most destructive (and briefest) forms of natural disaster, the earthquake, is the focus of this thesis. Throughout history, earthquakes have been responsible for some of the most devastating disasters. The figures below highlight earthquakes resulting in large numbers of fatalities:

- 830,000 in Shaanxi, China: January 24, 1556
- 300,000 in Calcutta, India: October 11, 1737
- 250,000 in Antioch, Syria: May 20, 526 AD
- 242,000 in Tangshan, China: July 28, 1976
- 200,000 in Yokohama, Japan: September 1, 1923
- 200,000 in Nan-Shan, China: May 22, 1927, **Source:** Kastenbaum (2008)

More recently, in 2008, China suffered the Sichuan earthquake (magnitude 8), which killed over 69,000 and left over 18,000 missing and an estimated 4.8 million homeless (Vervaeck and Daniell, 2011). Although a number of the events listed above occurred

in China, destructive earthquakes have been suffered around the globe and the scale of casualties is often significant. Nevertheless, not all earthquakes result in high numbers of fatalities. For example, the earthquake that struck during the 1989 Baseball series in California resulted in 62 deaths, whilst just one person died in the 1992 Californian earthquake. More recently, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck Christchurch, New Zealand, which devastated buildings, wrecked businesses and took the lives of 185 individuals (Heather, 2012). However, earthquakes continue to display their destructive and fatal force. On December 26th, 2003 an earthquake (magnitude 6.5) devastated the city of Bam, Iran killing more than 27,000 people and left more than 75,000 people homeless (Nadim, Lindholm, Remseth, Anresen, Moghtaderi-Zadeh, 2004). On December 26th, 2004 the Indian Ocean undersea megathrust earthquake resulted in a devastating tsunami which struck coastal communities with waves up to 30 meters high. It claimed the lives of over 230,000 people in fourteen different countries and, to date, is remembered as one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history (National-Geographic, 2005). On March 11th 2011, the world witnessed the Japan undersea earthquake (magnitude 9.0), which also resulted in a tsunami reaching heights of 40.5 meters. Once again, the consequences were devastating, with more than 700,000 buildings damaged and some 20,000 people losing their lives. The tsunami also caused a nuclear accident in three reactors in the Fukushima Daiilchi Nuclear Power Plant complex, resulting in an evacuation affecting hundreds of thousands of residents (Chameides, 2012). During the writing of this thesis an earthquake (magnitude 5.9) struck the Emilia-Romagna region, Italy, on 20th May 2012, causing widespread damage to buildings and businesses and costing the lives of seven people (BBC-News, 2012). Indeed, Italy has suffered numerous earthquakes and many cities and towns throughout the country have suffered from their impacts including, of course, L'Aquila.

3.8 Recovering from disasters: Historical illustrations

Throughout human existence, our habitable environments have been prone to natural disasters and, as introduced in the previous section, earthquakes have proven to be one of the most destructive. El-Khoury and Robbins (2004) believe that, in the majority of occasions, a disaster or earthquake provides the chance for a city to reinvent itself, particularly when the cost of human tragedy is great, this becomes an important process of renewal. Sharp (2010) identifies some examples in which disasters have affected cities and how they have reconstructed themselves. The Great Fire of London (1666) changed the face of the city forever; London became a rationally organised city, modern as a consequence of the entrepreneurial spirit that

shaped it. El-Khoury and Robbins (2004) note that when a city develops traditionally it also grows organically; when there is the chance to plan from new, the opportunity exists to plan properly, to facilitate better circulation and provide better facilities. For example, the fire that struck Chicago in 1871 destroyed about four square miles of the city centre, resulting in the emergence of a new form of architecture that proved to be one of the most significant in history. Specifically, instead of wooden or stone buildings, the need to build much in a small space led for the first time to skyscrapers being built from steel (Sharp, 2010).

Another example is the Great Lisbon earthquake (1st November 1755, estimated magnitude 8.5 - 9), destroying most of the city, killing around 100,000 people. King Joseph 1st and Prime Minister Sebastiao Jose de Carvalho e Melo, were quick to rebuild. They set about hiring architects, engineers and organising labour, developing a new Lisbon that contained early examples of anti-seismic architecture (Sharp, 2010). Sharp (2012) offers other examples, such as the San-Francisco earthquake of 1906, Hiroshima after the US atomic bomb on 6th of August in 1945, Kanto earthquake of 1923 on the Japanese Island of Honshu which also devastated Tokyo, and the 1976 earthquake in the Chinese city of Tangshan. In all cases, there is evidence of significant success in rebuilding the cities after major disasters. So a question relevant to this thesis is: can L'Aquila learn from the experiences of other nations when faced with a catastrophic event? Of course not all countries, regions, cities or people may desire such sweeping changes. Indeed, it has been found that the people of L'Aquila were against any significant modernisation of their city, but wanted it restored to its previous historic grandeur (Sharp, 2010). More generally, if earthquakes are such a big part of Italian history, how have those places that have suffered earthquakes managed to recover? Or, why after every earthquake in Italy do people forget, and why do the earthquakes become a myth and a distant thought?

> *There are no disasters more easily forgotten than earthquakes, when the reconstruction is accomplished...*
> *...to forget is a necessary reaction to be able to want again to live on the earth.*
> *...the second removal is individual, is the renunciation to communicate the experience.*
> *The event goes away from the actuality and becomes no more tellable...*
> *...as regards the cult of the memory, the war and the earthquakes are at odds, like daylight and night. Facing the war everyone take a stand, being submitted by some kind of participation; in the instant of the earthquake the only reaction is to be passive, shocked, projected at the same time at the beginning and at the end of the world.* (Nimis, 2009)

Italy is beginning to realise that disasters and earthquakes cannot be evaluated as isolated incidents and furthermore, that there does not appear to be any kind of accepted model of intervention to create a guiding principle for reconstruction (Massaro and Scamporrino, 2012). Additionally, Massaro and Scamporrino (2012) suggest that all earthquakes are different and propose their own challenges. However, it is possible to study the past in order to recognise both mistakes and good practice in order to enhance knowledge of an issue that is often scarcely considered. The following section therefore discusses some of the more appropriate reconstruction examples that have occurred in Italy.

3.9 Paradigms of reconstruction – Italy's past cases

The final re-construction of the architecture (considering both functionality and heritage) is a highly discussed and coveted phase, and the transition from the recovery to the actual reconstruction is what distinguishes an accomplished reconstruction from a failed one. A number of earthquakes that have struck Italy throughout history are listed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Historical earthquakes in Italy

Date	Location	Magnitude – Mercalli scale	Fatalities
04-02-1169	Sicily	-	15,000
25-11-1570	Ferrara	-	70-200
11-01-1693	Sicily & Malta	7.4	60,000
08-09-1694	Basilicata	6.9	6,000+
14-01-1703	Norcia	6.2	6,240 – 9,791
12-02-1703	L'Aquila	6.7	2,500 – 5,000
04-02-1783	Calabria	7.0	50,000
16-12-1857	Naples	6.9	11,000
16-12-1857	Montemurro (Basilicata)	7.0	11,000
29-06-1873	Veneto	6.3	94
08-09-1905	Calabria	7.9	557
28-12-1908	Avezzano	7.0	32,610
28-12-1908	Messina & Reggio Calabria	7.2	120,000
26-04-1917	North Umbria	5.8	20
29-06-1919	Mugello	6.3	100
07-09-1920	Garfagnana, Toscana	6.4	171
23-07-1930	Irpinia, Campania	6.5	1,404
30-10-1930	Senigallia, Marche	5.9	18
18-10-1936	Bosco Cansiglio, Vento	5.9	19
21-08-1962	Irpinia, Campania	6.2	17
15-01-1968	Western Sicily	6.5	1,000
11-08-1971	Lazio	4.9	31
06-05-1976	Friuli	6.5	989
19-09-1979	Norcia, Umbria	5.9	5
23-11-1980	Campania (Irpinia) & Basilicata	6.5	3,000
13-12-1990	Augusta, Sicily	5.7	17
26-09-1997	Foligno, Marche, Umbria	6.4	11
06-09-2002	Sicily	6.0	2
31-10-2002	Molise, Southern Italy	5.9	30
04-06-2009	L'Aquila	6.3	308-309
20-05-2012	Emilia Romagne	6.0	7
29-05-2012	Medolla	5.8	20

Source: adapted from Galli, Galadini, and Calzoni (2005); Guidoboni and Traina (1996); USGS (2013).

The following short case studies describe what are considered to be the top four earthquake-reconstructions to date during the post-war period, and were presented by Massaro and Scamporrino's during the 17th International Conference on Cultural Heritage and New Technologies.

3.9.1 Belice (Western Sicily) 1968

The earthquake of Belice occurred during the night of the 14th and 15th of January 1968 with an intensity of around 6.5 of the Mercalli scale. It was subsequently followed by a less powerful tremor ten days later, on the 25th of January.

Figure 3.4: Belice – post earthquake in 1968

Source: Giusti (2013)

The natural disaster struck the entire hilly region of south-west Sicily, a 6200 square kilometre area, whilst causing significant damage in the Belice valley (about 2800 square kilometres). At the administrative level, one region, 3 provinces and 12 towns were involved. The government adopted a 'Top-Down' strategy. The Sicilian national government centralised the decision making process, thus depriving the local actors the ability of attaining any kind of control during the reconstruction phase. The aim was to focus on an industrial development in a mainly agricultural area, and to propose a new 'territorial asset' by abandoning the historical hilly hamlets in favour of a modernists 'new town' further down the valley (Giusti, 2013).

3.9.2 Friuli (1976)

On May 6th 1976, an earthquake of 6.4 magnitude struck the northern part of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. The city of Udine was not directly hit, but the foothills and the

mountainous areas were almost completely destroyed with the epicenter between Gemona and Artegna. Two more earthquakes struck the following September with magnitudes close to 5.8 and 6.0. The 45 affected municipalities, both in the Udine and Pordenone provinces, were declared disaster zones. Another 40 municipalities were classified as 'highly damaged' in the same two provinces. A further 52 towns were declared 'damaged' of which three where in the Gorizia province. The total area covered was more than 6,000 square kilometres. The population affected was around 600,000 residents, of whom 100,000 were left homeless (17% - 32,000 of the people affected had their homes completely destroyed).

Figure 3.5: Friuli, impact of earthquake on a local bar

Source: Protezione-Civile (2011)

On this occasion, the reconstruction governance followed a 'bottom-up' approach in which local actors played the most important roles in the whole process. They were in charge of managing money; they approved the transformation of projects and controlled the different phases. The main objectives were to preserve the urban structures and the rebuilding of villages. The aim at the time was to propose economic development based on small and medium-sized enterprises able to promote the reconstruction itself (Protezione-Civile, 2011)

3.9.3 Irpinia (1980)

On November the 23rd 1980, the strongest seismic event occurred. An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.9 (on the Mercalli scale) struck central Campania and part of the Basilicata region (whilst also impacting the region of Puglia and the provinces of Avellino, Salerno and Potenza), an area of about 17,000 square kilometres - eight times the scale of the Belice area and more than three times that of Friuli. An initial 158 municipalities were affected (a number which reached to 687, one of which was the city of Naples).

Figure 3.6: Disillusioned woman gazes at the impacts caused by the
Irpinia earthquake

Source: photo by Galasso (nd)

Initially around 200,000 people were made homeless but, with the addition of Naples, the number rose to 300,000. On this occasion, the governance of the re-construction was diversified. Indeed, there were various decision-making powers involved, mostly controlled by local actors (municipalities and provinces). However, with such widespread destruction and damage they were unable to technically manage it. Therefore, the state promoted a wide range of big projects and designed major works, although the scale of the projects was such that the bureaucracy caused a rapid slow-down in the re-construction. The aim of this approach was to create a model of industrial development, including a territorial reorganisation which planned a new production plant and a new settlement in the valley, but this was not successful. Most of the 'modernisation projects' failed, some of which were as a result of the opposition from the population.

3.9.4 Umbria-Marche (1997-1998)

The example above described the single most powerful seismic event in Italy, but a sequence of earthquakes from September 1997 to March 1998 occurred, registering 5.9 on the Mercalli scale. The earthquake was so extensive, following this repetitive pattern, that is was called 'endless' by the media. Initially, the earthquake struck the Perugia and Macerata provinces (including both Umbria and Marche regions) with 48 municipalities affected but, following succession of quakes, the total eventually became 76.

Figure 3.7: Destroyed home after Umbria-Marche earthquake

Source: Carta-del-Rischio (nd)

Due to the fragmented sequence of events, the number of homeless was difficult to calculate. However, by the end of the seismic activity there were about 24,000 people affected out of a demographic basin of 50,000; thus, some 50% of the population had been affected. The governance can be compared to the one applied in Friuli, that is, 'bottom-up'. The role of municipalities alongside the regions was considerable. The central government collaborated in the reconstruction, but the operations were directed by locals with support from the 'Protezione Civile', a recently born entity.

As noted, Italy is prone to earthquakes and therefore the reconstruction of homes, towns and cities is not new. History reveals that locations that have been devastated by natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, can be rebuilt. However, Italy also has many examples where the potential benefits of redevelopment have left much to be

desired. On many occasions, places that have been struck by earthquakes have been left in ruins; cities have become deserted and the ruins remain only as a living memory of the devastating events that bought their sudden end.

3.10 Citta Morte – The silent ghost towns of Italy

This section presents examples of two key aspects relevant to this thesis. Dark tourism has been recognised as a concept that can encapsulate a wide range of tourism locations related to death, destruction or the seemingly macabre. It has also been established that natural disasters, such as earthquakes, bring death and destruction, often on a significant scale. Therefore, the two (dark tourism and natural disasters) can be integrated with each other. The city of L'Aquila in Italy is the principal focus of this thesis, but the following examples provide illustrative situational instances in which death and destruction brought about by natural disasters (specifically, earthquakes) and tourism come together in Italy. The examples focus on places known as ghost towns as a result of devastation caused by earthquakes.

Kathy Weiser (2010) on *Legends of America* offers a definition of ghost towns. She describes them simply as any historical town / site that leaves some evidence of a town's pervious glory. This could take a variety of forms, such as all businesses shut, municipal services' at a minimum, rubble and old nails scattered around, ruins of former structures, and more. Weiser further suggests that some places that are categorised as ghost towns still have inhabitants, even though sometimes they do not wish to accept their town being classified in such a manner. However, according to Weiser (2010), historians will continue to refer to them as ghost towns if the reason or purpose for their former 'boom' or glory is no more (Weiser, 2010).

Philip Varney (1994), the writer of many ghost town books, offers his own definition in his book *Southern California's Best Ghost Towns: A Practical Guide*. He defines a ghost town as 'any site that has had a markedly decreased population from its peak, a town whose initial reason for settlement (such as a mine or railroad) no longer keeps people in the community. A ghost town, then, 'can be completely deserted… or it can be a town with genuine signs of vitality' Varney, 1994: xiii-xiv). There is also the suggestion that ghost towns must have tangible remains for visitors to see (Baker, 2003).

Much of the focus on ghost towns has been in America; such is the extensive list of books by Philip Varney. His writings have described ghost towns in Colorado,

Arizona, Oregon, Washington, British Colombia, California, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico and elsewhere. In addition, a recent book by Hinckley (2011) explores *Ghost Towns of Route 66.* However, Italy also boasts a number of ghost towns. An article by Demetri (2012) discusses *Citta Morte (Dead City): Ghost towns of Italy: Ancient towns and ruins in Italy.* Demetri suggests that, for English speakers, they are more commonly acknowledged as Ghost Towns (and not dead cities). He explains that countless locations have been abandoned after earthquakes reduced the major buildings to rubble. The locals more often than not were forced by government to relocate, instead of rebuilding. However, whether the result of a natural disaster or more mundane reasons such as a lack of modern conveniences or simply a declining elderly population, Citta Morte are scattered across Italy (Demetri, 2012). Demetri goes on to reveal that some of these (Citta Morte) have been offered a 'second life' in the form of artist colonies or as a refuge for squatters and illegal immigrants. He notes that there are hundreds of abandoned villages and little towns throughout the country, with more of them concentrated in the underprivileged and seismically active vicinities of the south (Demetri, 2012). In the following section some examples of these Citta Morte are provided and, subsequently, the relevance of the concept of Citta Morte to the specific context of L'Aquila will be discussed during stage one research (Chapter 7, Volume Two).

3.10.1 Citta Morte: Bussana Vecchia

One of the most famous towns with the title Citta Morte is Bussana Vecchia (located in Liguria), and has taken on a rebirth as an artist colony. On the 23rd of February 1887, a shattering earthquake left the city uninhabitable for the locals. It was abandoned for around 70 years before artists began squatting in the buildings (around the 1960s). Since then, battles with local government have the residents fighting to stay in the abandoned city. However, due to the artists, the city has seen improvements, such as established electricity and pluming. As a result of this, commercial enterprises have emerged, such as restaurants and art galleries. However, the majority of the town retains a ruined appearance and continues to be an inspiring motif for artists. As with the majority of cities seen as Citta Morte, the future is unsure, much to the active role of authorities attempting to either evict the squatters or, more recently, try to force them to pay rent (Falcone, 2008; Demetri, 2012).

Figure 3.8 below shows how buildings in Bussana Vecchia have been adapted and reconstructed; in the background there are buildings with new windows and gates whilst in the foreground there is a restaurant. Destroyed buildings that crumbled

during the earthquake and which remain uninhabitable surround the renovated buildings.

Figure 3.8: Bussana Vecchia: Citta Morte

Source: Demetri (2012)

3.10.2 Citta Morte: Pentidattilo

Pentidattilo, a medieval Calabrian town has long been deserted due to the effects of earthquakes and landslides. The name Pentidattilo means the *five fingers* in reference to the shape of the rocks that overshadow the backdrop of the town (see Figure 3.9 below). Whilst arguably in much better condition to some of the other Citta Morte, the city was evacuated before a major disaster. With many buildings still in good order, including the town church, visitors may question its abandonment. Today an organization is aiming to restore the town, and recently the ghost town has become the setting for a Film Festival. Nevertheless, with the impending rock fingers formation overhead it makes it simple to realise that the slenderest of tremors has the potential to propel the mountain hurtling down upon Pentidattilo and any potential locals residing in the town (Clement, 2006; ItalianNotebook, 2010; Demetri, 2012).

Figure 3.9: Pentidattilo: Citta Morte

Source: Demetri (2012)

3.10.3 Citta Morte: Poggioreale

Located in the province of Trapani is the Sicilian ghost town of Poggioreale, which was destroyed by an earthquake (1968). The old town of Poggioreale scarcely existed for three hundred years before the earthquake enforced residents to construct a new town a few kilometers south (Demetri, 2012). The medieval town of Salaparuta (another town in the Sicilian Belice valley to be abandoned and rebuilt in a new location due to destructive earthquake of 1968) was completely reduced to rubble, leaving nothing but ruins except for a few parts of its castle. In contrast, Poggioreale fared a little better than other towns and can still be visited in its deteriorated state (Trabia, 2001; Demetri, 2012). The image below (Figure 3.10) shows two visitors strolling within Poggioreale around the rubble of the ruined town.

Figure 3.10: Poggioreale: Citta Morte
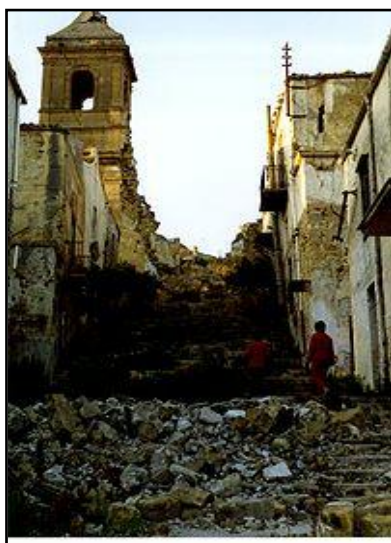
Source: Demetri (2012)

3.10.4 Citta Morte: Tocco Caudio

Tocco Caudio (a Beneventan town) offers and example of a living town, which is surrounded by a dead one. The ancient town can be located on an inaccessible ridge, making made modern living exceptionally challenging for the local residents. Even before the earthquake of 1980, the old town center was being abandoned. Consequently, the residents decided to create a new town that is much more accommodating and allows for accessibility and movement traffic within the town. The old town of Tocco Caudio is seen as a unquestionable Citta Morte and is very much off-limits due to significant safety motives. However, as Demetri notes, this still has not stopped visitors from entering the old town and walking amongst the crumbling buildings to take photos of its current state (Demetri, 2012).

Of course, there are numerous examples of where earthquakes have struck in Italy. The country lies on an active fault line and throughout history has experienced earthquakes of varying magnitude on a regular basis. Reflecting on all of these would, in the context of this thesis, be an impossible task; however, as noted above, the cases described briefly above provide a useful and relevant framework for considering the earthquake and its aftermath in L'Aquila. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 7, a number of similarities become apparent during the research. It is interesting to review the experience of Christchurch in New Zealand where, following an earthquake in 2011, dark tourism has become one element of the recovery process.

3.11 The case of Christchurch, New Zealand

On the 22nd of February 2011 (around two years after the L'Aquila earthquake), Christchurch, the third more populated city in New Zealand's succumbed to a devastating magnitude 6.3 earthquake, which devastated buildings, ruined businesses and 185 individuals victims lost their lives (Heather, 2012; Stevenson, Kachali, Whitman, Seville, Vargo and Wilson, 2011). In a recently published paper, Coats and Ferguson (2013) focus on a number of issues (also central to the current thesis on residents' perceptions of dark tourism in L'Aquila) exploring how the residents of Christchurch have endeavored to negotiate the balance between the unwelcome attention of tourists gazing at their tragedy and the challenges of beginning the journey towards economic and social recovery following the shattering earthquake. Coats and Ferguson's (2013) research provides realistic implications for business managers operating within a complex environment, particularly for the tourism sector, the aim being to reduce the inherent tensions between residents and

tourists whilst meeting economic recovery objectives. Before reviewing some of their findings, it is useful here to provide a brief background to the case study of Christchurch.

Tourism has long been an important economic sector in Christchurch. As a result of the earthquake, however, many of the city's attractions were destroyed yet both tourists and residents remain motivated to engage with the disaster site for varying reasons. The desire exists to offer a dark tourism product or experience for visitors, with the purpose being to generate revenue to support the regeneration of the city. Consequently, a number of tourist services have been developed, including the commercialised Red Zone bus tours around the cordoned Christchurch Central Business District (CBD) which provides the specific context for Coats and Ferguson's (2013) research; the purpose of which was to examine the tensions between residents and tourism and their competing motives. The existing literature concludes that, even without the provision of purposeful supply, tourists will still seek to engage with a disaster site in order to satisfy their curiosity or fascination (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Thus, the Red Bus tours provide a service in which suppliers have the opportunity to manage effectively the consumption of dark tourism, focusing the experience on what the local population is happy for tourists to witness whilst discouraging inappropriate touristic behaviour.

Coats and Ferguson (2013) observe that, although the rationale exists to provide a service that meets both tourists' demands and regeneration agendas, tourism businesses face risks of being blamed by the media as showing a lack of respect and benefitting from other peoples misfortune. Thus, the tours within the Red Zone deliver an absorbing setting where one can consider the potential social and ethical dilemmas connected with supplying a dark tourism product. Through their research, Coats and Ferguson (2013) sought to develop a set of guidelines that can be used and applied by businesses (in dark tourism localities) as a means of understanding how to best manage the supply of tourism in such tragic contexts. Their data was collected primarily by conducting six focus groups amongst Christchurch residents, whilst they also draw on additional data sources including news articles, media releases and participant observation on Red Zone tours.

As noted, Coats and Ferguson (2013) sought to develop a practical model for businesses attempting to formulate tourism development strategies in a dark tourism context. A number of outcomes from their research are of relevance to this thesis, and their key findings and managerial implications are summarised in Figure 3.11 below. Importantly, they suggest that their findings are neither fixed nor appropriate to

all circumstances. Instead, they are seeking to utilise the research findings they have gathered to present a framework which may be of interest to various institutions during turbulent times in order to arrive at, or attempt to find, a balance between the many tensions that exist during such ethically fragile and emotionally unstable periods.

Coats and Ferguson (2013) stress that tensions will continually exist in such situations. However, the research amongst the Christchurch residents revealed that such tensions would not always lead to or represent disagreement between varying stakeholders; a finding that was of particular significance when discussing the representation of death. From the research, it became clear that, on the one hand, residents understood the fascination that death might exert over tourists but found it unacceptable to represent death in a personal way or as the focus of the tourist experience. Thus, they concluded that tourism managers ought to restrain from revealing individual particulars of the victims (deceased) as well as information concerning how deaths transpired. On the other hand, however, it was also evident that residents believed that death should not be overlooked, and that confronting death can lead to catharsis and acceptance as a means of grieving. Engaging with sites of death allows visitors to comprehend the disaster and to remember the individuals who tragically lost their lives. Death should, thus, be approached, represented and discussed in an appropriate manner. However, Coats and Ferguson (2013) suggest that what can be defined as 'appropriate', particularly during the more immediate period of heightened sensitivity in the aftermath of the disaster, requires further investigation.

In addition, Coats and Ferguson (2013) suggest that instead of sensationalising the event, management should place emphasis on portraying the reality of the situation through an unbiased and authentic interpretation, engaging tourist, and to frame their emotional responses towards a dark site. They suggest that, in particular, multimedia, like videos and photos, should be utilised throughout the experience because locals felt it was vital for visitors to have knowledge of the city prior to the earthquake in order to enhance the evidence and reality of the disaster. In other words, residents felt that part of the reality of the situation was being portrayed to outsiders and, therefore, the use of historical visual explanation would improve the authenticity of the experience for tourists and empowering them to understand the enormity of the disaster. The research also exposed the need of managers to control challenging tourist practices such as taking photographs, seen as a particularly contentious issue for the host community. Moreover, a continuing assessment of perceptions and

listening to feedback was found to be essential in order to reduce potential conflicts at dark tourism sites.

Coats and Ferguson's (2013) framework (Figure 3.11) outlines the recommended approaches and provides administrators with a guide that could be of assistance in foreseeing the impending areas of conflict likely to erupt in dark tourism contexts.

Figure 3.11: Application of research findings to business practice

Unacceptable		Acceptable
Providing a service that invades areas of human presence (i.e. the residential suburbs),	⟶	Commercial areas and business districts were seen as acceptable locations for the provision of tourism services.
Providing a purely commercial service with the aim of making a profit.	⟶	A service that in some way contributes towards disaster recovery or aids in the revitalisation of the local economy.
A service that is entertainment- orientated.	⟶	Providing an educational aspect to the product (an educational-centric message).
Death as the focus, and mentioning death in a personal way.	⟶	It was seen as acceptable to mention death, for it is the reality of the situation.
Sensationalising the event / Inauthentic interpretation.	⟶	Portraying the reality of the situation through an unbiased and authentic interpretation.
Focusing on the macabre.	⟶	Focusing on the future direction of the city and accentuating the positives.
Encouraging or allowing problematic tourist practices (e.g. taking photographs).	⟶	Monitoring / modifying problematic tourist practices.

Source: adapted from Coats and Ferguson (2013)

It is important to recognise the significance and contribution of Coats and Ferguson's research to the dark tourism literature, whilst their findings and discussions are also of direct relevance to this thesis in particular, which focuses on similar issues and also aims to address a significant gap in the knowledge of the phenomenon of dark tourism, particularly from the perspective of local residents. As Coats and Ferguson (2013) suggest, the outcomes of their research is not necessarily applicable to all disaster situations; rather, it is representative of Christchurch and of the social context in which their research was conducted. However, this is not to say that their research cannot be of use in similar contexts, such as L'Aquila. Indeed, it can contribute to and be augmented by further research that can assist in identifying alternative issues that may be present in different dark tourism situations and contexts, such as different locations (globally), different magnitudes of disaster, different level of demand and supply, and varying availability of resources to meet the demand of tourism.

At the same time, however, Coats and Ferguson's (2013) research focuses on a specific and existing dark tourism 'product', namely, Christchurch's Red Zone tours. In a sense, therefore, dark tourism in Christchurch is a 'fait accompli'; a formal dark tourism product exists and the research explores local residents' reactions to that. What their research does not do is delve down to the roots or meaning of the dark tourism concept. As identified in Chapter 1, the research of the thesis aims to consider the use of the term 'dark' in a tourism disaster context and the attitudes of the local community towards tourists visiting this conceptual context. Hence, Coats and Ferguson's research does not address this basic and fundamental issue surrounding the term 'dark'. Additionally, L'Aquila presents a very different socio-cultural environment to that of New Zealand and therefore, through extended research, original data can be collected to recognise or establish how our cultural surroundings can impact on both attitudes towards dark tourism and the development of 'dark' tourism in post-disaster scenarios.

3.12 Disasters as opportunities

Disasters may impact on communities, organisations, families and individuals in devastating ways. Consequently, numerous challenges face individuals and populations as a whole, not only with respect to the difficulties in managing and engaging in the effective and appropriate reconstruction of the physical environment, but also the social and psychological rebuilding of the local community. However, disasters are increasingly being considered as opportunities for development (Davis, 2005). Certainly, disasters bring with them human suffering, economic and physical damage, social and individual life disruption, and a multitude of other impacts. Nevertheless, disaster opportunities also exist, but within a limited temporal 'window'. Hence, they must to be recognised, planned and utilised through partnership and effective cooperation between all stakeholders, as all have different interests (Asgary et al., 2006). For example, two years after the earthquake in Bam, Iran 2003, Asgary et al. (2006) explored the extent to which potential development opportunities had been used or lost, based on the notion that disaster and development are linked in diverse ways and that at least four models present themselves:

i)   Disasters set back development by destroying years of development initiatives;

ii) Development can increase susceptibility and vulnerability to disasters;

iii) Development can decrease the susceptibility and vulnerability to disasters and their negative consequences;

iv) Disasters provide significant opportunities to initiate and enhance development

Source: United Nations Development Programme, UNDP (1994)

The forth model, viewing disasters as development opportunities, is considered the most relevant to this thesis. The deconstruction of hazardous infrastructure and buildings can provide an opportunity for reconstruction with enhanced standards, or if necessary, due to unsafe grounds, sites can be assessed for relocation. Large disasters involve widespread rehabilitation and reconstruction investment and as a result, presents new opportunities that were not previously present (Bardri, Asgary, Eftekhari and Levy, 2006). By assessing damaged buildings, structural weaknesses can be repaired, and with the intention of improvements to planning regulations in the future. Post-disaster situations also generate a social and political environment within which significant institutional, social and physical development programs can be presented and applied. Furthermore, disasters may stimulate alternative 'dark' tourism interests and demands. Therefore, alternative tourism development and management practices should be taken into account in order to reduce the negative impacts of tourism and to maximise tourism's potential positive impacts. Disaster opportunities in the case of L'Aquila will be assessed during both stages of research.

3.13 Summary

Having identified with the background topic of dark tourism and tourism development in Chapter 2, this chapter initiated discussions on theory relevant to disaster tourism and the disaster recovery process. Subsequently, literature on defining and constituting what a disaster is and an exploration of the disaster recovery process has been provided. Once more the significance of discussing these topics is because of the presence they will have in the DLCF and DTDF (to be proposed in Chapter 5). The necessity of identifying relevant theoretical positions within recent disaster and recovery process research was to ensure a valid and logical implementation of the various stances within the construction of two frameworks.

The application of these conceptual frameworks will offer a guided observation of the extent of L'Aquila's disaster recovery process and its current state. The chapter has also recognised the impacts of disasters on a global scale and the recovery processes that followed in each circumstance. This was followed by a presentation on the impacts of earthquakes in Italy and the realisation of how many cities / towns in Italy have at times managed to redevelop (using either bottom-up or top-down

approaches), and in some cases locations have become, what can be called 'citta morte' (dead cities) or 'ghost towns'.

It has been established the dark tourism concept is the key academic theory under examination. Furthermore, that one local community, L'Aquila, devastated by death and destruction will be the case study location. The city and its people continue becoming a dark tourism attraction. In order to understand the implications of using terminology such as 'dark' in such tragic scenarios and the implications of doing so, and how a local community feels towards the application of conceptual terms, it is necessary to understand how the social / cultural environment can impact on individuals. Objective 5 will consider how L'Aquila's social environment impacts on or influences the local communities attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism development. The next chapter will consider literature surrounding the discussions of social constructionism and the role of place identity in society.

Chapter 4

Analytical Lens: The Social Construction of Reality, Place and Memory

4.0 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, two conceptual frameworks will be proposed in this thesis as a framework for the research into the local community's attitudes and reactions towards the emergence of their city, L'Aquila, as a dark (disaster) tourism destination. The first, the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF), will be developed to inform a critical appraisal of the social responses to the earthquake in L'Aquila, facilitating an assessment of the current state of the city as a potential dark tourist destination. The second, the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF), will specifically frame the research that seeks to enhance understanding of the development of L'Aquila as a dark tourism destination.

In order to inform the development of these frameworks, therefore, the preceding chapter first identified the different groups of stakeholders within the wider community who play a role in the redevelopment of disaster destinations before going on to conceptualise 'disaster' and the disaster recovery process. Having done so, it is now necessary to turn to the principal focus of this thesis; the people affected by a catastrophic event (the earthquake at L'Aquila) and, in particular, how their attitudes and responses to the disaster and the subsequent development of dark tourism are formed and influenced. It is important to understand how the local community's social environment may determine the beliefs and attitudes of both individuals and collectives within the community and, in particular, their attitudes towards the development of (and their implicit participation in) dark tourism. This chapter, therefore, will introduce and review Berger and Luckmann's (1991) Social Construction of Reality theory, which, will both, as suggested in Chapter 1 consider the relevant social processes and influences and underpin the community perspective of the two conceptual frameworks. In line with this will be discussions on socialisation and culture and the influence on humans within specific cultural upbringings. This chapter will also consider alternative philosophies of existentialism and humanism and their importance in understanding the construction of meaning.

The earthquake in L'Aquila has created a new tourism attraction, of which the local communities have inevitably, due to their experiences, become a part. The research

will investigate the types of tourism attractions that are present within L'Aquila and the role and impact of such attractions for both the local community and tourists. Place theory, the empathic consciousness, Durkheim's collective effervescence and memorialisation will be considered in order to understand how meaning is constructed in different social realities and social entities.

4.1 The social construction of reality

The phrase 'social construction of reality' was popularised by the (Austrian born) American sociologist Peter Berger and the Slovenian-German sociologist Thomas Luckmann (1967). They developed their theory based on literatures from diverse social sciences including sociology, social history, philosophy and social psychology. There work was also influenced by the opposing views of Durkheim and Weber with respect to the nature of society. Specifically, Durkheim adopts a structural perspective, reifying society and encouraging sociologists and anthropologists to 'consider social facts as things' (cited in Berger and Luckmann, 1991: 30). Thus, for Durkheim, the role or influence of individual members of society in establishing and maintaining social reality is subordinated to the power of society itself. In contrast, Weber emphasises the role of individuals within a society and their social interaction in the constitution of social reality; for Weber, subjective meanings evolve through human action and, as a consequence, social reality is seen to be determined not by society as a whole, but by individual members of a society.

Berger and Luckmann (1991) combine these two opposing positions to explain the dualistic character of society in terms of 'objective reality *and* subjective meaning that makes it 'reality *sui generis"* (Berger and Luckmann, 1991: 30). They developed their theory based on the 'Sociology of Knowledge' which was developed in Germany by Scheler in the 1920s, and the 'common-sense world of everyday life' as studied by Schultz. Schutz (1899 - 1959) was an Austrian social scientist whose work connected sociological and phenomenological traditions to form a social phenomenology, and is 'gradually achieving recognition as one of the foremost philosophers of social science in the [twentieth] century' (Walsh, 1997: 15). Berger and Luckmann, in their work on the sociology of knowledge, focus their attention specifically on knowledge of everyday life, rather than the philosophical and scientific theories which they considered to have traditionally played a central role in attempts to understand how social reality is constructed. They state that the 'sociology of knowledge must concern itself with everything that passes for 'knowledge' in society' (Berger and Luckmann, 1991: 26) and, hence, fundamental to their theory is the idea of the 'reality of

everyday life' (1991 [1966]: 13). Moreover, they argue that there exist different realities, such as the realities of different cultures and groups, which display their own norms, values and traditions. Thus, Berger and Luckmann's concept of the reality of everyday life relates to the anthropological use of 'culture'. It is significant to note that there are a number of encapsulated principles regarding the essence and discipline of sociology as expressed within the *theory of the social construction of reality*. These relate primarily to the relationship between society and culture and, more broadly, to the role of the divine and humanity. In other words, even from a creationist perspective, it is commonly argued that humankind has developed culture, which is a social construct, though this has not always been a deliberate process (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

The opposing argument, is that of biological necessity. That is, for example, people do not eat because they want to, but because they have to if they wish to live. Of course, sociology does not rule out biological necessity with regards to certain aspects of human behaviour, particularly those that underpin human survival, but it commonly observes that the majority of social norms and institutions are the work of people, or social constructions (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Spector and Kitsue, 1987; Bruce and Yearley, 2006).

Thus, to claim that an individual's personality is determined entirely by biological factors is an extreme view held by few people today (Burr, 1995). Nevertheless, it can be argued that this view represents a criticism of the social constructionists' position, in as much as it is evidently firmly located in the 'nurture' dimension of the 'nature *versus* nurture' debate. In other words, the social construction theory can be criticised for generally ignoring biological effects on human behaviour or culture, or for suggesting that they contribute little to the understanding of human behaviour (Sokal and Bricmont, 1999). In contrast, however, psychologists and social scientists (Ridly, 2004; Francsis and Kaufer, 2011) believe that human behaviour is the outcome of the highly multifaceted interaction of both cultural and biological influences. Similarly, a number of other disciplines, such as evolutionary psychology, behaviour genetics, behavioural neuroscience and epigenetics, adopt a nature-nurture interactionism approach to understanding human behaviour and cultural phenomena. At the same time, however, social constructionists also argue that 'what we are' is also, to a great extent, the consequence of social influences. Even if we like to consider ourselves as the independent creators of 'I', it is arguably clear that much about us is acquired through our socialisation into a certain language or culture (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

In short, the social construction of reality theory reflects and combines the two principle schools of sociological thought, namely structuralism, which gives primacy to society as a whole in the determination of social reality, and social action theory, which emphasises the role of individuals and their social interaction. As such, it is based on similar foundations to Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, which proposes, not unreasonably, the social structure (or society) is both the medium and outcome of social action. Putting it another way, both structuralism and social action play a role in the development of society, but neither is afforded primacy (Sharpley, 2008). The question to be addressed now is, what *is* society?

4.1.1 The meaning of society

Peter Berger offers a definition of society, as follows:

> *Society is a dialectic phenomenon in that it is a human product, and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts back upon its producer. Society is a product of man. It has no other being except that which is bestowed upon it by human activity and consciousness. There can be no social reality apart from man. Yet it may also be stated that man is a product of society. Every individual was born a product of society, which both precedes and survives it. Society was there before the individual was born and it will be there after he has died. What is more, it is within society, and as a result of social processes, that the individual becomes a person, that he attains and holds onto an identity, and that he carries out the various projects that constitute his life. Man cannot exist apart from society. The two statements, that society is the product of man and that man is the product of society, are not contradictory. They rather reflect the inherently dialectic character of the societal phenomenon. Only if this character is recognized will society be understood in terms that are adequate to its empirical reality* (Berger, 1967: 3 - 4).

Berger continues by stating that the central dialectic process of society comprises of three significant moments*, externalisation, objectivation*, (terms derived from Hegel and applied to collective phenomena by Marx) and *internalisation*, which is generally used in (American) social psychology, the theoretical foundation of which lies in the work of George Herbert Mead (1934). It is suggested that, by understanding these three moments at the same time, an empirically adequate view of society can be maintained. *Externalisation* is the continuous outpouring of human beings into the world (both in the physical and mental activity of people); '*objectivation* is the attainment by the products of this activity (again both physical and mental) of a reality

that confronts its original producers as a facticity (the quality or condition of being a fact) external to and other than themselves'; whilst '*internalisation* is the reappropriation by men [sic] of this same reality, transforming it once again from structures of the objective world into structures of the subjective consciousness' (Berger, 1967: 4). Therefore, it is through externalisation that society is a human product, through objectivation that society becomes reality '*sui generis'* (of its own kind) (Durkheim 1950), and through internalisation that man is a product of society (Berger, 1967).

As illustrated by Berger (1967) non-human animals enter this world with highly specialised and directive drives, and completely determined by instinctual structures. Animals live in environments that are specific to their particular species (for example, a dog-world, cat-world or horse world). In contrast, a human being's primitive structure at birth is under specialised and directionless toward a species-specific environment. Suggesting, that no human-world in the same sense as for animals exists. The human world is imperfectly programmed by its own establishment, it is seen as an open world. A place that people must fashion and manipulate by their own individual activity. Thus, people have a double relationship with their world. On the one hand, people live in a world that precedes their appearance (the same for animals); whilst, unlike the other mammals, the world is not simply given or prefabricated for humankind. 'Man [sic] must make a world for himself. The world-building activity of man, therefore, is not a biologically extraneous phenomenon, but the direct consequence of man's biological constitution' (Berger, 1967: 5). The questions raised over human nature therefore usually surround the 'nature *versus* nurture' debate; nature representing genetic (biological) influences, and nurture the environmental (cultural) factors that influence the choices and decisions people make. Identifying the earliest of stages, *The Ascent of Man,* Bronowski (1981) writes that humanity has not restricted itself like animals that evolved through a set of adaptations which limit them to inhabit rather particular niches in the natural world. Through technology, innovation, imagination, reason and so on, humans are free to change the world in incalculable ways. Moreover, this is not as a result of a biological evolution but of cultural developments. Indeed, Bronowski (1981) focuses on culture as a driver of change and believes it to be a consistent theme throughout time (Berger 1967).

4.1.2 Culture: Structuring society

It is essential to recognise how individuals are shaped by their cultures; even if people believe themselves to be free independent thinkers determining their own lives, they

are arguably not (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Thus, for the purposes of this thesis and in order to generate an understanding of the development of dark tourism from the perspective of a local community, it is evident that the realities that coexist in that community should be taken into account. More specifically, in order to understand how dark tourism is perceived by individuals and collectives in a particular society, it is necessary to identify how that society has culturally evolved to its current state. As Berger and Luckmann (1991) suggest, there is no objective reality; rather, each community has its own reality of everyday life. The social construction of reality theory maintains that human beings construct 'their' society essentially, to ensure they act as social beings and through the development and maintenance of social institutions (for example, political systems, religion, family and peers), attempt to facilitate an environment to live collectively (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

Berger and Luckmann's concept of the reality of everyday life relates to 'culture' as used in the context of anthropology. German-born anthropologist Boas became one of the most influential developers of American cultural anthropology. He suggested that cultures are only 'understandable in specific cultural contexts' (cited in Moore, 2004: 34). Pre-empting Berger and Luckmann's later theory, he argued that an individual's experiences 'are largely determined by the culture in which he lives' (Boas, 1982) and, furthermore, that 'culture is a much more important determinant than bodily build' (Boas, 1982: 250). Subsequently, the anthropologist Geertz (1973: 5) described man as an 'animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun', defining 'culture' as those webs of meaning. Berger and Luckmann's theory is, thus, part of wider developments in the social sciences, both theoretical and methodological. At the same time, in anthropology the focus was on structures of society (Levi-Strauss, 1966 [1962]), symbols (e.g. Turner, 1969) and in the interpretation of cultures (Geertz, 1973). Hagedorn (1981) defines culture as a shared set of symbols, including technological and social innovations that have accumulated over time. Such innovations have psychological and physiological functions, and have assisted individuals to live collectively. Bronowski (1981) perceives culture as a means of broadening the human imagination, by transporting people's minds through time and space, visualising themselves in the past, present and future. This cultural phenomenon, *the ascent of man,* has, according to Bronowski (1981) occurred over a few thousand years, or more than one hundred times faster than biological evolution. Nevertheless, there remains significant debate amongst anthropologists with respect to how individuals and societies culturally change and evolve (Fennell, 2006).

4.1.3 Socialisation of the individual into society and cultures

The ways in which humans understand their reality are relative to history and culture. They are not only explicit to specific cultures and ages in history, but are seen as the products of the culture and history they represent. Therefore, are dependent upon the specific economic and social arrangements dominant in the given culture at that present time (Burr, 2003). Additionally, it should be noted that the certain types of knowledge that exist in large amounts in any culture are, as a result, artifacts of the culture, and that it should not be assumed that one way of understanding (if different) is superior, in regards to what is closer to the truth (Burr, 2003). Through socialisation, known as the social learning process, societies have the ability to transmit objectivated meanings between generations. Through culture, new individuals are taught how to contribute in established tasks and customs, and to an extent, consent to roles and social identities that constitute the structure and fabric of their societies. Through socialisation, the individual learns these objectivated meanings, identifies with them and, indeed, becomes shaped by them. By drawing the objectivated meanings into themselves, one makes the meanings their own. In possessing these meanings, the individual will represents and expresses them (Berger, 1967). However, as Berger (1967) notes, the accomplishment of socialisation is dependent on the founding of equilibrium amid the subjective world of the individual and the objective world of society. So, if one were to imagine a completely socialised individual member of society, each meaning objectively available in the social world would have its equivalent meaning given subjectively within the individual's consciousness. Such complete socialisation is theoretically impossible and empirically non-existent given the biological uniqueness of individuals; after all, individuals are, by definition individual (Berger, 1967).

As noted, the construction of a human world is a collective project. The individual is socialised in order to be a selected person and to live in the selected world. Berger (1967) notes that subjective identity and subjective reality are shaped in the same dialectic between the individual and what are the significant others who control his socialisation. It can be said that the individual takes possession of the world through conversation with others, and only through these conversations with others does the world remain real (Berger, 1967). A fundamental point, as Berger suggests that socialisation can never be completed, it must be a continuous process throughout an individual's life. This is the subjective element of the previously discussed instability of all humanly constructed worlds. Trying to maintain a world going is difficult to articulate psychologically in the ability of keeping the world subjectively believable.

Berger identifies that the ability to keep the world subjectively believable is through our conversations with 'others'.

4.1.4 Interaction and relationships in everyday life

Berger and Luckmann (1991) believe that the social world is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations. This can be achieved through dialogue between persons, or a dialogue between the internal, subjective world of an individual and the external, objective world surrounding him or her. Berger and Luckmann argue that the reality of everyday life is shared with others and that individuals assume their 'attitude to this world corresponds to the natural attitude of others' (1991: 37). These are the two sides of reality in their approach: the subjective, internal reality and the objective, shared reality.

The individuals' world is built up in their own consciousness and through conversations with others (parents, friends, teachers, colleagues). As time progresses the world is maintained as a subjective reality through conversations with the same or new others. What is of particular significance to this thesis is Berger's suggestion that when conversations are disrupted, especially in the context of death, the world begins to lose its subjective credibility (Berger, 1967). This would be evident in the consequences for an individual when death and destruction occurs in their subjective conscious reality, for example, in the case of mass death as a consequence of a natural disaster. So, Berger suggests that the subjective reality of an individual's world is suspended on a thin line of conversations. He also maintains that individuals are frequently unaware of this precariousness as a result of continuous conversations with others. In other words, the preservation of continuity is one of the most fundamental imperatives of social order (Berger, 1967). Therefore, the impact of any disaster resulting in death would not only leave the individual in a state of subjective denial, but could also lead to greater and thought provoking issues on the subjective reality of society (Berger, 1967). For example, significant events, from the Holocaust, attacks on New York's twin towers (2001) or the mass murders of Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia (1970s), to natural disasters such as earthquakes, have all placed individuals and collectives questioning the subjective reality of their life. Noted by Shilling and Mellor (1998) it is the collective effervescence that is aroused by gathered social crowds that attach peoples' desires to the symbolic order of a society. These emotional experiences shared by gatherings of people facilitate individuals to interact on the basis of socially shared ideas and concepts. Dark tourism sites have the ability to form new spaces (Sharpley and Stone, 2009) where individuals collectively continue conversations with others and maintain their subjective reality.

4.1.5 Attaching meaning to the objective world to maintain a social reality

As indicated above, the process of internalisation should be comprehended as one moment within a broader dialectic process, which also includes moments of externalisation and objectivation. The individual is not shaped as an unreceptive, motionless being, but is fashioned through extended conversations in which he is a participant. The individual does not passively absorb the social world; instead the social world is actively appropriated (taken for his own use) by the individual. From this, the individual continues to be a co-producer of the social world and himself through his continuous participation in conversations that maintain him as an individual in his continuing personal profile (Berger, 1967).

It would be logical, therefore, to suggest that our socially constructed world(s) are an ordering of personal experience. More specifically, to suggest that society is a world-building project is to suggest that it is an ordering and 'nomising' (a socially constructed ordering of experience) activity. If an individual holds no biologically set mechanisms, such as those possessed by animals, then he attempts to force his own order on his experience. Organising experience is widespread to any type of social interaction (Berger, 1967). However, just as there can be no completely socialised individual, it makes no sense to imagine there will ever be an ordering or nomos of the totality of individual meaning; again, we are all individuals. That is, there will always be individual meanings that remain out with or bordering the communal nomos. According to Berger (1967), the marginal experience of the individual is of substantial importance to the understanding of social existence. Thus, in order to understand the development of a dark tourism site in a location that has been affected by a disaster, it is important to recognise that whilst the disaster has impacted on a collective society that has been constructed on a common nomos, individuals within that collective society will differ in their opinions and emotions. Understanding these individuals' views from a phenomenological existentialist position is critical to understanding the 'individual' and the alternative meanings they attach to dark tourism within a 'collective' society. The social world composes a nomos both objectively and subjectively. The objective nomos evolves in the process of objectivation and in language; it can be seen as an imposition used for individuals to establish an order on their experiences. Language according to Berger can therefore be seen as a non-material tool used to nomise differentiation and structure on an individual's continuous fluctuation of experiences.

Berger suggests that the cognitive and normative edifice (referring to the complex systems of belief in societies) that passes for knowledge in a society is bounded to

the foundation and the continuous use of language. In such, every society enforces a general order of interpretation upon existence that, by way of objectivation, becomes 'objective knowledge'; and is continuously established through the use of language (Berger, 1967). Theoretical knowledge (within societies) is given high importance as it is said to contain the body of 'official' interpretations of what is reality; to assist individuals to understand their existence and manners in which they should live their lives (Berger, 1967). The collection of theoretical knowledge (which is socially objectivated knowledge) consists of interpretive schemas, moral maxims, and the collection of traditional wisdom (which man has developed and passed down over the years from one generation to the next). Evidently, societies offer diverse bodies of knowledge, yet, whatever these differentiations may be, all societies do provide their members an objective body of knowledge, such as religious doctrine or cultural beliefs and moral standards; and not all societies establish and employ the same sorts of objectivated knowledge (Berger, 1967). So, for an individual to participate in a society, it requires the individual to share its knowledge, which means, to co-inhibit its nomos; for example, its laws, statues, ordinances (Berger, 1967), and general terms in order to live peacefully as law abiding citizens.

Through socialisation, the objective nomos is internalised and therefore, the individual makes use of the objective nomos as his own subjective ordering of experience. 'To live in the social world is to live an ordered and meaningful life. Society is the guardian of order and meaning not only subjectively, in its institutional structures, but subjectively as well, in its structuring of individual consciousness' (Berger, 1967: 21).

Consequently, the socially established nomos can be understood in terms of representing a shield against terror. If the individual is disconnected from society he exposes himself to an assortment of vulnerabilities with which he is inept to handle. Therefore, the sheltering quality of social order is clear in marginal situations in an individual's life, situations in which he is close or beyond the boundaries of order that determines his daily routine and existence. These kinds of marginal situations often arise in our dreams and fantasies (Berger, 1967). Lying on the horizon of our consciousness, they are haunting suspicions that the world may involve alternative characteristics from those considered to be normal, suggesting that the formerly accepted definitions of reality may be delicate or even false (Musil, 1880-1942). The marginal situation *par excellence* (truest of its kind) is that of death (Heidegger, 2005). Witnessing and mourning the death of others (especially of significant others), and the anticipation and contemplation of one's own death, forces the individual to question the cognitive and normative operating practices of their normal life and their place

within society. 'Death presents society with a formidable problem not only because of its obvious threat to the continuity of human relationships, but because it threatens the basic assumptions of order on which society rests' (Berger, 1967: 23).

A significant conundrum can occur when there is interaction between members of differing social realities (who have been socialised through different objecticated knowledge), and more significantly, the complexities are enhanced when individuals begin to adopt the alternative social realities (and or objectivated knowledge). Indeed, there is the possibility that individuals or groups within one reality will ''emigrate' from the traditional universe or, even more serious a danger … change the old order to the image of the new' (Berger and Luckmann, 1991: 126). It must be emphasised however, that Berger and Luckmann's concepts of symbolic universes and social realities are theoretical constructs. For example, they discuss the construction of a new reality that is totally separated from all others in order to simplify the situation. However, in the lived reality (within which we live) no community is truly isolated. Tourism is one example of how different social realities are often bought together, whilst technology and mediums such as television and the Internet enable social realities to be shared and experienced on an ever-increasing 'instant' basis. Thus, impacting on cultures, individuals can bring the once established and recognised objectivated knowledge into critical debate (within societies) between members of that culture. Through globalisation individuals of this world are arguably, frequently striving to recognise suitable methods of living a peaceful and happy life and the adoption of alternative objectivated knowledge is frequently seen as a possible means in which to recognise alternative ways of living. The term globalisation refers to the processes of international integration that arise from the interchange of worldviews, products, ideas and other various aspects of culture (Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann, 2006; Albrow and King, 1990). Wahab and Cooper (2001: 4) provide a description of globalisation which could be considered a modern understanding of the concept;

> *Therefore, globalization is an all-embracing term that denotes a world which, due to many politico-economic, technological and informational advancements and developments is on its way to becoming borderless and an interdependent whole. Any occurrence anywhere in the world would, in one way or another, exert an impact somewhere else. National differences are gradually fading and being submerged in a homogeneous mass or a single socioeconomic order.*

The significance of this definition is in relation to the act of globalisation and its increasing ability in formation of a cultural homogeneity, or contrastingly, the increased perception of heterogeneity. As a result, greater understanding of the finitude of world resources and the assimilation of previously separate groups into a greater whole is noticeable, with a consequently, greater sharing of experiences (Featherstone and Lash, 1995). The topic of globalisation is deeply historical and extensive (for further reading on globalisation and the impacts on culture see Tomlinson (2011) *Globalisation and Culture*, Hooper (2007) *Understanding Cultural Globalisation*, and Jameson and Miyoshi (2003) *The Cultures of Globalisation*) and for this research it is necessary to understand that the impacts of globalisation are very much embedded within the discussions above. Furthermore, it is important to recognise because tourism is regarded to be part of the process of globalisation (Robinson, 2004).

Therefore, the relationships between the different 'symbolic universes' are not as clearly differentiated as Berger and Luckmann suggest. Nonetheless, the concept of symbolic universes can be used as an analytical framework for examining interaction. The significance of the levels of institutionalisation lies not merely in understanding the differences between the reality of the hosts' and the tourists' everyday life realities, but also the variations in social reality within the destination. Therefore, in reference to this thesis it is vital to understand the social realities of the host community (L'Aquila) in order to understand the various attitudes that might emerge in response to the dark tourism behaviour of the tourists and the possible attitudes towards the development and concept of dark tourism.

4.2 Existentialism and Humanism: We are all individuals

Having briefly reviewed the social construction theory of reality, and its relevance as an analytical conceptual framework for attitudes to the development of dark tourism in L'Aquila, it is now necessary to consider other theoretical concepts of potential influence. The social construction of reality presents a philosophy, which is considered highly relevant and theoretically realistic within the sociological sphere of understanding individuals and collectives within society. However, in order to fully appreciate the possible responses that could emerge during research, additional theoretical concepts may aide the interpretation of data. The other philosophical perspectives that will now be discussed are those of humanism and existentialism. Attention is given to these two schools of thoughts due to the earlier recognition of how globalisation has impacted on individuals and collectives in contemporary

society. Berger identified 'different realities' in order to simplify the conceptual understanding of how individuals are socialised into cultures and in so doing explained how an objectivated body of knowledge within societies is passed from one generation to the next. He further identified that when these different realities meet, the objectivated knowledge can be called into question. It was recognised that through globalisation, a strong argument is that no one signal reality lives free of external influences. Therefore, allowing the individual to decide for themselves, by for example, reading, travelling and through other forms of communication and learning, individuals are able to decipher numerous amounts of objectivated knowledge from different realities (cultures to which they have now been socialised), and can begin to understand and interpret the world in ways in which are unalike that of the cultural realities and knowledge they were socialised into earlier.

As emphasised by Berger and Luckmann (1991), members of societies are individuals, and it is the existence of the individual that the philosophy of existentialism takes as its starting point. Existentialism begins with the individual and, as a consequence, does not aim to arrive at general truths (Earnshaw, 2007). The individual is the focus of existential philosophy, and the individuals' existence (their feelings, thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, and ethics) is reflected in the world they inhabit, and they are all relative when understanding their individual reality. The existential existence is on personal insight (within the individual) and is seen as both the means and process in which one can actually begin to understand. It demands that one should not make claims to objective knowledge (Earnshaw, 2007), thus, presenting a contrasting view to that of the social construction of reality.

Put simply by Sartre, 'being is an individual venture' (Sartre, 1995: 619), whilst Merleau-Ponty (2002: 9) affirmed, 'I am the absolute source'. In contrast to the discussions on the social construction of reality and the proposition that the socially constructed world is an ordering of experience (Berger, 1967), existentialism does not attempt to offer any kind of systematic account of its ideas. Indeed, owing to this lack of systematic ordering, existentialism is often not even classed as a philosophy but something more in line to an association of collective concerns (Earnshaw, 2007). Many of the historical discourses on existential literature (such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche) are at times seen in a fictitiously, instead of the customary meticulous expression of a rigorous philosophical discourse (Earnshaw, 2007).

The growth of and fascination in the existential philosophical school of thought has arguably been drawn from this magnified significance of the 'individual' and the

importance given to subjective truth (and away from objective truth). Existentialism concerns itself with immediate fundamental issues relating to the individual, asking themselves questions such as who and what am I? What and how shall I live my life? By embracing this outlook there is an intrinsic sense of dynamism for an individual, a process, journey, discovery, enlightenment and revolution that is seen to be more meaningful than the constructing of self-contained, all-inclusive systems of typical philosophical endeavour (Earnshaw, 2007).

Humanism is similar to existentialism in that it is a psychological term concerning an approach in which studies are focused on the entire person and individuals are seen as unique. Like existentialism, it is a psychological approach that looks at individual behaviour, through the eyes of the observer and the eyes of the person being observed. Humanistic psychologists believe that an individuals' behaviour is linked to their inner feelings and self-concept. Humanistic psychology correlates with the existential assumption that phenomenology is central and that individuals have free will. This can be further understood by identifying with opposing schools of thought. Humanism often rejects the assumptions proposed by the behaviourist perspective, and the psychodynamic perspective, which are both considered much more deterministic (Earnshaw, 2007). They focus more on the unconscious irrational and instinctive forces determining human thought and behaviour. Humanistic psychologists have gone as far as labeling both behaviourism and psychoanalysis as dehumanising (Sartre, 2007). Humanists refer to the exercise of free will as *personal agency,* which refers to how individuals make choices, take certain paths and accept the consequences that follow their actions (Earnshaw, 2007).

Humanists Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow consider an individual's personal growth and self-fulfillment as a basic motive for living, suggesting that people, in different ways, seek to grow psychologically and to continuously enhance themselves. This process has been termed *self-actualisation,* which centers on psychological growth, fulfillment and satisfaction in life. However, fundamental to both Rogers' (1959) and Maslow's (1943) humanist theories are the subjective, conscious experiences of the individual. Humanistic psychologists maintain that objective reality is less significant than an individual's subjective perception and understanding of the world, which emerges from a human being's capacity for conscious thought, reasoning and language. The significance of this is apparent in humanistic psychologists' rejection of a rigorous scientific approach, arguing that such approaches are dehumanising and unable to capture the richness of conscious experience. In their approach to the study of humans, humanists demonstrate a belief

in free will that is in direct opposition to the deterministic laws of science (Earnshaw, 2007). Indeed, humanistic investigation focuses on areas such as consciousness and emotion, which are challenging phenomena to observe, measure and study. It is suggested that the humanistic approach has not been extensively applied to psychology and its contributions remain limited to various specific areas such as therapy, motivation and personality (Earnshaw, 2007). Humanism is used less in the study of humans within experiential psychology but its validity is a debate for the philosophy of science and not the current thesis. What is argued by those who follow the humanistic approach is that in order to study the whole of human experience and meaning of existence, there must be roles for both quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1946) is seen as one of the essential existentialist philosophers with his works on *l'existentialisme est un humanisme* (existentialism is a humanism). In his essay, Sartre asserts that the fundamental defining concept of existentialism is that the *existence* of a person predetermines his or her *essence*. The phrase '*existence precedes essence'* thus became a maxim of the existentialist movement. It implies that there is nothing commanding a person's character or goals and that only the individual can define their own essence. According to Sartre (2007), firstly, man exists, encounters himself, and then surges up (evolves as an individual and collective member of society) in this world; and then he begins to define himself afterwards. Sartre rejects the deterministic excuses for individual behavioural acts (either good or bad *per se*) and therefore, claims that individuals should take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.

The existentialist and humanistic theories have been chosen due to their unquestionable relevance to this thesis. There is evidently much currency to the argument that, within certain (and certainly variable) parameters, individual human beings possess the potential ability to create and structure their own life and make their own choices. Equally, there is also validity in the notion that man exists and at some point or at many points or as part of a process, encounters himself (from birth to death becoming more prominent through gradual development and ability to self-reflect critically) then, surges up in the world as an individual growing organically and becoming a human being, creating and questioning their own existence in the world. Humans are unable to fend for themselves at birth, yet they have created a world to live in, a human-made world that aims to suit all needs and provide longevity to their own existence. Existentialism and humanism emphasise individualism in that our life experiences are, by definition individually lived and experienced. In order to explore

an individual's experience of life (and therefore gain insight into their existence and meaning) the humanistic approach advocates amongst others, the observation of language and the investigation of thoughts and feelings. However, humanism also stresses the major importance and significant power that the environment, culture and society has over the individual organism and their ongoing developmental existence as a social human being. Thus, the social construction of reality remains a significant conceptual framework for this thesis. The objectivated nomos that it suggests is prominent in all societies, creates meaning and social order in that society, molds and conditions perceptions and behaviour including, as may therefore be assumed, any responses to disasters and attitudes towards dark tourism as in the case of L'Aquila.

4.3 Proposing a framework based on the social construction of reality

Human existence is a basic and inevitable externalising activity. That is, by way of personal externalisation, people dispense meaning into a social reality. Thus, human society is a structure of externalised and objectivated meanings, constantly aiming for a meaningful totality. Indeed, according to Berger (1969), all societies are occupied in the never-accomplished endeavor of constructing a world that is humanly meaningful, so individuals can live peacefully. The world is only maintained as a subjective reality through conversations with the same or new 'others' as time progresses. Consequently, Berger (1967) suggests that when conversations are disrupted, especially in the form of death, the world begins to lose its subjective credibility.

The social constructionist position maintains that societies are essentially constructed by people to control their lives and existence enabling them to live harmoniously in collective environments. Through the socialisation process, individuals are bought up within their respective societies learning the culture of that society. The world is maintained as a subjective reality by the individual through conversations with the same or new 'others' in their day-to-day lives. When conversations are disrupted the individual begins to question the subjective credibility of their world. The individual begins to rely upon the continuous conversations with others. Where conversations have been interrupted by such events as disasters or death, a safe context or relationship may now not exist in which to explore that part of a person's reality. Dark tourism sites can represent or become locations where individuals continue conversations with others, including discourse of the events that unfolded at those particular locations. This thesis will use the social construction of reality theory as the conceptual framework for exploring the social 'nomos' of L'Aquila and how it may have influenced or patterned the individual and therefore collective response to the

earthquake and the cities' subsequent emergence as a dark (disaster) tourism destination. It is necessary to identify how people connect with both significant others' and perhaps, outsiders.

4.4 Empathic civilisation: The historical development of the term empathy

The term 'empathy' originates from the (German) word *Einfuhlung*, devised by Robert Vischer during the 19th Century. Within its original context of German aesthetics, the word Einfuhlung related to the observation of how people projected personal feelings onto an object of adoration, love, respect or contemplation as a means of illuminating how they came to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of our world (Rifkin, 2009). However, the (German) philosopher and historian Wilhelm Dilthery took the term more commonly associated with aesthetics and used it to define the mental process by which an individual enters into another's *being* and thus, comes to know how they feel and think (Dean, 2004). According to Davis (1996), it was 1909 when (American) psychologist E.B. Titchener translated Einfuhlung into the 'empathy.' Whilst in Europe, Titchener studied with the father of modern psychology, Wilhelm Wundt (Rifkin, 2009), and had become fascinated in the central concept of introspection. It is a process where a person inspects their own inner feelings and drives, emotions and thoughts in order to gain a sense of personal understanding about their identity and selfhood. The 'pathy' element of empathy proposes that individuals can enter into the emotional state of another's suffering and has the ability to feel their pain, as if it was our own emotional state of suffering (Davis, 1996).

Over time, and as it became a term used in popular psychology, variations of the word empathy evolved, such as 'empathic' and to 'empathise'. In contrast to the more passive term 'sympathy', empathy came to imply active engagement and the willingness of a spectator to be part of another's experience, and to share the feeling of particular experiences. Thus, it perhaps inevitably became the subject of academic controversy (Davis, 1996; Rifkin, 2009). Rational Enlightenment thinkers, for example, were quick to challenge the affective content of the term, believing empathy to be a cognitive fuction wired into the brain but requiring cultural attunement. Davis (1996) points out that Mead, the American philosopher and psychologist, alleged that all human beings take on the character of another in order to gage that person's thoughts, behaviour and intentions and, consequently, generate a response. The capability to do this was seen as an exceptionally significant component in the developmental process of learning to live effectively in a highly social world. In other

words, in reality a meaningful social organisation would be largely impossible without the capabiltiy to anticipate the reactions that one's behaviour would evoke in others, whilst using those anticipated reactions to tailor one's behaviour to fit a variety of different social circumstances (Davis, 1996).

Hoffman (2000) suggests that empathy is the attachment of psychological processes that enables people to have feelings that are more congruent with another's situation than with their own. Known in psychology as 'empathic accuracy,' Hoffman perceives empathy to be a total response to the plight of another person. This is ignited by a profound sharing of emitions of the other person's state, complemented by a cognitive evaluation of the others' present condition, followed by an affective and engaged response to attend to their needs in order to help their suffering. Emotions hold an important part in empathy. As noted by Darwin (1896) emotions can be seen as a universal set of internal processes that are hardwired, appearing when an event relevant to the concerns of the individual occurs. As many issues are collective across wordly cultures, emotional experiences can be seen as cross-culturally comparable. Matsumoto (1989) notes that research has identifed that emotions such as fear, surprise and anger have universal consensus, but differences across cultures also exist. Such differences are often credited to systematic cultural variations in the concerns of individuals, which arise from distinct self-construal patterns ('consture' refers to how a person percieves, comprehends or interprets the self as separate from the social context, with an emphasis on autonomy and independence) (Triandis, 1989).

Empathy is often viewed as an emotional and cognitive response to another's plight, but it is also possible to empathise with another person's happiness. Equally, another person's empathic embrace can also transform one's own suffering into happiness, as expressively put by Carl Rogers (1958: 16):

> *When a person realizes he has been deeply heard, his eyes moisten. I think in some real sense, he is weeping for joy. It is as though he were saying, 'Thank God, somebody heard me. Someone knows what it is like to be me.*

As Rifkin (2009) notes, there has been an increase in the development of and concern in the ideas relating to the influence of empathy on consciousness and social development. For example, within the field of biology, research has enabled the founding of mirror neurons, also known as the so-called empathy neurons, which

support genetic predispositions for empathic response across the mammalian kingdom (Rifkin, 2009), thus, adding scientific rigour to the reality of empathetic reasoning.

Generally, however, empathy is the psychological method by which we become part of other people's lives and can share significant experiences. The idea of being able to transcend, refers to our ability to reach beyond oneself and to engage with and belong to our communities, allowing us to be entrenched by the ever growing complex webs of meaning we encounter in our lives (Rifkin, 2009). Our empathic consciousness has evolved through time with our human development of self and us, within our world. As we gradually become a globally connected human race, our empathic consciousness is slowly reaching the far corners of the world. The quote bellow is Rifkin's view on civilisation and the fundamental meaning of empathy.

> *The awakening sense of selfhood, bought on by the differentiation process, is crucial to the development and extension of empathy. The more individualized and developed the self is, the greater is our sense of our own unique, mortal existence, as well as our existential aloneness and the many challenges we face in the struggle to be and to flourish. It is these very feelings in ourselves that allow us to emphasise with similar existential feelings in others. A heightened empathic sentiment also allows an increasingly individualized population to affiliate with one another in more interdependent, expanded, and integrated social organisms. This is the process that characterizes what we call civilization. Civilization is the detribalization* (the act of causing tribal people to abandon their customs and adopt urban ways of living) *of blood ties and the resocialization of distinct individuals based on associational* (a group of people entering voluntarily into an agreement to accomplish a purpose) *ties. Empathic extension is the psychological mechanism that makes the conversion and the transition possible. When we say to civilize, we mean to empathize* (Rifkin, 2009: 24).

Tourists in a dark tourism context visit sites associated with death and suffering. Dark tourism destinations that have been frequently identified (in the vast scope of their diverse contextual realities) throughout this thesis often portray devastating atrocities / disasters that have tragically impacted on the destination / community (such as Ground Zero or the Killing Fields in Cambodia). This thesis will be focusing on the city and people of L'Aquila who have been devastated by an earthquake. More so, it will

begin to understand tourism development within the city since that earthquake. Therefore, research will assess the post-disaster tourism development within the city, begin to recognise the role / act of various tourism locations which have been established and furthermore, how and why these places have become seen as the more prominent tourism attractions. Visiting destinations engulfed by tragedy will no doubt provide travelling non-residents an opportunity to transcend their own existence and begin to emphasise with the local community. It is precisely this reason that empathy is a necessary discussion, because it is within dark tourism locations that the victims of a tragedy have the ability to project their experiences to allow tourists a chance to empathise with their plight. However, the act of empathetic reasoning is not entirely simple. Tourists and locals after all are separated undoubtedly by their own objectivated knowledge, following their differing socialisation (through life) into different realities (Berger, 1976).

4.4.1 Problems with empathy: Cross-cultural differences

Self-construal, (self perception within a societal context), can vary and more so, can impact on our emphatic consciousness. Individualism-collectivism is a cultural-level variable denoting the extent to which people of a particular culture tend to have an independent versus interdependent construal of the self (Hofstede, 1980). In individualist cultures (USA, Australia and Canada) an independent, self-construal (referring to self as comprising an exclusive set of internal attributes or characteristics including traits, values and motivations) is often promoted, encouraged and promoted. Contrastingly, in collectivist cultures (such as China or Japan) an interdependent self-construal (refering to self as inseparable from others and social context) is often promoted (Aaker and Williams, 1998).

Owing to such diverse self-construals, the interests of people of individualist *versus* collectivist cultures can differ. It can be suggested that individualists possess needs to disconnecting from others influences, and displaying unique qualities. Subsequently, the personal and subjective part of their emotional experience, to the omission of others, is prominent, most noticeable or significant. Collectivists, conversely, are more interested in identifying and creating communal and cooperative associations (Singelis, 1994). Thus, the interpersonal and intersubjective aspects of emotional experience are noteworthy. In this light 'the self-structure functions as an individualised orienting, mediating, interpretive framework giving shape to what people notice and think about, to what they are motivated to do, and to how they feel, and their ways of feeling' (Markus and Kitayama, 1991: 92).

The significance of collective and independent cultures does not necessarily form significance between an understanding of empathetic reasoning amongst the tourists and the locals, which of course would be a fascinating area of research, but one that would arguably rest on the interrelationship between two individuals (a tourist and a local), and is beyond the area of research for this study. Of more consequence for this research is the act of empathetic reasoning amongst the local community (and its members). This is significant because it could arguably impact on the type of tourism development that emerges in a post-disaster situation, and subsequently the impact on the development of 'dark' tourism attractions. Are Italians and, more precisely, the residents of L'Aquila seen as a collectivist culture? The research will aim to address this. And more so, has empathic reasoning between locals of L'Aquila influenced the types of tourism development after the earthquake? The discussions on empathetic relationship between individuals' leads directly into the following area of what can be described as collaborated emotional stimuli between humans, or a definition of collective effervescence.

4.4.2 Collective effervescence: A human ecstasy

Durkheim (*The Elementary Forms of Religious Life)* established an intense interest for society as a moral, religious force, which encouraged in people an effervescent 'propulsion' towards actions productive of either social unity or termination (Durkheim, 1912). Simply, Durkheim was interested with the asocial abilities of the individual and also the potentialities of humans at a collective level. Durkheim was interested in the emotional stimuli of individuals when placed together and how such individuals reacted when positioned in a group context.

Shilling and Mellor (1998: 196) suggest that 'it is the collective effervescence stimulated by assembled social groups that harness peoples' passion to the symbolic order of society'. This effectively means the emotional experience of such assembled social groups permits individuals to interact on common ideas, concepts and, arguably, an empathic understanding of a certain event. Embedded into the concept of effervescence and its resulting emotional "*rush of energy*" (Durkheim, 2001: 215) is the manner in which it allows social gatherings (a collective group of people) to pervade individuals. Therefore, people become embodied and informed about particular tragic events that may, in some way or another, have disturbed their life-world. Durkheim (1912) suggests that a collective effervescence has the potential to substitute the world, which is immediately available to our perceptions, for another, more moral world. It is indeed within these social groups (gatherings), such as those at dark tourism sites, or indeed any environment living the reality (present or past) of

a disastrous event, that a contemporary reality of society is observed in its collective effervescent form. This is especially reflective of the social fastening of individuals in an emotional effervescence situation (for example a disastrous event), and thus, informs moral conversations regarding disaster and death. This leads to the self, being able to unearth individualised and morally comparative meanings about a specific event absorbed by tragedy (Harman, 1975). Of more direct relevance to contexts where communities have suffered a disaster, Durkheim (2001) suggests that a collective response has the following implications for the individual:

> *When emotions are so vivid, they may well be painful but they are not depressing. On the contrary, they indicate a state of effervescence that suggests a mobilization of all our active forces and even an influx of external agencies. It matters little that this exaltation was provoked by a sad event; it is no less real and does not differ from the exaltation observed in joyous festivals…. Just by being collective, these ceremonies raise the vital tone of the group…. thus they are reassured, they take heart, and subjectively it is as though the rite really had repelled the dreaded danger* (Durkheim, 2001: 302 - 303).

Subsequently, a Durkheimian perspective permits an understanding of the construction of moral orders as mediated by collectives of embodied individuals who are emotionally and cognitively involved with their social world (Shilling and Mellor, 1998). When applied to contemporary assembled social groups, for example, dark tourism spaces, it is proposed that individual 'dark tourists' can be influenced and informed and, therefore, embodied by the tragic event they are consuming (Stone, 2010). Consequently, this could result in a transformation of their emotional structure and moral order (Stone, 2010). These discussions are very much focused on tourists and their collective empathic or effervescent experiences in dark tourism destinations. Additional suggestions point to the relationships between the host community and the tourists in regards to sharing emotional responses and empathic understanding in light of the society's plight after a disastrous event.

A focus for this thesis is exploring how collective empathic or effervescent sentiments are shared between groups unfamiliar to themselves; tourists or visitors engaging in communicative places with locals. Furthermore, with a movement of context, the collective engagement of the host community experiences itself in what is now a new post-disaster societal existence. However, as frequently recognised in the above discussions, for example in the work of Berger (1967), individuals are socialised into

different realities and obtain what can be recognised as an objectivated body of knowledge. Evidently, as individuals grow into critical and reflective adults, they have the ability to become selective regarding the types of objectivated knowledge they choose and accept. But as humans we are not capable (at birth) to survive alone, and therefore, we are socialised into our societies and cultural realities. Consequently, in the 'places' of existence in this world, we are socialised into and obtain within us the objectivated knowledge (that pre-exists us). This knowledge becomes embedded into our personalities from our social surroundings and the institutions that dominate our upbringing (family, education, laws etc.…). Therefore, in order to understand the individual or collective of any particular social reality which can be termed a place in the world, it is necessary to understand what 'place' in this context means and the influence of 'place' on both the individual and collective bodies that interact in different societies. The emergence and development of 'dark' tourism attractions in cities or towns that are encapsulated by death and destruction can be considered and defined as 'places' in their own right.

4.5 Place and Memory in Society

4.5.1 Introduction

The following section will discuss the concept of place, which although historically has often been associated with human geographers, is now used by many disciplines including tourism in order to further understand human interaction. This section looks at the role of place and the various ways in which individuals and collectives are influenced by places and the establishment of place-making (within societies); place-bonding between tourists and locals and between the locals themselves. It should be noted that the discussion draws primarily on the work of Cresswell (2004). The concept of place and its function will be applied when understanding the development of dark tourism in L'Aquila.

4.5.2 Space, the establishment of place

To understand *place,* it is necessary to recognise its expansion from *space.* German philosopher Heidegger (1927) identified with the human condition of existing as 'dasein', or 'being there'. Such a concept of being-in-the-world has been succeeded by the theory that, as humans, we exist and 'to exist' means to 'be in place' (Stefanovic, 1998). In such, the human condition of 'being' implies a spatial context. For humans, existence is manifested by experiences that express meaning and intention, of which all can be recognised as the foundation of place creation (see

Figure 4.1). By the simplest nature of 'being', humans are inherently emplaced. Therefore, space incorporating human interaction becomes the foundation for place (Suvantola, 2002). A 'particular or lived space' (by humans) will in effect become a place (Agnew, 2005: 82), (this section will not provide an in-depth theory of space but for further reading see; Cresswell (2004) *Place: a short introduction*, Malpas (1999) *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*, Sack (1997) *Homo Geographicus* Tuan (1977) *Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective*, and Relph (1976) *Post-modern geography*). This thesis will however take a deeper look into 'what is place'?

Figure 4.1: From Space to Place
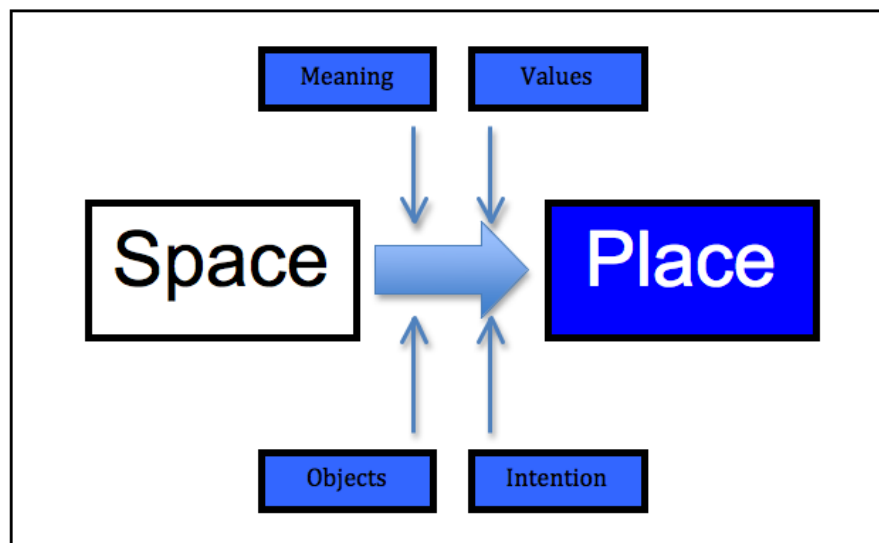
Source: adapted from Jepson (2013)

4.5.3 What is Place?

Until the 1970s with the emergence of humanistic geography founded on phenomenology 'place' and its application and understanding as a concept was arguably underdeveloped. Academics such as Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) and later Sack (1997) and Malpas (1999) grew the notion of place as a fundamental expressive element in human life. Place is seen as a center of meaning and field of care forming the basis for human interaction and critical human geographers, through the informed teachings of Marxism, feminism and cultural studies were keen to recognise how places were socially fabricated in contexts of uneven power relations and how they represented relations of domination and exploitation. Place has proved to be a complicated concept, and is all the more confusing because at an initial glance it seems to be obvious and arguably common sense. Agnew (2005: 82) states that 'space refers to the location and place to the occupation of that location'. Relph

(1976: 2) when further defining the concept of place suggests that 'places in existential space can therefore be understood as centers of meaning or focuses of intention and purpose'. Relph (1976: 43) believes that place determines our experience and that 'the essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centres of human existence'. For Relph, the essence does not come from a geographic location, (functionality of place and the dwellers of its geographical locality); the essence is derived from the fact of experience of place. Additionally, Tuan (1997) suggests that place develops from human experience in undifferentiated space; experience is expressive of what we know and how we construct our realities. Therefore, it can be said that place is in fact space permeated with meaning, and this meaning is developed in the ways in which we make sense of our own reality; our experiences which reflect personal and collective values, cultural perspectives and historical influences (Cresswell, 2004).

Cresswell (2004) continues by noting that the concept of place has been written about in a variety of ways apparently referring to quite different things; regional geographers defining places as discrete areas of land occupying their own ways of life. For humanists place is seen as an essential way of being in the human world. Radical geographers investigate the way places are constructed as reflections of power. The central disconnect regarding place in geography and beyond, seems to exist between those who view place in terms of individual places (regional geographers investigating locations, boundaries and associated meanings and practices) and those who argue a deeper primal sense of place (such as humanistic geographers and philosophers of place) (Cresswell, 2004). Arguably they both exist in space and time. The places we inhabit on a daily basis (our homes, neighborhoods, regions, nations) are all social products and can be described as regional geographers have done so in the past (Cresswell, 2004). However, these places are potentially also examples, within which a deeper sense of humanity can be found to exist. Of course, one would be wrong to think of place simplistically, romantically, or even idealistically (as perhaps happy, comfortable and safe) (Cresswell, 2004). Places can be evil, oppressive and exploitative, but still they are the way we experience the world. It maybe for these reasons that place is so primal to human existence and why it becomes such a powerful and political force in its socially constructed forms (Cresswell, 2004). Is it possible to think of the world without place?

4.5.4 Versions of place: Towards an understanding

The concept of place is multidimensional, the complexity of ideas providing a variety of forms and perspectives in which theorists have endeavored to conceptualise it:

1. ***A descriptive approach to place.*** This approach takes places as areas or entities that can be studied as unique and particular; an *ideographic* position, it is one often taken by regional geographers. Place has a physical form, if in nature or in manmade structures; place is substance (Bott, Cantrill and Myers, 2003). Gieryn (2000), studying the sociology of place, claims that place can be locative; it is physical, having material form and is invested with value and meaning. Furthermore, place may be represented on a map, located in a room, or in a town or region. Comparably, Walmsley and Lewis (1984: 160) assert that place is not based on size but can range from 'a rocking chair, through to an urban neighbourhood, to a nation-state'. However, place is more than a sum of its material characteristics. Geographic location and physicality of form combine with attached meanings to become the defining factors in what differentiates one particular place from another. In such, a researcher might discuss or write about the 'geography of Rome' or the 'sole of Rio De Janeiro' (Cresswell, 2004).

2. ***A social constructionist approach to place.*** Here the approach still focuses on the particularity of places but only as instances of more general underlying social processes. From a social construction perspective of place, the unique attributes of a place are explained with the importance lying with the structural conditions that were involved in its construction (Anderson, 1991; Till, 1993; Forest, 1995; Clayton, 2000). Place is the way we organise our world, how we make sense of it, how we perceive it, and how we come to know and understand it (Cresswell, 2004). There is a strong social dimension to places as human practices and societal institutions are instrumental in the construction of them. Equally, places impact on human practices and the institutions within a society (Giddens, 1984; Gieryn, 2000). As Stedman (2003) observes, place is a meaning-based concept and the meanings that people confer on their environment echoes their own socio / cultural experiences. In this way, places locate us externally by telling us where we are in the world as well as locating us internally 'by becoming part of one's psychological and cultural identity, telling one how one is to be here'

(Roberts, 1996: 62). Equally, public and personal spheres of meaning exist. The dual character of place is also observed on the one hand, within subjective meanings attributed by individuals to places through personal involvement and on the other hand, through shared collective meanings symbolizing places (Suvantola, 2002). The current thesis recognsies 'place' as a significant and useful concept in that it reflects the values across different levels of social construction from individual, to community, and from cultures to nations through to global perspectives (Cresswell, 2004).

3. ***A phenomenological approach to place.*** As discussed by Cresswell (2004), in contrast to both descriptive and social constructionist perspectives described above, the phenomenological approach to place is not concerned with unique attributes of, nor the type of social forces involved in the construction of particular places, but rather, seeks to define the essence of human existence as one that has become necessarily and importantly 'in-place'. Thus, this approach is less concerned with 'places' and more interested in 'Place'. Humanistic geographers, neo-humanists and phenomenological philosophers all take this approach to place (Sack, 1997; Malpas, 1999; Casey, 1998; Tuan, 1974). Place is not 'a thing out there' but is seen as a process, continuously being shaped and reshaped in response to internal and external forces. Massey (1994: 155) stresses the importance of viewing place in relationship to the outside world, as what makes a place distinctive is not limited to the inherent qualities of a locale but also 'the particularity of linkage to that 'outside' which is therefore itself part of what constitutes the place'. Furthermore, she believes that place cannot be viewed in isolation but must be consciously linked to the social relationships found in a wider geographical context. Essentially, places are never disconnected from the world but subject to continuous interaction with the world around, thus constantly producing and reproducing new meanings (Gustafson, 2001; Cresswell, 2004).

As described below, there may be different levels of 'depth' in the approach to places, not distinctively independent from each other but in some respects, overlapping. Level one represents a concern with the surface of the world as seen and lived, whilst level three represents the deep universal sense of what place means to humanity. Between these extremes, level two focuses on the social constructions that are present within

the places. Endowing one with greater importance than the others is erroneous, for only collectively do they contribute to an understanding of the full complexity of the role of place in human life (Cresswell, 2004).

It should be recognised that places can be contested, as they may when evoking qualities of ownership, belonging, connection, privacy and boundaries (Cresswell, 2004). Place can be used to confer status, to denote cultural and community understanding, to express historic or political identities and, ultimately, to define individual and community connections within places (Gieryn, 2000). In fact Gieryn (2000) argues that place may be bound more by political, economic and social influences and that they are subject to continuous contestation. The concept of place is used to identify commonalities and differences between places of varying representations and values. Relationships to place can result in feelings of alienation, rootedness, embeddedness or placelessness (Corcoran, 2002); place also has the power of inclusion or exclusion (Relph, 1976; Cresswell, 1996). In this way, place can be experienced individually or collectively as both negative or positive (Manzo, 2003). Often spurred by conflicting political ideologies, cultural diversity and dissimilar value systems, places are continually contested (Devine-Wright and Lyons, 1997; Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). Through these struggles, both tangible and intangible boundaries are constantly disputed, destroyed and produced. Furthermore, places have an ability to continually change. Place is a dynamic concept and therefore, endures in locative terms but is never permanent in meaningfulness (Massey, 1995; Gustafson, 2001; Smaldone, Harris and Sanyal, 2005). In this way, places posses history but are also emergent, and are constantly being constructed, reshaped and reconceived, mirroring the transformations in individual and collective spatial and temporal attitudes (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Manzo, 2003). The deconstruction and construction of place is continuous, occurring naturally as a result of both physical and mental processes (Agnew, 2005). As the physical landscape changes owing to natural or manmade forces, attitudes and place meanings may also alter in response. Subsequently, the continuous transition of place is a reflection of the social nature of people, human interactions, discursive practices and the fluid meanings that are derived from such exchanges (Bremer, 2004; 2006). In these ways, place is continually imagined, contested and constructed (Gieryn, 2000; Cresswell, 2004).

In order to understand the development and impact of dark tourism (especially of the local community) in a place that has been destroyed, it is necessary to understand the role of, and the differing perspectives of that place. This will be discussed in more detail shortly when considering the 'end of place'.

4.5.5 Regions and nations as places

Geographers as a majority have used place as a reflective common-sense notion to describe places such as villages, towns, cities, and neighborhoods (Cresswell, 2004). However, place can be more, it can be a sense of being, meaning and understanding (Tuan, 1974) as identified above. So how do geographers consider larger scale places, such as regions and nations? Taylor considers the function of space and place in the politics of the modern nation. Taylor maintains that nations might simply be seen as political impositions of rational and abstract space over the specificities of place and goes on to suggest that this argument is too simple and place also plays a role in the production of a nation:

> *Nations have been constructed as imagined communities each with their own place in the world, their own homeland, some as 'fatherland', others as 'motherland'. By combining state and nation in nation-state, sovereign territory has been merged with sacred homeland to convert a space into a place* (Taylor, 1999: 102).

As suggested by Taylor, nation-state combines the abstraction of space with the deeply felt emotions of place. For example, Cresswell (2004) asks how a black inner-city resident of the Bronx, a white businessman in Westchester County and a Mexican immigrant in San Diego, may all feel that they belong to the same community, the United States of America. Theorists of nation, suggest that this is because the creation of the nation involves the creation of 'imagined communities' where people with little and at time nothing in common in their everyday lives believe themselves to be connected through the idea of a nation place (Anderson, 1991; Edensor, 2002; Cresswell, 2004). One must be aware of all the national ideology and sense of belonging through socially constructed flags, anthems, passports, money and so on, after all, the world is a socially constructed place (Berger and Luckmann 1967). For a nation to maintain itself and its people, it must act as a place, in which one can feel safe. If we go deeper into the nation-place we discover alternative places, in which there are alternative political units, these can be identified as regions. These regions can be identified as positioned between the larger scales of things, that is, the nation-place, the region and then the local (Cresswell, 2004). Region and place are often interchangeable, however, if looked at from a philosophical point of view and from the perspective of a phenomenologist, then place maintains a much deeper significance (Paasi, 2002; Cresswell, 2004). This main importance of recognising the nation-place and regional-place is due to the locality in which this thesis is positioned, that of Italy and L'Aquila. Again, it is important to stress the need to recognise the differences in

place, and not just a national sense but at a local level. Research in this thesis (stages 1 and 2) will critically discuss the sense of place in Italy and L'Aquila. In accordance with Objective 5, this thesis will consider how L'Aquila's social environment (its regional-place) continues to influences the local community's attitudes towards the post-disaster dark tourism development.

4.5.6 Place and its relationship to memory

It has been identified that place and the creation of a sense of place is dependent on a variety of factors. Sense of place in particular is commonly considered to be a function of three factors, namely, the physical characteristics of a place, the manner in which people use or behave in places, and the cultural (constructed) significance attached to place (Cresswell, 2004). The relative importance of each is open to debate. For example, Stedman (2003), claims that the contribution of the physical environment to a sense of place remains underestimated, whilst others emphasise the importance of 'place social bonding', or communal bonds developed between people in a particular place, as a powerful factor in place attachment (Ramkissoon, Weiler and Smith, 2012). Of specific relevance to this thesis, place and memory are very much interwoven (Cresswell, 2004). Memory is something that can be identified as a personal phenomenon; people are able to remember some things and not others. Importantly, however, memory can be seen as a social phenomenon (Cresswell, 2004). Some memories are allowed by society to fade and possibly even be forgotten, whilst others are promoted and may become representative, in the sense that they may hold power when standing up against or for something (Cresswell, 2004). Thus, societies construct monuments and museums, preserve particular buildings (destroy others), install plaques and inscriptions and, in some cases, encourage or support the promotion, restoration and conservation of entire areas as 'heritage zones', all of which are examples of the 'placing' of memory. The actual materiality of a place means that the memory is not abandoned to the 'vagaries' of mental processes but instead is inscribed into the landscape and remains as what can be described, public memory (Cresswell, 2004).

> *If place does provide an overload of possible meanings for the researcher,*
> *it is place's very same assault on all ways of knowing (sight, sound, smell,*
> *touch and taste) that makes it powerful as a source of memory, as a weave*
> *where one strand ties to another. Place needs to be at the heart of urban*
> *landscape history, not on the margins* (Hayden, 1995: 18).

Hayden notes that it is one thing to read about the past in a book or to gaze on it in a painting; it is, however, another thing to enter the realm of history-in-place. Edward Casey, when considering 'place memory', refers to a similar issue:

It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favour and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place-orientated or at least place-supported (Casey, 1987: 186 - 187).

What Casey means by 'place memory' is the ability of place to bring the past to life in the present and, thus, to contribute to the (re)production of social memory. Such places of memory are very much at the foundation of dark tourism sites, attractions and destinations. Dark tourism destinations encapsulate the 'dark' historical past and are places where people can go and attempt to reproduce (if the event occurred during living memory) or, perhaps, create the memory of that past time. Post-disaster place memory in the specific context of L'Aquila is explored later in this thesis. However, it is also important to consider, within the broader theme of place, how places change and indeed, even how they can come to an end.

4.5.7 Place: Varying forms and the end of

Inherent in the local is the concept of place – a portion of land / town / cityscape seen from the inside, the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar …Place is latitudinal and longitudinal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories of place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there (Lippard, 1997: 7).

Lippard argues that places are 'about connections' but makes more of the layering of histories which sediment in place and become the bedrock for future action. The type of place which is at the center of humanistic geography is very much a place of rootedness and authenticity. Therefore, as Cresswell (2004) notes, as long as a place signifies a tight and relatively immobile relationship between a group of people and a site then it will be constantly implicated in the construction of 'us' (the people who belong in the place) and 'them' (people who do not). In this manner, outsiders are

also 'constructed' relative to place. However, does place need to be understood in such an introverted and exclusionary manner (Cresswell, 2004)?

Massey (1994), for example, rejects this notion of place in her development of the idea of the 'progressive' or 'global' sense of place, suggesting that place should be thought of as a context for combining bodies, objects and flows in new ways (Cresswell, 2004). Similarly, Escobar (2001: 143) sees 'places gathering things, thoughts, and memories in particular configurations'. In this sense, place becomes an event rather than a thing of boundedness and permanence and, as such, significantly shifts the value put on place as seen when constructed from the outside rather than from the inside (Cresswell, 2004). Massey's concept of a 'global sense of place' reflects how objects and processes from the outside construct places, reflecting Lippard's above observations. She is calling (and is not alone in doing so) for a new conceptualisation of place as open and hybrid, and as a product of interconnecting flows – that is, of routes rather than roots (Cresswell, 2004). This extroverted notion of place calls into question the entire history of place with regards to place as a center of meaning connected to a rooted and 'authentic' sense of identity. Such rootedness and authenticity is increasingly challenged by mobility and, consequently, Cronon (1992) suggests that places need to be understood as sites that are connected to others around the world in constantly evolving social, cultural and natural networks. Places should be understood through the paths that lead both in and out of them (Cresswell, 2004).

It is evident that places should be understood in terms of relativity; if one is to completely understand a place then one needs to understand the totality of that place (Cresswell, 2004). Arguably, however, this is not possible. For example, if places are based on memory, what social memories have been allowed to slowly and inevitably fade over time and space? Perhaps it is only possible and more important to focus on individuals and collectives, to understand how they feel in their places and how their places make them feel. Of more relevance, is how do individuals and collectives feel when their places come to an end, or are at least dramatically changed?

According to Relph (1976), the amalgamation of mass communication, increased mobility and a consumer-based society is blamed by many for the rapidly accelerating homogenisation of our world. With increasing globalisation, our lives arguably occur in places that are not 'somewhere' but 'anywhere'. Humanistic geographer Edward Relph took great interest in the issue of erosion of place in his book *Place and Placelessness*. According to him, it was becoming progressively

challenging for people to feel attached to the world through place, and he distinguished between the experience of insideness and outsideness in the human experience of place: 'To be inside a place is to belong to it and identify with it, and the more profoundly stronger you are inside the stronger is the identity with the place' (Relph, 1976: 49). In contrast, 'existential outsideness involves the alienation from place, which is the antithesis of an unreflective sense of belonging that comes from being an existential insider' (Cresswell, 2004: 44). Key to Relph's argument (developing Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling') is the concept of 'authenticity'. Authenticity means a genuine and sincere attitude and 'as a form of existence, authenticity consists of a complete awareness and acceptance of responsibility for your own existence' (Relph, 1976: 78). Thus, an existential insider maintains an attitude to a place which is likely to be authentic. Conversely, an inauthentic attitude to place:

> *…is essentially no sense of place, for it involves no awareness of the deep and symbolic significances of places and no appreciation of their identities. It is merely an attitude which is socially convenient and acceptable – an uncritically accepted stereotype, an intellectual of aesthetic fashion that can be adopted without real involvement* (Relph, 1976: 82).

Relph is arguing that, in the modern world, individuals are enclosed by a general condition of creeping placelessness, which is marked by a powerlessness to experience authentic relationships to place, because the new placelessness limits people's ability to become existential insiders. Relph continues by suggesting that an inauthentic attitude towards place is transmitted by a variety of processes, though in particular by the 'media', which, both directly or indirectly, encourage placelessness. This is achieved by dispossessing a place of its identity, rendering all places similar and, thus, offering the same bland possibilities for experience. The underlying causal processes are various and include mass communication and culture, the influence of multinational corporations and also the central authorities. Relph also blames tourism as it encourages the Disneyfication, museumisation and futurisation of places (Cresswell, 2004).

Arguably, however, one of the main culprits is the broader phenomenon of increased mobility, of which tourism is but one element, and the inevitable trend and increase in 'mass culture' and mass values which also dilute authentic relations that people have with place (Cresswell, 2004). Thus, place becomes 'other directed' and more similar across the globe. Auge (1995) holds a similar position to Relph, though uses the

word 'non-place' which does not have the same negative moral connotations as Ralph's placelessness (Cresswell, 2004). Non-place refers to sites that are marked as fleeting; they are temporary and ephemeral, such as motorways, airports, or supermarkets. In short, non-places, according to Auge, do not have histories and traditions and are not (allegedly) relevant. What, then, about place after a disaster? What does it mean to an individual or wider collective community when their place is destroyed? In other words, it is important to consider the meaning of a post-disaster place, in the context of place memory concerning the individual and collective community (Cresswell, 2004).

4.5.8 Place-memory: Memorialisation in contemporary society and tourism destinations

In dark tourism destinations such as L'Aquila, in which living memory of the disaster is still very much evident, it is important to understand how collective memory occurs and how this can impact on the possible establishment of memorialisations.

Durkheim (1912) argued that in traditional and or primitive societies, totemic religion acted as an important function in uniting members through the creation of a common consciousness. As such, the consciousness of individual members of such societies mirrors that of all other members of the community. This totality of beliefs and sentiments which is common to the members of a community, thus forming a fixed system within a life of its own, was termed by Durkheim as the collective consciousness. Maurice Halbwachs (a pupil of Durkheim) also published works on collective memory: his most significant contribution considered to be *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925). Halbwachs (1925) discusses the collective memory suggesting that it is dependent upon the framework within which a group is situated in society. This implies that an external group memory exist outside the individual memory. Subsequently, an individual's understanding of the past is significantly linked to a collective consciousness. It is within society that individuals generally obtain their memories and within society that individuals recall, recognise and localise such memories. This is very much representative of place-memory and the ability to create memorials and museums (discussed previously) in order to (re)produce memory. By understanding the term collective memory and in respect to work offered by Durkheim and Halbwachs, the current aim is to assist further understanding of the collective (community) act(s) when establishing memorialisations (of victims) in a post-disaster scenario. It is necessary to understand the location and its objectivated knowledge in order to do this.

Of particular relevance to this thesis is the work of Kenneth Foote (2003) who, in his book the *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy,* he discusses *Community and Catharsis.* Foote suggests that sanctification, which is a religious ceremony in which something is made holy, can appear when a community is struck by a disaster. Foote continues by identifying that a community which has been affected by tragedy commonly seeks to memorialise the victims and pay tribute to their sacrifice at either the site of the disaster in which their lives where abruptly ended, at the site in which victims were subsequently buried, or in a public place elsewhere. Such memorialisation can also be seen as a practice in which the process of planning, creating and establishing such memorials assists a community to deal with the disaster. These memorials are used as a focal means for the local population to mourn and grieve the victims and to help them overcome their great sense of loss. Foote considers that the creation of memorials is a method that can help heal a community in distress. In particular, following a tragic event, the creation of a memorial can be seen as an act that unites individuals and groups within a community to work towards common and collective goals rather than surviving alone.

Another significant moment, or what Foote classifies as 'dedicatory ceremony', is an event often held on the first anniversary of the tragedy. An act of remembrance of this type can also provide a community with a sense of collectiveness and unity. As disasters can fragment communities, 'dedicatory ceremonies' can provide survivors with the opportunity to recommence acquaintances and share their experiences. In addition, sites of group memorialisation help to comfort survivors in the belief that the victims of the disaster did not suffer alone and that their sacrifice has meaning within the community and consequently, the community grieves together. Memorials can also provide individuals and groups with a place for healing and a sense that perhaps the first stage in a recovery process is complete. The durability of memorials can act as a focal for ritual commemoration long after and in some cases continue even when all evidence of the initial tragedy has been removed (Foote, 2003). The act of memorialisation and its influence on the individual or collective in L'Aquila will be investigated during research along with the impact of post-disaster place-memorials upon the tourism industry.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has introduced the analytical lens of this research. It has acknowledged the importance of social constructionist theories and their prominence throughout this thesis. Humans actively create societies in order to ensure that collective

communities can survive together. Through socialisation humans have the ability to ensure that new members of its community can be taught the cultural ways of life that are relevant to the society. Humans create the objective realities around us in order for the collective to live harmoniously but as individuals, we view this objective world subjectively. As individuals, humans have all been socialised by the world around them but through life experiences humans construct their own subjective views of that world. Consequently, existentialist and humanist principles have been recognised as a significant analytical lens by which to view the individual within their surrounding environment. To investigate the objectives of this thesis, it is necessary to gain some understanding of the social environment regarding the local community and surrounding areas of L'Aquila. The thesis will therefore aim to gain insight into the social objective realities and what impact and influence such realities have at an individual level on the attitudes towards dark tourism. As discussed above, these attitudes feedback into the social collective and play a fundamental role of the dynamic social construction of reality theory. This section relates to Objective five as stated in Chapter 1.

This chapter has also identified the significance of recognising 'places' within society. As individuals we continue to live our subjective reality in an objective world and through conversations with 'others' we continue to ensure that the objective world has meaning to us. Death has the ability to disrupt conscious thoughts and leaves the individual questioning their subjective view of the world. Dark tourism sites have the ability to form new spaces (Sharpley and Stone, 2009) where individuals can collectively continue conversations with others and maintain their subjective reality. Subsequently, it is necessary to identify new 'places', which have been created as a result of significant changes or so called 'end of place'; in our case, as a result of a devastating earthquake. These new places within our social surroundings provide us with a place to share our experiences and emotions. Therefore, with the aim to provide a further understanding of the meaning of places, it is necessary to recognise and investigate the creation of 'places' post-disaster and their function with regard to both the local population and the developing tourism product. The theories discussed in this chapter form part of the two conceptual models guiding the two stages of research, which are proposed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

The Proposal of Two Conceptual Frameworks

5.0 Introduction to the conceptual frameworks

It was observed in Chapter 1 that, although significant and increasing academic attention has been paid to the concept of dark tourism over the last decade, understanding and knowledge of it remains, in some respects, limited. In particular, and despite the predominantly supply-side perspective on research into dark tourism, the attitudes and responses of the local host community in dark / disaster tourism destinations to becoming, in a sense, the object of the (dark) tourist gaze have not yet been the focus of academic scrutiny. Hence, the overall aim of this thesis is to explore critically the consequences and implications for the local community of tourism development in a post-disaster tourism destination (L'Aquila). It was also established in Chapter 1 that, in order to inform and underpin the empirical research in L'Aquila, two conceptual frameworks will be proposed. Consequently, the preceding chapters have reviewed literatures relevant to the development of these frameworks, Chapter 3 firstly identifying relevant stakeholder groups before going on to consider definitions and the nature of disasters and, from both a theoretical and practical perspective, disaster recovery processes, whilst Chapter 4 considered the social construction of reality and associated concepts as a basis for understanding how the local community's attitudes, perceptions and responses to the earthquake and the subsequent development of dark tourism is socially constructed.

The purpose of this brief chapter is now to introduce the two conceptual frameworks and to explain how together they will be used to structure and guide both stages of empirical enquiry, the outcomes of which are discussed in Chapter Nine. Firstly, the *Disaster Life Cycle Framework* (DLCF) provides a basis for a theoretical analysis of the social / environmental context of the event / disaster and its impacts, and will be utilised during Stage One of the research. Secondly, the *Dark Tourism Development Framework* (DTDF) will guide Stage Two of research in L'Aquila, the purpose of which is to enhance knowledge and understanding of the social responses to the disaster and the subsequent emergence of dark tourism, hence identifying potential tourism development decisions in dark tourism (post-disaster) scenarios. The following sections detail the construction of the two conceptual frameworks.

5.1 Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF)

The first framework to be proposed is the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (see Figure 5.1 below). As previously suggested, the framework provides a basis for the theoretical analysis of the social / environmental context of the event / disaster and its impacts on a destination, which forms Stage One of the empirical research in this study. The themes considered in the literature review included the social construction of society (Berger, 1967), disaster definitions and recovery processes / phases (Quarantelli 1985; Quarantelli 1989; Quarantelli 1999), and the current state of the location, all of which are represented within the framework. The DLCF, as represented in Figure 5.1, will facilitate a critical evaluation of the city of L'Aquila since the earthquake.

Figure: 5.1: The Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF)
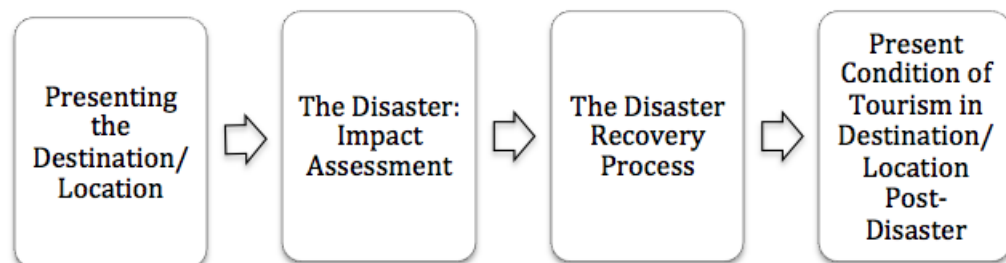
The individual elements of the framework and their specific contribution to implementing Stage 1 of the research are now discussed.

5.1.1 Presenting the destination / location

The framework commences with *Presenting the Destination / Location.* In other words, at this initial stage it is necessary to identify with the society in question, to develop an understanding of the role and influence of society and culture on the local community's attitudes, perceptions and responses to the disaster and post-disaster tourism development within research location. Consequently, and as established in Chapter 4, this thesis is positioned within theory associated with the social construction of reality in societies and the need to understand *place* in the context of a given location (in this case, L'Aquila), both of which contribute to understanding and defining the characteristics of local people. Thus, Stage One of the empirical research will commence with a critical account of the city in question (L'Aquila) and an historical exploration of its cultural journey to present (pre-disaster) day.

5.1.2 The disaster: Impact assessment

Having introduced the location that will be used as a case study, the second element of the framework turns to the disaster itself – in the case of L'Aquila, the 2009 earthquake that devastated the city. Here, following a description of the disaster, it is then considered critically against the seven conceptual terms proposed by Quarantelli (1985) as a means of identifying and defining a disaster. These seven terms facilitate the acknowledgement of an event as a disaster and, consequently, provide the necessary agendas within which events can be defined as disasters. Drawing on a variety of data sources (both primary and secondary) this 'disaster: impact assessment' stage aims to categorically define the impacts of the earthquake on L'Aquila and, thus, establish its validity as a disaster in definitional terms.

5.1.3 The disaster recovery process

What is then necessary is a systematic and organised evaluation of *The Disaster Recovery Process*. Again, the framework draws on Quarantelli's (1999) five 'R's' of the disaster recovery process, namely: reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, restitution and recovery. From the literature review, it was established that these provide a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the numerous and interchangeable contemporary definitions and processes within the theoretical arena of disaster recovery. Therefore, by acknowledging and incorporating the five 'R's', an analysis of the disaster recovery process since the event (that is, post-disaster) will be undertaken, thereby providing a platform from which to then navigate towards the final section of the framework.

5.1.4 Present condition of tourism in the destination / location post-disaster

This framework concludes by identifying the *Present Condition of Tourism in the Destination / Location Post-Disaster.* In order to understand possible future directions with regards to tourism development, it is necessary to understand the current state or condition of the tourism industry within the location. This thesis will use various data sources to investigate the current tourism industry in L'Aquila. Secondary data and field study visits will assist the eventual conclusion of L'Aquila's current tourism condition.

The Disaster Life Cycle Framework thus provides a means for constructing a post-disaster evaluation of a destination. Although proposed specifically for the purposes of guiding this study's research, the theoretical concepts considered in the preceding literature review chapters are relevant to disasters (and recovery from disasters) more generally. This suggests, therefore, that the first framework has been constructed with

the possibility that it can be drawn on in future tourism development research studies in post-disaster scenarios.

Once a detailed and evaluative analysis has been undertaken at the destination, the second framework (DTDF) can be then implemented during the second stage of research.

5.2 The dark tourism development framework (DTDF)

The DLCF, introduced above, provides a framework within which a detailed analysis of a destination and its community, the disaster, its impacts, the recovery process and, finally, its current state with regards to tourism development can be undertaken, representing Stage One of the empirical research. This then leads to the second framework, *The Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF)* (see figure 5.2), to guide Stage Two of the empirical research. The DTDF incorporates a range of concepts that have been considered in the preceding chapters

Figure 5.2: The Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF)

As above, the individual elements of this framework and their specific contribution to implementing Stage Two of the research are now discussed.

5.2.1 Resident characteristics

As with the DLCF, the DTDF commences with the *Residents Characteristics. S*imply stated, the best way to understand a culture is to ask the people who 'are the culture'. Therefore, empirical research will further investigate the underlying social characteristics or objectivated knowledge that is present within the society being studied (L'Aquila). In doing so, research will obtain data to investigate objective 5, which will consider how L'Aquila's social environment impacts on or influences the local community's attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism development.

5.2.2 Residents' attitudes toward tourists and tourism post-disaster

The next stage of the framework addresses *Residents' attitudes towards tourists (and tourism post-disaster.* Given that the earthquake and the aftermath has resulted in the emergence of a new form of tourism in L'Aquila, (or a new role for the city as a tourist destination based upon the disaster that it has suffered), it is essential to the development of dark tourism to identify the attitudes and perceptions of the local community towards the concept and, indeed, terminology of dark tourism and towards 'dark' tourists themselves. Thus, this element of the framework focuses on eliciting from respondents their attitudes towards tourists in the early period following the earthquake when tourists first began arriving in the city, thereby facilitating the acquisition of data to meet research objectives 1 and 2 (Objective 1: Given the potential negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark', to explore critically how the local community of L'Aquila feels about and responds to the concept of dark tourism. Objective 2: To explore the responses of the local community of L'Aquila as they have become the focus of the post-disaster tourist gaze).

5.2.3 Disasters as opportunities

As suggested earlier in this thesis (see Chapter 3), disasters can and arguably should be seen as opportunities. Thus, at this stage of the framework, the focus shifts to exploring the extent which local people recognise the opportunities, if any, that have emerged for the city as a result of the earthquake. Specifically, research respondents will be encouraged to reflect on the potential opportunities within a tourism context. Also at this stage, observations can be undertaken in order to (a) identify focal tourism locations within the city (post-disaster) and how these have been fashioned since the earthquake and (b) compare this objective assessment with the opportunities identified by local residents.

5.2.4 Community involvement in post-disaster tourism development

As discussed in Chapter 2, it is widely accepted that, for the successful development of tourism, it is essential to identify and respond to the factors that in one way or another influence the host community's support (or otherwise) for tourism development. In particular, the extent to which the local community is, or perceives itself to be, involved in tourism development is considered to be a decisive factor in community support for tourism for example, the role of 'community involvement' in tourism development. The theory (in Chapter 2) discussed and recognised the importance of community involvement in tourism development projects. Such involvement where death and destruction is present and in living memory of the locals who are victims of such devastating phenomena (in this case an earthquake) was

given arguably heightened significance (for example, to tourism development that does not involve death). Therefore, community involvement is included in this framework as a close affiliation to the role of stakeholders within societies and their influence on tourism development. This section of the DTDF will underpin the acquisition of data to meet the fourth objective of this research, namely, 'to identify the role of different stakeholders in L'Aquila's dark (post-disaster) tourism development, thus contributing to knowledge and understanding of the role of different stakeholders in dark tourism development'. In so doing, it will contribute further to understanding the role of stakeholders in dark tourism development.

4.2.5 The destination's future

The final section of the DTDF will begin to recognise future prospects for the destination. The focus and aim of this section will be to provide some closure to the study in terms of future tourism initiatives for the location of study and its people. This section will predominantly focus on the opinions of the local residents towards their future prospects.

5.3 Summary

The first framework, the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF), will facilitate a detailed analysis of the destination, it provides a basis for implemented Stage One of the empirical research which seeks to interpret L'Aquila's cultural construction, to define the earthquake as a disaster, and to explore critically the recovery process and the current state of tourism industry, in turn providing a knowledge platform on which to develop the second stage of the research. The Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF) will then be implemented to guide the research at Stage Two. Subsequently, as part of Objective 3 of this thesis, the frameworks will be critically evaluated in order to identify their potential in future tourism research studies, in the event of a natural disaster.

Before discussing the application of the two frameworks and subsequent research data collected during the two stages of research, it is first necessary to consider the methodological paradigms, philosophies and approaches employed in the research. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Methodology

6.0 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, foundational concepts (Chapter 2) and the literature review (Chapters 3 and 4) introduced and considered theories and debates relevant to the central focus of this thesis. At the same time, they underpinned the proposed conceptual frameworks of tourism development that will guide the empirical research (Chapter 5), whilst reference to the location of study (L'Aquila, Italy) was made throughout. Collectively, these provide the conceptual background to study and the foundation for the empirical research with which the remainder of this thesis is concerned. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to introduce the philosophical underpinnings of the methodology adopted in this thesis, as well as to outline and justify the specific research methods employed to meet the objectives of the research as set out in Chapter 1. Before discussing the methodological perspectives adopted by this thesis, the chapter commences with a review of research objectives, as follows:

Objective 1: Given the potential negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark', to explore critically how the local community of L'Aquila feels about and responds to the concept of dark tourism.

Objective 2: To explore the responses of the local community of L'Aquila as it has become the focus of the post-disaster tourist gaze.

Objective 3: To review critically the applicability of the proposed Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF).

Objective 4: To identify the role of different stakeholders in L'Aquila's 'dark' post-disaster tourism development.

Objective 5: To consider how L'Aquila's social environment impacts on or influences an individual's attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism development.

The discussions in his chapter will focus on the research strategy, illustrating its philosophical underpinning, ontological and epistemological perspectives, and the assumptions of the research paradigm. Subsequently, the research design is then examined. Methods of data analysis are also introduced. Then, a detailed consideration of participant selection and the selection process will be presented.

6.1 Research paradigm and philosophical underpinning

'Why is qualitative research and not quantitative research in the minority status? Why is it necessary to present a philosophic perspective on qualitative research and not on quantitative research' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 7)? It is suggested that qualitative methods continue to face the challenge of providing a rigorous and philosophic defense of the experimental methods adopted, because the philosophic underpinnings are still miss-understood. Qualitative research, in contrast to quantitative research, is still seen as less rigorous and arguably less valued as a method of research inquiry (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). However, this thesis will not be drawn into a discussion of the extended history of research. Importantly, what should be acknowledged is that both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research are significant (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). However, the types of inquiry and findings produced by each are different. Distinctions between the two paradigms will be discussed shortly. At this stage, however, it is necessary to note that this research adopts a qualitative approach.

There are two broad methods of, or approaches to, reasoning frequently associated with research, namely, deductive and inductive methods. Deductive (top-down) reasoning commences with theory on a specific topic and then narrows down to a more specific hypothesis that can be tested (Feeney and Heit, 2007; Holowchak, 2007: 277). Through observations, the hypothesis is tested and the initial theory is then placed under critical analysis, thus providing confirmation of the theory or the requirement for alternative theories. In contrast, inductive (bottom-up) reasoning operates in a reverse manner. That is, specific observations lead to broader generalisations and theories. As a consequence, these two methods of reasoning imply different processes when approaching and conducting research. On the one hand, the inductive approach reflects an unrestricted and exploratory method of reasoning towards research whereas, on the other hand, deductive reasoning is often seen as narrow by nature and is concerned with testing and or confirming research hypothesis. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 below provide a simple illustration of the distinctions between inductive and deductive reasoning.

Figure 6.1: Deductive Reasoning
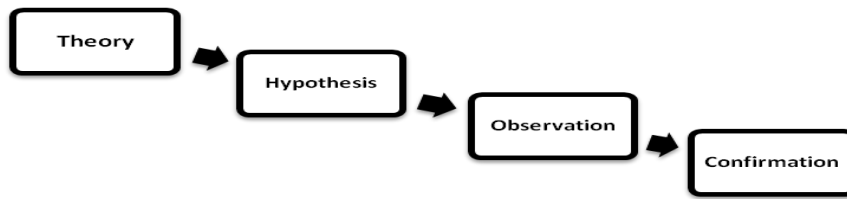
Source: adapted from Trochim (2006)

Figure 6.2: Inductive Reasoning
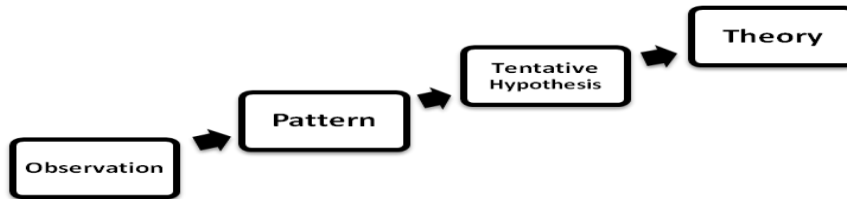
Source: adapted from Trochim (2006)

Research is not, of course, restricted to a single type of reasoning. In fact, it seems just as logical to take the two processes illustrated above and to combine them into one single process which represents a continuous cycle of theories which through observations are being tested, thus leading to conclusions that may in turn point to adjusted, supplementary, alternative or even new theories (Feeney and Heit, 2007; Holowchak, 277).

Reflecting its various and distinctive aims and objectives, this research will primarily adopt inductive reasoning although, given that the proposed frameworks (DLCF and DTDF) will also be tested, a circular interpretation of the inductive and deductive fields of reasoning will be employed. More specifically, objectives 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the research all focus on developing theory in relevant sub-fields in the area of dark tourism in which understanding and theoretical foundations are lacking. Hence, an inductive approach could be deemed more appropriate. Objective 3, however, is to test two frameworks which have been constructed and proposed by drawing on contemporary academic models / theories, the aim being to evaluate critically their suitability through observational research and application. Thus, on this occasion, deductive reasoning could be considered more suitable. Additionally, extant academic theories, such as models of tourism development will also be placed under critical examination. Therefore, complementary theory could be derived from research analysis. This type of inquiry is arguably recognised as deductive reasoning. Thus, a circular process involving both inductive and deductive reasoning will be employed in the analysis and interpretation of research data collected throughout this study.

Best (1977: 384) defines research as 'the systematic and objective analysis and recording of controlled observations that may lead to the development of generalisations, principles, or theories, resulting in prediction and ultimate control of many events that may be consequences or causes of specific activities'. Alternatively, Van Dalen (1973: 532) states that, more generally, 'research is defined by scholars as a careful, critical search for solutions to the problems that plague and puzzle mankind'. Irrespective of definitions or interpretations of what research is, however, every researcher has a set of assumptions that direct the approach used to investigate the problem and to seek the answer or 'the truth'. In other words, the starting point for any research is the research paradigm, which may be defined as 'a cluster of beliefs which can dictate scientists in a particular discipline and even influence what should be studied, how research should be done and finally, how results should / could be interpreted' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 25).

According to Hassard and Kelemen (2002), a research paradigm is a set of connected beliefs about the social world that represents a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world. More specifically, Guba (1990) describes a paradigm as a basic belief system that guides research actions while undertaking disciplined inquiry. As such, the selected research paradigm is the starting point for any research investigation. It is well documented that all research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based upon underlying assumptions about what forms 'valid' research and which research methods are suitable (Baskerville and Myers, 2004; Denscombe, 2002; Fuchs and Weirmair, 2003; Hopkins, 2002; Mazanec, 2005; Yin, 2003). In order to conduct and or evaluate qualitative research, such as that undertaken in this thesis, it is important to explain and justify the research paradigm adopted, as it is that paradigm which then prescribes the suitable methods to be employed during the collection of data. Smith (2010) suggests that different paradigms tend to be characterised by different methods, and each paradigm provides different assumptions about the nature of reality and how individuals understand reality. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), there are three fundamental components that need to be understood when considering a particular research paradigm or 'worldview', which can be briefly explained as follows:

- *Ontological question*: what is 'truth' and 'reality', what is 'real', how is it constructed / understood, what can be known about it?

- *Epistemological question*: what is the potential of the would-be knower to understand what can be known; is there an objective entity to grasp 'truth' or 'reality'?

- *Methodological question*: how can the knower discover whatever he or she believes can be known? By which means will the would-be knower become the knower, what constraints or knowing capacity will shape the path to an understanding of 'truth' or 'reality'?

In order to acquire the worldview of research, these three components need to be reviewed in order to understand the context underpinning the research. These worldviews are shaped by the past experiences of the researcher, whose individual beliefs will normally lead to quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method approaches in their research (Cresswell, 2009).

When conducting research, epistemology, or the nature of knowledge, is essential because it focuses on what humans know and learn about the social world. In other words, epistemology is concerned with what knowledge is, how it is acquired and the truth or adequacy of acquired knowledge; it is concerned with the nature of relationship between the knower and the known (Denscombe, 2002; Fuchs and Weiermair, 2003). Thus, it focuses on questions such as: 'how can we know about reality and what is the basis of our knowledge' (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 13)? Phenomenology is a philosophical and theoretical endeavour (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010), and it is necessary to understand the philosophical and theoretical assumptions that inform phenomenological research. In so doing, it will help situate the various approaches to phenomenology that have advanced during the 20th Century within a diverse range of research paradigms (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). Within the research paradigm, the researcher's 'basic set of beliefs that guides action' (Denzin and Lincoln 2003; Guba 1990: 17), the epistemological view is contained within the ontological and methodological approaches of the researcher to formulate the framework of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). In practical terms, epistemology involves both ontology and methodology, as ontology is related to the philosophy of reality; epistemology reflects how we come to know that reality, while methodology describes the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it (Krauss, 2005). Implicitly, therefore, the researcher adopts an appropriate paradigm that supports his / her ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

Table 6.1: Table of Research Paradigm

	Positivism	Post-positivism	Critical Theory	Constructivism
Ontology The nature of reality	Realist Reality is Objective Reality Exists out there and is driven by unchangeable natural laws and mechanism Context-free, Generalisation of finding	Critical Realists Reality exists It is driven by natural laws but can never be completely understood or uncovered	Critical reality Reality is shaped by social, political, ethnic, and gender values	Relativist Reality exists in the form of multiple mental representations
Epistemology Nature of relationship between the inquire and the knowable	Objectivist Knowledge is scientific. The inquirer adopts detached, non interactive position	Modified objectivist Objectivity remains an idea but can only be approximated with special emphasis placed on external guardians such as critical community	Subjectivist Values of inquirer influence inquiry	Subjectivist The findings are the fused interaction process between inquirers and inquired into. Personal
Methodology Whole process of collecting and interpreting data	Experimental / Manipulative Redness imbalance by doing inquiry in natural settings	Modified Experimental/manipulative Redness imbalance by doing inquiry in natural settings	Dialogic / Transformative Eliminates false consciousness and facilitates emanticipation	Hermeneutic / dialectic Inductive and interpretive
Methods Specific techniques of data collection	Quantitative methods i.e. Questionnaires	Mixed methods through quantitative methods are often used	Some mixed methods with care taken to permit views of respondents to be expressed	Qualitative methods i.e. interview, texts analysis of cases

Source: Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1990)

Research paradigms are frequently characterised under different headings, including positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, feminism, post-modernism and the chaos theory (Jennings, 2001). As recongised by Guba and Lincoln (2004), scientific paradigms (positivist) have over the past century become more predominant, whilst new paradigms (post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism) are ultimately increasing in value as more researchers apply them. Lincoln and Guba (1990) suggest that (recently) the four dominant paradigms applied by researchers are positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. Again, applying such paradigms is useful because it helps researchers to recognise where they stand when confronted with the different objects / subjects they are studying. More specifically, it can assist researchers specifically in the philosophical (ontological and epistemological) suppositions that can influence methodological approaches (taken during research) and assumptions of the research itself.

6.2 Ontological perspectives

Willig and Rogers (2008) describe ontology as the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of the world and questions the nature of reality, and for this

reason it is advocated that ontological assumptionsd are essential (Willig & Rogers, 2008) to research; that is, it is arguably impossible for researchers not to make various assumptions about the nature of the world we live in. Simply, ontology is how we understand the nature of reality (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Fundamentally, ontological considerations 'help determine or designate the nature of the knowable' (Hollinshead, 2004: 75) and can be described as 'realist' and 'relativist'.

In tourism research, due to it nature and processes, ontological reflections become significant, much to the emphasis on associations with the interactions between individuals and places (Hollinshead, 2004). Hollinshead's analysis of ontological matters in tourism, drawing on the work of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1992), proposes that, when embracing the 'ontological *madness* of places' tourism research is limited in its ability to embrace such matters (Hollinshead, 2004: 66).

Such limitations have resulted in consequences for tourism scholarship, due to the quintessential 'place-maker' that is tourism (Hollinshead, 2004). Taking this into account, the researcher is able to challenge the idea of objective knowledge and therefore, can 'try and understand the contextual realities and subjective meanings that shape people's interactions with their world' (Samdahl, 1999: 126).

Before focussing on the interpretivist theory, it is necessary to discuss how positivists view the nature of reality and its application to research. From a positivistic ontological perspective, research questions are seen with a singular, external and objective reality; irrespective of the researchers own beliefs (Carson, Gilmore, Gronhaug and Perry, 2001; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). A positivist researcher is often guided by a controlled and structured approach to the nature of conducting research. Such a controlled guide often initiates by identifying a research topic, constructing an appropriate research question and hypotheses, followed by assuming an appropriate methodology. It is also suggested that positivist researchers will aim to remain removed from the participants (subjects of enquiry), during research in order to reduce emotional attachment. Therefore, the researcher will aim to remain emotionally unbiased in order to attain pure distinctions between reason and feeling, remaining closer to science than personal experience. Positivistic positions will also emphasise the importance of clearly differentiating between fact and value judgment. The importance of this lies in the positivistic researcher's search for objectivity and subsequent adoption of a rational and logical approach to research (Carson et al., 2001; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Consequently, data collection and presentation is often presented in the form of statistical and mathematical techniques. As suggested,

positivist research methods apply specifically structured research techniques in order to uncover single and objective realities. It can therefore be argued that positivist research seeks to collect and present time and context-free generalisations. A positivist researcher will suggest that the ability to present this type of data reflects the possibility to understand and explain human behaviour as a direct result of real causes that precede such behaviour (Carson et al., 2001; Hudson et al., 1988).

Opposing the positivistic position are interpretivists, who see reality as relative and multiple. Interpretivists place importance on the notion that there can be more than one reality, challenging the positivistic notion of a single structured way of assessing such realities. This is further explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who suggest that these multiple perspectives on viewing realities are difficult to interpret as they depend on alternative systems for interpreting meanings. The knowledge produced by the intepretivist discipline is derived through socially constructed and subjective interpretations of reality (Carson et al., 2001; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

Interpretivist researchers tend to apply more personal and flexible research structures (in contrast to positivist paradigms) because the knowledge obtained through research is arguably generated from value-laden socially constructed interpretations. Interpretivists are capable of making sense of (what is perceived as) multiple realities and, hence, research approaches have to be more receptive to meanings in human interaction (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Hudson and Ozanne (1988) identify that an interpretivist researcher will enter the field of inquiry with some form of previous insight regarding the research topic. However, the researcher will assume this to be insufficient in developing a fixed research design, much to what is seen as a complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived to be reality.

The data collection stage will see the researcher and his participants as interdependent and mutually interactive with each other, together constructing a collaborative account of perceived reality. Importantly, the researcher maintains an open view to possible new ideas emerging throughout the duration of study, permitting the study to develop and take alternative directions (if necessary) with the assistance of the participants. The interpretivist approach is consistent with the belief that, as humans, we have an ability to adapt and, consequently, it would be restrictive by nature to suggest that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context bound social realities (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

An interpretivist research approach seeks to understand and interpret 'human behaviour' rather than to generalise and predict possible cause and effects. Hudson and Ozanne (1988) suggest that an interpretivist research places emphasis on the significance in understanding subjective experiences that are time and context bound, such as motives, meanings and reasoning's of human behaviour.

Given that its aims and objectives reflect varying theoretical and reasoning stances, the constructivist / interpretative paradigm can be deemed as the most suitable paradigm for this research project, whilst critical theory will also be present to some extent within the research paradigm. For example, the ontological approach of the constructivist paradigm is relativism; understanding of a reality is based on the idea that there are multiple realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 21). This approach is shared by the present study, which is focused on understanding the different realities for locals and their feelings towards the concept and development of dark tourism. Lincoln and Guba's (2000: 169) view is that, within the constructivist paradigm (and critical theory), the influence of the ethics and values of the research and researcher (axiology) are seen as an integral part of the way in which research is conducted and the process of analysing findings. Similarly, they view the process of conducting research (methodology) as hermeneutical, or interpretative and dialectical; in other words emphasising the informants' as well as the researchers influence on research findings.

6.3 The research process

Methodology is 'inevitably interwoven with and emerges from the nature of particular disciplines and particular perspectives' (Lincoln and Guba, 2000: 164). The two terms 'methodology' and 'method' refer to different aspects of approaching and doing research. According to Silverman (1993: 1) 'methodology' is associated with 'a general approach to studying research topics', whereas 'method' refers to 'a specific research technique'. Methodology is much more directly informed by the researcher's epistemological position compared to the meanings associated with method (Willig, 2008). This general, rather than specific, approach considers the role of 'knowledge' in relation to the research. It could be suggested that a researcher who adopts a predominantly empiricist view of knowledge acquisition will approach research topics through the collection of data instead of using theoretical formulations. In other words, a deduced (deduction) ideas or hypotheses relating to research must be subjected to the rigours of testing before being considered knowledge / theory.

In this thesis, the literature review has identified the perspective that will be taken within this research, namely, the social construction of reality / society as central to understanding the local community. The researcher holds uncertain views in relation to the ontological and epistemological levels of the research, further suggesting for the purposes of this research that the influences of cultural realities are arguably not subjective, and nor should they arguably be seen as objective. Rather, they should be seen as what Hunter (2010: 2) calls 'dislocated'. Simply stated, these meanings are positioned somewhere between the two views. As recognised in Chapter 4, humans are socialised into realities which provide them with objective knowledge. However, as humans become independent, through globalisation, reflection, and awareness of 'other' realities the individual is able to interpret and establish alternative objectivated knowledge different to the one they were socialised into. This allows the individual to establish an existential awareness of the world around them. Therefore, this thesis adopts a more 'dislocated' ontological approach, accepting that it is necessary to not be solely immersed and guided by one ontological perspective with respect to the nature of reality.

The background theory and literature review (Chapters 2-4) were shaped by the focus / construction and eventual proposal of two conceptual frameworks (Chapter 5) to guide the empirical research. Thus, reflecting the two conceptual frameworks, the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF), there are two stages of research. Consequently, a multi-method research approach is adopted. The following sections discuss the methodological approach adopted by this thesis, focusing on the two stages of research related to the two conceptual frameworks. Additionally, the data collection sources and techniques will also be introduced. However, before focussing on the two stages of the research, and given that this thesis is concerned with researching the development of dark tourism in the specific context of L'Aquila (i.e, utilizing L'Aquila as a case study), the following section addresses the benefits and limitations of the case study approach.

6.3.1 The case study approach

The case study approach is widely utilised within tourism research (Beeton, 2005: 37). It is often described as a holistic empirical form of inquiry applied by researchers to attain an in-depth understanding of the subject at hand (Dei, 2000; Fadahunsi, 2000; Kellehear, 2002; Yuksel, Bramwell and Yuksel, 1999). Many commentators highlight the value of case studies as a means of gaining an in-depth understanding of a situation (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000). A number of factors render the case study approach a valid methodological tool in tourism research (Fadahunsi, 2000;

Kellehear, 2002), and its contribution to further understanding of tourism development, planning, management and operations from the perspective of a local community is particularly relevant to this study, specifically as it enables the researcher to explore as well as test theoretical concepts (Beeton, 2005; Tosun, 2001). A case study approach applies a research strategy that involves the empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within its real life context (Hamel, Dufour and Fortin, 1993; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Robson, 1993; Yin, 1994); here, of course, the earthquake, its impact on the community and the consequential emergence of dark tourism are the phenomena being investigated in the 'real life' context of L'Aquila.

The intention of a case study is to gain insights from an individual case that can have wider implications. Indeed, it is believed that such insights may not be revealed in a study that attempts to embrace a large number of instances. Thus, a case study is characteristically 'in-depth' and, by limiting the range of the study to just one focus or phenomenon, the approach offers the potential to investigate the complexities, subtleties and intricacies of a certain situation in greater detail (Stake, 1995). Putting it another way, case studies focus on the 'particular' rather than the 'general' and 'the aim is to illuminate the general by looking at the particular' (Denscombe, 2003: 30). However, it should be stressed that, whilst the theoretical propositions of case studies are indeed generalisable, generalisable to populations they are not (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman, 1956). At the same time, however, case studies have come under criticism, a significant limitation being seen its potential to be speculative, unreliable and too specific to a particular phenomenon to be replicated or applied generally in future instances (Beeton, 2005). Furthermore, it has been argued that case studies can often reflect and fail to limit the bias of the researcher.

Certainly, Hoaglin, Mosteller and Tukey (1982) discuss how the values of the researcher can often influence the analysis and eventual presentation of data, whilst Beeton (2005: 39) similarly notes that the apparent usefulness of case studies can also be questioned by the value system of the researcher, who suggestively 'tends to remember results that support his / her values, rejecting the others that do not fit as neatly'. More generally, Beeton (2005: 39) suggests that 'criticisms of case studies are valid and cannot simply be passed off as mere historical or etymological aberrations'. However, whilst recognsing the possibility of researcher bias in case studies approaches, Bryman (2004) acknowledges that bias is not exclusively restricted to the case study design. Yin (1994: xiii) suggests that 'investigators who do case studies are regarded as having deviated from their academic disciplines, their

investigations as having insufficient precision (that is, quantification), objectivity and rigour... [Yet] case studies continue to be used extensively'. Further to the issue, Beeton (2005) recognsies that the continued application of case studies is because of its process and how it provides instant recognition and understanding, as people 'learn from analysing and processing our observations of the world around us, from both direct and vicarious experience' (Beeton, 2005: 39).

Whilst it is necessary to acknowledge that the case study approach is susceptible to criticism, mainly due to a potential lack of credibility of generalisations derived from research findings (Bryman, 2004; Yin, 1994), it is important to note that not all research objectives in this study aim to present generalisable data. As has been frequently stressed, this research aims to critically investigate the concept of dark tourism and, in particular to explore and understand the social environmental characteristics of a destination and how it can impact on local residents' feelings / attitudes towards dark tourists / tourism and the development of. Therefore, generalisations are not at this stage a focal aspect of the research objectives. Needless to say, research is arguably ever seldom complete. Rather, it frequently leaves open and or exposes new / additional avenues for further research into various phenomena. Thus, although the research in L'Aquila aims to enhance understanding of the concept of dark tourism concept, specifically from the perspective of local residents as the object of the (dark) tourist gaze, it is likely that it will open up further avenues for research within dark tourism.

6.3.2 Qualitative research methods

Many researchers (Becker, 1986: 122, cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 9) recognise that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are significant and, therefore, they all 'think they know something about society worth telling to others'. Indeed, individually or together, both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research are significant. However, the types of inquiry and findings produced by each are different. Dependent on the type of research approach and the aims and objectives, researchers will apply different types of research methods to collecting data, either quantitative or qualitative. As Bryman (2001) acknowledges, various questions cannot be answered using quantitative methods, whilst qualitative methods are unsuitable for other research questions. Some scholars (for example, Hughes, 1990; Smith and Heshusius, 1986) suggest that the research objectives often define the type of research method to be employed, which is further closely related to the epistemological focus of the research.

A qualitative approach to research emphasises commitment to viewing events, actions, norms, values (and so forth) from the perspective of individuals who are the focus of the study (Bryman, 1988). Qualitative researchers are more often fascinated with meaning and how individuals make sense of their world and of particular experiences of events / phenomena. Thus, qualitative research focuses on the quality of experience, rather than aiming to identify cause-effect relationships (Anafara and Mertz, 2006). Qualitative research frequently encompasses close contact between the researcher and the individual(s) being studied. Qualitative researchers 'stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the research and what it studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 8); that is, they 'seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning'. Flick (1998) recognises that the fields of study where research is conducted are not artificial conditions, but are the practices and interactions of the subjects in their everyday life. Thus, qualitative research provides a situation in which the researcher can explore incidents in rich detail and can elicit the full extent of the subject's accounts on the research topic. Therefore, in order to carry out this research and in line with its ontological and epistemological positions, the qualitative research approach is deemed most suitable to investigate the local Aquilani's feelings towards the development of dark tourism in a post-disaster situation.

6.3.3 Interviews: Data collection

Having discussed that this research will adopt a qualitative research approach, it is now necessary to identify and discuss the main methods of data collection employed in the research and how this choice was particularly suitable to this study. In order to attain rich and detailed data from subjects it is essential that the correct methods are applied. The common methods in qualitative research are participant-observation, focus groups, individual interviews and document analysis.

When identifying potential methods for research, the application of focus groups was considered. As noted by Bryman (2001), researchers are increasingly utilising focus groups as an interview technique to collect data. Focus groups involve assembling individuals into groups (the number of participants can vary, but is often limited due to the complexities of anaylsing data from large groups) to discuss and thus, investigate specific research topics / objectives. Bryman (2001) and Smith (2010) suggest that the principal benefits of focus groups is their ability to allow subjects to challenge and question each other's views, potentially leading to additional / alternative insights that arguably could have gone unrecognised. Nevertheless, focus groups also have

limitations, a particular one being their possibly restrictive nature when discussing sensitive or controversial topics, as individuals in the group could be reluctant to disclose personal thoughts and opinions in the presence of others (Krueger, 1998). Additionally, strong characters may come to dominate the discussions, imposing their views on other members of the group.

Another useful qualitative research approach is participant-observation, which is explained by Becker and Geer (1957: 28) as 'the method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of the researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time'. A limitation of the participant observation approach is the significant demands placed upon the researcher, such as personal commitment and potential resources required to undertake observations, and the challenges of interpreting what is being observed. The participant observation research method was not deemed appropriate or necessary for this research inquiry in order to attain the required data for research objectives.

The qualitative research method applied in this study during Stage 2 empirical enquiry was one-to-one in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Interviews provide the researcher with a range of benefits in order to assemble detailed data. As noted by Fontana and Frey (1998), interviewing is a common method utlised by researchers in which they can attempt to investigate and understand their participants, and their reactions to various phenomena. Interviews can assist the investigation of people's knowledge, views, understandings, values, beliefs, attitudes, interpretations and experiences within the context of research objectives. Furthermore, through the use of interviews, researchers can attain deep and insightful knowledge of participants' perceptions to specific phenomena (Mason, 2002). Denscombe (2003: 165) notes that researchers will use interviews when explore participant 'emotions, experiences and feelings rather than more straightforward factual matters'. As recognsied by Sandiford and Seymour (2007: 724), interviews have the potential to offer deep, rich and meaningful data within 'multi-layered accounts of respondent experiences'. As discussed by Johnson (2001) a researcher who uses in-depth interviews aims to obtain detailed knowledge and information, implying that such rich data is less forthcoming from surveys, informal interviewing or focus groups. Significantly, the information being elicited can include issues which are personal to the individual, and relate to lived experiences, values and decisions.

Furthermore, in-depth interviewing involves a certain style of social interpersonal interaction. Interviews can been associated with formats such as structured, semi-structured and unstructured Gillham (2005). Structured interviews usually follow a rigorous set of questions that restrict the subject's ability to diverge from the questions being asked; conversely, unstructured interviews occur when there is no prearranged set of questions. Thus, unstructured interviews allow for spontaneity and for the discussions to develop over the course of the interview, but may not fully address the research objectives. Semi-structured interviews are seen as open, allowing for new ideas to be bought into conversation as a result of the flow of the topics / discussion, but at the same time the interviewer employs a framework or a range of themes to be explored during the interview. Semi-structured interviews are frequently applied when the interviewer has specific topics he or she wishes to explore which have been identified in advance in relation to the research objectives. Therefore, it is common for the interviewer to have a guide of topics / questions prepared to propose to the participants. An interview guide will assist the researcher to focus on their interview objectives without constraining them to any particular format, thus providing greater freedom to explore and delve further into alternative issues if and when they arise during an interview (Gillham, 2005; Schensul, Schensul and LeCompt, 1999). As identified, the second stage of research will be guided by the Dark Tourism Development Framework and, thus, semi-structured interviews were considered most appropriate for this study.

Moreover, also owing to the potentially emotive topic of dark tourism and, more specifically, the difficult and possibly traumatic experiences of the participants, it was concluded that one-to-one in-depth semi-structured interviews would provide the most suitable method of data collection. The researcher felt that participants would be more willing to discuss detailed and complex topics on a one-to-one basis than openly in front of others individuals, such as in a focus group, therefore allowing for the collection of rich and detailed information on the issues surrounding the development of dark tourism in a post-disaster destination.

Interviews do have their limitations and challenges, and this study was required to overcome various complications. For example, there was difficulty in accessing appropriate individuals (due to displacement after the earthquake), time constraints (interviews conducted during the summer periods when people are on vacation, or organisations are closed) and the emotive topics being investigated (dark tourism and the earthquake). Language barrier can often be an issues, however, a matter that is

certainly related but did not limit this study, as the researcher is bilingual in both Italian (the native language of the Aquilani) and English.

It should also be acknowledged that suspicion was present on the part of some participants when initially being informed that the researcher was English and studying at an English University. However, this did not restrict the ability to obtain data, and once participants were clearly informed of the purpose of the research, they were happy to participate.

6.4 Stage 1 research: Applying the disaster life cycle framework (DLCF); research methods and data collection techniques

As already established, the empirical research in this study was undertaken in two stages. The first stage was, in effect, a scoping study, the purpose being to identify and collect data in collaboration with the application of the DLCF. The first stage of research used both primary and secondary data (as shown in figure 6.3 below). Extensive use was made of a variety of secondary sources in both Italy and the UK, including news articles (both printed and accessible via the Internet) personal accounts, printed and published books and academic material (journals and reports). Secondary data used came in a variety of different formats, such as written documentation, images, graphs and tables. In effect, the first stage of research initially aimed, through the use of secondary data, to collect information on the following:

- The initial impacts of the disaster,
- The immediate responses from various institutions (i.e. local, national and international governments, religious bodies, emergency response organisation),
- The disaster recovery process (from the initial stages to two years post-disaster),
- The current state of the city of L'Aquila - focus on destruction and re-development projects (over a period of two years),
- The tourism industry post-disaster - both from a supply and demand perspective.

The first stage of research was based on both secondary (as discussed above) and primary sources (see figure 6.3). The purpose of the primary research was to accompany and support the evidence derived from secondary sources and to generate a deeper, 'first hand' understanding of the city of L'Aquila prior to the commencement of the second stage of the research. This primary research took the form of three field visits in the month of August 2011, during which extensive photographic evidence was collected. Additional supporting material was obtained

from informal discussions with local people during the visits, which contributed to the researcher's understanding of the city's topography. It also included one field visit with a guided tour of the city with a local resident who provided a descriptive understanding of the cities historical past, the damage caused by the earthquake and further / additional clarification on the rebuilding / redevelopment processes being undertaken up to the time of the field visits. This tour was provided by a Professor of Philosophy in L'Aquila, who was also an interviewee during Stage 2 research - see Figure 6.5, participant 2 below.

Figure 6.3: Stage 1: Applied Research Methods and Data Sources
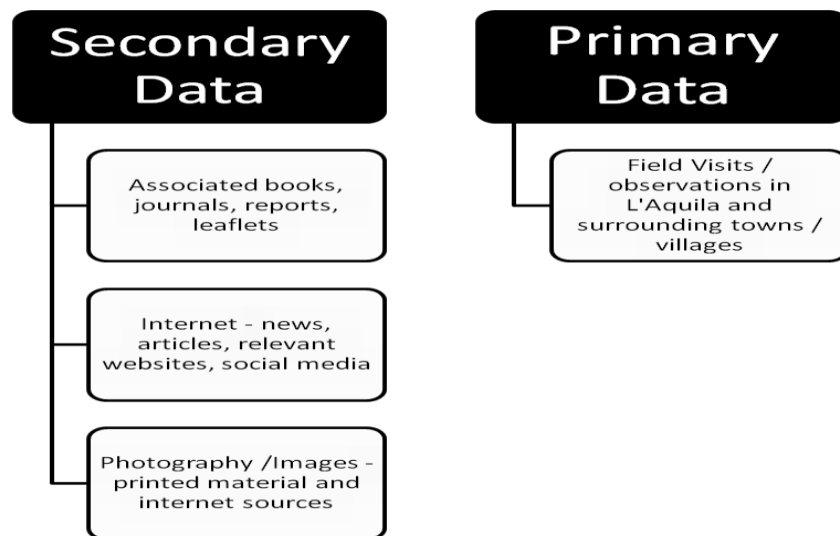
Once Stage 1 research was complete, the outcomes of which are presented in the following chapter, and the data was chronologically assembled in line with the DLCF, what followed was the application of the DTDF during Stage 2 research.

6.5 Stage 2 research: Dark tourism development framework (DTDF) framing research; research methods and data collection techniques

The second stage of empirical research focuses on the previously identified objectives, specifically, enhancing understanding of the development of a dark tourism destination from the perspective of a local community. The purpose of the second stage of research was to address the overall objectives of the study: to explore and critically investigate the perceptions of local residents in L'Aquila towards the concept and development of dark tourism in their city since the earthquake. The Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF) was applied to guide the researcher through the second stage of research. More, precisely the DTDF acted as a guide for the semi-structured interviews which are discussed in more detail shortly.

Similar to Stage 1, the Stage 2 research also made use of both primary and secondary data, as shown in Figure 6.4 below. Secondary data once again was derived from published books and journals, news articles, Internet sites, social media and reports from various organisations (government, local, national and international institutions). Secondary data also continued to inform areas of interest which were stated above in Stage1 research, including the continuing disaster recovery process being undertaken in L'Aquila and any additional information that was deemed relevant and necessary to be included in this thesis.

Figure 6.4: Stage 2: Applied Research Methods and Data Sources
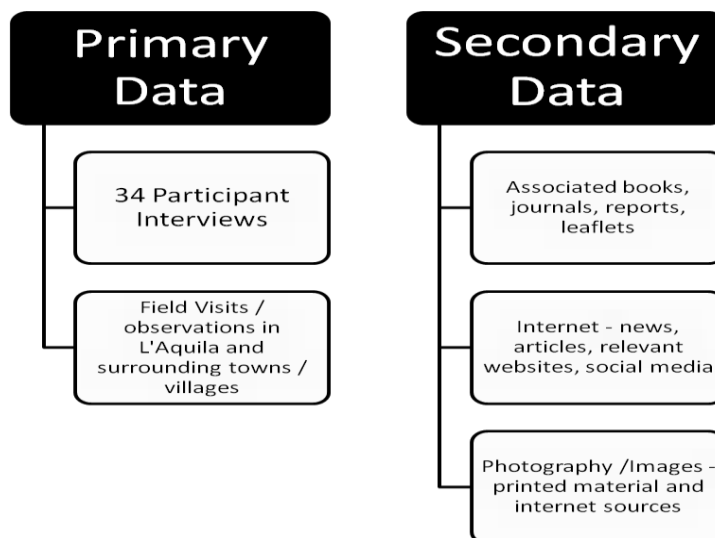
However, the most significant data collection technique used during Stage 2 research was semi-structured interviews. The appropriate use and both the benefits and limitations of semi-structured interviews has been discussed above. The following section discusses the application and process of the semi-structured interviews used during Stage 2 empirical research.

6.5.1 The interview process during stage 2 research

This section focuses on the acquisition of participants (sampling), the interview process and the structure of the interviews. Figure 6.5 provides a list of the participants interviewed during stage 2 research. The participants are listed in the order in which they were interviewed, along with their age, gender and occupation, their association with L'Aquila, their place of birth and the amount of time they have spent in L'Aquila during their lives.

The structure of the interviews was, as already noted, guided by the DTDF, the structure and content of which is directly related to this study's research objectives. The following is a list of the type of questions asked during the interviews:

- Can you please reflect and share your experiences of the initial impact of the earthquake, the moment it struck?
- How did the earthquake affect your life physically or mentally, your personality, characteristics?
- How do you see L'Aquila in its current state?
- How would you describe to me as an outsider the personality or the characteristics of the Aquilani?
- Did you see tourists in L'Aquila soon after the earthquake? If yes, how did you feel towards them?
- How do you feel about tourists now (4 years after the disaster)?
- Is there any reason why your attitude and feelings have changed towards tourists and tourism?
- Do you know what dark tourism is?
- What do you think of the label 'dark'?
- What do you think of this type of tourism?
- If L'Aquila wanted to develop dark tourism, who do you think should have a voice, who should be present in any sort of decision process?
- How do you see the future of L'Aquila?
- To finish, do you think there will be a future for developing dark tourism in L'Aquila?

However, it must be stressed that, whilst interviews took a semi-structured format, the necessity of such approach was to ensure that appropriate data were collected to meet the research objectives. The interviews themselves did not necessarily follow a standard format as the topics being discussed were emotive and of personal value to the participants. Thus, it was not uncommon for participants to go 'off topic' and discuss alternative issues, some of which were relevant to the thesis, whilst others were not. Given the circumstances, however, the researcher felt it appropriate to allow participants to express themselves and to allow the discussion to diverge from the original question being asked. Indeed, this was seen as an opportunity for additional topics / viewpoints to emerge from the interviews. In many ways, it also acted and was an opportunity for participants to share experiences for the first time and, therefore, it was an opportunity for them to let go of some of the emotive feelings that they had, perhaps, been unable to express since the disaster. In short, therefore, it is important to stress that the structure of interviews varied from participant to participant, the questions above being used to guide participants to respond and provide data relevant to the research objectives.

In addition, it is recognised that academics have long explored the role of the researcher bias in issues of research design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963), choice of study populations (Graham 1992, Hambrecht, Maurer and Hafner, 1993), statistical

analysis (Abelson, 1995; Rosenthal, 1994), data presentation (Huff, 1954; Monmonier, 1996), experimenter gender (Eagly and Carli, 1981), and experimenter expectancies (Campbell, 1993; Harris, 1991; Rosenthal, 1994). All of these have been taken into consideration in this study though to suggest that the researcher is bias free would be inaccurate. That is, the researcher sought to meet the research objectives through interviews in a semi-structured format and, as a consequence, respondents were directed to explore and discuss topics of specific interest, responding to the method, role and inter-subjectivity of the researcher. Therefore, the complete elimination of bias was not possible in this research. However, the questions were put to participants in an approach and manner which aimed to reduce the potential bias, focusing particularly on topics to be explored. Moreover, the application of the DTDF was also considered as a means of minimising the degree of influence exerted by the researcher during the interviews.

6.5.1.1 Participants and sampling technique

Figure 6.5: The Participants

Participant	Age	Gender M/F	Occupation	Association to L'Aquila	Place of Birth	Time spent in L'Aquila
1	30	Male	Worker/Student	For study	Pescara	3 years
2	58	Male	Prof. of Philosophy at University of L'Aquila	Resident	L'Aquila	Majority of life
3	57	Female	Housewife/ Former designer	Lived and worked	Pescara – Relocated to L'Aquila in 1063	Majority of life
4	63	Male	Former bank official	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
5	58	Female	Housewife	Lived in L'Aquila for 30 years	Pescara	30 years
6	24	Female	Student	For study	Atri	3 years
7	61	Female	Housewife	Lived and worked	Gissi	30 years
8	23	Male	Student	Lived and studied	L'Aquila	Majority of life
9	53	Female	Social worker	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
10	58	Female	Teacher	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
11	50	Male	Photographer	Lived and worked	Milan	20 years
12	43	Female	Teacher	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
13	77	Female	Retired	Lived	Fiume	70 years
14	50	Female	Craftswoman	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
15	43	Female	Doctor	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
16	52	Female	Teacher of Philosophy	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
17	56	Female	Nurse	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
18	29	Male	Civil protection operator	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
19	50	Male	Photographer	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
20	49	Male	Doctor/ former candidate for Major	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life

21	20	Female	Student	Lived and Studied	L'Aquila	Majority of life
22	22	Male	Priest	Lived and worked	Messina	23 years
23	62	Male	Regional Education/ head teacher/ former candidate for Major	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
24	58	Male	Hotel duty manager	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
25	73	Female	Housewife	Lived	Citta St. Angelo	26 years
26	44	Male	Deputy Mayor	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
27	44	Male	Travel Agent – owner	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
28	29	Male	Student	Lived	L'Aquila	Majority of life
29	30	Male	Construction Engineer	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
30	26	Female	PhD Student	Lived and studied	L'Aquila	Majority of life
31	29	Male	Journalist	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
32	30	Male	Journalist	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
33	31	Female	Construction Engineer	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life
34	30	Female	Psychologist	Lived and worked	L'Aquila	Majority of life

A total of 34 in-depth one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted. The respondents varied from residents born in L'Aquila to students living in L'Aquila; all but one was present during the earthquake. Participants for research were obtained through a technique similar to snowball sampling. As discussed by Babbie (2011), snowball sampling is seen as a non-probability sampling technique, also referred to, sometimes, as accidental sampling. It is a procedure most often implemented when members of a specific community / population are difficult to reach and or locate. It is often the case in snowball sampling that the researcher assembles data on a selection of members within the target population. Thereafter, the researcher inquires whether those individuals can provide the information needed to identify and perhaps locate other members of the population whom they happen to know. It is suggested that, due to its questionable representativeness, snowball sampling is frequently used during exploratory research. Noy (2008: 329) argues that the process of selecting a snowball sample reveals important aspects of the population being sampled: 'the dynamics of natural and organic social networks'. There are a number of reasons for the use of snowball sampling in this research. First, after the earthquake the entire population was displaced from L'Aquila's *centro historico*. Thus, many locals had been repositioned away from L'Aquila to surrounding villages and towns, making it difficult to locate participants. Second, as noted earlier, dark tourism is potentially emotive and ethically challenging subject and therefore, it is difficult to contact people and ask spontaneously if they are willing to allocate time to discuss such a topic. Third, experience confirms that people can be suspicious and rather disconnected and unwilling to share their time unless they have been informed by someone else of what can be expected from the interview and the topic. Furthermore, since the

earthquake, local residents of L'Aquila have become suspicious of journalists and their motives, also rendering the recruitment of willing participants more complicated. Indeed, as considered in Chapter 8, the research reveals the introspective and closed attitude of local people to non-residents.

As previously mentioned, the researcher had sufficient existing contacts drawn from Stage 1 research and also from his personal connections with the area to begin the snowball sampling technique Overall, therefore, the snowballing technique was the appropriate method to recruit interview respondents in interviews. Nevertheless, the representativeness of participants to the wider population can of course be questioned: the permanent population numbers some 40,000 local residents, plus an additional 30,000 students. Therefore, in order to ensure as representative selection of the population as possible was targeted; the individuals that were interviewed were selected by category. As such, the researcher was helped by the willingness of participants to identify and ask other individuals to participate in interviews, resulting in a sample of respondents drawn from a broad range of the local public domain, thus, ensuring a representative data sample of the community. Figure 6.5 provides a list of participant occupations which clearly demonstrates the representative range of individuals.

6.5.1.2 Location and time of interviews

In order to carry out the interviews, the researcher spent three months living in Italy during the summer months of June, July and August 2012. As discussed above, interviews were in-depth and semi-structured, and they lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes. The location of the interviews also varied. The relocation of local residents has varied greatly, some moving to live in the peripheries of the historical center, others to surrounding towns and villages. Therefore, some interviews were conducted in the city center whilst others were conducted in the nearby town of Silvi Marina and city of Pescara. The interviews were carried out in either the participant's homes or in local cafés / bars. The decision to carry out no more than 34 interviews was dictated by the recognition that sufficient rich data had been collected during the 34 interviews, and that the data being collected was beginning to become similar and repetitive. That is, within the scope of the research questions, saturation had been reached.

6.5.1.3 Data coding and analysis

According to Saldana (2009), coding in qualitative research inquiry is frequently a word or short phrase that symbolically allocates the amassed, prominent, essence-

capturing and or evocative attributes for a portion of language based or visual data. Such is the variety and breadth of approaches to coding among scholars that authors cannot claim authority to the best practice of coding qualitative research (Saldana, 2009). The act of coding requires researchers to wear their analytical lens. However, the manner in which one perceives and interprets what is happening in the data depends on what type of filter covers the lens (Saldana, 2009). Merriam (1998: 48) notes 'our analysis and interpretation – our study's findings – will reflect the constructs, concepts, language, models and theories that structured the study in the first place'. It is not simply your approach to qualitative inquiry (in this circumstance a case study), and ontological, epistemological and methodological issues that influence and affect the researchers coding decisions (Creswell, 2009; Mason, 2002). As Sipe and Ghiso (2004: 482 - 483) state, 'all coding is a judgment call' as we bring 'our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions, [and] our quirks to the process of selecting data coding methods'. The coding for this research took place both during and after data collection as an analytic tactic, for coding is analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As suggested, coding is a cyclical act and was rarely perfected in the initial cycle (or even the second, third and fourth, and so on) during data coding (Saldana, 2009). Overall, however, the act of coding in this research was a combination of implementing the conceptual frameworks, research objectives and researcher preferences in analysing the data, and was a process that began from the outset of this study. In fact, there are contrasting opinions as, for some, '*code* is a dirty four-letter word' (Saldana, 2009: 8). Additionally, Saldana suggests, 'few research methodologists perceive code as mere shorthand or an abbreviation for the more important category yet to be discovered'. However, the author believes that coding is a crucial aspect of analysis, but should be contextually based.

Given the structure and nature of the conceptual frameworks developed throughout the literature review and the multiple methods used to collect data (primary and secondary data sources), the coding of interviews and, indeed, the discussion of the research outcomes was also guided by the application of the two conceptual frameworks. Following the completion of the 34 interviews, they were all transcribed into word documents from the voice recorder. All interviews were conducted in Italian, but transcribed in English. In the translation process, in order to account for differences in the meanings of various words in different national contexts, words were at times omitted or a more appropriate word was selected to facilitate the reading of quotes, with the intention of ensuring all original meaning was maintained. Moreover, in order to ensure accuracy, an Italian language teacher checked a sample of interview recordings and transcriptions. An example transcript is presented in

Appendix One. Additionally, as has been noted, field visits were undertaken to further explore the destination which, along with written documents/secondary data and voice recordings, were used to address the research objectives and subsequently interpret and present data. Various factors influenced data coding and, in particular, the decision not to employ computer software in data analysis. Specifically, the use of a software package, such as NVIVO, was not considered to be appropriate given that the researcher was analysing data during field visits (during stage 2 research over a three month period) when access to the software was not possible. Additionally, due to the nature of the interviews and the manner in which participants responded to questions, discussions were fragmented. That is, participants would move from topic-to-topic and conversations were not 'standard' and, hence, unsuited to software coding techniques. As King and Horrocks (2010: 142) observe, when considering forms of data analysis, the distinction 'between approaches…strongly focused on language and those…concerned with the content of what participants said' is significant. For data coding, this research adopted what is known as a thematic approach related to 'experience-focused methodologies' (King and Horrocks, 2010: 142), though it should be noted that thematic approaches take on different styles.

As clarified by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a highly effective method which can assist researchers to recognise, analyse and report patterns (themes) within their data. Importantly, it is acknowledged that there is no consensus as to how this method is carried out (King and Horrocks, 2010). Nevertheless, it involves the researcher making choices of what is important or not to include, and a level of understanding of the words used by participants (King and Horrocks, 2010). Therefore, themes will maintain a level of difference, but what is likely to occur is the identification of repetition in the interpretation of data. Clearly, in this research there were challenges and modifications throughout data coding and analysis as the two were frequently synchronised during the final writing-up of the thesis. The implementation of the two conceptual frameworks (DLCF and DTDF) assisted the categorisation and structure of research data, whilst the topics within the frameworks were used to bring responses together as a method to structure the analysis in Chapter 8, Volume 2. However, it was still necessary to explore and analyse data in a more refined manner on an individual participant response basis. By applying a thematic approach to the analysis of the data, the researcher was able to elicit key words, themes and specific patterns that emerged, which could then be assembled and presented and discussed in line with research objectives and using the frameworks. As mentioned, the frameworks guided the research and the exploration of objectives during the interviews, and then provided a structure to present data.

Therefore, the coding of key words and themes were methodically placed under the DTDF sections, which is also an effective means of explaining the thematic method used in this research.

Residents' characteristics: A key theme that emerged during both stages of the research was the closed mentality of residents towards non-locals. During interviews, key words were frequently used that further emphasised this point, such as 'closed', 'suspicious' and 'distrustful'. Additionally, local residents referred to historical and geographical influences shaping of their local mentality, with themes such as being surrounded by mountains or being isolated from the coastal regions and other big cities frequently occurring in the interviews.

Residents' attitudes toward tourists and post-disaster tourism: In this section, it was common for local people to express a variety of different feelings towards tourists and tourism. However, they commonly expressed such feelings through words or phrases which, on the one hand, identified displeasure and, on the other hand, the desire to be welcoming or to be seen to be more hospitable. Therefore, data analysis (coding) segregated responses under these two broad themes. The words describing respondents' attitudes towards tourism are further identified in Chapter 8 (see Section 8.5.4), forming a key element in the generation of new theory as a direct result of research.

Community involvement in post-disaster tourism development: It was identified in Chapter 3 that key stakeholders are present in the development of post-disaster (Asgary et al., 2006) and dark (heritage) tourism (Seaton, 2001) destinations / attractions. These stakeholder categories were used to compartmentalise (code) participant responses into similar / periodic themed areas (see Chapter 8, Section 8.6 for the stakeholder-themed analysis).

Disasters as opportunities: Identifying disasters as opportunities as a theme emerged primarily from the recognition that few if any tourism facilities had been provided, an issue that was identified during the Stage 1 research (scoping field visits). Thus, the subsequent field visits during Stage 2 of the research began to investigate the extent of or potential for tourism attractions and post-disaster tourism development within the city. Additionally, some interview participants recognised the limitations in L'Aquila's tourism development and offered their own suggestions of potential opportunities for developing tourism / meeting the needs of tourists. Therefore, unlike the thematic coding methods used above, this section of the

research utilised a combination of participant responses, field visit notes and, in particular, images to explore and analyse post-disaster tourism development opportunities (see Chapter 8, Section 8.1).

Whilst the methods described above may be less conventional than other approaches to data coding and analysis coding, such as the application of software (NVIVO), they were considered the most appropriate for this research given its focus and the context in which it was undertaken.

6.6 Ethical considerations

Social research, such as that being undertaken in this thesis, by definition involves interaction and enquiry with people (Kellehear, 2002) and, therefore, may give rise to a number of ethical concerns (Mason, 2004). As frequently stated, the topic of dark tourism is complex. According to Marczyk, David and David (2005), the fundamental ethical principle of social research is to protect human participants. This research is undertaken having met the ethical clearance requirements of the University of Central Lancashire's relevant ethics committee. As such, all participants for this research were informed of the purposes of the project and were provided with other necessary information about the research. Before each interview commenced, an informed consent statement was presented to the participants. The participants'confidentiality and privacy were strictly protected during and after the research process, in both data collection and presentation. Participants were asked if they were willing for elements of personal information to be disclosed within the discussion of the research outcomes. A summary of the findings of the completed thesis will also be sent to certain participants who expressed their wish to view it.

There are more fundamental issues when discussing ethical issues in a location that has been overwhelmed by a natural disaster that continues to impact on the members of that community in a variety of ways as they try to rebuild their lives. Therefore, necessary investigation was undertaken during the initial stages of this study to familiarise the researcher with the challenges faced and processes followed by local residents moving on from such a disaster.

6.7 Researcher's roles

Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 3) suggest that qualitative research is 'a situated activity that locates the observer in the world'. The role of the researcher in this thesis is of significance. Qualitative research is not value neutral: the life story of the researcher

through values, personal experiences, and training has an impact to conducting research and analysis findings. Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 3) suggest that qualitative research is 'a situated activity that locates the observer in the world'. The role of the researcher in this thesis is of significance. Qualitative research is not value neutral: the life story of the researcher, defined through values, personal experiences and training, has an impact on conducting research and the analysis of findings. The author of this thesis is very much associated with the towns near L'Aquila in the region of Abruzzo and the Umbrian region more generally. Much of his childhood was spent in Italy and especially within the two regions identified. On the one hand, this reduced the difficulty in recruiting interview participants, as people with whom the researcher already had connections provided the platform to identify and recruit other participants. On the other hand, the tragedy of L'Aquila is, in some respects, a personal event for the researcher although, as noted above, all efforts were made to minimise researcher bias. Overall, however, the researcher's background proved invaluable to the success of this study, not least owing to personal local connections and his fluency in Italian. Moreover, it enabled him to immerse himself into the city and, more importantly, to establish effective participant-interviewee relationships in which interviews could effectively explore the research objectives.

6.8 Summary

This chapter has identified the distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research and that different research paradigm and philosophical thoughts will lead to specific research methods being applied. It has been established that this research adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological paradigm informing the research. The methods employed have been described and justified and, therefore, the second volume of the thesis continues with the two stages of research considered in the following chapters.

Volume Two

Residents' Perceptions of Dark Tourism Development: The Case of L'Aquila, Italy

Image of the author seated on a bench in Piazza Duomo during a field visit

Figure: 1.2 Thesis Structure (Volume 2) Reprinted

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│          Volume Two              │
│      An Empirical Analysis       │
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│           Chapter 7              │
│    Stage One Research: DLCF      │
└──────────────────────────────────┘
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│           Chapter 8              │
│    Stage Two Research: DTDF      │
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│     Disasters as Opportunities   │
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                      │  Intermezzo 1: The Initial  │
                      │ Impact: Participants Relive  │
                      │      their Experiences       │
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│ The Social Construction of       │
│ Character: An Aquilano           │
│ Perspective                      │
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                      │ Intermezzo 2: The Story of  │
                      │   the Vittorini Familgia     │
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│ Residents Reactions to Dark      │
│ Tourists and Tourism             │
│ Post-Disaster: An Aquilano       │
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│ The Role of Stakeholders: A Local│
│ Aquilano Perspective             │
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│ Future of L'Aquila: A Participant│
│ Perspective                      │
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│           Chapter 9              │
│          Conclusion              │
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Volume Two – An Empirical Analysis

Chapter 7

Stage 1 Research: Application of the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) to L'Aquila

7.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 presented two conceptual frameworks to guide empirical research which, as discussed in the preceding chapter, comprises two stages. The purpose of the first stage of research is, essentially, to introduce and consider critically the location for the case study – the city of L'Aquila in Italy – as the site of a major disaster and, thereafter, as an emerging 'dark' (disaster) tourism destination, thereby providing a detailed contextual foundation for the subsequent research at Stage 2. In other words, following the process proposed in the first of the two conceptual frameworks, the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF), the first stage of the research takes the form of a theoretically informed analysis of the social / environmental context of the disaster and its impacts on the city and its inhabitants. Focusing on the city of L'Aquila and the local people who suffered and continue to suffer as a result of the tragic earthquake on April 6th 2009, the DLCF will be applied critically and, reflecting Objective 3 of this thesis, will be appraised with regards to its applicability as a framework for guiding the research. As noted in the previous chapter, the outcomes of Stage 1 are based upon extensive use of secondary sources and information / observations compiled during field visits to L'Aquila. However, the chapter commences by locating the city within the wider cultural context of Italy before going on to consider L'Aquila as a cultural place prior to the earthquake, the earthquake and its impacts on the city, and the post-disaster recovery process.

7.1 The location

The following section will present a detailed discussion of the case study location, L'Aquila. In order to understand how the local community of L'Aquila feels towards the development of dark tourism, it is necessary to understand the historical development, location and cultural aspects of the destination. This is the first stage of the DLCF as shown below in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Presenting the Destination / Location (DLCF)

Presenting the Destination / Location →
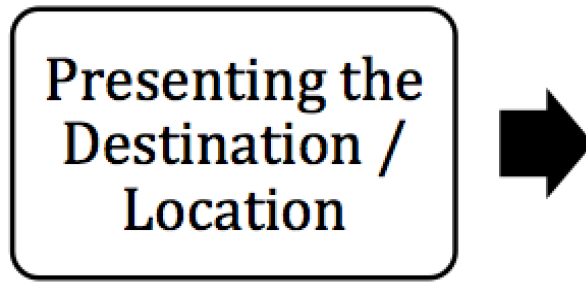
7.1.1 Italy: A regional or unified place?

Italy, as anyone who has lived here will realise, is not a lawless society. From the formal greeting to the social ritual of the passeggiata (the small walk), the life of the average Italian is defined by a set of rules as complex and intricate as those of a secret monastic sect. But these are rules and not laws, and the Italians have become very adept at making the distinction. Rules are observed. Laws are imposed by the state and are therefore automatically regarded with suspicion. Historically the state has always been either distrusted or feared by the Italians. (Frei, 1997: 94).

Whilst conducting the literature review for this thesis, in particular with respect to exploring Italian culture and society, the difficulty of explaining the Italian mentality and way of life to a non-Italian audience became immediately apparent. Indeed, as discussed in the preceding chapter, the researcher is himself half Italian and, having spent much time in Italy surrounded by family and friends, is very aware of, on the one hand, the Italian character but, on the other hand, the challenge of explaining its diversity and uniqueness. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this thesis, it is both necessary and important to capture some of the characteristics of contemporary Italian life and culture in order to fully appreciate the complexity of the potential attitudes amongst the local community in L'Aquila towards dark tourism development. Thus, the following section briefly introduces Italy and the Italians as a framework for a more specific focus on L'Aquila and its cultural history in the subsequent sections.

As discussed earlier, not only does the evolution and characteristics of political power vary over time and often between nations, but also the allocation and distribution of power can be spread within the regions in their representative nations (Cresswell, 2004). In Italy in particular, significant dissimilarities and conflict between national, regional and even local cultural, political and social identity have long been documented by scholars and writers within the field and, reflecting his status as half-

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Italian by birth, is also recognised and well understood and, indeed, has been experienced by the author of this thesis. An example of such political conflict, specifically where a region is trying to promote its own political agenda, above that of the nation-state, is provided by Giordano (2000) (cited in Cresswell, 2004: 100-101). He describes how the Lega Nord, or Northern League, a right-wing political party in Italy, argues that the Italian state does not serve the people of the north of the country, but instead favours the needs of the south. Hence, the success of the Northern League party is founded on a strong anti-southern sentiment. Giordano (2000: 459) shares an interview with a Northern League councillor who explains this in more detail:

> *The mentality of the people of the North is distinct to that of the South. In the North there is a strong work ethic which could be described as almost Calvinistic in nature. In spite of the high levels of taxation and the burden of the South, Lombardy is still one of the wealthiest regions within the European Union (EU). However, the South of Italy has a 'Mediterranean' work ethic, which is based on corruption, a reliance of state transfers and a more relaxed attitude towards work* (cited in Cresswell, 2004: 100).

More specifically, according to the Northern League, the Italian state is run by the south and, consequently, 'Italian Identity' is associated as a 'Southern Italian Identity' (Giordano, 2000; Cresswell, 2004), an identity which, from a northern political perspective, is not representative of the wider population. In particular, Giordano (2000) argues that immigration is common in Southern Italy, contributing to an ethnically diverse culture that threatens the cultural unity and identity of people of the North (Cresswell, 2004). As Cresswell (2004) notes, the Northern League advocates the formal constitution of a new 'space', citing Taylor (1999) who suggests that the Northern Italian League seeks to make a new 'place' with its own history and customs, thus creating an identity for its people.

The drive towards the establishment of an independent north is a result of the historical process of Italian Unification or 'Risorgimento' that is, the combination of political and military events that, in 1861, ultimately fashioned a united Kingdom of Italy (Gooch, 2002). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the history of unification in detail (for further reading see Clark, 2013; Chapman, 2008; Pearce and Stiles, 2008; Bouchard, 2005; Beales and Biagini, 2002). Nevertheless, it is useful to identify some arguments and debates surrounding unification within contemporary Italian society.

Generally, within Italy much attention has been paid to its unification, specifically with respect to both its failures and success. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge that whilst Italy celebrated its 150 years of unification in 2011, to this day it remains very much a segregated or, in effect, a divided nation. Prideaux (2011) recognises that Italy, as a uniform political entity was fashioned by a small elite at a time when apparently around 90 percent of the peninsula's inhabitants did not speak Italian. Inhabitants felt that the regions making up the country were too different to be squeezed into a solitary nation and, as a result, contemporary Italy is considered to have shallow cultural roots (Prideaux, 2011).

For example, Prince Clemens von Metternich, an important figure in European diplomacy during the first half of the nineteenth century, sent a letter to the Austrian ambassador of France in April 1847 from which the following quotation is taken:

> *The word 'Italy' is a geographical expression, a description which is useful shorthand, but has none of the political significance the efforts of the revolutionary ideologies try to put on it, and which is full of dangers for the very existence of the states which make up the peninsula* (Age-of-the-sage, 2011).

The significance of this statement is noted by Charles Richards (1995) in his book *The New Italians*. Richards identifies that in a country as diverse as Italy, there are many different answers to the question of what it is to be Italian. He observes that Leo Longanesi established his periodical *L'Italiano* in the 1920s as a means of expressing the sense, taste and the smell of a national character based on the concept of *strapaese*, which refers to the critical importance to local values (Richards, 1995). He continues by suggesting that Italians will be the first to point out that 'Italian-ness' is an elusive concept, with older generations often emphasising regional origins or local differences. Also in the 1920s, the Piedmontese writer, artist and politician Massimo D'Azeglio created the slogan, 'We have created Italy, now we must make the Italians' (cited in Richards, 1995: 20) whilst Norberto Bobbio, a veteran twentieth century political philosopher, declared that 'Italy is no longer a nation in the sense that in the new generation there no longer exists a national sentiment. Italy has become little more than a geographical expression and the Italians are becoming once more a common mass with no name' (also cited in Richards, 1995: 20). Here, Norberto is echoing the words of Metternich, expressing sentiments and regarding the issue as a contemporary problem in Italian society.

Jones (2007), in an exploration of the Italian language, discusses the provincialism in Italy that is unthinkable elsewhere. The word for country, *paese,* is also used for town, proposing through this language association that unity is present in the local sense as it is at a national level. Former city-states are considered, at least culturally, to be city-states, with their particular dialects and cuisine. It is written that 'Italy' and 'Italian' are notions that have been in some way superimposed on previously independent states, notions, which are still not exclusively recognized (Jones, 2007). Thus, Italy can be described in a manner suggested by Carlo Levi who refers to Italy as 'thousands of countries', where the inhabitants can enjoy the best of both worlds; the cosiness of provincialism mixed with urbane cosmopolitanism (Jones, 2007: 12). The result is what some consider being the most appealing aspect of Italian culture and society; the fact that people tend to live and work where they were born, rather than moving to some far-off place. Similarly, Jones (2007) suggests that there is, as others argue, no patriotism in Italy. Few Italians feel much affection for anything national, perhaps the only exception being the *Azzurri*, the national football team, whilst, given that the unification of Italy remains a relatively recent historical event, many people continue to feel that the Italian flag is only a 'heraldic symbol,' crude and out of place, the red representing shameless and the green absurd (Levi, 1947).

Many of the commentators referred to above recognise the complexities of discussing Italy as a nation-place, particularly when individuals within the country are able to appropriate symbolic aspects of Italianism and apply them to their own sense of identity. Indeed, various patriotic representations that might be applied to the Italian population as a whole fail to underpin or provide a cohesive unification for the wider collective society. As discussed previously (Chapter 4, section 4.5.5), politicians aim to create nation-places in a way which fashions social similarities in order for the 'larger collective' of individuals to live socially within a nation-place (Cresswell, 2004). Having thus established a culture of symbolic associations for individuals to retain as personal to them and their nation-place, it is then through socialisation that these symbols are passed on from one generation to the next (Berger, 1967). However, as suggested above, the concept of Italianism is not necessarily recognised by the country's own citizens. Therefore, in order to understand Italians, (or more precisely, particular groups of Italians), it is necessary to recognise the significance and influence of region-place as opposed to an overarching nation-place (Richards 1995; Giordano, 2000; Cresswell, 2004; Jones, 2007). Consequently, and reflecting the importance of social identity and place-representation as considered in Chapter 4, the following section focuses on the regional and local senses of place in contexts that are relevant to this thesis, namely, the region of Abruzzo and the city of L'Aquila.

7.1.2 Regional Place: The history of L'Aquila (pre-2009 earthquake)

Figure 7.2: L'Aquila Emblem

The L'Aquila emblem (see Figure 7.2, left) shows the image of an eagle: L'Aquila translated means eagle. The Words *Immota Manet* is Latin and is translated as *Remains Firm*. The inscription IMMOTA MANET was added in the nineteenth century with reference to the earthquake that struck on February 2nd 1703. The meaning is representative of the oak that: REMAINS FIRM.

Source: CNGEI-L'AQUILA (2013)

The city of L'Aquila, 'The Eagle', is a commune and the capital of the Abruzzo region positioned in central Italy. Located on the wide valley of the Aterno River, positioned on a hill and enclosed by the Apennine Mountains; the Gran Sasso d'Italia (highest mountain in central Italy) is located to the north-east, the city is built within medieval walls which reflect its origins.

As discussed by Clementi (1998) the founding of L'Aquila in the thirteenth century was associated with the struggle for self-government on the northern borders of the Regnum Sicilliae (Kingdoms of Sicily), which had become increasingly turbulent following the death of Emperor Frederick II (1194 –1250). Frederick II was one of the most powerful Holy Roman Emperors of the Middle Ages; though based in Sicily, his political and cultural ambitions stretched through Italy and Germany, and even to Jerusalem. Following his death, about seventy of the residents of castles, lands and villas of Amiterno and Forcona moved together to create the new city of L'Aquila. The uncharacteristic conditions under which it was founded determined the fundamental character of the city. Each castle was allocated a piece land to build houses, a church and, a public fountain in the church-square. The famous 'Fountain of 99 Spouts', the name of which alludes to the number of castles which, according to tradition, took part in the founding of L'Aquila, can be seen in the images below (Figures 7.3 and 7.4).

Figure 7.3: Fountain of 99 Spouts   **Figure 7.4:** Fountain of 99 Spouts (detail)

Photos: Author

The researcher took the two images above during a field visit. Figure 7.3 shows part of the square where the 99 fountains continue to function. The fountains are placed in a 'U' shape and are symbolic of the city history. Figure 7.4 is a close up of three of the fountainheads.

From it's beginning, L'Aquila established itself as a market town for the surrounding area, providing its people with a regular food supplies. Not long after its establishment, the city became a intersecting location in communications for cities within and beyond the Kingdom, via the so-called *Via degli Abruzzi* running from Florence to Naples (Clementi, 1998). What followed, around the middle of the fourteenth century was a crisis period for the city. L'Aquila was hit by recurrent plague epidemics (1348, 1363) and an earthquake (1349), which gave it the appearance of having been abandoned; reconstruction soon followed. University-of-L'Aquila (2013) notes that the generals of the Franciscan Order (Roman Catholic religious orders founded by Saint Francis of Assisi) subsequently selected L'Aquila as the seat of the Order's general chapters (1376, 1408, 1411, 1450, 1452, 1495). Friar Bernardino of Siena (of the Franciscan Order of the Observance) visited L'Aquila on two occasions, firstly to preach in the presence of King Rene' of Naples and, secondly, in 1444. During the latter outing, he passed away in the city. The Franciscan Order of Observance had a significant effect on L'Aquila. Initiative by Fra Giovanni da Capestrano and Fra Giancomo della Marca (the Lombard master) undertook the development of an impressive series of buildings, such as the basilica of S. Bernardino and the hospital of St. Salvatore (1446). Due to the earthquake (1461) that shattered many buildings, the construction was extensive and challenging. The

entire city experienced severe destruction during the earthquake and it took two years for reconstruction to begin (University-of-L'Aquila, 2013; Clementi, 1998).

The second half of the fifteenth century is considered to be a prosperous historical age for the L'Aquila economy. The strategic geo-political location of L'Aquila enticed merchants from nations such as Germany, Catalonia and Florentine company representatives. However, during the first three decades of the sixteenth century sew great economic decline. This occurred when Spain took control of the city and in line with the epidemics of 1503 and 1505, all brining about demographic crisis and economic depression (Clementi, 1998). The crisis worsened in 1529 when Philip of Orange punished L'Aquila because they rebelled against his imposing feudal tenure on the surrounding countryside, to which he assigned to his army captains as a reward for their services. Thus, the Aquilani were quickly deprived of the land which founded their economic base. This led to a decrease in merchants attending fairs. However, the city structure experienced considerable transformation. An example of this was the construction of a large fortress (1529), which involved demolishing a great number of churches and buildings. The fortress construction lasted a hundred years, but its more modern look is a result of restoration carried out after the Second World War. The fortress is square in shape, at each corner there are four great bastions all of which is surrounded by a deep moat; reflecting the best progressive military building techniques of its time (Clementi, 1998). Today, it is used as the Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo, which boasts an assortment of art works (paintings and sculptures), predominantly focusing on the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods (ItalyHeritage, 1998-2013).

The reconstruction and extension of the ancient Palazzo del Capitano for Margaret Hapsburg of Austria (life-governor to the Abruzzi) took place during the 1570's and is seen as a significant building project, transforming L'Aquila's civic centre (Clementi, 1998)., The building became the Magistrates residence (following her death in 1587) and currently is the seat of local government. The seventeenth centuries saw continued redevelopment to the civic centre. A plague struck the city in 1657 taking the lives of 2,294 (of its 6,000) inhabitants (University-of-L'Aquila, 2013). More tragedy struck when an earthquake on the 2nd February 1703 destroyed much of the ancient, medieval and Renaissance face of the city, with houses, palaces, churches, and the fortress all experienced severe destruction. This left the population at a meager 2,468 (Buffon, 1792). Tax exemptions aided the recovery, conceded by the government in Naples. In 1707 Spanish rule was substituted by Austria, which, not too long after, in 1734, was succeeded by Charles of Bourbon (University-of-L'Aquila,

2013; Clementi, 1998). Gradually, L'Aquila once again emerged from the 1703 earthquake, but once again, the urban environment and buildings experienced substantial modification (Clementi, 1998).

There were two prominent social classes, the clergy and the nobles, contending the cities reconstruction. Both deliberated over what would be a dualistic character of church against palace. The nobles assembled new palatial buildings (Quinzi, Antonelli and Centi Palaces) whilst the clergy recovered fragments of the medieval city and improved them to meet the needs of new cultural conditions. The majority of the churches were refurbished, extended and even re-built. Nonetheless, subsequent refurbishment work during the 1960s and 1970s saw many past works demolished and restored with a more Romanesque taste. However, the churches of St. Maria Paganica and S. Domenico (the latter is now used as an auditorium) retain eighteenth century features (University-of-L'Aquila, 2013; Domenico, 2002;

L'Aquila was invaded by the French in 1779, which saw the city devastated by pillage and killing. 1833, 1841 and 1848 saw Aquilan patriots take part in revolutionary events, much in vein because in 1860 when Italy became unified, L'Aquila lost many benefits as a frontier city without allowing it to take advantage of its centrality in the peninsula (Clementi, 1998). The unification meant L'Aquila required modernisation to meet administrative and economic demands set by the state. Such developments have progressed at an increasingly quicker pace over just one century, al have subsequently once again, transformed the appearance of the ancient city walls, where little if nothing in the past had been built; L'Aquila was at this stage due to the unification, required to establish substantial urban (re)development. Many of the historical churches and buildings built in previous centuries still remained however, at least before the earthquake struck on the 6th April 2009. However, as in previous earthquakes, many were seriously damaged (University-of-L'Aquila, 2013; Domenico, 2002; Clementi, 1998).

By the twenty first century, with around 70,000 inhabitants L'Aquila was seen as one of most crucial and inhabited cities in central Italy. As previously noted, it is situated in the centre of the Apennine mountains, an area characterised by fault earthquakes (Westaway and Smith, 1989; De Luca, Scarpa, Filippi, Gorini, Marcucci, Marsan, Milana and Zambonelli, 2000) that have in the past experienced macroseismic strengths up to XI on the Mercalli-Cancani-Sieberg scale (MCS), corresponding to an Ms close to 7 and causing considerable damage (Working Group Catalogo Parametrico dei Terremoti Italiani, CPTI, 1999). The seismicity rate is inferior than

that observed in the adjacent regions northwest of L'Aquila, Umbria and Le Marche, but is the area is prone to more frequent occurrences of high-magnitude events in comparison to its neighbours (Galadini et al., 2000).

7.1.3 Tourism in L'Aquila and the Abruzzo region

The province of L'Aquila is the largest of the four provinces in the region, the others being Teramo, Pescara and Chieti, and is the only one without access to the sea. Owing to L'Aquila's geographical and cultural characteristics, it boasts a great variety of customs and traditions, history and dialects, at least before the earthquake. Moreover, the territory surrounding L'Aquila is mountainous, with attractive landscapes offering numerous recreational opportunities. Nevertheless, the office for tourism in L'Aquila presents a rather limited description of the tourism available in the city, very much reflecting regional attitudes towards tourism generally:

> *Although less than two hours' drive from Rome, the city has not yet been heavily affected by foreign tourism. L'Aquila is a popular summer resort and in the cold winter the city welcomes a great number of skiers, mainly Romans, who stay in town while skiing at nearby resorts. L'Aquila lies at the foot of the highest peaks in the Apennines* (Office-of-tourism, 2014).

Most of L'Aquila's tourism is based on art, culture, heritage, religion and the natural environment. The territory of L'Aquila is dotted with ruins of ancient pagan temples (such as the Church of San Pietro in Alba Fucens, built in the 13th Century) and Roman settlements, revealing the area's ancient and religious traditions. The main monuments as discussed by the Office-of-tourism (2014) include St Bernardine's dome, which is the largest Renaissance church in Abruzzo. Renowned for its architecture and as the site of the original Papal Jubilee (a penitential observation devised by Pope Celestine V, who is buried there), St. Maria di Collemaggio is a large and notorious medieval church in L'Aquila. St. Silvestro, a Romanesque-Gothic style Church built in the first half of the 14th Century is also highly regarded. There is also the City Cathedral, named after the patron saint of the city St. Massimo. It was built in 1257 on the foundations of a pre-existing temple, but continuous earthquakes have destroyed all traces of the former structure. St. Massimo today has much more modern features than in the medieval times. The Spanish Fortress of L'Aquila - commonly called "il Castello" by the Aquilans, is one of the most impressive Renaissance castle in Central and Southern Italy (Office-of-tourism, 2014).

The main attraction of L'Aquila for tourists before the earthquake was its beautiful landscapes and artistic heritage. The region of Abruzzo and the environment

surrounding L'Aquila is home to some large National Parks (such as Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo Lazio e Molise) and, owing to its environmental characteristics and richness, the province is seen by tourists as an ideal destination for trekking, jogging, horseback riding, cycling and mountain biking along the valleys and slopes of the countryside. Cultural events usually take the form of open-air celebrations and folk festivals, all of which are typical and characteristic occasions that aim to recreate the old traditions of the area, allowing tourists to witness the past culture of the territory and to indulge in more traditional gastronomy (Italia.it, 2014).

Tourism figures for the region of Abruzzo are not easily accessible. However, tourism in Abruzzo is becoming an increasingly prosperous sector for the region and, in recent years, has seen a growth in tourist numbers. Most visitors are of Italian origin although tourists from other European countries also frequent the region. Statistics from the Italian Institute of statistics (ISTAT, 2007) reveal that Italian arrivals totalled 1,371,155 whilst a further 189,651 foreign tourists visited the region. According to market analysis and sector studies on tourism (Abruzzo National Society TurisMonitor 2012), it was estimated that there was a year on year increase of between 4% and 5% in international tourist arrivals in 2007 (Turismo-in.it, 2014).

The table below shows some alternative figures that are of interest in order to understand tourism flows within the region. The table shows the international arrivals to the airport of Abruzzo in Pescara.

Table 7.1: Statistics for Abruzzo Airport - Pescara

Year	Total passengers	Total aircraft movements
1996	71,908	4,052
1997	72,962 ▲	4,618 ▲
1998	104,000 ▲	6,390 ▲
1999	105,500 ▲	6,310 ▼
2000	114,024 ▲	9,940 ▲
2001	153,227 ▲	6,775 ▼
2002	295,875 ▲	11,559 ▲
2003	301,773 ▲	10,932 ▼
2004	334,998 ▲	10,075 ▼
2005	350,447 ▲	10,339 ▲
2006	340,699 ▼	12,139 ▲
2007	371,247 ▲	12,085 ▼
2008	402.845 ▲	11.128 ▼
2009	409.045 ▲	9.773 ▼
2010	461.086 ▲	7.971 ▼
2011	550.062 ▲	7.827 ▼
2012	563.187 ▲	8.284 ▲

Source: adapted from Associazione Italiana Gestori Aeroporti (2014).

It should be noted that it is not evident from this table how many arrivals are actually incoming tourists as opposed to local people returning home. Moreover, it is also necessary to note that tourists may land at alternative airports, such as Rome, and travel into the region. Additionally, tourist may visit by car from further afield. Therefore, accurate figures for tourism in L'Aquila, both prior to and following the earthquake, do not exist. However, as revealed in the research, the city now attracts tourists with alternative motives, such as the desire to witness the impacts of the earthquake.

7.1.4 Prologue to L'Aquila as a disaster destination

During field visits to the city, cultural characteristics of the people of L'Aquila began to emerge from informal conversations with locals and others from surrounding towns, villages and cities. Therefore, before considering the disaster recovery process in L'Aquila post-earthquake as the second stage of the DLCF, this section provides an overview of the town and its surrounding locations.

L'Aquila was arguably an unfamiliar location outside Italy until the media attracted the world's attention to the city after the earthquake. The University City was free of over-populated touristic crowds frequently linked with other popular Italian medieval locations / attractions and, thus, at its core it managed to retain the energy of what was pre-industrial Italy. Pre-earthquake L'Aquila was filled with bohemian student

bars and the city had a somnolent ease to the day to day living. Its romantic seasonal markets during Christmas would have provided a fair competition to German counterparts with its specialty chocolates and spiced warm wine (Domenico, 2002; Clementi, 1998). The city is situated at the foot of the Gran Sasso and this provided Romans a picturesque skiing season. The Aquilano economy has frequently been fixed in sheep trade and what offerings could be taken from the earth. Flocks are wintered in the South of Italy and then bought to the high pastures to fatten during summer (University-of-L'Aquila, 2013). A city often overlooked industrial capitalism and tourists, L'Aquila escaped many of society's innovative and industrialised developments, thus, holding onto its market-town roots. Even the region of Abruzzo, with its bears and Apennine wolves, promoted as a 'green' destination, arguably belongs to a bygone age (Lonely-Planet, 2010). As a tourist destination, it was in its infancy years, and also seen as an alternative location to purchase property for British visitors especially with the recent Ryanair route to Pescara (located around 30-40 minutes from L'Aquila). A third of the Abruzzo land area is a protected national park and currently up for listing as a world heritage site. Whilst development is often slow not only in L'Aquila but the Abrizzo region as a whole, it has just over 1.25 million inhabitants sparsely dotted over its 4,000 square miles (Fitzpatrick, 2009).

L'Aquila is a city surrounded by the Apennine Mountains and its historical past uncovers its turbulent, secluded, independent existence and isolated characteristics, which managed to withstand past intruders. This study is focusing on the people of L'Aquila who have been affected by the devastations caused by an earthquake. In order to explore in particular how the social environment (the social construction of reality) influences individuals' attitudes towards the development of dark tourism, it is necessary to establish a representational analysis of the culture under investigation, in this study, the Aquilano history, way of life and noticeable cultural characteristics. Consequently, derived from the above discussions, the impression of L'Aquila as an isolated and closed city will be a topic that will be explored in greater detail when carrying out empirical research (during stage 2). By exploring and understanding this idea through primary research with the locals of L'Aquila, this thesis will aim to demonstrate a viable understanding of what dark tourism means to the local community and if their social environment influences opinions towards dark tourism development.

7.2 The disaster: impact assessment

The following discussions will turn to the disaster and will provide an impact assessment, particularly asking: What damage did the earthquake cause? As can been see from Figure 7.5, this is the second stage of the DLCF.

Figure 7.5: The Disaster: Impact Assessment (DLCF)
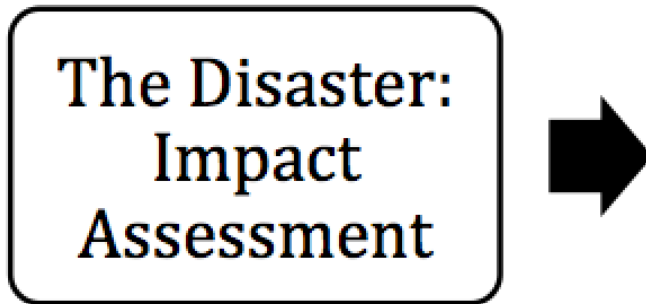
7.2.1 Defining the disaster: L'Aquila from April 6th 2009

Figure 7.6 below depicts a sign attached to a barrier in the center of L'Aquila. It is a photograph taken by the researcher during a field visit to the city.

Figure 7.6: A sign in L'Aquila
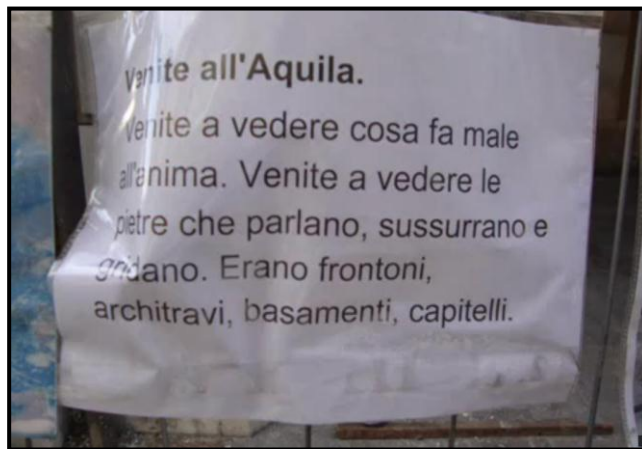
Photo: Author

Translated (from Figure 7.6): *Come and see what hurts the soul,*
Come and see the stones that talk, whisper and shout,
They were pediments, architraves, foundations, capitals.

The earthquake struck L'Aquila on Monday April 6th 2009 at precisely 3.32am. Measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale and 6.3 on the moment magnitude scale; its epicenter can be seen in Figure 7.7 below. The location and impact of the hypocenter was projected to lay 2 km west of L'Aquila's city center 42.3476◦ N, 13.3800◦E at a depth of 9.5 km (Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, INGV, 2009). The

earthquake killed 309 people, injured more than 1,500 people and left more than 70,000 homeless, whilst destroying or damaging around 10,000 buildings.

Figure 7.7: L'Aquila 2009 earthquake epicenter

Source: The New York Times (2013)

Before defining and considering the earthquake and its aftermath within the framework of conceptual terms of disasters offered by Quarantelli (see Chapter 2), the following section presents, first, a collection of figures, including graphs and numerical data, that detail the location and impacts of the earthquake and, in particular, an analysis of the numbers and locations of fatalities, and second, images that provide visual evidence of its impacts.

7.2.2 Fatalities of L'Aquila's earthquake – graphical demonstrations

In a recent paper entitled *Mortality in the L'Aquila (Central Italy Earthquake of 6 April 2009)* Alexander and Magni (2013) present the results of an analysis of data with respect to fatalities resulting from the earthquake which struck the city of L'Aquila. Their aim is to create a profile of the deaths in terms of age, gender and location, as well as the behaviour of residents during the tremors, the purpose being to assist the prediction of patterns of causalities and priorities for protection in future earthquakes. The paper observes the patterns of fatalities during the earthquake, focusing on demographic, spatial and behavioural terms in relation to the characteristics of buildings and damage. The following figures present the data offered in Alexander and Magni's (2013) paper. It should be noted that all the figures below benefit from open access copyright agreements, and are credited as required by these agreements.

Figure 7.8: Abruzzo Region
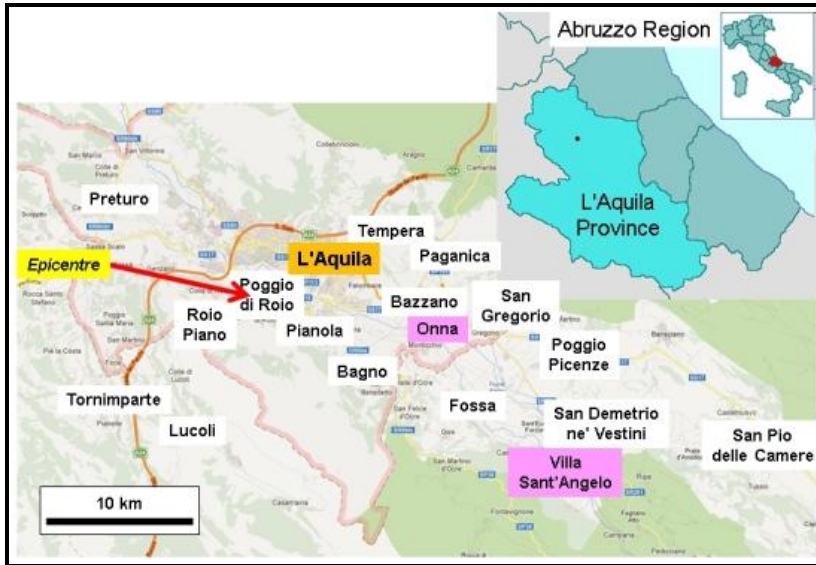
Figure 7.8 above provides a birdseye view of L'Aquila and surrounding area, with an arrow indicating the location of the earthquake's epicenter.

Figure 7.9 below provides a birdseye view of the deaths per town whilst Table 7.2 presenting the death rates in contrast to other data such as population of residency. As can be seen, L'Aquila suffered the highest number of fatalities, 202, but has a population of 72,988. In the town of Onna, with a population of 310, 39 residents were killed, representing 12.58% percent of their population. Figure 7.10 is a pie chart identifying the birthplaces of those who died, the majority being from the city of L'Aquila and surrounding. 93% of all fatalities were Italians.

Figure 7.9: Location of deaths by town
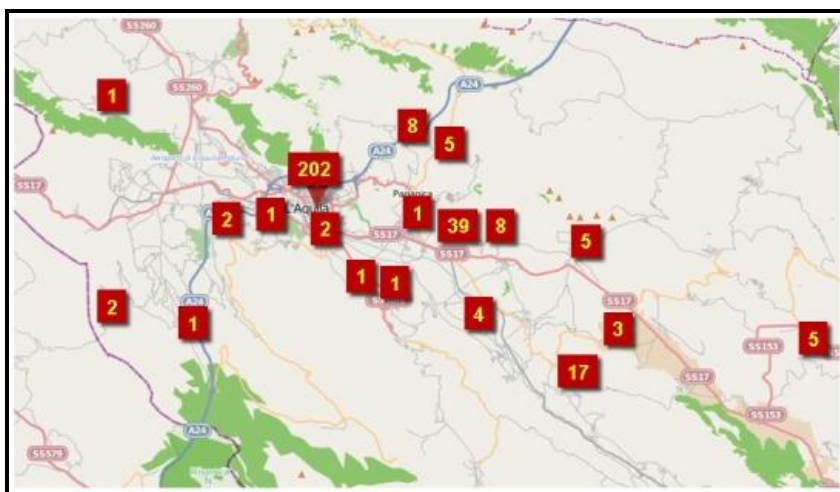
Table 7.2: Death rates and population in the L'Aquila area

Settlement	Comune	Deaths	Population	Males	Females	Death/popn.
L'Aquila	L'Aquila	202	72,988	35,077	37,911	0.32
Onna	L'Aquila	39	[310]	--	--	12.58
Villa Sant'Angelo	Villa Sant'Angelo	17	433	206	227	3.97
San Gregorio	L'Aquila	8	[433]	--	--	1.85
Tempera	L'Aquila	8	[900]	--	--	0.89
Paganica	L'Aquila	5	[5,024]	--	--	0.10
Poggio Picenze	Poggio Picenze	5	1,066	513	553	0.47
San Pio delle Camere	San Pio	5	622	317	305	0.80
Fossa	Fossa	4	701	343	358	0.57
San Demetrio ne' Vestini	San Demetrio	3	1,834	923	911	0.16
Pianola	L'Aquila	2	--	--	--	--
Roio Piano	L'Aquila	2	[500]	--	--	0.40
Tornimparte	Tornimparte	2	3,002	1,481	1,521	0.07
Bazzano	L'Aquila	1	[600]	--	--	0.17
Civita di Bagno	L'Aquila	1	--	--	--	--
Lucoli	Lucoli	1	1,012	510	502	0.10
Poggio di Roio	L'Aquila	1	[733]	--	--	0.14
Preturo	L'Aquila	1	[800]	--	--	0.13
Sant'Angelo di Bagno	L'Aquila	1	--	--	--	--
Totals	--	308	81,658	39,370	42,288	0.37
NB: Figures in square brackets are population estimates for settlements that are not full municipalities.						

Source: adapted from PLoS Curr (2013)

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3541886/table/d34e376/

7.10: Birthplaces of people who died in the L'Aquila earthquake

Source: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3541886/

184
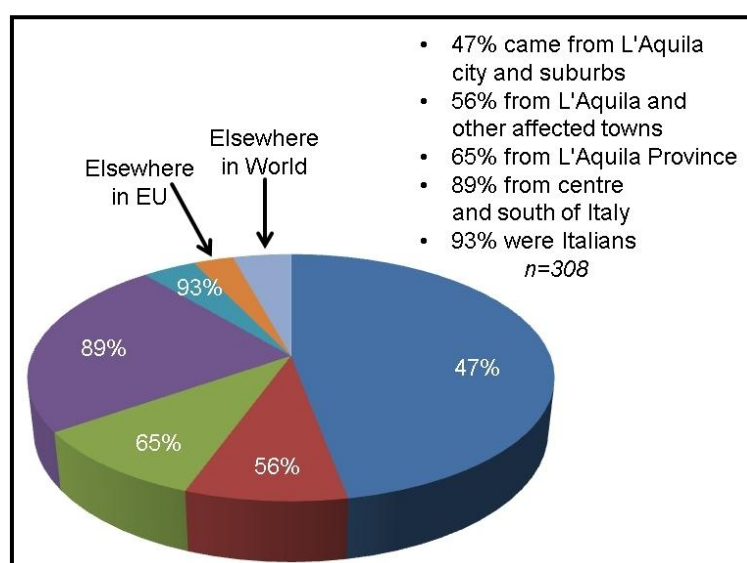
Figure 7.11 below presents the types of behaviour that was commonly experienced, ranging from people *fleeing from buildings* and those who *sought refuge inside*, to others who *did nothing*. Figure 7.11 also presents a graph which identifies people's behaviour during the earthquake, and how it varied between age demographics.

Figure 7.11: Behaviour during the earthquake of interviewed survivors

Source: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3541886/
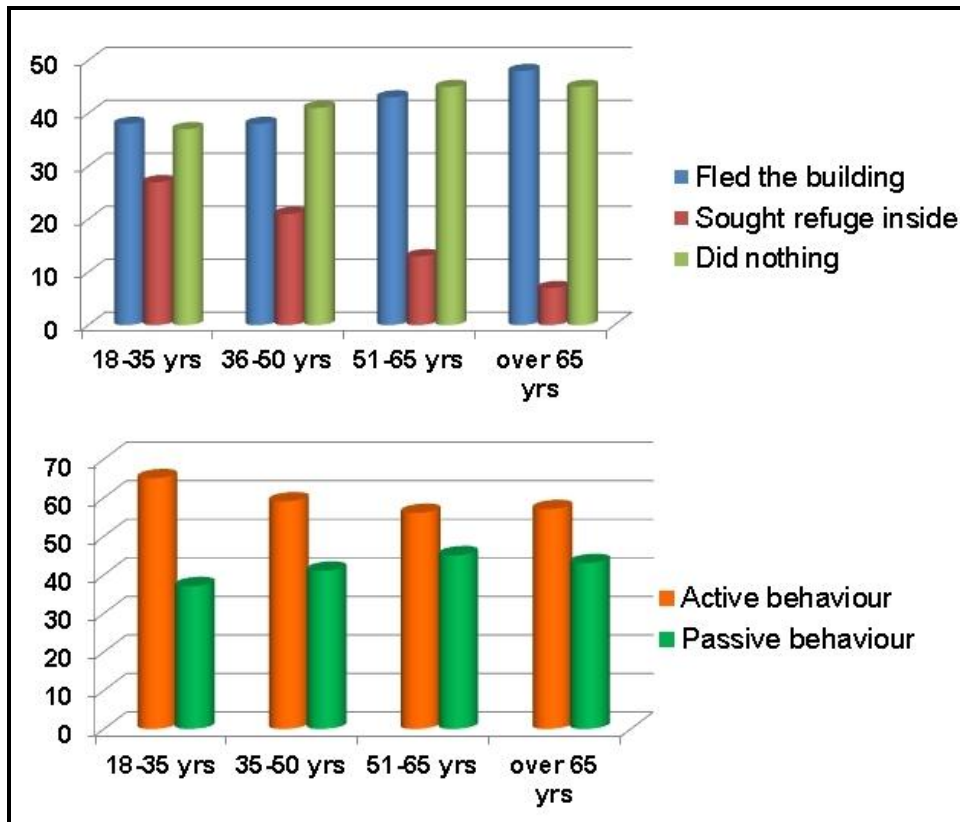
The following three figures provide a zonal representation of buildings that collapsed in L'Aquila's city centre. The map (Figure 7.12) recognises how various sections of the centre incurred major damage and casualties whilst in some areas there was more sporadic damage and fewer casualties. Figure 7.13 provides the locations of deaths in L'Aquila by building type whilst Figure 7.14 focuses more on zonation of mortality in relation to building collapse in L'Aquila's city centre (similar to Figure 7.12).

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Figure 7.12: Zones of building collapse in L'Aquila city centre

Source: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3541886/
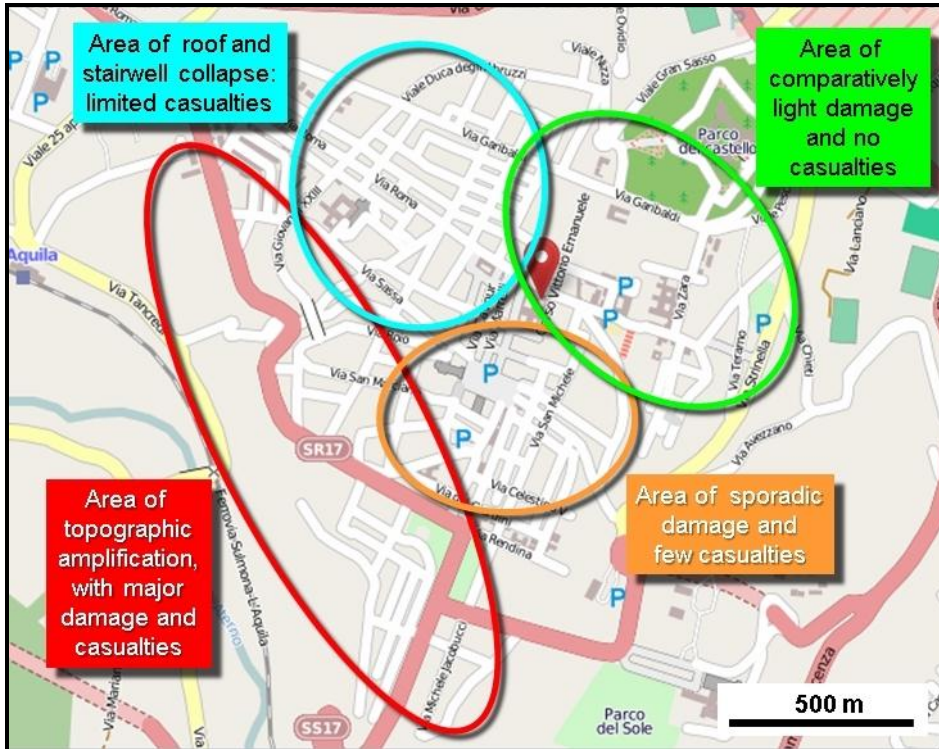
Figure 7.13: Locations of deaths in L'Aquila city centre, by building type zone

Source: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3541886/
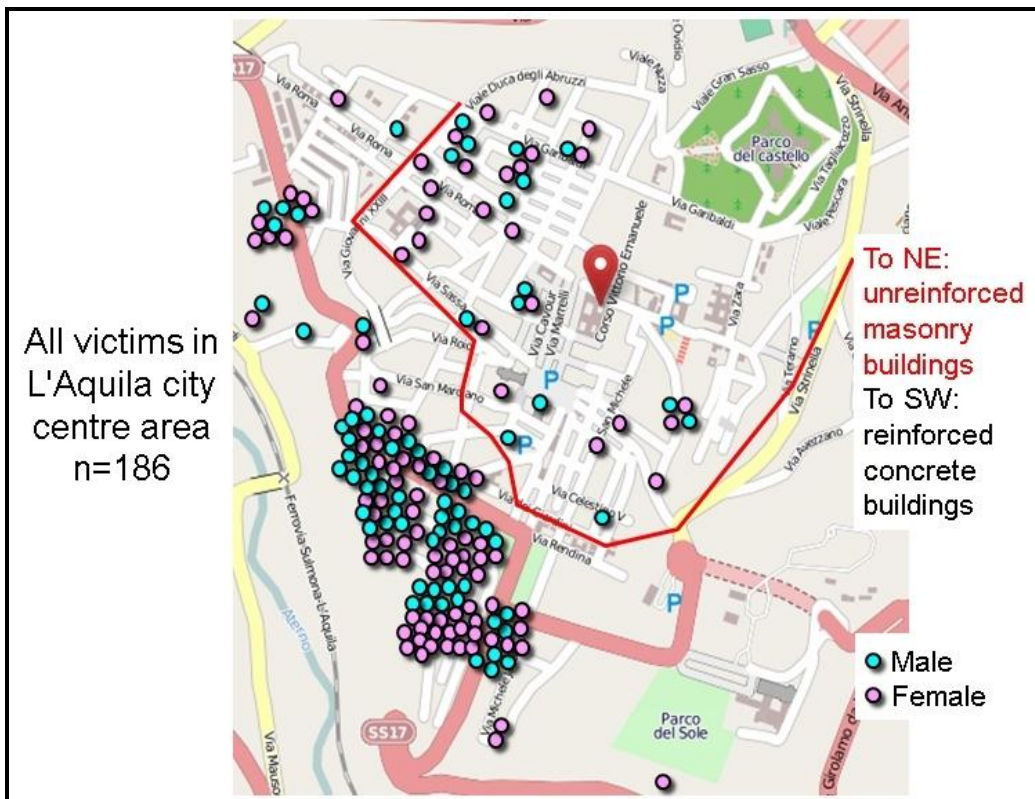
Figure 7.14: Zonation of mortality in relation to building collapse in L'Aquila city centre

Source: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3541886/
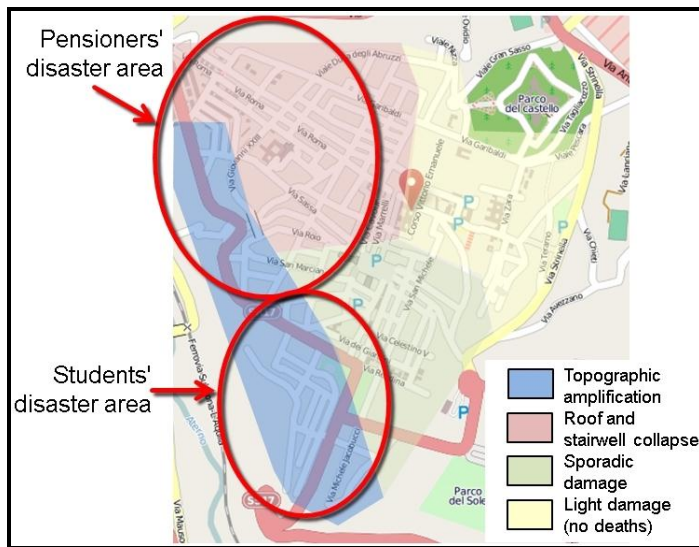
7.2.3: Photo collection one: Snapshots of reality expose the truth

Figure 7.15: Sign in L'Aquila
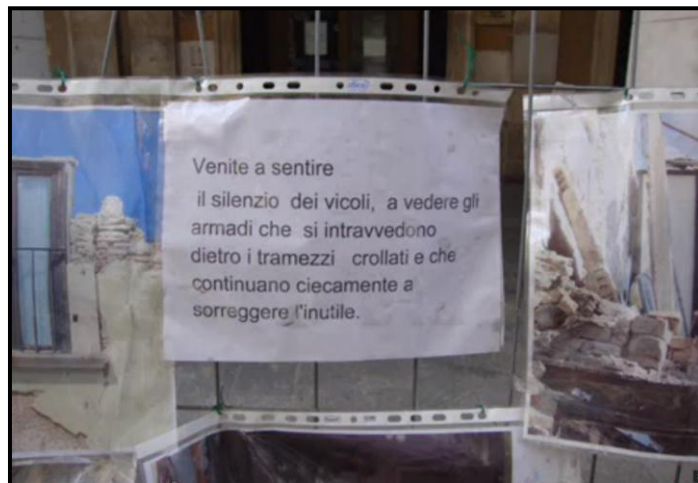
Photo: Author

Translated (from Figure 7.15): *Come and hear the silence of the alleyways,*
Come and catch a glimpse of the wardrobes amongst the collapsed dividing walls,
which blindly carry on to support the nothingness.

During a holiday in Italy in 2009, only 5 months after the disaster (and prior to the commencement of this thesis), the researcher came across a photographic book in a store in Abruzzo displaying images of the traumatic event that was the earthquake.

This book, called *Terrae Motus Ore 3:32 L'Aquila 6 Aprile '09*, was published by Roberto Grillo and Renato Vitturini, the first of whom, Roberto Grillo, would become a participant in Stage 2 research. It was the images in the book that went a long way in stimulating the author's interest in L'Aquila. A number of these images are displayed below, revealing the reality of L'Aquila post-disaster. The first collection of images depicts the chaos within the immediate aftermath of the earthquake.

Terrae Motus - Mariano Maugeri

Terrae Motus
The earthquake of L'Aquila will never end.
Terremotus, this word, should be written in every public building, school, hospital, prefecture, tribunals and private house. From now on and for the next few centuries.
Terremotus is not a sadistic gesture, but an exercise of memory, one of those practices – or those rites – to which us Italians, eternally unconcerned people, do not pay the attention it deserves.
Terremotus to remember the 298 (309) men and women buried under the ruins and the 50 students between them; terremotus because a town so at risk must re-create on the earthquake's memory a substantial part of his values, economy, inheritance, university culture, Theater, music, research, and prevention and Civil protection's trials. Terremotus because this organization of men and women which expresses intelligence and knowledge, will have to invigilate for the rebuild to be model of transparency, efficiency and solidarity. From L'Aquila will spread a message addressed to 60 million of Italians for them to be prepared to defend themselves and to demand for protection from the earthquakes, those next to come. Terremotus, because we all must feel responsible for the end of a student boy or girl from Isernia or from S. Giovanni Rotondo who, before, going to sleep, the night of the 6th of April left the Medicine or Engineering manual on the bedside table; terremotus, because we killed our future, and more than us did those who asked the citizens the high responsibility to take care of it. Terremotus, because since the birth our lives are similar to earthquakes; but we were not able to preserve the 298 (309) victims' lives, and their memory will torture us Day and Night if we will not be able to fix each mistake by which L'Aquila's earthquake story is covered.

Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 15)

As noted above, the following 10 images (Figures 7.16 to 7.26) have all been taken from Grillo and Vitturini (2009). All the images have been reproduced with the permission of Grillo.

Figure 7.16: Untitled 1

Figure 7.17: Untitled 2
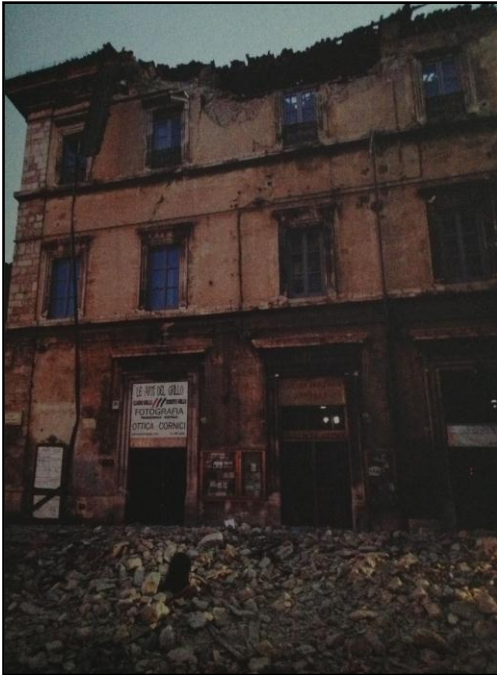
Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 37)
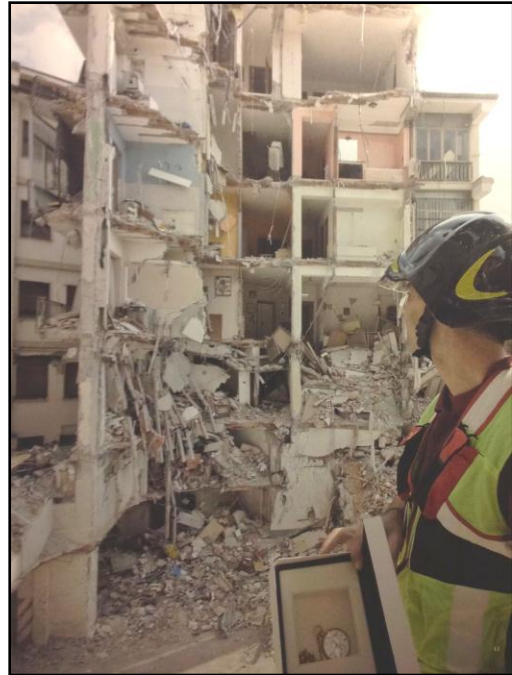
Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 41)

Figure 7.18: Untitled 3

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 39)

Figure 7.19: Untitled 4

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 38)

Figure 7.20: Untitled 5

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 57)

Figure 7.21: Untitled 6

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 150)

Figure 7.22: Untitled 7

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 150)

Figure 7.23: Untitled 8

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 151)

Figure 7.24: Untitled 9

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 157)

Figure 7.25: Untitled 10

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 163)

Figure 7.26: Untitled 11

Source: Grillo and Vitturini (2009: 74-75)

7.2.4: The L'Aquila earthquake within a theoretical framework

The images above reveal the catastrophic damage caused by the earthquake and clearly demonstrate its scale and magnitude. The fact that it was a major disaster is, of course, evident; nevertheless, for the purposes of definition and for assessing the validity of the DLCF as a framework that may be applied in future research in alternative destinations, it is necessary to apply the theoretical underpinnings that can be used to define disasters. As reviewed in Chapter 3, Quarantelli (1985) provides seven conceptual terms to identify disasters. These facilitate the acknowledgement of an event and consequently, define it as a disaster.

1. *Physical agents*

The earthquake measured 5.8 on the Ritcher scale and 6.3 on the Moment Magnitude scale (Eggleton, 2010). Therefore, according to this concept it was 'something' that evidently had a major impact on the environment in L'Aquila and which, consequently, was an event that can clearly be defined as a disaster.

2. *Disaster as Physical Impact*

L'Aquila's earthquake again can be classified as a disaster as it claimed the lives of 309 people. In addition, it injured 1,600 people, left 65,000 people homeless and destroyed or damaged around 10,000 buildings (Eggleton, 2010; McLaughlin, 2010). As for the scale of the earthquake, Badington and Cinelli (2009) argue that it was the worst in Italy since 1980, effectively destroying not only L'Aquila but also many towns

in the surrounding area. Moreover, the earthquake and the aftershocks were felt some 100 km (60 miles) east of Rome.

3. *Disaster as Assessment of Physical Impacts*

Quarantelli suggests that, from this perspective, most commentators concur with some variant of the observation by Barkun (1974: 72) that 'disaster means damage – physical, social, and psychological'. Moreover, he suggests that, in some form or another, the event must be categorised as 'disastrous'. This approach implies the concept of a benchmark or threshold beyond which the event may justifiably be referred to as a disaster, usually based upon an assessment criterion. In the specific case of earthquakes, such an assessment is made on the basis of the Mercalli and Richter scales, firstly measuring the intensity of an earthquake, and secondly its magnitude – involving the combinations of distinguishable physical impacts and assessment of those effects (provided above).

To this point, the three concepts above have focused on firstly, the antecedent conditions responsible for the physical agent, secondly, the distinctive features of the disaster as distinguishable by its physical impact and, thirdly, defining an event as a disaster when its effects are assessed as notable. Therefore, these three concepts of a disaster stress its cause and characteristics, and the consequences of physical agents and/or their impacts (Quarantelli, 1985). Quite evidently, all three definitions perspectives are applicable to the L'Aquila earthquake.

4. *Disasters as Social Disruptions from Events with Physical Impact*

From this perspective, social disruption is identified as the necessary consequence of an event for it to be defined as a disaster (Quarantelli, 1985). Again, it is clearly evident that the L'Aquila earthquake brought about significant social disruption, causing death and injury on a large scale and leaving thousands of people homeless.

5. *Disaster as Social Constructions of Reality in Perceived Crisis Situations that may or may not involve Physical Impacts*

The basis of this perspective is the social-psychological understanding of a situation; that is, a disaster is considered or believed to be real not on the basis of the presence or absence of its physical impacts, but whether it is perceived to represent a threat or danger to life, well-being, property and social order (Quarantelli, 1985). In other words, in addition to the physical / tangible / measurable parameters of a disaster as defined by the first three concepts above, there should also be a socially constructed perception of a crisis situation; in such, a situation that necessitates unexpected

collective action because it involves high-priority values. Therefore, from this perspective, actual impact is not the crucial element. What is important is the perceived necessity for collective action, a consensus type of crisis and not a 'dissensus' crisis (Quarantelli, 1970). This implies that the concept of disaster is a relative rather than an absolute there exists the potential for differential perceptual possibilities that reflect different social constructions of reality. In other words, a disaster is not a motionless entity with a static time duration; rather, a disaster, to the extent that its existence if concerned, is always a relative matter, varying according to whose perspective is being applied (Quarantelli, 1970). Consequently, a disaster is open to varying degrees of interpretation depending on the involvement of different organisations, groups and individuals. In the case of the devastating earthquake that struck L'Aquila, there was an immediate collective response, reflecting the fact that, from a social-psychological perspective, it was disaster that was perceived by those involved to be real.

6. *Disasters as Political Definitions of Certain Crisis Situations*

Political decisions reflect the benefits of society's power holders (elite), thus, from this perspective disasters can be defined in political terms (Brown and Goldin, 1973; Westgate and O'Keefe, 1976; Dombrowsky, 1981). As noted previously, for a variety of reasons, disaster researchers and theorists often shied away from looking at the political aspects of disasters (Quarantelli and Dynes, 1977). However, political processes are involved in all aspects of disaster phenomena. This is significant because political processes can determine whether an occurrence can be called a disaster and therefore, can impact of the stages that follow a disaster. Thus, for some disaster theorists, this potential role of political elite is enough to justify the stance that disasters should be conceptualised as a political statement, in regards to particular crisis situations (Quarantelli, 1985). In the case of this research, the acting Italian Prime Minister at the time, Silvio Berlusconi summoned or defined L'Aquila's state, referring to the earthquake in such a manner, 'It is a serious disaster. Now we must rebuild and that will require huge sums of money'. Additionally, Berlusconi declared a national emergency and pledged to seek hundreds of millions or euros from the EU disaster funds (Badington and Cinelli, 2009).

7. *Disasters as an Imbalance in the Demand Capability Ration in a Crisis Occasion* (Quarantelli, 1985: 43 - 44).

Analysts recognise a disaster when the demands for certain action exceed the capabilities for response in a crisis occasion. As high priority values are threatened, there is a perceived urgent need to act, but the available capabilities, intangible or

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otherwise, are insufficient to meet the demands of the occasion (Quarantelli, 1985). The 'occasion' is a term taken from Goffman (1963), but applied to the disaster context by Brown and Goldin (1973), and it typically requires non-routine and emergent collective behaviour. It is certainly clear that the earthquake in L'Aquila created social devastation beyond the means of the city to manage and respond to the event. Therefore, the earthquake can distinctly be associated with the above definitions, inasmuch as high priority values, whether lives, property or emergency support, were not only threatened but also completely destroyed. The city reacted urgently, and the Italian Red Cross provided immediate provisions as rescue teams entered the disaster zones. They provided personnel, equipment, mobile kitchens (able to provide up to 10,000 meals daily), blankets, tents, first aid, logistics, and humanitarian relief. In addition, field hospitals were set up to relieve pressure on local health facilities which were under enormous strain due to the sudden upsurge in demand, and thirty six ambulances from the Italian Red Cross were on rotation evacuating the injured to other hospitals (Tagliacozzo, Pescara and Avezzano) within the region (One-World, 2009).

From the above analysis, it is clear that in reference to all of Quarantelli's seven conceptual definitions, the earthquake in L'Aquila was clearly a disaster – that is, physically, as a social reality and, indeed, as a political reality, it was recognised that a major disaster had befallen the city. Hence, the next task is to progress to the next stage of the DLCF, the disaster recovery process.

7.3 Disaster recovery process: L'Aquila post-earthquake

The third section of the DLCF (see Figure 7.27) is to consider the disaster recovery process after the earthquake. The following will now present documents and reports to assess the various strategies and approaches the authorities and specific institutions implemented to assist the local community in such tragic times.

Figure 7.27: The Disaster Recovery Process (DLCF)
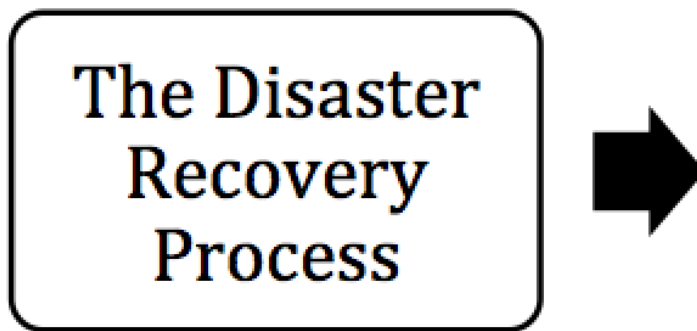
Figure 7.28: Sign in L'Aquila, 2

Photo: Author

Translated (from Figure 7.28): *Come and see the precious little disorder scattered all around, Details of a life which was abandoned in a hurry, moments before hell broke loose.*

In the immediate period following the earthquake the world came together. Aid was sent to L'Aquila from around the globe and the city appeared to move promptly into the recovery phases that typically follow such a tragic event (Eggleton, 2010; McLaughlin, 2010). However, as considered in Chapter 3, Quarantelli (1989) makes two general observations before discussing the research literature on recovery from disasters. Firstly, it is important to locate disaster recovery in a wider context; that is, recovering from disasters did not start with disaster studies, suggesting that there could be better processes in which disaster recovery planning can be attempted. Secondly, there are, according to Quarantelli (1989), some serious conceptual limitations with the theory of disaster recovery, a number of which are related to the

fact that, when commentators refer to 'recovery', they are utilising too broad a term. The following section, therefore, draws on a variety of sources to explore the events, promises, actions, disappointments and so on that have come to define the recovery process experienced by the people of L'Aquila and surrounding areas since the earthquake. In so doing, it makes an important contribution to this thesis section inasmuch as it tells the story of the years following the earthquake, hence underpinning an understanding of the current situation in L'Aquila at the time of the research.

7.3.1 L'Aquila – disaster recovery process: The aftermath and donations

Immediately following the earthquake not only Italians but the entire world, like so often in such tragic events, came together to offer support and donations to the city of L'Aquila and the victims. Within an hour of impact the Italian Red Cross rescue teams were on the scene, bringing personnel and equipment, providing necessary resources for search and rescue operations, additionally, supplying survivors with meals and blankets. They also established a field hospital to relieve the burden on local health facilities, offering on scene active health, first aid, logistics and humanitarian relief; along with a large number of ambulances working on rotation to evacuate the injured (One-World, 2009). Williams (2009) observes that in the aftermath of the L'Aquila earthquake, Italians put their regional bickering to one side and united in the moment of need. Significantly, she also admits to her own fixation to the television the morning after the earthquake, gazing on the scenes of death and destruction. But of course, on that morning not only did she wake up to such news, the whole of Italy did. Moreover, despite the fact that most Italians identify with their home region rather than with the nation as a whole (as discussed in section 7.2.1 above), the people of Italy focused on L'Aquila and on all the people whose lives had been destroyed by the tragedy. Immediate stories of heroism, human strength and courage spread through the news, of mothers who died shielding their babies from the walls that fell in on them; of a 98-year-old grandmother who survived after being trapped in her bed; of a father who witnessed the death of his pregnant wife and son. One elderly earthquake victim, Vinicio, shares his memories of the night of the disaster with Tara McLaughlin:

> *I was in bed when we felt the tremors and my world literally fell down around me. My daughter-in-law went into labour that night and we were beside ourselves in the confusion. My brother died, along with countless dear friends. Everything I knew was taken from me in an instant* (McLaughlin, 2010).

Donations, support, and help flooded into L'Aquila from all the regions of Italy as well as from overseas. At that time in need, the twenty regions of the country, more usually squabbling with each other, each seeking autonomy or claiming superiority over their neighbours, came together; at that moment, Italy showed 'her' true colours, uniting to help the people of L'Aquila (Williams, 2009). As the days and weeks progressed, so too did the support from various areas of the country. However, over the weeks there was also the increasing recognition of the extent of the devastation caused by the earthquake and of the reality of the complex restructuring required to bring the city back to life.

In addition to direct donations made to disaster relief, a number of books about the disaster were written and published, such as *Terrae Motus* by Roberto Grillo and Renato Vitturini (2009) referred to earlier in this chapter, with all the profits going to the relief fund to rebuild the city. Similarly, a book by Maria Filice honouring Southern Italy's fine food and wine but with an L'Aquilian twist, *Breaking Bread in L'Aquila*, was published with all net proceeds from the sale of the book being donated to the earthquake restoration efforts (Filice, 2012). In addition, ticket sales from Italy's 2-0 win over Bulgaria were donated because, as explained by the FIGC President Giancarlo Abete, Italy's football governing body wanted to make a concrete contribution to help the Abruzzo region return to normal (Football-Italia, 2009). The Group of Eight (G8) summit, originally intended to be staged in Sardinia, also took place in the region of L'Aquila on the 8-10 July 2009, not only as a showpiece political opportunity for its host, the then Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi but also, and more importantly, as an opportunity to bring L'Aquila continued recognition to the wider world (Andrews, 2009).

Soon after, there was also a petition, supported by the votes of thousands of people, for L'Aquila to become a candidate for the European Capital of Culture in 2019. Whilst acknowledging that L'Aquila should justifiably be nominated as Capital of Culture on the basis of its unique rich culture, architecture, artistic capacity and musical heritage, it was also recognised that the city was one of Europe's most overlooked cities of art, and that it had taken a disastrous earthquake to raise its profile. The choice of L'Aquila as Capital of Culture will not only highlight what L'Aquila once was, but will also allow people to see what it can become by 2019 and beyond. It will also allow reconstruction to be more than a dream, but an achievable goal, to show what European, if not worldwide, cultural co-operation can achieve. The government of Abruzzo offered an initial contribution of fifty thousand Euros in support of L'Aquila's candidacy as European Capital of Culture, whilst the proposal was also backed by the

Prime Minister, and announced that the national government would post a call for the bids in 2012 (L'Aquila-Renaissance, 2009). Consequently, more than 20 Italian cities applied: Aosta, Bergamo, Cagliari, Caserta, Vallo di Diano and Cilento with Campania and Mezzogiorno, Erice, Grosseto and Maremma, L'Aquila, Lecce, Mantova, Matera, Palermo, Perugia with the sites of Francesco d'Assisi and Umbria, Pisa, Ravenna, Reggio Calabria, Siena, Siracusa and the South East, Taranto, Urbino and Venezia with the North East. The applications were examined by a panel composed of 13 independent cultural experts - six appointed by Italy and the remaining seven by the European institutions. Six Italian cities (Cagliari, Lecce, Matera, Perugia, Ravenna and Siena) were short-listed for European Capital of Culture 2019 (Europa.eu, 2013) L'Aquila was not one of them.

Soon after Easter of 2009, some important measures were introduced to assist the victims of the crisis and to promote resilience, as follows:

- Suspension for three months of the payment of welfare and insurance contributions that would have been paid by the government.
- A 400 Euros government grant to homeless families, or 500 Euros if one of the family members was over 65 years of age or handicapped.
- Suspension for two months of utilities payments (gas, telephone, electricity).
- Suspension for four months of monthly mortgage payments.
- Institutions of current bank accounts for the civil protection department to receive donations.
- 70 Million Euros to fund immediate reconstruction.
- 700 soldiers to be stationed in the city to protect properties from looting
  Source: Rossi (2012)

Immediately after the earthquake, L'Aquila's mayor relinquished decision-making to the national government, consolidating the responsibility for disaster response in the Civil Protection Department and Prime Minister Berlusconi (Alexander, 2011; Alexander, 2010). Civil Protection, assisted by a large number of volunteers, evacuated town centers, established tent communities and arranged for additional housing for the homeless in coastal hotels. By late April, three weeks after the earthquake, Civil Protection and national government leaders had decided not to provide victims with temporary homes, such as trailers. As an alternative, they decided to construct structures intended to endure the recovery timeframe, the so-called 'C.A.S.E' project. C.A.S.E. – an Italian acronym meaning earthquake-proof, sustainable, eco-friendly compounds. This consisted of the construction of 185

seismically isolated buildings comprising 4,600 apartments designed to house up to 15,000 residents. Built between June 2009 and February 2010, the C.A.S.E buildings are located in nineteen areas around the municipality of L'Aquila. The apartments were initially rent-free and fully furnished (Calvi and Spaziante, 2009), whilst the buildings had a 'greater air of permanence' than previous post-disaster construction in the sense that they were not trailers or other types of provisional construction (Alexander, 2011). Nevertheless, it was envisioned that residents would not live there indefinitely and that the buildings would eventually be repurposed as dormitories for university students (Calvi and Spaziante, 2009). An additional 8,500 people were accommodated elsewhere in L'Aquila and surrounding communities in homes known as M.A.P., or *Moduli Abitativi Provvisori* (Alexander, 2011).

Civil Protection also organised a large team of engineers to inspect and stabilise damaged structures. These inspections classified structures as *A* (usable), which amounted to 52.5% of inspected structures, *B* (usable after short-term countermeasures), accounting for 12.5% of structures, or *C* (partially usable), comprising just 2.6%. The remaining structures were classified as unusable or re-inspection was needed (Dolce *et al.,* 2009). Inspections began with schools, and continued with buildings with solely industrial and commercial activities. For residential buildings, inspectors started in the less damaged neighborhoods. These classifications provide the basis for determining the funds building owners would receive from the government to make repairs. Much of the responsibility for longer-term reconstruction was handed over to the Abruzzo regional government in January 2010, but funding remained nationally controlled.

Various studies documented the continuous impacts of the earthquake and the reconstruction on the affected community. Microdis (2010), for example, employed a multiple-choice questionnaire, as well as data gathered by researchers through site visits, medical admission records and other sources, to evaluate resident satisfaction with the quality of transitional housing and the access to social and other services. Results showed that residents liked the housing's comfortable feel and improved seismic resistance, but believe housing assignments were unfair. Most of the C.A.S.E. and M.A.P. sites were found to have poor or insufficient access to transit and other essential services. Microdis (2010) also evaluated broader economic factors in L'Aquila, reporting a 6% decrease in university enrolment since the earthquake and an increase in the unemployment rate (self-reported) from 3% to 8%. In addition, the study documented a post-earthquake increase in health problems among victims, including cardiovascular and stress and anxiety disorders. Passi-

Cometes (2010) also identified an increase in depression and reduction in interest in daily activities compared to before the earthquake, as well as a higher incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression compared to the Italian population as a whole. Vicari, Feo, di Gioia, D'Oto, Tozzi and Arigliani (2011) confirmed that children, as well as adults, suffered from increased levels of anxiety and depression after the earthquake.

Figure 7.29: L'Aquila's Santa Maria of Collemaggio Basilica, 13 April 2009

Source: La Monaca (2009)

The Catholic Church, with its undoubtedly strong presence in Italy, also shared its prayers and thoughts for the victims of L'Aquila. Pope Benedict XVI led Italy's mourning of the victims of the earthquake in Abruzzo days after in an Easter Sunday speech to tens of thousands in St Peters Square. He said:

> *Happy Easter to you, men and women of Italy, in particular those who suffer because of the earthquake'. He continued, 'May the risen Christ inspire in all the necessary wisdom and courage to proceed united in the building of a future open to hope* (GulfNews, 2009).

On the Friday before, Pope Benedict had presided over a Way of a Cross procession at Rome's Colosseum, recalling the Christ's crucifixion, a somber ceremony darkened further by Italy's disastrous earthquake on the Monday. Taking up a symbolic wooden cross for the final stage of the walk, the Pope prayed for the victims and 'all those who suffer' in Abruzzo, wishing that 'even from them the star of hope and the light of the risen Lord will appear. In this tragic hour I feel spiritually close to you and share your anguish'. At the same time, the Italian Prime Minister attended Easter mass in

L'Aquila at a military academy. Berlusconi promised the survivors aid and thanked rescue workers. Telling one survivor, 'we'll manage to get you out of the tents as soon as possible' (GulfNews, 2009).

Two weeks after the earthquake, Pope Benedict XVI visited the area, initially going to Onna, speaking to victims living in shelters. He noted that the village was 'one of the places that paid a high price in terms of human lives', and said that he was close to the victims 'from the first moment'. He said that he followed the news with great concern, sharing the local population's disbelief, tears for the dead, and their anxious concerns for what had been lost in an instant.

> *Now I am here among you', Benedict said, and 'I would like to embrace you affectionately, each one. All the Church is here with me, accompanying your sufferings, participating in your pain for the loss of relations and friends, and desirous to help you rebuild the homes, churches and businesses that collapsed or were seriously damaged in the tremor. I have admired and continue to admire the courage, dignity and faith with which you face this serious trail, showing great determination not to give way to adversity* (Catholic News Agency, CNA, 2009).

The Holy Father continued by addressing the difficult conditions that the victims faced, and the presence of the Lord in these times:

> *I am well aware that, despite the solidarity forthcoming from all sides, there are many daily discomforts involved in living outside your homes, in cars or tents, especially because of the cold and rain. My poor presence among you is intended as a tangible sign of the fact that the crucified Lord is risen and does not abandon you… He is not deaf to the anguished cries of so many families who have lost everything: houses, savings, work and sometimes even human lives. Of course, His (Our Lord) tangible response comes through solidarity, which cannot be limited to the initial emergency but must become a stable project over time. I encourage everyone, institutions and companies, to ensure that this city and this land may rise again* (CNA, 2009).

The Pope also visited the Basilica of Collemaggio in L'Aquila (see Figure 7.29 above), where in front of the casket enclosing the remains of Pope St. Celestine V, one of the few things to have endured the earthquake in the Basilica, he offered a prayer. As a sign of his spiritual participation, on the casket, Benedict XVI left the pallium with which he was vested at the beginning of his own pontificate. From there the Pope visited The House of Students in L'Aquila and was greeted by university students who once resided there. He then concluded his visit by going to the training school of the Finance Guard, greeting mayors and pastors from the forty-nine communities most affected by the tremor (CNA, 2009).

A few months after Pope Benedict XVI's visit to L'Aquila, nearly 130 religious leaders held a G8 summit in Italy on the 16-17 June 2009, which started with a visit to the city. Within their appeal by the Forth Summit of Religious Leaders on the occasion of the G8 they stated that:

> *We commenced our meeting in L'Aquila in solidarity with those who are suffering there from the devastating earthquake and in solidarity also with all those around the world who are bearing the burdens of suffering* (Reuters, 2009).

7.3.2 As time went by – one year post-disaster

Figure 7.30: one year after the earthquake, residents continued to remove uncollected / unmanaged rubble from the town's streets.

 Source: Salomone (2010)

As time passed, survivors were facing increased difficulties and believed more could be done to address the reconstruction of their city; Figure 7.30 above presents a vivid

image of the struggles faced by locals. Langer (2009) points out that eight months after the earthquake, many of the cities and villages of Abruzzo continued to lie in ruins. As the people struggled to cope with the trauma, many residents continued to fight to stay in the impoverished region while local authorities attempted to fight corruption and increasing Mafia involvement in reconstruction efforts. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider the role and influence of the Mafia in Italy; nevertheless, it is important to note that whilst the towns and cities struggle to rid the areas of rubble and provide suitable living for the survivors who lost their homes, the Mafia is widely considered to have taken advantage of the situation. It is alleged that, by deploying their own members as businessmen to offer support in a variety of recovery areas, a region of Italy that has often been seen as a Mafia-free zone now finds that certain organised crime families (the Neapolitan Camorra and the Sacra Corona Unita from Apulia) are making inroads into local society. Many local mayors have been confronted by visitors offering to help, but have turned down any proposals; conversely, some local councils, facing high costs to rebuild towns and cities, have been less vigilant and in so doing have either directly or indirectly sanctioned the spread of the Mafia empire into the region (Langer, 2009).

More generally, corruption in Italy is widespread (Richards, 1995; Jones, 2007; Severgnini, 2007). Richards (1995) reveals how the greatest misuse of government funding and political fraud occurred in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck Iroinia in the region of Basilicata on 23rd November 1980. Approximately 3,100 people were killed, 7,651 injured and 200,000 made homeless. Ten years after the disaster, parliament was officially informed that the government had spent 51,000 billion lire (£23 billion) to repair the damage. Nevertheless, more than a third of the victims were still living in prefabricated huts. It is suggested that much of the money was diverted into the hands of the Neapolitan Mafia, the Camorra (Richards, 1995). Thus, in the context of this thesis, it is necessary to recognise that issues such as corruption and mafia involvement, though complex, are undoubtedly implicit, if not explicit, in the Stage Two primary research.

Hooper (2010) describes the state of L'Aquila a year on from the earthquake. Thousands of survivors of the earthquake carried out a procession through the streets of a city which was feared to be condemned as a latter-day Pompeii. The marchers, who carried candles and torches, symbolised the hope of a happier future for the regions capital city. However, after twelve months since the disaster struck there was still no comprehensive plan in place for the rebuilding of the Historical Center (Hooper, 2010). A junior minister Gianni Letta, also a close associate of Berlusconi,

suggested that the city's residents should collectively strive to examine their conscience in order to recuperate that spirit of unity present in the first hours and days following the earthquake when, together, the people buried the dead and helped the living. However, many local people felt it was the government and not them that needed to recover a sense of purpose. Work had been done and Berlusconi's government had managed to arrange timber-built houses for 17,000 people so they could move out of tents before the winter. Nonetheless, at the time there were still some 7,000 people living in hotels, 4,000 in temporary Red Cross accommodation and thousands of others funding their own provisional accommodation. Many thousands of young people had moved away from the city in search of a new beginning due to the lack of reconstruction within the Centro Storico (Historic Center). Moreover, whilst some suburban businesses and shops had reopened, the center remained a ghost town (Hooper, 2010).

Williams (2010) writes about the anger of the survivors. She points out that twelve months after the earthquake, survivors remembered the dead but were also annoyed with the authorities' failure to rebuild their city. Residents complained that the government's reconstruction program had got its priorities wrong (Williams, 2010). Whilst the government had built (on the outskirts of the town) twenty 'new towns' with earthquake-proof permanent buildings, what had been ignored was L'Aquila's medieval center, the hub and heart of the city (Williams, 2010). The issue had come to the fore as many residents congregated into the historical center with wheelbarrows and shovels trying to haul away some of the several million cubic meters of debris, a vivid memory of the living disaster. Whilst the residents complained, the local government and Silvio Berlusconi claimed that the reconstruction of L'Aquila at the time was a excellent accomplishment to be studied and emulated; however, many failed promises continued to emerge (Williams, 2010). For example, fifty-five students had been killed when a student residence building collapsed in the earthquake. The university rector, Ferdinando di Orio, stated that deep divisions over the reconstruction had occurred. He said that the government had promised sixteen million Euros to build new student housing but that the pledge, like so many others, had been forgotten. Furthermore, he pointed all that was needed was a walk through the streets of the city to observe that the shining example of reconstruction, as claimed by the local authorities, did not exist. The fact that 30,000 people were still living along the Adriatic coast was evidence that the rebuilding plan was not working. Much of the criticism was directed towards the profit made by the construction companies, whilst less or no attention has been paid to the needs of the citizens. Two major companies were being investigated for corruption; in one case,

the manager's phone had been tapped and he, immediately after the earthquake, was recorded laughing about all the money he would soon be making (Williams, 2010).

An article in the Independent by Sharp (2010) discusses the issues regarding the rebuilding of the disaster zones in general. Whilst focusing mainly on the rebuilding of the eastern suburb of the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince after the earthquake on 12th January 2010, Sharp also discusses the situation in L'Aquila. He identifies many of the challenges regarding the reconstruction of important buildings and historical landmarks, preserving architectural style and town-planning systems. He asks: where does one start work when contemplating the re-construction of an entire city, and does it present the opportunity to build better? Sharp recognises that, unlike Haiti, Italy is a developed nation yet sees the delay of the city's rebirth lying in bureaucracy and lack of funds, and the city's mayor, Massimo Cialente, focusing on the building of new homes outside the city rather than on repairing the historical center. He also observes how plans for 'L'Aquila II' or 'L'Aquila Newtown' came to a halt when residents objected to the proposed modernisation. The local people wanted the 1,000-year-old city center restored in its former style. However, given that L'Aquila is located on a seismic zone, rebuilding must conform to new anti-seismic regulations, compromising the ability to rebuild in traditional architectural styles. The residents accused Mayor Cialente of turning their city into a 'ghost town, suggesting that the city may become another Pompeii, nothing more than a monument to the disaster that destroyed it (Sharp, 2010).

7.3.3 Two years post-disaster

Two years after the earthquake struck the region of Abruzzo, Di Nicola (2011) published an article in the *Espresso Repubblica* called *L'Aquila: I numeri della vergonga,* Translated*: the numbers of shame / embarrassment*. He discusses the issues that are still causing many problems for local people, such as the forgotten promises. For example, after the earthquake Silvio Berlusconi had promised that 'you will soon return to your homes; you will not pay taxes; the reconstruction will be fast, and absolute transparency in management and there will be incentives and tax exemptions to attract business investment'. However, these pledges are seen by many as empty chatter and, along with most other policies and statements, false promises and commitments made and not kept, mirroring the failure of the reconstruction model imposed on the city (Di Nicola, 2011). Two years after the disaster, displaced persons continue to wait to return home. Of a total of 37,732 people originally made homeless by the earthquake, 13,856 are housed in the 185 buildings in the C.A.S.E. project (the seismic wooden chalets and environmentally

friendly complexes located in nineteen areas around the city), 7,099 are housed in the M.A.P. temporary housing scattered across twenty-one villages and other towns in the region, 844 live in homes purchased by the Fund L'Aquila and rented, 1,126 people have agreed to rent with civil protection in the place damaged by the earthquake, and 62 are in other municipal buildings. Moreover, 13,416 people are benefiting from the contribution of self-accommodation (600 Euros a month for each household), 1,077 displaced persons are housed in various accommodations in Abruzzo and outside, and 251 people are housed in barracks (Di Nicola, 2011).

Two years after the earthquake, a total of 3.4 billion Euros has been spent on the recovery process, including emergency assistance for the population and early reconstruction. However, a return to normality seems to be far away and the recovery operation is tainted by delays and a lack of transparency. For example, the earthquake resulted in approximately 4,000,000 tons of rubble, but this is being removed at a rate of just 300 tons a day, meaning that it would take 444 months, or more than 36 years, to remove all the rubble. Other problems persist, such as the city failing to make tax repayments owed to local businesses and the inability of companies to open up within the city. Nevertheless, the restoration of some buildings is evident, although this is largely the result of individuals willingly investing their own money to pay for restoration (Di Nicola, 2011).

Overall, then, not only has slow progress been made in the reconstruction of the city, but also there is clear evidence of significant discontent on the part of local people with respect to the way in which redevelopment has progressed and to the distribution of money. It should be noted that wider social issues are deeper and more complex than can be presented here. However, for the purposes of this thesis it is sufficient to emphasise that not only has the rebuilding of L'Aquila been slow and extremely complicated given the scale of the destruction and the number of people affected, but also the recovery process has been occurring against a background of inefficiency, excessive bureaucracy, broken promises and corruption, with many local people feeling that, having been victims of the original disaster they are now victims of a failing recovery process.

It is also against this background that the research in Stage 2 was undertaken (see Chapter 8). However, a key contribution to this thesis were field visits to L'Aquila which comprised Stage 1 of the research. These visits served to confirm the issues considered above. The city center continues to remain uninhabitable, although money has been spent on maintaining the structure of the buildings to ensure they do not

collapse. The four images below (Figures 7.31 – 7.34) were taken during visits to L'Aquila. Figures 7.31, 7.32 and 7.33 provide a visual representation of the structural maintenance that has been provided during the recovery process, reflecting Quarantelli's (1999) *Reconstruction* category (see Section 3.5)*,* which stresses exclusively the post-impact rebuilding of physical structures destroyed or damaged in the disaster. Figure 7.34 is an example of the wooden chalets built (post-disaster) to accommodate locals, and an example of Quarantelli's (1999) *Recovery* category*,* and is representative of an attempt to bring the post-disaster situation to some level of acceptability.

Figure 7.31: Building in the center of L'Aquila

Photo: Author

Figure 7.32: *The Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio*

Photo: Author

7.33: Buildings in the centre of L'Aquila

Photo: Author

Figure 7.34: Wooden Chalets built on the out skirts of the city center

Photo: Author

The above discussions have identified some of the post-disaster recovery practices that occurred in L'Aquila. Whilst highlighting a number of issues present in a disaster context, specifically various complications and challenges have been identified, including unfulfilled promises, a lack of trust, misplaced / misuse of government funding, and a lack of organisation. Thus, at this stage, the outlook for the city

appeared bleak, or was perceived as such by the local community which directed its anger and frustration towards both the local and national governments.

7.4 Contemporary tourism in post-disaster L'Aquila

To date, the DLCF has considered, firstly, the historical development and cultural aspects of the city of L'Aquila. This was followed by a consideration of the damages caused by the earthquake and then the disaster recovery process that followed. The final section of the DLCF is to evaluate the current state of the tourism sector in L'Aquila (see Figure 7.35). Simply stated, how has the earthquake impacted on the tourism industry within the city?

Figure 7.35: Present Condition of Tourism in Destination / Location Post-Disaster (DLCF)

Figure 7.36: Sign in L'Aquila, 3
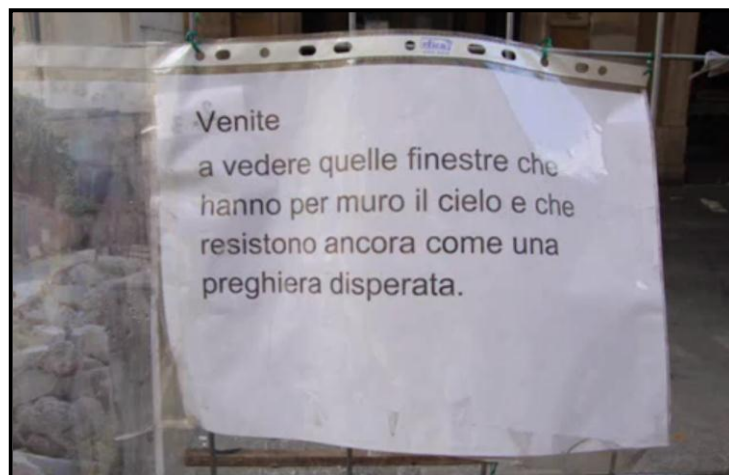
Photo: Author

Translated (from Figure 7.36): *Come and see the windows whose adjoining wall is the sky, as they stand as a desperate prayer.*

Having reviewed the overall recovery process in L'Aquila, this chapter now turns to an assessment of the contemporary tourism in the city, two years after the earthquake. This is the final element of the DLCF, the purpose being to identify the extant realities of L'Aquila and, hence, the possibilities that await the city and its people in the future. Throughout this section, reference is made to the researcher's field visits to the city which, though observation, photography and informal conversations, resulted in data that complemented media reports and other documentary evidence.

As considered above, the city of L'Aquila currently finds itself in a process of re-construction and development. However, this process is extremely slow and, to an extent, the *centro storico* has become frozen in a time zone far removed from the reality it once was. In other words, the historical centre of L'Aquila has come to resemble a 'citta morte' (literally, 'dead cities' or, more loosely translated, 'ghost towns'), as discussed previously in Chapter 3. More specifically, other places were revealed through the research at Stage 1 to have the appearance and characteristics of a 'citta morte'. The following section will discuss more recent examples, as acknowledged during Stage 1 research.

7.4.1 Citta Morte: Old spaces become new places, coexisting realities

During the earthquake, no place was hit as hard, with respect to size and population, as the town of Onna, which is located a few kilometers for the city of L'Aquila. At least forty people out of a total population of just three hundred lost their lives, whilst the earthquake destroyed virtually the entire town, leaving nothing inhabitable (Fleishman, 2009). An article in Citta-Nuova *'New Town'* (2009) with the headline *La ricostruzione di Onna,* translated: 'The Reconstruction of Onna', discusses how, immediately following the earthquake, the reconstruction of a new town had begun for the ninety-four families of the town. The work on the 'new town', located close to the completely destroyed Onna, was rapid. During a field visit, the researcher passed through both the old town of Onna (where access was possible) and the 'new town'. Figure 7.37 below is an aerial view of Onna after the earthquake, whilst Figure 7.38 is taken from a street in the new Onna.

Figure 7.37: Aerial view of Onna after their earthquake

Source: The Telegraph (2010)

Figure 7.38: The new town of Onna

Source: L'Irregolare (2013)

There are many similarities between Onna's old town and the examples offered by Demetri (2012) as considered in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.10). Like many of the other ghost towns of Italy, Onna became uninhabitable whilst, similar to the Beneventan town of Tocco Caudio (exemplified in Chapter 3), new Onna has become a living city situated next to a dead one. As Weiser (2010) suggests, a ghost town is any historical town or site that leaves evidence of a town's previous glory although in Onna, much of this evidence lies in the rubble of collapsed buildings. At the same time, Varney (1994) defines ghost towns as places with a population level that is significantly reduced; in the case of Onna, all its residents left, leaving it a completely deserted 'ghost town'. The future of Onna's old town is uncertain but, in its current condition, it provides stark evidence of the impact of the earthquake and the consequences it bought for the local inhabitants.

So what of the city of L'Aquila? In its current condition, can it be described as a Citta Morte? An article on the Natural-Disaster (2010) website commenced with, 'One year after the earthquake, L'Aquila remains a ghost town'. This concept of the city is similarly adopted by Sharp (2010), who reports that the people of L'Aquila have accused Mayor Cialente of turning the center into a 'ghost town' similar to the state of Pompeii. Moreover, he suggests that L'Aquila has become nothing more than a monument to the disaster that destroyed it, particularly with respect to the issues surrounding the reconstruction of the city center. Similarly, Eggleton (2010) notes that some survivors genuinely feel that L'Aquila will eventually become a place similar to Pompeii, primarily because of the lack of a comprehensive plan to restore buildings in the city and the limited supplies of water, gas and electricity

In reality, much of L'Aquila is representative of theoretical definitions of a ghost town. The Centro Storico is uninhabited, with only a small number of bars and restaurants open to cater to the few tourists and locals that pass through the streets. This reflects the definition offered by Varney (1994), who suggests that a ghost town can show some signs of vitality. This was one of the main observations resulting from the field visits. Imagine a bustling Italian university city, full of coffee shops and with a *campanilismo* like atmosphere. *Campanilismo* has no English translation but derives from *campanile* (bell tower), traditionally the tallest tower and the most prominent building in any town or village. *Campanilismo* is an enduring symbol of local people's devotion to, and love of their region, city, town, village, or even quarter. It is fundamental to identity, pride and sense of belonging to a place (Richards, 1995; Severgnini, 2007). For the people of L'Aquila, this *Campanilismo* no longer exists; or

at least, it has been locked away in the rubble, enhancing the sense that the city has become a ghost town.

The preceding consideration regarding the post-earthquake recovery process in L'Aquila highlighted the lack of any real form of rejuvenation and reconstruction within the city center. Parisse (2010) writes that time is running out. According to him, seventeen months have passed since the tragic day of April 6th 2009 when the earthquake stuck, yet *L'Aquila si ritrova più o meno a vivere come in quei giorni che seguirono una scossa che ha travolto vite umane e distrutto la città e tanti paesi del circondario.* Roughly translated, a series of coincidences for L'Aquila mean that the city continues to live more or less in those days that followed, in the shock that swept the city and destroyed lives and many local villages. Parisse (2010) goes on to state that today (written on the 6th September 2010), just like seventeen months ago when the old town was closed, the city is still empty of residents and, above all, fear of the earthquake has not passed but remains as it was during the days and nights of the devastating event. All of this in a landscape full of uncertainties, which range from reconstruction work to the ability to return to a normal life, by definition, reveals L'Aquila as a dead / ghost town (Parisse, 2010).

Significantly, particularly in the context of this thesis, Alessandri (2010) offers a similar account in an article written on the 22 August 2010. It is titled *Tanti I turisti tra luoghi della distruzione del terramoto; curiosita' e voligia di verita' LAquila del dolore.* Translated this means, 'Many tourist places between the destruction of the earthquake; curiosity and desire for truth, L'Aquila – tourism of pain'. When Alessandri was visiting the city he spoke to a tourist named Mario from Ravenna. Mario stated that, apart from the devastation of the students' home, the thing that struck him most was the presence of the military. Yes, they are working, but they are still there a year and a half after the earthquake. Mario felt that it portrayed the feeling that everything had stopped in that time and the presence of the military continues to represent the tragic event which occurred more than one year ago. The image of the militarised city made him feel sad and, when standing in front of the students home (which collapsed killing eight students), it made him think that there had been an earthquake last week, not sixteen months ago (Alessandri, 2010). Mario continued by suggesting that it would take more than ten years to rebuild the city and that almost everything seems to have remained stationary since the morning of April 6th 2009.

During field visits in August 2011, twenty-eight months after the earthquake, the researcher was extremely aware of the overwhelming silence that engulfed the city

during tours of the entire accessible areas of the Historical Center, a silence that intensified the immense transformation that the city has experienced since the earthquake. To the outsider, it is impossible to understand the sense of loss of one's home and life experienced by the people who once lived, worked and enjoyed the city. As for now, the ex-inhabitants are left with a city that is frozen in time, symbolising a moment that bought about devastation, destruction and death. It is for this reason that L'Aquila evidently demonstrates and embraces characteristics similar to those of a Citta Morte.

Before discussing contemporary tourism in L'Aquila, it is important to note that in Chapter 3 it was demonstrated that 'space' is everywhere; therefore, for 'space' to become a 'place', then meaning has to be attached to that space. It was also discussed that memorialisation occurs in places where disasters and atrocities have occurred and more generally where death is present. Memorialisation can also occur in the context of what Durkheim termed 'collective effervescence', when embodied individuals are cognitively and emotionally engaged with their social world. In so doing, 'space' (in society) becomes a significant and recognisable 'place' to individuals. One way in which this can occur is through the action of memorialisation by an individual or group. Therefore, the following section explores the way in which new 'places' (post-earthquake) have been created in L'Aquila, 'new' in the sense that, prior to the earthquake they were places with different constructed social realities based on their history whereas new social realities have since been constructed as a result of the earthquake. In particular, this creation of new places has come about through the process of memorialisation for the victims of the tragic earthquake on April 6th 2009, this will also be further explored during stage 2 research.

7.4.2 Memorialisation in L'Aquila: Diverse realities in endless place(s)
In the aftermath of the earthquake in L'Aquila it is possible to identify actions of empathy and collective effervescence on the part of the local residents. These can be seen below in the images (Figures 7.39 and 7.40 below) and document extracts.

Figure 7.39: Candlelight processions to remember the dead: one year after the earthquake

Source: Williams (2010)

Figure 7.40: Candlelight processions to remember the dead: one year after the earthquake

Source: Williams (2010)

One year after the eartquake devastated their city, the inhabitants of L'Aquila were remembering their dead. Four candlelight processions met in the large central square of the ciy where twenty-five thousand people crowded together as the names of family and friends who had died in the disaster were read out one by one (Williams, 2010). Similarly, Hooper (2010) describes the state of L'Aquila a year on from the earthquake. Thousands of survivors of the earthquake that shattered L'Aquila carried out a procession through the streets of a city that many fear is condemned to become a latter-day Pompeii. The marchers, who carried candles and torches, symbolised the hope of a brighter future for the city but, at the same time, they are also angry at the authorities failure to rebuild their town.

This procession to remember the dead of L'Aquila is an example of collective effervescence which, through its emotional and socially binding of individuals, has the potential to (re)invent spaces and locations which have suffered disastrous events into contemporary places, where people can reflect, record and interpret moral concerns. However, as noted by Collins (1988) the occurrence, intensity and scope of collective effervescence acts might differ depending on the relationship, activities and characteristics of a given social group. Again, as highlighted, Stone (2010) suggests that this could be real of dark tourism, giving its varied and extensive assortment of attractions, and more so considering the individuals who visit them. Stone (2010) further suggests that the apparent 'shade of darkness' in any dark tourism experience (that is, its location on the dark tourism spectrum - see Chapter 2, Section 2.3 / Figure 2.3), will dictate the level of emotional (re)structuring for the individual and that any succeeding moral instruction and meaning will fluctuate within diverse socio-cultural environments and geo-political motivated contexts (Stone, 2010). Additionally, according to Shilling and Mellor (1998: 197), the effects of collective effervescence, which are rooted in emotion, are 'characterised by ephemerality and must be recharged if it is to have enduring social significance'. This would explain, in some way, the ever increasing growth of dark tourism in all its manifestations as the recharging effects occurs, and the ways in which diverse experiences of dark tourism inform a wider morality framework (Stone, 2010). However, Durkheim was concerned with what he called professional organisations or non-traditional institutions, seen as modern associational forms acting as the socially binding functions in society which were formerly assumed by religious institutions (Durkheim, 1983; Stone, 2010). Subsequently, the practices of effervescent vitalism in contemporary society, locatable within dark and disaster tourism locations, and these sites ability to morally bind individuals through reflection, is seen as problematic (Stone, 2010). Indeed, Graham (2007) identifies the ambiguity in Durkheim's theory of social effervescence

and its lack of distinction between different types of social bonding. It is here where the diversity of dark tourism and its ability in both scope and generation of moral conversation is complex. Additionally, for locations that have suffered from a natural disaster that result in death and destruction, there is a difficulty in identifying any kind of possible dark tourism development which will encapsulate a collective feeling that would be representative of the wider cultural community. This is an issue that will be further investigated during stage two of this research. For now, however, having demonstrated L'Aquila's similarities of a 'citta morta' or 'ghost-town', the task now is to address the last element of the Disaster Life Cycle Framework, that is, tourism in L'Aquila.

7.4.3 Tourism in post-disaster L'Aquila

The section identifies the changes and the impacts resulting from the earthquake on the tourism industry in L'Aquila as a basis for establishing the contemporary state of the tourism sector in the city. Soon after the earthquake struck, Flamminio (2009) noted that whilst the ex-inhabitants of L'Aquila were living in tents, tourists were attempting to enter the old town (which at that time was only open to firemen) in order to take pictures and to collect souvenirs. Flamminio (2009) also reported that tourists often gathered in the biggest square of L'Aquila to pose for photographs in front of the cathedrals (see Figure 7.41), whilst another group of tourists stood in front of an old door of the medieval city asking two soldiers if they can go in (Figure 7.42).

Figure 7.41 Tourists posing for photographs in L'Aquila

Source: Flamminio (2009)

Figure 7.42: Tourists attempting to enter the old city

Source: Flamminio (2009)

Similarly, some six months after the earthquake (at the end of the peak season of the Italian summer holiday), an on-line article on InAbruzzo (2009), titled *Il terremoto diventa attrattore turistico,* translated: 'The earthquake becomes a tourism attraction', suggested that whilst in other areas of Italy close to Abruzzo, such as Romagna and The Marche, have a history of successfully offering weekend tours and site seeing trips to their local towns and villages, the same could not be said about Abruzzo. However, according to the article, the earthquake has in fact achieved what the regional tourism organisations had long failed to do (pre-earthquake). In other words, the summer months had witnessed an influx of tourists and numerous organised weekend trips offering tours to L'Aquila's centro storico, to gaze on and photograph the destruction previously seen in the media. The article finishes by stating that although the earthquake has destroyed everything, it had attracted thousands of shocked tourists who are *attrati dall'orrore della citta distrutta,* translated: 'attracted to the horror of the destroyed town' (InAbruzzo, 2009). In short, there was clear evidence that L'Aquila had rapidly become a dark tourism destination, attracting tourists in their thousands to witness, for whatever reason, the destruction wrought by the earthquake.

Alessandri (2010) also discusses tourism in L'Aquila since the earthquake, observing that there are numerous sites within the city that, as a result of the earthquake, have become tourist attractions. He also suggests that the tourists are motivated by

curiosity and desire to learn the truth, referring to tourism in L'Aquila as 'Tourism of Pain'. Parisse (2010) focuses on the building that collapsed, resulting in the death of eight students. He states that the memory of the young people had disappeared under the rubble of the student's home as the sun scorched grass, flowers dried and died and wreaths rotted. Consequently, a monument was being built by the Fire Department to pay homage to the memory of the young. He goes on to state that, increasingly, macabre people come to the city, park their cars and take photos of the site. A tourist coming to visit L'Aquila has no point of reference from where to begin their tour, but the first thing they see is the student's home (Figure 7.43). However, when moving towards the center, all that can be seen is tourists 'armed' with cameras and camcorders (Alessandri, 2010).

Figure 7.43: Tourists visiting the 'student house' in L'Aquila

Source: Alessandri (2010).

Reflecting previous discussions on dark tourism, Marecic (2010) writes that people come to L'Aquila to see an earthquake-destroyed city just as they would visit the ruins of Pompeii, or the Coliseum. The earthquake has created a new form of tourism in L'Aquila; whether new tourists, returning tourists or locals, people are now attracted to the city to gaze upon the destruction caused by the earthquake.

As discussed earlier, other forms of tourism (other than dark tourism) have been in evidence since the earthquake in L'Aquila, such as it becoming the venue for the G8 summit originally planned for Sardinia (Andrews, 2009), the visit of Pope Benedict XVI and the meeting of 130 religious leaders also held in L'Aquila (Reuters, 2009).

Interestingly, Dawson (2010) discusses the impact of the earthquake on the making of film *The American*. Some months before the disaster, the film's director, Anton Corbijn, had chosen the Abruzzo region as a location for the film, which was to be set in Castel Del Monte, Castelvecchio and L'Aquila. However, the earthquake inevitably led to the search of alternative locations, and Corbijn's discussions with the mayors of the locations led to an agreed hope that filming *The American* would help boost the region economically, Corbijn stating that 'what with the money spent during production and the finished film encouraging tourism in the future" (Dawson, 2010). In the event, Castel Del Monte and Castelvecchio (small villages in the region) were used as settings, whilst Sulmona, a town located in the Southern part of Abruzzo, was selected as a suitable replacement for L'Aquila. However, this did not mean L'Aquila was forgotten. The leading actor of *The American*, George Clooney made a special visit to the city and was quoted by journalists as saying that 'the only way that people who are famous can help is by brining attention'. The filming of *The American* in Abruzzo allegedly gave the area an immediate financial boost, although similar to other film locations, longer-term advantages are expected to accrue once audiences have seen the film (Dawson, 2010). In some respects, the devastation that resulted from the earthquake has enhanced the attraction of this film location to tourists; how welcome this outside attention is to local people will be investigated at stage two of the research. Figures 7.44 and 7.45 below are photographs of tourists visiting post-disaster L'Aquila (post-taken during field visits.

Figure 7.44: Tourists in the Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio

Photo: Author

Figure 7.45: Individual tourist guided round the city centre

Photo: Author

The Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio was partly destroyed during the earthquake and today, as prior to the earthquake, attracts many tourists. However, their motivations have now perhaps changed, their interest primarily been to witness the destruction.

Overall, then, it is evident from the above discussions that L'Aquila, willingly or otherwise, has become a destination that attracts tourists curious to witness or gaze upon the destruction caused by the earthquake. Thus, as noted above, L'Aquila can be identified as a contemporary dark tourism destination. However, it must be stressed that statistical data on tourism in L'Aquila since the earthquake is not available. Therefore, the above reports provide some evidence that L'Aquila has become a dark tourism destination. Field visits provided an opportunity to further add validity to the reports (identified above) of L'Aquila as a dark tourism destination.

7.4.4 Impressions of the tourism industry in L'Aquila gained during field visits

The field visits presented an opportunity for the researcher to establish how the tourism industry has developed since the earthquake. First and foremost, during the visits the author was interested in observing tourists within the city. Whist no set numbers can be provided, what must be stressed is that, overall, there were large numbers of tourists within the city. The types and group size of tourists observed

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varied significantly, from individual tourists to groups of tourists (families and or friends) walking around the city. However, it can be suggested that the majority of these tourists were likely to be day visitors passing by from other locations, to gaze upon the disaster caused by the earthquake.

Fortunately, local people were happy to guide the author around the Historical Center, providing detailed information on L'Aquila's past as well as on the present situation the city faced. Indeed, such guidance was necessary. An initial independent visit was made to the city in order for the researcher to try to understand the city from the point of view of a stranger. When arriving to the city by car and parking near the Historical Center, the journey began at what is known as the Fontana Luminosa (Figure 7.46).

Figure 7.46: Fontana Luminosa in L'Aquila

Source: Virgilio-Fotoalbum (2013)

La Fontana Luminosa, in the Alpine Battalion Square (built in 1934 by the sculptor Nicola D'Antino), is named after the way it captures magical play of light and water. Within a circular pool, raised a few steps, the fountain is placed on a marble structure in which two nude bronze females support a typical 'Abruzzo basin' above their heads (Regione-Abruzzo, 2013). It is situated at the entrance of Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, which leads down to the central Pizza del Duomo.

However, even when approaching the city from a distance, one can begin to witness the devastating impacts of the earthquake. However, once in the center of the city,

there are no directions or explanations of what had happened. As a tourist, the researcher felt lost and disorientated within the city. No signs, leaflets or information points were readily available; all that was visible were empty streets and houses, numerous Army patrol vehicles, and barriers implying one cannot pass. Interestingly and, perhaps significantly, the earlier stories discussed in the previous section of flocks of tourists visiting the city to witness the destruction, seemed a thing of the past. What should be stressed is that tourists were present within the city, but not in any great number, as if the 'dark' attraction of L'Aquila had, to some extent, diminished with the passing of time since the earthquake. Moreover, there also appeared to be a lack of interest on the part of the local community in recognising the potential and opportunities for tourism. Therefore, this lack of tourism interest would become a focus during the second stage of primary research. Field visits allowed an assessment of the current situation regarding tourism in L'Aquila, providing an essential foundation to the empirical research at Stage 2.

7.5 Summary

As suggested, two stages of research would be implemented during the study. The Disaster Life Cycle Framework has been used in this chapter to initially assess L'Aquila's cultural / historical development and characteristics. It has provided an understanding of, firstly, the issues between national and regional influence of 'place' and the impacts on individuals and communities. It is suggested that whilst Italy is the nation-place in which L'Aquila is situated, it was further recognised that Italy is arguably best not identified as a unified country. In fact, it is suggested that even when identifying with the notion of regional-place, in this case Abruzzo being the region-place of L'Aquila, complications still arise when trying to form an understanding of community characteristics within a city. Therefore, the city of L'Aquila has been subject to an introspection of historical expansion throughout its history. This established how L'Aquila became what it is today (pre-disaster), whilst Stage 2 research will further investigate the characteristics and mentality of the local Aquilano community.

This was followed by research into the disaster and its impacts which, following Quarantelli's 7 definitions, revealed that L'Aquila's earthquake was clearly definable as a disaster in a physical, social and political reality. This was then followed by a detailed discussion of the disaster recovery process (post-earthquake up to 2 years post-disaster) in L'Aquila and the subsequent relief, donations, initiatives, awareness and recognition from various institutions and organizations. Finally, the focus (of the

DLCF) turned to the current tourism industry in L'Aquila. It was suggested that L'Aquila's current state is arguably similar to the concept of a Citta Morte (ghost town). It has been recognised that since the earthquake, tourists have flocked to gaze (for individual purposes) at the current state of the city. Therefore, the demand for tourism has shifted. Whilst previous tourism attractions remain, the earthquake has created a new attraction. This new attraction is the destruction caused by the earthquake and the locals have also become part of that attraction because they, their homes, families and the community at large, were part of the tragic event. However, it was also recognised during field visits that visiting L'Aquila as a tourist presented many difficulties. Much of this is down to the lack of tourism investment.

Overall, then, the DLCF has investigated the physical and social impacts of the earthquake in general and, more specifically, the consequential impacts on the tourism industry. In so doing, it has provided a platform for the second stage of research, based upon the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF), the outcomes of which are considered in the next chapter.

Figure 7.47: L'Aquila, Bella me

Source: Screen shot taken from You-Tube-Video (2012)

From the above Figure 7.47 script on Italian Flag: In Dialect: 'Jemo Nnanzi' / In Italian:
Andiamo Avanti
Translated: 'Lets carry on'

Chapter 8

Stage 2 Research: Application of the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF) to L'Aquila

8.0 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF - as proposed in Chapter 5) provided the basis for a detailed analysis of the cultural environment in L'Aquila, a comprehensive understanding of the disaster recovery process that has occurred since the 2009 earthquake, and a brief review of the current state of the tourism sector in the city. In so doing, the DLCF not only facilitated a theoretically-based analysis of the socio-environmental context of the disaster and its impacts, but also provided a platform for the subsequent research at Stage 2. As detailed in the Methodology (Chapter 6), the second stage of the empirical research comprised thirty-four in-depth, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in L'Aquila, the overall purpose being to identify and explore the local community's responses to their city becoming a dark tourism attraction, and their becoming the focus of the dark tourist gaze.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to present and consider the outcomes of the research at Stage 2. The discussion follows the structure of the proposed Dark Tourism Development Framework and also reflects the five objectives of the research as established in the introductory chapter. At the same time, however, also included in the chapter are a number of '*Intermezzos'*, that is, short sections which, drawing on the empirical research and other sources, serve to locate the research within the reality of the earthquake and its aftermath for the community of L'Aquila.

8.1 Introducing the DTDF: Disasters as opportunities

It has been established that whilst disasters bring death, destruction and suffering to a local community, they may eventually be looked upon as opportunities (Davis, 2005). In the likelihood that the disaster was unexpected, with little no or warning, then there is little the community can do at the moment of its occurrence to prevent the ultimate outcomes. However, significant attention has been paid, particularly within the tourism context, to the prevention of disasters, to the development and implementation of plans and strategies to ensure minimum impact (pre-disaster), and to the recovery

stages that follow a disaster (Faulkner, 2001). In short, the periods both preceding and following a disaster are seen as significant moments in which humans can apply their capabilities to ensure that disasters have as little negative impact as possible on the social and cultural realities within destinations. However, as is often the case, disasters inevitably will bring some degree of damage and or disruption to a location. Therefore, the necessity lies with focusing on the opportunities that can arise from disasters.

So, what are the opportunities that have arisen from the disaster in L'Aquila in general and, specifically in the context of this research, what have been the potential opportunities from a tourism perspective? Although the issue of opportunities relates to the third stage of the DTDF (see Chapter 5), it is considered appropriate to open the discussion of Stage 2 research outcomes with an analysis of such opportunities in order to provide further evidence and understanding of the ways in which 'dark' tourism has been developed in L'Aquila post-disaster (see Figure 8.1). This will serve as a focus for the subsequent considerations of local community responses to post-disaster 'dark' tourism development and, indeed, their contribution to it, for local people have played a positive role in establishing the existing attractions frequently visited by tourists in L'Aquila.

Figure 8.1: Disasters as Opportunities (Section Three of DTDF)

8.1.1 Disasters as an opportunity: Recognising the wider potential

The initial focus of this section is on identifying participants' attitudes towards possible post-disaster benefits that can be brought to the community of L'Aquila and beyond, both generally and through the development of tourism in particular. As has been emphasised throughout this thesis, disasters may bring destruction, chaos, injury and death to cities and their residents. A specific problem to be overcome is the disorientation that may follow the event and which may then last for a significant period, which has undoubtedly been the case for L'Aquila. There is, then, a need to search individually and collectively for a positive future. This may of course be difficult

to achieve given the variety of individual issues that need to be overcome for people's lives to return to some kind of normality. However, people display courage, a disposition to not only survive, but also to try and better what was the previous reality. This courage was possessed by the participants interviewed, as is revealed in the following discussion:

Participant 2 provides a description of the economic challenges facing the city.

> **Participant 2**
>
> *Emilia-Romagna is a great example because it is a region that funds Italy; it has massive industries such as pharmaceuticals that export products all round the world. Therefore, it is vital that these businesses have money invested into them to ensure they are up and running instantly. L'Aquila is not like this. It is a city that is fundamentally based on its University image and administrative activities. On top of this you have all the other commercial activities in the city, the shops, bars and restaurants. With around 75,000 inhabitants, some 30,000 were students, so this was very much a university and commercial city. There were no major industries with major exports of products or services. Thus, the university students were relied upon for most of the economic activity within the city, through renting and commercial sales, and their use of the library… in fact, this city had so many libraries. So, in our circumstance, the earthquake struck right at the center of our economy because, without the city and the university, there is no city of L'Aquila, as we don't have any industrial activities. It is not like Friul* (Venezia Giulia Italy's most north-eastern region) *where, after their earthquake in 1976, they changed their economic project. Again, Emilia will recover, because it is an economic necessity;, they will continue their industries in alternative locations and eventually it will go back to how it was. L'Aquila though, without the city, [the historical center] cannot function economically.*

The respondent highlights the importance of the university as the hub of economic activity within the city. The earthquake struck the economic center of the city and, in so doing, destroyed the city's financial foundation. Without the Historical Center and its thriving university culture, L'Aquila has remained economically stagnant. The respondent reflects on this by drawing comparisons with the experience of Emilia-Romagna in northern Italy where, following a recent earthquake, there has been greater public recognition of the need to rebuild the economy because of the

economic contribution to Italy as a whole. Emilia-Romagna is home to many large industries that fuel the Italian economy; therefore, the need to pour money into the region's recovery effort was seen as essential because of the potential ramifications for Italy's export sector. L'Aquila, in contrast to the region of Emilia-Romagna, is a city that was economically dependent on its own local resources; particularly the university. For the national government, L'Aquila is not seen as a good investment, the foreseeable financial rewards for the state by pouring money into L'Aquila's reconstruction are limited at best.

Participant 20

However, it is necessary to communicate before (an earthquake) to stress to Italians that Italy is a seismic country. Therefore, we cannot be safe anywhere…. as we saw in Emilia, which was one of the zones least at risk in Italy but, in the end, it happened. Therefore, it is this that needs to be done; we need to put all of our efforts into changing the mentality of this country so that it becomes more like Japan. As such, we are on seismic land, we are seismic from the Alps all the way to Sicily, Sardinia, well Sardinia possibly not, anyway. It is a country that needs to begin to think of its safety and prevention. It will probably take about fifty years [to achieve this]. I see L'Aquila as an image that can be used to modify this mentality, and show the capabilities of this city in fifty years time and be proud of them. But we need to start… we need to be in the vanguard, like Japan, the United States, in the vanguard in the field of disaster prevention. Therefore, the true protection of security is what the state should invest in, and clearly the results won't be seen straight away. Politicians should be looking at this, and not at today, trying to resolve small problems. Of course they are still important, but they are only important because the Italian politician has to be seen favorably, and it's a question of exchange between votes; between the subject and the locals. However, they need to look at the long-term because only that way will things effectively change. If not, things will remain the same; actually they can get even worse. Therefore, I hope L'Aquila becomes a symbol for excellence in disaster prevention.

Participant 20 expresses how the impacts of the disaster can be used as an opportunity by publicising the consequences to other locations around Italy and seismic locations elsewhere. As such, he suggests that disasters present opportunities to learn about what could have been done to minimise the damage and

destruction, hence focusing on prevention practices. The participant also refers to the need to use the earthquake as a means of changing the mentality of people within Italy with respect to prevention or the reduced impacts of disasters through effective management and the implementation of anti-seismic infrastructure development. He is expressing the need to see the disaster as an opportunity to make sure that appropriate development and infrastructure is in place prior to the occurrence of a natural disaster. The participant lost members of his family during the earthquake and he recalls how difficult it is to continue life. However, in the following passage he refers to the impact of the death of loved ones and his involvement in disaster prevention since the earthquake.

Participant 20

…if one is like this then you will feel bad, so you try to do everything, such as jobs, I think of my son, I try to give life to the other families who have suffered. The foundations that look to the future, the foundation of the 6th of April which looks to the future, looks at prevention, and at the remembrance of who is no longer with us. You do battles in court, not for revenge, but to finally arrive at the truth of what happened, which would be for the first time in Italy; so we can better ourselves. I am not interested that someone ends up in prison, but to arrive at the truth and justice. Therefore, the same mistakes will not be made again… it will be difficult to change, but I have given myself this objective and I try to fight with others for this. Of course then there are political commitments to try and change this city straight away from today to tomorrow, and let me repeat the city has not understood. However, seeing that we are in there (the courts) we try to fight it the all the same, and not be the people who go there and read the newspaper, but we fight for our land. That way the day is full, the day is full of things to do, which are rather important. Then when the evening arrives, when you find yourself alone, like I said, it's much harder.

Evidently, this respondent reveals the power and possible life changing impact that can come from tragic events. The loss of members of his family has resulted in his involvement in the field of disaster prevention, providing just one example of how opportunities can arise from disasters. It is, of course, beyond the scope of this research to address the details of implementing measures to endorse disaster prevention. However, as suggested by Participant 20, had he been made aware of these possible disaster impacts with respect to his own home, then prevention methods would have been applied and he may not have lost half of his family.

The example below focuses on the development in the city of L'Aquila and the opportunities that have arisen since the earthquake.

> ### *Participant 8*
> *Renzo Piano undertook a project, a new small auditorium for art and culture for the young people of L'Aquila. He (Piano) is a man who focuses on culture and art, and he has initiated a project that is being built within the green park next to the castle. Instantly, there were people arguing against it because of its position. Typical of L'Aquila and its people. I understand people's disagreements, but there is nothing in L'Aquila, apart from a few streets open to walk around and the odd bar and restaurant, and that is about it for the center, nothing else.*

The project referred to by Participant 8 can be seen in Figure 8.2 below. Architect Renzo Piano designed the project to replace the auditorium destroyed during the earthquake, a flat-pack building comprising of three wooden cubes. The project, the new 'Auditorium Aquila', is located within the grounds of the city's medieval castle and contains a 238-seat concert hall. The project was at the initial stages of construction during final field visits, and is now open to the public. As mentioned by the participants, there were disagreements with respect to the project and the location plans. However, it has become a new addition to the Historical Centre. It can be considered an additional feature that compliments the traditional artistic and cultural ambiance within the city and, aesthetically pleasing or not, it does offer, as suggested by Participant 8, an additional attraction for both locals and tourists. It also provides another example of how to focus on opportunities post-disaster by establishing / constructing infrastructure that reflects the historical cultural characteristics of L'Aquila.

Figure 8.2: Auditorium Aquila

Source: Dezeen-Magazine (2013)

The two examples above can be recognised as disaster opportunities, as they provide the basis for the city to showcase its potential to other communities. However, the specific focus of this research is on the development of the Historical Center as a tourism attraction and, therefore, the following section critically addresses the post-disaster tourism opportunities that have been recognised within the Historical Center. Specifically, it asks the question: to what extent has L'Aquila recognised its tourism potential and possible touristic opportunities since the earthquake?

8.1.2 Place and collective memorialisation: Tourism attractions in post-disaster L'Aquila

During this research, it became immediately evident that, since the earthquake, L'Aquila and its people have become part of a new dark tourism attraction. The demand has been documented (see Chapter 7) and tourists continue to visit L'Aquila. It would be logical to assume, therefore, that the local community would in some way or another attempt to benefit from this tourism activity. Indeed, as identified from the literature, tourism-based opportunities do arise in dark places, as shown specifically in the case of Christchurch, New Zealand following the earthquake there (Coats and Ferguson, 2013) whilst, more generally, there are numerous examples of the ways in which communities express their tragedies and how they package, present and sell them to tourists. So what about L'Aquila? How has the city and its people facilitated tourism following the earthquake? To what extent has the city united and created recognisable tourism projects in order to attract and cater for tourists? In particular,

during field visits to the city, the question that arose was: why has L'Aquila evidently done so little, if anything, to attract tourists?

At a basic level, the field visits revealed that information for tourists have been placed around the city (for example, see Figure 8.8).

Figure 8.3: *'Lucilla'* – Sign: for the tourists, foreigners and the curious

Source: Grillo, (2012d: 60)

Sign Translated (from Figure 8.3):

For the tourist, the foreigners and the curious.

What you are visiting is not just a random place; it is NOT a tourist attraction.

This was a part of our city, which until 16 months ago was still alive.

It is too early to treat it like an archeological site,

And to stand smiling and have a photo taken.

Have pity for whoever died under the rubble and for the people who are still crying for that loss.

Consider that what you are looking around with curiosity is where we live.

Ours is a difficult reality that you will find difficult to understand.

The only help that you can give us is to tell with honesty what you saw, in order to make people aware of our dignity and strength to help us move forward and reconstruct L'Aquila.

The image above was taken from a collection published in a photography book by Roberto Grillo (2012d). The sign is a message on behalf of the local community to tourists. This was an image taken from a photography book and not one located by the researcher. The sign is tattered, and only in Italian, what about non-native

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speakers? The researcher encountered foreign tourists visiting L'Aquila during the field visits. These tourists, some of whom were families (English being their primary language), how are they to interpret this sign?

Figure 8.4: Access Forbidden

Photo: Author

The sign in the image above (Figure 8.4) states: Vietato L'accesso, Zona Rossa (translated: 'Access Forbidden, Red Zone'). Similar 'no access' signs are placed at all entrances to the red zones. The two images (Figures 8.8 and 8.9) are informative to tourists (at least, those who can read / speak Italian), one identifying no access zones and the other providing a brief outline of acceptable behaviour, similar to a code of conduct. However, this information is limited; one simply restrains the entry of individuals into certain districts whilst the other is part code of conduct, part appeal. There is, then, an apparent lack of eagerness on the part the local community to exploit the disaster for tourism, an issue that was explored in the interviews. For example, in response to the question: 'why has L'Aquila evidently done so little to exploit the earthquake for tourism purposes?' one participant answered as follows:

> **Participant 28**
>
> *For me, in part, it is very much bound to the culture of this place, the city and the way of life is different. For a community with a 'shepherd' culture requires more time, not just to understand what has happened, but also to react. For this reason, it is difficult to begin projects, especially with regards to this type of (dark) tourism, it's not natural to our way of life. This is what I think.*

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With respect to tourism facilities or initiatives that have been implemented since the earthquake, very little has been done in the city, for a number of possible reasons. For example, economic difficulties, disagreements over various projects, and even a lack of social, political and contextual understanding of tourism opportunities may have contributed to the lack of activity. Indeed, from the research, it is evident that there is not a common recognition or understanding of tourism as an opportunity for the local community and the city more generally:

Participant 17

L'Aquila as a tourist city before the earthquake… on a Sunday, if you were to walk around the city, there would be nothing open, nowhere to get a coffee, nothing for locals or tourists. Today it's exactly the same. This city never catered for tourists before the earthquake. In fact, there is probably more chance of seeing one in these few cafes open now on a Sunday than you would have before the earthquake, possibly more out of need than want.

Many respondents expressed reasons that explain L'Aquila's inability or unwillingness to develop any established form of tourism attractions and facilities. The following three extracts are representative of the wider opinions expressed from participants.

Participant 29

I think that, right now, our lives are already full of problems, logistical problems, things that people don't even consider. People might think of the earthquake, the tragedy, the death and all the issues that come with the ruins, instead, its all the 'after' that is difficult, things like removing all your property, where to put it all, your grandparents, and this struck not just me but the entire city. Therefore, the principle objective is retaining a life, I won't say normal but, a little more calm. Therefore, to think of any kind of development like a museum for this type of tourism, to think of something of this sort, if it is to happen then it will come later on. Partly because it's too early and most certainly because of our mentality, we aren't ready or able to find the right idea, we aren't able to exploit what we have. Right now the urgencies for the people lie elsewhere, there is still so much that needs to be done at this stage that people focus on them and how to get their own lives back in place, in some form or another.

Participant 32

However, a major issue is the administration and the mentality of the city. For example, here, if I wanted to do my own memorial museum, then someone will say, well I also need to do my own memorial museum and I will do it 40 meters away from yours and how should we do it definitively or provisionally, do we make it from wood or start from scratch, who should do and how they should do it. So it becomes a question of mentality, the administrators who cannot and are not able to prioritise. Apart from the money, there is no logic because there exists a schizophrenic and a bibliotism towards decision-making, and what happens has the ability to scare, what is needed is a tourism that will provide and something more definitive. There is a gentleman in a bar, one of the few bars open in the historical center, who offered me a coffee and told me two things. "One, why don't you journalists invent some kind of miracle, in order to attract some people. Secondly, if not, you know what could be done, we could do a mock earthquake, and we have shows, where people throw themselves from windows, get some microphones, and we can charge people to purchase tickets for entry". Whilst a little humorous, the idea is there this idea of exploiting that what remains of this city. However, it would be crazy to present such an idea to this community, who would do this? This is one of the most beautiful, natural and historical areas of central Italy. Already before the earthquake we didn't publicise ourselves, then the earthquake, which bought a bit of attention, and now we are going back to the way we were, but with the all the problems that have been left on us, in respects to before.

Participant 34

This is what I think, at the base of things it depends on the base of the cultural foundations, which here are very different to other places. Additionally, are the objectives of what is happening and coming our way? We don't know if there is money, if it is real or phantom money, but at the moment for us it is phantom money, phantom help, and when I talk of objectives, I am simply talking about the need to know, and we would even like to know the ability and impacts that we all put in as local individuals, where will it take us. If we are to draw comparisons to other places, tourism places like Ground Zero, I know where my money will end up and I even know to what extent my money will become of assistance, as I am told that in 10 years that building will be constructed

in that manner, that building will be constructed in another manner, and so on. For us one of the difficult things is time, we are not aware of any time, there is no objective limit or finality in time, even if someone tells me that in 20 years this will be done, yes it's a long time, but it's a goal, it's structured and a goal, but this here doesn't exist. It becomes difficult to even invest in a belief or possibility of something being developed or constructed. Also we are very much involved with our own personal, individual issues, we focus on our own objectives and maybe this is important to get little projects and developments moving, but they are individual and possibly even seen as egotistical, but in this moment it is very much a protective dimension on the part of the people of this city. People try to protect the little they have left.

Certainly, following the earthquake there have not been any significant tourism developments within the city in order to cater for the demand of tourism, perhaps for the reasons expressed above by interview respondents. Nevertheless, tourists are present in the city, so the questions then are: what are they witnessing or gazing upon when visiting the city, what tourism attractions exist and who is responsible for the design and provision of such attractions? It is necessary to address these questions in order to recognise the deeper socio-cultural understanding of potential dark tourism development post-disaster.

8.1.3 The city of L'Aquila: An open museum for tourists

As previously mentioned, when exploring the city as a tourist during field visits, apart from when in the company of local people who were on occasion acting as personal tour guides, the researcher experienced a genuine sense of confusion. These visits were framed by a fundamental lack of understanding of what was being engaged with, and a sense disorientation regarding the layout of the city. L'Aquila is a large city and, without the benefit of directions or signs, it is very easy to feel displaced and lost. Of course, just a stroll through the streets is enough to maintain the attention of any individual; such is the scale of the destruction. However, much is left to the imagination as so little is explained for people who have no history or stories to recall within the city. When interviewing the locals, many identified that the city had become an open museum. The following extracts encapsulate this feeling on behalf of the participants.

Participant 32

There is already a museum, it's right there, everywhere. In the last three years, we have been immersed by so many different expressions, such as L'Aquila is the new Pompeii, no L'Aquila isn't like Pompeii, its different because Pompeii died a long time ago. L'Aquila is a museum where people can walk around, like myself, as I go nearly every evening, and one can see a museum, offering living, historical and natural sciences, L'Aquila is the museum, that's why they don't do one. The city is still so much alive, at times we sneak into the red zone, around the houses, and see the objects, furniture, stuff that still remains in the same place since that night, that is the museum.

Participant 30

…the city is an open museum for all to see. A museum provides a place to continue to tell the story of what happened. In all honesty, that happens, the locals do that continually on a daily basis on the internet via various sites and blogs. For me a museum would be too static and would be too much like the city, like it is now... static.

The participants express the feeling that L'Aquila has become an open museum for people to walk around and visit. However, it is not a museum in a strict sense. Museums are managed and controlled places / environments; they hire staff, and depend on income for maintenance and restoration. They are also places where artifacts or events are explained and or interpreted, where visitors come to learn, to understand. This is not the case in L'Aquila. As fascinating a site of destruction it may be, as a 'museum' it still lacks the ability to tell a human story. It fails to capture the true essence of what the city was like, or to tell the stories of bravery and heroism, pain and suffering, life and death that are commonly associated with such dark tourism sites. These are the real stories of human experience that are vivid and authentic within locations that have been struck by natural disasters.

So, where are these stories, where can they be found when visiting L'Aquila? They can be seen on the Internet and in books or on films. But this is not close enough to the reality of what happened otherwise people (tourists) would not visit. There is more meaning in the actual location; there is a greater opportunity to experience a deeper sense of reality when in the place that the disaster occurred. Tourists in L'Aquila wonder around the 'open museum', but where can they find meaning and human representation amongst the rubble?

The following sections reveal how local people have expressed their desire to present accurate and true reflections of the city's current state and the difficult experiences through which they have lived. Moreover, the research reveals how the local community wants tourists to try and understand what has happened, to attempt to grasp even a small aspect of truth and meaning, which they can then take away and share with others around the world. So it was this question that remained to be answered. Where is it within the city that tourists can find meaning, and begin to understand the locals and the experiences they have endured? Where are the social 'places' where communication with others can be effervescently explored and provide individuals with places to continue conversations with 'others'. As Berger (1967) identified, the capability of keeping the world subjectively believable to the individual is through conversations with 'others'.

8.1.4 Memorialisation: Places of commemoration in L'Aquila

The purpose of this section is to present the ways in which the disaster is memorialised in L'Aquila. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to return briefly to the relevant literature. As considered in more detail in Chapter 4, Berger (1967) suggests that socialisation can never be completed, that it must be a continuous process throughout an individual's life. Humanly constructed worlds are unstable; it is difficult to keep the world subjectively believable. Berger argues that the ability to keep the world subjectively believable is through conversations with 'others'. That is, the individual's world is built up in their own consciousness and it is through conversations with significant others (parents, friends, teachers) that the world is maintained as a subjective reality. However, when such conversations are disrupted, especially by death, the world begins to lose its subjective credibility.

Thus, Berger (1967) suggests that the subjective reality of the individual's world is suspended on a thin line of conversations, yet this precarious existence goes unrecognised because of continuous conversations with others. The preservation of continuity is one of the most fundamental imperatives of social order (Berger, 1967). Consequently, witnessing and mourning the death of others (especially of significant others), and the anticipation and contemplation of one's own death, drives the individual to question the cognitive and normative operating practices of their normal life and their place within society (Berger, 1967). It has, therefore, been recognised that dark tourism destinations may become places where significant conversations can continue, in so doing acting as social places where individuals can continue to understand their subjective realities.

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After the earthquake, the city of L'Aquila and its people became a new 'dark' tourism attraction, which arguably created negative tensions amongst the local community towards tourists. As discussed shortly, these tensions reflected the initial feelings and responses of local people to tourism and tourists. However, it is also recognised that greater understanding on the part of visitors of the earthquake and its consequences is fundamental to establishing a more harmonious relationship between tourists and locals. That is, as considered in Chapter 4, the concept of empathy suggests that humans can enter into the emotional state of another's suffering and feel his or her pain in the sense that it was their own emotional state of suffering (Davis, 1996). Empathy invokes an active engagement and the willingness of a spectator to become part of another's experience, and to share the feeling of that experience.

One means of achieving such empathy and, indeed, encouraging the continuation of significant conversations, is through memorialisation or, more specifically, the creation of memorials that act as a focus for both locals and tourists. As discussed in Chapter 4, Foote (2003) suggests that communities struck by disasters often seek to memorialise the victims and pay tribute to their sacrifice at places where lives were abruptly ended, at a site where people are buried, or more generally in a public place. Not only does the process of planning, creating and establishing such memorials assist a community in coming to terms with a disaster, but the memorials then become the focus of individual and collective loss, and a symbol of a community working towards common and collective goals. They also become, of course, an attraction to be visited by tourists

The research revealed that such memorialisation has taken place in L'Aquila, as demonstrated by the examples below. It must be stressed that this development of memorials is typical in locations of death and destruction (Foote, 2003), and is common at dark tourism attractions, as discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Memorialisation meets an individual and collective need, as described by the following interviewee.

> **Participant 15**
>
> *My uncle died under the rubble. If one is to remove the building and reconstruct an entirely new property over time... this includes the change of not just physical matter, such as buildings, roads and most importantly people and especially with generations of them changing overtime, but also the historical memory of people will filter away. So physical memorials are important if people are to remember what has happened, not just to the*

city, but what is important are the changes for each and every individual depending on their experiences.

8.1.4.1 Example 1: Social places of memorialisation – The student house

The following four photographs (Figures 8.5 to 8.8) of a memorial place were taken during a field visit.

Figure 8.5: Student House: Ground Zero 1

Photo: Author

Figure 8.6: Student House: Ground Zero 2

Photo: Author

Figure 8.7: Student House: Ground Zero 3

Photo: Author

Central Sign between the images of the students reads:

'The angles of the student house'

The large central sign reads:

'Those who have taken our future do not take our small process of justice'

Also attached to the site is this message below

Figure 8.8: Student House Poem

A drop of oil Dew perfect ontop of a green leaf, perfect, slips away slowly at first light of dawn

Then as if he had fear to make the leap, stop a moment on the extreme edge eventually determined by choice already made, grab the courage and leave happy

To all students who here have lost their lives your courage is for us, forever, for motives of pride

L'Aquila April 6, 2009, because it will not be forgotten, because it did not happen in vain. To give voice to those who are here no more.

Photo: Author

The images above reveal how this 'place' has become a place-memory for individuals. During the earthquake, the student house collapsed killing eight people. It is a location where the 'end of place' has occurred; the death of the students and the falling of the building represent the end-of-place. To this day the memorial remains, and both local people and visitors continue to leave flowers. Thus, the student house has become a focal attraction and, in many ways, the symbol of the earthquake. It is a place of memory, not only for the collective local community, but for the friends and families of the students who lost their lives. It is a social place where the collective and the individual can remember their dead.

8.1.4.2 Example 2: Constructed monuments

The image below (Figure 8.9) is of a memorial built opposite the student house on a small roundabout. The Memorial was erected by fire fighters in memory of the students who died when their student house collapsed during the earthquake. Similarly, Figures 8.10 and 8.11 below present another monument that was constructed and placed within the main square, Piazza del Duomo.

Figure 8.9: For the students: the fire service memorial

Photo: Author

Figure 8.10: Memorial in Piazza del Duomo

Photo: Author

Figure 8.11: Sign on memorial

Photo: Author

<div align="center">

The sign (Figure 8.11) reads:

A memory for the victims of the earthquake on the 6ᵗʰ April 2009:

The fire department of L'Aquila

</div>

These two examples of constructed monuments are representations of how the collective community has created memorials in order to remember the dead. They provide the collective community with a place where they can go and experience the

shared social memory of the tragic event. Inevitably, individuals will have had different experiences, resulting in different memories. However, the earthquake struck the entire population of L'Aquila and, whilst individuals had their own experiences during the earthquake, that night bought the community together. The monuments have become new social places where memories can be evoked within individuals.

8.1.4.3 Example 3: Keys to the home

Figure 8.12: We have a dream, L'Aquila

Photo: Author

Figure 8.13: Keys 1

Photo: Author

Figure 8.14: Keys 2

Photo: Author

The examples of place-memory above (shown in Figures 8.12 to 8.14) are displays where locals have left the keys to their homes and messages to loved ones. If one is referring to 'place' in terms of its descriptive location, then on this occasion 'place' refers to the Corso Vittorio Emanuele (located just of Piazza del Duomo). However, representation of 'place' can also be representative of the social constructionist and phenomenological aspects of what 'place' means and represents to the local collective community (Cresswell, 2004). In this example, especially with reference to the keys that have be left, the significance is a collective reference to the loss of one's home. The act of people leaving their keys is a display of how the locals have come to collectively view the impact of the earthquake on their lives. The locals have lost their homes; the key is a symbol that represents ownership to the home. Together as a community many of the locals have created this new 'place', replete with symbolic meaning, which local people have collectively shared to establish and add meaning to the subjective world, because the objective realties have been placed into question. There is a strong act of collective recognition within this new social 'place'. It should be noted that images above were taken during Stage 1 research yet these 'temporary' examples of place-memory were still in place one year later during Stage 2 field research.

8.1.4.4 Example 4: Amarcord – I remember

Figure 8.15: Commercial Bar, Amacord

Photo: Author

Figure 8.16: Amacord 'post-it' notes 1

Photo: Author

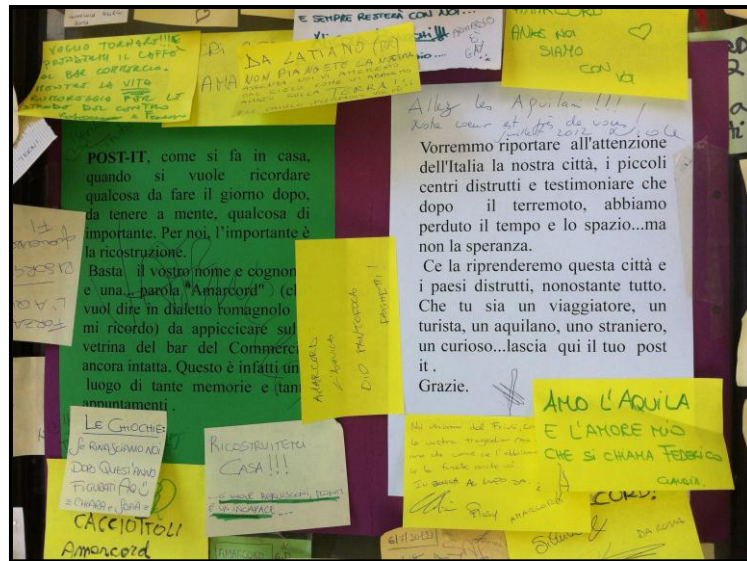**Figure 8.17:** Amacord 'post-it' notes 2

Photo: Author

The following transcriptions are of the two letters that can be seen in Figure 8.17 above.

Green letter translated:

We would like to bring our town, the small-destroyed communities, to the attention of the Italians, that after the earthquake we have lost time and space but not hope. Notwithstanding all that happened, we will get our town and destroyed communities back. Whether you are a tourist, an Aquilano, a foreigner, or just a curious person, leave your post-it here, thank you.

White letter translated:

As we do at home, when we want to remember something important, for us the significant thing is to rebuild. All we need is your name and surname and a word 'Amacord' (which means 'I remember' in the Romagnolo dialect) to be attached to the window of this bar, which is still standing. This is a place full of memories and lots of human interaction.

The images (Figures 8.15 to 8.17) are provided because they are illustrative of the manner in which 'places' become place-memory as a result of communities constructing memorials in certain areas. Not all are necessarily places with significant association; here, the place-memory is located near the central Piazza del Duome in L'Aquila on the front doors of a commercial bar that is no longer in use. The back-story to this 'place', at some stage, someone has written on a post-it note and stuck it to the door, the first of many. When visiting, the researcher noticed a small pouch

attached to the bottom of the door where there were pens, but no more post-it notes. The intention was to allow people to come and leave a message and, subsequently, many people left a similar message with the word 'Amarcord'. The word comes from the title of an Old Italian comedy-drama film directed by Federico Fellini, and in the Romance language spoken in Romagna (Northern Italy) simply means, 'I Remember'.

Similar to the place-memory example of the keys (Figures 8.13 and 8.14 above), what has been constructed here is a place where people can come and share and express their emotions and feelings. Significantly, the majority of the post-it notes are expressing the 'amarcord' message. This shows how as a collective, individuals can, without even meeting one another, create meaning and understanding to their subjective realities within the world. As noted on the white letter, this 'place' is full of the memories of both locals and tourists. Additionally, the final suggestion on the white letter is how the 'place' has become full of human interaction, allowing individuals to share stories and experiences, and to remember the dead. As suggested, it is in these 'places' where conversations with others transpire and consequently, individuals can continue to add meaning to the subjective world.

8.1.4.5 Example 5: Roberto Grillo's photos as tourism attractions

Figure 8.18: Grillo's image in L'Aquila

Photo: Author

The photograph above (Figure 8.18) depicts an image taken by local photographer Roberto Grillo (2012). This image, along with a few others, was placed in the center of

L'Aquila on Corso Vittorio Emanuele. This is what Grillo had to say when questioned about it during the interviews:

I tell you what I was a little worried about this and this photo especially. I studied this photo and with Vincenzo who is my friend, and you know what, when I did the exhibition and I put this photo on show which was then seen by a lot of people, no one took it badly, everyone accepted it. Maybe that's because I did it, if it was done by someone else I don't know. Being a local, well known, being taken by me it was maybe easier to accept by the local Aquilani. However, the motive behind that photo was to say, ladies and gentleman look here this happened, here people died and people there are people who lost everything. Let's stop one moment and reflect a little and from my point of view it should be done with respect. Then most probably for a person with a different perspective, let's say 'darker', may find different significances from the photo, but again that is their problem. My motivation is that the people who have lost loved ones already feel as if they have been abandoned, therefore I want reawaken peoples consciences.

Grillo's motive is his desire to express through photography the reality of what has happened in L'Aquila, reflecting the strong desire of the local community, as discussed previously, to try and share their experiences. In so doing, Grillo is assisting people, tourists or otherwise, to listen and understand the reality of L'Aquila's current situation.
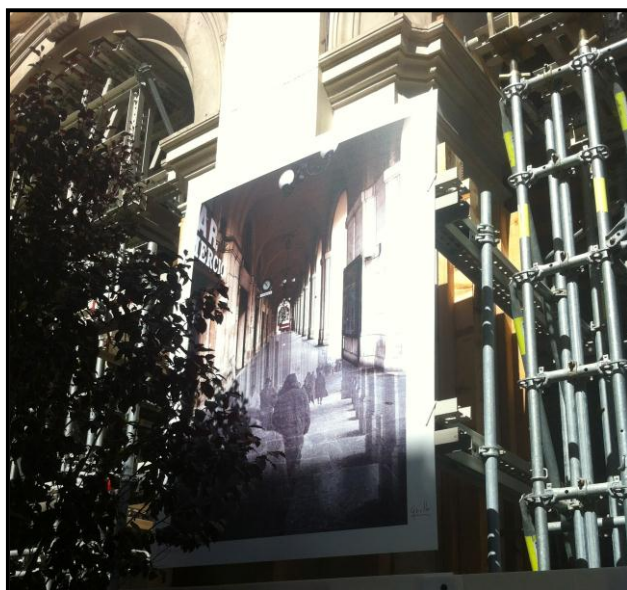
Figure 8.19: Fantasmi 3 (street photo)

Photo: Author

Figure 8.20: Fantasmi 3

Source: Grillo (2012: 85)

The first image above (Figure 8.19) was again taken by the researcher, whilst the second (Figure 8.20) is the original by Roberto Grillo (2012). The passage below is how Grillo explained this image during the primary research:

> *The fantasma photo, I have never done it before in my life. I have never mounted photos, well I may have done it once before for a photo on Auschwitz. It's a technique that I do not like too much. However, on that day, it was a little random, it came and is the only one I did, I didn't do any others. However, there was something in this one which I was convinced with. I feel these photos have an ability to really impact an individual. I am looking at continuing to possibly create a few others. I would like to work with some families who have lost loved ones if they willing and do some more. Because at the end of the day, that what's left, look after a tragedy what remains, death and destruction, what else remains… the hope of rebirth, yes but that's fictitious, whilst death and destruction are there. Sure re-construction will begin but death remains, and for this I can understand this type of tourism (dark), I don't know what pushes a dark tourist, I don't know, I would like to. I am very curious.*

The above images show how 'places' which have specific meaning to people can be created within society. Here, Grillo is expressing his view of what has become of

L'Aquila since the earthquake. There is much emphasis placed on the people who once lived within the city. He aims to evoke a feeling of the great loss that this city has suffered.

The examples of memorialisation collectively portray and reveal different approaches towards the understanding place (Chapter 4). These can be individual acts expressing emotions and feelings, which, in the cases above, subsequently become collective expressions. As a consequence, place-memory locations have been established within social environments. It has been recognised that tourists visit for personal reasons, which are wide and diverse. These memorials, essentially dark tourism attractions, are public places where people can continue to communicate with one another (Stone, 2010) in order to share experiences and in doing so continue to ensure that the subjective view of the world is maintained.

8.1.4.6 Example 6: Words of inspiration and signs of recognition

The preceding memorial examples (Figures 8.21 to 8.28 below) have identified the ways in which locals have reacted since the earthquake (such as leaving keys to their homes) and the various places (the student house being an example) that become significant symbols and places of remembrance. The final example will focus on how locals have expressed themselves through, what will be called 'words of inspiration' and 'signs of recognition'.

Figure 8.21: RIPRENDIAMOCI LA CITTA: Let's take back our city

Photo: Author

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Figure 8.22: RICOSTRUIAMOL AQ: Let's rebuild L'Aquila

 Photo: Author

Figure 8.23: L'AQUILA NON DIMENTICA 309: L'Aquila will not forget 309

Photo: Author

Figure 8.24: LA MUSICA CONSTRUCISCE: Music Rebuilds

Photo: Author

Figure 8.25: ZONA FRANCA? ENONOMIA? RICOSTRUZIONE? SENZA LAVORO SENSA CASA L'AQUILA NON RINASCRE: Without work, without a home, L'Aquila will never be reborn

Photo: Author

Figure 8.26: S.O.S L'AQUILA CHIMA ITALIA: S.O.S. L'Aquila calls Italy

Photo: Author

Figure 8.27: TERRERMOTOSTRO: We will stand firm

Photo: Author

Figure 8.28: L'Aquila 06-04-2009 Risorceremo: We will rise again

Photo: Author

This collection of signs, posters, graffiti and banners are spread around the city of L'Aquila and, similar to the previous examples, are replete in meaning and value. The messages again portray the emotions and lived experiences of local people since the earthquake. They talk of suffering and the lack of work, they call for help from the rest of the nation, and emphasis is placed on the need to rebuild, to be reborn, and to reconstruct. These signs are telling a story, a story that has been lived in the city since the earthquake. And aside from the ruined city itself, these signs and other memorials have become tourist attractions.

8.1.5 Memorials of commemoration become tourism attractions

Figure 8.29: We Remember!

Photo: Author

The above discussions have led precisely to this point. The examples identify locations that have become full of value and are ways in which the locals have expressed and shared their feelings and experiences to the outside world. If it is the abandonment of keys to the home, or the mark of recollection of 'amarcord', to the continuous embellishment of the student house, and the images of friends who lie alone remembering their love ones. It is these areas that have become the places where tourists visit within the city of L'Aquila (as can be seen from Figure 8.29 above).

8.1.6 The end of memorialisation: Lost memories

Figure 8.30: Fading Memories

Photo: Authors' Relative

The image above (taken by a relative of the researcher in March 2013, Figure 8.30) represents how a lack of control and management can result in the diminishing value of 'places'. Of course, many of these places appear in unlikely locations and, therefore, the duration of time will eventually see the end of these places which have become sites of memorialisation and symbols of the earthquake. So many of the symbols created by the collective community in L'Aquila, so many were wonderful expressions, but the original desire that started them begins to fade. Each day brings new light and new hope, but the place-memories that have been created will eventually be removed and forgotten. It is for this reason that the management of tourism and of destinations is so important. The locals wish to express their experiences and feelings and, through adequate management, this could have been done. An open and free museum of L'Aquila remains; people will continue to visit and wonder the streets with little sense of direction and purpose, continuously searching for places where they can find true meaning, which is often expressed through local action. From time to time they will come across place-memories, which have been

erected over time by the collective locals. It is within these places that the locals tell their stories, and provide tourists will an opportunity to emphasis and understand, even if it is only a small sense of understanding, at least it begins to achieve what the locals want; to be understood.

8.1.7 Tourism development breakdown: the case of L'Aquila

The previous section discussed the specific development of tourism sites in L'Aquila and how they been established in various places throughout the city by the collective community. It further identified that these places have been constructed because the of the local communities desire to express individual or collective experiences that have endured years of emotional struggle since the disaster. These various sites around the city have frequently been associated as acts of memorialisation and remembrance on behalf of the residents to the 309 individuals who tragically lost their lives. L'Aquila's lack of tourism management has resulted in an open city museum where tourists can walk among the ruins, with little or no direction and communication on behalf of the community. The following participant response distinguishes the importance of memorials and how they can assist the living community.

> *Participant 7*
> *In order to develop dark tourism, people need to rationalise; there needs to be a place or a something for memorial purposes, because we cannot pretend that nothing has happened. If there was a memorial then maybe we could begin to live this differently, more consolidation, we might be sweeter by nature. But it shouldn't be something where people can go and gawp over others. It needs to be more tranquil, a tranquil memory. A place where people can go and remember their lost loved ones, but this needs to be done with a sweeter sentiment towards remembrance, eventually the pain needs to be let go of and people need to be able to remember with a softer heart, and not with anger. At the moment there is a lot of pain, which is fuelled by anger.*

Inevitably, when people do not have places to go and share their experiences, sites of memorialisation can be constructed as a result of emotional reactions, such as anger. The examples discussed above recognise how such places can express significant meaning, and consequently, they have become some of the focal tourism attractions. What was also recognised is the lack of organisation and management of these places and how over time they can become neglected.

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L'Aquila, through its own actions, or more accurately, its own inaction towards tourism development post-disaster, has fallen short on many levels. This research has recognised the lack of tourism infrastructure that has been provided by the city. What has occurred with regards to tourism is an open museum for tourists and other groups to visit and wonder freely around many parts of the city. Through emotional reactions, such as frustration and anger, the locals have expressed their feelings in various different ways, including the formation on memorials scattered around the Historical City Center. As a result of the lack of tourism management, the open city museum becomes a bewildering experience without any logical explanation and understanding, leaving tourists and non-locals disorientated when left to walk alone through the ruined streets. Amongst the ruins and the confusion experienced by strangers when passing through, there are places of meaning and the locals, who have suffered from the event, have assisted the creation of these. As suggested, the city of L'Aquila and all is physical destruction is not the only tourism attraction that has become a part of the demand post-disaster, the locals are also part of the attraction.

Participant 14

People come up to me and ask, "can you tell me which way to via September to the student house?" what can you say to these people, you just indicate which direction and get on with your day. Fundamentally, these people want to see the student house, and it doesn't bother me. But I would like it if someone would stop me and ask if I am an Aquilano, ask how I am coping, what has been done and hasn't been done, ask me what I think of the situation. It was something that was evident for some friends of mine in Milan, who didn't believe in the filtered media on TV, of all the channels the only one that speaks some truth is Rai 3. So, I would like more attention towards people knowing the truth.

It has been clearly documented, not only in the passage above but also throughout this thesis, that whilst the locals have expressed their displeasure towards tourists in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, over the course of time, they feel that they have been suppressed and forgotten (this will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis). There is the desire on the part of local people to tell share their experiences, and it is their stories that are part of the tourism demand. However, this has not been successfully implemented within the city. This can, in part, be explained by the culture of the community, closed and resistant to outside influences and ideas. For this reason, L'Aquila provides an example of how not to develop tourism post-disaster. The earthquake created a new tourism demand, and the city of L'Aquila failed to

provide the structures of supply to meet the demand. In doing so, they failed to recognise the potential benefits of tourism. Exploitation does not need to be for monetary value, it can also be for expression, enlightenment and relief, all of which are issues that are arguably suppressed within the city and the locals; hence the sporadic acts of remembrance and memorialisation. This has resulted in tourists visiting and becoming part of a negatively viewed group of people. It has become apparent that post-disaster tourism in L'Aquila has failed in all attempts to welcome tourists, to visit and achieve whatever experience they seek. What is required is communication between not only tourists and the local community, but evidently between the various stakeholders within the local community. Every member of the community will have their own motives for memorialisation, which are dependent on and relative to their experiences.

> ***Participant 15***
>
> *What is important, when considering any development, whether tourism or other things, is the purpose behind them and are they suitable to the people they are portraying. So if one is to build or leave some form of site for tourists, the important thing here in L'Aquila is the memory of what happened is kept but within restricted conditions, dependent on what the people of L'Aquila want.*

The role of various individuals and stakeholder groups present within L'Aquila and their opinions towards the role of various parties with regards to post-disaster tourism development is considered later in this chapter.

8.1.8 Interim summary: The story so far

This section has attempted to immerse the reader into the city and to reveal the experience it offers for a tourist. This was followed by discussions on how the local community has expressed itself through various acts of memorialisation and remembrance. It is suggested that such sites of memorialisation have become social 'places' where the locals express their feelings and emotions drawn out by the experiences they have encountered. This has resulted in 'places' being created that have added meaning. The city of L'Aquila, as observed by local people, has become an open and free museum where tourists can stroll and gaze at the damage caused by the earthquake. As discussed, there is a lack of tourism facilities provided by the community but, nevertheless, this section has established that the local community has expressed the desire to tell its stories, and to help tourists understand the reality

of the post-disaster city. What has transpired is that, through collective acts of memorialisation and remembrance on the behalf of the community, new 'places' of significant meaning have been created. These places have unintentionally but inevitably become the focal tourism attractions because of what they represent, profound 'places' portraying meaning of personal experiences. Within these new 'places', tourists begin to recognise the devastating realities for the local community generated by the earthquake. Therefore, these new social 'places' are locations where residents and tourists come together and, as Berger (1967) argues, continue conversations with each other, thereby maintaining the subjective reality of the individual. Overall, however, the research reveals that, since the earthquake, there has been a general lack of interest in purposefully developing tourism attractions and facilities in the city of L'Aquila – with a focus on the earthquake and its impacts. The chapter now presents the first of the *Intermezzos* which, based upon the responses of a number of interviewees, attempts to re-capture the moment when the earthquake struck L'Aquila, presenting a vivid, honest and absorbing story through the experiences of some of those who lived through the disaster.

8.2 *Intermezzo 1:* The Initial Impact: Participants relive their experiences

The initial impacts of the earthquake have already been revealed through the images included in Stage 1 research discussions. However, as a means of initiating the in-depth interviews at Stage 2, respondents were asked to recall the moment when the earthquake struck, the purpose being to encourage them to reveal their remembered emotions as the disaster first struck. By focusing respondents' minds on the event itself, this was also considered an effective 'ice-breaker' to start the interviews. Therefore, prior to focusing on the DTDF in line with the research objectives, this first *Intermezzo* presents some interview extracts which reveal the initial impacts of the earthquake on the lives of individual participants in the research. The images (Figures 8.31 to 8.35) that are provided alongside the text are not photographs of the participants. However, they have been combined with the extracts to provide a visual interpretation of the disaster and, together with the words of the respondents, to immerse the reader into the event that so rapidly changed the lives of the Aquilani on April the 6th 2009.

Figure 8.31: Victim trapped under the rubble

Source: Live-Journal (2009)

Participant 18

Of course, at the moment my house is unfit for purpose due to grave structural damage. Fortunately the house did not totally crumble. However, the wall next to my bed did; as I awoke in the mist of darkness, just in time I managed to get out of bed and got under my desk. Right at the moment at which I launched myself under my desk the wall collapsed onto my bed. So I managed to move just in time without any serious injuries, just with bruises and cuts, but those stupid cuts seemed to seep a lot of blood. Then I tried to remove the dust from my face, whilst the light in the room would come and go; fortunately the light came back quickly, my face was dirty and covered in blood, so let's say it was rather traumatic. Even if I didn't have the time in reality to live the trauma, because I had my parents, grandma, cousin, uncle all living in an apartment close by. I instantly motivated myself to see if they were okay. Fortunately, regarding personal loss and death, we didn't have to experience this, which of course instantly provided me with a sense of serenity.

Figure 8.32: Easter services were held in many of the 67 tent cities in the Abruzzo region

Source: BBC News (2009)

'Hundreds of people made homeless by Monday's earthquake in the Italian city of L'Aquila have attended Easter Mass. Survivors used a makeshift altar in a giant tent. Similar services are being held in many surrounding village.' BBC News (2009).

Figure 8.33: Thousands mourn quake victims at funeral mass - Coffins of the victims were laid out on the piazza d'Armi in L'Aquila

Source: Donadio (2009)

> **Participant 21**
>
> *Okay, the 6th of April, 2009, 3:32am. I was at home and at that time I was asleep. My mother and father were at home and, as the*

earthquake struck, we ran out of the house. Whilst the house did not suffer any major damage, the structure and foundations of the property were ruined. My house was right at the doors, entering the historical center. When we ran out of the house we could see all the smoke, and the dust from the center, which was covering everything. At that moment, I realised that I would not be able to go back into my house; it was evident, all the damage in the first moments was overwhelming. I saw houses collapsing as I went past them, and people covered in blood.

I didn't have any major personal loss, apart from my grandparents who were stuck for several hours under the rubble before they were freed. Otherwise, the major lost to my family and me was our home. Whilst it might seem like a trivial thing, but I never thought I would have the fear of being in my own home. I was able to get some of my stuff; I haven't had the chance to take everything, where can I put it all. So, I got some stuff, obviously, like almost everyone I imagine, thieves came and took stuff that they might have considered valuable, but then the rest is still there. So the personal damage, well, I lost me, I lost who I was in there, because in reality I left that house a completely new person. The person I am now is not the same person who went to bed that evening before the earthquake, certainly.

Figure 8.34: Victims embrace in the aftermath of the earthquake

Source: The Washington Post (2009)

Participant 25

*I was at home, and at eleven-ish there was a tremor. Not many people left their houses; after all, for months before hand we had felt small tremors. Earthquakes cannot be predicted, but there were warnings that a bigger earthquake was coming. At eleven when there was the first tremor, I was watching TV. I got up and went into the corridor of the apartment block and there were some students who where outside, they were worried, scared, some crying. We tried to stay calm, and came to the conclusion that there is no point being outside so we all went back into our apartments, and decided if anything else happens, we would meet up again outside, so I went back in. I had a larger room and a wall partition in the middle. When they built it they told me it would be strong and would withstand an earthquake, as it was fixed to the floor and the ceiling. There was a small bed next to the partition which I have been sleeping in recently, but my daughter told me I should sleep in another little room just in case. So I decided to take her advice and slept in my bedroom. I got into bed as normal, however, small tremors continued, so I got some pillows close to me. At around 3:20 I woke, I felt this strange feeling in the air and I wrapped myself in the duvet. When earthquakes strike, there is a noise that the tremor creates, like a loud bang, but I didn't hear it, I was frozen, almost as if I was in a coma. Then I came round and I had the feeling of being in a washing machine, with the room spinning and the same noise, boom, boom boom, boom, boom, continuously, and I asked myself 'Oh lord when will this stop?' Eventually it did and I got up and went into the other room and saw that the wall partition had collapsed onto the bed; it was a complete mess. If I didn't sleep in my room that evening I would have been covered by the wall. In the actual moment I wasn't sacred of the earthquake and what was happening. The entire apartment was in a chaotic state, so I left and went back into the corridor outside and no one could be seen, and I asked myself, 'all this and no one is leaving?' Then the door opposite opens and the lady shouts to me 'ignora dobbiamo uscire!' (*translated: 'lady we must get out!'). I couldn't get anything from my apartment, I was thinking, 'I was in my pyjamas' and the lady come over to me and grabs my shoulders and again shouts 'signora dobbiamo uscireeeeeeeeee!!!!!!!!!' She never gave me time to speak, and she continued 'me segue, me segue, Io ho la macchina' (*translated: 'follow me, follow me, I have a car'). So I turned, grabbed*

my keys and left. As we left I was calling for the professor who lived next door. I was shouting his name as we were leaving, however, they only managed to get him out at six in the morning because they had to break down his door.

Figure 8.35: Victim pulled from collapsed building

Source: AFP (2009)

Participant 30

Well, at 3:32 I was in bed, after the first tremors my sister and I were talking and we decided to stay in bed. Then the earthquake struck at 3:32. I was in bed and there I remained. In the sense that I lived in a house which was quite fragile and therefore, it instantly crumbled, I didn't even have time to get out of bed, I was left stuck there in bed, and nothing, I waited, I waited for someone to come. I was lucky because I was left with my duvet over my head, so it covered my face and made it easier to breathe a little, and fortunately there wasn't much on top of me. Therefore I was able to talk and people were able to hear me and after a few hours my father who didn't live with me, realised the actuality of the situation, came to where I was living with two other people, they broke down the door, began to dig through the rubble and they managed to find me. I have to tell you it was the most beautiful sensation of my entire life, to feel the hand of another person who was touching my back, they removed the bricks and I said to myself, 'I have made it'.

I lived in Via Roma and, therefore, in the center. I left the house with a broken arm, of course I wasn't in the best of conditions, we went to Piazza San Pietro, the only Piazza that was free within the area, and

we stayed there until 8 or 9 in the morning, I was in a car, along with another person who was in a much worse condition to me, and we waited for someone to come. An ambulance arrived in a piazza close by, we got into the ambulance and told them where to go, because the ambulance had come from Chieti and didn't know where the hospital was. Then I realised the gravity of the situation, the hospital looked like it should have been in Bahgdad.

I lost my glasses, and I was bleeding, and it gave me the impression… there were people all over the place, on the floor, covered up, blood, it was an intense sensation. I think I might have been lucky to spend the night in the manner of which I did. I think it would have been worse to spend the night digging and searching for people, that would have been really difficult and they are brave people and it must have been a really difficult experience.

8.2.1 *Intermezzo 1*: Summary

In presenting the experiences of some respondents during the initial moments of the earthquake, it is evident that not only was it a traumatic event for them but they were able to describe their emotions in a vivid, emotional and authentic way. Their descriptions require no further commentary yet, as noted above, the main purpose of asking respondents to recapture their feelings and emotions as the earthquake struck was to allow them to engage with the past in order to be more explorative and open when discussing issues more closely related to the research in general and topics to be explored through the application of the Dark Tourism Development Framework in particular.

8.3 Social construction of character: an Aquilano perspective

As discussed in Chapter 4, the predominant theoretical perspective framing this research is Berger and Luckmann's concept of the social construction of reality, central to which is the idea of 'reality of everyday life' (1991 [1966]: 13). They suggest that there exist different realities, such as the realities of different cultures and different groups, which have their own norms, values and traditions. Consequently, they argue that it is essential to recognise how individuals are shaped by their cultures; that is, a structured understanding of individual personalities is enhanced by understanding societies and collective approaches to life (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). At the same time, the theory of the social construction of reality maintains that

humans construct society, and that socially constructed environments impact on the members of that society, the way they see their world and respond to various phenomena.

Others have argued similarly. Boas (1982, cited in Moore, 2004: 34), for example, suggests that the experiences of an individual are 'largely determined by the culture in which he [sic] lives', whilst Geertz (1973: 5) views man as an 'animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun'. Equally, Hagedorn (1981) defines culture as a shared set of symbols, including technological and social innovations, that have accumulated over time and that have assisted individuals, to live collectively.

However, the ways in which people understand their reality are relative to history and culture. They are not only explicit to certain cultures and periods in history, but are also viewed as products of that history and culture, and are dependent upon the prevailing social and economic arrangements in a particular culture at that time (Burr, 2003). Through socialisation, every society has the ability to transmit objectivated meanings (knowledge) from one generation to another; the individual learns the objectivated meanings, identifies with them and shaped by them. By absorbing them, he makes them his meanings, and becomes a person who retains these meanings and who epitomises and expresses them (Berger, 1967).

Within the context of theory of the social construction of reality, Stage 1 of the research in this thesis focused on the history of L'Aquila, exploring the realities of the past that have assisted in shaping the city. However, in order to elicit a deeper, richer understanding of the local community's responses to the emergence of dark tourism in L'Aquila, the empirical research at Stage 2 sought to investigate further, specifically exploring what it was to be a local Aquilano (Figure 8.36).

Figure 8.36: Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF Section One)
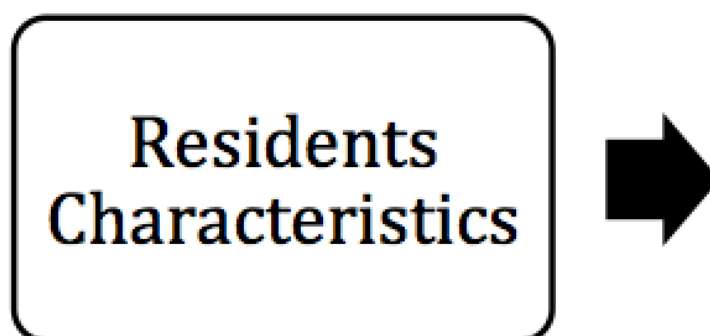
Fundamental to the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF - see Chapter 5) is an understanding of the cultural factors that shape the identity of the local community. Hence, the research, through the semi-structured interviews, sought to identify how the socio-cultural environment of L'Aquila potentially influenced or shaped local people's attitudes or responses to becoming a dark tourism destination (Research Objective 5 – see Chapter 1). Thus, interview respondents were asked what they regarded as main factors that shaped their social identity.

8.3.1 Participant responses: Towards a collective local identity in L'Aquila

In order to explore how local people in L'Aquila see themselves, how their collective social identity is, in their view, constructed, interviewees were asked how they might best describe the mentality to an outsider, to someone who does not know the city and its people. In addition they were asked to consider how the people of L'Aquila feel as a community and how they react or behave towards foreigners and tourists (Italian or otherwise). When necessary, interviewees were also asked if they could explain why certain types of community characteristics exist.

In order to understand the social characteristics of a destination and in particular how a community will react to dark tourism, it is necessary to understand the community from a more general perspective, specifically from the position of the social construction of reality and how people are socialised into communities in order to live together harmoniously.

Participants throughout the interviews all identified very similar local characteristics. It was continuously stressed that the local community has long been isolated from external influences; its mountainous landscape has kept the Aquilani secluded and this has impacted on their closed nature and resilient attitudes to change, tourists and students (who form a large part of the community). An abundance of extracts could have be chosen to highlight this point, the following once again is representative of the entire cohort of participants that were interviewed.

> *Participant 26*
>
> *Well, an Aquilano is a man who holds closely his own town, his territory, his land, and a man who is very much bound to his origins, traditions in the way he lives his city. On the other hand, he is also a little suspicious at the beginning, of the other(s)… when involved with*

external encounters. However, getting to know him well (generally speaking about Aquilanos) he is a man who eventually opens his heart to you. He then gives you his trust, and then he will have a lot of time for you and eventually his friendship. Therefore, this is the real Aquilano and the Aquilano who… well, our mountains have provided us with protection for many years; however, at the same they have contributed to our rather reserved mentality.

There are many key points to be taken from this first representation of what it is to be an Aquilano. Firstly, there is reference to the city and how important it is for a local. Then it is emphasised how the community of L'Aquila can feel closed and a little suspicious towards non-residents during initial encounters. However, this suspicion can be overcome and the boundaries broken over time, when trust is created and a new friendships form. Finally, the respondent refers to the surrounding mountains and how these have acted as a protective barrier, not only keeping people out but also functioning as a means of keeping people within the city. From this, he concludes that locals have a rather reserved mentality. Similar issues are apparent in the responses from participant 22:

Participant 22

The characteristics of the city of L'Aquila are those of a mountain city which has its own beautiful noble traditions, its own past, rich in history; it was a city which was rich in art, monuments, and this characterised certain aspects such as our way of seeing, our way of consideration for each other. A city that was cautions to many cultural aspects, and at the same time it is a reasonably small city, with little interest in industrial development and modern technology. Therefore, it remained a little in the noble and provincial times. For this it was closed within itself, within the boundaries of its own world. Therefore, it had great advantages of an environment which was very traditional, not too broad, it allowed for a peaceful life, a tranquil life, as there wasn't the chaos of a modern city. Therefore, in L'Aquila there was a quality of life that we could say was more than good, it was very high. However, at the same time it was a bit cramped in other respects, especially for open-mindedness. Nevertheless, even if once there was some very strict practices, despite this there was a very good level of culture in the overall population.

The similarities here to the response of Participant 26 above are evident. Participant 22 refers to particular factors that have molded the character of the local community - the surrounding mountainous, the relatively small size of city, and the lack of interest in modern development and technology have all influenced the cultural identity. Additionally, there is recognition of the cultural history of L'Aquila, a provincial city from noble times, reflecting the influence of the city's cultural history on the identity of contemporary residents. Participant 23 below also identifies the impact of the authentic and traditional culture of L'Aquila on the modern day community.

> ### Participant 4
>
> *An Aquilano carries with them on their shoulders years of isolation that has affected and impacted on their mentality. Having gone to university outside of L'Aquila, military service outside of L'Aquila, having married a coastal woman, and having a house here in Silvi, therefore, I have had contact with other people. However, an Aquilano, is a population reasonably closed, disinclined to relationships with others, non-trusting of others.*

> ### Participant 2
>
> *The Aquilani are a little strange. The symbol of the city is a Latin phrase Immota Manet, meaning the city is still… what it means is this is a city that isn't subject to change, it doesn't accept change. It has a form of detachment a little snobbish.*

The participant is referring to this strong sense of fixed identity which is ever present within the local mentality.

Of the participants interviewed, not all were born and raised in L'Aquila. Some were students, or had moved to L'Aquila some years earlier. However, when they were asked how best to understand the mentality of the Aquilani, these participants expressed the same views as others. They responses echo those of the locals, as presented by an extract from participant 6 and 2.

> ### Participant 6
>
> *The Aquilani are a little closed with us students who are not from the city. They stick between themselves. If you are Aquilano then you are okay; however, if you come from somewhere else, they look at you with suspicion. Especially the students who have to take all the blame*

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for everything that is wrong. In two years that I lived in L'Aquila, I never had a friend who was Aquilano. I knew a few Aquilano, but the ones I did know where either relatives or I knew them before I came here. The students from L'Aquila create friendships between themselves and the non Aquilani students create their own friendships. It is very difficult to integrate with the locals.

Participant 2

Of course there were around 30,000 students who were seen as a foreign body. Of course they were here, they were tolerated, they brought positive effects. However, there was never real contact and sentiment towards them. It was a sense of, they are here, they will come and go, all they bring is noise, this kind of polemic existed.

8.3.2 Section summary

Research into the cultural characteristics of the residents of L'Aquiila has revealed a society that has long been isolated from external influences and, hence, has been resistant to change. This section on cultural characteristics provides the platform to now consider and critically investigate the *Residents' Attitudes towards Tourists Post-Disaster* (DTDF) and thus, begin to establish what the locals of L'Aquila felt towards 'dark' tourism / tourists post earthquake. Before doing so however, Intermezzo 2 will allow the reader to engage with a local who was also an interview participant.

8.4 *Intermezzo 2*: The story of the Vittorini Familgia

The following images and words are drawn primarily from Robert Grillo's book and, in particular, an interview with Vincenzo Vittorini, whose family is the focus of this *Intermezzo* and who was keen for his story to be told in this thesis. Both Grillo and Vittorini seek to develop a sense of deep and true meaning of the consequences of the earthquake through relating the experiences of local people. Therefore, the following provides a brief engagement with a local Aquilano who, like many in the city, lost loved ones during the earthquake. During the primary research, when asked of the consequences suffered during the earthquake, Vittorini responded as follows:

The damages that I suffered, apart from the material ones such as the house, it took away half of my family. I lost my wife, I lost my daughter, and I don't know why I am here talking to you because I was under the

rubble, so I don't know how I am here. The other thing is, I still have a son because the days before he was outside of L'Aquila on a school trip. Therefore, just the two of us remain, and as a two we struggle to go ahead in this life, which is completely different to the previous one. However, we must put our hands together and move forwards; if not, you can enter a spiral of depression, of negativism and therefore, one becomes a burden on oneself and on others. I look to move forward and try to offer a different future for my son until he is able to think better of life, so he has serious values, not towards stupid things, but towards the serious things in life, such a security and prevention, to work for others, these things have become important.

Figure 8.37: Famiglia Vittorini
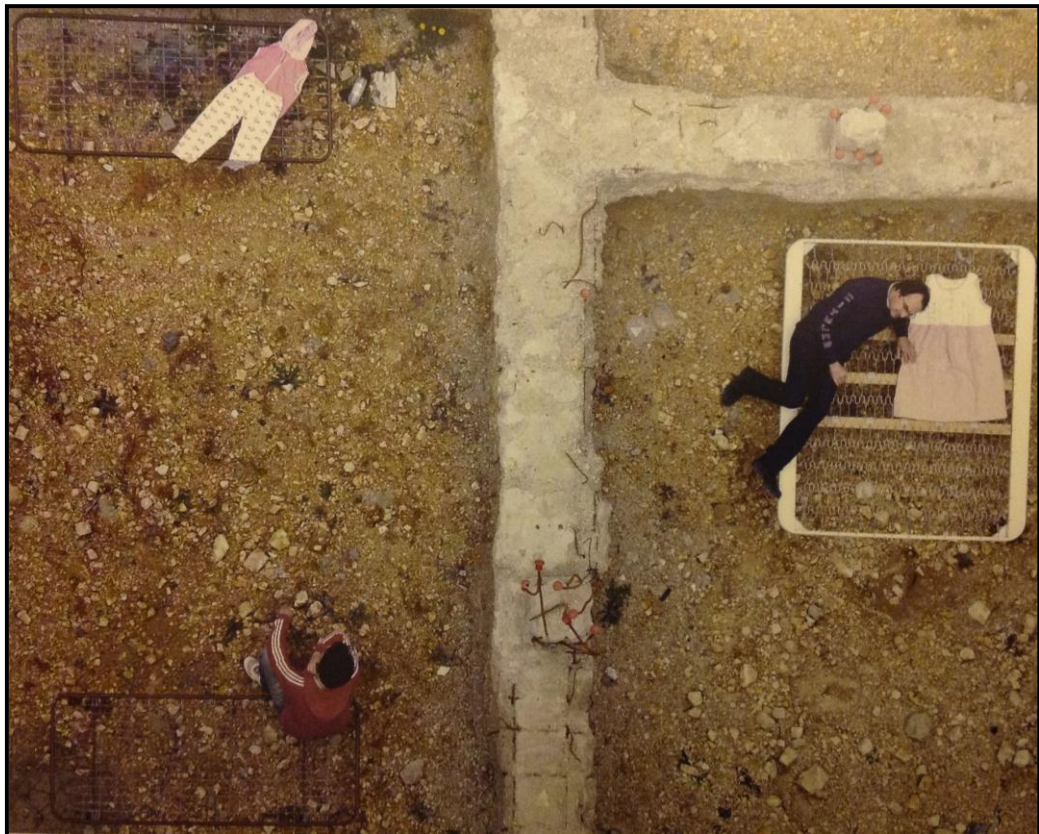
Source: Grillo (2012: 87)

Figure 8.38: Via Luigi Sturzo

Source: Grillo (2012: 61)

The two images above (Figures 8.37 and 8.38) are taken from Roberto Grillo's (2012) photography book *L'(Est)etica del Dolore* ('The Aesthetics of Pain').

The following passage is also from the interview with Vincenzo Vittorini. He is reflecting on his feelings when returning to the site where his family home once stood:

> *Every now and then I return there, because 'there' was everything to me, the home is a myth, it can be a myth of beautiful things, ugly things. Its normal in a family's life; you have beautiful moments and moments not so beautiful, the happy and unhappy moments, discussions, but that is part of life. Then if you are able to move forward together, united, you can overcome everything and, therefore, when the problems come, they come to be resolved and to fortify you more, and therefore there (the home) is everything. Even if the home is no longer there, there is still a part of me, my son, our family is there, everything we ever did together. Therefore, I return, I reflect, I rethink of how I used to see the house, what it was once like.*

Participant 16

He lost his wife and daughter in the earthquake. He allowed a photographer, to take a photo of him, for me it was scandalous, it shocked me, but he had a photo of him at the actual site of his home, amongst the ruins, with him on his bed, and his son overlooking the bed where his sister once was. I found it incredibly macabre and it shocked me. You can see the photo in the Historical Centre of the city, on the main street of the historical center, a large photo, along side many other... Its a perfect example of how people react differently to certain situations.

Participant 21

Many Aquilani have not understood Vittorini's gesture behind the photo. Tourists do not know the story of Vittorini, how much he has lost and how much he had to let go of that evening under the rubble. No one will understand the pain he suffered, not even me who was in L'Aquila that night. That photo is close to my idea of acceptable tourism what could be represented as dark. Because if someone passes through the street and sees the photo and the others, and they begin to inform themselves about the story behind the photos, then the second time they see it, they will cry. A person who cries is one who can begin to get closer to us and understand, and then they at least might be able to behave in an acceptable manner towards my city. This is a good example of something with meaning behind it. This is a city, which is destroyed inside, outside and all around it.

Participant 21 reflects on the power of the photos and how it provides tourists with a capability to begin to understand some of the people who suffered from the earthquake. He emphasises the ability of an image to demonstrate the deep emotions of an individual who lost a great deal of their life, and how through an image tourists can get closer to that person.

After the interview, Vincenzo Vittorini asked for the photograph below (Figure 8.39) to be included in this thesis. It is a photograph of him with his son Fabrizio, and his late wife Claudia and daughter Fabrizia. Below the image is a message written by Vincenzo taken from Grillo's (2010: 26 - 27) book, *Un Blues Per L'Aquila: Immagini Di Una Indetita Perduta* ('A Blues for L'Aquila: Images of a lost Identity').

Figure 8.39: The Vittorini Family

Source: Grillo (2010: 27)

Our Identity

> *The Earthquake, the one night monster, took away everything from us,*
> *our loves, homes, memories, work….. what it did not do was to deprive*
> *us of our identity, based on our own special toughness to solve tasks.*
> *The same tenacity which was part of my two stars, Claudia and Fabrizia,*
> *the same tenacity of Fabrizio who keeps fighting every moment of our*
> *private and personal tragedy with the huge strength he gets from feeling*
> *inside himself his dear sweet mum and his tender little sister.*
> *The great dignity of our people has come forth from this tragedy: not*
> *screams and unseemliness, but the ability to pull through the suffering*
> *with extreme serenity. L'Aquila will be reborn for sure, getting the*
> *strength from its history, not sitting on it. It will have to be a starting point*
> *for a general change of way of thinking, for a new social network based*
> *on each others respect. The Family represents the identity of any human*
> *being; the family with its warmth helps you overcome the greatest*
> *difficulties. The monster of that dammed night, destroying our families,*
> *annihilates you from the inside and takes away all you ever cared for. It*

takes away your foundations, future, identity. Away from L'Aquila from our streets, skies, air and scents, everything has been difficult and unreal. Coming back to L'Aquila after months of exile it was like switching on again the light that was off that sad night.

Together we must revive L'Aquila, our town, to add spark in our life again and to donate a new light to our children's lives who will be our future. It is hard, but together we will stand. For us all and for them who will give is strength to move on from above.

To remember, forever, the joyful embrace of Fabrizia and Claudia's sweetest smile together with Federico's eyes, frightened but full of hope.

With Love
Vincenzo Vittorini

8.5 Resident reactions to dark tourist and tourism post-disaster: an Aquilano perspective

Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, that occur in tourism destinations frequently have the capability to change the nature of the tourism product within that destination, consequently attracting a new form of tourism: dark tourism. However, as argued in Chapter 2, there remains limited understanding of local residents' attitudes and responses to becoming the focus of the dark tourist gaze.

Following the earthquake, and as demonstrated in Chapter 7, L'Aquila became a dark tourism destination. Thus, reflecting Objectives One and Two of the research (to investigate the local community's understanding of the concept of dark tourism and to explore their reactions towards becoming the object the dark tourist gaze), the purpose of this section is to present and consider the results of the research focusing specifically on residents' attitudes towards their city (and, implicitly, themselves) becoming a dark tourism attraction. More specifically, Objective One is to investigate the negative connotations surrounding the term dark and to investigate the attitudes of local residents towards the application of such a term to their disaster. This section fulfills the second element of the proposed Dark Tourism Development Framework (Figure 8.40).

Figure 8.40: Residents' Attitudes towards Tourists Post-Disaster (DTDF Section Two)

8.5.1 Local residents' reactions to tourism

Participants were invited to express their feelings towards the visitation of tourists within their city, post-earthquake. A range of responses were elicited which can be divided under two broad headings: negative responses that were antagonistic towards tourists / tourism, and those that were more positive or supportive. Moreover, distinct themes immediately began to emerge from the research, two of which related to local residents' feelings towards tourists. Specifically, (a) emotional feelings changed significantly over time, and (b) the behaviour of tourists was a significant factor in influencing the feelings of local people. Both of these are more relevant to Objective Two. Additionally, what also emerged from the interviews was how the locals were more inclined to distance themselves from the term 'dark' to their destination, which is more related to Objective One. The following discussion focuses on these points.

8.5.1.1 Local residents' reactions to tourism: Negative responses

Negative responses towards 'dark' tourism and tourists as revealed by participants during interviews are considered first. As noted above, a number of common themes emerged. Firstly, participants held negative attitudes towards tourists / tourism as a result of the behaviour displayed by tourists and the lack of respect shown by tourists, especially through the practice of photography. Secondly, it was common for participants to show negative reactions towards 'dark' tourism and tourists in the initial stages of the disaster, with this negative reaction gradually diminishing over time.

Another key theme to emerge from the research was that participants felt that tourists did not and would not be able to fully understand the reality caused by the earthquake. They frequently suggested the tourist would come and gaze at the rubble and would take photos, but would attach no meaning to what they were gazing upon

and photographing because they would not be able to grasp the true nature of what happened. However, it should be emphasised that, as discussed earlier, little has been done in L'Aquila to accommodate the needs of dark tourists. Therefore, the responses of participants should be considered in the context that tourists were provided with little information regarding the earthquake and its impacts on various locations or with any advice / requests on how to behave in order to reduce the potential for tourist-host conflict.

In addition, another theme that also emerged was that local residents believed the media was inaccurately and inadequately portraying the reality of L'Aquila to the wider public. However, this issue is discussed in more detail in the analysis of the role of stakeholders in post-disaster scenarios (Section 8.8.2 below).

> ### Participant 27
> *Of course, it also annoyed me to see people who would start laughing or shouting in front of certain places, such as the student house, because at the end of the day people died there.*

> ### Participant 26
> *Well, these tourists came, yes from the very early stages, and honestly, I did not take to them very much. If someone was coming to find out about the disaster, to find information and to spread the news to help outsiders understand the grave situation here then that is fine? … However, to come and look, to participate in tourism to marvel on what happened, honestly, I don't accept it.*

The above quotes begin to reveal the displeasure shown by locals towards tourists' behaviour. Participant 26, for example, reacts negatively towards tourists, specifically in the early days when they first began to arrive. However, this participant suggests he would have been a little more welcoming of tourists had they displayed more appropriate intentions, to try to understand the gravity of the situation in L'Aquila rather than simply gazing upon the devastation and the misfortune of the local community. However, as previously suggested, this is arguably difficult for tourists visiting L'Aquila, given the limited information provided.

> ### Participant 24
> *There is one thing I think and we have seen it here in L'Aquila, particularly at the beginning, and I can tell you it was not seen positively from the*

locals' point of view. It wasn't seen positively because to see people who would come here to take photos in places there would have been people who died, you know at the beginning it did not give a good impression...

...Clearly, when they are here they take photos, things like that, they take a stroll. On the one hand, it was a negative thing this tourism. However, there is also a positive side to it with regards to what I just told you. The fact that at least it was possible for the people to come and visit and to testify to the reality in which the city is left. Which was a different reality to what was being communicated in the media...

...Initially, the people who came, and I am talking about the initial period, they were seen with annoyance, at least by the Aquilani. I also heard some locals when they saw people come and take photos, I heard locals say in our dialect, words that were not appreciative.

This participant also refers to the annoyance of local people more generally, and how they would talk inhospitably towards tourists. However, there is a more positive outlook, suggesting that tourists could witness (and implicitly talk about) a reality that was being misinterpreted by the media – that is, tourists could witness and communicate the truth to counter the inaccurate picture being painted in the media.

Participant 20

Initially, this city became a place of tourism for catastrophes, yes, dark tourism, like you said. Tourism that, well after what people saw on television, they were curious to see a large city like L'Aquila destroyed, because it's never been seen before. Usually it is small towns that are struck. It was the biggest earthquake in Italy, even Europe. Therefore, it's important when a city like this has been struck. It was seen as something sensational, which attracted people to come and see the mess, the rubble, the camps, a bit like a museum, like an exhibition. And in the initial stages it really bothered me, it really bothered me, this catastrophe tourism.

This respondent recalls the annoyance felt in the early days when tourists started to come and visit the city. The notion of dark tourism is also acknowledged, though the term catastrophe tourism is used instead. The participant appears more comfortable with the term 'catastrophe' than 'dark'. Participant 20 continues:

Now it is different. I would like people to come to L'Aquila to see, yes the things that have been done on the peripheries, but above all the things that

haven't been done, like the historical center. At this moment in time, I would like to see people here because they would be able to touch with their own hands the things that haven't been done, and then ask why hasn't it been done? Therefore, it would be a different type of tourism. That first [dark] type of tourism would be 'spectacular', we were seen like actors, like a film, but it wasn't like a film. Now I would like people to come to L'Aquila to see that after a period of three years and a few months "il grosso" ("the majority or everything") is still the same. Now I see it [tourism] more positively, it's a form of communication, like understanding. Communication is... we in Italy are very good at doing everything afterwards, the civil department are very good, one of the best in the world (sarcastically speaking) because it always acts afterwards, the communication in Italy is not good because it always does things after."

Having revealed annoyance towards tourists in the initial period after the earthquake, this participant now focuses more on how things have changed over time, reflecting like others' on how tourism might be a means of spreading knowledge and understanding of the true situation in L'Aquila. That is, tourism represents an opportunity for people to witness the reality that is post-disaster L'Aquila. Participant 22, a local priest highlights a distancing from dark tourism.

Participant 22

I don't believe that a true dark tourism exists in Italy. Its just not part of the Italian culture this dark tourism, according to me. There is a dark fascination of evil and even the fascination of death. But dark tourism for me is more a dimension of an Anglo-Saxon world than of the Italian culture. In fact, if you intend dark tourism to be a thing that is thought about, organised by companies, organisations, travel and tourism agencies which are a things offered as packages pre-prepared on a table and studied to involve certain types of people, well I haven't see this phenomenon anywhere. Until now, I haven't detected this in any manner and for me it doesn't exist. I am almost certain it doesn't exist in these terms. Another thing is the fascination that exercises everything, which is at times negative in the life of man. In the life of man there is also the dark fascination of evil, evil in general, and also that sensation that the tragedy of others gives you a sense of security. Because you are not involved, you are a spectator of the tragedy and not a protagonist. This gives you a sense of security.

Interviewer: If you don't recognise the term and concept of dark tourism, then what do you see it as, what would you call it?

Participant 22

Well, I wouldn't give it this name. When I think of Italian culture, I would avoid it because for me its not exactly the same phenomenon which can be seen in the Anglo-Saxon cultures. I wouldn't use this term. I would say... and then here it's a tourism that is developed not in an organised manner, but in a spontaneous manner, by people who find themselves in this air (referring to the 'air' of L'Aquila) for various motives... "lets go and see" they say, they are families, friends... "lets go and see the situation the city of L'Aquila finds itself in", in what situation its in objectively to what is said by media outlets and other information. And then what situation does it find itself in, with respect to all the mechanisms that have subsequently been linked to the re-construction, in this sense. But it's not an organised tourism, in an Anglo-Saxon way, like "lets have a party for Halloween" because death is sort of a spectacular thing, a thing of entertainment. In this sense I don't think Italians, they just don't feel it. Well, by now the Halloween festival is done all over Italy, however, it is something that has been imported from the outside, like fashion, and of course it enters, just like many other American phenomena's, and now we are partly integrated into the American culture, so its normal that these trends impose themselves on our culture, but its not a phenomena that has roots. It exists because it's another festival, and more festivals is always good, but it doesn't have profound roots within the identity of the Italian population.

The response focuses on the mentality of the local community (and that of the wider nation-place, Italy) and how, for this participant at least, the fascination of dark tourism in organised forms is representative of Anglo-Saxon cultures. The participant, perhaps unsurprisingly, distances the local community from the practice of dark tourism and describes the influence of (mainly) American culture and the function of entertainment. The participant is correct in the sense that the management of dark tourism and tours do not exist in the specific context of L'Aquila. However, there are tourists who come and can be classified as dark tourists. The participant makes a key point by suggesting that, whilst the term dark can be associated with particular places, it is rooted in cultural realities. Thus, L'Aquila, which can be seen as a closed and isolated city, is arguably unprepared or unsuited for dark tourism and the intrusive

nature of tourists, hence, the negative reactions towards tourists expressed in this research. This raises questions about the cultural relevance of the dark tourism concept, which is arguably related more to Anglo-Saxon cultures.

The extracts above have focused on the negative responses offered by locals towards 'dark' tourists and tourism. In the following section, the more positive reactions on the part of local people revealed by the research are considered.

8.5.1.2 Local resident's reactions to tourists: Positive responses

Whilst the previous section focused on the local community's negative feelings towards 'dark' tourism, other participants expressed more positive attitudes. In other words, although according to Berger (1967) individuals are socialised into cultures and the characteristics form part of their identity (Berger, 1967), from an existential or humanistic position individuals have the ability to detach themselves from the societies they inhabit and the cultural identities that are present. As a consequence, they possess personality traits and express attitudes or feelings that may contradict those expressed by the majority. Although the majority of participants held negative attitudes towards tourism, at least initially, the following presents some of the more positive reactions towards 'dark' tourists / tourism revealed in the research.

Participant 4

I am not sorry, it does not bother me. I would like the entire world to come for a little visit, especially those people who called us 'exploiters', there were many of them, especially the people from the North, who don't really believe that you leave your house at 3:30 in the evening, and then you never return. Then to recover every little thing, it's like you are stealing, because you have to go back and enter with the fire service, you have to wear a helmet, all kinds of security measures. Then put everything into bin bags, all of your life reduced, its value reduced to bin bags and take it away a bit at a time. Therefore, I feel it is important; those people who do come begin to understand it a little, even if they have not lived it. There is more participation on behalf of the people who come, of course it's not as if then can offer anything, but they begin to understand. It's already... the fact that they begin to understand, it helps you to not feel so lonely, and it doesn't make you feel like a person who is profiting from the state, from other help that may have been given to the city.

Participant 2

To be honest, if I happened to confront them I tried to assist them and explain to them what they were looking at. That is, explain to them what there was before. Whilst other people may have been more focused on telling people to come and see the rubble and the mess that has been made. I on the other hand tired to explain to people to what places and areas where like before the earthquake. Help tourists and outsiders to understand what it is they are gazing upon. I wasn't really that unhappy that people would come and visit, I was indifferent to it. If I overheard people say things like "what was this?" "what was here before.?" I would say "excuse me I don't want to interrupt you but I can tell you what it was, what there used to be... explain what has happened". This was my reaction to tourists, it didn't annoy me.

Participant 31

First it has to be clearly understood that there were two different realities. One was what we were living and the other was how we were being portrayed to the outside world with regards to what was happening here in L'Aquila. Therefore, I always saw it as a positive thing, literally because I realised that even within small distances, such as here to smaller towns close by, it was difficult to get people to comprehend the reality of what was happening here. Therefore, I never suffered from this type of tourism, instead I saw it as an opportunity in a manner in which people could come here and see it first hand, and also for me, because of my work, I spent time taking outsiders around the center. Even after two or three years there is disbelief amongst the people who come here and see the state of L'Aquila. People would say "seriously this is what is happening here, we didn't realise, we didn't know that you were still living in these conditions". Therefore, I saw the positive sides of this type of tourism.

As presented above, there are also positive reactions towards 'dark' tourists during initial post-disaster periods, and not all locals will evidently look negatively on tourists. However, the positive reactions towards 'dark' tourists do share similarities with the participants who had negative reactions towards tourists. Such similarities are reflected in the fact that the local community feel there is a need for people to appreciate and witness with their own eyes the reality of the city in its current state. The main difference is that the participants who initially reacted negatively gradually

changed their attitude towards dark tourists. They came to appreciate their presence; it just took them more time to do so.

8.5.2 Summary

It is evident that there exists a range of emotional reactions towards 'dark' tourists amongst the local community in a city that has been devastated by a natural disaster. However, common themes are apparent and these emerged throughout the analysis of data collected during the interviews. During the initial period following the disaster, tourists were frequently seen with frustration and annoyance and many interview respondents expressed their displeasure towards tourists coming and taking photos and showing a lack of respects to the local community. What is also apparent is that many respondents revealed negative attitudes towards dark tourism, specifically the use of the word 'dark', and preferred to identify with other terms such as macabre, catastrophe or disaster tourism. This attitude was frequently revealed by locals distancing themselves from the practice of dark tourism and the visitation to sites associated with death and suffering. Simply stated, many participants clearly suggested that it was not something that would interest them. And the fact that they did not like tourists visiting reflected that they did not agree with the term dark tourism being used in relation to tourists visiting L'Aquila.

However, as time passed, participants' animosity towards tourists began to mellow and there was less strain on the individuals. Indeed, local residents revealed a more willing and open attitude towards tourists / tourism, primarily as a result of factors such as the lack of media attention, incorrect media reports or lies. What was frequently expressed was the need for the wider world to understand. As such, tourism presented the opportunity to present tourists with the reality of L'Aquila's current state; through tourism, people could come to L'Aquila and subsequently share their stories / opinions / experiences with others.

8.5.3 Generating theory, Objective 1: The negative connotations of 'dark' as a tourism concept

As introduced in Chapter 1, Objective One of the thesis is investigating the continued negative connotations surrounding the term 'Dark': What are the attitudes and responses of individuals in a community towards this term when associated with the tragic event they have suffered?

The research has identified a common response amongst the local community, inasmuch, many have frequently distanced themselves from the practice of dark tourism. They could not relate to and, in some instances, positively rejected the concept of dark tourism and the 'dark' label, arguably reflecting the cultural characteristics of the destination and the local community. The closed nature of the local community was identified and discussed earlier in this chapter, whilst interview respondents suggested that the wider Italian population is generally not accustomed to such acts of travel. Moreover, it was suggested by some that dark tourism is not appropriate to the community and Italy as a whole, referring to it as an Anglo-Saxon practice that has become increasingly absorbed into Latino cultures. The significant point here is not the importance of death, but the way that death is symbolised and (re)presented within a community.

Earlier, this research documented the impact of the geographical function of place (Cresswell, 2004) over many generations on the local community of L'Aquila, manifested in a closed and isolated mentality, reluctant to embrace cultural change and external influences. Certainly, the research revealed this to be a common theme amongst local residents. Therefore, distancing themselves from dark tourism is arguably a manifestation of the more general distancing that has been common throughout L'Aquila's secluded historical development as a collective community. Moreover, the city has endured a history of suffering and disasters. Thus, the idea that the earthquake or, more precisely, its consequences, could become a tourist attraction might appear curious to a community that has remained independent and self-reliant, and which has recovered from such repeated disasters over time. Moreover, given that the city had remained relatively immune from tourism in the past, from being a tourist attraction in its own right, it becomes easy to understand why the Aquilani would dislike 'dark' tourism practices and distance themselves from the concept of dark tourism as related to the disaster that befell their city.

Participants often referred to alternative words that they felt were more appropriate, such as disaster, catastrophe, rubble, and ruins. As suggested in the literature review, dark tourism as a concept allows academics to investigate various social realities under a single conceptual 'umbrella'. However, dark tourism can be used in a practical sense by destinations to promote and market their attraction. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the wider implications of applying and associating sites with the label of 'dark' because, whilst L'Aquila might be representative of a 'dark tourism' destination from an academic perspective, there are important considerations when it is evident that local people reject that label.

In particular, it is important to note that although the term 'dark' can be attached to both the location as a tourist destination and to the tourists who are visiting, the negative connotations that surround the term dark do not necessarily apply to the local community and the attraction. Rather, the negative connotations surrounding 'dark' are attached to the tourists by the local community. Consequently, this can heighten the perceived negative relationships between the host community and tourists. However, this issue requires further research to understand the implications in alternative destinations, particularly when considering the differences between collective and individualistic societies; if negative ('dark tourist') labels can be attached to tourists and their perceived reasons for visiting sites associated with death and destruction, then there are evident implications for the local community's perceptions of and reactions to tourists and tourism in post-disaster situations. Indeed, given the potential of tourism to play a positive role in the disaster recovery / redevelopment, understanding the local community's response to 'dark' tourists is imperative.

In Chapters 1 and 2, it was identified that academics in the field of dark tourism often highlight the need to carry out further research into the negative implications of associating sites with the term 'dark' and how doing so can potentially apply negative stigmas to attractions and locations. It was noted that the term 'dark' can hint at ghoulish interest in the macabre, implying an element of *schadenfreude* on the part of the tourists (Sharpley and Stone, 2009). Furthermore, Ryan (2005) suggests that our understanding of the emotive nature of the term 'dark' when applied in a tourism context remains incomplete. Thus, this research aimed to investigate the implications of using the term in a scenario in which a local community becomes part of the fabric of a dark tourism attraction.

In line with this, the research has revealed that although dark tourism is an academic term that encapsulates a wide range of destinations and locations, providing a conceptual context for a critical investigation of the role of such places in mediating between the living and the dead, it is not necessarily an appropriate term to be applied in practice. The research has revealed that local community of L'Aquila rejects the term 'dark' to describe their city as a destination. Thus, a wider issue has emerged with respect to destination marketing and the development of new tourism attractions that are associated with death and destruction. That is, dark tourism marketing in post-disaster destinations presents further opportunity for research.

8.5.4 Generating theory, Objective 2: A spectrum of emotions towards tourists

Objective Two focuses on local Aquilani attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism. Simply stated, how does the local community feel towards tourists who come to gaze upon the damage caused by the earthquake? Having discussed the emotional reactions of locals towards tourists, the research reveals that, most commonly, local people reacted negatively towards post-disaster tourists, especially in the initial periods after the earthquake, although some residents demonstrated a more positivistic stance towards tourists and tourism. The following section considers the range of emotional responses in an illustrative format, subsequently informing the construction of a model of local community attitudes towards tourism after a disaster.

The emotional responses of the local community can be categorised along a continuum, from negative to positive. In Figure 8.41 below, six levels of emotional response are proposed.

Figure 8.41: Emotional Responses to Post-Disaster Tourists
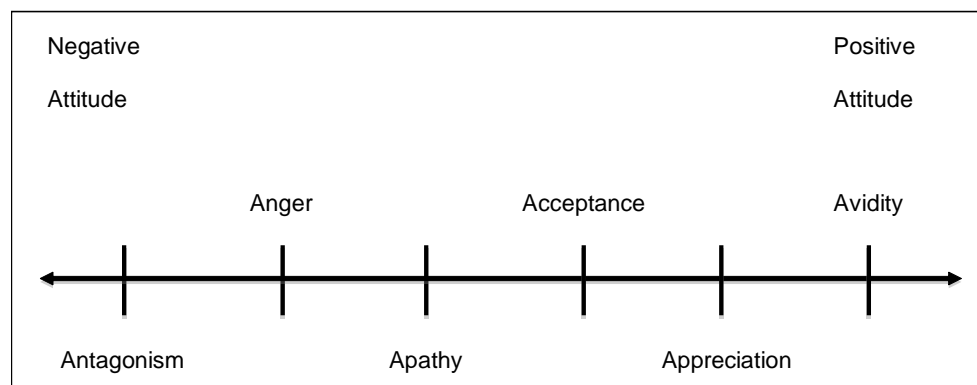
As can be seen in Figure 8.48, the continuum represents different intensities of response, from negative attitudes through to positive. The words between the two poles reflect the different attitudes expressed by participants in the research and are explained below.

8.5.4.1 Defining the six emotional responses

Six emotional responses towards tourists on the part of the local community post-disaster have been identified from the research, each of which is a reflection of participant responses collected during primary research.

1. Antagonism

Locals show active hostility or 'opposition' in their emotions towards tourists.

For example, *'antagonism'* was expressed by Participant 9 when suggesting, '*I would like to go over and break their camera'.*

2. Anger

Local people reveal a strong feeling of annoyance or displeasure towards tourists.

Anger and a sense of annoyance was common amongst the local community, especially during the initial stages. An example is offered by Participant 10, *No, I don't like this kind of tourism, it annoys me because I do not think it is right... However, if it is for negative purposes, for curiosity, and they think at least this happened to them and not us, then this annoys me, it makes me angry'.* Similarly Participant 28 stated *"...But I wouldn't even answer to these people; they annoyed me, a lot."*

3 – Apathy

Locals show or feel no interest, enthusiasm or concern towards tourists.

An example is Participant 18, *'It often annoyed me, but mainly one thing, firstly, indifferent because I knew that this tourism existed. However, the sentiment often felt was indifferent, they (the tourist) exist, I know them (not personally), they take photos, fine. However, it often also annoyed me, it annoyed me when I saw people who didn't show respect to the local community.'*

4. Acceptance

Locals show equal level of feelings towards tourists. Moving towards the positive end of the spectrum, local people react more positively towards tourists. Here, there is no real emotion towards the tourists. Participant 25 provides an example for this emotion, *'I do not feel much, fortunately tourists come and visit, at least they are moving round the city, its needs people, otherwise it will remain silent. When you walk through the city you can hear the heels of people's shoes, because it is so silent.'*

5. Appreciation

Locals show recognition of gratitude towards tourists. Participant 7 expresses a more appreciative attitude towards tourists and the benefit of their presence, *'Dark, possibly a little vicious, almost intends a black evil. It's true that the city became very much a graveyard. But the word doesn't shock me...*

... I do not really see it as a dark or macabre tourism. What is important is people come and see the reality of the city's current state, so if it is this type of tourism then thank you to it.'

6 – Avidity

Locals show extreme eagerness or enthusiasm towards tourists.

Finally, at the opposite end of the spectrum comes avidity, where locals are enthusiastic towards the tourists. As Participant 31 suggested, *Therefore, I always saw it as a positive thing,*

'I never suffered from this type of tourism… instead I saw it as an opportunity in a manner which people could come here and see it first hand…Therefore, I saw the positive sides of this type of tourism.'

Interestingly, the continuum proposed above can be related to Doxey's (1975) Irridex concept, introduced in the literature review. Doxey's model suggests that, as the tourism industry develops in a host area, local attitudes also change. Doxey anticipated that tourism would put pressure on a local society and, with an increase in numbers and tourists grow, pressure on the local community would also increase. Consequently, local residents' feelings towards tourists become more negative. The model is not unambiguous as it depends on the characteristics of both the host community and visitors'. However, what is does do, is assume that change is unidirectional, with residents' attitudes transforming through four different phases. From an initial state of *euphoria,* local people gradually feel emotions of *apathy* and *irritation,* finally experiencing a feeling of *antagonism* towards tourist. Additionally, Butler's (1980) seminal resort life-cycle model and Smith's (1977) tourist typology all proposed that residents adopt increasingly negative attitudes towards tourism as it develops and grows.

The literature review (see section 2.5.3) critically explored current academic theory on residents' perceptions. It was recognised that understanding residents' perceptions and responses is fundamental to the success and sustainability of tourism; moreover, it was further noted that in a dark tourism context, the importance of this is increased owing to the reality of death and destruction in such locations. Research has also recognised that there is ever-increasing criticism of the linearity nature of local community homogeneity in perception theories (Sharpley 2014). Tourism impacts are both negative and positive and are apparent at the level of the destination community (Simmons, 1994; Jafari, 2001). Therefore, this research explored this issue, aiming to further understand host-perceptions.

In contrast to more traditional host-perception theories, this thesis suggests that it is necessary to recognise alternative attitudes on the part of local people towards tourists and tourism during the development of tourism services / products in post-

disaster scenarios. It has been established that disasters bring new forms of tourism. Additionally, it has been recognised that with new 'dark' tourism attractions, such as L'Aquila, come new 'dark' tourists. The local residents also become part of the new 'dark' tourism product, whether they wish to or not. In this context, the research presented above clearly challenges the current theory of host-visitor relationships during the establishment of a new 'dark' tourism destination, in a post-disaster scenario. Indeed, a model is presented below that reflects the actuality of resident attitudes towards tourists, at least in the case of L'Aquila.

8.5.4.2 Host-community attitudes towards post-disaster tourism: L'Aquila's collective response

Figure 8.42 below presents a model of the attitudes felt by the host community towards tourism in L'Aquila as a post-disaster 'dark' tourism destination. The research revealed that the common reaction towards tourists in the initial stages was one of annoyance, the opposite of that suggested by Doxey. The research also revealed that, as time progressed, residents began to feel a greater sense of appreciation towards tourists. The factors influencing these changes in emotional response are considered shortly.

Figure 8.42: Host-Reactions to Post-Disaster Tourists / Tourism
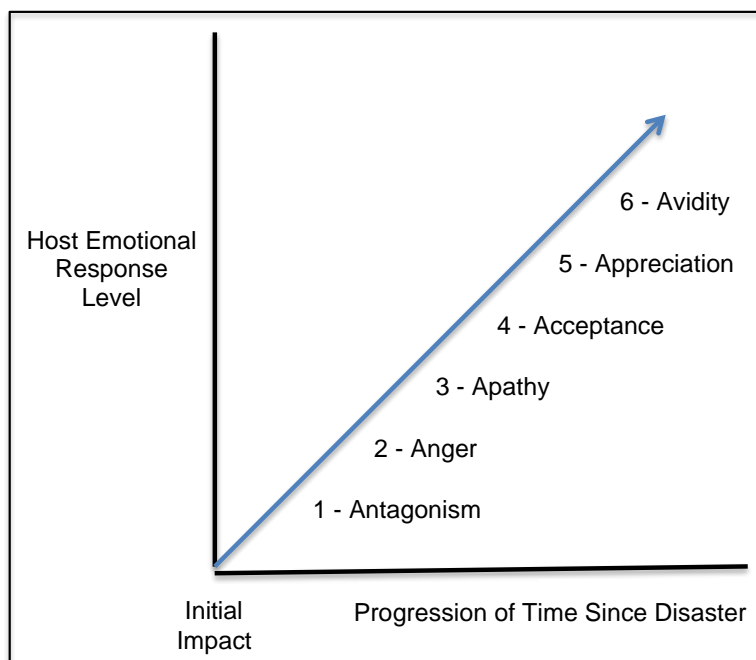
As noted, disasters such as the one in L'Aquila create new forms of tourism supply and consequently, new tourism demand is generated. As can be seen from Figure 8.49, the initial impact is felt (bottom left). This is initial period, following the

earthquake when the new supply of and demand for tourism commences. The horizontal scale represents the progression of time since the disaster. A situational representation of other destinations on the graph is dependent on the time since the initial impact. The vertical scale represents the emotional responses felt by the majority of local people (in this study) towards the arrival of tourists seeking the new 'attraction' in L'Aquila. The central (angled) line represents the six emotional responses felt towards tourists. As noted, in the case of L'Aquila, the initial reaction towards tourists was, in most cases, more negative. However, it has been identified that, for various reasons, the emotional reactions of locals may transform, for two specific reasons:
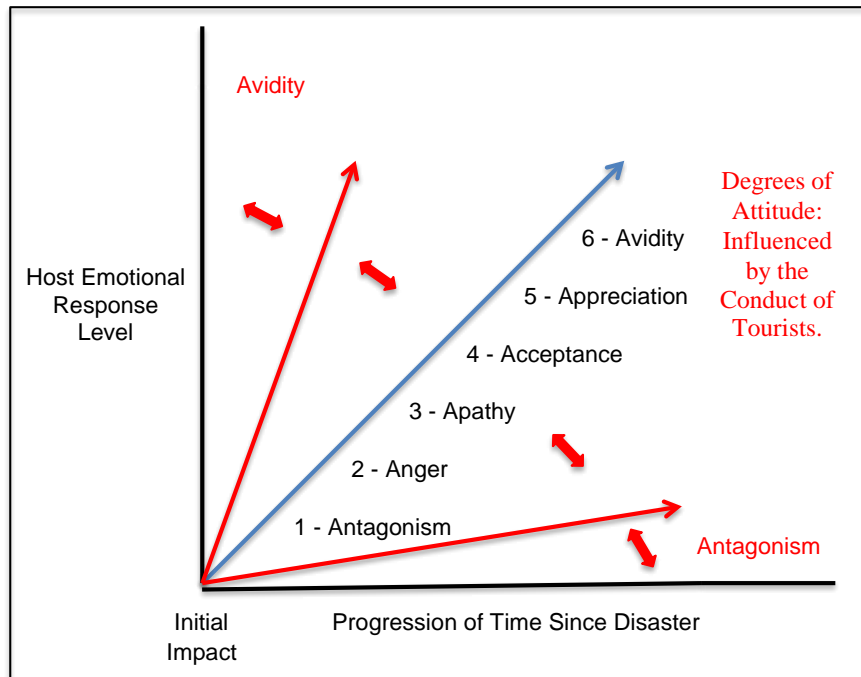
i. The Influence of Time

This research has found that 'time and the passage of it' can greatly influence local people's attitudes towards 'dark' tourism / tourists. Certainly, responses during the interviews revealed a general 'mellowing' of attitudes towards tourists and tourism, although this must evidently be considered in the context of the continuing challenges to the disaster recovery process in L'Aquila.

ii. The Conduct of Tourists

Another factor revealed by the research is that the local community will assess and reflect on the conduct of tourists with whom they have been in contact in the city. The interviewees clearly revealed that the manner in which tourists act has major consequences for the way in which local people perceive and respond to them.

The graph below (Figure 8.43) builds on Figure 8.49 above. Here, the conduct of tourist factor, contributing to the change in positive and negative attitudes is included.

**Figure 8.43:** Host-Reactions to Post-Disaster Tourist / Tourism

Included on this graph (Figure 8.50) are the 'degrees of intensity', which can be seen in red. The degrees of intensity signify the influence of the factors (conduct of tourists) in determining local residents' attitudes towards tourists / tourism, as found in this study. Future research can apply this model to investigate its applicability to alternative post-disaster destinations. One significant question that should be investigated is, do more individualistic societies (in contrast to the more collective cultures; present in L'Aquila) react similarly in a negative fashion to dark tourism? Understanding that tourism can be seen negatively, as was the case for L'Aquila, can assist future destinations experiencing similar circumstances found in this research, when a disaster strikes and the 'dark' tourists arrive.

8.5.4.3 Host-community attitudes towards post-disaster tourism: Individual responses

The model presented above (Figure 8.43) follows previous models such as Doxey's (1975) 'irridex model', Butler's (1980) resort life-cycle model and Smith's (1977) tourist typology, in adopting inherently linear assumptions with respect to host-tourist relationships, an assumption that has recently been criticized (Sharpley, 2014). As such, it assumes a collectivist position approach to L'Aquila's residents' attitudes. However, as noted, the model might not be so representative in alternative and, more specifically, individualistic cultures. Therefore, Figure 8.51 below proposes a more rounded and holistic perspective of host-tourist attitudes to dark tourism, focusing on the individual, rather than a collective societal position.

This model recognises the potential range of attitudes that locals may individually adopt towards tourists and tourism. Unlike the more linear and unidirectional models previously proposed in the academic scene and coming under greater criticism (Sharpley, 2014), it recognizes that locals can possess and express both positive and negative attitudes which can fluctuate at any given time. This is presented by the circular shape within the model. It should also be stressed that, unlike the previous model (Figure 8.43), which adopts a collective community approach to local-tourists attitudes to tourism, this model (Figure 8.44) focuses on the individual attitudes to tourists and dark tourism development.

Figure 8.44: Holistic Model of Host-Tourists Dark Tourism Attitudes
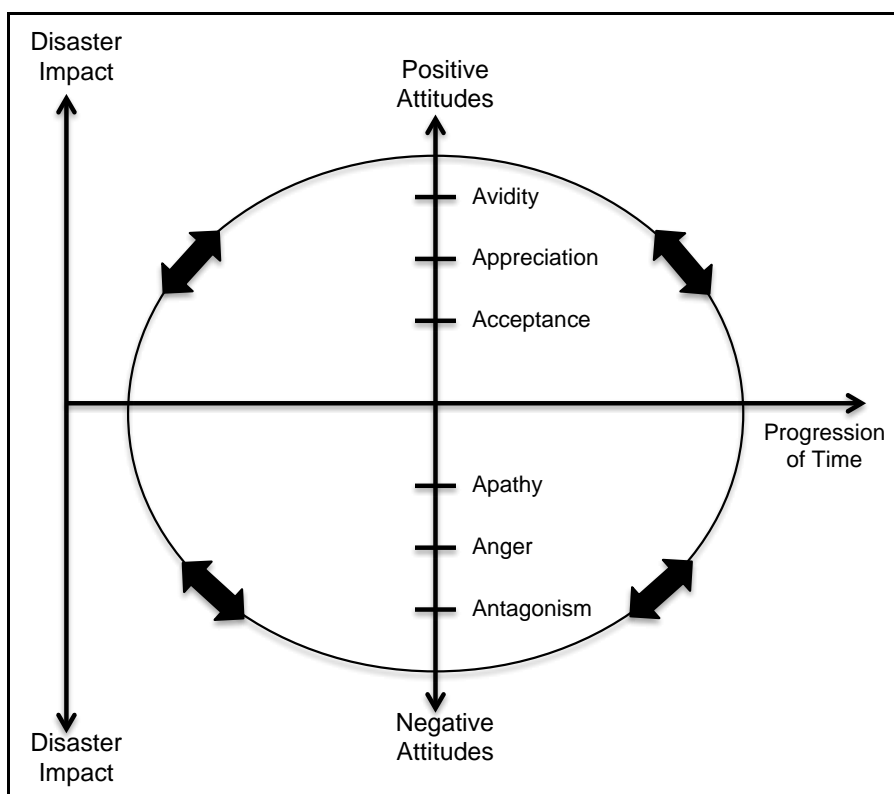
The data collected and analysed in this research has gone some way to answering some of the fundamental limitations in the dark tourism literature. L'Aquila has presented itself as a location that contradicts traditional host-perception theory inasmuch the local community, following the introduction and development of a new tourism product, do not convey enthusiastic attitudes which become more antagonistic over a period of time. That is, the residents of L'Aquila demonstrated attitudes towards tourism that contradicted traditional theory; they exhibited negative attitudes at the offset when the new dark tourism product emerged, but over time their feelings became more positive.

However, this research has also taken into consideration that L'Aquila arguably represents an untypical case that is not similar to alternative destinations. That is, few locations will possess collectivist attitudes similar to the cultural and social environment that is present within L'Aquila. Furthermore, it has also taken into consideration current criticism of host-perception theory (Sharpley, 2014) and with the acknowledgment of existentialist and humanist theories and with the reality that more individualistic cultures exist. This research has also recognised and constructed a model - *Holistic Model of Host-Tourists Dark Tourism Attitudes*, which recognises the need to explore the host-perceptions of tourists and tourism at a more individual level, and not only on a community homogeneity level.

8.6 The role of stakeholders: A local Aquilano perspective

As discussed previously in this chapter, there has been little if any formal attempt to provide for the needs of tourists in L'Aquila, despite evidence of significant numbers who visit the city to witness the aftermath of the earthquake. In part, this reflects the fact that tourism development is not the sole focus of any specific individual or group in the city. The purpose of this section therefore, is to explore the role of stakeholders in tourism in L'Aquila, thereby addressing section 4 of the DTDF (Figure 8.45).

Figure 8.45: Community Involvement in Tourism Development (DTDF Section Four)

Chapter 3 of the thesis reviewed Seaton's (2001) heritage force field model, which identifies how conflicts may arise between the four groups with interests in a heritage site. Equally, Asgary et al. (2006) identify the prominent stakeholders within a post-disaster society that should be considered when developing and re-constructing places. These stakeholders are listed below, the numbers in each category referring to interview participants placed (based upon their profession) in the stakeholder category they best represent.

1. Community members and citizens' groups.
   Participants: 3 – 5 – 7 – 8 – 13 – 21 – 25 – 28

2. Governments (national and local), encompassing public and semipublic entities in a wide range of sectors and roles.
   Participants: 15 – 17 – 20 – 23 – 26

3. Civil society organisations including NGOs, civic groups, and voluntary associations.
   Participants: 9 – 18 – 22 – 29 – 33

4. Private sector (i.e., the business and industrial groups).
   Participants: 4 – 14 – 19 – 24 – 27 – 34

5. Professional groups, including academic, research, and training organisations, consulting firms, etc.
   Participants: 2 – 10 – 12 – 16

6. Media including newspapers, radio, and television networks
   Participants: 31 – 32

This again highlights the range of individuals in L'Aquila interviewed during primary research. Whilst some participants were easy to categorise, others were less so. For example, Participant 20 was a Doctor and former mayoral candidate; whilst Participant 23, a regional educator / head teacher was similarly a former mayoral candidate. Thus, both could have been placed in different categories as they have represented (at the same time) different stakeholder groups. Importantly, however, and irrespective of the categorization, the participants are all individuals who form part of the community and are, thus, members of a collective society.

The research aimed to investigate the role of stakeholders as part of the DTDF because although Seaton's (2001) and Asgary et al.'s (2006) work identifies the various stakeholders who have (or should have) an interest in, respectively, tourism heritage and post-disaster development, greater understanding is required of the key stakeholders involved in the development of post-disaster 'dark' tourism development. In so doing, the thesis seeks to create a more holistic approach to 'dark' tourism development from a local community perspective when confronted with such a scenario as the earthquake in L'Aquila.

During the interviews, the participants often expressed their opinion with respect to various institutions and their role(s) and or influence since the earthquake. The more significant stakeholders that were frequently referred to included governments and politicians, the media, community members, external agencies and the tourism sector. The following discussion will critically assess the responses given by local people to the role of these stakeholder groups in L'Aquila's 'dark' tourism development.

8.6.1 Governments and politicians: National and local

Unsurprisingly, governments are listed in both Seaton's (2001) and Asgary et al.'s (2006) stakeholder categories, yet the political involvement is an issue that is diverse and complicated, especially in Italian society (Jones, 2007; Severgnini, 2007; Richards, 1995). However, political engagement in post-disaster scenarios cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is necessary to establish the respondents' attitudes towards governments and politicians. It should be emphasized here that, typically, the local community regularly displayed negative attitudes towards both national and local governments, considering them to be corrupt, inconsistent, untrustworthy and more inclined to work to their own advantage rather for the city of L'Aquila and its people. At the same time, the role of the Mafia was frequently referred to. However, despite the undoubted influence of this organization on the redevelopment process, it is not appropriate to consider that in the context of this thesis.

> ***Participant 23***
>
> *No, well it's not like L'Aquila was closed with regards to who came to this city. It's more that, after time it was visible that the people who came to this city, and there was also the G8 held here, they all came here, they all walked around, the President, Berlusconi, and they all walked around the city. However, the following day they returned to their own cities and at that point L'Aquila was forgotten. This is the real problem. So today, the Aquilano is, well, when someone comes here aiming to help this city, then they are seen with a lack of confidence. I understand what you are saying, if only there was someone who was able to promote this type of tourism ...*
> *...Well, now the time has passed to send out a message that this was one of the most beautiful cities in Italy, which no one knew about. That's because L'Aquila wasn't in the guidelines of tourism. Now some people are discovering the monuments that were in this city, the opera, arts. However, they don't see them because they are destroyed or closed. Therefore,*

what is seriously needed here is a push, because the re-construction of these monuments has not started here, these attractions that the city has. Many promises were also made by foreign countries, however, in the end no one kept them. Starting with this country's government. The force that has probably been missing and needed, the political force in this city, counts for nothing at a national level. Therefore, it is not able to develop a type of tourism that could be important as well re-constructing, and therefore, it is always tourism attracted to the rubble...

...this type of tourism (dark) has never been planned and the Aquilano would not be able to manage it. Clearly, it is something the government institutions would have to do. This would be needed in this case, just like they were needed in all other cases

Participant 23 highlights the lack of regional government influence at a national level. Suggesting that the local government has not sufficiently represented the city and its residents. He also suggests that it is the regional government that should be involved in the development of 'dark' tourism, though he reflected that even if the government did try to develop any form of tourism they would be unable to do so as tourism has never been a marketing priority for the city. This reflects previous discussions on L'Aquila's historical identity and the notion of an isolated community. Also of note is the participant's reference to L'Aquila's tourism industry as an attraction to rubble - once again distancing from the word 'dark'.

Participant 12

Politically, the situation is very complicated. That's because people's interests are diverse, there is a lot of money involved, and the money L'Aquila is receiving substantial. Therefore, the politicians and people with power, or construction companies, the Mafia, the Camorra, they are all here, but they do not do good things for the city and its people.... Politically, they are all very improper, very improper, with our lives; we are paying a mortgage on a house that isn't there. Who knows if one day it might be rebuilt, but we still have to pay the mortgage. So politically, the issue is very stressful, there is disaffection towards these people who should be representing us. They are not detested or loved, they are bearable. In law we have to have a mayor for laws and we need to have councilors, we need to have representatives, but honestly they are not loved, or detested, they are just accepted.

On this occasion the participant clearly indicates how corruption within the area has led to distrust. Reference is made to personal issues, such as paying a mortgage on a house that is uninhabitable. Similar to the previous respondent, reference is made to the lack of representation on behalf of the local people and for the development of L'Aquila in general.

> ### *Participant 2*
>
> *Well, our politicians would not understand dark tourism at all, they would see it as something ugly. If I was to talk to my syndicate, who I have known for 40 years, as well as other local politicians, they wouldn't really understand what you are talking about. Unfortunately, the politicians, possibly all over the world, but certainly here for us, they reason only in two ways, according to two criteria. One, what will bring me votes? Two, what will bring me money? These are the two criteria. If they thought that this thing (dark tourism) could be important, because it could help re-develop the city, and help them gain votes, or if it would bring them personal benefits then they would, otherwise they couldn't care less.*

Participant 2 suggests that the local politicians would not be interested in the idea of developing dark tourism, suggesting that they make decisions based on money and votes, and feels that dark tourism development would be seen by politicians as a form of tourism that would *not* bring any advantages in either money or votes. Interestingly, a local politician who held a high position in L'Aquila provided the following response to the possible development of dark tourism.

> ### *Participant 26*
>
> *No... we don't accept this kind of tourism, we don't like it, and we don't share it. The type of tourism that shows disasters after an earthquake, a devastating and destructive earthquake, then no we don't like this kind of tourism. We have beautiful art, archeology, we have beautiful landscapes, we are a city of history. It would also be a pleasure to attract religious tourism because we have cultural, historical and religious areas within the city which are very important. It would be a pleasure for us to promote tourism focusing on these things and to promote the positive and beautiful things we have to offer to assist the recognition and understanding of our city to future generations. And absolutely not as a way to make one know of our disgrace, our misfortune, all the terrible situations, macabre, which all occurred after such a terrible earthquake.*

The politician suggests that the local community would not be interested in dark tourism, or developing a type of tourism based on death and destruction. It appears, therefore, that he corresponds to the opinions expressed by the local community, giving credence to the attitude of many participants. There is only a focus on developing tourism that promotes an image of L'Aquila as it was, in effect denying the impacts of the earthquake and certainly ignoring the extent to which dark tourism occurs in the city. However, tourists will still visit the city to gaze on the destruction but, arguably, this politicians' view was in many ways obscured by his Aquilano 'closed-city' mentality, consequently overlooking the potential of dark tourism to benefit the local community.

Politicians hold a central role as stakeholders in both disaster recovery situations and in tourism development. Thus, even if some participants expressed a lack of trust in their governments, by definition politicians hold the power through their role in the distribution of resources, such as financial, legal and authorisation of development and construction projects. Nevertheless, in this research it has become apparent that the local government is not interested in 'dark' tourism, of any form of tourism focused on the earthquake as an attraction. Arguably, it has therefore restricted the potential benefits from 'dark' tourism development. Thus, it could be suggested that the local authorities might have benefited from external consultation regarding the benefits of developing 'dark' tourism, thereby recognising disasters as an opportunity for tourism development.

8.6.2 The role of the media in L'Aquila

A key stakeholder in disaster recovery suggested by Asgary et al. (2006) but overlooked by Seaton (2001) is the media, a stakeholder sector that frequently dominated participants' responses. The media, of course, plays a vital role in disaster scenarios in many ways but, for the purposes of this thesis it is the control of the media in Italy that is of particular interest, specifically the role of the then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

A report by Reuters (2013) provides a brief perspective on Berlusconi's media power. He has a stake of around 41.1% in the Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset, which owns terrestrial television channels (3 of 7 national channels), digital terrestrial channels and an advertising firm (it also controls Spanish broadcaster Mediaset Espana). Through Mediaset, Berlusconi also owns Italy's leading movie production

and distribution house, Medusa Film and, in addition, he owns around 53% of Italy's leading publisher, Mondadori. This is Italy's biggest book and magazine publisher and the company's activities also include advertising, digital radio, retailing and direct marketing. Yet this is only a part of the Berlusconi empire, which includes interests in medical biotechnology company, investment banking and AC Milan football club. He has also and served three times as Prime Minister of Italy, from 1994 to 1995, 2001 to 2006 and 2008 to 2011 (Reuters, 2013).

Whilst it is not relevant to critique Berlusconi's influence on the media in the context of the L'Aquila earthquake, most interview participants expressed highly negative opinions towards the media's activities since the earthquake. Of most significance, the local community feels that the media has been deceitful in its coverage and representation of L'Aquila, arguably a significant factor in their increasingly positive attitudes towards tourism over a longer period of time since the earthquake's initial impact. As noted, the media are likely to focus on stories that will sell newspapers. Hence, in the case of L'Aquila, the media focused their coverage on the collapse student house which, on the one hand, was the scene of relatively few deaths but, on the other hand, has now become a symbol of the earthquake and a key tourism attraction within the city as a result of the media attention.

All participants commented on the role of the media, on how they felt they had been represented over the three years since the earthquake, which was negatively, and how the media have impacted the tourism industry in L'Aquila. This has also been identified in some of the earlier extracts.

> ***Participant 21***
> *It's a question and a matter of respect in the sense that, for me, it is ok that the entire world has seen what happened via TV coverage for example. But there are too many lies and false images represented with regards to this city, its development...*
> *...Now, I can understand if someone wants to come and visit L'Aquila to see for themselves the truth and reality of this city and the state it is in, and to see what the media doesn't portray as the truth, and for this reason, its perfectly fine with me...*
> *...If I now see a tourist going to L'Aquila saying that they are going to see the truth, what the TV isn't portraying, previously I wouldn't have been happy, it was too soon. However, now I see it differently, now it needs*

recognition because with time and incorrect management and development we have been left in the same state, and forgotten.

Participant 17

Like I said before, it's how we are presented to the outside world by the media and TV. I have friends in other parts of Italy that I speak to and they tell me that they hear that everything in L'Aquila is now ok. And I say 'no', you come here and have a look, then tell me if you think everything is ok. It depends what you define as 'all' ok, an entire city, which has its buildings maintained by reinforced scaffolding, you come and see what type of a city this has become. So people need to come here and see for themselves what state this city is in.

Participant 7

I remember an interview I did with a footballer. I am not interested in football, but he came and said, it's not true, these people are not crying, because we were exposed by the media as some kind of whiners. Stories were reported to the wider public which were not true. So, people are more than welcome to come and visit, at least you can come and see the truth with your own eyes...
... Then the media talks about how everything is ok, the city has life again, it's all a massive lie. Today, around three years after the earthquake, how can people report such blatant lies about the city and its people. One cannot do propaganda, not when there are people who still care and understand the truth.

Participant 2

The Giro D'Italia (2012) went through Via 20 Settembre, they always go through L'Aquila, and they were filming tightly on the cyclists, and only on the cyclists. Not the journalists that were commentating but another individual who was on a motorbike said 'but all the houses that are here are still supported by scaffolding?' He was saying this as he could see the wider picture. However, even the Giro D'Italia passed through L'Aquila without even mentioning a word of the city. All they said was the city was being reconstructed, hardly that. Even the Giro D'Italia seemed to ignore and hide the reality of L'Aquila as they went through...

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The above quotations collectively represent a feeling amongst the interview participants that the reality of L'Aquila was not being represented correctly to the wider world by the media. Indeed, the respondents suggest that the media have played a part in presenting an alternative truth of L'Aquila's current state, whilst it might be surmised that, for Berlusconi, focusing on the positive re-constructions in L'Aquila portrayed his governments' role in the re-development of the city in a positive light.

As already noted, however, it is significant that the activities of the media have, according to the respondents, transformed their attitudes towards tourism in L'Aquila. They have become more open to tourists visiting the city in the hope that, having experienced the current state of L'Aquila first hand, visitors will convey a more realistic message. At the same time, the media has been instrumental in establishing particular places in L'Aquila as tourism attractions. Mention has already been made, for example, of the creation of the student house by the media as a focal point for the tragedy of the earthquake. Nevertheless, the research revealed a general mistrust of the media, particularly because of their failure to exploit their undoubted influence to convey the reality of the continuing disaster in L'Aquila.

8.6.3 Community members: Listening to the locals

As considered in some detail in Chapter 2, local communities tend to view tourism positively when they can engage with the benefits of tourism (Spanoudis, 1982; Murphy, 1985; Getz, 1987; Haywood, 1988; Simmons, 1994; Reid et al., 2004; Seaton, 2001). Consequently, it has long been suggested that, for tourism development to be successful, the wider community should be involved (Perdue et al., 1990; Ap, 1992; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Yoon et al., 2001; Gursoy et al., 2002). More specifically, Seaton (2001) also identified community members as key stakeholders in the development of heritage tourism.

The research here revealed additional stakeholders who were seen by the participants as potential stakeholders in L'Aquila's tourism development. Community members expressed that dark tourism development would be an interest for younger people, the mayor, the university, sociologists, and individuals who have suffered the loss of loved ones. However, conflicting opinions emerged over who should be involved in the development of dark tourism although generally, respondents suggested that the wider local community should be more engaged in any process of developing dark tourism in a post-disaster scenario.

Participant 12

There are many people who are able to plan, design and work on this kind of project, there really are a lot. Firstly, young people, because in the end it will be they who manage and live the future reality of the city. Then there are associations and foundations, and maybe even the Church could provide a helping hand, especially because the sense of death and the loss of life, the loss of beautiful terrain, it could help revalue L'Aquila a lot.

An important point to be taken from this response is the need to engage the young people of L'Aquila in any possible redevelopment projects, as they will be the future of the city, whilst the suggested involvement of the Church reflect its cultural influence.

Participant 9

Well, the people who lost, not their homes, because the home is relatively small, but someone who lost a family member. Because if I had lost a son, as happened to my friends, friends who lost both children, or their husband or wives, people who have lost all this and suffered these impacts on their lives and are now left alone and to see people taking photos in front of their houses where they lost their family, I wouldn't want it...

The respondent above suggests that those individuals who suffered personal loss should be considered as 'high priority' when developing tourism, if nothing else to ensure that tourism is manged to ensure their privacy is maintained. However, this 'subject group' (Seaton, 2001) is diverse, and may include non-residents. For example, in the case of the student house in L'Aquila, this 'subject group' includes parents of the students who lost their lives. Thus, it becomes evident that the 'community' as a stakeholder group may also, in a disaster context, comprises of people who are not residents.

Participant 3

Well, everyone a little bit, certainly, everyone's voice should be heard. However, predominantly those who have a good understanding of L'Aquila's history, so they can provide a vision that is less emotive. Maybe, someone who has lost loved ones, would be upset, start to show too many emotions, start crying, so someone who would be able to provide a logical account of what has happened.

Participant 3 suggests that individuals who have suffered personal loss may be too emotionally vulnerable to be involved – a contrasting opinion to the previous participant. Another point being made is that individuals who have a deep understanding of L'Aquila's history would be best suited to provide an objective input into tourism development, perhaps reflecting Asgary et al.'s (2006) proposal that 'professional groups', such as academics with a knowledge and understanding of the city's heritage, should be involved in post-disaster (tourism) development.

The following participant recognises the potential lack of interest amongst those who have lost loved ones:

> ### Participant 5
> *As for people who lost loved ones, I am not sure, probably the majority wouldn't be interested. The pain is too strong, why would they go about selling this pain.*

However, the case of Dr Vincenzo Vittorini, described in earlier in *Intermezzo 2*, presents the opposite view. The image of the family was used to tell a personal account of despairing loss, the intention being to enlighten people about the destruction brought by the earthquake. The photograph was published in books and displayed in public locations to be viewed and sold. Therefore, from this perspective, it became a purchasable commodity. Yet, it was not necessarily 'selling pain'. The research has shown that there is willingness amongst individuals who have lost loved ones to promote their tragic stories, although the motivation behind such willingness will vary.

> ### Participant 17
> *We should, the community, the province, we should try and turn something negative into something positive. People cannot spend their time and lives crying and feeling sorry for themselves. They have to move forward and look to the future. It needs a lot of money and it needs to be managed by the region, province, and the community, and they all need to agree to develop something that is suitable for the locals. There is a possibility here. The little that there is left needs to be valued and enhanced. I have lived in this city for 56 years and it (tourism) has never been valued, and therefore, tourism has never been promoted. Well, since the disaster, you can see a few more people coming to see what has been lost, and even the locals*

are beginning to value the city more now that is has gone. The misfortune that has happened has opened our eyes to what we once had.

A key point here is once again the reference to the wider community and the need to acknowledge tourism development from a local perspective. However, this participant suggests that a lack of tourism promotion in the past is restricting the current development of tourism, perhaps reflecting the traditionally closed and isolated nature of the local community as discussed in section 8.4 above.

Participant 16

Difficult to say, possibly the local citizens. There are many sectors that would need to be involved. The local government and administration, they would need an open relationship with the rest of the city and its people. It varies, because certain people, individuals become important or significant figures after such tragic events. So it is hard to suggest prior to such an event who should have a say, and who would be best placed to suggest any type of tourism development. It is a consideration that should be taken into account post-disaster, something that should be observed and then acted upon. People react differently, and alter their involvement and efforts, but you can only begin to understand this post-disaster. A good example is Vincenzo Vitorrini ...He is a doctor and part of the town council. He lost his wife and daughter in the earthquake. He allowed a photographer to take a photo of him. For me it was scandalous, it shocked me, but he had a photo of him at the actual site of his home, amongst the ruins, with him on his bed, and his son overlooking the bed where his sister once was. I found it incredibly macabre and it shocked me. You can see the photo in the Historical Centre of the city, on the main street of the historical center, a large photo, along side many others...
...It's a perfect example of how people react differently to certain situations. So it is extremely difficult to try and understand what are the types of mechanisms that can drive dark tourism, and more so the type of people that can help drive certain projects, because it is so difficult to understand how people might react. He (Vitorrini) is a man who suffered greatly from the earthquakes consequences, but he has also managed to try and find the positives, and focus on them and how to make sure that the same problems do not happen in the future. But I found this image to be very 'dark'. People can react in so many different ways depending on how each individual experienced the earthquake.

This extract resonates with many issues that have already been expressed. However, there is a significant point being made, that such devastating and tragic events can affect individuals in various ways, resulting in different reactions. Particularly, there are individuals who become involved who might not have been known before the disaster. Only after the event do certain individual establish themselves as prominent voices, often through their actions. Vincenzo Vitorrini is one such example of many individuals within the city of L'Aquila who decided to get involved with the opportunities presented by the earthquake. These individuals can become key stakeholders not only in post-disaster development in general, but in dark tourism development in particular.

> ### Participant 18
>
> *The local community needs to inform and make the local people aware of such a tourism (dark), and let people know that these tourists will not invade your homes and privacy and take photos to then publicise to their friends. These people will come on tours in order to gain knowledge and understanding. The people who actually need to be made aware of the situation are the local community. They are the people who need to be informed, because if you manage that, only then can you begin to do something. Someone like me who is in agreement, for whom it is not a problem, as it was not an unwelcome surprise, I knew that tourists would take photos. It's the people who are not aware and do not appreciate and even understand the presence of curious outsiders. Therefore, if you can inform and make people aware of the benefits that can be taken from this kind of tourism, then locals might be more accepting. The reality is, if you want to get people to accept something they do not want or something people are uncomfortable with, then you need to be able to get them involved in the decision making and to make sure there is something they are benefiting from, especially when they are the ones being exploited.*

The participant neatly summarises the role of the community in post-disaster tourism development in L'Aquila. Recognising the traditional closed nature of local society, change is needed. The respondent identifies two issues that need to be considered. First, it should be recognised that tourism development requires a community approach. Second, communication across all stakeholders is necessary in order to identify the opportunities that can arise from tourism. Inevitably tourists will come and there will always be negative issues that emerge. However, the tourists will continue

to visit and, therefore, it is necessary to understand what the collective community wants and to correctly implement it.

Nevertheless, the research has already identified the lack of tourism amenities and facilities within the city. The questions to be addressed, then: has the local community been unable to manage their own tourism development and, if so, could 'external assistance' provide the necessary support to exploit the potential benefits of developing 'dark' tourism? And, how does the local community perceive the possible involvement of potential external assistance?

8.6.4 External assistance in tourism development – A local perspective

External assistance can be accredited to various stakeholder interests; for Asgary et al. (2006), it would be located with the professional groups category. The responses below highlight the local community's attitudes towards potential external involvement in tourism development. As is evident, the tradition closed mentality of the community is reflected in an unenthusiastic and distrustful attitude towards possible external assistance, suggesting a belief that only they are really capable of rebuilding their city.

> ***Participant 2***
>
> *I will give you this dialect phrase that would be used towards the idea of outside assistance: 'ecco quisto' translated: 'here he is', which means: 'arrivato lui, adesso insignia lui come dovermmo viver', translated: 'now he's arrived; now he will teach us how to live our lives' (Sarcastically said). However, this attitude is negative; it has caused many problems for the city. This has been a negative and pessimistic attitude which has limited the development of this city.*

As the participant highlights, this pessimistic and closed attitude towards outsiders has consistently caused issues for the city. The reluctance to accept outside ideas for development has acted as a defense mechanism and consequently, reduced the speed at which development within the city has progressed. This negative attitude is not held by all individuals. However, it is a characteristic that is common within the collective cultural environment. Thus, similar to the negative reactions towards tourists, the idea that someone from outside the city might know what is best in terms of development is not well received by the local community.

Participant 2

In L'Aquila you wouldn't find much agreement. The Aquilani are a little strange. The symbol of the city is a Latin phrase / moto, which means Immota Manet, meaning, 'the city is still', unmovable. Obviously not the ground, because it tremors. But what it means is this is a city that isn't subject to change, it doesn't accept change. It has a form of detachment, a little snobbish. In Emiglia it would make sense to get all the citizens involved and get them to understand the economical benefits, and instantly they would get to work on it (dark tourism). However the Aquilani would remain indifferent, especially after all its suffering throughout its history.

As previously discussed, 'Immota Manet' refers to the idea that residents are rooted in the city and how external influences will not change the local way of life. Citing this Latin phrase to describe local characteristics and ways of life truly reflects the local community's deep attachment to their city, as does the following response:

Participant 32

For me, it's a little too forward-looking to think what the character of the Aquilani might be in the future. Back in the 18th Century during the last big earthquake in L'Aquila, the doors were closed, with the Aquilani inside and they rebuilt this city. However, on this occasion the doors are closed and the Aquilani have been locked out. So, whilst this city has been publicised in certain ways to the outside world, symbols of the earthquake that are not necessarily our main symbols. It has been difficult for the locals. Being a closed mentality in terms of population from the start there has been a rigid attitude towards outsiders because there has been a strong desire on the part of the locals to try and find a sense of community once again. Six to seven months after the earthquake there were movements between locals, such as gatherings of around 40 people, something they did not regularly do before, and they began to focus on what we call 'active citizenship', and this involved doing things for the local community. However, this didn't last long. Why? Because too much time passed, and there were never any results. Then people, obviously turned back and focused on re-organising their own lives.

The locals are aware of how past Aquilani communities managed to rebuild the city themselves, and the continuing recognition of an isolated and independent attitude was frequently expressed in the interviews.

Participant 29

That which you mention, the idea that someone comes from outside, to take what they say, what they bring with them, what they might take with them, then one has to have the ability to listen to them. However, as long as one is in the condition of only being able to look after themselves, with the idea of building a wall around them for protection, to pamper themselves after losing everything that they had around them, then it is very difficult to open yourself to someone else, if you cannot be comfortable and happy with yourself you can forget the possibility of being open to someone you don't know, especially an outsider. I return to the fact that firstly it is necessary to look at the foundations of the culture within the majority of us locals...

...Before saying let's await for someone to come from outside and listen to what they have to say, we should be putting ourselves into a position of being the motors of any new launch. If there is a will to launch, then there is the basis of being able to go forward. Also, another thing, in order to develop such (dark) tourism, in a city like ours, a province with a closed mentality, then a lot of time is needed. Therefore, what is needed is a historical sense of time, in order to understand what has happened to us, and also to understand what has happened with those who have confronted us, therefore, to understand the territory, to understand what the locals are like, what L'Aquila was like before the earthquake and what it is like now post-earthquake, and like I said, to understand the relationship and the impacts of these encounters with outsiders, and all this takes a lot of time, time which we do not have. It will never be forgotten, but maybe it will be best implemented for the future, in manner for others not to make the same mistakes. What will happen is in the future it (the earthquake and the impacts) will be more focused in written and visual aspects, social networks, books, newspapers, TV.

Once again, the (above) participant refers to the host community as being the key stakeholder who should be aiming to develop the city and its tourism industry. There is recognition of the possible benefits of external influences, but this is shadowed by the need (and inability) to listen, something that the participant stresses is difficult for the local residents of L'Aquila, as they are not often accustomed to such external influences.

Participant 26

Well, if there are any external resources willing to provide us with assistance to re-develop and for important tourism projects, then we are certainly favorable towards such ideas. We are not closed and we don't think that we alone can solve this problem. We can realize the value of the beautiful things we have. And clearly we are much more open towards what confronts us, and towards dialogue.

Participant 26, a local politician, suggests that they would in fact be willing to take advantage of external assistance. However, there is a quick change of topic, focusing towards maintaining the valued aspects of the city. The local politician was also asked on his view of dark tourism, but was quick to dismiss dark tourism as an acceptable form on tourism for the city of L'Aquila (see Section 8.6).

Participant 30

The truth is we Aquilani have a desire to tell our stories of what happened indefinitely. I remember the role of the media in the initial stages, I was in great pain, and so frequently I would get phone calls from newspapers asking if I would like to be interviewed, and to start with I was delighted. However, whilst, it was a personal story, the earthquake was a collective experience and only as a collective can we move on from this tragedy. And the report would cut out what I was saying, and I began to realise that they were not telling true stories and I don't think organised tourism would be any better. To me the idea of a tour is "allucinante" (translated: "incredible" – but more shocking in a negative sense) as I really don't see it as a purpose in which I can retell these experiences. Plus in L'Aquila there is this saying 'Ecco Questo' (translated: "here he is" which implies, "here is the one who will solve all our problems"). Personally I think we should maybe return to the eighteenth century, when we had our last earthquake, and I read that after that earthquake L'Aquila closed its walls, the Aquilani were left inside and therefore, had to rebuild. In the meantime, what has happened on this occasion, the Aquilani have been left to run and hide in their homes, to become introverts, whilst externally, many people have arrived and done things without consulting what we would like to do with our own city, with our own spaces. Therefore, I think that the 'ecco questo' has left us without any sense of trust in anyone from outside this city. And tourism and the tourists become a face of the invaders who come and bring something that we don't want...

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...Instead what we would like is to take back part of the decisions which are being made for our city, so we can see it getting re-constructed. For me, the idea that someone comes to see our ruins at this time doesn't interest me, because it doesn't bring anything for me. My objectives are different, if I want to recount my story I will find my own mediums to do so, via social media, the Internet, maybe a book, but not a tour.

Before the earthquake, the Aquilano lived an isolated way of life. External influences have always been, and continue to be, seen pessimistically whilst the 'ecco questo' attitude to outside assistance is embedded in the city's culture. Its history is one of invasion, destruction by earthquakes and geographic isolation, all contributing to a closed way of life. Hence, the notion that external forces could assist in re-developing the city and, more specifically, the tourism industry is almost inconceivable to the locals.

Nevertheless, although the local community should be seen as a key stakeholder in tourism development, and arguably more so in a post-disaster context, as L'Aquila has shown, there is a need for external assistance. Even if not necessarily welcome, there are many benefits to be gained from external agencies and experienced individuals from a range of specialist backgrounds, and therefore, external organisations / individuals should also be recognised as a possible stakeholder in post-disaster 'dark' tourism development.

8.6.5 Tourism sector in L'Aquila

It has been identified that, since the earthquake, L'Aquila has provided few, if any facilities or amenities to meet the needs of tourists visiting the city. Nor have any attractions been purposefully developed; places of memorialisation around the city have become focal tourism attractions because it is here that tourists can find some meaning and local representation of how the earthquake has affected the community. However, constructed by local people, these are in a sense 'accidental' attractions. Therefore, the research sought to identify the extent, if any, of a tourism sector in L'Aquila.

It should be stressed that when approaching tourism-associated individuals / organisations to take part in interviews, certain departments were reluctant to take part. For example, the *Ufficio Tourismo: Settore Politiche Sociali e Cultura* (Tourism Office: Sector for Social Policy and Culture) 'politely' refused to be interviewed.

Additionally, there are few tourism departments or companies within the city. However, the owner of a local travel agent, located in a shopping center on the outskirts of L'Aquila, offered his opinions whilst other stakeholders who participated in this research who have an interest in tourism (for various reason) provided responses that suggest it is they who arguably have the appropriate attitude and vision to develop and manage 'dark' tourism in a post-disaster situation. Evidently, not all feel that the tourism industry has played a positive role since the earthquake, as now discussed.

Participant 22

L'Aquila doesn't have dark tourism in an organised sense. There is tourism, but not a strong, organised tourism. There are structures, hotels, there are people who often come, but it's a tourism that is more linked to people commuting, not settled. Many people who came to L'Aquila visited the city, and they continue to visit it, but dark tourism doesn't have an influence, according to me, because the operators within the sector do not deal with this, they occupy themselves with whoever comes and they offer everyone the same things.

Participant 20

I think if regulated and done well we could develop this kind of (dark) tourism. As I didn't really know that it existed and that it was in some way defined. Well, I knew it existed but I didn't know that it had been given a precise name. Therefore, I think something rather intelligent could arise from this… seeing this exists to whatever extent and seeing that at L'Aquila we cannot decide to change the name, or more so we shouldn't be picky, it's a resource so, therefore, why not try and exploit this resource. Right now, let's exploit it. However, it's always about rules. Something that could be important and here I touch a little on my terrain, simply all that is needed is to create in this city, things that exist in every city which has been devastated by an earthquake in Italy, and here I have tried and I am still trying, but I do not know if I will succeed. All that is required to do is to create a museum, even a small museum, of images and photos. Its been done at Fontecchio, a small town 30 Kilometers from L'Aquila, showing some of my images of L'Aquila and surrounding areas before and after the earthquake. However, there is still nothing here in L'Aquila, there isn't this concept. Therefore, just construct locations, places where the tourist comes sees what there is, and it should be regulated. What is important is

it to show what there was before. For example, at Collemaggio (Church) if a tourist passes and sees all that has crumbled, all that is simply needed is to place some large posters which would allow the tourist to understand what is was like before. So what does this mean, this means you come to me, you bring me resources because I need them, such as money, and I will provide you with some information to let you understand what the city and places where like before. Therefore, whilst many might have negative inclinations towards this dark tourism, the reality is that I am not the one with the problem, you (tourists) are the one with the problem, your (tourists) the one who comes here, if you (tourists) come here and gaze on the devastation then that's your (tourists) problem, not mine. If you (tourists) come here and stare where someone has died then it's your problem, maybe it is you (the tourist) who lives with a wrong ethical judgment. However, I cannot change that, so why change it, so, if you (tourists) come here to L'Aquila, ok, then I will do you a package, I will invite you to shop, eat, and sleep here in the city and at this point I will be able to exploit your (tourists) resources.

The notion that so little has been done in the city is repeated at the start of the response. The participant provides a simple idea of how tourism could have been established and managed. He provides an example of a smaller town, which opened a museum to promote the earthquake and its devastating impacts. There is acknowledgement that tourists need to be presented with an honest picture of L'Aquila's history. The earthquake ushered in an unwanted form of tourism; what is important, then, is to try to exploit the tourists for the benefit of the community, which has not been achieved.

Participant 27 Travel Agent

If at this stage we proposed to the Aquilan a tour that was set up for outsiders who are interested in coming to see the impacts of the earthquake, the skies would open, it would be the end of the world. However, what is needed is a different type of discourse, telling the locals that people will come and visit L'Aquila to see what it is like and to understand how it is different from what it was before. This would be taking a softer approach towards the people, and then the situation changes...

...The really important thing is the way in which one proposes and puts forward an idea. Because seeing the way we are here in L'Aquila, we are excellent when it comes to arguing, and if things are done in a certain way,

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we risk setting off a bomb. People start saying 'questi che vengono a fare?' (translated: why are these people coming here?), che cosa vogliono questi' (what do these people want?) and 'vengono a visitare nostre macerie' (they come to see our ruins)...

..No, they have come to see L'Aquila, to see what it was like. You need to show them images of what it was like, we must appreciate what L'Aquila used to be like and show this to tourists. And we also show the current state of L'Aquila in a way that we can identify ways in which we can reconstruct this city for the better...

...In all honesty, we need to try something, any type of tourism even if it is dark or related to the devil, just to try and attract more tourism back to this area, No? Unfortunately, like I said, here it has to be done and managed in a certain way. I took a group of students and have taken various people and groups to certain places, such as the student house, by bus to see the damage, and they took photos. But they did it in silence, with respect. Therefore, tourists are not stupid, and tourists who are guided around behave in different ways, because one has the ability to reinforce the reality and truth of certain places and locations. This then changes the way people act and can assist in ensuring the local community is respected and, therefore, the locals' attitudes will change towards tourists.

Whereas a tourist left to wander without any guidance, then yes, they begin to shout, 'take a photo of me' and so on, and this is the kind of thing that really irritates me and the Aquilani. I think this is something that no one would find acceptable. Wandering around freely, taking photos of intimate and private things, it's normal that locals will get upset. So things need to be done in a different way. Things need to be managed in a certain way that people have to ask permission, to walk around in certain places and take photos of private and things. So, the reality is, like always, we have a large amount of resources available to us, but we are not able to produce and use them in any manner or form for tourism. And it is our own fault, the fault of our mentality, our culture, not just Aquilano, but of the Abruzzesi. Whilst at the start even if it is a form of dark tourism. What happens is that at first as long as tourists come, that is the most important thing. Because with time, what happens? Things change, development continues and over the course of time, as the city develops, so do many things and one of those is the tourism industry, so whilst it might start of as dark tourism, in time it will change and become a different form of tourism.

The travel agent's comments encapsulate all the issues relevant to the perceived benefits of 'dark' tourism development. The difficulties in L'Aquila are extensive and diverse for all the residents, and are personal to each individual. The travel agent recognises the importance of tourism management in such situations, further accepting that a tourist left to wander alone is more likely to be less respectful, to take photos, which will irritate the locals. However, the tourism industry is something that can be shared by the collective community, and should be correctly managed to achieve benefits for the local community. The travel agent notes that the tourism industry in L'Aquila was neglected before the earthquake and continues to be overlooked. As so often has been expressed, he suggests that this neglect is down to a collective mentality that is rigid and lacks collaborative (ecco questo) recognition of benefits that can be bought about by external assistance. In other words, he stresses that the development of tourism has been obstructed by the local community's collective mentality and, therefore, it is the community that must take responsibility.

Overall, however, the tourism sector is evidently a key stakeholder in post-disaster tourism development and it should continue to demonstrate its support to develop and manage potential 'dark' tourism initiatives for the benefit of the wider local population.

8.6.6 Generating theory: Post-disaster tourism development stakeholder model

As discussed in the literature review, stakeholder analysis represents an approach for understanding a system by recognising key stakeholders (Ramirez, 1999; Brocklesby, Ambrose and Fon, 2002) on the basis of their attributes, interrelationships and by considering their particular interests related to systems, issues or resources (Smith, 1993; Ramirez, 1999; Swiderska, 2002). Stakeholder analysis in post-disaster reconstruction can be used to consider potential support or opposition to the reconstruction process amongst interested parties. The literature review presented stakeholders with an interest in post-disaster recovery (Asgary et al., 2006) and within the context of tourism heritage (Seaton, 2001). Asgary et al. (2006) noted that, for a reconstruction process to be effective and successful, all the stakeholders (indicated earlier in this section) should demonstrate commitment to the cause. However, it was highlighted that their model was not the focus of tourism. Thus, Seaton's (2001) heritage force field was discussed, which recognises four distinctive categories (*Owners / Controllers; Host Community; Subject Groups; Visitor Groups)* in which

differences, including emotionally-charged disagreements may arise with respect to conflicting interest in the development of a dark heritage site. Limitations of Seaton's (2001) force field were acknowledged with regards to its applicability to a post-disaster destination. Throughout the discussions above, it was also noted that Seaton's model is limited, inasmuch that it fails to acknowledge other significant stakeholders, such as the media. Subsequently, the empirical research explored the respondents' opinions with regards to the role of stakeholders in developing tourism. Combining the theory (above) with the data elicited from the interviews has allowed for the construction of a *Post-Disaster Tourism Development Stakeholder Model* as proposed in Figure 8.46 below.

Figure 8.46: Post-Disaster Tourism Development Stakeholder Model
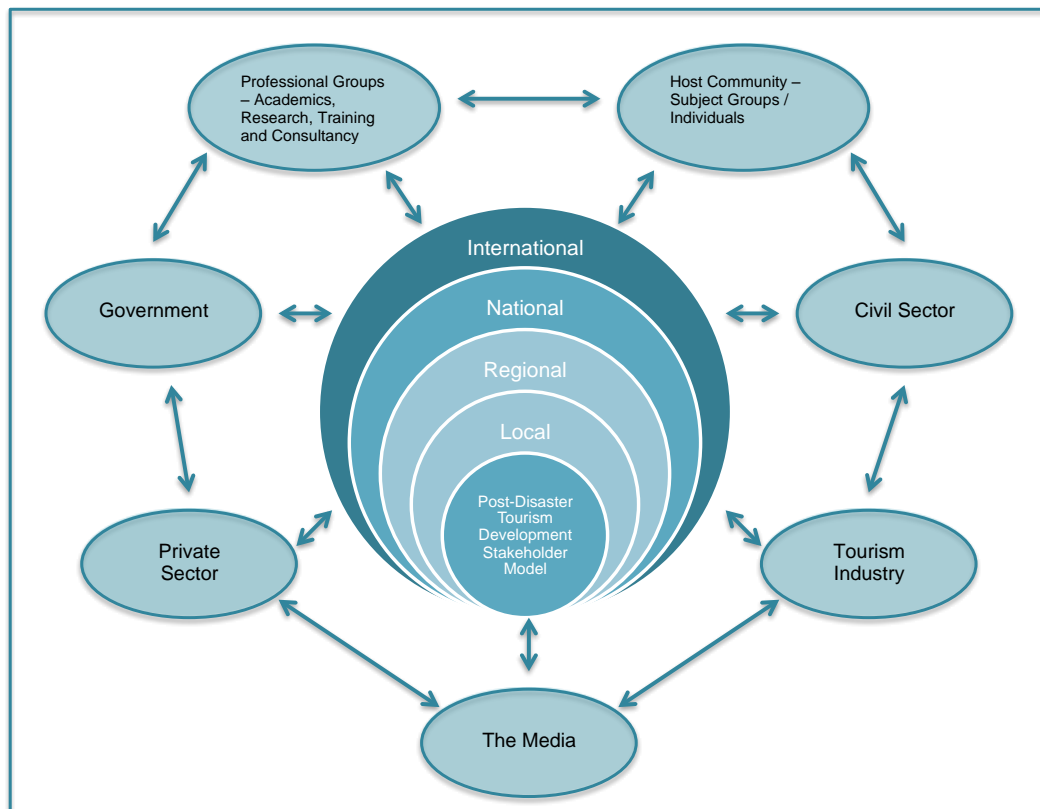
The model presents an original contribution to not only the dark tourism arena but to disaster tourism development destinations and arguably tourism development destinations in general. This thesis proposes that the *Post-Disaster Tourism Development Stakeholder Model* can be applied to future post-disaster destinations to assist 'dark' tourism development. It is suggested that the integration of the diverse groups of stakeholders within communities into the decision making process may reduce or minimise the potential for exploitation, discontent or conflict between the

local community over potential dark tourism development projects and post-disaster tourist (tourism) in general.

By amalgamating the significant stakeholders identified by this research as key to the development of dark tourism, communities can better utilise the tourism industry to the benefit of the wider local population. This research has discussed the roles and impact of different individuals and organisations since the disaster in L'Aquila and in doing so, supports the notion that post-disaster 'dark' tourism development should be a community practice. In other words, if the stakeholders presented in the *Post-Disaster Tourism Development Stakeholder Model* are all taken into consideration then it is suggested that the development of tourism in a disaster scenario will focus on providing the community with a source of not only income, but as a means of exploring the wider social / cultural impacts of the disaster. Furthermore, the disaster should be seen as an opportunity for change, and all stakeholders present within the community should be consolidated in order to optimise the possible benefits from tourism development.

8.6.7 Summary

Fulfilling Objective 4 of this research (to identify the role of different stakeholders in L'Aquila's 'dark' post-disaster tourism development), this section applied the DTDF to the research, exploring community involvement in tourism development and the role of stakeholders. The aim of this section of the DTDF was to identify how the local community of L'Aquila felt towards post-disaster 'dark' tourism development and, in particular, the role of different sectors within the community. Furthermore, it sought to identify who, from the respondents' point of view, should be involved in tourism development. Consequently, combining previous stakeholder development theory with the findings of this research, a *Post-Disaster Tourism Stakeholder Model* has been proposed. Thus far, all but one element of the DTDF have been applied and discussed. The remaining element, the destination's future, is a consideration of the future of L'Aquila.

8.7 Future of L'Aquila: a participant perspective

The aim of the following section is to focus on the future of L'Aquila as perceived by the local residents. As can be seen from Figure 8.47, this is the final section of the DTDF.

Figure 8.47: L'Aquila's Future – Participant responses (DTDF Section Five)

The following section will provide three extracts that offer a representative summary of the overall attitude that residents have towards the city of L'Aquila and how they perceive the future of their city.

Participant 9

I see it dark, (participant laughs), black (again said in English, with humour)… because there isn't any money, because the money has been used wrongly. It's pointless. If there isn't any money to help develop the city, then it will never get going again. The will and desire is there, but if there is no help and money has been spent poorly, then what can you do? They could have built temporary houses, but spending a quarter of what they spent and not in the new towns of Berlusconi, they spent too much money on them. They should spread the money, not enough was spent on the construction of the city. They (talking of Berlusconi's government) did it for personal interests. Have you seen the new towns that they have built, they are built on plates, anti-seismic plates that cost so much. The same houses built on a regular concrete base would withstand another earthquake just as well, because of the material used to build them, and they are only two floors high. There was a lot of money spent more for show than for need, and it was a waste. So much money could have been saved if the original plan was thought through carefully.

Participant 30

The one thing I have witnessed is the great sense of attachment towards L'Aquila amongst the locals since the earthquake. Ok, for logistical reasons, many were forced to leave. However, everyone seems to have a need to come back and see how things are progressing and to remain in contact with the city. From the point of view with regards to time, I see it dark. I see the future of the city very differently, it will change a lot. Not only will there be a massive change physically, but also a massive cultural change amongst the local community because of the large number of

outsiders who are coming here to work. Because at this stage, we require certain types of workers, engineers and construction workers, whilst people with other professions leave and go work elsewhere. Therefore, the social fabric of this city will change…

…How would I like to see it develop? Well better than before, because it is not as if it was a paradise before. It was already a city with many problems. It might take about 50 years to rebuild, but I hope it is a city that aims for better than what it was before and focuses on its culture and art, as this city as always had so much history in these, as well as the university and the beautiful mountains surrounding this city, which for me are the most beautiful mountain in the world.

Participant 3

Dark, dark, dark, dark, the right word for L'Aquila is this, not in terms of dark tourism, but it will be a dark future. The reconstruction will be long and painful because there isn't any money. There is no money from the state because they don't have any, not because they are mean and don't want to give us any; they just don't have any to give us, that's my opinion. There just isn't any money available. I'm not sure that there couldn't be any repercussions from this earthquake. At times I get this idea that maybe time has slowed down, because within the historical zone there hasn't been any movement, and therefore, there is a desolation to return home, I had a lovely garden. Now the idea of nature is the earthquake, but nature, the earth, grass, animals, nature is recovering, but slowly it's taking everything, in a different way, it's in the houses, the streets, the roads and squares are covered with "bocche di leoni" (flowery and very beautiful weeds). They give an amazing sensation. It really does feel like an abandoned city, like I have seen in the films, because you just don't come across such places often. It's like a dead city with barriers all over the place, with red and white hazard and no crossing tape attached and hanging everywhere, tarpaulins covering roofs, from the rain, the snow, and the wind, it's deserted.

It has been identified in this study, particularly during Stage 1 research, that the reconstruction of L'Aquila will be complicated and extensive. Through secondary data analysis it became evident that, owing to the historical age of the buildings, the rebuilding of the historical center presents many challenges, not least the narrow streets making it difficult for construction workers to operate. The weather also

restricts the potential to work during the winter months, with temperatures dropping below zero and snow often engulfing the streets. Thus, reconstruction is often restricted to the autumn, summer and spring. There is a lack of funds and resources available to the city, whilst those which are available, potentially fall into the hands of the Mafia. Equally, the inappropriate allocation of funds has also been highlighted, all of which further underline the complicated reconstruction process.

This rather depressing outlook of the future is also evident in the participants' responses. Their perceptions of L'Aquila's future reflect the likelihood that it will be long and difficult. Ironically, participants often referred to the city's future as 'dark', much to the potential influence of discussions during interviews on dark tourism. Interestingly, the earthquake was Mother Nature's way of showing her force and power, and now, as mentioned by participant 3, Mother Nature is taking over the city. As weeds and flowers begin to grow through the paved roads and cobbled streets and into homes, gradually L'Aquila is becoming overwhelmed by nature.

However long it takes, it is certain that there will be difficult obstacles and challenges to be overcome and a very different city may potentially emerge. As highlighted by participant 30, L'Aquila's culture may also change, owing to the type of individuals moving into the local vicinity for work purposes, reflecting the potential change to the 'social fabric' and cultural environment.

8.8 Summary

Chapter 8, stage 2 of research, has developed on from stage 1 of research (discussed in Chapter 7). The purpose of this chapter was to present and consider the outcomes of the research at Stage 2. The discussion follows the structure of the proposed Dark Tourism Development Framework and also reflects the five objectives of the research as established in the introductory chapter. The chapter has presented interview data in line with research objectives. The data has enabled a critical exploration of themes that have been identified as lacking in understanding and knowledge. Consequently, this research has generated and contributed new theory, models and frameworks, addressing gaps in knowledge in dark tourism development and stakeholder theory, and host-perceptions of tourism and tourists. The objectives of this research will now be revisited in the final chapter of this study.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.0 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate and enhance academic understanding of post-disaster tourism from a dark tourism perspective. It has presented the story of L'Aquila and its post disaster recovery processes, for the city presented an opportunity in which research could examine and provide a detailed analysis of a contemporary disaster location which has become a 'dark' tourism destination. More specifically, addressing the research objectives has contributed to tourism knowledge and theory, particularly with respect to areas such as dark tourism, post-disaster tourism and the role of stakeholders in post-disaster tourism development scenarios. The purpose of this final chapter is to draw conclusions from the thesis within the context of the research objectives as introduced in Chapter1, and to consider the contribution of the outcomes of this research to current academic knowledge. Opportunities and directions for future research are also presented.

9.1 Disasters and dark tourism: the case of L'Aquila

It was established in Chapter 1 that the overall purpose of this thesis was to identify and analyse critically the attitudes and responses of the local community to becoming the object of the 'dark' tourist gaze in a post-disaster context. More specifically, it was suggested that, despite the increasing academic attention paid to the concept of dark tourism, there remains limited understanding and knowledge of host community attitudes towards becoming a dark tourism destination. Thus, based on an in-depth study of L'Aquila, an Italian city that, having suffered a devastating earthquake in 2009 subsequently became a tourist destination, this thesis set out to address this gap in the literature.

In so doing, the background concepts of dark tourism and host-guest relationships were introduced in Chapter 2. The subsequent literature review in Chapters 3 and 4 considered key concepts and theories relevant to the objectives of the thesis, including a review of the literature on stakeholders and the conceptual analysis of disasters and disaster recovery in Chapter 3. It was considered necessary to explore

the meaning of 'place' in society to both individuals and collectives, and how 'place' and the meaning of place may be transformed in the face of destruction and death, which as noted, destruction brings about the end of places, hence, in Chapter 4 place theory (Cresswell, 2004) was critically discussed; to explore the meaning of place to collectives and individuals. It was also considered essential to understand the act of memorialisation, as memorials / commemoration sites (where the end of place occurs) frequently become 'dark' tourism attractions. The social construction of reality theory (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) was also introduced in Chapter 4, emphasising the importance of human interaction and continuous conversations with 'others' (in places) in order to maintain a subjective reality. Dark tourism sites are seen as 'places' where such conversations can take place (Sharpley and Stone, 2009).

The literature review informed the construction of two conceptual frameworks in Chapter 5; these were subsequently applied to the empirical research in Chapters 7 and 8. Stage 1 of the research, considered in Chapter 7, explored the reality of L'Aquila as the site of an earthquake and as an emerging 'dark' tourism destination, whilst Chapter 8 presented and analysed the outcomes of Stage 2 of the research based on in-depth interviews with members of the local community of L'Aquila. This revealed that, as a destination, L'Aquila had become an 'open museum' for tourists but the development, promotion and management of this museum was at best limited, resulting in an apparently superficial tourist experience.

Nevertheless, within the 'museum' city of L'Aquila, there are areas in which tourists can begin to drive meaning and understanding of the experiences endured by the local community; many of these examples are discussed in Chapter 8. It was established that the local residents had created these 'places', though not for the purpose of tourism. Rather, it was a means by which members of the local community could share their experiences through memorialisation, expressing frustration, desperation, and support and, more often than not, the need to be acknowledged and understood – to be heard. However, such places of memorialisation presented tourists with the opportunity to begin to understand the experiences suffered by residents, they represented 'places' where the tourist and 'host' might share in what Durkheim (1912) described as collective effervescence, where social groups and individuals can interact on shared ideas, concepts and, in this case, an empathic understanding of a disastrous event (Rifkin, 2009; Hoffman, 2000; Davis, 1996; Matsumoto, 1989; Rogers, 1958). Thus, they are the 'places' allowing for tourist-host interaction to take place and where continuous conversations with 'others' can occur.

Thus, the experience of L'Aquila, from suffering a major disaster to becoming a dark (disaster) tourism destination, offered the opportunity to consider through empirical research a number of key questions with respect to the development of dark tourism from a local community perspective. Hence, this thesis had the following objectives:

Objective 1: Given the potential negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark', to explore critically how the local community of L'Aquila feels about and responds to the concept of dark tourism.

Objective 2: To explore the responses of the local community of L'Aquila as it has become the focus of the post-disaster tourist gaze.

Objective 3: To review critically the applicability of the proposed Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF).

Objective 4: To identify the role of different stakeholders in L'Aquila's 'dark' post-disaster tourism development.

Objective 5: To consider how L'Aquila's social environment impacts on or influences an individual's attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism development.

The extent to which these objectives have been met is now considered.

9.2 Objective 1

Given the potential negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark', to explore critically how the local community of L'Aquila feels about and responds to the concept of dark tourism.

As observed in Chapter 2, increasing attention has been paid within the literature to the use of the term 'dark' to describe destinations / attractions associated with death, disaster and suffering and, by implication, the tourists visiting such destinations, with some suggesting that the term is pejorative and inappropriate. Hence, through Objective 1, the thesis sought to explore the extent of these negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark' through the opinions and experiences of the local community of L'Aquila. What emerged from the research, as documented in detail in Chapter 8, was that local people frequently distanced themselves from the term 'dark'

tourism. Throughout interviews, participants frequently used alternative words to define tourism and tourists visiting their city, including 'disaster' and 'catastrophe', and the object of the tourist gaze being described as the 'rubble' or 'ruins'. Indeed, the research revealed that for the locals of L'Aquila, tourism since the earthquake was best defined not as 'dark tourism' but as disaster tourism.

The research also revealed that the respondents were detached from the practice of visiting sites associated with death and disaster; that is, they could not understand why people would want to visit such places and suggested that, in other circumstances, they would not participate in such tourism. Significantly, it was suggested by one respondent that participation in dark tourism is socially inappropriate to the community of L'Aquila and, indeed, to Italy as a whole. Rather, it was described as an Anglo-Saxon practice, endowing the concept of dark tourism with a specific cultural characteristic. This is arguably a significant finding. Although the act of travel to sites of death and destruction has historically long been in evidence, including travel to witness gladiatorial contests during the Roman era, the concept of dark tourism was considered anathema in contemporary Italian culture, though largely because of the terminology of dark tourism (and all it implies) rather than the act of such travel itself.

More specifically, the people of L'Aquila have remained a parochial, 'closed' or inward looking community; throughout history, they have arguably remained contentedly detached from external influences, living in and persisting with their own cultural reality. At the same time, and perhaps reflecting this parochialism, they demonstrate a lack of interest in tourism both before and after the earthquake; the city has remained relatively immune from the advance of contemporary travel and tourism. Together, these characteristics serve to influence what the research revealed as a negative attitude on the part of the local community towards the concept of 'dark' tourism. Not only did they not want tourists to be visiting L'Aquila, at least, not in the early post-disaster stages, but the term 'dark' also heightened their animosity towards tourists coming to seemingly gaze on the city's misfortune.

Thus, as considered in Chapter 2, dark tourism is a concept that allows academics to investigate various social realities related to tourism to places of death and disaster under a single, all-encompassing conceptual label. It is a term that embraces a wide variety of destinations, attractions and tourist experiences locations, providing a context for the critical investigation of the role of tourism (or tourism to particular places) in mediating between contemporary society / individual existence and death /

mortality. However, whilst many established 'dark' tourism attractions exist, the term 'dark' tourism has become increasingly contentious and, from the evidence of this research, one that local communities in places that have become 'dark' attractions are unlikely to look on favourably. Certainly, the conclusion can be made that, in the case of L'Aquila, the label 'dark' is not suitable and that, although the city may be culturally unique, the use of the term in practice demands interrogation. In other words, should the term 'dark tourism' remain restricted to the academic realm?

Certainly, the research established that the residents of L'Aquila demonstrate significant displeasure towards 'dark' tourists in the initial post-disaster stages. What became apparent is that the labeling of L'Aquila as 'dark' not only stigmatised the location and the victims but also influenced the residents' perceptions of the tourists. As such, the tourists are seen as 'dark' by the local residents, heightening negative feelings towards them and consequently, reinforcing the unwillingness of many members of the community to support or engage in promoting dark tourism.

However, as considered widely in the literature, there are numerous and, frequently, positive reasons on the part of tourists for visiting dark attractions whilst such experiences may often have positive outcomes for the tourist. At the same time, developing tourism in 'dark' destinations may bring significant benefits to the destination and its community. Therefore, destinations should not necessarily be labeled as dark attractions. Indeed, there is undoubtedly a need to explore further how destinations such as L'Aquila, facing a post-disaster or 'dark' event scenario, should be labeled, marketed and promoted.

9.3 Objective 2

To explore the responses of the local community of L'Aquila as it has become the focus of the post-disaster tourist gaze.

Within the relevant literature, the relationship between the local community (hosts) and tourists (guests) is typically considered as a linear process defined by increasingly negative perceptions on the part of the destination community. Doxey's Irridex (1975) model, for example, suggests that as the tourism sector (and the number of tourists) grows, so does the pressure on the local community. As a result, local residents' feelings towards tourists become more negative, moving from 'euphoria' through to 'antagonism'. The model is not unambiguous because it

depends on the particular characteristics of both the host community and visitors, as well as the nature and significance of the tourism sector itself. Nevertheless, the model assumes that the change is unidirectional and negatively directional.

In contrast, this thesis has identified an alternative transformation process in the attitudes of locals towards tourists (and tourism) during the development of tourism services / products in post-disaster scenarios. Certainly, it is evident, disasters bring new forms of tourism and that with new 'dark' tourism products come new tourists. Furthermore, the local residents also become part of the new 'dark' tourism product, whether or not they are favorable towards the tourists, suggesting that, in principle, local people are likely to become more antagonistic. However, the research has confirmed the point made by others that host attitudes towards tourists cannot be considered independently from the wider context in which tourism occurs.

In the case of L'Aquila, the research identified a number of related factors that impacted on the local Aquilano's attitudes towards tourists, one being the passage of time. As the initial impact of the disaster became temporally more distant, the locals became more accepting of tourists. At the same time, the role of the media was also identified as influential in transforming local people's attitudes towards tourists. That is, the residents' felt that the media had mis-represented the reality of L'Aquila's current state to the wider population. Consequently, the local community increasingly felt that, as time progressed, tourism presented an opportunity for conveying the reality of the city's 'calamitous' state and lack of development to the rest of Italy and beyond. Equally, other factors, such as the lack of redevelopment, the sense that the city's plight was being ignored by central government, changes in personal circumstances, time to mourn loved ones, and the ability to move on from the earthquake, served to temper initially negative attitudes towards tourists. However, what is significant is that, over time, the local residents have become more willing to accept tourism and tourists who are engaging with 'dark' tourism practices relating to the tragic earthquake that destroyed their city.

This temporal element is recognsied in the 'Host-Reactions to Post-Disaster Tourists / Tourism' Model proposed in Chapter 8 and reproduced below (Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1: Host-Reactions to Post-Disaster Tourists / Tourism Model

Another significant factor that was been highlighted as impacting greatly on the residents' feelings towards tourism is the conduct of tourists themselves. The research found that local residents experienced higher levels of negative emotions towards the tourists in the initial stages following the disaster, frequently, in response to seeing tourists taking photographs of the devastated city. Tourists' behaviour and, more specifically, taking photographs was also identified as an issue in research conducted by Coats and Ferguson (2013) in Christchurch, New Zealand (see chapter three, section 3.11). However, unlike Christchurch where established tours are in place, L'Aquila lacks any significant tourism services to assist tourists when visiting the city. Arguably, a more recognised and established tourism presence on behalf of the local community could have ensured that the conduct of tourists was effectively controlled and managed, thereby reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the local community. Effectively, it is suggested that the local residents would have been more accepting of tourism and tourists if in the initial stages they would had been able to manage the influx of 'dark' tourists into the city.

As noted in Chapter 8, the proposed new model (Figure 9.1) continues to adopt a linear concept of host-tourist relationships. Indeed, this research found that local people in L'Aquila on a collective basis displayed greater levels of negativity / hostility towards tourists in the initial stages post-disaster but, over time, this hostility reduced and tourism become more acceptable. Therefore, the model above assumes a collectivist position on L'Aquila's residents' attitudes. However, this thesis has

stressed the relevance of the social construction of reality to fully understanding local attitudes to tourism development. L'Aquila has been described as a collectivist culture yet the model might not be so representative of alternative collective or perhaps individualistic cultures. Therefore, a subsequent model, again reproduced here (Figure 9.2) proposes a more rounded perspective of host-tourist attitudes to dark tourism, focusing on the individual attitude of a local, rather than that of a collective societal position.

Figure 9.2: Holistic Model of Host-Tourists Dark Tourism Attitudes
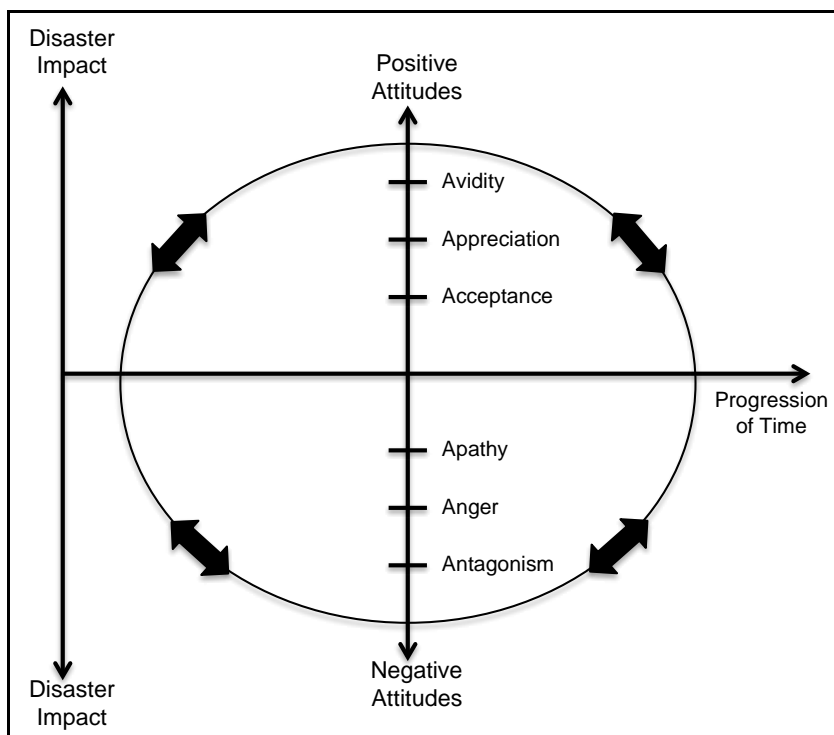
In other words, the theory of host-tourist relationships (Chapter 2) stresses the need to recognise the potential diversity in host attitudes in tourism development locations. This model therefore embraces the range of attitudes that locals may have towards tourists and tourism. That is, unlike previous, linear models, it allows for the fact that local people may possess and express both positive and negative attitudes, either of which may fluctuate at any given time.

As noted, dark tourism encompasses a wide range of attractions under the 'umbrella' concept. Thus, this model may be applicable to all destinations that may be described as dark and indeed, others that are not dark. The point is, the model is representative of both individualistic and collective societies, and, thus, future research should continue to investigate not only communities as a whole but individuals within those communities and their attitudes to tourists and tourism development, but especially in

destinations that have become victims of a disaster or another dark event. This will facilitate identification of the potential impacts on local communities' and further understanding of potential best practices when developing dark tourism attractions.

9.4 Objective 3

To review critically the applicability *of the proposed Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF) and the Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF).*

A stated in the introduction, one purpose of the literature review was to inform the construction of two conceptual frameworks, the DLCF and the DTDF, which would subsequently guide the two stages of research. The following two sub-sections will critically reflect on the appropriateness of the two frameworks.

9.4.1 DLCF Analysis

Figure 9.3: The Disaster Life Cycle Framework (DLCF)
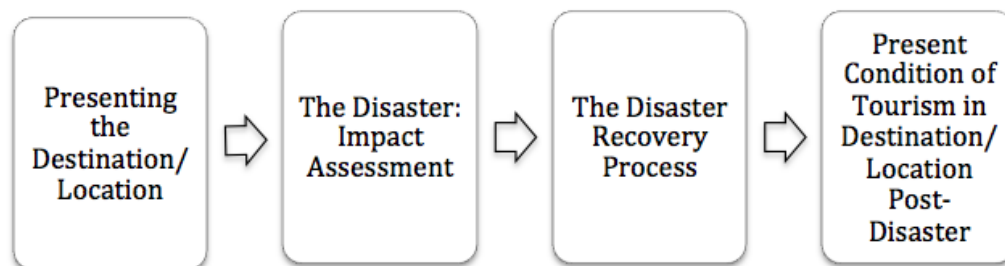
The application of the DLCF was used to guide Stage 1 research and, specifically, to critically appraise the general social responses to the earthquake in L'Aquila. It further assisted the identification of post-disaster recovery processes, which facilitated an assessment of the current state of the city, subsequently identifying it as a 'dark' tourist destination.

It may be concluded that, overall the theory identified in the literature review and underpinning the DLCF facilitated a logical and theoretically detailed evaluation of L'Aquila's disaster recovery process. However, one element of the framework that was found to be of limited significance was Quarantelli's (1989) five definitions of the recovery process. Quarantelli (1989) identifies five words; reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation, restitution and recovery associated with element three of the DLCF, suggesting that these words should be clearly defined in order to allow researchers to appropriately assess the development process in a post-disaster scenario. However,

whilst valid, it was arguably not necessary to adhere strictly to a systematic clarification of each word when assessing L'Aquila's recovery process, largely due to the fact that these words and their definitions overlap considerably and more so when translating from one language to another. Therefore, a stringent application of such words was not necessary and did not restrict the disaster recovery assessment of L'Aquila during stage one research.

9.4.2 DTDF Analysis

Figure 9.4: The Dark Tourism Development Framework (DTDF)

The DTDF was used to guide Stage 2 research and also acted as a framework for the in-depth, semi-structured interviews which focused on the five research objectives. Furthermore, the DTDF was used as a guide to structure / present the research outcomes and discussion in Chapter 8, although the individual sections were not presented in the same order as presented in the model. As justified in Chapter 8, it was deemed necessary to first provide an analysis of L'Aquila's tourism industry before assessing why or how the tourism industry had developed into its current state and to investigate local opinions towards 'dark' tourists (tourism).

Nevertheless, the DTDF guided the second stage of research effectively, with the application of the framework, the data collection, analysis and presentation all being undertaken systematically. It also helped to maintain focus on the research objectives. Thus, both the DLCF and the DTDF facilitated the successful navigation of the research through the two stages, enabling the other four research objectives to be critically addressed. The applicability of the frameworks to alternative studies is difficult to assess. Whilst the DLCF could be applied in future to destinations in order to assess a location and its disaster recovery process, the suitability of the DTDF would be dependent on the objectives of future research studies.

9.5 Objective 4

To identify the role of different stakeholders in L'Aquila's 'dark' post-disaster tourism development.

The role of stakeholders is crucial in any tourism development scenario, arguably more so when death and destruction are present. Therefore, this research investigated local attitudes towards 'dark' tourism development. The research identified that, since the disaster L'Aquila, has inadequately managed the provision of facilities and amenities to cater for post-disaster tourists. Consequently, the city is, in effect, an open, unmanaged museum where tourists may gaze upon the destruction. It was also highlighted that key tourism attractions within the city were the student house (a media established location) and other particular localities where locals had actively expressed their experiences since the disaster. Having understood the current state of the tourism industry, and through in-depth interviews with a diverse selection of the local population, the research was able to explore the responsibility and impact of different stakeholders.

Theory identifies how a disaster should be seen as an opportunity for change (Chapter 3) and how all stakeholders within the community should be brought together in order to maximise the possible benefits from tourism development (see chapter 2). This research discussed the roles and impact of different individuals and organisations since the disaster in L'Aquila and, in doing so, supports the notion that post-disaster 'dark' tourism development should be a community practice. Inevitably, not all members of the community will be sufficiently satisfied with the types of tourism development that emerge from a disaster. Through the recognition of current stakeholder development theory (Asgary et al., 2006; Seaton, 2001) and the empirical data collected and analysed in this research, the thesis proposed a *post-disaster tourism development stakeholder model* (Figure 9.5).

Figure 9.5: Post-Disaster Tourism Development Stakeholder Model
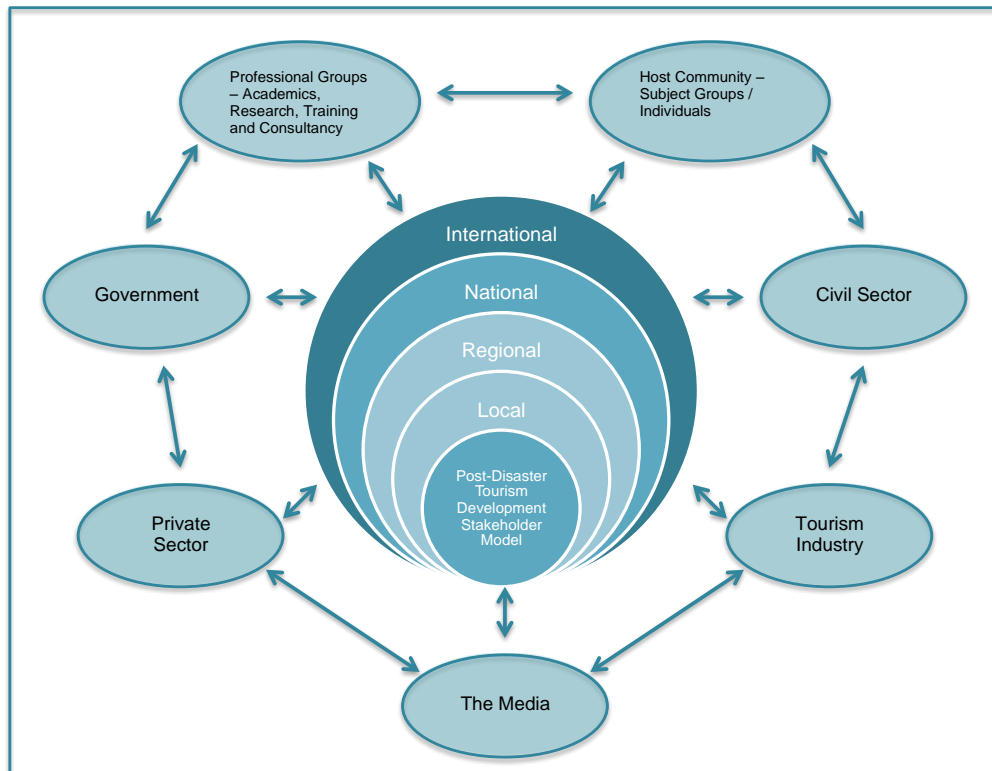
This model may be applied to future post-disaster 'dark' tourism development destinations. It is not proposed for exclusive use in 'dark' tourism development locations, recognising as it does the diverse stakeholders present in society, all of whom should, arguably, be acknowledged when developing tourism. In recognising the scope of stakeholders, communities can seek to exploit tourism to the benefit of the wider local population, thus, aiming to reduce negative tensions between hosts and tourists.

9.6 Objective 5

To consider how L'Aquila's social environment impacts on or influences an individuals attitudes towards post-disaster dark tourism development.

Objective 5 of this research was to generate further understanding of how the social and cultural environment impacts on a destination's tourism development, post-disaster. The first stage of the research (Chapter 7) presented the historical development of L'Aquila, and identified the city's recurring relationship with one of nature's most powerful forces, the earthquake. It was also suggested in accordance with place theory (Cresswell, 2004) that L'Aquila's geographical positioning within Italy has left the city isolated from the majority of the Abruzzo region, Italy and the

wider global community. This is not to say the locals have been hidden from the outside world, but historically and even to present day, the city, surrounded by mountains, has maintained a more isolated existence.

During the second stage of research, respondents provided their own interpretations of their cultural identity, further exploring local characteristics. It was established by the residents that a collective community existed. Within this collective community, various characteristics were evident and even shared between the residents. In fact, these characteristics have been present throughout the city's long history – 'Immota Manet'. Common representational characteristics that were discussed suggested that non-residents were perceived with suspicion, and that the local people were closed by nature and resistant to change. The major influxes of non-residents have been in the form of students attending the city's university, and even they are looked upon apprehensively.

It was acknowledged that this apprehensive attitude towards non-residents is also directed towards tourists and the tourism industry, both before and after the earthquake. The earthquake brought destruction to L'Aquila on a significant scale and subsequently (but not unusually), tourists began to visit the city. However, this thesis has revealed how L'Aquila has been unsuccessful in developing tourism post-disaster, specifically with respect to the establishment of tourism services with an emphasis on the disaster, although sites within the city have emerged as a reaction by locals to the inaction on behalf of the authorities; these places have subsequently become focal tourism attractions within the city.

The question is: can this lack of tourism development post-disaster can be seen as the outcome of the city's collective mentality? Indeed, Objective 5 asks, does the social environment influence the individuals' attitude towards dark tourism development? In the case of L'Aquila, it has been found that, over time, the social and cultural environment has formed a collective identity and way of life, a social reality into which locals have been socialised (Berger, 1967). L'Aquila's residents have become part of and accustomed to a social reality that is closed, isolated and resilient to outside influences.

A closed, suspicious mentality towards 'foreigners' (both national or international) throughout its history is a significant reason why L'Aquila has not recognised the benefits of developing 'dark' tourism, or any form of tourism that is focused on the promotion of the earthquake. This thesis stresses that the collective mentality of the

city has negatively impacted on the tourism industry and on any potential developments that could have been implemented at the initial stages post-disaster and thereafter. Arguably, the city has always been destined to be exploited by the disaster, primarily because of the mentality that has been established over generations.

Consequently, there has been little if any collaboration between the city's stakeholders in order to develop tourism services since the disaster. Whilst the residents of L'Aquila have shown their collective strength through various effervescent acts of remembrance and memorialisation, as frequently suggested by the participants, they are more concerned with their own individual problems. Moreover, their closed mentality rendered them unprepared for the influx of 'dark' tourists, particularly when considering that the tourism industry has never been embraced. This closed mentality has also significantly influenced tensions between tourists and the local community in the initial post-disaster stages.

As identified in the literature review, dark tourism destinations have the ability to assist individuals who have been left questioning their subjective reality; dark attractions allow people to share and express experiences with 'others' (Berger. 1967; Sharpley and Stone, 2009). L'Aquila's collective closed mentality, as identified in this research, resulted in negative feelings towards tourists. Therefore, local people's conversations with 'others' were prevented by virtue of their own characteristics and the nature of their identity. Politicians and the media, according to the residents, have not facilitated an environment in which the locals can express themselves; rather, the city has been overlooked, especially from a tourism perspective. Thus, L'Aquila stands in stark contrast to other dark tourism destinations such as Ground Zero or, of particular relevance to this thesis, Christchurch in New Zealand.

The greatest impact arising from the neglect of tourism has been on the locals themselves, as opportunities have not been exploited. The lack of any significant guidance or leadership in tourism development has resulted in an open museum for tourists, and the only people who feel betrayed and exploited are the residents, who should in fact be using disaster opportunities as a means to attain a wide range of tourism benefits. As time has progressed and with the continuous lack of development many locals have moved away in search of a better life.

Of most significance, however, is the manner in which the city's social and cultural environment has limited the individual and the collective attitudes within Aquilano

residents. Further research is needed to investigate how destinations differ in attitudes towards dark tourism development. Do alternative destinations share collective mentalities that obstruct tourism development? If so, more should be done to ensure that support is provided to encourage locals to exploit tourism for all its positive opportunities and not to become exploited and to be forgotten? For this is very much the case for L'Aquila and its tourism industry.

9.7 Advancing literatures and future research

This research has gone some way to advancing knowledge within the academic field of tourism development, particularly in the context of dark tourism, stakeholder theory and post-disaster tourism. More specifically, it has explored the negative connotations surrounding the term 'dark' as a concept for tourism promotion. The findings suggest that, certainly in the case of L'Aquila, the term is unsuitable for describing and or promoting tourism to the city. Thus, although further research is required in other locational / dark contexts, this research has added an empirical dimension to the debate surrounding the validity of the term dark tourism, adding weight to the argument that it is a disadvantageous and pejorative means of referring to tourism to disaster zones and other places associated with death and suffering.

In this thesis, L'Aquila has been identified as a collective society and the research has demonstrated that the social environment can significantly impact the individuals' attitudes to dark tourism development. A significant point that has emerged from this research is how our social environment can influence opinions and obstruct development. Further research is needed to understand, firstly, the differences between individualistic and collective societies and how they manage the development of dark tourism. Research should focus on current and well-established destinations in order to understand how and why various tourism facilities have been created, in so doing contributing to the appropriate development of potential dark tourism destinations of the future. Secondly, further research should seek to identify and understand the socio-cultural influences determining the creation and nature of dark tourism destinations in order to assess future locations to understand why and how dark tourism can benefit the local community. At the same time, given the specificity of the study in this thesis, further investigation is necessary into the development of dark tourism in other post-disaster destinations in order to enhance knowledge and understanding of how tourism can benefit the local community in such contexts.

An issue implicit in Objective 1 is the role of destination marketing in line with the development of new tourism attractions that are associated with death and destruction. Specifically, dark tourism marketing in post-disaster destinations presents further opportunity for research to investigate the benefits of attracting tourists. As such, further research should address the question: is marketing a destination as 'dark' beneficial to the local community and what are the implications of doing so?

9.8 Final thoughts: A personal reflection

When I began the PhD journey I was unaware of the demanding process that lay ahead of me. The challenges I confronted provoked my emotional and rational capabilities, demanding me to develop continuously my mental and physical state in order to achieve the final outcomes. As time progressed, the PhD became part of me, as much as I was part of it. Together, the 'PhD' and 'I' were inseparable, yet such an alignment between myself and the PhD was something that I was not aware of or prepared for from the outset. The journey I have taken has evidently changed and impacted on who I am today; the journey has been, for me, an emotional conquest and an academic achievement.

What became apparent throughout the journey was the fact that I was the only person who could overcome the fear of failure that arose during the more difficult times. It was I who had to complete this journey, I who was challenged and, therefore, required to adapt and change in order to overcome obstacles. However, there have been some incredible individuals who have assisted me during my journey, whom I have acknowledged at the start of this thesis. Such individuals have provided me with the encouragement, motivation and support necessary to overcome the difficulties and challenges presented throughout the undertaking of my PhD. To them, I owe much gratitude.

A significant part of my journey was the experience encountered during the interview processes. People had often told me that at some point I would enjoy my 'eureka moment', a moment when everything would fall into place. I do not recall such a stage in my PhD. However, the empirical data collection phase remains the moment at which I feel my PhD came to life, not just on paper but in me. Conducting the interviews with local residents in the city of L'Aquila, amongst the destruction, in a truly captivating environment, listening to the heart-wrenching detail of peoples' experiences, all of this evoked a new identity in me. During the three months of in-depth interviewing and field visits, I encountered so many people who opened up to

me and shared their desperate and yet incredible stories. These moments often left me questioning my own fragile existence, my own significance as an individual and, inevitably, the meaning, importance and implications of my own research. Indeed both the empirical research and my wider reading explored many difficult and emotive topics related to death, destruction, society and philosophy, all of which challenged me to question my own views on life. The PhD journey has, in many ways, provided me with my own identity and sense of place in this world. I have come to recognise the importance in the people and places I have encountered, and how these have helped form my own identity. And all this has been undertaken in the university environment, and this experience has contributed not only to me as an individual but, hopefully, to my professional development as a lecturer and, eventually, to the encounters I have with other people, not only students, but also in my personal life. The PhD journey has been but a fragment of my life, but certainly one of the most significant. My journey as an individual in this world will continue and, hopefully, I will be blessed with similar opportunities to meet incredible people who continue to challenge my personal attitudes towards the extraordinary world we inhabit and the manner in which we not only exploit our world, but also towards the challenges we face when the world exploits us.

Participant 21

I went to bed as a 17 year old girl, and awoke a completely different person.
I find it really difficult to remember me, who I was, what I was like before,
because objectively it changes you, both internally and externally,
your manner of doing things, your personality,
characteristics and the trust you have in other things and other people.
Certainly, for me, it taught me to appreciate and value things,
things that before may not have seemed so important.

Post-Script

Since the earthquake, six Italian scientists and an ex-government official have been sentenced to six years in prison. The judge at a regional court found them all guilty of manslaughter (BBC-News Europe, 2012). He stated that the reasoning behind his verdict was based on the fact that the seven individuals were all members of a government body, the National Commission for the Forecast and Prevention of Major Risks, and that they had analysed the risk of a major earthquake in L'Aquila in a 'superficial, approximate and generic way' and that they were willing participants in a 'media operation' to reassure the public. Public prosecutors had claimed that, as a consequence, some of the city's residents had changed their behaviour, staying indoors on the night of the quake rather than seeking shelter outside, something they were commonly used to doing during tremors. In defence, the Serious Risks Commission's argument was that earthquakes cannot be predicted and that in scientific practice there is not a single accepted method of predicting earthquakes (Prats, 2012). Consequently, a large part of the population and the scientific community felt that is was, in fact, science that was on trial, and that scientists were being prosecuted for being unable to predict an earthquake. However, it was claimed that it was not science that was on trial, but the 'communication of science' and, more to the point, the 'communication of risk'. The message offered by the Civil Protection Agency was too paternalistic: we are prepared to face the situation, you do not have to worry, go home and we will take care of everything. However, the population was not prepared, and adequate and practical advice was not provided to the community. (Prats, 2012).

An article by Bolzoni on the 14th of January 2014 presents a vivid description of L'Aquila's current situation (see www.repubblica.it). Translated extracts from this article, titled '*L'Aquila, così il cantiere più grande d'Europa ha partorito una città fantasma*' (L'Aquila, so the largest construction site in Europe has given birth to a ghost town) read as follows:

> *L'AQUILA - You only hear the sound of a hammer beating in what they call 'the largest construction site in Europe'. A hammer, a nail, a carpenter suspended in the air. The rest is silence inhabited only by ghosts. L'Aquila dead city, time 14.30, Piazza del Duomo. Everything is still 'closed because of the earthquake', five years later. Everything is rubble, houses and government, there is no reconstruction and there is no longer a mayor, everything is lifeless, abandoned. In a house on the ground floor of the*

Piazzetta San Flaviano, clothes are still hanging left to dry from the night of April 6, 2009. They are rescued only by thieves in Abruzzo tortured after the tragedy. The Berlusconi era managed to steal more than the jackals did in Irpinia or in Belize. The Eagle exhausted and still militarized. His cry of pain: "The Eagle that no longer exists ". L'Aquila dead city, the Piazza del Duomo. 900 workshops existed before the earthquake, now there are 29. One which sells cheese, a jewelry store and a gift shop which share the same shop space, and twenty-five bars. Less than 3 percent of the stores that existed five years ago.

The reality for the people of L'Aquila is that their city continues to lie in ruins and retains the ambience of a ghost town, and from a tourism perspective, a disastourous (dark) tourism destination.

Figure 10.1: Venite a L'Aquila: Come to L'Aquila

Photo: Author

Sign reads (From Figure 10.1):
Come see what hurts the soul. Come see the stones that speak, whisper and shout.

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Appendix One

Participant 19 Interview Transcription

Interviewer
How did the earthquake affect your life physically or mentally, your personality, characteristics?

Participant
Ok, I state that it may be something curious for you, I was sure, I was certain, seeing that the story of earthquakes is very much tied to my work of photography, I was certain, for years before, I was positive that I would see and photograph my city after being destroyed by an earthquake. I waited for this moment because in 1980 I was 18 and I was in Irpinia (Southern Italy) after the earthquake in Irpinia. I was there for 2 to 3 days doing voluntary work and I didn't want to take my camera back then, but I was left with that experience in my mind, and as I grew older and I developed my career as a photographer I thought, seeing that L'Aquila is very much a seismic zone, I said to myself that I am certain at some stage in lifetime it will occur, that I will have to do a similar thing but as a photographer, I was sure and therefore, perhaps paradoxically I was more at the ready to a devastation hitting my city, plus with all the tremors that could be felt 6 months previously I was ready. Therefore, I have to say that in the immediacy it did not cause me any problems because I left straight away so my initial functions in the first few months was to do a testimony to that which occurred, so at the time I didn't think of much because my focus was on that (photographic the event). Now, it gives me a sensation that we obviously live on the land, which can be subject to natural events. Therefore, we are very small in respects to the earth and so vulnerable to suffering all of this. Obviously if we had an understanding or a custom or a culture on the earthquake we could have constructed better and we could have managed the event better. Therefore, there could have been fewer tragedies, but not because of the earthquake, but because of our incapacity to build correctly. Therefore, we are residents of a land that has its own movements and its own breaths and therefore we suffer. Maybe it is for this reason I cannot be angry at the fatalities, as it is difficult to channel your anger at the earth. I don't say it was the earthquake that killed, maybe because I didn't lose anyone directly, otherwise I may think differently. However, we are residents of the earth and thus live on a territory, which has it own capabilities, which are out of our hands. We are very small in respects to the universe. Another sentiment, which I have is the anger against us city folk, our

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politicians, at us being men but not able to know this was going to happen, not being able to prevent, by way of construction (pre-earthquake).

Even with our politicians, I have never even done training to be prepared for an earthquake, especially living in a territory like ours. I am angry because, maybe us Italians, well I'm not sure if it is only us Italians but, at the moment we cannot manage the post-earthquake recovery. This is a dramatic thing and therefore we being humans made mistakes before the earthquake and we continue to make mistake afterwards. This begins to give me… it make me angry because I am very bound to this city, I love L'Aquila, but, not for long, only recently in the past month or so I have began to suffer this situation. I was born in L'Aquila, even my parents were born in a town 60 kilometers away in the region of Lazio. I am from L'Aquila and I love this city in real deep way. However, I will tell you that right now I am beginning to suffer a little.

Interviewer

Being an outsider how would you describe to me the personality or the characteristics of the Aquilani?

Participant

Look, the Aquilani, I will explain it to you, its not difficult. The Aquilani thought they were very strong people, with very strong characteristics. And this felt very true within the first two months of the earthquake, because there was a very composed reaction from the part of citizenship, the reaction was very ethically correct, well, there wasn't any, you couldn't hear loads of screams in the immediacy of the earthquake. For example there are people in the south who would tear out their hair (metaphorically speaking) there wasn't this external emotional reaction of pain, much more composed. Therefore, I thought that the Aquilano was how you would normally say, of a strong ethical characteristic. However, instead I began to doubt this about a month after and thought maybe we aren't so strong, we are weak, frail and we are people who have suffered, in a negative manner this thing (the earthquake), in a shocking manner, we didn't have the strength to act and perhaps now, after more than three years we are demonstrating this, in the sense that maybe we are demonstrating that we are part of the south, in the sense that we rely on the help of welfare from the state. On our own we are probably not able to act. However, there are a few people who are capable to find the strength within. At the moment I believe this to be the case, that the Aquilano thought they were strong but at the moment they are probably weak. Actually, not probably, but weak because we haven't had the strength to re-construct and we don't have the strength… people say, to re-build money is needed,

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the damages are lots and you don't have the resource to re-build… true. However, we haven't fought our politicians, we haven't marched in our thousands and said we went our city to be re-built. However, we wait. That's the way we are, we are very weak from this point of view.

Interviewer

Maybe after three years of witnessing the state of L'Aquila as it is now, for the locals it has a sense of normality to it?

Participant

According to me there will be, like all human tragedies… Well a human being that undergoes an organ transplant will then live their lives in a normal way, who goes back to living in a normal manner to an extent, even if their normality is slightly different than before. However, the human being and the animal have an adaptable spirit, in such we adapt to the changes we suffer, that's normal. That is what we are currently doing. However, we are not adapting to better ourselves, we are possibly adapting for worst. Everyone thinks of himself or herself, everyone thinks about building their own homes, but not towards the redevelopment of everything, and therefore there is no global vision, everything is very individual,

Interviewer

Do you feel this has something to do with the characteristics of the Aquilano?

Participant

At the moment I believe so, yes. In the sense that, well there was a study by a well known man who studied culture and cultural differences, I cannot remember his name, and he said that we are so closed... a population so closed, very little inclined to exchange and communicate with outsiders, but not only because we are a mountainous population, and therefore used to living is a closed off area, but because we are a population who are used to earthquakes, to devastations within the history of our time. I think he could be correct because earthquakes that are sub sequel to each other during the historical course of time can genetically change the people in the areas. We are able to be much weaker in respect to other populations who are at greater risks than us. Perhaps this is the case. However, much research would be required to see if this is the case… to understand such cultural differences. Research would have to look into past cultures and see if links can be found and if they can be interrelated to the earthquakes. At this stage I think yes, it is a kind of genetic… here I will give you another example – some people within their families have had issues of

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Interviewer

After the earthquake L'Aquila attracted tourists, however, some of these Tourists' arrived for new motivations. These tourists that I am recognizing are those attracted to death, tragedy, destruction, and places that could be described as being macabre. My studies are focused on a concept of tourism called dark tourism. Do you know the word dark?

Interviewer

What are your initial reactions to this word or concept in relation to your city?

because there is not too much significance on death now, compared to the initial days, were this concept would have been a little fresh and I think it is part of the human being. Man is black and white, therefore, it can be justified that there is dark tourism and white tourism seeing that man can be dark I can see why it shouldn't exist. I have never done it myself (dark tourism) and I don't think I will ever do it as I don't have this morbid-ness. But it doesn't mean that others cannot, but with respect to the people who live in these places, the locals.

Interviewer

When walking around L'Aquila today one can see many tourists taking photos of certain sites such as Church's and the student's house. If you wanted to develop dark tourism what would be important in terms of providing recognition between the tourists and the locals in regards to helping tourists understand what happened here?

Participant

Look I have a very practical position, which is also possibly a little hard. However, it goes hand in hand with the type of tourists who comes here. I think if regulated and done well we could develop this kind of tourism as I didn't really know that it existed and that it was in some way defined. Well I knew it existed but I didn't know that it had been given a precise name. Therefore, I think something rather intelligent could arise from this… seeing this exists to whatever extent and seeing that at L'Aquila we cannot decide to change the name, or more so we shouldn't be picky, its a resource, so therefore why not try and exploit this resource at this point, lets exploit it. However, its always about rules. Something that could be important and here I touch a little on my terrain, simply, all that is needed to create in this city, things that exit in every city which has been devastated by an earthquake in Italy, and here I have tired and I am still trying, but I do not know if I will succeed, all that is required to do, is to create a museum, even a small museum of images and photos. Its been done at Fontecchio, a small town 30 Kilometres from L'Aquila, showing some of my images of L'Aquila and surrounding areas before and after the earthquake. However, there is still nothing here in L'Aquila, there isn't this concept. Therefore, one should just construct locations, places where the tourist comes sees what there is, and it should be regulated. What is important is to show what there was before. For example, at Collemaggio (Church in L'Aquila) if a tourist passes and sees all that has crumbled, all that is simply needed is to place some large boards or posters to exhibit which would allow the tourist to understand what is was like before. So what does this mean, this means you come to me, you bring me resources because I need them, such as money, and I will provide you with some information to let you understand what the

Interviewer

So the important thing is to show the tourists and get them to understands what there was before compared to now.

Interviewer

Do you think that the Aquilani would feel exploited by dark tourism development?

before (the earthquake). This is a very rich territory, the environment, culturally, it was and it still is. We have many little towns surrounding us which have a lot of emerging archeology and this area is a rich territory of environment as we have two national parks and one regional park and lots of culture. We have a great climate we have great opportunity for outdoor activities such as cycling, horse-riding, a great winter season of skiing, it is a enormously rich area and we have always been unable to exploit it, from the start, never. So it's not worth imagining if this city is capable of exploiting anything now, especially on the mess caused by a disaster because it would be seen as an insult to the population. The reaction would be… right now we are going to exploit the earthquake and develop dark tourism. This is a limitation which was there before and obviously now it will be even deeper because its impossible to imagine such a development. There isn't the sensibility or the intelligence from this point of view to develop in a correct manner of dark tourism. We have suffered deeply and we will continue to suffer this dark tourism but we haven't done anything to expand it or manage it or canalise it.

Interviewer
What do you think the Aquilani feel about tourists coming and visiting?

Participant
I know that, well I think there is a bit of anger, but there is also the sensation that it is normal that such tourists arrive and there is nothing you can do to avoid or prevent it, what do you do close the frontier. So like I said, we are suffering and living this so lets exploit it.

Interviewer
Do you think a location or site of dark tourism could be a mediation between the dead and the living?

Participant
I don't think so, well its not that I don't believe so, however, I see this question as being a little to individualistic. I personally have suffered and and do not need a photo or a place to remember my loved ones. However, I imagine that for some people it could be a sort of bridge. But this topic between the dead and the living is not something I have ever thought about profoundly, not for any critical reason or for conviction or for stereotypes. I think it's all very open to personal judgment for man to decide. Maybe there are people who probably feel that such a place could hold such a position, not for me. I couldn't give you any kind of universal explanation cause I

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don't think there is one. When I go past places where people have died, some of whom were my friends its clear that from within a strong emotion and feeling of respect comes out, even if I have photographed these places. There are some places I have never photographed and never cataloged out of respect for my local citizens. I couldn't go and photograph dead people; it would have been a robbery. After however, I did photograph some places even in a strong emotional sense but I do it for a reason, maybe to normalise it slightly, or maybe I did it to smack it straight into the faces of everyone, for shock purposes, to highlight what has happened.

Interviewer

Today I saw your photo in the center of L'Aquila, which you took of

Dr Vittorini. Could you tell me about this photo, the story and motivations behind it.

Participant

I tell you what, I was a little worried about this, and this photo especially. I studied this photo and with Vincenzo who is my friend I asked him, and you know what, when I did an exhibition and I put this photo on show, which was then seen by a lot of people, no one took it badly, everyone accepted it. Maybe that's because I did it, if it was someone else, I don't know. Being a local, well known, being taken by me it was easier to accept by the local Aquilani. However, the motive behind that photo was to say, ladies and gentleman look here, this happened, here people died and people who lost everything. Lets stop one moment reflect a little and from my point of view it should be done with respect. Then most probably for a person with a different perspective lets say 'darker' may find different significances from the photo, but again that is their problem. My motivation is that the people who have lost loved ones already feel as if they have been abandoned, therefore I want reawaken people consciences.

Interviewer

These types of photos you have taken like the other one you have in the center called fantasma, is it something you have done previously or a new style of photography which you have begun since the earthquake?

Participant

The fantasma photo, I have never done it before in my life. I have never mounted photos, well I may have done it once before for a photo on Auschwitz. It's a technique that I do not like too much. However, on that day, it was a little random, it came and is the only one I did, I didn't do any others. However, there was something in this one,

Interviewer

It is very difficult to identify a broad understanding and general definition to provide one with the motivations of dark tourists. There can be endless amounts of reasons as to why tourists would travel to sites representative of dark tourism. You see many people visiting places for a wide range of reasons. Also the fact that there are so many different places associated with dark tourism also complicates any real definition or understanding of tourist motivations.

It is strange, especially when one discusses the importance of death in Italy. Death, commemoration and memorialisation is very prominent, within the streets, or even more so if one is to visit the graveyards, such powerful displays of remembrance and respect. Its seems strange to me that so little has been done in L'Aquila to pay tribute to the victims and to recognise the damaged caused by the earthquake, and to tell the story of this city.

depends on where it falls, if it happens in Finland then they are probably much more ahead of us and they will live it and confront it in a different way to us. We are egotistical because we initially see it that the first problem is our problem. Not that there are some people, a father who lost a wife and two children and ended up alone. For me this is the grave issue. We are the mirror of a population. L'Aquila is confronting this problem, it is reflecting all the negative mechanisms of the Italian population, we are like that, and there is no doubt about it. We are also a region who are doing a good job at the moment according to me of demonstrating that we a region of the south… the worst part. We respect the men of the south a lot, they have some beautiful characteristics, but maybe the existentialism in us is too strong.

Interviewer

If L'Aquila wanted to develop dark tourism who do you think should have a voice, who should be present in any sort of decision process?

Participant

Simply, L'Aquila's tourism department, they have an important identity. In theory it should proceed from them, or even more so it should proceed from the association of hoteliers. Because in theory it is them who would have the majority or the greatest economic advantage. So it should start from them and others who could live of it. Or those who have a greater interest from it, because for me personally, I wouldn't gain anything. It could also be speculative from the position of those who lost loved ones. But at the end of the day it won't happen, we did nothing before so we won't do anything now. What politician or person will risk going against the internal population. More than anything the politicians would have a strong position in projecting any type of development.

Interviewer

Do you think it is moral, immoral, or acceptable to develop tourism when death and destruction is involved?

Participant

Well, I will respond with an example, when I was in a town near by taking photos I thought I would find a place very mystical, however, it took me by surprise, these little shops, well it was a religious type or tourism so there where statues with the head of Christ, it became clear to me that it's a place which is very religious but also dark and bleak, but even there they manage to live off this type of tourism. So I repeat, if there is a question, so there is dark tourism, if we are clever, we can use this energy, and

there is nothing we can do because people will come (tourists) its worse to send them off and have them sleep in Rome or Teramo, if they are here then get them to stay and sleep in L'Aquila. Lets create a culture with this energy, and lets say this energy is seen as something negative… in such that dark tourism is seen as something wrong, but it exists and there is energy behind it, then why can we not treat it and turn it into something positive. At the end it can be difficult and it may not be possible. However, its here so why not in some way try and manage it, organise it and done in the correct way it could be possible.

All that is needed is to organise the most trivial of things, a site, a meeting point where people arrive, there is a guide, other people who want to work, what does this guide do, he takes people around the city, tells people about the city, what used to be here before and how it is now. So what does that mean… it means organise, with the energy of people coming an visiting, which they are doing, so even if it has to have a dark aspect to it, what does it matter, again I go back to the point that the problem is with the tourist its not my problem, its not our problem. If he then dies and goes to hell cause he is a dark tourist (metaphorically speaking) its his problem not mine or ours. Otherwise in the end you suffer the same. What is also important in terms of tourists is to bring people to see what an earthquake can do. Let them see the reality, the size and scale of destruction to this city. Many people come here or would like to come here because they think the city has been re-constructed and re-developed according to the media instead that is not the case. There could be many motivations so why not collect them all and dark tourism is just one of them.

Interviewer
How do you see L'Aquila in its current state?

Participant
At the moment I see it, well obviously it is a city completely different to what it was before because aesthetically it is completely split and exploded, therefore it no longer holds any form or shape. The historical centre, which was obviously the roots of the people, we no longer have our roots. Also because the small towns, they also suffered great damages and this larger city has lost its communities and therefore its roots. For this reason it is a weak city, a lost city, a powerless city, its nervous, which fears for the future, it's a city that has suffered a trauma. This is today and for tomorrow (the future) I think it will be much better.

Interviewer

That was precisely my next question. How do you see the future of L'Aquila?

Participant

Well, I think that, what will happen if we are talking about it logically, there will be a heavy re-construction of the houses outside the historical center so the people who lived outside the historical center will return to their homes, already going back to your home is important. It is then obvious that when you go to the center… when you go to the center today you go to see your wounded relative, it's like going to the hospital. It's about 3 to 4 months that I haven't been because I need to breathe, I can't do it. However, my father, maybe ever Sunday goes and has a walk to have a look, so its like going to the hospital to visit you old sick relative, who lives in a clinic. Therefore, because I do not believe that the center of L'Aquila will ever get totally re-built, and I don't believe for a simply reason, because to rebuild the entire historical centre of L'Aquila costs too much, and L'Aquila at the national level is a expenditure wasted. In such that the benefits of spending are not positive, it's not Rome.

Interviewer

Let's say like Emilia Romagna who have just suffered from an earthquake, who have large industries such as pharmaceutical industries dispatching medicine globally. To rebuild there would ensure greater returns for the government.

Participant

Exactly, our cost to benefits ration is negative. Look if L'Aquila's historical center was rebuilt and lets talk clearly at a national and international level no one cares. This is something all Aquilano's need to comes to grips with. It's important to understand that this city was little known before the earthquake and since the wave has come and gone no one cares. Because we don't have the Caravaggio (Michelangelo's painting), we don't have La Basilica di Assisi, we don't have any of this. So I don't think it will ever be rebuilt completely, therefore it will end up like Givona. I have been there, a little part of the historical center has been rebuilt and the locals moved out of the center, on the outskirts, like we have. They have gone on with living but in a city different to what it once was.

Interviewer

And what of the other parts of the city, have they stayed the same?

Participant

The city has been re-developed outside the historical center. They never returned, however, their city wasn't as large as ours. They never went back and relived their historical center. They go but they don't live it. For us, well, it may take what, 50 years… In 50 years it may be rebuilt… MAYBE (emphasis added). Its clear that in 20 years many things will change, certain people will die, many of us will be old, many of the younger people will have left the city and therefore the rapport will change. You have to ask yourself this. After the earthquake in 1703 L'Aquila was rebuilt and relived. Are we capable today, us in 2012 to do what our ancestors were capable of doing; it is this concept that needs understanding. However, in 1700 L'Aquila was a richer city and had more importance, today I don't think it's the same (taking in the contexts of time). I have already heard the laws on re-construction in L'Aquila since the earthquake, and already there it slows down any process. It will become a different city, fragmented, in which the historical center will have a small area where some small shops will open up, where you can go and have a look, but there will be… look L'Aquila will never be a place where your relatives once lived and a place where you can live normally. It will be like your sick relative who you go and visit from time to time. According to me this is what L'Aquila will be like in 20 years. If economic resources do not arrive then it will not get re-constructed. And it's a shame because it should be a large resource, another form of tourism, a city that has been ripped apart in the years 1300, 1400, 1700 and 2012, and has been rebuilt, reborn, with new types of technologies, this is an example in which L'Aquila should be used as a global laboratory of new infrastructure, and we can come to terms with this and understand what an opportunity, just like dark tourism, the same thing.

Interviewer

To finish do you think there will be a future for developing dark tourism in L'Aquila?

Participant

Look I will respond to you with paradox, if L'Aquila is able to arrive at a level where it develops dark tourism it means that is has managed to change completely the mentality of the Aquilano to which point I can imagine an immediate re-development of the city, a sort of illumination and I do not believe it possible, according to me no. We will continue to have this type of tourism until there is another earthquake, perhaps even stronger in another place which will cause even more damage and therefore for the tourists there will no longer be any motives to come here, they will go to another place. Until this happens we will continue to suffer this kind of tourism because we will not be able to develop or exploit it.

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